Reimagined and Transformed: Martin Delany and the Rhetoric of Genre

by

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I examine the major texts of nineteenth-century African American abolitionist Martin Delany to show how he transforms literary genres to develop his arguments for emigration and the uplift of African Americans in the United States. By doing so, I argue first that Delany is better understood as a rhetorician rather than a literary writer because his texts present extended arguments aimed at persuading readers to take action and these arguments often take precedence over the artistic merits of an ostensibly literary genre. Secondly, I argue that, for Delany, any genre is fluid, and he adapts or transforms them at will to frame his message to have an impact on his intended audience. I suggest that Delany's works have been largely misclassified and call on us to rethink his contributions to nineteenth-century African American literature and rhetoric.

In chapter one, I examine *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* in order to argue that Delany has written a jeremiad, the genre that laments the moral failings of society and traditionally calls on the audience to move closer to God to redress these failings. However, Delany revises this traditional genre into a text that laments the oppressed condition of free Black Americans and calls for them to take concrete action to escape this oppression by emigrating from the United States. In chapter two, I analyze *Blake, or the Huts of America*, which scholars have classified as a novel, and argue that the text is better described as a didactic narrative that presents the main character as a model to enslaved Black Americans for an alternative way of thinking and acting during the waning days of antebellum America. In the third chapter, I discuss the *Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party*, arguing first, that Delany writes a business report (not a missionary or travel narrative) and second, that he transforms this genre to achieve two distinct goals—first, to fulfill

the duty of documenting the viability of the Niger Valley as a destination for emigration assigned to him by the Cleveland Commission, and second, to convince African Americans readers that emigrating to Africa can offer them the best way to achieve freedom and prosperity. In the fourth chapter, I examine Delany's final text, *Principia of Ethnology: The Origins of Race and Color,* in order to argue that Delany transforms the treatise, a genre that traditionally relies upon scientific evidence, into a text that blends faith-based and scientific evidence to argue for a single origin of creation, and in so doing he refutes the prevalent views of his day that African Americans were genetically inferior to white Americans.

This comprehensive re-examination of Delany's work uses the lens of traditional genres reimagined and transformed to call for us to rethink the importance of this work not only within the canons of nineteenth-century African American literature *and* rhetoric but also its contributions to genre theory.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In "The Lab vs. the Clinic: Sites of Competing Genres," Catherine Schryer defines genres as "stabilized-for-now or stabilized-enough sites of social and ideological action" (89). Schreyer's definition suggests that genres are both stable (unchanging) and constantly changing, an oxymoronic definition that encourages us, when we examine a genre, to account for more than its style and form. Schryer adds that "all genres have a complex set of relations with past texts and with other present texts: genres come from somewhere and are transforming into something else" (89). In this passage, she highlights that not only do genres have histories (that is, that they have evolved through stages to be able to take the form one currently sees) but that even as they seem fixed and stable to us right now, they are in fact even now evolving into a different form. Additionally, she adds that "because they exist before their users, genres shape their users, yet users and their discourse communities constantly remake and reshape them" (89). The academic research article is a good example of these phenomena because its form and structure vary among disciplines and users modify its conventions to meet the needs of their subject matter and their argument. In fact, two academic disciplines, English for Specific Purposes and English for Academic Purposes, have evolved to identify and track variations in structure and form in the research article across disciplines. Schryer's discussion emphasizes the fluidity of genres that includes preconceived notions of specific genres and the way they are used within discourse communities. All of this is to say that genres may be constraining to the writer, but they are also malleable, capable of being changed to allow the writer to meet his or her discursive goals for a text.

Although Schyrer's definition of "genre" in this article is based on research she conducted in 2012, her theoretical insights are relevant and, I would argue, applicable to texts

that predate her research or "Rhetorical Genre Studies" as an idea or area of academic inquiry. For example, upon my initial reading of the works of African American abolitionist and activist, Martin R. Delany, I was intrigued by how the text *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Political Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* adhered in its early chapters to the conventions of the literary genre of the jeremiad. However, of falling back on the traditional ending of the jeremiad, where prophets exhort their flock to restore their faithfulness to God in order to persuade Him to alleviate their sorry state, Delany argues that African Americans will never be recognized as equal to white Americans in the United States and exhorts his fellow African Americans to emigrate to create a society where they can be free and prosper. This flouting or transformation of a central convention of the genre, in that initial reading, seemed to me to derail the text as an example of the jeremiad. In fact, however, after a cursory examination of the other three of Delany's text and the published scholarship addressing the genre of each text, I observed him giving his selected genre a similar treatment: the text ostensibly appears to be a well-recognized genre ("*Blake* is a novel"; "*Official Report* is a travel/missionary narrative"; "*Principia* is a manifesto or treatise") but in significant elements, it departs radically from the generic convention. It is these departures from the expected conventions that may have led, I suspect, to disparaging judgments about Delany's work. For example, Julianne Malveaux states that "*Blake* was not an outstanding novel in literary terms. The main plot often stems from minor sub-plots that add little development to the novel. Delany, like the other novelists of his time, sometimes reverted to grandiose language that is not very suitable to a novel such as *Blake"* (56), and Addison Gayle Jr. states that *Blake* contains "implausible plot sequences and the overall episodic quality" is fragmented (21). However, if we apply Schryer's definition of genres as entities that not only "shape their users, yet users and their discourse communities constantly

remake and reshape [them]" (89) to the approach that Delany takes with the genres that he chooses to write, we may see his texts in a different light. In this dissertation, I do just this: I closely examine Delany's major texts to show how he transforms the literary and other genres that he chooses to employ to achieve his goals and thus "remake[s] and reshape[s]" (Schryer 89) them to suit his needs.

In this opening chapter, I begin by discussing Martin Delany's life to fill in the necessary background to help us understand why he chose to write the books that he did and the genres that he used. Second, I summarize the relevant scholarship on genre and rhetoric that provides a foundation for my later analyses of the texts. I then discuss the rhetorical strategies commonly used by African American rhetoricians during the nineteenth century to situate Delany's rhetorical approach within the common strategy of the era. Next, I summarize the theory of the rhetoric of agitation, a twentieth-century theory that helps illuminate why Delany would choose an established genre only to remake it in radical ways and how he went about transforming these genres. This chapter then ends with a brief outline of the remaining chapters.

A Brief Overview of the Life of Martin R. Delany

I open with this brief survey of Delany's life to provide context for his writings. As is the case with all writers/rhetoricians, life experiences play a pivotal role in how they approach issues, form arguments, and compose texts. Learning about some of Delany's life experiences provides us with an understanding of his positions regarding the topics and issues he chooses to explore in his texts.

Martin Delany (1812-1885) was born in Charles Town, Virginia, now West Virginia. His mother, Pati, was a free seamstress, and his father, Samuel, a plantation slave. Pati moved her children to Chambersburg in Pennsylvania after she was threatened in Charles Town for teaching

them to read and write. Pati's choice to move her family in response to these threats surely demonstrated to her young son, Martin, the central importance of literacy skills, and of which he would make such use in his adult life. Delany would eventually leave Chambersburg for Pittsburgh to study with Lewis Woodson, an educator, abolitionist, and early leader of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Pennsylvania. Delany grew up to be a public figure, and he had many titles during the course of this career. He was an abolitionist, physician, ethnographer, army officer, politician, legal theorist, and journalist. He began his writing career when he started publishing news articles, opinion pieces and editing the *Mystery,* one of the earliest African American newspapers. Delany also knew and worked alongside Frederick Douglass at the *North Star* in the late 1840s (Levine, Sterling).

In 1851, a significant moment occurred in Delany's life, one that would alter his view of the United States and his belief in the ability of Black Americans to receive equal rights. In 1850-51, Delany applied to Harvard Medical School, where his application was supported by letters of recommendation from ten members of Pittsburgh's medical and religious communities (Sollors et al. 27). He was accepted and attended Harvard Medical School for one semester. However, his tenure there was cut short when white students of the medical school objected to the presence of Black students in the student body; they created a petition to have Delany and two other Black students removed because they believed "the presence of [B]black students would cheapen the Harvard medical degree, the quality of education would suffer, and the presence of an inferior race was socially offensive" (Sollars et al. 27). Although Delany was allowed to finish the term, his time at Harvard ended. This experience of injustice convinced Delany that African Americans would never be equal to white Americans in the United States.

In 1852, perhaps as a result of his experiences at Harvard, Delany wrote *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States,* where he argued that emigration from the United States was key to Black elevation. In this text, Delany transforms the jeremiad, a literary genre that laments the state of society and exhorts the audience to repent and turn to God for salvation, into a text that provides his audience with specific actions for overcoming their oppression. He argues that in order for African Americans to be free, they need to emigrate from the United States. Delany's argument was largely rejected by the white and Black members of the abolitionist community, who believed the situation in the United States could change and that the path of moral suasion could change it. However, as evidenced in *Condition*, Delany did not share this belief. Next Delany wrote *Blake or the Huts of America.* In this text, he uses his title character, Blake, as a model for his readers of alternative forms of thought and action that Delany felt would better prepare them to resist and (ultimately, he hoped) overcome the oppression that they experienced as African Americans in the US in the 19th century. Prior to 1859, *Blake* was published serially in the *Weekly Anglo-African* by Robert Hamilton. Then, in late 1861, the episodes of *Blake* were collected and published in their entirety in the same publication. However, by 1861, Delany was busy writing his next text, *The Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party*, following his prospecting trip the previous year to the Niger Valley in Africa. In this book-length document, he had two purposes that shaped his drafting of the text: 1) to fulfill his obligations to the Cleveland Commission, which had sponsored his trip and required that he explore, document, and report on the viability of Central Africa as a potential destination for African American emigrants; and 2) to pursue his goal of convincing African Americans that emigrating is essential to them achieving freedom and prosperity.

In 1861, the Civil War started in the US and by 1863, Delany was actively recruiting African American soldiers to enlist in the Union Army. In 1865, Delany was granted a meeting with Lincoln and would eventually become an officer in the Union Army. The Civil War represented a change of strategy for Delany when he recognized that the war was a potential opportunity for African Americans to participate more directly in American civil life by serving in the military. He set aside his calls for emigration to work towards increasing opportunities for African Americans generally. Specifically, he sought an appointment as a commander of an all-Black regiment of the Union Army, but he was turned down. Eventually, however, he was appointed the first Black field officer of the US Army, which further encouraged him to believe that African Americans might be able to improve their positions in a post-civil war society in the US Post-Civil War, Delany was an integral part of the Reconstruction effort in South Carolina. During this time, he was appointed a trial justice in Charleston.

Nearly twenty years after writing *Official Report*, in 1879, he published his final text, *Principia of Ethnology: The Origin of Races and Color,* where he sought to refute arguments circulating generally in American society and politics that African Americans were naturally inferior to white Americans. In this text, he combines evidence from science and religion to refute these arguments.

After witnessing the failure of Reconstruction firsthand, Delany returned to advocating emigration for African Americans and even sought to finance his own emigration to Africa in 1877. However, instead of actually emigrating, he returned to Ohio, where he passed away a few years later in 1885.

As is obvious from the brief summaries of his texts, Delany was a man always seeking to encourage and assist African Americans in working towards achieving their own equality and

elevation. He was unafraid of shifting his ideas or his approaches to advocate for these causes. His texts are a testament to this commitment and should be read as texts constructed to appeal to a broad range of audiences using a myriad of rhetorical strategies intended to persuade his readers to share his vision and follow his advice.

Genre and Rhetoric

In this section, I examine three important rhetorical concepts: first, Bitzer's rhetorical situation; second, the idea of genre as rhetorical; and third, how understanding genre as rhetorical enables a more sophisticated view of the rhetorical situation. These three theoretical concepts provide some insight into understanding both Delany's genre selection and why he found them inadequate and in need of transformation.

To identify how Delany ultimately transforms the genres he writes, we start by revisiting key scholarship associated with genre in the field of rhetoric. Lloyd Bitzer's 1968 essay "The Rhetorical Situation" (revised edition 1992) offers a starting point to discuss rhetorical genre studies. Bitzer, who claims that rhetoric is "situational" (3), views rhetoric as "pragmatic" (3) and claims that "it comes into existence for the sake of something beyond itself; it functions ultimately to produce action or change the world" (3). In other words, rhetoric seeks to create change using thought and action. It brings about change through the creation of discourse with an audience. Such statements provide us with a starting point for discussing how rhetoric enables authors to bring about change through their written texts. More importantly, rhetoric lends itself to discussing how Delany uses his texts to bring about change in the unjust society he sees around himself, but also to the genres that he engages.

In *Form and Genre: Shaping Rhetorical Action* (1978), Campbell and Jamieson extend the work of Northrop Frye, who noted that "the study of genres is based on analogies of form"

(qtd in Miller and Devitt 25), which he defined as “typical recurring images,” “associative clusters,” and “complex variables” (qtd in Miller and Devitt 25). That is, Frye identified how genre relies on similarities of form (or structure). Campbell and Jamieson incorporate this recognition into their definition of genre, noting that form and style can identify the specific genre of a text. This definition is complicated, however, when we try to account for the rhetorical situation in which an author constructs their text, a complication that Campbell and Jamieson recognize when they state that “rhetorical forms do not occur in isolation” and add that “it should be apparent that these forms are phenomena—synthesis of material that exists objectively in the rhetorical act of perceptions in the mind of the critic, a member of the audience, or a future rhetor” (Miller and Devitt 26). Here we see that the shared understanding of the text between the various parties that engage with it becomes synthesized with the rhetoric of the text. Tellingly, Campbell and Jamieson conclude that “a genre does not consist merely of a series of acts in which certain rhetorical forms recur” (qtd in Miller and Devitt 27); rather, they claim “a genre is composed of a constellation of recognizable forms bound together by an internal dynamic” (qtd in Miller and Devitt 27). Campbell and Jamieson emphasize how forms are bound together by dynamics within texts. What is of significance here is that a genre is more than form but also a synthesis of the shared experience of the text by author and reader(s). This description shows us the fluidity of genre (as noted by Schryer 2012) and urges that we consider the dynamics of the shared experience between the author and the audience when classifying the genre of a text.

Caroline Miller, in “Genre as Social Action” (1984), elaborates Campbell and Jamieson’s work while also proposing that “an understanding of genre can help account for the way we encounter, interpret, react to, and create particular texts” (Miller and Devitt 36). In this article, Miller makes an essential contribution to our understanding of the concept of the rhetorical

situation, a contribution that informs my work in this dissertation. She argues that Campbell and Jamieson's discussion "yields a method of classification (of genre) that meets the requirement of relevance to rhetorical practice" (Miller 38). Here Miller notes that Campbell and Jameison's discussion of genre provides rhetoricians with a classification that accounts for aspects such as audience, purpose, and context. Additionally, in the field of rhetoric, genre accounts for the shared experiences of the author and the reader. I emphasize Miller's comment concerning Campbell and Jamieson because it helps to explain how the generic classification of Delany's text can be better understood through a rhetorical framework. As Miller points out, Campbell and Jamieson address an aspect of genre that has not been covered in literary definitions, the relationship between author and audience, and the experiences that they share.

