

An African American Anthropologist in Wales: St. Clair Drake and the Transatlantic Ecologies of Race Relations

Kieran Connell 

Abstract In summer 1947, African American anthropologist John Gibbs St. Clair Drake arrived in Tiger Bay, the port neighborhood of Cardiff in South Wales, to begin field work for his doctoral thesis, “Race Relations in the British Isles.” Drake’s academic reputation had already been established by the publication of *Black Metropolis* (1945), a seminal study of Chicago’s so-called Black Belt that Drake co-authored with researcher Horace Cayton. What attracted him to Tiger Bay for his next project was a scandal that erupted on both sides of the Atlantic around Britain’s growing population of what were referred to as *brown babies*. These children were the product of sexual encounters that sometimes took place between local white women and some of the 200,000 African American GIs who were at different points stationed across the United Kingdom during the later part of the Second World War. Using the extensive field notes Drake kept during his sojourn in Cardiff, this article reconstructs the nature and feel of a neighborhood where, by the 1940s, half of all residents were from ethnic minority backgrounds. Drake’s work serves as a window onto the nature of racism and ideas about race in late-imperial Britain, alongside the parallel presence of metropolitan community life in Tiger Bay, one of Britain’s oldest multicultural communities.

INTRODUCTION

In summer 1947, African American anthropologist John Gibbs St. Clair Drake arrived in Tiger Bay, the port neighborhood of Cardiff in South Wales, with the intention of conducting field work for his doctoral dissertation, “Values, Social Structure and Race Relations in the British Isles.”¹ By this point, Drake’s academic standing had already been established in the United States. Two years earlier, he had

Kieran Connell is a senior lecturer in contemporary British history at Queen’s University Belfast. He thanks Guy Ortolano for being such a generous host during his fellowship at New York University and the Fulbright Commission, which funded his New York trip just before the global pandemic. He also thanks James Cantres, Tom Hulme, Keira Williams, the anonymous reviewers for the *Journal of British Studies*, and the participants at the Columbia British History seminar—especially Julia Burke, Sam Coggeshall, Susan Pedersen, Rochelle Malcolm, and James Stafford—for their incredibly insightful and thought-provoking input on earlier versions of this article. Thanks also to Si Baker at the Cardiff Rugby Museum, who assisted with the sourcing of an image of the rugby player Bill Douglas, and to Marika Sherwood, who generously shared some of her own research on Tiger Bay in the middle of the first COVID-19 lockdown. Please address any correspondence to K.Connell@qub.ac.uk.

¹ St. Clair Drake, “Reflections on Anthropology and the Black Experience,” *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1978): 85–101, at 87.

published *Black Metropolis* (1945), a pathbreaking study of the African American community in 1930s Chicago that he co-authored with researcher Horace R. Cayton.² The book brought together a mass of detail to demonstrate the embedded nature of racism in Chicago. With the Great Migration of African Americans from the Jim Crow South to the ostensibly more egalitarian North, Chicago's Black population increased by 148 percent between 1910 and 1920; by 1930, the city's Black population had reached 233,903 people. Black communities were effectively confined to neighborhoods like the South Side, which had the worst quality housing and, because of severe overcrowding, disproportionately high rates of disease.³ When Black people attempted to buy property outside the so-called Black Belt, the small strip of land between State Street in the east and the city's railway yards in the west, they were repeatedly targeted by white vigilante groups, which contributed to the August 1919 race riots in Chicago and a series of arson attacks on African American homes throughout the 1920s and 1930s.⁴ In the workplace, Drake and Cayton showed how Black people continued to be vastly over-represented in both unskilled jobs and unemployment rates.⁵

Tiger Bay was an area also beset by issues like overcrowding, discrimination, disease, and, at different points, high unemployment and rioting.⁶ But what distinguished it from the South Side, Drake knew, was Tiger Bay's reputation for racial mixing. With support from the Julius Rosenwald Fund, Drake crossed the Atlantic Ocean with the ambition of understanding the dynamics of one of Britain's oldest multicultural communities.⁷

Underpinned by the global demand for Welsh coal, by the late nineteenth century Tiger Bay had become a major stop-off for the ethnically diverse laborers who manned the global merchant shipping industry and who often arrived in Britain from its colonies in Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean. By 1911 there were 3,894 foreign-born people living in Cardiff, alongside 1,304 people who had

² Henri Peretz, "The Making of *Black Metropolis*," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, no. 595 (2004): 168–75, at 169. See also Horace R. Cayton, *Long Old Road* (New York, 1964).

³ Roger Biles, "Race and Housing in Chicago," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 94, no. 1 (2001): 31–38, at 32.

⁴ Davarian L. Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, The Great Migration and Black Urban Life* (Chapel Hill, 2007), 23–25. For the classic study, see William M. Tuttle Jr, *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York, 1970). See also Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890–1920* (Chicago, 1967); Christopher Robert Reed, *The Rise of Chicago's Black Metropolis, 1920–1929* (Urbana, 2011); 1–9; Tom Hulme, *After the Shock City: Urban Culture and the Making of Modern Citizenship* (Woodbridge, 2019), 211.

⁵ St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (1945; repr. Chicago, 2015), 177–79, 204, 208, 210, 219.

⁶ Simon Jenkins, "Prostitution in Cardiff, 1900–1959," (PhD diss., Cardiff University, 2017), 295, citing the Joint Council of the British Social Hygiene Council and British Council for the Welfare of the Mercantile Marine, "Social Conditions in Ports and Dockland Areas: London, Liverpool, Cardiff" (1935).

⁷ Peretz, "The Making of *Black Metropolis*," 171; Drake, "Reflections on Anthropology and the Black Experience," 86. Drake had earlier contributed research to the landmark study of racial segregation in the American south authored by Black sociologist Allison Davis and overseen by one of Drake's future PhD supervisors, W. Lloyd Warner. See Allison Davis, *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* (Chicago, 1941). See also Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent* (New York, 2020); 246–48; A. Gilbert Belles, "The College Faculty, the Negro Scholar, and the Julius Rosenwald Fund," *Journal of Negro History* 45, no. 4 (1969): 383–92.

been born in Britain's colonies, almost all of whom lived in Tiger Bay.⁸ Outside of London, these were the highest numbers of overseas residents in the country. In 1938, there were more foreign and ethnic minority seamen living in Tiger Bay than in Britain's provincial port areas put together, alongside an additional population of 40,000 "floating" seamen who passed through the area on an annual basis.⁹ By the 1940s, over half of Tiger Bay's 6,000 residents were from ethnic minority backgrounds, and one writer calculated that there were more than forty-five different nationalities in residence, from Arabs, Chinese, Somalis, and Haitians to those whose "race mixtures" were "too difficult to name." Taking a trip around Tiger Bay, a journalist observed, was "like taking a trip around the world."¹⁰

It was a scandal that erupted during the tail end of the Second World War that provided the stimulus for Drake's decision to uproot himself from the American Midwest to this surprisingly cosmopolitan one-square-mile corner of South Wales. The controversy centered on reports that some of the more than 200,000 African American GIs who were at different points stationed across the United Kingdom during the war were embarking on sexual relationships with local white women.¹¹ Features began to appear in the press on both sides of the Atlantic—including in *Time* Magazine, which at the start of the war boasted more than 700,000 readers, and the *Chicago Defender*, the biggest-selling Black newspaper in America.¹² These relationships and, even more alarmingly for many observers, the growing population of what were called half caste babies that were reportedly being fathered by Black troops, struck a nerve with the American public. The US Army remained a racially segregated force during the war, and the prospect of interracial mingling in Britain threatened to damage diplomatic relations between the British government and its key ally. But more than this, sex continued to be conceptualized as one of the key frontiers of America's so-called color line. Even allowing for the long-standing

⁸ Neil Evans, "The South Wales Race Riots of 1919," *Llafur: The Journal of the Society of Welsh Labour History* 3, no. 1 (1980): 5–29, at 6.

⁹ Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (1984; repr., London, 2018), 299; Kenneth Little, "Race Relations in English Society. Preliminary Report on a Community Survey," *Man*, no. 42 (1942): 90–91, at 90; St. Clair Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, St. Clair Drake Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library (hereafter the collection is abbreviated as DP and the repository is abbreviated as NYPL-SC). See also Neil Evans, "Regulating the Army Reserve: Arabs, Blacks and the Local State in Cardiff, 1919–45," *Immigrants and Minorities* 4, no. 2 (1985): 68–115, at 71.

¹⁰ Stanley Bishop, "Clean Up at 'Tiger Bay,'" *John Bull*, 29 January 1938, 30.

¹¹ The exact number of African American troops in the United Kingdom during the war is unknown. Lucy Bland estimates that it could be as many as 240,000 based on the fact that three million American troops passed through Britain between 1942 and 1945, and 8 percent of these soldiers were Black. See Bland, *Britain's "Brown" Babies: The Stories of Children Born to Black GIs and White Women in the Second World War* (Manchester, 2019), 14.

¹² "Inside London's Coloured Clubs," *Picture Post*, 17 July 1943, 19–20; "Almost in Conflict," *Sunday Dispatch*, 5 March 1944, 2; Henry Lee Moon, "Little Negro Community in Britain Faces Same Race Bias as US Colored," *Chicago Defender*, 5 May 1945, 11; "Plain People: 'Is There Anywhere ...?,'" *Time*, 11 March 1946, 27; "Britain's Brown Babies: Illegitimate Tots a Tough Problem for England," *Ebony* 2, no. 1 (1946): 19–23; Chris Vials, *Realism for the Masses: Aesthetics, Popular Front Pluralism, and US Culture, 1935–1947* (Jackson, 2009), 151. On the status of the *Defender*, see James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago, 1989), 79–80; Mary E. Stovall, "The *Chicago Defender* in the Progressive Era," *Illinois History Journal* 83, no. 3 (1990): 159–72; Elizabeth Schroeder Schlachab, *Along the Streets of Bronzeville: Black Chicago's Literary Landscape* (Urbana, 2013), 7.

tradition of white residents slumming it for a voyeuristic night out in the Black Belt, Drake and Cayton found that across Chicago there was a widespread fear on the part of white citizens about the threat that miscegenation was understood to pose to the sanctity of the white “race”—something that echoed the temper of the crudest legislation of Jim Crow South.¹³ It was with this milieu as his point of reference, then, that Drake began seven months of research in Cardiff in order to understand the nature of a neighborhood where, at the very least, the lines seemed to be less clearly drawn.¹⁴

The impact of the wartime relationships between some African American troops and local white women across the United Kingdom has been well documented. Historians have shown how in the broader context of the unprecedented ethnic diversity brought about in Britain by the conflict, these affairs jeopardized the UK government’s balancing act between toleration of US segregation on British soil in order to prevent the risk of alienating the United States and the desire to project a mythical image of imperial Britain as a liberal, racially tolerant country in order bolster the government’s anti-Nazi propaganda (and calm the prospect of anticolonial nationalism across the empire).¹⁵ Historians have also examined the later emergence of a sociology of race relations in Britain, which was shaped by a cadre of mostly white scholars in response to the growing numbers of Black and South Asian immigrants from Britain’s colonies and former colonies who arrived in Britain in the postwar years. The researchers who shaped this field were generally at pains to repudiate the notion that there was such a thing as biologically distinct races and, influenced by the Chicago school of sociology in the 1920s, largely focused on structural inequalities in areas such as housing.¹⁶ However, as Chris Waters has argued, their

¹³ Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 101–4, 118, 129, 159; Schlabach, *Along the Streets of Bronzeville*, 4. On so-called slumming in this period, see Baldwin, *Chicago’s New Negroes*, 25; Kevin J. Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York, 1997); Chad Heap, *Slumming: Sexual and Racial Encounters in American Nightlife, 1885–1940* (Chicago, 2009).

¹⁴ Drake, “Reflections on Anthropology and the Black Experience,” 87. Drake conducted his fieldwork in two visits to the United Kingdom over a two-year period.

¹⁵ Graham Smith, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull: Black American Soldiers in World War II Britain* (London, 1987); Laura Tabili, “We Ask for British Justice”: Workers and Racial Difference in Late Imperial Britain (Ithaca, 1994); Bill Schwarz, “Black Metropolis, White England,” in *Modern Times: Reflections on a Century of English Modernity*, ed. Mica Nava and Alan O’Shea (London, 1996), 176–207; Sonya O. Rose, “Sex, Citizenship, and the Nation in World War II Britain,” *American Historical Review* 103, no. 4 (1998): 1147–76; Neil A. Wynn, “Race War: Black American GIs and West Indians in Britain during the Second World War,” *Immigrants and Minorities* 24, no. 3 (2006): 324–46; Leanne McCormick, “One Yank and They’re Off’: Interaction between U.S. Troops and Northern Irish Women, 1942–1945,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 15, no. 2 (2006): 228–57; Mica Nava, *Visceral Cosmopolitanism: Gender, Culture and the Normalisation of Difference* (Oxford, 2007), 81; Bland, *Britain’s “Brown” Babies*, 14–17; Wendy Webster, *Mixing It: Diversity in World War Two Britain* (Oxford, 2018), 6, 17; Stephanie Makowski, “For the Duration Only: Interracial Relationships in World War II Britain,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 29, no. 2 (2020): 222–52.