Referencing Campbell and Jamieson's claim that "rhetorical forms that establish genres are stylistic and substantive responses to perceived situational demands" (38), Miller argues that "a genre becomes a complex of formal and substantive features that create a particular effect in a given situation" (38) and concludes that "genre, in this way, becomes more than a formal entity; it becomes pragmatic, fully rhetorical, a point of connection between intention and effect, an aspect of social action" (Miller 38). Miller's theory of genre as social action is relevant to all of Delany's works because in each text he chooses a genre that he believes will enable his perspective to take social action. In fact, several of his texts advocate for the reader to take direct action.

"Situation" in Miller's definition is not used to locate a genre, but rather, to prioritize individual scenarios and actions. Miller adds that "the set of genres is an open class, with new members evolving, old ones decaying" (Miller 38). This passage suggests that genre is fluid and always evolving. Miller's point is that rather than relying on form or style as indicators of genre,

we should examine the rhetorical situation to which authors respond when writing, we should look at how they engage their audience, and what goals they set out to achieve. This is what I aim to do in my analyses of Delany's work. Notice also that Miller does not identify an agent for the action of genres "evolving" or "decaying" in this quotation because her point is to emphasize their fluid nature, but it is always writers who are using these genres to take social action who alter the conventions to make them evolve or choose not to use a genre because it does not facilitate their goals. We can understand some of the choices that Delany makes and the actions he takes in his use of genres to be part of the agent of such genres evolving.

At this point, I must return to Bitzer's concept of the rhetorical situation to explain how the concept of genre in rhetoric can give us insight into how authors in general, and Delany in particular, might be able to transform a genre according to their purpose. Bitzer defines rhetoric as a "mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of a discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action" (Bitzer 4). The altering of reality for Bitzer comes through the rhetorical situation, which he regards as "a natural context of persons, events, objects, relations, and an exigence which strongly invites utterance; this invited utterance participates naturally in the situation, is in many instances necessary to the completion of situational activity, and by means of its participation with situation obtains its meaning and its rhetorical character" (Bitzer 5). Bitzer sees utterances as situational because they come into existence as a response to a given situation and receive their meaning from the situation (Bitzer 5).

While Bitzer's theory of the rhetorical situation is useful, we must look at how his theory has been extended to help us understand how an author might transform a genre. In "Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetorical Ecologies" (2005), Jenny

Edbauer expands on Bitzer's concept to allow for new interpretations of genre and the relationship between writer, audience, and text. While Bitzer conceives of exigence in a rhetorical situation as something that the writer responds *to* (it is, for Bitzer, *external* to the writer), Edbauer posits that exigence is, in fact, *created* by the author (exigence comes from *within* the author). She argues that this shift in perspective is necessary to allow us to observe and challenge artificial frameworks "in their temporal, historical, and lived fluxes" (Edbauer 9), a process that she argues will force us to reconceptualize our concept/understanding of rhetoric. This approach, which Edbauer calls "rhetorical ecologies," defines the rhetorical situation not as merely the relationship between author, audience, and the text, and invites us to broaden our understanding of how authors approach a text and their audience. Edbauer's reconceptualization of exigence and how authors approach the text and audience are important in helping us understand how Delany writes his texts, and it can also help to explain how he transforms the genres he engages. Edbauer's theory that rhetors create exigence through their approach and how they choose to engage their audience is relevant to how we understand the works of Delany; it allows us to see that, in fact, Delany *created* the exigency for his texts. For example, many of his contemporaries, authors and abolitionists, responded to the exigence of slavery in ways that fit within the traditional understanding of the rhetorical situation of the antebellum era. For example, many abolitionists pushed moral suasion or other solutions that maintained an African American presence in the United States. However, in contrast, Delany calls for emigration—that free Black Americans and freed slaves should leave the US—rewriting human history to highlight the many contributions by Africans to create a sense of urgency outside of situated calls for abolition. In particular, Delany's lamenting of the state of African American life in the United States (jeremiad) is a way of creating exigence to propose his solution of emigration from the

United States. Rather than beginning by proclaiming that Blacks should emigrate, he uses the jeremiad genre to create the exigence needed to propose his potentially radical solution. I argue that Delany created this exigency by beginning with a familiar genre that he then transformed into a new genre; the completed work responded to the exigence that he simultaneously created.

We can also turn to Edbauer's description of an ecological augmentation of models of the rhetorical situation to better understand the ecologies of Delany's rhetorical context. As Edbauer notes, "an ecological augmentation adopts a view toward the processes and events that extend beyond the limited boundaries of the elements" (20). Delany's transformation of literary genres into rhetorical ones is an example of "extend[ing] beyond the limited boundaries of elements."

Nineteenth-Century African American Rhetorical Strategies

In this section, I discuss common strategies used by nineteenth-century African American rhetoricians to achieve their goals despite their marginalized positions in American society. To identify key differences between African American abolitionists and their white counterparts, I draw on two theoretical frameworks in my analysis of Delany's work: 1) the theory of nonchalance or self-deprecation, described in her work by Jacqueline Bacon; and 2) the rhetoric of mystery, elaborated by Kenneth Burke.

The rhetoric of African American abolitionists in the nineteenth century often differed from their white counterparts because they used strategies borne out of their marginalized positions. Scholarship on nineteenth-century American rhetoric has distinguished racial differences to varying extents. For example, Nan Johnson focuses mainly on the history of white American rhetoric, noting that "the white nineteenth-century American tradition was slow to free itself from the powerful influence of the eighteenth-century British tradition; however, it began to show theoretical and pedagogical creativity at midcentury" (Johnson 8-9). Johnson explains

the reason for the shift in creativity as coming "in response to the needs of a democratic society and the aims of an increasingly pragmatic system of education" (Johnson 9). Johnson illustrates the evolution of American rhetoric from that of the British tradition but maintains a focus on the history of *white* American rhetoric and does not address potential differences among the generic category of "American rhetoric." And it is these differences,—understanding how African American rhetoric differs from the (white) American tradition—that are critical to understanding the context for Delany's works. Jacqueline Bacon distinguishes among several groups that comprise nineteenth-century American rhetoric. In *In The Humblest May Stand Forth* (2002), Bacon remarks that "the rhetoric of abolitionists who were African Americans or women—when viewed on its own terms—expands our conception of the domain of abolitionist discourse" (Bacon 4). In other words, Bacon invites scholars of rhetoric to expand our understanding of rhetorical practices to account for characteristics that distinguish African American rhetoricians from their white contemporaries. Bacon adds that "African Americans developed a diverse, empowering, and theoretically complex array of rhetorical strategies in order to assume agency within a society that did not grant them full equality" (Bacon 4). Here Bacon argues based on her conclusion that "conventional assumptions about rhetorical theory and practice must be revised to account for the [strategies of] persuasion of those who are marginalized in society" (Bacon 4). If we accept Bacon's contention that our field must revise its conventional assumptions about rhetorical theory and practice based on the practices of rhetoricians outside of the mainstream, then Martin Delany's work is a fruitful site where such revision can be initiated. For example, Delany's work challenges traditional notions of genre, and only through revised readings can we understand how his approach and purpose for each text might alter how we understand how someone like Delany would find characteristics of a specific genre to be confining and thus

would transform the genre to better meet what he perceives as the needs of his readers. I argue that Delany's rhetoric, as Bacon posits, "demonstrates that conventional assumptions about rhetorical theory and practice must be revised to account for the persuasion of those who are marginalized in society" (Bacon 4). The works of Delany challenge notions of genre as fixed forms and only through revised readings can we understand his approach and purpose for each text.

One specific strategy that Bacon describes as characteristic of African American rhetoricians and that stems from their marginalized positions is known as "nonchalance or self-deprecation" (Bacon 65) which the speaker uses to establish a rapport with audiences. This strategy establishes a rapport with the audience by downplaying their ability. Bacon states that "because African American rhetors constantly negotiated the assumption that they were inferior to whites in both intellectual and oratorical skill, their deployment of this nineteenth-century commonplace [nonchalance or self-deprecation] appropriates audiences' expectations and recreates them in ways that grant rhetorical authority" (Bacon 65). Bacon informs us that by "exploiting the audience's expectations of their inadequacy, they [African American speakers] take control of the terms of the antebellum hierarchy that would elevate whites over [B]blacks" (Bacon 65). Bacon's theory is relevant to Delany because, in some sense, Delany exploits the audience's expectations of his perceived inadequacy but more importantly of what they expect from the genres he uses. This latter expectation is what I want to focus on because Delany uses the expectations of his audience [the expectation to read a novel] and instead delivers a didactic narrative. I see a correlation between Delany's approach and Bacon's theory here because he indirectly exploits the expectations of his perceived inadequacy by delivering more than what the genre can offer.

Another theoretical framework that may be understood as a strategy employed by African American rhetoricians of the nineteenth century is explained by the rhetoric of mystery. The rhetoric of mystery or, as Kenneth Burke refers to it, the principle of courtship, is defined as "the use of suasive devices for the transcending of social estrangement" (Burke 208). Burke defines mystery as "courtship when 'different kinds of beings' communicate with each other. Thus we look upon any embarrassment or self-imposed constraint as the sign of such 'mystery'" (Burke 208). For African American rhetoricians, communicating with white audiences meant communicating with "different kinds of beings," ones holding racial prejudices and white supremacist viewpoints that the speaker must confront and overcome. When Burke states that "thus we look upon any embarrassment or self-imposed constraint as the sign of such mystery" (208), he is referring to the strategy of downplaying one's ability in order to transcend social engagement. These strategies prove effective because they play into the already low expectations of white readers and thus have the ability to make the arguments more compelling by exceeding expectations.

African American rhetoricians developed their strategies while accounting for marginalized status. Their strategies seek to assume positions of authority and to counter the omnipresent cultural narrative/assumption of white supremacy. I argue that rhetorical analyses of Delany's texts show that they do not easily fit into one generic category, because in order to assume a position of authority and to counter the cultural narrative of white supremacy, he transforms literary genres, thus moving outside the normal discursive means. Secondly, rhetorical analysis shows that to achieve his goals Delany seeks to remove the constraints imposed by generic classification, which often dictate what a rhetor would say and how it should be said.

The Rhetoric of Agitation

In the following section, I discuss the theory of the rhetoric of agitation because I see it as a common thread that runs throughout all of Delany's texts.

In *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control* (1971), authors John W. Bowers, Donovan J. Ochs, Richard Jensen, and David P. Schulz define their subject in two ways, first, as a "persistent, long-term advocacy for social change, where resistance to the change is also persistent and long term" (Bowers et al. 3). They apply this definition to the works of individuals such as Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King Jr. among others, whose works advocate for the marginalized classes of their communities. Second, they define the rhetoric of agitation as "a style of persuasion characterized by a highly emotional argument that is based on the citation of grievances and alleged violation of moral principles" (Bowers et al. 3). The authors critique both definitions because they contend, "each of these definitions of agitation would include some activists and exclude others, since persistence, emotionality and moral principles do not necessarily have a great deal in common" (Bowers et al. 3). They propose an improved definition of agitation, that can be defined as existing when, "(1) *people outside the normal decision-making establishment (2) advocate significant social change and (3) encounter a degree of resistance within the establishment such as to require more than the normal discursive means of persuasion.* Control refers to the *response of the decision-making establishment to agitation"* (emphasis in original, Bowers et al. 3-4). This definition of agitation is an improvement on earlier ones because it provides scholars of rhetoric with a framework for analysis that elucidates why authors choose specific rhetorical strategies to try to persuade audiences and challenge the establishment. More importantly, their theory is important for discussing Delany's work because I see Delany's transformation of genres to suit his needs as a form of agitation. Delany uses his

texts to "advocate significant social change" and demonstrates an understanding that he must move outside the normal discursive means of persuasion. Bowers et al. extend their definition when they state that "agitation exists when a movement for significant social change meets such resistance within the establishment that agitators must use more than the normal discursive means of persuasion to call attention to their grievances and to achieve their goals" (5). They emphasize that the rhetoric of agitation often meets with strenuous resistance by the establishment such that heightened means of persuasion—that is, "more than the normal discursive means of persuasion"—are required if agitators are going to continue pushing for social change. Bowers et al. describe normal discursive means of persuasion as those "prescribed by the establishment" (5). This is an important difference because African Americans, let alone an abolitionist such as Delany, would be outside of the establishment and therefore agitators rather than dissenters. To illustrate what they mean by "more than the normal discursive means," the authors point to the 1968 Democratic convention where "the Coalition for an Open Convention, made up of citizens outside the party establishment, advocated for the inclusion of a broader range of voices during the convention: 'the Coalition for an Open Convention (COC) argued that more citizens should have access to and participate in the political convention" (5). This coalition was made up of citizens outside the party establishment that advocated for broader inclusion of voices during the convention. The authors state that "although the COC mainly operated within the normal channels of communication, it worked with agitating groups" to as they state, "achieve its goals" (Bowers et al. 5). The agitating groups were considered outside of the establishment, that is, a political group that was not affiliated with the Democratic Party and therefore outside the normal discursive means of persuasion available to influence the attending delegates. In this instance, the group outside the establishment pushed for significant social

change outside the normal discursive means by stepping into space that was usually occupied by the establishment. This effectively marshalls what Bowers et al. refer to as " beyond verbal appeals" (5). Rather than rely on normal discursive means—registering as a Democrat and voting in elections—the group remained on the outside and occupied space within the convention that otherwise was unavailable.

We can see many similarities in what Bowers et al. describe in their Democratic Convention example and the works of Delany. Rather than occupying physical space, Delany engages the establishment through common literary genres[1]. By transforming them to meet his needs, Delany employs the rhetoric of agitation. Superseding more than the normal discursive means of persuasion to air grievances and achieve specific goals is central to understanding the works of nineteenth-century abolitionist and activist Martin R. Delany. Delany's texts often begin with or imitate popular literary genres of his era; however, his versions of these genres soon depart from fulfilling reader expectations for these genres. While he maintains some elements as expected, he also transforms each genre into a text that affords him opportunities to educate and enlighten his readers about his topic while also advancing the argument he feels compelled to make about it. I would argue that as Delany transforms these genres, each text becomes an example of the kind of discourse Bowers et al. have defined as the rhetoric of agitation. That is, in departing from the established conventions for the genre he chooses to write, Delany, in essence, invents a new version of the genre (or another entirely) that I argue fits Bowers et al.'s definition of the rhetoric of agitation because, within the context of his day, it constitutes "more than the normal discursive means of persuasion" (4). For example, transforming *Condition* from a traditional American jeremiad that exhorted readers to lead more godly lives into a text that pursues *secular* solutions to improve the state of their lives represents

[1] In several of his texts, Delany appears to be writing for both white and Black audiences.

a new genre and a new discursive means of persuasion. In *Principia*, he presents for readers an alternate reading of human history that highlights the contributions of African peoples to knowledge and progress. The rhetoric of agitation provides a theoretical framework that explains how and why Delany attempted to transform literary genres to advance the arguments he wanted to make about African Americans. He chose these genres to gain flexibility. He could use the characteristics that he knew readers would recognize and feel comfortable with. That is, they would recognize the genre and think they understood what the text was. However, Delany used the genres to gain his readers' attention and then remade them to advance his own agenda. For example, in *Condition*, a traditional jeremiad would not have allowed him to propose a solution beyond prayer and godly living to elevate the poor condition of African Americans in the mid-nineteenth century. It can be argued that the rhetoric of nineteenth-century African American abolitionists is itself a rhetoric of agitation. In the next section, we more closely examine nineteenth-century African American rhetoric to understand more clearly how the two explain Delany's rhetorical strategies.