¹⁶ Mark Clapson, “The American Contribution to the Urban Sociology of Race Relations in Britain from the 1940s to the early 1970s,” *Urban History* 33, no. 2 (2006): 254–56; Mark Clapson, *Anglo-American Crossroads: Urban Planning and Research in Britain, 1940–2010* (London, 2013), 32–50; Peretz, “The Making of *Black Metropolis*,” 169. On the Chicago school, see, for example, Andrew Abbott, *Department and Discipline: Chicago Sociology at One Hundred* (Chicago, 1999); Lee Harvey, *Myths of the Chicago School of Sociology* (Aldershot, 1987); Rolf Lindner, *The Reportage of Urban Culture: Robert Park and the Chicago School* (Cambridge, 1996).

perspectives were nevertheless often rooted in racialized assumptions about what was understood to be the essential cultural differences between white Britons and the growing population of “dark strangers.”¹⁷ The setting for the majority of studies was London, the city with the largest and most visible so-called “colored quarters.”¹⁸ But it was Tiger Bay that provided the case study for the earliest investigation of this kind, anthropologist Kenneth Little’s *Negroes in Britain* (1948).¹⁹ Little began his career as a physical anthropologist and had intended to go to Cardiff to measure the size of Black children’s heads, but he pivoted to a focus on Tiger Bay’s socioeconomic ecology and the relationships between minority groups and the indigene “host” community.²⁰ At various points, however, Little’s own prejudices and ideas about the racial “characteristics” of Tiger Bay’s residents came to the surface to such a degree that, upon the book’s publication, one Tiger Bay activist accused Little of “lies and slander” worthy of a “sick pseudo-biologist.”²¹

Drake undertook his doctoral research in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Chicago, where his supervisory team included W. Lloyd Warner, whose growing interest in race in the United States superseded his earlier specialism in the indigenous tribes of northern Australia, and Everett Hughes, who was a key player in the “second” Chicago school of sociology in the 1930s.²² In Cardiff, Drake assisted local residents in drafting a statement that declared their distrust of people who, like Little, had tried to “survey us and study us.”²³ Drake later published his own summation of this statement in *The Crisis*, the official publication of the US-based

¹⁷ Chris Waters, “‘Dark Strangers’ in Our Midst: Discourses of Race and Nation in Britain, 1947–1963,” *Journal of British Studies* 36, no. 2 (1997): 207–238. See also Gavin Schaffer, *Racial Science and British Society, 1930–62* (Basingstoke, 2008), 153–54; Freddie Foks, *Participant Observers: Anthropology, Colonial Development, and the Reinvention of Society in Britain* (Berkeley, 2023), 102–29. For a discussion of gender, see Nava, *Visceral Cosmopolitanism*, 97–120.

¹⁸ Michael Banton, *The Coloured Quarter: Negro Immigrants in an English City* (London, 1954); Ruth Glass, *Newcomers: The West Indians in London* (London, 1960); Sheila Patterson, *Dark Strangers: A Sociological Study of the Absorption of a Recent West Indian Migrant Group in Brixton, South London* (London, 1963).

¹⁹ The book, originally slated for publication in 1947, was delayed until the following year due to production issues.

²⁰ Jordanna Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkeley, 2012), 26; Waters, “‘Dark Strangers,’” 218.

²¹ Alan Sheppard, as quoted in Marika Sherwood, “Racism and Resistance: Cardiff in the 1930s and 40s,” *Llafur: The Journal of the Society of Welsh Labour History* 5, no. 4 (1991): 51–69, at 62.

²² Drake, “Reflections on Anthropology and the Black Experience,” 87, 106; St. Clair Drake, Field notes, Blacks in England: Cardiff Diary and Notes, 3/62, DP, NYPL-SC (hereafter the subcollection is abbreviated as BE). See also George Clement Bond, “A Social Portrait of John Gibbs St. Clair Drake,” *American Ethnologist* 15, no. 4 (1988): 762–81, at 769–70. Warner was a key player in securing the federal funding for what became Drake and Cayton’s *Black Metropolis* and encouraged Drake to apply for a Rosenwald scholarship for training at the University of Chicago while working on the book. He also provided a methodological commentary to *Black Metropolis*. The other members of Drake’s supervisory team were Robert Redfield and Fred Eggan. For Warner’s earliest, book-length study of race in the United States, see W. Lloyd Warner, Buford H. Junker, and Walter A. Adams, *Color and Human Nature: Negro Personality Development in a Northern City* (Washington, DC, 1941). See Richard C. Helmes-Hayes, “Everett Hughes: Theorist of the Second Chicago School,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 11, no. 4 (1998): 621–73.

²³ As quoted in Leslie James and Daniel Whittall, “Ambiguity and Imprint: British Racial Logics, Colonial Commissions of Enquiry and the Creolization of Britain in the 1930s and 40s,” *Callaloo* 39, no. 1 (2016): 166–84, at 180.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.²⁴ But he never published his 500-page dissertation, which he completed in 1954 after becoming a faculty member in the Sociology Department at Roosevelt University. There, having initially been promised a light teaching load to allow him time to complete his dissertation, he became a key player in the establishment of one of the earliest African American studies courses in the country.²⁵

On one level, then, Drake's Cardiff work can be viewed as a hitherto overlooked, early rejoinder to race relations scholarship in Britain, much of which would initially be produced by one-time students of Little.²⁶ Drake saw himself as an "activist anthropologist" and had the expressed ambition of developing anthropology so that it could act as a tool for the "liberation of black people."²⁷ His Cardiff research thus arguably anticipated the work produced by a later generation of ethnic minority scholars in Britain, who sought to refute what was understood to be the ongoing tendency among the mostly white academics who made up Britain's race relations "industry" to pathologize their Black subjects.²⁸ A key locus for this work would become the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, which had been established at Birmingham University in 1964 and throughout the 1970s was headed by Stuart Hall, who in 1951 moved to Britain from Jamaica on a Rhodes scholarship.²⁹ Hall would later recall that, in spite of his own formation, it took until the emergence in the mid-1970s of a cohort of Black British post-graduate students for race to become a core focus at the center.³⁰ Certainly, in the immediate postwar context, Drake was among an extremely small minority of Black social scientists operating in the United Kingdom.³¹ And it is this distinctive

²⁴ St. Clair Drake, "A Report on the Brown Britishers," *The Crisis* 56, no. 6 (June 1949): 174, 188–89, at 174.

²⁵ Drake, "Reflections on Anthropology and the Black Experience," 96–98; St. Clair Drake, to Lloyd Warner, 6 September 1952, Drake Personal Papers: Dissertation Topics and Correspondence, 2/2, DP, NYPL-SC; Bond, "A Social Portrait of John Gibbs St. Clair Drake," 775; Kevin Gaines, "Scholar-Activist St. Clair Drake and the Transatlantic World of Black Radicalism," in *The Other Special Relationship: Race, Rights, and Riots in Britain and the United States*, ed. D. G. Kelley and Stephen Tuck (New York, 2015), 75–76.

²⁶ Antony Richmond, *Colour Prejudice in Britain* (London, 1954); Michael Banton, *The Coloured Quarter* (London, 1955). See also Jenny Bourne, "Cheerleaders and Ombudsman: The Sociology of Race Relations in Britain," *Race and Class* 21, no. 4 (1980): 331–52, at 332.

²⁷ Drake, as quoted in Bond, "A Social Portrait of John Gibbs St. Clair Drake," 775; Drake, "Reflections on Anthropology and the Black Experience," 86.

²⁸ Errol Lawrence, "In the Abundance of Water the Fool is Thirsty: Sociology and Black 'Pathology,'" in *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, ed. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (London, 1982), 100. See also Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London, 1987), 15–42; Rob Waters, "Race, Citizenship and 'Race Relations' Research in Late-Twentieth-Century Britain," *Twentieth Century British History* 34, no. 3 (2023): 491–514; Marc Matera, "The African Grounds of Race Relations in Britain," *Twentieth Century British History* 34, no. 3 (2023): 415–39, at 416.

²⁹ Stuart Hall, with Bill Schwarz, *Familiar Stranger: A Life between Two Islands* (London, 2017), 149–52. For the history of the emergence of the politics of identity at the center, see Kieran Connell and Matthew Hilton, "The Working Practices of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies," *Social History* 40, no. 3 (2015): 287–311.

³⁰ Stuart Hall, interviewed by Kieran Connell, in *Cultural Studies 50 Years On: History, Practice and Politics*, ed. Kieran Connell and Matthew Hilton (London, 2016), 299.

³¹ The most well-known Black anthropologist working in Britain at this time was Sydney Collins, a Jamaican researcher who undertook his PhD thesis under Kenneth Little at Edinburgh University in

perspective that allows for Drake's Cardiff work to be utilized in a way that moves beyond the arena of intellectual history.

Drake's work also offers a distinctive, if undoubtedly partial perspective on the lived experience of growing ethnic diversity in postwar Britain, something that would be repeated in different ways across the country as immigration increased from the late 1940s onward. Drake's perspective in Cardiff was a complex one. During the war, African American GIs had become a familiar presence in Tiger Bay, having been drawn to the area in the hope that the area's reputation for racial mixing would allow them to sidestep the hostility that could greet them elsewhere in the country.³² Drake also claimed that his wartime experiences in the US Maritime Service helped him establish a rapport with the seafarers he encountered in Cardiff.³³ But in other ways he was in the classic anthropological tradition an outsider to his subjects in Tiger Bay, and his field notes often speak to a lack of surefootedness on everything from the etiquette of tipping in British hotels to the complicated ways the anticolonial movement was playing out among Tiger Bay's ethnically diverse inhabitants.³⁴ At one point in his field notes, Drake recorded his frustration at the number of people in Tiger Bay who, in spite of his attempts to keep conversations focused on "race relations in Britain," seemed determined to talk about the subject of American lynchings.³⁵ No tape recordings survive of Drake's work in Cardiff, and we are thus forced to rely on the notes he made of the interviews he did eventually conduct with local figures, and his impressions of the sociability that took place inside Tiger Bay's cafés, sports clubs, and boarding houses. Yet in spite of these limitations, Drake's work nevertheless provides an opportunity to follow the methodological lead of scholars interested in the "social scientific turn" in modern British history, whereby the data and findings produced by social scientists have been re-interrogated and recast as "historical texts in themselves."³⁶ As Rob Waters has pointed out, historians have hitherto largely neglected the racial dimensions of the

the early 1950s. It was published as *Coloured Minorities in Britain: Studies in British Race Relations Based on African, West Indian and Asiatic Immigrants* (London, 1957).

³² Neil M. C. Sinclair, *The Tiger Bay Story* (Cardiff, 2003), 63. On the hostility that could face Black troops stationed in Britain during the war, see Webster, *Mixing It*, 197.

³³ Bond, "A Social Portrait of John Gibbs St. Clair Drake," 777.

³⁴ Drake's initial disorientation upon arriving in Cardiff is detailed in St. Clair Drake, Field notes, BE, Cardiff Diary and Notes, 1/62, DP, NYPL-SC. It is worth noting, as George Steinmetz and others have, that professional European sociologists and anthropologists conducted major research projects in the colonies. George Steinmetz, "Sociology and Colonialism in the British and French Empires, 1945–1965," *Journal of Modern History* 89, no. 3 (2017): 601–48; George Steinmetz, "British Sociology in the Metropole and the Colonies, 1940s–60s," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Sociology in Britain*, ed. John Holmwood and John Scott (London, 2014), 302–37; Ali Meghji, *Decolonizing Sociology: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2021).

³⁵ St. Clair Drake, Field notes, BE, Drake Notes, 1/63, DP, NYPL-SC.

³⁶ Lise Butler, "The Social Scientific Turn in Modern British History," *Twentieth Century British History* 33, no. 3 (2022): 445–50, at 445; Jon Lawrence, "Inventing the "Traditional Working Class": A Re-analysis of Interviews from Young and Willmott's *Family and Kinship in East London*," *Historical Journal* 59, no. 2 (2016): 567–93; Jon Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me: The Search for Community in Post-war England* (Oxford, 2019); Selina Todd, "Affluence, Class and Crown Street: Reinvestigating the Post-war Working Class," *Contemporary British History* 22, no. 4 (2008): 501–18. See also Florence Sutcliffe Braithwaite, *Class, Politics, and the Decline of Deference in England, 1968–2000* (Oxford, 2018). On the methodological implications of utilizing unpublished research notes in historical research, see Butler, "The Social Scientific Turn,"

encounter between social scientists and their subjects in the postwar period.³⁷ There has been even less work in this area that seeks to use social science fieldwork as a source base that sheds light on the lived experiences of ethnically diverse citizens in Britain, as opposed to the development of academic fields and their relationship to shifting forms of governance both in Britain and across the empire.³⁸ I fill this lacuna by using Drake's work to foreground a more humanistic, social perspective of how ethnic diversity was experienced in a particular British locale at a critical moment of social and geopolitical change, in this specific community and more broadly.

What Drake's work reveals is the durability of racism and ideas about race in late-imperial Britain. This was certainly a feature of the way Tiger Bay was viewed by law-makers, journalists, and other commentators, whose fascination with Tiger Bay was conditioned by long-standing fears about the potential of criminality and violence among Tiger Bay's ethnically diverse population, concerns about what was understood to be the hypersexuality of Black men, and, most fundamentally, worries about miscegenation and a charged fascination with what was deemed to be the aberration of so-called half caste babies.³⁹ Drake's arrival in Britain coincided with the declaration of Indian independence, the clearest sign yet that the stability of the empire was in serious jeopardy. But the complex and evolving racial fictions that underpinned Britain's colonial relationships maintained a powerful presence.⁴⁰ Hazel Carby, who was born in Devon in 1948 to a white Welsh mother and a Black Jamaican father, was part of the cohort of ethnic-minority students who gravitated to the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in the 1970s. Carby has argued that during the war in Britain and in the years that followed it became increasingly difficult to avoid what she calls "the entanglement of race;" the ideas about race that circulated in the British Empire threaded into people's attitudes, actions and beliefs in the metropole, influencing "even the smallest detail of their lives."⁴¹

449; Jon Lawrence, "On Historians' Re-use of Social-Science Archives," *Twentieth Century British History* 33, no. 3 (2022): 432–44.

³⁷ Waters, "Race, Citizenship and 'Race Relations' Research in Late-Twentieth-Century Britain," 493–94. For an early exception, see Kieran Connell, "Race, Prostitution and the New Left: The Post-war Inner City through Janet Mendelsohn's 'Social Eye,'" *History Workshop Journal* 83, no. 1 (2017): 301–40.

³⁸ Butler, "The Social Scientific Turn," 446; Erik Linstrum, *Ruling Minds: Psychology in the British Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2016); Foks, *Participant Observers*, 1–8.

³⁹ In Britain, the term *half caste* was widely used to refer to people of mixed ethnicity, whether they had an African American parent or an African Caribbean one. This remained the case well into the 1950s, when anxieties around miscegenation were a key backdrop to the race riots that took place in summer 1958. See Bland, *Britain's "Brown" Babies*, 7; Chamion Caballero and Peter J. Aspinall, *Mixed Race Britain in The Twentieth Century* (London, 2018), 10.

⁴⁰ Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, introduction to *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, ed. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Durham; London, 2005), 3. See also Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, 2002); Anne Spry Rush, *Bonds of Empire: West Indians and Britishness from Victoria to Decolonization* (Oxford, 2011); Kennetta Hammond Perry, *London is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship and the Politics of Race* (Oxford, 2015); Antoinette Burton, "Rules of Thumb: British History and 'Imperial Culture' in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Britain," *Women's History Review* 3, no. 4 (1994): 483–501; Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire*; Bill Schwarz, *Memories of Empire*, vol. 1, *The White Man's World* (Oxford, 2011).

⁴¹ Hazel V. Carby, *Imperial Intimacies: A Tale of Two Islands* (2019; repr., London, 2021), 1, 67, 72. See also Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire*, 12.

Drake's work in Cardiff is testament to the extent to which the prominence of racial fictions in the British culture left a "deep imprint," as Geoff Eley has put it, creating "entirely 'real'" social situations that, in the course of their everyday lives, the diverse inhabitants of Tiger Bay were forced to inhabit.⁴²

Alongside this, Drake's work also facilitates an engagement with a parallel social formation in Cardiff—one that echoed a central intervention made by Drake and Cayton in *Black Metropolis*. In addition to demonstrating the pervasive nature of the structural discrimination in operation in Chicago, Drake and Cayton were also determined to highlight an equally real, parallel reality they referred to as the *metropolis*. If places like the South Side were racialized ghettos beset with the consequences of racism, the metropolis represented the social and commercial bonds that people were nevertheless able to make for themselves around streets like South Parkway Avenue, the center of Chicago's Black Belt and for a time the most famous street in Black America.⁴³ The metropolis was a "city within a city," as Drake and Cayton put it, or as the African American sociologist E. Franklin Frazier summarized his own impression of Black Chicago, a "whirl of life."⁴⁴ The metropolis meant a lived culture made up of churches, dive bars, dice rooms, jazz clubs, political associations, chitterling diners, and cabaret joints. It meant "organizing, love-making, thinking, hustling" and "having a good time." In essence, the metropolis represented the lives that people fought to create, in spite of the lived consequences of racism. It was both a "struggle for liberty" and a "tenacious clinging to life."⁴⁵

Drake's work is also testament to the presence of metropolitan community life in Tiger Bay. There was the existence, for example, of political organizations like the Colonial Defence Association, which in the 1920s had played a major role in fighting for the rights of ethnic-minority seamen but by the 1940s was struggling to reckon with how an increasingly heterogeneous anticolonial movement had set the energies of activists off in competing directions. There was the 1947 opening of a permanent mosque in Tiger Bay, replete with traditional Islamic minarets, the green flag of Islam, and banners with the message *la ilaha illa Allah* (there is no God but God). There were the mixed-race youths who frequented a local sports club, the West Indian-run boarding house that catered for visiting seaman of different ethnicities, or the local cafés that reportedly had backrooms set aside for illicit sexual liaisons. What follows is testament to the relentless presence of racism in 1940s Britain, and the related influence of ideas about race. But it is also the story of a multicultural "metropolis" in its infancy, something that is indicative of what later scholars would identify as Britain's fundamentally unruly emergence as a multicultural society.⁴⁶

⁴² Geoff Eley, "The Trouble With 'Race': Migrancy, Cultural Difference, and the Remaking of Europe," in *After the Nazi Racial State: Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe*, ed. Rita Chin et al. (Ann Arbor, 2009), 137–82, at 152, 161, 167.

⁴³ Schlabach, *Along the Streets of Bronzeville*, 6.

⁴⁴ Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 396; E. Franklin Frazier, as quoted in Christopher Robert Reed, *The Rise of Chicago's Black Metropolis*, 3. See Frazier's own pioneering study: E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago, 1939).

⁴⁵ Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 383. See also Mary Patillo, foreword to Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, xii–liii, at xvii.

⁴⁶ Paul Gilroy, "Multiculture, Double Consciousness and the 'War on Terror,'" *Patterns of Prejudice* 39, no. 4 (2005), 431–43, at 438.

TIGER BAY

Having arrived in Cardiff, Drake recorded his initial impressions of Bute Street, Tiger Bay's main thoroughfare, in his field diary. The street was lined with dozens of cafés, seamen's boarding houses, pubs, barbers, and shops selling naval uniforms, sea boots and other seafaring equipment. To Drake, the names of these establishments—Ebony Café, Cairo Lodging House, Singapore Café, Satar's Arab Lodging House—epitomized the global nature of the neighborhood where he had arrived. Drake was equally struck by the diversity of the people around him. At one junction he watched a street performer entertaining a crowd of more than thirty people, eight of whom were "recognizably colored" (although it appeared to Drake that he was the only one making "distinctions of color"). Further down toward Loudoun Square, Tiger Bay's central hub, the diversity became even more pronounced. In a park Drake watched a blonde-haired toddler playing with a Black girl of the same age and observed a white woman and an Arab man. Nearby, Drake noticed a smartly dressed girl he estimated to be no more than eight years old looking after two dark-skinned toddlers; he also saw a Black boy of twelve pushing a friend in a wheelbarrow. Men passed by in fezzes and with badges bearing the insignia "MN" (merchant navy) on their collars; many of the women wore brightly colored turbans. At the northern end of Bute Street, Drake noticed, there was a newly built stucco mosque with truncated minarets and neon Arabic lettering. At the opposing end of the community there was a sign with directions to the nearby maternity clinic printed in both English and Arabic.⁴⁷

"The professor," as Drake's subjects referred to him, was a recurring presence as he attended cricket matches put on by the Coloured International Athletic Club, or sat down for tea with the Yemeni *shaykh* of Tiger Bay's Mosque.⁴⁸ The apparent ease with which he assimilated into community life was perhaps helped by the familiar site of African Americans in Tiger Bay during the war. Various Black US Army companies were stationed on bases like the Maindy Barracks in north Cardiff and Fairford in Gloucestershire. Photographs from the period show Black GIs sitting in Cardiff's Loudoun Square, smoking and drinking bottles of VP wine; in one photograph, a GI poses awkwardly next to a young white woman in a floral dress.⁴⁹

The sex appeal that Black GIs found they had in Britain stemmed in part from the popular understanding, particularly in the provinces, that American "negroes" represented a sense of exotic, modish urbanity.⁵⁰ In the Jim Crow South, intermarriage remained illegal, and Black men could be lynched for having been seen fraternizing with white women.⁵¹ It is not surprising, then, that stories of successful encounters with white women could be a central feature of the later recollections of African American soldiers who had been stationed in Britain during the war. Wilbur Young, for example, who had joined the US Army in 1943 and received his training

⁴⁷ Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, pp. 180, 202, 328, DP, NYPL-SC. Café estimate is from Kenneth Little, *Negroes in Britain: A Study of Racial Relations in English Society* (London, 1948), 42.

⁴⁸ Drake, Field notes, BE, Cardiff Diary and Notes 3/62, DP, NYPL-SC.

⁴⁹ Sinclair, *The Tiger Bay Story*, 63.

⁵⁰ Nava, *Visceral Cosmopolitanism*, 10; Lucy Bland, "Defying Racial Prejudice: Second World War Relationships between British Women and Black GIs and the Raising of Their Offspring," *Women's History Review* 28, no. 6 (2019): 853–68, at 856.

⁵¹ Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 129.

in the military town of Norfolk, Virginia, found himself stationed in Newport, Wales, during the war, a twenty-minute drive from Cardiff. In an interview conducted in 1946 with historian Lawrence Reddick, a friend of Drake's and another Chicago University graduate, Young remembered how his Black unit seemed to "fit right in with Welsh life." Appreciating the "sing-song" nature of the Welsh accent and the peculiar way locals would say "aye" instead of "yes," Young insisted that a number of marriages between Black GIs and white women took place "right off the bat," in spite of the US Army's formal requirement that any such arrangement be approved by a commanding officer. When Young's company was moved to a barracks thirty-five miles away in Bristol, some of the men managed to locate a truck to drive them back to see their girlfriends. When this was not possible, the women would get on trains to go and see them. There were even rivalries between women over the attentions of particular men, Young claimed. On occasions there were as many as three women waiting for a single soldier outside a camp, and the soldier in question would be forced to make his excuses and send word that he was out on detail.⁵²

Notwithstanding the diplomatic difficulties that such relationships posed for the UK government during the war, alongside Britain's growing population of so-called brown babies, which Drake estimated at 2,000 children, by the end of the war it had become apparent that there were a substantial number of British politicians and other commentators who found the prospect of inter-ethnic relations distasteful on their own terms.⁵³ As Stuart Hall put it, it was the "erotic element" of these encounters that "proved the combustible factor in the racial imaginary."⁵⁴ In Cardiff, this centered on a sustained moral panic in September 1945 over the scenes taking place around Maindy Barracks, three miles from Tiger Bay. There, American GIs allegedly arranged sexual encounters with girlfriends in the park next to the barracks, which had reportedly also become a prominent area of solicitation for sex workers. According to reports, dozens of young women had begun to sleep rough in the park, with the majority having "camp followed" troops from base-to-base. The area of the park closest to the barracks was described as being one of "indescribable filth," strewn with women's underwear and "lice ridden straw palliasses."⁵⁵ To begin with, and in contrast to the discourse around miscegenation in the US South, which was dominated by the specter of the "black beast rapist," the Welsh press laid the blame for such activity with the women concerned.⁵⁶ For example, one newspaper, tying into class-based tropes regarding the essential "instability" of "fallen" women and "good-time girls," declared that "girl tramps" had become a "menace to Wales," and suggested that the best solution might be

⁵² Lawrence Reddick, interview with Wilbur Young, 9 August 1946, in Reddick's African Americans in WWII project, Box 1, Interviews with Servicemen, W-Z, NYPL-SC. See also Bond, "A Social Portrait of John Gibbs St. Clair Drake," 771.

⁵³ Drake, "A Report on the Brown Britishers," 174.

⁵⁴ Hall, *Familiar Stranger*, 181.

⁵⁵ "Scenes on Cardiff's Burma Road," *Cardiff Times*, 15 September 1945, 1.