Project Goals and Chapter Outline

The goal of this project is to analyze the complex rhetoric of Martin Delany's major texts to show how he transforms familiar genres to create new forms of texts aimed at convincing his audiences that his arguments contained the solution for Black elevation. In the second chapter of this dissertation, I examine *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States (*1852), focussing on how Delany uses the jeremiad as a rhetorical strategy to develop and explain his argument for Black emigration from the United States. I argue that Delany transforms the jeremiad because the genre often relies on prayer as the path to salvation. Delany's transformation of the jeremiad into a genre that works for him provides the

opportunity to achieve his goal of convincing his audience that the true path to salvation is through physical action.

In the third chapter, I discuss Delany's *Blake, or the Huts of America* (1859). Often referred to as a novel, I argue that this text is a transformation of that literary genre into a didactic narrative, which aims to educate his readers through indirect discourse and how he develops his main character. Although aesthetically different from *Condition*, *Blake* continues to model for readers an alternative path to freedom that requires a rethinking of faith and the necessity of taking concrete action to overcome oppression in the United States. Using the title character as a model for a new way of thinking and acting, Delany utilizes rhetorical strategies that allow him to engage his audience and model a way of action and thought that can lead to an end of Black oppression.

Chapter four analyzes the *Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party* (1861) and Delany's transformation of the recommendation report into an argument that targets two distinct audiences. I show how Delany's transformation enables him to satisfy the needs of the Cleveland Convention that commissioned his trip by adhering to the characteristics of the recommendation report. I also discuss how Delany transforms the genre to achieve his goal which is to convince the African American community to see Central Africa as a viable destination for emigration.

The final chapter explores Delany's final work, *Principia of Ethnology: The Origins of Races and Color* (1879). Alluding to Isaac Newton's *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687) and potential response to Confederate Vice President, Alexander H. Stephens' Cornerstone Address, Delany's *Principia* blends faith and science to refute arguments of polygenesis. I argue that Delany transforms the treatise genre—one that is grounded in scientific evidence—by including Biblical interpretation as evidence that carries the same weight

as scientific evidence. I show that Delany views and uses science and faith-based evidence equally.

My project aims to show that Delany's generic transformations and his rhetoric of agitation help scholars of rhetoric better understand these processes within the context of nineteenth-century African American discourse, or perhaps nineteenth-century discourse more generally. As I discuss in greater detail, many scholars approach his works from an exclusively historical or cultural perspective. Often overlooked are the complex arguments that he makes and the rhetorical strategies he employs to make them. Delany is a rhetorician who selects his genres carefully to help his audience feel (at least initially) comfortable or familiar with his texts, but then he uses those familiar genres to construct arguments that for those same readers at that time, would not be comfortable or familiar but would instead be considered radical and controversial. Delany's skills as a rhetorician are what makes his ability to transform genres possible and deserves to be studied in greater detail. In the next section, I analyze his first text and show how Delany uses the characteristics of the African American jeremiad to meet his goals.

Chapter 2. Reconsidering *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People in the United States of America*

The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People in the United States of America, published in 1852, is often mistakenly described as primarily a political manifesto in which Martin Delany advocates for the emigration of African Americans from the United States to Central and South America. As Toyin Falola informs, "Delany's book was shaped by slavery,the race politicas of mid-nineteenth-century America, and the search for solutions to the problems of Blacks, both slaves and free" (12). In short, Delany's *Condition* was written to provide a solution for Black Americans. Falola adds that "to many scholars of African American political thought, this book marks the origin of Black nationalism in print" (12).

Martin Delany opens the text by describing the condition of the lives of African Americans in the US in the 1850s. As part of this description, he also lists (literally) the contributions of Black Americans to the prosperity and elevation of the United States as a whole. He lists these contributions to accomplish two things: to prove to his readers that African Americans are not inferior to white Americans and to set the stage for the larger argument he wants to make in the text. Two-thirds of the way into the text, Delany includes a verbatim copy of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, which allows him to show his readers why, exactly, he believes that African Americans will never receive equal treatment in the United States and to impress upon them that they should seriously consider the validity of the argument he makes in the remainder of the text. The Fugitive Slave Act is central to providing the broader context for the rest of the text, where he argues that African Americans should, therefore, emigrate to a place where they can live free. To convince his audience that this is the best solution for overcoming their oppressive conditions, Delany uses aspects of the popular genre of the jeremiad to build a

case for his readers that the historical and present conditions of oppression now culminate in the Fugitive Slave Act, signalling both the futility of expecting equal treatment under the law and the necessity of reflecting on the best means of achieving equality.

Jeremiads have been used often in US history and literature because they enable the authors to establish themselves in a position of authority, based on their understanding and interpretations of Biblical scriptures, that allows them to lecture/hector their listeners/readers to behave more ethically. The jeremiad has been an effective genre in US culture because it often combines religious rhetoric with social critique, allowing the speaker to advance a rhetorical/argumentative agenda. The traditional structure of the jeremiad was constraining for Delany because it characteristically allows for the speaker/writer to move from detailing society's moral shortcomings to lamenting its potential downfall towards advocating a path to Christian salvation. However, in his version of the jeremiad, Delany departs from the traditional structure. He does detail the moral shortcomings of white Americans in their treatment of African Americans, and he also warns of white Americans potential downfall if they continue to treat African Americans badly, but he quickly dispenses with pointing out the path to both white and African American Christian salvation in a couple of chapters in *Condition* because his real focus for the jeremiad is to provide an action plan to change the current oppressed condition of his African American readers by guiding them through a series of rational decisions that can lead to their actual successful elevation in this world.

In this chapter, I first document the theoretical aspects of the traditional jeremiad, including the *American* and the *African American* jeremiad, and then I briefly analyze an example of the traditional African American jeremiad, *David Walker's Appeal,* to define and illustrate its characteristics. Next, I review scholarship about *Condition* and end with a close

reading of *Condition* to show how Delany transforms the jeremiadic genre to achieve his goal of persuading readers to think seriously about their treatment in the United States, and what he sees as means for effective change.

Scholarship on the Jeremiadic Genre

Traditional American Jeremiad

This section surveys the characteristics of the jeremiad to lay the groundwork for an analysis of Delany's *Condition*. The main characteristics of the jeremiad include a lamentation of the state of society and the moral shortcomings of its citizens. Additionally, the jeremiad often predicts the downfall of that society. The genre was initially made popular in Puritan texts and later adopted by abolitionists. The name jeremiad is derived from the Biblical figure Jeremiah who wrote mournful sections in the Old Testament.

The jeremiad has a long history in the United States. The Puritans of the 1600s often used the genre to increase the devotion of settlers. Often, preachers would forecast impending doom should their community stray from the Puritan faith. Scholars of the traditional American jeremiad have identified several functions of this genre in US history and culture: 1) to provide direction towards an ideal society, 2) to critique behaviours that are detrimental to achieving that ideal society, 3) to shape the myth of America, and 4) to frame societal discontent in religious terms. In nineteenth-century American literature, as Willie J. Harrell Jr. states, "the jeremiad has always been a distinguishing construction that exchanged with cultures and governments to aid shaping of an idyllic society [in the US in the 19th century]. In these moralistic texts, the author acrimoniously lamented the condition of society and its morals in a stern tenor of sustained invective and utilized prophecy as a means of predicting society's ominous demise" (6). In this quotation, Harrell notes the role that the jeremiad has played historically in directing and

policing the behaviour of the American populace. In particular, Harrell highlights how the jeremiad was used by preachers to rebuke wayward listeners and exhort them to improve their morally questionable behaviour. To assume the role of the speaker of a jeremiad, authors must establish an ethos of great moral standing. This was often done through their ability to interpret the Bible and to construct a public identity among their audience. Sacvan Bercovitch defines the jeremiad in literary and historical terms, stating that it "was a ritual designed to join social criticism to spiritual renewal, public to private identity, this shifting 'signs of the times' to certain traditional metaphors, themes, and symbols" that "played a major role in fashioning the myth of America" (xi).

Both Harrell and Bercovitch identify a key aspect of the genre—the act of lamenting the lack or loss of morality in society and prophesying its eventual demise. As Bercovitch notes, authors often supported these arguments by blending religion with social critique, and public and private life to connect individual moral shortcomings with broader society's potential downfall. Cathleen Kaveny comments on the historical relevance of the jeremiad when she states, "the rhetoric of prophetic indictment has been a staple of American public discourse from the time that John Winthrop led a small band of men and women out of England and founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630" (2). Kaveny argues that the "passionate condemnations of sinful behaviour that pervades the biblical Book of Jeremiah", were "delivered not only by abolitionists but also those who saw Scripture as giving divine sanction to slavery" (2). As Kaveny mentions, the jeremiad was used by both pro-slavery and abolitionist rhetoricians because it offered both camps a means of using the Bible as evidence to support the solution they proposed to the problems they addressed. In addition, Martin Marty sees the jeremiad as "a rhetorical legacy of the colonial era, best understood as biblically informed and inflamed rhetoric

intended to chastise a sinful people, enjoin humility, and call them to repentance" (qtd in Carlson & Ebel ix). Marty also points out that "the editors and authors use jeremiad as a trope for framing and interpreting religiously informed expressions of discontent with the state of American society, focusing on moments attended by calls for and acts of violence" (qtd in Carlson & Ebel ix). These scholars portray the jeremiad as a tightly constructed text with a clear goal to persuade audiences to make changes to society through spiritual means. The principal characteristics that I will address in my analysis of Delany's text include expressions of discontent with the state of society as well as the prophetic indictment of American society.

African American Jeremiad

The previous scholarship summarizes perspectives in the published literature on the role of the traditional American jeremiad in American literary (and social) history, but to understand clearly what Delany is doing in *Condition*, we need to examine a subgenre, the *African American* jeremiad. The *African American* jeremiad shares some features with the *American* jeremiad but also has some distinct differences. Both versions of the jeremiad framed and interpreted religiously informed expressions of discontent. Authors of African American jeremiads are often critical of American society and lament the lowly conditions of African Americans' position in it. Jacqueline Bacon contends that "the African American jeremiad shares significant features with the broader genre of the American jeremiad, but also contains distinct elements of its own" (78). She specifically identifies the element of prophecy in the African American version as necessitating "some adjustment" to "theoretical perspective on the jeremiad . . . to account for the particular prophetic rhetoric of African American rhetors" (78). What Bacon means is that the authors of African American jeremiad had to account for their marginalized position, and one powerful approach was to present themselves as a prophet delivering the message of impending

doom. Bacon notes that the African American jeremiad is "based on fundamental paradoxes" because "African Americans are both part of American culture and excluded socially from it" (Bacon 78). She notes that therefore, "the African American jeremiadic speaker demonstrates both hostility toward American culture and loyalty to fundamental American values" (Bacon 78). Here Bacon is proposing a concept similar to the Du-Bosian theory of double-consciousness and its vision of twoness. In *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), W.E.B. Du Bois defines double-consciousness as "a peculiar sensation, the sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Du Bois 3). He describes twoness as "an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (3). In both cases, Du Bois and Bacon note the peculiar location of the African American rhetor in mainstream American society, where they are both a part of the society they critique and an outsider to it. When we apply these theories to the author of the jeremiad, it becomes clear that he (or she) recognizes that their membership as an outsider status to the society they critique plays a crucial role in the genre.

An Example of a Jeremiad: David Walker's Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World

In this section, I discuss David Walker's *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* to establish a basis for analyzing Delany's *Condition.* Walker's *Appeal* is an example of an African American jeremiad. This version of the jeremiad is a rhetorical genre, structured by a series of claims followed to their logical conclusions. The text is formatted into four articles, over the course of which Walker provides examples of the key elements of the African American jeremiad. In September of 1829, David Walker's *Appeal* was published in *Freedom's Journal*, the first African American newspaper which began publication in New York two years prior. In

article one, he establishes his moral and ethical credibility and laments the current state of Black life in America. Next, he calls on African Americans to move closer to God in order to rise up out of their oppression and find salvation. In article two, Walker laments the ignorance of his Black audience and the role this ignorance plays in their continued bondage. In article three, Walker connects white preaching and religious oppression with Black bondage. Lastly, Walker speaks of the impending doom of America should African Americans not be freed.

Walker's Appeal is described as "wide-ranging, fiercely militant and unequivocal in tone" (Katz vi). Walker's text departs from the abolitionist writings of the period (vi) in both tone and stance. In this section I do not conduct a full analysis of *Appeal*; instead, I identify passages that illustrate some of the key characteristics of an African American jeremiad. Walker's work provides an insightful counterfoil to Delany's jeremiad because it evinces these elements of what has become recognized as the traditional African American jeremiad, from which Delany departed as he re-fashioned the jeremiad to accomplish his persuasive goals.

We start by considering Walker's audience for the text. Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford, in "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy," expand our understanding of the role of the audience in a text. Ede and Lunsford note that "the most complete understanding of audience thus involves a synthesis of the perspectives we have termed audience addressed, with its focus on the reader, and audience invoked, with its focus on the writer" (Ede and Lunsford 167). In other words, according to Lunsford and Ede, writers need to be aware of both the audience they are addressing and the audience they create through their use of language and assumptions. In Walker's case, his addressed audience would primarily be enslaved Blacks because as Ede and Lunsford tell us, "the addressed audience, the actual or intended readers of a discourse, exists outside the text"

(Ede and Lunsford 167), and Walker would need to be in tune with their "needs, anticipate their biases, and even defer to their wishes" (Ede and Lunsford 167). The invoked audience is one that the author creates a role for, one that is borne out of the author's vision— "a vision which they [the author] hope readers will actively come to share as they read the text" (Ede Lunsford 167). The invoked audience is the group of readers that the author hopes they evolve into by the end of his or her argument. For Walker, the addressed audience would be moderate whites and free Blacks and his invoked audience would be both freed Blacks and moderate whites whose consciousness is raised and whom he would like to push for the liberation of all enslaved African Americans.

Walker begins *Appeal* with a preamble where he states that "having traveled over a considerable portion of these United States and having, in the course of my travels taken the most accurate observations of things as they exist—the result of my observations has warranted the full and unshakened conviction, that we, (coloured people of these United States) are the most degraded, wretched, and abject set of beings that ever lived since the world began" (12). Walker's opening reference to the lowly state of African Americans in the United States is a common move of the jeremiadic genre, which is to lament the dismal condition of some population of society, in this case, African Americans. Doing so presents the sad reality of life in bondage and hints that for people in this state, their only possible move is upward. Walker later asks a series of rhetorical questions beginning with "can our condition be any worse? (12) and followed by asking, "Can it be more mean and abject? If there are any changes, will they not be for the better, though they may appear for the worse at first? Can they get us any lower? Where can they get us?" (12). Walker's series of questions aims to illustrate the disparity of Black life in the United States compared to white Americans. His questions model a line of reflection about

the means for overcoming oppression in the United States. Specifically, Walker's line of questions is an attempt to elicit feelings of despair and fear while simultaneously offering a glimmer of hope, common in the genre.