⁵⁶ Amy Louise Wood, "Lynching Photography and the 'Black Beast Rapist' in the Southern White Masculine Imagination," in *Masculinity: Bodies, Movies, Culture*, ed. Peter Lehman (New York, 2001), 193–211; Diane Miller Sommerville, *Rape and Race in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Chapel Hill, 2004); Crystal N. Feimster, *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching* (Cambridge, MA, 2009).

to simply “round [the women] up as vagrants, and send them for institutional work or treatment.”⁵⁷ But there was also a racial undercurrent to the reportage. The lane that separated the park and the barracks was soon christened “Burma Road,” with “Burma” functioning as a popular wartime postal acronym for “Be Undressed and Ready My Angel” that also implicitly referenced understandings of moral waywardness in the colonies as a result of a string of wartime movies based on the real-life supply road connecting China to British Burma.⁵⁸ One local resident complained to the press that his daughter had become afraid to leave the house because a Black GI had recently followed her home. “The trouble,” he argued, was that GIs “now think that all girls are alike.”⁵⁹

As the controversy wore on, and with the end of the war in Europe perhaps emboldening those who had previously been persuaded to hold back on their reservations about the presence of African American soldiers in Britain, the emphasis increasingly shifted to the role that Black GIs were playing in the establishment of Cardiff’s Burma Road. This reached a crescendo in mid-September, when Cardiff’s Lord Mayor described the situation as “a disgrace to everyone concerned” and advocated the immediate removal of African American troops from Cardiff. Siding with the mayor, Cardiff’s veteran chief constable, James A. Wilson, who was in his twenty-fifth year in the job, made his position explicit: “it is on account of the coloured troops that these lapses of moral rectitude have occurred,” he declared. “The coloured troops are a truculent lot of people with the civil police and we have had trouble dealing with them. Until these coloured troops are removed from Cardiff,” Wilson warned, “this type of woman will still persist in hanging about the barracks.”⁶⁰

A number of African American GIs wrote to the press anonymously in shock at the way in which race had been made a central feature of the Burma Road scandal. One soldier accused Wilson of “trying to create undesirable thoughts toward the coloured American soldiers,” while another explained how he had “never felt more down and sick on any subject connected with the British and Americans at the present moment;” the whole episode had, the soldier suggested, led to “minute elements of friendship” being “blown asunder.”⁶¹ More experienced observers of the treatment of Cardiff’s ethnic minority population would have been less surprised. The eventual response to “Burma Road,” and the link that Wilson and others made between the supposed collapse in the established moral order and the presence of what was seen as an alien Black population, had in fact been conditioned by decades of hostility and state-sponsored racism toward Cardiff’s ethnic minority citizens.

⁵⁷ “Woman Tramps Menace Social Life in Wales,” *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 12 September 1945, 3. See also Carby, *Imperial Intimacies*, 75.

⁵⁸ Simon Jenkins, “Prostitution in Cardiff, 1900–1959,” 171; Radhika Natarajan, “The ‘Bogus Child’ and the ‘Big Uncle’: The Impossible South Asian Family in Post-imperial Britain,” *Twentieth Century British History* 34, no. 3 (2023): 440–66, at 459.

⁵⁹ “Scenes on Cardiff’s Burma Road,” *Cardiff Times*, 15 September 1945, 1; “Shock and Shame of Disclosures,” *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 17 September 1945, 3.

⁶⁰ Wilson, as quoted in St. Clair Drake, Field notes, BE, Miscellaneous Manuscripts and Notes, 7/62, DP, NYPL-SC. See also “Chief Says ‘I Have Done All I Can,’” *South Wales Echo and Express*, 12 September 1945, 3; “Police Say J.P.s Too Lenient,” *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 13 September 1945, 3.

⁶¹ As quoted in “A Soldier Replies,” *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 15 September 1945, 3; Drake, Field Notes, BE, Miscellaneous Manuscripts and Notes, 7/62, DP, NYPL-SC.

The flashpoints in this history were influenced by the status of the labor market in the shipping industry. During the First World War, shipping companies filled the increasingly severe labor gap created by the war with cheap labor from China and Britain's colonies in the Caribbean, West Africa, and elsewhere. The return of British soldiers at the end of the conflict contributed to a labor surplus, and a perception that ethnic minority workers were not only undercutting wages but were also, having often formed relationships with local white women, a source of sexual competition.⁶² In summer 1919 these tensions erupted with an outbreak of major rioting in Tiger Bay, the initial spark for which was a gang of returning white soldiers targeting of a group of Black men out with their white wives in central Cardiff.⁶³ During the subsequent unrest, which followed similar disturbances earlier in the year in the port areas of South Shields and Liverpool, and preceded the Chicago race riots Drake described in *Black Metropolis* by a month, property in Tiger Bay was looted, Arab-owned lodging houses were vandalized, and white lynch mobs attacked "non-white" passersby.⁶⁴ Over the four days of the unrest an estimated £3,000 worth of damage was done to property, and three people lost their lives—a Black man from a fractured skull, a white man from a slit throat, and another white man who had been shot through the heart.⁶⁵

What was striking about the response to the unrest was the extent to which the British state, with the backing of the major shipping companies and at different points the trade unions, were willing to institutionalize the prejudice that had fueled the white rioters in Cardiff and elsewhere in the first place.⁶⁶ Pushed by hyperbolic press coverage of the issue, in the immediate aftermath of the unrest the Colonial Office were increasingly determined to find ways of repatriating ethnic minority seamen from Britain. In some cases they broke up marriages between seamen and their British-born partners.⁶⁷ A series of new and explicitly racist Aliens Orders were then passed that targeted ethnic minority seamen specifically by requiring them to prove their right of entry into Britain and subsequently to register with the authorities as aliens, in spite of the fact that large numbers were citizens of the British Empire and had earlier been actively encouraged to fill Britain's wartime labor shortage.⁶⁸ The Orders emboldened, rather than placated, those who were opposed to the presence of "non-white" labor in Britain. In 1929, for instance,

⁶² For background, see Colonial Office correspondence regarding "coloured" seamen, 28 August 1919, CO 323/810/7, National Archives, London. (Hereafter this repository is abbreviated as TNA.)

⁶³ Memo from Chief Constable Williams to Home Office, 13 June 1919, HO45/11017/377969/11, TNA.

⁶⁴ Tim Harper, *Underground Asia: Global Revolutionaries and the Assault on Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2021), 369.

⁶⁵ Evans, "The South Wales Race Riots of 1919," 5–29; Fryer, *Staying Power*, 309; Jacqueline Jenkinson, *Black 1919: Riots, Racism and Resistance in Imperial Britain* (Liverpool, 2009).

⁶⁶ Little, *Negroes in Britain*, 77.

⁶⁷ See, for instance, London Repatriation Committee, minutes, 7 August 1919, CO 323/815, TNA; H. J. Bosson to Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 3 December 1919, CO 323/817, TNA. For more on the growing focus on repatriation in this period, see Daniel Renshaw, *The Discourse of Repatriation in Britain, 1845–2016* (Abingdon, 2021), 109.

⁶⁸ The most infamous of these was the 1925 Special Restriction (Coloured Seamen) Order though the authorities also used earlier orders like the 1920 Aliens Order to target ethnic minority seamen. See Laura Tabili, "The Construction of Racial Difference in Twentieth Century Britain: The Special Restriction (Coloured Seamen) Order, 1925," *Journal of British Studies* 33, no. 1 (1994): 54–94; Evans, "Regulating

deploying the argument he would later make against the presence of African American GIs in Cardiff, the chief constable, James Wilson, declared that “British West Indians and West Africans” were “men who dislike work.” He characterized them as “dissolute thieves, inveterate gamblers, the associates of prostitutes” and men who were “strongly suspected of living on their immoral earnings.” While he regarded the Somalis as “a fairly intelligent race,” he thought of them as both “truculent and vicious.” The West Africans, meanwhile, were to the mind of Wilson “of an inferior order and almost primitive in their habits.” In the absence of mass deportation, Wilson argued, the best way to avoid any future problems in Britain would be to follow the lead of South Africa, which with the passing of its 1927 Immorality Act had effectively banned interracial sex, and make miscegenation a formal crime.⁶⁹

Anxieties around sex and miscegenation were indeed a central feature of these narratives and often functioned in such a way as to deny agency to the white women who were deemed unlucky enough to have fallen in love with Black men. “Coloured” seamen simply “come into contact with white women” in Tiger Bay, the author of one report explained in 1935, “principally those who are unfortunately of loose moral character,” and the result was “that a half-caste population is brought into the world.”⁷⁰ Dovetailing with these sexualized and gendered narratives was an equally powerful understanding of race that exposed the presence of a telling kind of doublethink in imperial Britain. On the one hand, commentators showed themselves to have internalized the racial hierarchies of Empire; at the same time, on the other hand, they were at pains to disavow Britain’s history of colonial expansionism as providing any justification for the presence of West Indian, African, or Arab people in places like Tiger Bay. “Cardiff has before it a social problem that cannot as yet be solved,” one report explained. Its “coloured” population were “being made to adopt a standard of civilisation they cannot be expected to understand.”⁷¹ A 1935 editorial in the *Western Mail and South Wales News* rejected the argument that, “inasmuch as the white man has staked claims in the black man’s country, the black man is entitled to settle wherever he chooses in the Empire.” Such an interpretation was to ignore a “clash of civilisations and ethical standards a thousand years apart;” “coloured” people simply “do not belong to the social system we have evolved in these islands.” The problem as one journalist saw it was that Tiger Bay had become “a community of unsophisticated strangers, many of whom are unable to adjust themselves happily to the complexities of our civilisation.” The solution advocated by the *Western Mail and South Wales News* was repatriation. This may involve “hardships” for the people effected, the paper’s editorial recognized, and in light of this Britain should “continue to carry the “white man’s burden”” in the colonies.

the Army Reserve,” 68–115. On discrimination of the trade unions in this area, see Sherwood, “Racism and Resistance,” 55.

⁶⁹ Chief Constable James Wilson, as quoted in Ross Cameron, “‘The Most Colourful Extravaganza in the World’: Images of Tiger Bay, 1845–1970,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 31, no. 2 (1997): 59–90, at 74. On the workings of the 1927 Act, see Jeremy Martens, “Citizenship, “Civilisation” and the Creation of South Africa’s Immorality Act, 1927,” *South African History Journal* 59, no. 1 (2007): 223–41.

⁷⁰ Joint Council of the British Social Hygiene Council and the British Council for the Welfare of the Mercantile Marine, “Social Conditions in Ports and Dockland Areas,” 3AMS/B/08/03, Women’s Library, London School of Economics.

⁷¹ As quoted in “Cardiff’s Coloured Population,” *Cardiff Times*, 13 July 1935, 7.

But the simple fact was, the editorial concluded, “we can no longer tolerate that burden on our doorstep.”⁷²

This kind of journalism went hand-in-hand with the growing number of investigative reports into what was called Britain’s “colour problem” at its major seaports that were produced in the 1920s and 1930s by or in conjunction with the Home Office. As Leslie James and Daniel Whittall have argued, these reports were in many respects an extension of the royal commissions into colonial matters that were published across the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on issues such as social unrest and the consequences of economic depression in the colonies. If the commissions functioned as an important bureaucratic apparatus designed to legitimize colonial rule, James and Whittle argue, their British-focused counterparts operated as a means of “modulating racial dynamics in the metropole” and simultaneously contributed to a heightened suspicion of the journalists, philanthropists, and investigators who were increasingly turning their attentions to the ethnically diverse communities residing at Britain’s port districts.⁷³ In Tiger Bay, this suspicion only intensified as Kenneth Little began to publish the results of his ethnography of everyday life among Tiger Bay’s varied “racial groups.”⁷⁴ As Jordanna Bailkin has observed, what would come to define the tenor of the sociologies of race relations in Britain was a near obsessive focus on classifying and ranking the “characteristics” of various migrant communities, something that often drew on anthropological work that had earlier been undertaken in Africa.⁷⁵ In Little’s analysis, there were a wide range of “racial types” in Tiger Bay to which certain characteristics could be attributed. The “half castes,” for instance, maintained a “light-hearted attitude toward life” that verged on “irresponsibility,” and the Arabs, who, Little explained, had black hair, were of medium stature and had “almost white skin,” were primarily religious rather than political. The demeanor of the African and Caribbean people, meanwhile, who Little emphasized had “the darkest skins in the community,” was characterized by “a certain degree of masculinity ... even austerity.”⁷⁶ As Chris Waters observed of *Negroes in Britain* and the later sociologies of race relations, “whiteness” was equated with “civilized” virtues; it was something against which “non-white” subjects were to be “measured and found wanting.”⁷⁷

Little’s “facts of blackness” differed from the Cardiff chief constable’s focus on what he saw as the “immorality,” “truculence,” and “viciousness” of ethnic minorities in Tiger Bay.⁷⁸ But foreshadowing the response of ethnic-minority subjects to later

⁷² Editorial, “The Coloured Man in Our Midst,” *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 8 July 1935, 8; Allister Smith, “Among Cardiff’s Coloured Seamen,” *World Dominion* 12, no. 3 (July 1934): 222–29, at 222. See also Susan D. Pennybacker, *From Scottsboro to Munich: Race and Political Culture in 1930s Britain* (Princeton, 2009), 134.

⁷³ James and Whittall, “Ambiguity and Imprint,” 171–72, 173, 176, 178, 180.

⁷⁴ Little, *Negroes in Britain*, 44.

⁷⁵ Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire*, 24–27. See also Barbara Bush, *Imperialism, Race and Resistance: Africa and Britain, 1919–1945* (London, 1999); Matera, “The African Grounds of Race Relations in Britain,” 418.

⁷⁶ K. L. Little, “Loudon Square—A Community Survey I,” *Sociological Review*, 34, nos. 1–2 (1942): 12–33, at 16; K. L. Little, “Loudon Square—A Community Survey II,” *Sociological Review* 34, nos. 3–4 (1942), 119–46, at 120, 123; Little, *Negroes in Britain*, 87–88, 108–13.

⁷⁷ Waters, ““Dark Strangers,” 224–25.