One characteristic of the African American jeremiad used by Walker is the attempt to establish a sense of moral and ethical credibility. In article one of *Appeal*, Walker presents himself as both a good judge of moral character and knowledgeable about the past, both important strategies in an African American jeremiad to establish the authors' credibility. Authors of the African American jeremiad must consider their dual audience—both Black and white audiences—and what is necessary to establish their ethos as a deliverer of the moral failings of society. He states that "all the inhabitants of the earth are called men, and of course are, and ought to be free" (17), but immediately contradicts this assertion: "but we, (coloured people) and our children are *brutes!!* and of course are and ought to be SLAVES to the American people and their children forever! To dig their mines and work their farms; and thus go on enriching them, from one generation to another with our blood and our tears!!" (emphasis in original 17). Walker spells out the views of white Americans that Blacks are naturally inferior in order to point out the horrific conditions of their bondage. Walker then compares the treatment of the slaves of the United States with that of the slaves in Egypt recounted from the Bible. Walker points to the story of Joseph receiving a wife from the Pharaoh. Walker asks his audience to "compare [Egyptians] with the American institutions" (18) and poses another rhetorical question "do they not institute laws to prohibit us from marrying among whites?" (19). Walker points out that he made the comparison "to show how much lower we are held, and how much more cruel we are treated by Americans, than were the children of Jacob, by the Egyptians" (19). Walker's rhetorical strategy here is twofold. First, he aligns African Americans with the Egyptian

civilization to highlight a royal bloodline and to connect the accomplishments of the Egyptians with African Americans. Second, he wishes to show that although the Egyptians held slaves, they treated them with more dignity than do white Americans treat Blacks.

The second characteristic of a jeremiad exemplified in *Appeal* is the lamenting of the perceived ignorance of the target population, in this case, African Americans, and the role it plays in their bondage. Walker states that "ignorance, my brethren, is a mist, low down into the very dark and almost impenetrable abyss of which, our fathers for many centuries have been plunged" (29). Walker positions himself outside of the abyss of ignorance by tracing the history of arts and science through Egypt and into Europe when he states that "when we take a retrospective view of the arts and sciences—the wise legislators—The Pyramids, and other magnificent building—the turning of the channel of the river Nile, by the sons of Africa or Ham, among whom learning originated, and was carried thence into Greece, where it was improved upon and refined" (30). Walker demonstrates his knowledge while also emphasizing how Africa is the center of knowledge and learning. He then moves to the cause for African American bondage in the United States when he states, "ignorance and treachery one against the other—a servile and abject submission to the lash of tyrants, we see plainly, my brethren, are not the natural elements of the blacks, as the Americans try to make us believe; but these are misfortunes which God has suffered our fathers to be enveloped in for many ages, no doubt in consequence of their disobedience to their Maker" (32). Here Walker highlights the connection between the treatment and condition of his contemporary African Americans and some unidentified lapse in their worship of God that caused their subjection. A common trait of the jeremiad genre, in general, is the notion that the current state of the afflicted people's oppression is due to some past injurious action against God. We see Walker explicitly positioning himself as an authority here,

delivering the news to Blacks, demonstrating his enlightened state, a role the author of a jeremiad often takes.

While the lamenting of the perceived ignorance of the audience is important, the jeremiad offers a path forward through the use of emotion as a call to action. In the second article, Walker links the oppressed state of Black life with ignorance to appeal to pathos as a motive for action. He asserts that "ignorance, as it now exists among us, produces a state of things" (32) to offer an explanation for the condition of African Americans. Walker here connects the attempts by whites to keep African Americans illiterate as a central cause of their state. In support of this claim he directs, "any man who is curious to see the full force of ignorance developed among the colored people of the United States of America" (32) to "go into the southern and western states of the confederacy, where, if he is not a tyrant, but has feelings of a human being, who can feel for a fellow creature, he may see enough to make his heart bleed!" (32). His line "any man who is curious" is indirectly aimed at this audience as a call to action. He tries to make clear that whites lack moral standing and are responsible for keeping African Americans ignorant as a way of oppressing them. Walker then follows with an anaphora or series of sentences beginning with "he may see" or "my observer may see." These sentences list the atrocities of which African Americans have been victims. This list is an appeal to pathos because Walker wishes to elicit strong emotions of loss and sadness for what has befallen the descendants of Egypt.

Walker stays true to the African American jeremiad by offering his addressed audience a way out of their situation through the salvation of God. He tells them that they"must go to work and *prepare the way* of the Lord" (emphasis in original 42). He continues by stating, "there is a great work for you to do, as trifling as some of you may think of it. You have to prove to the Americans and the world, that we are *Men*, and not *brutes* as we have been represented, and by

millions treated" (emphasis in original 42). Walker informs Blacks that by educating themselves, they can persuade white Americans that they deserve better treatment. The jeremiad often ends with a call to salvation, and these passages illustrate Walker's attempt to offer an avenue for Black Americans to reach salvation. Lastly, he reminds his audience to "let the aim of your labours among your brethren, and particularly the youths, be the dissemination of education and religion" (42). Walker argues that the only way out of their current state is through education and faith. This move is also common to the African American jeremiad as a means for overcoming oppression. Walker claims that the only means by which ignorance and oppression can be overcome is through education and religion.

In Article III Walker uses another typical convention of the African American jeremiad, a focus on the religious oppression of the afflicted group. He connects Black wretchedness with Christian preachers, accusing them of "merchandising Africans" and conducting a plan to oppress them (47). He notes that "Pagans, Jews, and Mahometans try to make proselytes to their religions, and whatever human beings adopt their religions, they extend to them their protection" (48) but argues that "Christian Americans not only hinder their fellow creatures, the Africans, but thousands of them will *absolutely beat a coloured person nearly to death, if they catch him on his knees, supplicating the throne of grace*" (emphasis in original 48). What Walker claims in this passage is that white Christian Americans have adopted religion as a form of physical control. He argues that despite the strong religious faith that African Americans have as Christians in the US, they will never be seen by white American Christians as equals. Despite their state of inequality, he urges African Americans to maintain their faith in God's salvation, which he argues provides a form of redemption because they are able to maintain their faith

despite their situation. As stated, this promotion of redemption for the afflicted groups is a key element of the African American jeremiad.

A main component of the African American jeremiad is the warning of the doom that awaits should a group in society not correct their actions. In Article IV, Walker predicts what will become of white Americans should they not heed the warning of eternal damnation. Of white Americans, Walker proclaims, "you have and do continue to treat us [African Americans] more cruel than any heathen nation ever did a people it had subjected to the same condition you have us" (80). Walker reiterates the dangers that white Americans face should their actions continue and warns, "unless they [laws that oppress African Americans] are complied with, the Americans of the United States, though they may for a little while escape, God will yet weigh them in a balance, and if they are not superior to other men, as they have represented themselves to be, he will give them wretchedness to their very heart's content" (81). Walker warns that the oppression of African Americans will lead to the downfall of American society. He adds that the doom that awaits white American Christians reaches beyond life and will result in eternal damnation. These passages represent a common thread of the African American jeremiad, which is to use fear of an afterlife in hell to move the audience to change. These passages also show a shift in Walker's "audience addressed" (Lunsford and Ede) from Black Americans to white. The shift in audience marks a component of the African jeremiad and is supported by the "twoness" of Black life in America, which is described as being a part of society and distinctly separate from it. Additionally, the audience invoked is also worth discussing here as the white audience invoked In the African American jeremiad, the author progresses through his argument by moving from the oppressive conditions of Black life to exhorting white Americans to treat Blacks better.

Walker's *Appeal* represents a classic example of the African American jeremiad. His text adheres to the characteristics that scholars contend are included in the genre—lamenting the loss of morality in society while offering a path towards salvation. Unique to the African American jeremiad, however, is the dual audience of both white and Black American readers. While in the traditional jeremiad the writer blames a group's poor living conditions on their own behaviour, in the African American jeremiad, the writer laments the poor living conditions of one group (Black Americans) and blames another group (white Americans) for its causes. In Walker's case, this is mostly true as he does place some responsibility on African Americans for living in a mist and the role it plays in their bondage.

The African American jeremiad is an effective rhetorical genre that provides authors with a way for Black authors to lament the state of Black life in America and to criticize the moral failings of white Americans. Additionally, the rhetorical genre positions the author as a moral authority knowledgeable about the oppressive conditions African Americans face and what is necessary for their elevation.

Background

Delany's *Condition* is a classic version of the African American jeremiad and shares many similarities with Walker's *Appeal*. Both rhetoricians lament the state of Black life in America and point to the moral failings of society. Scholars who have written on *Condition* consider it to be one of Delany's most influential texts of the antebellum era. They have referred to *Condition* as a manifesto and an emigrationist text among others. However, their descriptions do not fully capture the text's genre. For example, many scholars note that the work is a political text that aims to promote emigration and Pan-Africanism. Benjamin Brawley describes *Condition* as "a mine of information about the social and economic status of the Negro ten years

before the Civil War" (219). Brawley emphasizes the importance of Delany's contribution to our understanding of Black life pre-Civil War. While Brawley rightly acknowledges the historical-cultural value of *Condition*, he tends to overlook the rhetorical richness of the text. Raymond Betts describes *Condition* as "a seminal work in the history of writings on the [B]black ethos" (4), while Vernon Loggins argues that it shows Delany, "at his best" (184) and views the book as " a valuable source for a study of the social position of the free Negro in the United States during the Civil War" (184). What all these scholars have in common is that their approach to *Condition* values historical-cultural contributions. What they overlook is that *Condition* is a jeremiad. Loggins argues that "Delany's main purpose in writing the book, as the concluding chapters show, was to encourage the emigration of free blacks to Central America" (184). While that is clearly part of Delany's project, emigration does not represent the entirety of Delany's aims for the text. He also wishes to promote a Black nationalist or pan-Africanist philosophy, one that connects African Americans with Africa. Throughout *Condition*, Delany attempts to show a sense of pride in African Americans with respect to their African ancestors. While he does not advocate for a return to Africa (although he does in *Official Report*), he attempts to make a connection between Africa's proud history and the need for African Americans to determine their own future. To achieve his goal, Delany, I argue, sought to use the nineteenth-century African American jeremiad and transform it into a broader project designed to advocate for the racial uplift of Black Americans.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, since it was (and is) a shocking and provocative recommendation, much of the scholarship around *Condition* glosses over its argument and focuses on its contributions to the cultural and historical understanding of Black life pre-Civil War. In *Bearing Witness to African American Literature* (2012), Bernard Bell calls *Condition* " a

valued literary document" (77) because the text offers an early depiction of pan-Africanism. Bell acknowledges the contribution Delany makes to Black literature and culture by praising its literary value. Similar to Bell, Tommie Shelby in *We Who are Dark* (2005) describes *Condition* as an "influential work" and the "first extended defense of African American emigration from the United States, urging free and fugitive blacks to collectively form an independent republic that would enable them to live under conditions of equality and liberty" (26). As with previously mentioned scholars, Shelby highlights the historical aspects of *Condition* while pointedly avoiding any attempt to address the argument or rhetorical aspects of the text. Kersuze Simeon-Jones follows a similar trajectory through her focus on Delany's role in developing our understanding of African American culture during the antebellum era when she refers to *Condition* as "the manifesto of the economic, political, and social predicament of blacks in the United States" (60). Simeon-Jones also notes that "the analysis of *The Condition* reflects the dangers of the teachings of an appropriated Christianity, which was geared to deliberately miseducate blacks through the misuse of the Scriptures" (60). In this quotation, Simeon-Jones alludes to how, in *Condition*, Delany addresses the fact that Christian scripture was misused to naturalize and reinforce the subjugation of African Americans through slavery and inequality. The analysis by these scholars speaks to the influence Delany's text has had on African American culture. The importance of his ability to recognize the misuse of Christianity and offer an alternative to white teachings cannot be underestimated. As Simeon-Jones states, "*The Condition* outlines the principles the black community must understand and follow" (61). She notes that *Condition* highlighted the inequities experienced by Blacks in the US in all facets of their lives, but she also highlights it as an important achievement in Delany's critique of American Christianity as a tool for maintaining these inequities. The African American jeremiad,

as a rhetorical genre, provides Delany with the opportunity to present his audience with those principles because he could adopt the role of a teacher, allowing him to criticize white American Christianity and present an alternative view of African American Christianity and history.

Little scholarship has dealt with the genre of *Condition* or whether it is an African American jeremiad. Willie J. Harrell Jr.'s *Origins of the African American Jeremiad* argues that Delany uses a "jeremiadic nationalistic rhetoric to persuade his audience to look for retribution and conduct 'great work' in a more wide-ranging way than his predecessors" (88). Further, Harrell also referred to Delany as "one of the foremost black Jeremiah Nationalists of nineteenth-century America" (89). Harrell defines Black Jeremiah Nationalist as two modes of rhetorical strategies—the African American jeremiad and Black Nationalism—operating simultaneously (73). Lastly, Harrell posits that "Delany's jeremiadic nationalist vision imagined a 'more perfect union' for [B]blacks" (89). Although Harrell does not explicitly address *Condition*'s genre, he does draw connections between Delany's rhetoric and message with the prophet Jeremiah. Harrell's claim that Delany was one of the foremost Black Jeremiah Nationalists implies that Delany's works drew simultaneously on both elements of the African American jeremiad and the philosophy of Black nationalism.

Victor Ullman comments on Delany's nationalist vision. He states that Delany referred to this vision as "self-elevation" (22) but notes that "he meant more than [the] education of his people" (Ullman 22). Ullman states, "his [Delany's] concept was the creation of a distinct minority group, so changing itself as to become a pattern for the majority society around it" (22). Ullman argues that Delany wished to model a form of leadership through education and elevation that African Americans would follow. The rhetorical genre of the African American

jeremiad affirms the author's role as a teacher and leader, thus allowing Delany to assume a form of leadership through the argument he makes in the text.

While there is ample scholarship on *Condition* and its contributions to our historical and cultural understanding of African American life during the antebellum era, as well as work demonstrating Delany's attempts to model leadership or document the economic, social, and political aspects of Black life, little scholarship has addressed Delany's rhetoric or the genre that Delany uses to achieve his goals. However, by analyzing Delany's rhetorical moves we can reach a new understanding of his use of the African American jeremiad to persuade his readers to consider his model of racial uplift—a model that includes a pan-Africanist and emigrationist philosophy.

Analysis of *Condition*

In the discussion that follows I conduct a rhetorical analysis of *Condition*. I approach the text as it unfolds in time for the reader in order to demonstrate how Delany develops his argument within the genre of an African American jeremiad. My approach is not to provide an exhaustive treatment of each chapter, but rather a selective analysis of passages that enables a concise framework for discussing Delany's use of the jeremiad.

Delany's structure in *Condition* does not stray far from the title as it clearly defines the structure of the text. He carefully crafts the first two chapters to contrast the role of slavery in Europe with slavery in the United States, exemplifying a primary characteristic of the jeremiad: to lament the far worse conditions African American slaves face when compared to the slaves of Europe. Delany then critiques the American Colonization Society for what he sees as an effort to remove freedmen from the United States and thus an obstacle to the continuation of slavery. Chapter four discusses the available means of elevation for African Americans in the United

States. The chapter provides readers with another characteristic of the African American jeremiad as Delany laments the corruption of Christianity by white American preachers and the hypocrisy between the words and deeds of the nation. Delany follows with several chapters that document the intellectual, economic, and artistic contributions of African Americans to the United States. The section provides the audience, both addressed and invoked, the evidence and justification for Black equality. The remaining chapters serve to lead the audience to Delany's logical conclusion—that emigration from the United States is essential for Black elevation. The use of the African American jeremiad provides one way for Delany to move from the lamentation of Black life in antebellum America towards presenting what he sees as the logical solution—emigration for the purpose of achieving racial uplift. His logical conclusion is prefaced by chapter sixteen, where he reproduces the Fugitive Slave Act verbatim. This rhetorical strategy shows readers the extent to which white Americans collaborate to maintain the institution of slavery. For Delany, showing (not just telling) his readers is pivotal.

Preface

In the Preface to *Condition* Delany discusses his inspiration for writing the text and starts by downplaying his argument and writing abilities. Delany's preface might be read as a strategy to veil his rhetorical skills by lowering the expectations of his audience. As previously mentioned, this strategy is what Bacon refers to as nonchalance or self-deprecation. Delany opens by stating, "the author of this little volume has no other apology for offering it to the public, than the hurried manner in which it has been composed" (35). Interestingly, he does not apologize for publishing it but for having composed it quickly. He comments that he "wrote the work in the inside of one month" (35) and urges his readers to "not entertain an idea of elegance of language and terseness of style" (35). Delany attempts to disarm his audience by admitting

that he composed the text in a hurry; this might be argued to be an example of the rhetoric of courtship (Burke 1950). He appears to defer to the hierarchy of race but the language is meant to reverse the hierarchy and place him in a position of authority. The Burkean theory describes "the use of suasive devices for the transcending of social estrangement" (Burke 208). In other words, the rhetoric of courtship is meant to bridge the gap, in Delany's case, between perceived racial or social classes between him and white American readers of his text. Delany's use of the rhetoric of self-deprecation and of courtship enables him to exceed the expectations he sets early on. Although this is an ancient strategy that dates back at least as far as Thucydides, it is especially important for the rhetoric of oppressed peoples. Rhetors would seek to do this to elevate their message because by exceeding the low expectations they have set for themselves initially it disarms an audience who may be skeptical of the speaker or writer.

The preface serves several rhetorical purposes. First, it allows Delany to reverse the hierarchy in his contemporary society that designated him as the inferior speaking to superiors, so he employs strategies from the rhetoric of courtship for his audience. He then acts as a messenger, delivering vital information, when he notes, " his [Delany's] sole object has been, to place before the public in general, and the colored people of the United States in particular, great truths concerning this class of citizens, which appears to have been heretofore avoided, as well by friends as enemies to their elevation" (Delany 35). This passage informs readers of Delany's project—to deliver vital information to Black citizens directly. Delany's choice of "great truths" is important because it offers our first clue that this document is a jeremiad. The role of the author in African American jeremiads is to deliver "truths" to alert society about how they can avoid potential doom. Delany claims that these "great truths" have been hidden by opponents "to conceal information, that they are well aware would stimulate and impel them [African

Americans] on to bold and adventurous deeds of manly daring" (Delany 35) and by friends "who seem to have acted on the principle of the zealous orthodox, who would prefer losing the object of his pursuit to changing his policy" (Delany 35). Delany's reference to friends likely references white abolitionists who maintain control of the movement through policy. Delany continues this line of argument, still presenting himself as the objective messenger who understands what is necessary for Black uplift and is here to help his readers see and understand this as well. At the same time, we can see similarities between Walker's *Appeal* and the opening to *Condition*. Both Walker and Delany remind their audience of the evils of American society and offer what they see as necessary for Black elevation. Likewise, both put the blame not only on African Americans but also on whites that continue to enslave and oppress.

Delany points to both the need for the "truths" that he delivers in the text and the exigency for his project when he explains the desire of African Americans to receive the truth he has to provide. He notes that

> there are also a great many colored people in the United States, who have independence of spirit, who desire to, and do, think for themselves; but for the want of general information, and in consequence of a prevailing opinion that has obtained, that no thoughts nor opinions must be expressed, even though it would eventuate in their elevation, except it emanate from some old, orthodox, stereotyped doctrine concerning them; therefore, such a work as this, which is but a mere introduction to what will henceforth emanate from the pen of colored men and women, appeared to be in most anxious demand, in order to settle their minds entirely, and concentrate them upon an effective and specific course of procedure. (Delany 35-36)

This passage, in emphasizing that his African American readers are anxious to learn what he has to teach, signals to readers the importance of his text and the urgency that it be delivered. It is also evidence that Delany is using the African American jeremiad genre because he positions himself as the author delivering "truths" in this text that have been sought but denied to African Americans. Much as Walker's *Appeal* provides vital information to help readers avoid potential

[spiritual and physical] doom, Delany provides "great truths" that will lead African Americans to freedom.

A final noteworthy aspect of the Preface is Delany's commentary on the weight or importance of his text. He informs readers that "the original intention was to make this a pamphlet of a few pages, the writer commencing with that view; but finding that he could not thus justify the design of the work, will fully explain the cause of its present volume" (Delany 37). When we compare this statement with the opening where he downplays his writing skills, we see that he did not hastily compose the text but rather crafted it carefully. By implying that the work changed for him, Delany overturns his previous description of his text as hastily thrown together to one that he has given much thought. Further evidence of the time and effort he put into the text can be seen when he says, "the subject of this work is one that the writer has given thought for years, and the only regret that he has now in placing it before the public is, that his circumstances and engagements have not afforded him such time and opportunity as to do justice to it. But, should he succeed in turning the attention of colored people, in general, in this direction—he shall have been amply compensated for the labor bestowed" (Delany 38). Although Delany continues to claim his work does not do the topic justice, we learn that he has long thought about this issue. His claims of a hurried delivery are, in fact, an emotional appeal that helps communicate the urgency of the text. Delany also claims that the text is a hurried release to suggest that its release is a public service, indicating that Delany is not out for personal gain but is rather a servant of the people.

The preface articulates Delany's motive for writing the text, which is to present "great truths" as public to African Americans. The jeremiad constitutes a genre that typically positions the author to deliver "truths" to their audience. Often these truths are spiritual and are meant to

bring the audience closer to God. Delany's Preface suggests that his text will deliver similar ideas. However, he notes that what he has to say has long been hidden by enemies [the devil] and friends [orthodoxy] alike. This claim speaks to the importance of his writing and the message he plans to deliver.

Delany uses the preface to reverse the hierarchical structure that places white abolitionists (friends) in control of the movement. He invites the reader to hear the "truths" he possesses and plans to share over the course of the chapters.

Chapters 1-4

In chapters one and two, Delany recounts in detail the severe state of oppression that African Americans face in the United States. In chapters three and four, Delany details the conditions of slaves in Europe and the African Americans in the United States before comparing the two populations. This comparison of European oppressed people with African Americans represents an aspect of the African American jeremiad because it illustrates the severity of oppression that African Americans face and the lack of morality in American society. Comparing the treatment of the two enslaved groups reminds readers that the institution of slavery is cruel and immoral. Delany emphasizes that the oppression under which contemporary African Americans live exceeds that of Europeans throughout Western history. He labels this distinction as "historical facts that cannot be controverted" (41). By claiming it an uncontroverted fact that African Americans are more oppressed than any European peasants throughout history, Delany signals that, for him, the degree of oppression endured by African Americans is not a subject that can be argued any more than one can argue about the freezing point of water.

Following the characteristics of the jeremiad, Delany laments the enslavement of African Americans by contrasting the slavery in America with that of Europe. In the opening chapter,

"Condition of Many Classes in Europe Considered," Delany briefly discusses the history of bondage. He notes, "that there have been in all ages and in all countries, in every quarter of the habitable globe, especially among those nations laying the greatest claim to civilization and enlightenment, classes of people that have been deprived of equal privileges, political, religious, and social cannot be denied" (41). He acknowledges that slavery and oppression are part of human history and society. However, he implies in his opening discussion of the oppressed classes of European history that their oppression was less severe than those in the United States. He also notes that "it is not our intention here to discuss the justice or injustice of the causes that have contributed to their [African Americans'] degradation, but simply to set forth the undeniable facts, which are as glaring as the rays of a noonday's sun, thereby to impress them indelibly on the mind of every reader of this pamphlet" (42). Delany demonstrates for his readers that he knows European history so he can accurately contrast the condition of African Americans with the peoples of Europe. In doing this, he presents the African Americans' condition as far worse, stating that "however unfavorable their [European slaves] condition, there is none more so than that of the colored people of the United States" (Delany 43). Delany contrasts the conditions of these two peoples in order to lament the current state of life for African Americans in the United States.

Delany then shifts from comparing the enslaved peoples of Europe with African Americans to the arbitrary laws used to maintain the institution of slavery. He argues that "wherever there is arbitrary rule, there must be necessity, on the part of the dominant classes, superiority be assumed. To assume superiority is to deny the equality of others, and to deny their equality, is to premise their incapacity for self-government" (42). In this passage, Delany explains that oppressing classes rule based on arbitrary factors rather than true genetic or

intellectual superiority, yet justify their positions of power by believing they are somehow superior to those they govern or enslave. Because they believe themselves to be superior, they judge others as inferior, unequal, and unable to govern themselves. This belief then justifies oppressive rule. Again, Delany points out this injustice in order to lament the oppression African Americans face in their daily lives.

Delany posits that notions of superiority and inferiority are arbitrary and not based on science. He adds, "let this [assumed superiority] once be conceded, and there will be little or no sympathy for the oppressed, the oppressor being left to prescribe whatever terms at discretion for their own government, suits his own purpose" (42-43). In this passage, Delany points out that any assumed inferiority leads the self-appointed superior group to create a government that suits the oppressor group. In making this argument, Delany undermines the views that have been made by white oppressors in both Europe and the United States. What Delany is tracing here is a system that was created to suit the white ruling class at the expense of Black Americans. By arguing that the condition of African Americans is far worse than various classes of oppressed Europeans, Delany employs a common trait of the jeremiad—lamenting the poor conditions of a group in society. What is not common about Delany's use of this characteristic, however, is that he contrasts two groups at different times in human history to make his point: African Americans in the present and peasants in European history. This contrast is purposefully chosen for its clear racial undertones because European slaves—in other words, "white" slaves—were treated far better than African American slaves in the United States. This comparison continues to introduce his argument that Black elevation is hindered by white oppression in America.

In addition to the lamenting of African American oppression, Delany links slavery with the potential doom of American society. In chapter two, "Comparative Condition of the Colored

People of the United States," Delany argues that "the United States, untrue to her trust and unfaithful to her professed principles of republican equality, has also pursued a policy of political degredation to a large portion of her native born countrymen, and that class is the Colored People" (44). He personifies the United States as a woman ("*her* trust") as he describes its relationship with African Americans. Personifying the US as a woman implies that African Americans are the man in the relationship, and in doing so Delany implies several things: First, that the United States, as a woman, has birthed ideals that she has neglected to nurture, making her a "bad mother," and second, that she has been "unfaithful," suggesting a marriage (or monogamous relationship) between America and the ideals it espouses complete with mutual obligations and commitments. The accusation of infidelity illustrates his use of the jeremiad because Delany connects slavery with the potential doom of American society because infidelity is seen as the breaking of a vow taken before God. Delany here suggests that the United States has broken the promise of liberty and freedom for all when it enslaves Black Americans. By describing the United States as a "bad mother" Delany argues that the country has failed to nurture her children (citizens) nor has she raised her children (citizens) to be respectful. By referring to the United States as an unfaithful wife he implies that infidelity is a breakdown or corruption of society that Delany links to the institution of slavery. The institution of slavery constitutes infidelity or corruption because it violates God's law to love thy neighbour.

Barbara Welter can help us to understand why Delany might make this comparison. In "The Cult of True Womanhood 1820-1860," while discussing the roles of men and women in the nineteenth century, Welter notes that for nineteenth-century women "it was a fearful obligation, a solemn responsibility which the nineteenth-century American woman had—to uphold the pillars of the temple (pillars of moral strength in the home and marriage) with her frail white hand"

(Welter 152). Delany's decision to adopt the common reference to America as the woman is used to strengthen the emotional appeal of this argument. Additionally, Welter tells us that "the attributes of True Womanhood, by which a woman judged herself and was judged by her husband, her neighbors and society could be divided into four cardinal virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity" (Welter 152). By figuring the United States as the woman in the relationship, Delany suggests that America is not fulfilling her roles in society. Making this claim can be traced back to characteristics of the jeremiad because as Welter informs us, "without them [the virtues of true womanhood], no matter whether there was fame, achievement or wealth, all was ashes" (Welter 152). What is then implied by Delany's comparison is that unless the United States changes its ways, all will be ashes.

To continue this comparison, Delany notes that the United States "has also pursued a policy of political degradation to a large portion of her native countrymen, and that class is the Colored People" (44). While this statement appears to resemble what he discussed in the previous chapter, Delany differentiates between the oppressed classes of Europe and African Americans by stating that African Americans being, "reduced to abject slavery is not enough…, but those of their descendants who are freeman even in the non-slaveholding States, occupy the very same position politically, religiously, civilly and socially, as the bondman occupies in the Slave states" (44). Within the subtext to this sentence is his main argument—that while enslaved Europeans could gain freedom and enjoy equality with other non-enslaved citizens, in the United States, free Blacks remain oppressed and without rights. Placing the blame on slavery as an institution and not on Black Americans represents a significant shift in traditional jeremiadiac conventions. Rather than lament the perceived ignorance of African Americans and the role that it plays in their oppression, Delany shifts blame onto the corrupt and immoral system of slavery.

Doing so eliminates the role of Black Americans in the potential downfall of American society. This rhetorical move of distancing African Americans from American society makes it easier for Delany to make the argument for emigration as it is the people [African Americans] and not the land that defines the nation. Delany's uniting African Americans around their shared experience and not the land opens the door for his argument for emigration because it suggests that they are not tied to any particular place. Delany's move here is distinctive from that of Walker who places blame both on white slaveholders and African Americans.

As he had discussed in the previous chapter, oppressed peoples in Europe were only denied equal rights until they became free. African Americans, however, Delany argues, are denied equal rights even if they are freed or born free Blacks. He argues that "the bondman is disfranchised, and for the most part, so are we [freedmen]. He is denied all civil, religious, and social privileges, except such he gets by mere sufferance and so are we" (44). He continues his argument that freed Black Americans lack legal or civil rights similar to enslaved Black Americans, "they have no part nor lot in the government of the country, neither have we. They are ruled and governed without representation, existing as mere nonentities among the citizens, and excrescences on the body politic—a mere dreg in community, and so are we" (44). We can draw a parallel between this emphasis and Delany's earlier shifting of blame from his Black audience to the institution of slavery as responsible for their lamentable condition. Additionally, the emotional power of this language fuels the jeremiad. With language such as "nonentities" and "dreg" Delany utilizes the emotions of the jeremiad to show the level of misery and oppression.