⁷⁸ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952; repr., New York, 2008), 109, 111.

sociological studies, his conclusions were strongly refuted by local activists.⁷⁹ Mindful of this, when Drake arrived in Cardiff, he was determined to foreground a different side to life in the area. Yet his work also shows how the racial thinking that structured external representations of and policies toward Tiger Bay's diverse residents also had an active presence within the community. Drake understood that residents were well aware of the perceived connection between race and status in the area. He saw this as having manifested itself as a "rank order based on power and prestige *vis-a-vis* [*sic*] the larger white community," something that Drake suggested mirrored the caste system as he understood it in the US South.⁸⁰ It was the Arab and West Indian communities, the two largest minority groups, that Drake realized were competing for superiority in Cardiff. However, whereas in colonial societies like Jamaica, the primary focus was on the relative lightness of skin pigmentation, in postwar Tiger Bay, the wider anxieties over interracial sex and the events around Maindy Road barracks in particular had placed its half caste residents at the bottom of the community's racial hierarchy.⁸¹

"Half castes" were undisputed "symbols of immorality," Drake recorded in his notes.⁸² This situation was undoubtedly shaped by concerns in the media and among some politicians. But it was in Drake's view exacerbated by high male mobility rates and the weakening of family structures, which reinforced stereotypes about the sex lives of Black residents of the area.⁸³ In this instance Drake was likely influenced by the arguments made in relation to the American context by E. Franklin Frazier, whose 1939 study *The Negro Family in the United States* has been widely criticized by historians for a pathologizing focus on the notion of Black family instability.⁸⁴ In Tiger Bay, Drake did recognize that the specific nature of a child's heritage was regarded as critical. One white woman was reportedly indignant at hearing that her son was being bullied at school for having a Black father when in fact his father was Arab.⁸⁵ Those who were themselves of mixed ethnicity, meanwhile, found that they were often the recipients of abuse from all sides. One of Drake's interviewees, Roger Burnham, who was born in the early 1900s to a Black seaman from St. Vincent in the Caribbean and a mixed-ethnicity woman from Southampton, and was married to a local white woman, found that as soon as he left Tiger Bay, he was regularly subject to cries of "look at the black man," or "look at the nigger" as he passed by on the street.⁸⁶ The geographic nature of racial discrimination and the extent to which ethnic minority residents were much more visible if they traveled to central Cardiff was also emphasized by a Somalian man who was photographed

⁷⁹ Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire*, 9.

⁸⁰ St. Clair Drake, "The Cardiff Race Relations Situation," Summary of Dissertation, 6/60, DP, NYPL-SC; Gaines, "Scholar-Activist St. Clair Drake," 82.

⁸¹ Drake, "The Cardiff Race Relations Situation," Summary of Dissertation, 6/60, DP, NYPL-SC. For a discussion of the Jamaican "pigmentocracy" see Fernando Henriques, *Family and Colour in Jamaica* (London, 1968), 45–46, 50–69.

⁸² Drake, "The Cardiff Race Relations Situation," Summary of Dissertation, DP, NYPL-SC.

⁸³ Drake, "The Cardiff Race Relations Situation," Summary of Dissertation, DP, NYPL-SC.

⁸⁴ Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States*; Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty* (1997; repr., New York, 2017), 15–16.

⁸⁵ Little, "Loudon Square—A Community Survey II," 141. See also Collins, *Coloured Minorities*, 218.

⁸⁶ Roger Burnham, as quoted in St. Clair Drake, Profile, BE, Notes and Interviews with Local Figures, 5/62, DP, NYPL-SC.

by the English documentary photographer Bert Hardy in 1950. "If I go up into town, say to the pictures," the man explained, "everyone looks at me as if I left some buttons undone;" leaving the confines of Tiger Bay meant having to come into contact with people who behave as though "they believe we've got horns under our hats."⁸⁷ But Burnham found that within Tiger Bay his mixed ethnicity meant that those with darker skins, who were more attuned to the nuances of the area's racial hierarchy, also subjected him to abuse. As Drake overheard one Black resident saying, "these half castes could make something of themselves if they had any initiative." For Burnham, "West Indians here look down on people who are not full West Indian. You know," he confided in Drake, "I wish I was one thing or the other. It would be better to be all West Indian or all White."⁸⁸

There was a messiness to the way in which Tiger Bay residents worked through this kind of racial thinking, something exemplified by another of Drake's interviewees. Mrs. Edwards was the Black proprietor of a Tiger Bay boarding house who had been born in Britain in the early 1900s to a West Indian father and a Black British mother. Prior to the Second World War, such boarding houses were generally segregated along ethnic lines, with particular establishments catering for Arabs, Indians, Somalis or, as they were then called, "Negroes." Edwards's establishment, by contrast, placed no restrictions on who would be accommodated.⁸⁹ In her interview with Drake, Edwards described herself as "all coloured and proud of it," and claimed to particularly identify with the local West Indian community. She was likewise explicit about the racism that "non-white" people experienced in Cardiff. "The Welsh people here don't like blacks," she explained. "They are taught young, too. The mothers tell the children [that] when they're bad the black man will get them if they don't behave." Reinforcing the emphasis placed on the politics of geography by both Burnham and Bert Hardy's anonymous Somalian subject, Edwards explained that as soon as you left the area, people were liable to nudge each other when you passed by and say, "there goes a black" or "there goes a dardy."⁹⁰ And there was also a class dynamic to Edwards's understanding of the city's racial politics. She was, for example, critical of the white women who were married to Black or Arab men, whom she noticed never seemed to go anywhere with their husbands. The consensus, Edwards argued, was that such women were ashamed of their partners; they wanted "money, but not the man." In spite of her nuanced dissection of the way in which racism was perpetuated from generation to generation in Cardiff, however, and

⁸⁷ As quoted in "Down the Bay," *Picture Post*, 22 April 1950, 16. On the importance of geography to Black or mixed ethnicity experiences of cities, see Caballero and Aspinall, *Mixed Race Britain*, 182; Paul Gilroy, *Black Britain: A Photographic History* (London, 2007), 97–98, 107.

⁸⁸ Anonymous testimony, as quoted in St. Clair Drake, Field notes, BE, "Tiger Bay, a Mixed Ethnic Settlement in Cardiff, Wales," 8/60; Roger Burnham, as quoted in Drake, Profile, Field notes, BE, Notes and Interviews with Local Figures, 5/62, DP, NYPL-SC.

⁸⁹ St. Clair Drake, Field notes, BE, notes of an interview with the Edwards Family, Notes and Interview with Local Figures, 5/62, DP, NYPL-SC. On ethnic segregation of prewar Cardiff boarding houses, see Evans, "Regulating the Army Reserve," 71.

⁹⁰ Drake, Field notes, BE, Notes of an interview with the Edwards Family, Notes and Interviews with Local Figures, 5/62, DP, NYPL-SC. This was echoed by Sydney Collins's 1957 Cardiff report, in which he pointed out that Black students at the city's university were treated differently than the ethnic minority community of Tiger Bay, and indeed were often warned by white residents not to enter the area. Collins, *Coloured Minorities*, 117.

her ownership of one of the few ethnically mixed boarding houses in Tiger Bay, Edwards reserved her most jarring criticism for the neighborhood's Arab community. Edwards complained about the noise this community made during a recent festival, that they kept goats by the Glamorganshire Canal, and had even tried to keep them in the park until a warden had stopped them. "Dirty old Arabs," she exclaimed; "they're so dirty!"⁹¹

While she accused Arabs of being "dirty," elsewhere in her conversation with Drake Edwards pivoted to maternal, if undoubtedly patronizing language to describe the area's Somalian population. This juxtaposed with the long-standing suspicion of Somalian migrants on the part of the British authorities, who suspected that Somalian seamen were particularly adept at "slipping over the frontier" at the French port of Djibouti and from there "drifting" via Marseilles to South Shields or Cardiff.⁹² Edwards's views on Somalians, in contrast, echoed the well-worn colonial motif that characterized "inferior races" as being fundamentally docile and childlike in nature.⁹³ "They're very nice, aren't they?," she mused, her question perhaps betraying a lack of confidence in her own ability to find the right language; "just like big children, aren't they?" In his field notes, Drake suggested that Edwards's views on Tiger Bay's Arab population should be understood in class terms, as an example of class hostility toward a group that, in contrast to the local Somalian community, were perceived as a source of competition for social and economic capital. But this was also inseparable from what Drake had elsewhere highlighted as Tiger Bay's racialized "rank order." Edwards characterized Arabs as being both "cunning" and hypocritical for their supposed willingness to smoke cigarettes and eat *haram* (forbidden) foods as soon as the *shaykh* was out of sight. On being told that a local Black woman was in the process of converting to Islam, which, thanks to the presence of a large Yemeni population, was perhaps particularly associated with perceptions of Arabs, Edwards responded by describing her as a "little fool."⁹⁴

Drake found this kind of discourse to be a pervasive feature of life in Tiger Bay. He overheard Edwards's son tell his mother that she would be better off not visiting Africa because she was "black enough already."⁹⁵ He met a West Indian cook who recounted a story about a group of Arabs who supposedly tried to cook a lamb with its bowels still inside as evidence of a lack of hygiene among "those dirty Muslims," and the warden of Tiger Bay's Colonial Centre who was reluctant to admit people of mixed ethnicity because they did not "take discipline." African seamen were commonly referred to as "cannibals," "heathens," or "savages."⁹⁶ While Drake suggested such discourse could have been an attempt to satirize the nature of racial thinking, it is clear that racism was also a way for certain sections

⁹¹ Drake, Edwards Family, 5/62, DP, NYPL-SC.

⁹² Laura Tabili, *Global Migrants, Local Culture: Natives and Newcomers in Provincial England, 1841–1939* (Basingstoke, 2011), 230.

⁹³ Ralph Bunche, *A Word View of Race* (1936; repr., New York, 1968), 44.

⁹⁴ Drake, Field notes, BE, Notes of an interview with the Edwards Family, Notes and Interviews with Local Figures, 5/62, DP, NYPL-SC.

⁹⁵ Drake, Field notes, BE, Notes of an interview with the Edwards Family, Notes and Interviews with Local Figures, 5/62, DP, NYPL-SC.

⁹⁶ Descriptions of Africans and Arabs as quoted in Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, p. 360, 375, DP, NYPL-SC; description of "half castes" as quoted in St. Clair Drake, Field notes, BE, Notes and Interviews with Local Figures, 5/62, DP, NYPL-SC.

of the community to reinforce what they saw as their superior position within Tiger Bay's racial hierarchy. From the postwar moral panic around Maindy Barracks and the views of Chief Constable Wilson over a period of more than twenty-five years to the newspaper exposés on Britain's "half-caste" problem and a growing literature produced by white sociologists of "race relations," ideas about race structured how Tiger Bay was viewed by white society. But beyond the control of figures like Wilson and the view of journalists from either side of the Atlantic, developments in the community's political and particularly its social life were beginning to undermine the reach of such ideas. The racial fictions that circulated in the empire exerted a powerful influence in postwar Tiger Bay. It is at the level of everyday politics and leisure that one can see how residents were beginning to feel out the practicalities of multicultural living. This was what Drake referred to as the metropolis within the ghetto, something that in his view, with regards to the people he encountered in the South Side of Chicago, represented concrete evidence of a particular kind of freedom—the "freedom to erect a community in their own image."⁹⁷

"A SCENE OF BRILLIANT COLOUR": THE TIGER BAY METROPOLIS

Drake's arrival in Tiger Bay coincided with a period of political fragmentation in the area. If race was an everyday feature of life in Tiger Bay, this dovetailed with wider tensions, particularly between Arab residents and those Black sections of the population who regarded their long-standing presence in the area as giving them a more authentic claim to the community. "Why can't darkies stick together like the Arabs?," one Black activist complained to Drake. "They've come here since we did, and now look, they've got all the stores. What have we darkies got? Nothing!"⁹⁸ Organizations such as the Colonial Defence Association, which had been co-established in 1927 by Guyanese seaman and Communist organizer Harry O'Connell and which had played a leading role in marshalling community resistance to the Aliens Orders of the 1920s, were by the late 1940s in a state of decline.⁹⁹ O'Connell had arrived in Cardiff in 1910 and joined the Communist Party in the aftermath of the 1919 race riots.¹⁰⁰ By the early 1930s, O'Connell's status was such that he was referred to in the pages of the *Negro Worker* newspaper as the "leader of the colonial seamen" in Britain.¹⁰¹ Indeed, one associate remembered him as "a very fine seaman comrade," a "totally devoted and energetic Communist of the finest quality," though O'Connell's unwillingness to depart from the party line and, in particular, his refusal to cede any primacy to race over class struggles, was a source of discord among his peers.¹⁰² In the late 1930s, O'Connell fell out with the moderate campaign group the League of Coloured Peoples, which was formed by the Jamaican physician Harold Moody in London in 1931 and for a

⁹⁷ Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 115.

⁹⁸ Anonymous activist as quoted in Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, pp. 374–75, DP, NYPL-SC.

⁹⁹ Little, *Negroes in Britain*, 75.

¹⁰⁰ Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism: The Communist International, Africa and the Diaspora, 1919–1939* (Trenton, 2013), 262; David Featherstone, "Harry O'Connell, Maritime Labour and the Racialised Politics of Place," *Race & Class* 57, no. 3 (2016): 71–87, at 75.

¹⁰¹ As quoted in Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism*, 262.

¹⁰² Mr. Elliott, letter to Marika Sherwood, c. 1990 (shared with the author by Marika Sherwood).

brief period was also a gaining a foothold in Tiger Bay.¹⁰³ During his sojourn in Britain, Drake had himself worked with the league's children committee, which was helping to provide support for some fifty mixed-race children across the country.¹⁰⁴ Moody personally lobbied the British government to treat those children fathered by Black troops as "wartime casualties."¹⁰⁵ To the mind of O'Connell, however, Moody was a "misleader" whose "race-mindedness" was such he thought Black people "could never do anything wrong."¹⁰⁶ By 1947, O'Connell's once-powerful Defence Association had become little more than a "paper organization."¹⁰⁷ And for O'Connell, in spite of the fact that in the late 1930s he had been a vocal advocate for the "complete unification of all the coloured peoples of Britain," a key reason was the difficulty he purportedly encountered in working with the local Arab community.¹⁰⁸ There was resentment toward the Yemeni *shaykh*, Abdullah Ali al-Hakimi, who was seen to be suspiciously willing to maintain a close proximity to the British state. This was something that echoed earlier accusations that Yemeni *muqaddams* (community leaders who often functioned as labor agents-cum-money lenders) had privileged relationships with British shipowners, which helped ensure that Yemeni seamen often got greater access to well-paid work in the port city of Aden, which had been annexed from the rest of Yemen by Britain in 1839.¹⁰⁹ For O'Connell, however, the issue with Cardiff's Arab community was more straightforward: it was simply "hard to understand what [they] are really thinking."¹¹⁰

There were more than 2,000 Muslims in Tiger Bay, though it was the 700-strong Yemeni Sufi community that, by the late 1940s, exercised the most political power.¹¹¹ And al-Hakimi was undoubtedly the prime mover in this respect. He had arrived in Britain in 1936 from Aden and played a key role in the establishment at 17–19 Peel Street of the Cardiff mosque, the first purpose-build mosque in Wales. To Drake, who had earlier encountered Muslim groups in 1930s Chicago, where the newly established Nation of Islam had a base, al-Hakimi came across as "a venerable gentleman" as he walked around Tiger Bay dressed in a green turban and white robe.¹¹² Indeed, as Humayun Ansari has shown, al-Hakimi was well-educated and maintained strong business connections in Aden.¹¹³ Local resentment at his apparent

¹⁰³ Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley, 2015), 42; Fryer, *Staying Power*, 339; Drake, "The 'Colour Problem' in Britain," 203; Carby, *Imperial Intimacies*, 89–90.

¹⁰⁴ Drake, "A Report on the Brown Britishers," 174.

¹⁰⁵ Bland, *Britain's "Brown Babies"*, 55.

¹⁰⁶ O'Connell, as quoted in Drake, Field notes, BE, Cardiff Diary and Notes, 4/62, DP, NYPL-SC. See also Featherstone, "Harry O'Connell," 80–81.

¹⁰⁷ As quoted in Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, p. 402, DP, NYPL-SC. By the time Drake had written up his dissertation, he was referring to O'Connell and Sheppard by the pseudonyms "Larry" and "Jack" respectively.

¹⁰⁸ O'Connell, as quoted in Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism*, 288.

¹⁰⁹ Humayun Ansari, *The Infidel Within: Muslims in Britain since 1800* (London, 2004), 37–38.

¹¹⁰ O'Connell, as quoted in Drake, draft Ph dissertation, 8-11/60, p. 400, DP, NYPL-SC; Drake, Field notes, BE, Cardiff Diary and Notes, 3/62, DP, NYPL-SC.

¹¹¹ Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, pp. 330, 340, DP, NYPL-SC.

¹¹² Drake, draft Ph.D. dissertation, 8-11/60, p. 336, DP, NYPL-SC. For more on al-Hakimi, see Ansari, *The Infidel Within*, 137–38. On Drake's experience with Islam in Chicago, see Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, p. 343, DP, NYPL-SC. See also Reed, *The Rise of Chicago's Black Metropolis*, 197–98.

¹¹³ Ansari, *The Infidel Within*, 138.

influence stemmed from the speed at which he was able to win governmental support for the rebuilding of the Cardiff mosque after it was severely damaged by the German blitz in January 1941.¹¹⁴ First, al-Hakimi secured planning permission for a temporary wooden structure on the same site, which was opened in July 1943. Then, with the help of both Colonial Office and British Council funds, he gained permission for a much more expansive, permanent structure that was designed by the Cardiff architect Osborne V. Webb and dedicated in September 1947. The new building was bookended on either side by rows of terraced houses, had windows carved in the shape of traditional minarets, two small domes and external walls painted light yellow; the green flag of Islam, adorned with white Arabic letters, hung over the entrance.¹¹⁵ According to the *Picture Post*, at the mosque's dedication ceremony processions of worshippers carried flags and banners and recited prayers as they went. Tea was distributed to the hundreds of local residents who had gathered to hear the *shaykh* deliver an open-air address. Inside the mosque, scores of people wearing flame-red or brilliant-green turbans sat bare-footed on "wonderful Eastern carpets of beautiful colours." The event was summarized by the *Post* as "a scene of brilliant colour," and was attended by dignitaries, including the Lord Mayors of Cardiff, Barry, and Newport, and Hafiz Wahba, the Saudi Arabian ambassador to Britain.¹¹⁶

There is an unmistakable sense of orientalism to the *Post's* reportage of what was understood to be the exoticness of a mosque built amid the run-down streets of working-class Cardiff. And given the spectacle of the mosque's dedication, as well as the financial support al-Hakimi was able to attract, it was inevitable that long-standing local activists like O'Connell also took notice. Belying Kenneth Little's assumption that the Arab community was largely apolitical, it is clear that al-Hakimi was an effective political operator with "painstakingly cultivated connections."¹¹⁷ At the end of an interview Drake conducted with al-Hakimi, for example, and perhaps mindful of the impact that the work of an American academic could have, al-Hakimi emphasized that he "would like the professor to know that the Muslims in Cardiff have been accorded every courtesy and that the government and the people have been very kind to them."¹¹⁸ Al-Hakimi had played an important role in the Islamization of the seafaring Muslim community in Cardiff and in making Islamic celebrations a visible part of public life.¹¹⁹ In Drake's analysis, his broader influence was bound up with Tiger Bay's racial hierarchy, and the extent to which Arabs were aware that their relatively light skin gave them "certain advantages in the British eyes."¹²⁰ For others, however, the reasons the British were so willing to support Cardiff's Arab population were more about *realpolitik* and the British government's determination to outstrip competition from the United States by

¹¹⁴ Ansari, 139.

¹¹⁵ Moon, "Little Negro Community in Britain," 11; "Britain's Moslems Get a Handsome New Mosque," *Picture Post*, 25 September 1943, 17.

¹¹⁶ "Britain's Moslems Get a Handsome New Mosque," 17–19.

¹¹⁷ Ansari, *The Infidel Within*, 141.

¹¹⁸ Abdullah Ali al-Hakimi, as quoted in Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, pp. 342–43, DP, NYPL-SC.

¹¹⁹ Sophie Gilliat-Ray, *Muslims in Britain: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2010), 35.

¹²⁰ Drake, Field notes, BE, Drake Notes, 1/63, DP, NYPL-SC. There are parallels here between the status of Arabs and the position of Indians in the imperial era. See Thomas Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley, 1997).

cultivating tactical relations with oil-rich states in the Middle East. Without the oil dynamic, one observer reflected, “them big wigs wouldn’t even look at those damned black faces.”¹²¹

While oil may have been a factor, it is perhaps more likely the authorities viewed al-Hakimi as a “representative” community leader who could be a useful ally in addressing issues such as rising unemployment among Muslim seafarers. Whatever the nature of the politicking behind the scenes, the reopening of the Cardiff mosque was a significant moment. It showed a willingness on behalf of the state to offer both financial and political support to a section of the ethnic minority population in a manner that would only begin to become commonplace in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s.¹²² But the extravagance of the dedication ceremony also masked increasing divisions within the Muslim community itself. These were primarily manifest with disputes between Tiger Bay’s Arab population and the some 200 permanently domiciled Somalis who also resided in the neighborhood. As Laura Tabili’s work on South Shields has shown, once in Britain the Muslim populations who resided in port cities were often treated by the authorities as a monolithic whole—in spite of the fact these populations came from regions as diverse as the Arabian peninsula, Somaliland, and Egypt, and in spite of the fact not every migrant from these areas was necessarily a practicing Muslim.¹²³ To Drake’s eyes, the divisions among Tiger Bay’s Muslim population stemmed primarily from the ethnic differences between Arabs and Somalis. While both spoke Arabic, for example, for Somalis this was primarily a ritual rather than a vernacular language, which Drake observed could lead to misunderstandings. There were also differences in religious interpretations, something that came to a head over the decision to erect the new Peel Street mosque with financial assistance from the British state. Tualla Muhammad, was born in 1893 in Berbera, the port city and one-time capital of Somaliland, worked as a ship’s fireman and was an active player in the Somali Youth League in Cardiff, which was established in 1943 to agitate for Somalian independence. He argued that money from “unbelievers” should never have been used to construct an Islamic building.¹²⁴ The dispute was eventually mediated by an Islamic scholar at Cairo University, whose conclusion was clear-cut: “since the infidel’s bombs had destroyed the mosque, let the infidels rebuild it.”¹²⁵

In Drake’s view, these disputes were really about the extent to which the shifting nature of the postwar geopolitical climate was increasingly also being played out in microcosm in the one-square-mile neighborhood of Tiger Bay. The willingness of the Arab community to openly embrace the British state, he argued, was connected to the role that Britain had begun to play in opposing Zionist expansion into Palestine at the outbreak of the 1947–1949 Arab–Israeli War. Tiger Bay’s Somalian political leadership, in contrast, was focused on campaigning for the removal of Italy from

¹²¹ Anonymous, as quoted in Drake, draft dissertation, 8-9/60, p. 336, DP, NYPL-SC.

¹²² Stephen Brooke, “Space, Emotions and the Everyday: The Affective Ecology of 1980s London,” *Twentieth Century British History* 28, no. 1 (2017): 110–42.

¹²³ Tabili, *Global Migrants, Local Culture*, 206–7.

¹²⁴ See Medal Card of Mohammed, Tualla, Records of the Board of Trade, c. 1914–25, BT 351/1/98842, TNA.

¹²⁵ Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, pp. 346–47, DP, NYPL-SC; Drake, Field notes, BE, Drake Notes, 1/63, DP, NYPL-SC.

any administrative influence on its former colony in Somaliland, as well as the more radical platform for the formation of an independent Greater Somalia that would encompass the Somalian populations in neighboring Kenya and Ethiopia.¹²⁶ Britain's imperial status and the increasingly powerful forces of postwar anticolonialism were, in other words, effectively pulling Tiger Bay's Muslim community in separate directions.¹²⁷ Arabs gravitated toward strategic support for the British as the colonial power apparently best placed to halt the partition of Palestine and the subsequent displacement of more than 720,000 Palestinian people. But for Tualla Muhammad and other Somali activists, it meant an emphasis on both the immediate political goal of removing the defeated colonial power of Italy from the region, alongside the more ambitious project of Somalian nationalism. The latter was a twin approach captured by the slogans held aloft on banners by those members of the Somali Youth League who took part in Cardiff's May Day parade of 1948: "no return of the colonies to Italy," "down with political expediency," "Somalis demand a united Somalia," and "Somalia *ha nolato*—long live freedom."¹²⁸

It is unclear whether these concerns resonated more generally in Tiger Bay, beyond particularly committed individuals like O'Connell, al-Hakimi, and Muhammad. Al-Hakimi's position as *shaykh* certainly gave him a particularly prominent presence in the lives of visiting Arab seamen. As Drake observed, he was not only a spiritual leader. He also "relates his followers to the great unknown 'white world' of Britain; he keeps their money while they are away; he gets them jobs when they need them; he gets them out of trouble when they are in it."¹²⁹ But he was also someone who, during his interview with Drake, broke off the conversation when a news report about the Palestinian conflict came on the wireless and paced silently around the room. Similarly, while in the late 1940s O'Connell fought campaigns against the discriminatory practices of the shipping companies, he also hung a chrome portrait of Stalin on his dining room wall and, by his own admission, spent a good deal of time "smashing up" those organizations he deemed to be Trotskyist or otherwise politically "impure."¹³⁰ In many ways, as was the case among the Black students and intellectuals that dominated anticolonial politics in London at this time, the rivalries between political organizations were about different activists' competing visions of what "winning the peace" should look like in South Wales and across Britain, but primarily in relation to the global political climate.¹³¹ These

¹²⁶ See Cedric Barnes, "The Somali Youth League, Ethiopian Somalis and the Greater Somali Idea, c. 1946–48," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1 no. 2 (2007): 277–91. See also Ioan M. Lewis, *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland: Culture, History and Society* (London, 2008).

¹²⁷ See Harper, *Underground Asia*.