Another significant aspect of this passage and of the text is Delany's use of "we" which he repeats throughout both to establish the audience addressed, his ethos, and his "consubstantiality" of Blackness. For example, in the above passage, Delany's use of we unites

all Blacks (enslaved and free) around their disenfranchisement. This move shows that all Blacks, including Delany, share a common struggle.

The various situations that Delany presents both implicitly and explicitly in these passages fit within common characteristics of the African American jeremiad. First, he demonstrates that Black Americans in the US have worse living conditions than any other group in history by comparing their lot to that of past enslaved and oppressed classes in Europe and showing that Blacks face a much more difficult situation. He also criticizes the moral failures of a group, as traditional jeremiads do, but instead of blaming African Americans for their own misfortunes, he emphasizes that the level of oppression they endure is entirely due to the moral failures of white Americans. Here Delany follows Walker's tactic in *Appeal*, using a rhetorical move that laments the state of Black life in America while placing blame for it on the choices and policies of white Americans. Unlike Walker, Delany is easier on his Black audience.

Still in chapter two Delany uses a rhetorical question to highlight how, unlike European serfs, African Americans gain no improved status by being freed or free-born. He asks, "where then is our [free Blacks] political superiority to the enslaved?" (44), and answers, "none, neither are we superior in any other relation to society, except that we are de facto masters of ourselves and joint rulers of our own domestic household, while the bondman's self is claimed by another, and his relation to his family denied him" (45). Outside of "ruling" their domestic household, nothing distinguishes the freedman from the slave. As we have noted, Delany's lament for the state of Black life in America is characteristic of the jeremiad. He employs the principal characteristic of the jeremiad in *Condition* because he wants to use the relationship that this genre constructs between the author and the audience. A jeremiad, as a genre, creates a unique relationship between the speaker and his or her listeners. It immediately positions the speaker as

a messenger or prophet to the audience, a speaker who can and must present difficult truths to listeners, and as a leader who can help them find their way to better living conditions through behaving differently. Clearly, Delany selected the jeremiad for *Condition* because this relationship automatically positions him as a messenger for his African American readers and predisposes them to hear the hard truths he has to speak.

Delany presents a second rhetorical question that contains another hard truth: "have we not now sufficient intelligence among us to understand our true position, to realise our actual condition, and determine for ourselves what is best to be done?" (45). This question challenges listeners to consider the possibility that they do not need white Americans to make decisions in their best interests, that they can examine their own situations dispassionately and develop an appropriate solution. The jeremiad genre positions Delany's readers as interested followers who want their leader to tell them what to do to improve their own situations. Additionally, the genre enables him to position himself so that he can not only speak to African Americans' oppression but also provide them with what he sees as the solution. The solution that he proposes—and the end goal of his text—is to convince his audience that the only way for Black Americans to achieve full civil rights is to emigrate from the United States. He then concludes the chapter by addressing the next critical point to his argument.

Having just proposed to his readers that they have the intelligence to solve their own problems, Delany then addresses and counters what he anticipates may be the objection to his position, the argument that blacks are naturally inferior to whites. Rather than arguing against assertions of Black inferiority, Delany takes a philosophical stance toward the issue and examines what characteristics may make a group vulnerable to these types of judgments. He states that "wherever the objects of oppression are the most easily distinguished by any peculiar

or general characteristics, these people are the more easily oppressed, because the war of oppression is the more easily waged against them" (48). Delany points out that Black Americans are oppressed not due to some natural inferiority but rather because their skin colour marks a distinguishable difference. His warrant, or underlying assumption, then is that because no action can change this fact, African Americans will always be a visible object of oppression in the United States. Delany does not connect this point with his proposed solution here, but he is laying the groundwork, so this point will become relevant as he moves towards his eventual proposal for emigration. Delany explains that these "peculiar" objects of oppression (Black Americans) are targeted or singled out by the colour of their skin "to ensure the greater success [the successful implementation of oppression] because it engenders the greater prejudice, or in other words, elicits less interest on the part of the oppressing class, in their favor" (48). He also claims, "this [oppression of Black Americans] is mere policy, nature having nothing to do with it. Still, it is a fact, a great truth well worthy of remark, and as such to adduce it for the benefit of those of our readers, unaccustomed to an inquiry into the policy of nations" (48). Lastly, Delany notes that "in view of these truths, our father and leaders in our elevation, discovered that as a policy, we the colored people were selected as the subordinate class in this country, not on account of any actual or supposed inferiority on their part, but simply because, in view of all the circumstances of the case, they were the best class that could be selected" (48). He emphasizes that Black Americans were selected to be an inferior class for good reasons, which he enumerates. First, they are oppressed because they are easily visually distinguishable. Second, he notes that "the African race had long been known to Europeans, in all ages of the world's history, as a long-lived, hardy race, subject to toil and labor of various kinds, subsisting mainly by traffic, trade, industry, and consequently being as foreign to the sympathies of the invaders of the

continents as the Indians" (50). He emphasizes that Europeans have recognized that Africans are strong and vital people who are used to hard work, unlike, he notes, the Europeans themselves. He is also underscoring, in this description of Africans, the fact that historically, they have been appreciated as a superior race (to Europeans) especially in their strength, good health, and willingness to work hard.

Delany's account of why Black people are oppressed in the United States also reveals aspects of the jeremiad as he points to the arbitrary nature of Black enslavement. Here Delany appeals to the characteristic of the jeremiad that laments the state of Black life by highlighting that their enslavement is arbitrary. When Delany makes the point that Africans are more hardy, long-lived, and harder working than Europeans, he also draws on the affordances of the jeremiad, although somewhat implicitly. He critiques the slavers by noting that Africans are unlike the Europeans that force others to do hard work for them. He states that they enslave Africans because the slavers know that Africans can do the hard work the slavers are too weak to do themselves. This passage suggests that the admirable attribute of African Americans as hardworking is actually a curse in the United States where they are exploited. The passage connects to the jeremiad because Delany is lamenting the state of life in America for African Americans and a society that uses positive characteristics of a people against them.

Delany continues his critique of the US's policy of Black racial inferiority when he argues, "nor was the absurd idea of natural inferiority of the African American was never dreamed of, until recently adduced by the slave-holders and their abettors, in justification of the policy"(51). Here Delany is working on two fronts. First, he continues to lament the current state of oppression for all African Americans in the United States, which follows the jeremiad genre. Second, he builds his argument with sub-claims, which will eventually reveal and support his

argument for emigration. These two fronts show how the jeremiad is an effective rhetorical genre for Delany. However, rather than lamenting the state of Black life and advocating for Americans to turn to God for redemption, Delany uses his lamentation as part of a strategy to prepare his readers to consider not waiting for God but acting on their own behalf and, when they eventually reach his argument for emigration, be receptive to the action he proposes they take.

Delany uses the jeremiad to lament not only the state of African Americans but also to critique more broadly white involvement in Anti-Slavery Conventions and the American Colonization Society. This rhetorical move of critiquing activist groups that claim to support African American emancipation is critical to understanding why Delany reimagines and revises the jeremiad genre to make it a useful genre that can help his readers improve their condition. Delany's view of agency entails taking action for oneself rather than relying on divine intervention and prayer. His view then would logically lead to his decision to revise a genre that does not solve the problem that it purports to address. Because the genre tends to promote divine intervention as a means of salvation, the jeremiad indirectly becomes an instrument of oppression. Delany argues that salvation and freedom will only come through action. Delany uses the jeremiad because it is a genre that his readers will immediately recognize that allows them to anticipate what he is going to say and how. He uses the genre to gain the effect of readers thinking they know what they are going to get when they see the initial characteristics. He uses his readers' anticipation as an emotional appeal to make them feel more comfortable and receptive because it makes his argument easier to receive. For example, although Delany acknowledges the contributions of white abolitionists, he compares their treatment of African Americans to slave-holders, stating, "we [African Americans in general] were doomed to disappointment. Instead of realising what we had hoped for, we find ourselves occupying the

very same position in relation to our Anti-Slavery friends, as we do in relation to the pro-slavery part of the community" (55). Delany describes their position as "a mere secondary, underling position, in our all relations to them, and any thing more than this, is not a matter of course affair—it comes not by established anti-slavery custom or right, but like that which emanates from the proslavery portion of the community, by mere sufferance" (55). Delany says that the secondary position of African Americans is a result of white Americans regardless of their stance on slavery. He argues that any benefits African Americans get from anti-slavery whites are not real and only granted because those whites tacitly consent to Blacks being allowed to have that benefit. What Delany emphasizes is that the system that relegates African Americans to an inferior position in the United States is arbitrary. Delany's claim has two purposes. First, he points out to his readers that African Americans are treated as inferior by both abolitionist and pro-slavery groups alike. This move contributes to the jeremiadic aspect of lamentation in the text by describing the similarity of the position between slaves and freemen. This bold speaking of truth to power is characteristic of the jeremiad. By exposing out loud that even abolitionists treat African Americans as a "mere secondary" to themselves, Delany continues to lay the groundwork for his principal argument that African Americans can achieve equal rights and true freedom only by emigrating from the United States. Additionally, we can look symbolically at what Delany is doing rhetorically as breaking from the American literary/rhetorical genre of the jeremiad to create something of his own just as he urges Blacks to break from American and emigrate if they too wish to create something of their own.

Delany warns African Americans that the goal of the ACS is to remove them from America to eliminate any resistance to slavery. In chapter three, "American Colonization, " Delany sharpens his critique of the American Colonization Society by comparing the ACS to the

Genesis story of Adam and Eve. In fact, he uses the ACS as a transitional device in his argument. Delany argues that the ACS "commenced in Richmond, Virginia, in 1817, under the influence of Southern slaveholders, having for their express object, as their speeches and doings all justify us in asserting in good faith, the removal of the free colored people from the land of their birth, for the security of the slaves, as property to the slave propagandists" (58). Delany criticizes the ACS because, although it claimed to be an anti-slavery society, it sought to relocate freed African Americans to Liberia. Delany claims that "the colored people generally have had no sympathy with the colonization scheme, nor confidence in its leaders, looking upon them all, as arrant hypocrites, seeking every opportunity to deceive them" (59). He notes that African Americans see the ACS as hypocritical because it claims to oppose slavery while covertly trying to remove free African Americans from US soil. He then says, "in a word, the monster was crippled in its infancy" (59) and later references Genesis 3.1 by stating, "it is true, that like its ancient sire [slavery], that was 'more subtle than all the beasts of the field,' it [ACS/serpent] has inherited a large portion of his most prominent characteristics—an idiosyncrasy with the animal—that enables him to entwine himself into the greater part of the Church and other institutions of the country, which having once entered there, leaves his venom" (59)[2]. Like the serpent, the ACS, according to Delany, is a corrupting force that should be resisted. His critique of the ACS is important for his argument because he needs to show that the version of emigration that he advocates is radically different from that of the ACS because he has the best interests of African Americans at heart while the ACS betrays Black Americans to support slaveholders.

Delany compares the ACS to the serpent in the Garden of Eden and explicitly criticizes the organization, but if we analyze this metaphor from a rhetorical perspective, his critique

[2] Although most African Americans held this position, some prominent Blacks, such as minister Lott Cary, cooperated with the Society and emigrated under these auspices.

reveals more. The serpent in Genesis is responsible for convincing Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God tells Adam and Eve that "you must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die." and the serpent states, "You will not certainly die, for God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:3-5). After they bite the apple God says, "man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.' So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken" (Genesis 3:22-23). This banishment results in the estrangement of Adam and Eve from God and the passing down of original sin to all their descendants. Similar to the deception of the serpent in the Book of Genesis, Delany paints the ACS as offering African Americans a solution that works against their interests while driving a wedge between freed and enslaved African Americans. The comparison also fits into the jeremiad genre because it issues a warning to readers about the dangers of following the ACS because its plans will oust African Americans from their homeland and lead them away from God. He sees the ACS as the serpent attempting to poison the minds of free African Americans by trying to persuade them to act against their own best interests and emigrate from the United States but at the same time framing the argument as somehow beneficial to them. Additionally, the jeremiad, which positions the speaker as a trusted, and godly leader of the people, verifies and supports Delany as a trusted leader and the ACS as evil and misleading. Delany's culminating claim against the ACS states that "we [free Blacks] look upon the American Colonization Society as one of the most arrant enemies of the colored man, ever seeking to discomfit him, and envying him of every privilege he may enjoy. We believe it to be anti-Christian in its character, and misanthropic in its

pretended sympathies" (59). Delany paints the ACS as anti-Christian, continuing to align the organization with the evil of slavery, as it seeks to rob free Blacks of "every privilege" they may enjoy. Delany sees the ACS as a treacherous organization that aims to rob African Americans of their right to choose their means of elevation because he sees their push for emigration as dishonest as it does the bidding of slave-owning whites. While Delany does favour emigration, he argues that it should be for all Blacks and not simply free men and women.

Delany ends the chapter with a warning, a common trait of the jeremiad, when he states, "A serpent is a serpent, and one none the less a viper, because nestled in the bosom of an honest hearted man. This the colored people must bear in mind, and keep clear the hideous thing, lest its venom may be test upon them" (62). Delany issues a warning to those in the Black community that the ACS is not to be trusted because the organization's true mission is hidden behind the veil of benevolence. Delany's goal in this chapter is to condemn the ACS and the argument that they have the best interests of African Americans in mind. His metaphor aligning them with the serpent discredits their purpose by suggesting they intend to deceive free blacks. While Delany favours emigration, he does so only under specific terms. For Delany, any emigration must be available to all Blacks and not just those who have already attained freedom. His critique of the ACS, which further contributes to his portrait of the state of life for African Americans and his warning to free Blacks, are elements of a traditional jeremiad. Throughout chapter three, Delany warns free Blacks to resist the deception of the ACS and to avoid its plans for Black elevation.

Delany opens the fourth chapter, "Our Elevation in the United States," with a credo, or statement of beliefs with an ancient connection to Christianity, where he speaks for all African Americans: "We believe in the universal equality of man, and believe in that declaration of God's word, in which it is there positively said, that 'God has made of one blood all the nations that

dwell on the face of the earth'"(63). Delany establishes that in the eyes of God, all humans are equal. He then explains that this edict has not been seen on earth, and particularly not in the US. He describes a part of the earth where two-thirds of human beings are coloured (63) yet subjugated by the minority of white humans. He states that "wherever there is one white person, that one rules and governs two colored persons. This is a living undeniable truth, to which we call the especial attention of the colored reader in particular" (63-64). Here Delany prepares readers for his argument that the injustices facing African Americans stem not from a divine proclamation (as presented by white [slaveholding Christian] Americans) but the attempt by white Americans to control Americans of colour. He uses the credo to establish a foundation from which he can present his logical conclusions in a persuasive manner. His credo continues, "We all believe in the justice of God, that he is impartial, 'looking upon his children with an eye of care,' dealing out to them all, the measure of his goodness; yet, how can we reconcile ourselves to the difference that exists between the colored and the white races, as they truthfully present themselves before our eyes?" (64). He immediately answers this rhetorical question when he says, "to solve this problem, is to know the remedy; and to know it, is but necessary, in order to successfully apply it" (64). The response appeals to ethos because it shows that Delany's claims are rational and logical. Therefore, Delany appears rational, logical, and objective, which is important when arguing that African Americans need to emigrate from the United States. More importantly, Delany makes an argument that the injustices facing African Americans stem not from divine proclamation but from whites' desire to control Blacks.

Next Delany breaks from his credo to critique what he calls African Americans' "susceptibility" to religion. He states, "the colored races are highly susceptible of religion; it is a constituent principle of their nature, and an excellent trait in their character. But unfortunately for

them, they carry it too far" (64). What is significant about this passage is his attempt to distance himself from other African Americans. He talks about other African Americans using the third person; "their nature" and "their character" and the addition of "them" and "they" separates Delany from others. This shift from speaking for all African Americans, "we all believe," in earlier passages to the third person in this passage shows Delany distinguishing himself from other African Americans by implying that, unlike them, he is not susceptible to white slaveholding Christianity. Additionally, this critique introduces the idea that Delany is going to try to teach his readers some new perspectives. Delany wants to encourage readers to be religious but not have them misplace their faith in God's willingness to free them. He continues his critique of the susceptibility of African Americans by stating that, "their hope is largely developed, and consequently, they usually stand still—hope in God, and really expect Him to do that for them, which it is necessary they should do themselves. This is their great mistake, and arises from a misconception of the character and ways of Deity" (64). This passage is important because it marks a key component of Delany's argument—that it is a mistake for African Americans to wait for God to free them. Rather, they need to take action to free themselves. Delany continues his role of teacher when he attempts to educate his audience on the way to avoid this mistake. He posits, "we must know God, that is understand His nature and purposes, in order to serve Him; and serve Him well, is but to know him rightly. To depend for assistance upon God, is a *duty* and right; but to know when, how, and in what manner to obtain it, is the key to this great Bulwark of Strength, and Depository of Aid" (emphasis in original 64). Here Delany alludes to *2 Samuel 22* where David sings a song of Praise for God after He delivers David from Saul and his other enemies. This passage is important here because it points to what Delany sees as necessary for the deliverance of African Americans from slavery. He argues that African

Americans are overly reliant on God to deliver them when they should be taking action themselves to gain their freedom.

After having highlighted the degree to which African Americans are "highly susceptible of religion," Delany draws on their faith as a conduit for persuading them that life in the United States violates God's law because the rights and freedoms of His children are denied. He argues that "God's means are laws—fixed laws of nature, a part of His own being, and as immutable, as unchangeable as Himself. Nothing can be accomplished but through the medium of, and conformable to these laws"(64-65). Here Delany equates Natural Law (the "fixed laws of nature") with God's law ("a part of His own being, and as immutable, as unchangeable as Himself"). He informs his readers that God acts within the fixed laws of nature, and the fixed laws of nature are "immutable . . . unchangeable as [God] Himself," so God is bound to act in particular ways that do not violate Natural law. Here Delany defines God's law as paralleling the fixed laws of nature because they are laws that are applied equally to all, unlike the United States which uses its laws to oppress African Americans. Even when Delany rejects the religious formulations of whites and his fellow African Americans, he does so in overtly religious terms. This way maintains the jeremiadiac genre and demonstrates the grip religious thinking has on nineteenth-century American rhetoric more generally.

The traditional jeremiad tries to use spiritual means to affect physical changes, which Delany sees as wrong, and impossible to succeed. Instead, Delany remakes the jeremiad into a genre that can lead to physical salvation. Delany notes parallels between God and human beings, pointing out that "they are three—and like God himself, represented in the three persons in the God-head—the Spiritual, Moral and Physical Laws" (65). He defines the separate spheres of these three types of Laws, and he argues that physical change such as improving the living

conditions of African Americans in the US, can only come about through the physical: "do they want to attain a physical end, they can only do so through the medium of the physical law" (65). This tripartite division is important because Delany wants to show that Black salvation can only come through the medium of physical law. Delany argues that the key to Black elevation rests in physical laws because, in the United States, God's spiritual laws are not being followed. This episode explains why Delany would reimagine the jeremiad genre.

As he continues, Delany shows that faith and prayer are not sufficient as many slaves are faithful to God and consistently pray and yet continue to be enslaved for most of their lives. Delany's teaching on religion continues with his discussion of prayer and his presentation of what he sees as the answer for change on earth. Delany disagrees with "the argument that man must pray for what he receives" (65) calling it a "mistake" (65) and posits that this argument "is doing the colored people especially, incalculable injury" (65). Delany sees such a reliance on prayer as relying on the spiritual for answers to the physical. He does agree that "man must pray in order to get to Heaven" (65) but argues "that among the slaves, there are thousands of them religious, continually raising their voices, sending up their prayers to God, invoking His aid in their behalf, asking for a speedy deliverance; but they are still in chains, although they have thrice suffered out their three score years and ten"[3] (65-66). He is critical of the reliance on prayer to solve what he sees as earthly problems, which is also a rebuke of those abolitionists that suggested African Americans pray for their release from bondage. Instead, Delany pushes for resistance based on physical laws rather than moral ones. Delany again laments the state of African Americans' enslavement and warns that reliance on prayer for relief is not sufficient. Delany urges readers to instead focus on "the physical laws governing all earthly and temporary affairs,"(66) which "benefit equally the just and the unjust" (66). Focusing on the earthly

[3] Reference to Psalm 90:10 which is meant to identify the normal lifespan of humans.

requires direct action, which is what Delany advocates throughout the text. Lastly, Delany states that "what we here desire to do is, to correct the long standing error among a large body of the colored people in this country, that the cause of our oppression and degradation, is the displeasure of God towards us, because of our unfaithfulness to Him" (66), which is the classic jeremiadic interpretation of history featured in the Hebrew Scripture. For Delany to employ a jeremiadic form and stir his African American readers to exercise agency, he must shatter this thinking.

The early chapters of *Condition* adopt elements of the African American jeremiad which laments oppression that African Americans face in the United States at the hands of white Americans. Delany also establishes his ethos and responds to his reader's expectations for the genre before he shifts gears to address the topics he is most interested in. The African American jeremiad genre also creates space for Delany to present his argument for emigration as it helps to construct a logical argument where the only acceptable option for overcoming oppression is emigration. He attempts to highlight the errors in attempting to gain freedom while offering a logical explanation for past and present failures. More importantly, the traditional jeremiad serves white American slaveholder Christianity because it presents the solution to emancipation as greater faithfulness and adherence to the word of God, rather than taking physical action to effect change. Delany must reimagine the genre into one that can lead to physical change. In his new version of a productive jeremiad, Delany presents the definitive solutions to African Americans' inferior conditions in the United States. He illustrates why African Americans should act and how they can elevate themselves out of legislated inferiority.

Chapters 5-7

In chapters five through seven, Delany continues to reimagine the African American jeremiad, from a faith-based solution towards one that recommends physical action. In these chapters, Delany shows that elevation is possible but, he suggests, not in the United States.

As Delany continues to build his argument that African Americans can not achieve equality in the US, he shifts away from the familiar characteristics of the traditional jeremiad. In chapter five, "Means of Elevation, " Delany embraces the role of a rhetorician in his attempt to show that Black elevation is impossible in the United States. He begins by reminding his readers of the history of struggle African Americans have faced when he states, "moral theories have long been resorted to by us, as a means of effecting the redemption of our brethren in bonds, and the elevation of the free colored people in this country" (67). Delany alludes to theories of moral suasion which argued that the key to their elevation in the United States was for African Americans to focus on being morally just and patient.[4] He counters this approach by stating that "experience has taught us, that speculations are not enough; that the *practical* application of principles adduced, the thing carried out, is the only true and proper course to pursue" (emphasis in original 67). Delany now introduces logos into the discussion as he works towards proposing a solution to the poor conditions he is detailing of African Americans' lives. Here he introduces his jeremiad features/characteristics of the proposal argument which relies on logos. He reminds his audience that "we have speculated and moralised much about equality—claiming to be as good as our neighbors, and everybody else--all of which, may do very well in ethics—but not in politics" (67). Delany again attacks the argument that moral suasion can overcome racial

[4] For further reading on the moral suasion movement and moralist groups such as the American Moral Reform society see Howard Bell's "The American Moral Reform Society, 1836-1841" (1958), Tunde Adeleke's "Afro-Americans and Moral Suasion: The Debate in the 1830's" (1998), Adam Chamberlin's "Moral Suasion and Political Action" (2018), and Jacqueline Bacon's *The Humblest May Stand Forth* (2002).

oppression. He contrasts ethics with politics and argues for a practical approach, noting, "we live in society among men, conducted by men, governed by rules and regulations" (67); that is, African Americans may be as moral as their neighbours but unless government rules and regulations are changed (by men, he notes), that moral goodness will not transform into equality. Here we see Delany invoking the principle he discussed in chapter four that change to African Americans' situation can only come through physical action and changes to rules and regulations rather than moral pressure. He then extends his argument to the scientific, drawing a parallel between physical laws and human psychology, "society regulates itself—being governed by mind, which like water, finds its own level. 'Like seeks like,' is a principle in the laws of matter, as well as of mind" (67). Delany suggests that society should be governed by laws similar to the principles of science. He does not see the United States as a society that adheres to such principles. He notes that "there is such a thing as inferiority of things, and positions; at least society has made them so" (67) and insists that "while we continue to live among men, we must agree to all *just* measures—all those we mean, that do not necessarily infringe on the rights of others" (emphasis in original 67). Delany advocates for equality but understands that "there is no equality of attainments" (68). He qualifies his push for equality by stating, "by this, we [Black leadership] do not wish to be understood as advocating the actual equal attainments of every individual; but we mean to say, that if these attainments be necessary for the elevation of the white man, they are necessary for the elevation of the colored man" (68). Here Delany clarifies that he is not calling for all attainments to be treated as equal but that Black Americans have equal access to the same means of achieving attainments as white Americans have.

Delany maintains some elements of the jeremiad with his warning that talk of elevation will not come until African Americans fight for equality rather than speak of it. He uses phrases

such as, “cast your eyes about us and reflect for a moment” (68), “behold the trading shops”; “see the stage coaches coming in”; “look at the railroads interlining every section”; “cast again your eyes”; “see the vessels”; “look as you pass along through the cities” and “behold the ten thousand cupolas” (68) to highlight the modernity of society that he describes as, “mighty living monuments, of the industry, enterprise, and intelligence of the white man” (69). The repetition of sentence structure in this passage, a series of commands using the imperative and implying the subject “you,” creates a sense of urgency. In commanding his readers to observe these phenomena, he positions his readers as spectators (rather than participants) to such progress. Here Delany is employing the rhetorical strategy of enargia to bring these details “before the eyes” of the readers. This is another way to employ emotion in service of the logos previously mentioned to bring “feelings” of urgency, as well as reasons for it. Delany then contrasts the roles of African Americans in this society with his description of the roles of the white man, “our fathers are their coachmen, our brothers their cookman, and ourselves their waiting-men. Our mothers their nurse-women, our sisters their scrub-women, our daughters their maid-women, and our wives their wash-women” (69). By contrasting the opportunities of whites with the mainly service roles available to African Americans, Delany highlights the gap Blacks face in the United States. This point is important as he carefully assembles an intricate argument to show his readers that his proposal is the only reasonable solution available to them. Delany expresses the urgency of the situation, “Until colored men, attain to a position above permitting their mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters, to do the drudgery and menial offices of other men’s wives and daughters; it is useless, it is nonsense, it is pitiable mockery, to talk about equality and elevation in society” (69). In other words, Black Americans have to strive to attain positions where service positions are not the only ones available to themselves or their wives or daughters. They have to

work hard to learn and build skills that are prized in society so that they can raise their whole family's social class by having a more professional job. Delany strategically follows these comments on the impossibility of elevation by further documenting the urgency of African Americans' need to improve themselves, "the world is looking upon us, with feelings of commiseration, sorrow, and contempt. We scarcely deserve sympathy, if we peremptorily refuse advice, bearing upon our elevation" (69). Here Delany claims that unless African Americans take advice about more effective means of elevation—that is, the advice he offers—they are undeserving of the world's sympathy. Delany ends his argument with further appeals to ethos. In this passage, he uses "we", "us", and "our" to characterize himself as a member of the community, yet he also takes a leadership role by analyzing the nature of the present-day living conditions of many African Americans. When discussing the present-day conditions, he distances himself, which allows him to maintain the perception of objectivity needed to relay his important message. He also maintains some elements of the jeremiad with his warning that talk of elevation will not come until African Americans fight for equality rather than speak of it.

Next Delany uses an analogy to lament the condition of African Americans when contrasted with whites in the United States. He says, "we [Delany and his readers] will suppose a case for argument" (69) in which he describes residents of a city that consists of "two colored families, of three sons and three daughters each" (69). His hypothetical argument informs readers that "the opportunities of these families, may or may not be the same for educational advantages—be that as it may, the children of one go to school, and become qualified for the duties of life" (69). The educated children "all enter into business with fine prospects, marry respectably, and settle down in domestic comfort"(69). Delany notes the children of the other family "grow up without educational and business qualifications, and the highest aim they have,

is to apply to the sons and daughters of the first named family, to hire for domestics!" (69-70). In this scenario, whites would be the first family and African Americans the second, lacking access to the means of elevation, which for Delany include education and meaningful employment opportunities. Delany asks his audience, "would there be an equality here between the children of these two families? Certainly not" (70). He uses this analogy to provide his readers with a rational way of understanding the implications of a lack of access to education, as well as connections in the broader professional community that would enable the prosperity of those (and by extension all) Black children. Delany follows this analogy by constructing a binary that urges African Americans to more actively participate in American society by becoming producers themselves rather than passive consumers. Using an anaphora, or repeating of a sequence of words at the beginning of a sentence, for emphasis and impact, he states,

> White men are producers—we [African Americans] are consumers. They build houses, and we rent them. They raise produce, and we consume it. They manufacture clothes and wares, and we garnish ourselves with them. They build coaches, vessels, cars, hotels, saloons, and other vehicles and places of accommodation, and we deliberately wait until they have got them in readiness, then walk in, and contend with as much assurance for a "right," as though the whole thing was bought by, paid for, and belonged to us. By their literary attainments, they are the contributors to, authors and teachers of, literature, science, religion, law, medicine, and all other useful attainments that the world now makes use of. We have no reference to ancient times—we speak of modern things. (70)

The passage contains characteristics of the jeremiad where Delany laments the lack of action on the part of Blacks in America. According to the binary that Delany sets up in this quotation, African American agency currently rests solely in their ability to purchase, whereas he laments the lack of action taken on the part of African Americans. Delany castigates his Black audience by stating that they do not take action, rather they "wait" until whites have produced and then contend they have a right to it. This castigation echoes his broader argument that African

Americans need to take action rather than wait for Divine intervention. Interestingly, although he uses "we," Delany can be seen as exempt from the state he describes because he is the prophet and therefore both part and seperate from the his readers. He wants to show his audience that despite his innocence of what he castigates Black Americans for, they are all connected. In doing so, he fits far better into the role of whites that he describes as a binary (and therefore exclusive of crossover) than he does into the role of Blacks. Delany's example builds upon what he is arguing in the chapter, which is a strategic choice meant to build his current argument—readers should follow his sound advice that will effectively improve their lives— and enables him to build his larger argument—that effort and physical action are needed to gain equality. His choice to include himself in his description of Blacks' situation demonstrates the interdependency of both free and enslaved Black Americans.