¹²⁸ Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, pp. 342–43, 348–49, DP, NYPL-SC; Sherwood, "Racism and Resistance," 64; Somalian political slogans as quoted in Drake, Field notes, BE, Drake Notes, 1/63, DP, NYPL-SC. For context on the partition of Palestine and the hostility of the Labour government toward the Zionist cause, see Rashid Khalidi, *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonial Conquest and Resistance* (London, 2020), 58, 62, 72; Jeffrey Herf, *Israel's Moment: International Support for and Opposition to Establishing the Jewish State, 1945–1949* (Cambridge, 2022), 2, 8.

¹²⁹ Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, p. 334, DP, NYPL-SC.

¹³⁰ Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, p. 397, DP, NYPL-SC; O'Connell, as quoted in Drake, Field notes, BE, Notes and Interviews with Local Figures, 5/62, DP, NYPL-SC. On O'Connell's and the Communist Party, see Jan Valtin, *Out of the Night* (New York, 1941), 329–30; Featherstone, "Harry O'Connell," 81.

¹³¹ Matera, *Black London*, 18–19.

were political aspirations, however, and as such they were not necessarily rooted in the everyday rhythms of life in Tiger Bay. For most people, Drake observed, day-to-day life did not mean “smashing” Trotskyist organizations. Rather, it was the area’s leisure scene that dominated most people’s time. And to Drake’s mind this generally meant “sitting around in the eating rooms of the boarding houses, drinking ... and participating in the gambling which goes on continuously on the streets and at the bookies.”¹³²

It is the trajectory of Alan Sheppard, a Guyanese contemporary of Harry O’Connell, seaman and prominent local organizer, who arguably embodied this tension between the political and the social. Sheppard had arrived in Tiger Bay in the early 1920s as a fully fledged activist, having previously been imprisoned for “stirring up the natives” in Portuguese Mozambique. With his “seedy” clothing and weather-beaten cap, his was the polar opposite of the near-regal image projected by *shaykh* al-Hakimi.¹³³ To the mind of Drake, Sheppard’s bombastic style of speaking and tendency to wander around with socialist newspapers tucked under his arm gave him all the trappings of a classic “proletarian intellectual.” Alongside O’Connell, Sheppard had been regarded as one of the elite Black Communists in Cardiff, but had been expelled from the party in 1945 as a result of what was identified as his Trotskyist tendencies.¹³⁴ His politics were certainly distinguished by a commitment to racial and class-based struggles, and Sheppard gravitated particularly to the Pan-Africanism of Marcus Garvey, which was being developed by Black intellectuals like the Trinidadian writer C. L. R. James in dialogue with the work of Trotsky.¹³⁵ But having been involved in the campaigns against the implementation of the Aliens Acts of the 1920s, and while continuing to maintain some connection to the largely dormant Colonial Defence Association in the 1940s, his expulsion from the Communist Party moved Sheppard toward less overtly political activity. He ran a newspaper shop, which acted as a front for his illegal bookmaking business prior to the legalizing of betting shops in 1961. And he became the key player in the running of the Coloured International Athletic Club, which began life as a cricket club but under Sheppard’s guidance expanded to include rugby, athletics, table tennis, and other activities. The club had a formal membership of around fifty, the vast majority of whom were men under the age of thirty.¹³⁶

The transient nature of life in a sailor town was a barrier to sustained political mobilization, beyond moments of crisis like the 1919 riots or the Aliens Acts of the next decade.¹³⁷ As one Tiger Bay resident explained to Drake, “going to sea helps to bring down the organisations here. You don’t know what happens when

¹³² Drake, Field notes, BE, Drake Notes, 1/63, DP, NYPL-SC.

¹³³ Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, p. 475, DP, NYPL-SC.

¹³⁴ Sherwood, “Racism and Resistance,” 63.

¹³⁵ See Stephen Howe, “C. L. R. James—Visions of History, Visions of Britain,” in *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*, ed. Bill Schwarz (Manchester, 2003), 153–74; John Williams, *C. L. R. James: A Life Beyond the Boundary* (London, 2022).

¹³⁶ Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, pp. 395–409, DP, NYPL-SC; St. Clair Drake, Notes and Interviews with Local Figures, 5/62, DP, NYPL-SC. See also Peter Fryer, *Staying Power*, 342–57.

¹³⁷ See, for example, Brad Beaven, Karl Bell, and Robert James, introduction to *Port Towns and Urban Cultures: International Histories of the Waterfront, c. 1700–2000*, ed. Brad Beaven, Karl Bell, and Robert James (Basingstoke, 2016).

you're away. And when you're here you're just apt to have a good time."¹³⁸ The leisure scene was particularly important to visiting seamen who, though flush with the earnings from their most recent job at sea, did not want to venture too far from their lodgings in local boarding houses because of the racism that faced ethnic minorities in central Cardiff. Locally, the options available included the Sailors Institutes, the Bute Town Social and Welfare Club, and the after-hours parties that took place above the shops and pubs of Bute Street. There were also the scores of local cafés which, because of their long opening hours, relative affordability, and varied services, were perhaps most pervasive sites of sociability in Tiger Bay.¹³⁹

With his proprietorship of one of the two illegal bookmakers in Tiger Bay, Alan Sheppard was a part of this underground scene. On one occasion, Drake visited Sheppard's premises in the hope of conducting an interview with him, only to find him relaying the racing results through a window.¹⁴⁰ Although the Cardiff authorities were less draconian in the prosecution of illegal bookmaking than were their counterparts in other parts of the country, their focus on Tiger Bay tied into longstanding puritanical narratives in Britain that connected gambling and vice to perceptions of "un-Christian" behavior in the colonies.¹⁴¹ Sheppard's activities stood in contrast to those who, like his contemporary Harry O'Connell, understood their politics in puritanical terms. "How can a gambler win anybody's respect?," one observer asked of Sheppard. "I know he has to live, and ... at least he isn't selling women, and that's to his credit. But you can't win respect if you're down there in the pig pen."¹⁴² Sheppard's club was in keeping with his wider aura of disreputability. It was based in a ramshackle building whose entrance was down a poorly lit alleyway. "A faded, inconspicuous, sign on the entrance [announced] the nature of the enterprise." On being taken to the clubhouse for the first time, one visitor was heard to remark: "[M]y God, what a dive. What are we going into? Is it safe?"¹⁴³

It is clear from his field notes that Drake spent a good deal of time socializing with Sheppard and the regulars at the club. He later characterized his work in Cardiff as being an attempt at putting into practice his own "brand of Mass Observation," the British social research initiative established in 1937 that famously attempted to map an "anthropology of ourselves."¹⁴⁴ Drake perhaps had in mind Mass Observation's *The Pub and the People*, which was published four years before his arrival in Britain. While it differed in methodological approach, it similarly emphasized the importance of everyday patterns of sociability in a particular working-class locale.¹⁴⁵ The dilapidated nature of the clubhouse may also have reminded Drake of the sensibility within which he had been immersed in Chicago's South Side. Yet

¹³⁸ Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, p. 378, DP, NYPL-SC.

¹³⁹ Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, pp. 482–84, DP, NYPL-SC; St. Clair Drake, Field notes, BE, "The Brown Baby Problem," 1/61, DP, NYPL-SC. See also Simon Jenkins, "Inherent Vice? Maltese Men and the Organization of Prostitution in Interwar Cardiff," *Journal of Social History* 49, no. 4 (2016): 928–58.

¹⁴⁰ Drake, Field notes, BE, Notes and Interviews with Local Figures, 5/62, DP, NYPL-SC.

¹⁴¹ Carl Chinn, *Better Betting with a Decent Feller: A Social History of Bookmaking* (London, 2004), 188–89.

¹⁴² Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, p. 416, DP, NYPL-SC.

¹⁴³ Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, pp. 471, 473, DP, NYPL-SC.

¹⁴⁴ Drake, "A Report on the Brown Britishers," 174.

¹⁴⁵ Mass Observation, *The Pub and the People* (1943: repr., London, 1987).

there were also elements of what took place inside that provided a contrast to the much more rigid nature of the United States color line.

Firstly, the Coloured International Athletic Club was a multicultural endeavor. It brought together various cliques in Tiger Bay, but particularly an older generation of Caribbean men like Sheppard and a “younger set” who were primarily British-born and often of mixed ethnicity.¹⁴⁶ To some degree, the clubhouse was a shared space, though like much of Drake’s ethnographic focus in Cardiff, it was one dominated by men. Drake also noticed that there also seemed to be a shift in the balance of power, taking place away from Sheppard and toward the club’s younger, mixed-race members who were apparently intent on turning the club into a more respectable enterprise. And this meant the younger generation gravitating not toward the Pan-Africanism favored by Sheppard, the orthodox Communism of O’Connell, or the anticolonial nationalism of the Somalian Tualla Muhammad, but toward a much more conservative, status-orientated emphasis that Drake described as a form of “British steadiness.”¹⁴⁷ This was doubtless influenced by the pervasiveness of the racial stereotypes around “half castes,” and a concurrent desire to upend them by foregrounding dominant perceptions of white “respectability.” Drake may well also have been reminded of the emphasis that was placed among sections of Chicago’s South Side on the trappings of “bourgeois status,” which were often deployed as a means of introducing distinctions between long-time residents of the area and new arrivals from the “Deep South.”¹⁴⁸ But it is more likely that the younger set’s privileging of “steadiness” was an echo of the focus on status that could commonly be found in the British West Indies where, as Anne Spry Rush has shown, and as Stuart Hall has recalled of his own upbringing in Jamaica, middle-class signifiers of respectability were a key element in attempts to renegotiate more inclusive definitions of Britishness.¹⁴⁹ However, the younger set’s focus on “British steadiness” was perhaps also a reflection of the extent to which Tiger Bay’s racial hierarchy seemed at times to be implicitly reinforced by an older generation of activists who, like Sheppard, bore the scars induced by decades of political campaigning. “These half-castes just haven’t learned how to cooperate with anybody,” Sheppard confided in Drake, as the influence of the club’s younger set increased. “They weren’t supposed to go off and do anything on their own.”¹⁵⁰

What took place at the Coloured International Athletic Club was in many ways indicative of the unruly nature of Tiger Bay’s multicultural metropolis. The club brought together different segments of the community, but to Drake’s eyes, as the influence of the mixed-race younger set grew, it was also a space where Tiger Bay’s established racial hierarchy was in the process of being negotiated. More than this, the club was run by a Caribbean Marxist who sought to encourage members to read up on the politics of Pan-Africanism but whose influence was being superseded

¹⁴⁶ Drake borrowed the term *younger set* from Little. See Little, “Loudon Square—A Community Survey II,” 133.

¹⁴⁷ St. Clair Drake, profile of Bill Douglas, BE, “The Brown Baby Problem,” 1/61, DP, NYPL-SC.

¹⁴⁸ Baldwin, *Chicago’s New Negroes*, 28–29.

¹⁴⁹ Rush, *Bonds of Empire*; Hall, *Familiar Stranger*, 117; Kieran Connell, *Black Handsworth: Race in 1980s Britain* (Berkeley, 2019), 119–56.

¹⁵⁰ Sheppard, as quoted in Clair Drake, Field notes, BE, Notes and Interviews with Local Figures, 5/62, DP, NYPL-SC; Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, p. 479, DP, NYPL-SC.

by those whose worldview was concerned primarily with projecting an image of upward mobility, something that in many ways echoed the emphasis placed on imperial narratives of respectability in the Caribbean and West Africa in particular.¹⁵¹ Drake recorded a visit to the home of one prominent member of the younger set, for instance, who was born in Trinidad but had attended school in Tiger Bay in the early 1920s. Drake pointed to a framed photograph of a white teenager on a mantelpiece, at which point his host laughed. “That’s my wife’s sister’s child,” Drake was told. “He’s English! His sister is the smart one. She’s just about to *finish* secondary school!”¹⁵² While Drake observed that Sheppard was admired by the younger set for his knowledge of cricket and rugby, as well as his enthusiastic work for the organization, others functioned as more authentic success symbols in this milieu. Sheppard was described as “old fashioned,” “stern,” and “critical;” someone who “expected you to listen and not to question.” In contrast, the most important “success symbol” for the younger members of the club, the person Drake identified as embodying the “British steadiness” privileged by the younger set, was Bill Douglas (figure 1), who was born in Britain in 1917 to a West Indian father and a white mother, had attained the rank of captain in the paratrooper division during the war, and, alongside his mother, ran a local grocery shop.¹⁵³

Between 1947 and 1951 Douglas became one of the earliest “non-white” players to play for Cardiff Rugby Club, making 39 first team appearances as a prop and flanker in a period of sustained success for the team. In spring 1948, toward the end of Drake’s time in Britain and organized by an increasingly confident “younger set,” the Coloured International Athletic Club hosted a black-tie banquet to celebrate Douglas’s burgeoning success. Local members understood the event to be an historic event: “[N]ever before had any coloured group in [Tiger Bay] been hosts to a white group” on such a large scale.¹⁵⁴ The event was held not at the clubhouse but in the convention room of a city center hotel that had been rented specifically for the occasion. The Cardiff rugby club was represented by a number of white administrators and two white players, Cliff Davis and Willie Jones. Perhaps driven by these symbols of British “respectability,” there was a concurrent desire among the younger members of the club that the event be handled in a “proper fashion.” An “Anglo-Arab” member, whose skin was so light he was reportedly able to pass for white, was put in charge of publicizing the occasion. Announcements about the event were posted on local shop windows, and Sheppard volunteered to take part as the event’s master of ceremonies.¹⁵⁵

On the evening of the ceremony, Drake recorded in his diary the events as they unfolded. He entered the hotel without any of the stares or comments that might ordinarily greet an ethnic minority in central Cardiff. In the hotel lobby he spotted five white girls and two Black girls chatting with a group of four white boys. Farther on, four or five boys of mixed ethnicity were trying to set up a keg of

¹⁵¹ Rush, *Bonds of Empire*, 2; Philip Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects: An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas* (London, 2000), 95; James and Whittall, “Ambiguity and Imprint,” 168.

¹⁵² As quoted in Drake, draft dissertation, 8-11/60, p. 384, DR, NYPL-SC.

¹⁵³ Observations of Sheppard as quoted in Sherwood, “Racism and Resistance,” 63; Drake, profile of Bill Douglas, BE, “The Brown Baby Problem,” 1/61, DR, NYPL-SC.

¹⁵⁴ Drake, Field notes, BE, Notes and Interviews with Local Figures, 5/62, DR, NYPL-SC.

¹⁵⁵ Drake, Field notes, BE, Notes and Interviews with Local Figures, 5/62, DR, NYPL-SC.



Figure 1—Bill Douglas (1949), middle row, second from left. Photograph courtesy of Cardiff Rugby Museum and the family of Bleddyn Williams.

beer. Sheppard had also made an effort to make himself presentable. His “seedy clothing” had been replaced with a newly pressed suit, and he had been to the barber for a haircut and a shave. Prior to the guests’ arriving, the members of the organizing committee reminded Sheppard that he would be expected to toast the king. “I have never toasted any bloody king and I don’t intend to now,” Drake overheard Sheppard respond, though the younger set “shushed him ... and pleaded with him not to spoil the affair.”¹⁵⁶

After the meal had been served by an all-white waiting staff, Drake noted, Sheppard began his speech. “The kind of sport a country has [is] no better than the kind of local players it produces,” he remarked. He declared himself “glad to present some boys who had grown up on cricket and rugby and who are now bringing honour to their club, their community and their city.” And he duly toasted the king, which was greeted with “knowing grins among the Tiger Bay boys at this great sacrifice of principle.” It was the short remarks of Bill Douglas himself, though, that perhaps best encapsulated the spirit of the event as envisaged by the younger set. “It’s good to see a Cardiff team with both black and white faces,” he stated. “I’m proud to represent Tiger Bay where I was born.” A three-piece ensemble was then formed by two members of the club and one of the white players from the

¹⁵⁶ Drake, Field notes, BE, Notes and Interviews with Local Figures, 5/62, DP, NYPL-SC.

Cardiff rugby team. The guests then “danced and clowned with no evidence of colour bar and self consciousness” to the American entertainer Arthur Godfrey’s 1947 hit, “Too Fat Polka.” The event finished at 10 pm, Drake observed, at which point there were handshakes all round. Then, after a brief period spent hanging around, the club’s younger set began to drift back to Tiger Bay.¹⁵⁷

CONCLUSION

After Drake’s return to Chicago in late summer 1948, some American scholars subsequently conducted research in Britain on related themes. In 1951, for instance, anthropologist Ruth Landes won a Fulbright fellowship to research Britain’s growing Black population, while in the late 1960s, Harvard graduate Janet Mendelsohn spent two years attached to the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies examining “immigrant sub-cultures” in inner-city Birmingham.¹⁵⁸ Like Drake, however, the academic impact of both women’s work in the United Kingdom was limited. Landes could not find a publisher for her 1954 manuscript “Colour in Britain,” and after publishing her work in a university magazine, Mendelsohn left academia altogether.¹⁵⁹ It was thus in other ways that the American influence on the development of a British scholarship of race relations was more properly manifest. Economically, American funders such as the Rockefeller and Ford foundations provided major grants to organizations such as the Institute of Race Relations, which was established in 1952 to examine “friction between the races of mankind” and would sponsor many of the signature sociological surveys of race in Britain.¹⁶⁰ The ideas of the Chicago school would also continue to have a significant impact on British scholarship well into the 1960s, as racialized debates about immigration became a dominant feature of the political landscape.¹⁶¹ Indeed, it was in the political domain that the US influence arguably became most acute in the context of the trauma induced by the onset of decolonization, as politicians like Enoch Powell used the fraught climate around race in America to warn about what he understood to be the consequences of the growth of Britain’s Black and South Asian populations.¹⁶²

This is not to suggest that the work of individual scholars like Drake are not of historical value. With his experience of mapping the extent of the Chicago color line, and in light of his status as one of few African American anthropologists, it is of course unsurprising that Drake was alert to the presence of racism in Tiger Bay, a racism the existence of which the British authorities continued to deny in the

¹⁵⁷ Drake, Field notes, BE, Notes and Interviews with Local Figures, 5/62, DP, NYPL-SC.

¹⁵⁸ Nava, *Visceral Cosmopolitanism*, 110; Kieran Connell, “Race, Prostitution and the New Left,” 301–40.

¹⁵⁹ Ruth Landes, “Colour in Britain: A Study in Emerging Biracialism,” unpublished manuscript, c. 1954, Reed Foundation, New York; Mica Nava, “American Anthropologist Ruth Landes and Race Relations Research in Postwar Britain: A Research File,” University of East London (2013), 7; Kieran Connell, Matthew Hilton, and Jonathan Watkins, *Janet Mendelsohn: Varna Road* (Birmingham, 2016).

¹⁶⁰ Clapson, “The American Contribution,” 265.

¹⁶¹ See, for example, John Rex and Robert Moore, *Race, Community and Conflict: A Study of Sparkbrook* (London, 1967).

¹⁶² Camilla Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge, 2013), 212–20.

postwar years.¹⁶³ Drake's work in Britain undoubtedly offers further evidence of the nature, extent, and impact of racism in mid-century, late imperial Britain. And what distinguishes his work from that of Kenneth Little and subsequent scholars in Britain's race relations industry was Drake's attentiveness to the presence of racial tensions *within* Black and minority communities. The obsessive attention that Little paid to what he understood as Tiger Bay's racial classifications was matched by a similar focus within the neighborhood. Drake's research thus helps us understand how the "culturally imperial ideologies and practices" that in different ways underpinned racial hierarchies across the empire could also inform the way in which colonial subjects viewed one another in the metropole, even as British-based activists were continuing to agitate for their own vision of what the postcolonial future should look like.¹⁶⁴

Drake decided against publishing his dissertation, he later suggested, because of ethical concerns about the detrimental impact that "dip in and out" anthropology could have on Black political struggles.¹⁶⁵ He did continue to reflect on his Cardiff findings pedagogically, including at Stanford University, where in 1969 he had been recruited to become the founding director of the university's African and African American studies program.¹⁶⁶ It was here that Drake began to work with a new generation of Black scholars, including the anthropologist, cultural theorist, and photographer Glenn Jordan, who having been mentored by Drake at Stanford in 1987 moved to Cardiff himself and made a series of interventions designed to refute what he understood to be the enduring potency of stereotypes around Tiger Bay.¹⁶⁷ Drake's own decision not to publish his doctoral work perhaps prevented him from fully developing what he understood to be its most important findings.¹⁶⁸ In the article Drake wrote about his time in Cardiff for the NAACP organ *The Crisis*, however, it was the significance of what he and Horace Cayton had earlier defined as metropolitan community life that he chose to emphasize for his readers. "American colored youngsters would feel right at home among these Cardiff young people," Drake declared, reflecting on his experiences in Tiger Bay. While "their cricket and rugby games would seem a little strange," the milieu Drake encountered in Tiger Bay's cafés, boarding houses, and in clubs like Alan Sheppard's Coloured International Athletic Club, was in his view evidence that a young Black and mixed-race

¹⁶³ Sonya O. Rose, *Which Peoples' War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain, 1939–45* (New York, 2003), 258–63; James and Whittall, "Ambiguity and Imprint," 167.

¹⁶⁴ Burton, "Rules of Thumb," 487; Matera, *Black London*, 18; Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, MA, 2003), 5. See also Perry, *London is the Place for Me*, 81; Bush, *Imperialism, Race and Resistance*, 246.

¹⁶⁵ Drake, "Reflections on Anthropology and the Black Experience," 99. Similar concerns have also been raised by a new generation of Black social scientists. See, for instance, Lisa Amanda Palmer, "'Each One Teach One': Visualising Black Intellectual Life in Handsworth Beyond the Epistemology of 'White Sociology,'" *Identities* 27, no. 1 (2020): 91–113.

¹⁶⁶ Bond, "A Social Portrait of John Gibbs St. Clair Drake," 780.

¹⁶⁷ Glenn Jordan, "On Being a Committed Intellectual: St Clair Drake and the Politics of Anthropology," *Transforming Anthropology* 1, no. 2 (1990): 15–17; Glenn Jordan, "Down the Bay": *Picture Post, Humanist Photography and Images of 1950s Cardiff* (Cardiff, 2001).

¹⁶⁸ Drake did publish an essay about the growth of Britain's ethnic minority populations in port cities following the First World War, but this largely eschewed the detailed fieldwork that forms the basis of his PhD dissertation. See St. Clair Drake, "The 'Colour Problem' in Britain: A Study in Social Definitions," *Sociological Review* 3, no. 2 (1955): 197–217.

generation in Cardiff was “no whit different” from the young African Americans that Drake knew back home: they were “young people intent on earning a living, marrying and raising their families, enjoying their athletics, their singing and dancing.”¹⁶⁹

Drake was no doubt writing for his African American audience, attuned to what he understood to be the importance of the civil rights movement making diasporic links that could stretch the coalition in support of the struggle as wide as possible.¹⁷⁰ He certainly did not engage with the weaknesses of his work in Cardiff, not least with respect to his primary focus on a largely masculine sensibility which, in keeping with other forms of Black radicalism in this period, too often had the analytical effect of “displacing women from the political realm.”¹⁷¹ The atmosphere at the Coloured International Athletic Club was in keeping with this masculine ether. And within this space there were also disagreements about political strategies. The direction in which the club was being taken by the younger set was not in keeping with Sheppard’s own definition of radical politics, and it appeared to steer clear of the more formal anticolonial maneuverings that were dividing seasoned activists like Sheppard, Harry O’Connell, and Tualla Muhammad. But what took place at the club was, Drake suggested, indicative of a broader habitus in Tiger Bay: a “determination in all the British-born colored youth ... to reject the status of ‘half caste’... and to operate as full men and women.”¹⁷² It was an example of the kind of limited, but significant freedoms that Drake saw as powering the Black metropolis: “the freedom to erect a community in their own image.”¹⁷³

It is in this sense that there is a political undercurrent to the sociability encapsulated by the notion of the metropolis. The term offers a way of getting at the historical dimensions of what sociologists have in more recent times highlighted as Britain’s “everyday multicultural” and the importance such scholars have attached to space as the backdrop to the increasing centrality of the diverse cultures of diaspora in Britain’s major cities and towns.¹⁷⁴ Such considerations will be critical as historians begin to develop an expanded perspective that examines the experience of increasing ethnic diversity in Britain, alongside the existing focus on the sociopolitical cultures of particular ethnic groups.¹⁷⁵ Certainly, *metropolis* is a term much less loaded with baggage than is *inner city*, which following its own importation to Britain from the United States became increasingly synonymous with racialized narratives of crime, poverty, violence, and disorder.¹⁷⁶ Indeed, it was perhaps the desire to show a

¹⁶⁹ Drake, “A Report on the Brown Britishers,” 189.

¹⁷⁰ Drake, “Reflections on Anthropology and the Black Experience,” 89.

¹⁷¹ Matera, *Black London*, 142.

¹⁷² Drake, “A Report on the Brown Britishers,” 174, 189.

¹⁷³ Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 115.

¹⁷⁴ Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London, 1996); Sarah Neal et al., *Lived Experiences of Multiculture: The New Social and Spatial Relations of Diversity* (Abingdon, 2018).

¹⁷⁵ Perry, *London is the Place for Me*; Connell, *Black Handsworth*; Rob Waters, *Thinking Black: Britain, 1964–1985* (Berkeley, 2019).

¹⁷⁶ There are parallels here with the terms *ghetto*, *white flight*, and *mugging*, all of which have similarly made their way into British usage from the United States. See Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (Basingstoke, 1978), 19–28; Otto Saumarez Smith, “The Inner City Crisis and the End of Urban Modernism in 1970s Britain,” *Twentieth Century British History* 27, no. 4 (2016): 578–98, at 588; James Rhodes and Laurence Brown, “The Rise and Fall of the ‘Inner City’: Race, Space and Urban Policy in Postwar England,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45, no. 17 (2019), 3243–59.

different side to Tiger Bay that was the reason the younger set seemed so determined that Sheppard raise a glass to the king at the event they had organized to celebrate the success of the rugby player Bill Douglas. In their own small way, and in a manner that would come to define the cultural and social transformations brought about by immigration and settlement in the decades that followed Drake's stay in Cardiff, this was part of a reimagining of what it meant to be British.