Chapter five concludes with Delany explaining what elevation entails. He argues, "these ["industry, enterprise, and intelligence" (68)] are the means by which God intended man to succeed: and this [Delany's discussion in this chapter] discloses the secret of the white man's success with all his wickedness, over the head of the colored man, with all of his religion" (70). Here Delany emphasizes that the white man's "industry, enterprise, and intelligence" (68), which he cultivates through education, networking, and creative thinking, have enabled him to succeed despite his moral shortcomings, while "the colored man", who traditionally does not seek education or actively pursue the knowledge and experience that would help him to acquire "attainments," has few options beyond manual labour and limited financial or professional success, even though he might be a faithful servant of God. In other words, Delany argues, Black Americans inadvertently assist in their own oppression by declining to participate in all the social

and community mechanisms that might allow them to elevate themselves. Instead, they trust in prayer as their primary strategy for elevating themselves.

Delany continues to follow the jeremiad by placing blame on African Americans for their current condition. He reminds his readers that "we [Delany as a jeremiadic leader] have been pointed and plain, on this part of the subject, because we desire our readers to see persons and things in their true position" (70). Delany wants his readers to view their situation clearly and dispassionately and to be able to describe it accurately. Delany follows with, "until we are determined to change the condition of things, and raise ourselves above the position in which we are now prostrated, we must hang our heads in sorrow, and hide our faces in shame" (70). Here Delany argues about the importance of physical laws rather than moral laws in the quest to change African Americans' status in the United States. Additionally, he follows the jeremiad by placing fault on his African American audience for their current state. He reminds his readers that the means available to them include understanding that "our elevation must be the result of *self-efforts*, and work of our *own hands*" (emphasis in original 71). Here Delany reminds his readers that elevation must come from within the Black community as they must be the agents in charge of their own fates. More importantly, he argues that God's laws work by individuals taking physical action to improve their personal situations. Delany couches his argument in explicitly moral terms. His appeal here is about honour and dishonour and invites his African American audience to reflect on their role in their current state. This call for reflection is a characteristic often found in the jeremiad.

Continuing his call for reflection, Delany argues that the denial of citizenship for African Americans is another reason for emigration. In chapter six, "The United States Our Country," Delany quickly rebuts arguments against African American rights to citizenship. He notes, "we

are Americans, having a birthright citizenship—natural claims upon the country—claims common to all others of our fellow citizens—natural rights, which may, by virtue of unjust laws, be obstructed, but never can be annulled" (74). That is, Delany emphasises that according to US law, humans born on American soil earn American citizenship. This birthright, Delany emphasises, has been "as immovably fixed as the decrees of the living God" (74). He then links American birthright citizenship to God's laws to assert that nothing can change the status of African Americans' natural citizenship, even "unjust [governmental] laws." Having made these claims for African Americans' birthright citizenship, Delany then acknowledges an opposing viewpoint, stating, "but according to the economy that regulates the policy of nations, upon which rests the basis of justifiable claims to all freeman's rights, it may be necessary to take another view of, and enquire into the political claims of the colored men" (74). These statements highlight the disparity between God's will [moral laws] and the reality of life for African Americans in the United States [physical laws]. As Delany has suggested, the strategy of moral uplift is ineffective, and a more forceful claim for equality and freedom is necessary. Interestingly, Delany makes a strong argument for Black Americans' rights to citizenship in a text where he ultimately openly advocates for Black emigration. However, I do not see Delany's position about whether or not Blacks should emigrate from the United States as conflicted, but rather I see him viewing this denial of birthright citizenship as yet another of the basic rights that the US denies to African Americans. To him, it is another reason for African Americans to leave a country that does not value them or their contributions. The chapter also signals a shift from lamenting the state of African Americans towards proposing a solution, and here Delany departs from the traditional solution offered in a jeremiad of exhorting his readers to more godly

behaviour to exploring concrete actions they might take to successfully overcome their oppressive conditions.

To build his argument that freedom is not attainable in the United States, Delany reminds his audience that African Americans, by virtue of their birthright citizenship, deserve yet are not afforded the same rights and privileges as whites. In chapter seven, "Claims of Colored Men as Citizens of the United States," Delany addresses what he sees as his readers' need to claim their inherent rights of citizenship. Delany begins, "the political basis upon which rests the establishment of all free nations, as the first act in their organization is the security by constitutional provisions, of the fundamental claims of citizenship" (75). He continues, "the legitimate requirement, politically considered, necessary to the justifiable claims for protection and full enjoyment of all the rights and privileges of an unqualified freeman, in all democratic countries is, that each person so endowed, shall have made *contributions* and *investments* in the country" (emphasis added 75). Delany concludes, "a freeman in a political sense, is a citizen of unrestricted rights in the state, being eligible to the highest position known to their civil code"... "their interests being the country's, and the interest of the country being the interest of the people" (76). Delany connects to the previous passage to show that African Americans, by way of their contributions to and investments in the country meet the requirements to be citizens. Implied here is that either the United States is not a democratic country or the country does not have the best interests of its citizens. Delany explains that "it is this simple but great principle of primitive rights that forms the fundamental basis of citizenship in all free countries, and it is upon this principle, that the rights of the colored man in this country to citizenship are fixed" (76). The existence of this principle removes any debate over African American claims of citizenship as it takes away the right of whites to decide. Delany argues that in every democratic

country, “free men” are entitled to the rights, privileges and responsibilities of citizenship; therefore, in the United States, free Black Americans should also be entitled to them. The denial of these “rights, privileges, and responsibilities of citizenship” is what he takes issue with. He argues that rights are primitive and fixed (meaning they are granted by birth) yet white Americans deny citizenship based on those basic terms. Delany then offers examples of Black excellence that far exceed these basic principles, arguing that African Americans have claims to citizenship beyond birthright.

Delany concludes the chapter with additional claims and evidence that African Americans are entitled to the “rights, privileges, and responsibilities of [US] citizenship” (87). He links labour and the ability to cultivate the land with rights to citizenship. Delany applies this premise to critique the legitimacy of white citizenship when he notes that “Europeans were sinking beneath the weight of climate and hardships” and that “food could not be had nor the common conveniences of life procured” and lastly that of the Europeans settled in the US “none [were] capable of doing them” (87). In other words, Europeans were not fit to cultivate that land that they had usurped from Native Americans. Delany then notes that “as the most natural consequence, the Africans were resorted to, for the performance of every duty common to domestic life” (87). Delany’s claim that the natural or logical consequence of Europeans’ inability to cultivate or procure what was necessary for their survival was to resort to Africans suggests that Blacks were the only ones capable of withstanding both the climate and hardship in the American South. Through this passage, Delany makes the case that African Americans, in fact, have a more legitimate claim to US citizenship than white Europeans. That white Americans deny the legitimate claim of Blacks to citizenship highlights the injustice and oppression of American slavery. Delany continues this argument stating that “it is notorious, that

in the planting States, the [B]blacks themselves are the only skillful cultivators—the proprietor knowing little or nothing about the art, save that which he learns from the African husbandman, while his ignorant white overseer, who is merely there to see that the work is attended to, knows a great deal less" (88). Delany again demonstrates the hypocrisy and cruelty of the American slave system to lament the current condition of African Americans and to convince them that freedom in the United States is not viable.

Final Chapters

In chapter sixteen, "National Disfranchisement of Colored People," Delany includes the entirety of the Fugitive Slave Law to show his readers that there is no safety for African Americans (free or enslaved) in the United States. Delany includes the full text "for the benefit of the reader, as there are thousands of the American people of all classes, who have never read the provisions of this enactment; and consequently, have no conception of its enormity" (161). Delany remarks that his readers have probably not read this piece of legislation as carefully as they should have and are probably unaware of its vast scope. Secondly, for his readers to fully understand the implications of this law and the argument that Delany will soon present about it, they need to have the full copy available to read and return to as they continue to read *Condition*. He follows the inclusion of all ten sections with his analysis of the Law and the role it plays in the oppression of African Americans. He begins his analysis by reminding his readers that "the most prominent provisions of the Constitution of the United States, and those which form the fundamental basis of personal security, are they which provide, that every person shall be secure in their person and property: that no person may be deprived of liberty without due process of law, and that for crime or misdemeanor; that there may be no process of law that shall work corruption of blood" (Delany 169). Delany reminds his readers that the Constitution protects the

liberties and freedoms of American citizens. He then defines "corruption of blood" as "that process, by which a person is *degraded* and deprived of rights, common to the enfranchised citizen—of the rights of an elector, and of eligibility to the office of a representative, of the people" (emphasis in original Delany 170). He explains that this phrase means that the legal system cannot downgrade or discriminate against a recognized citizen on the basis of claiming inferiority of birth (that is, a natural-born citizen cannot be legally deprived of their rights). Here Delany notes that the Constitution ensures that all citizens are equal and cannot be deemed inferior based on their birth. Delany adds that "heretofore it ever has been denied, that the United States recognised or knew any difference between the people—that the Constitution makes no distinction, but includes in its provisions, all the people alike" (170). This statement encapsulates the "delusion" (170) that the United States treats all people the same, and while the Constitution does express this ideal, Delany acknowledges that, in practice, "this is not true, and certainly is blind absurdity in us at least, who have suffered the dread consequences of this delusion, not now to see it" (170). Here Delany points out the hypocrisy between what the US Constitution says and the actions of a large group of its citizens, and he exhorts his fellow African Americans to confront the truth of what he says.

Delany continues his argument in the next chapter where he unpacks the ways in which he sees the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act as cementing and even augmenting the deplorable condition of Black lives in the United States. He states that this legislation is responsible for "the colored people of the United States [continuing to be] positively degraded beneath the level of the whites—[because, through its provisions, they] are made liable at any time, in any place, and under all circumstances, to be arrested—and upon the claim of any white person, without the privilege, even of making a defence, sent into endless bondage" (170).

Delany emphasizes that the Fugitive Slave Act allows whites to arrest and enslave any African American simply by accusing them of a crime. Further damning is the legislated prevention of any legal safeguards, that is, "without the privilege, even of making a defence," for all including free African Americans. He continues to distinguish between what the Constitution says and what the Fugitive Slave Law does when he urges his readers to "let no visionary nonsense about *habeas corpus*, or a *fair trial,* deceive us; there are no such rights granted in this bill" (emphasis in original 170) and adds that "any leniency that may be expected, must proceed from the whims or caprice of the magistrate—in fact, it is optional with them; and *our* rights and liberty entirely at their disposal" (emphasis in original Delany 170). He argues that the bill does not provide the accused African American with any recourse to defend him or herself or to receive a fair trial. He further emphasizes that the only "leniency" an African American might expect is through the "whims or caprice of the magistrate," highlighting how unlikely such a possibility might be. Here Delany reminds his audience that the legal system has always been unjust and unfair in its treatment of African Americans but the Fugitive Slave Act increases the injustice: the rights of Blacks are determined by the whims of white judges rather than through a fair and impartial trial. Delany summarizes the full effect that this legislation will have on African American lives going forward: "We are slaves in the midst of freedom, waiting patiently, and unconcernedly—indifferently and stupidly, for masters to come and lay claim to us, trusting their generosity, whether or not they will own us and carry us into endless bondage" (Delany 171). Delany's comments here are significant for two reasons. First, he describes the effects of the piece of legislation and the specific conditions it imposes on African Americans. Next, he critiques the actions of the Black community which he calls both "indifferent" and "stupid" for leaving their freedom in the hands of those who wish to enslave them. The passage relates to the

jeremiadic ethos of speaking uncomfortable truths, also known as parrhesia. Delany concludes this point by claiming " a people capable of originating and sustaining such a law as this [Fugitive Slave Law], are not the people to whom we are willing to entrust our liberty at discretion" (172). In this quotation, he argues that African Americans should not trust the same people who created the Fugitive Slave Act to maintain their freedom. Delany then asks a series of rhetorical questions that guide the reader towards his eventual conclusion. He asks, "what can we do? What shall we do? This is the great and important question:—shall we submit to be dragged like brutes before heartless men, and sent into degradation and bondage?—Shall we fly, or shall we resist? Ponder well and reflect" (Delany 172). Posing these questions and the options to fly or resist is a strategy Delany uses to lead his readers in a direction that makes his argument for emigration more acceptable.

To begin making his case for flight—or emigration, Delany first highlights the hypocrisy of American justice. He notes how general statements about the rights of American citizens are not intended to apply to African Americans and he cites a quotation from Chief Justice John Gibson of Pennsylvania, "every man's house is his castle, and he has the right to defend it unto the taking of life, against any attempt to enter it against his will, except by crime" (Delany 172). Delany follows up by explaining why this quote does not apply to African Americans: "we [Black Americans] have no such right. It was not intended for us, any more than any other provision of the law, intended for the protection of Americans. The policy is against us—it is useless to contend against it" (172). He emphasizes that Gibson's claim for "every man" actually means only white men and the other statutes to protect citizens' rights equally ignore African Americans. Delany's goal here is to show his audience that laws that govern citizens are race-based and, further, used to maintain the bondage of African Americans. He argues that

contending against any particular law is useless because "this is the law of the land and must be obeyed; and we candidly advise that it is useless for us to contend against it. To suppose its [Fugitive Slave Law] repeal, is to anticipate an overthrow of the Confederative Union" (Delany 172). Delany anticipates that the response to any attempts to repeal the law would be met with fierce resistance. He states that "we [I] must be allowed an expression of opinion, when we [I] say, that candidly we [I] believe, the existence of the Fugitive Slave Law *necessary* to the continuance of the National Compact. This Law is the foundation of the Compromise—remove it, and the consequences are easily determined" (emphasis in original 172). Delany wants to show the lack of options for overcoming the current state of oppression and enslavement so long as the law persists. He then removes any doubt that the law might be repealed by asserting that doing so would lead to the collapse of the United States.

To this point in the text, Delany has lamented the state of Black life in America and constructed an argument that both refutes claims of racial inferiority and demonstrates the many and impressive contributions of African American citizens to the country's success. He then argues that although African Americans are worthy in every way to be treated as American citizens equal to whites, they will never achieve this goal. He points to the recently passed Fugitive Slave Act as proof that African Americans occupy a most precarious position in the country, where their options to live freely and peacefully are severely curtailed. These options he identifies as "fly or resist." He next argues that resistance is futile because this law will not be repealed without the "overthrow of the Confederative Union," which he judges impossible. The only option, therefore, would appear to be flight. At this point, Delany begins to prepare his readers for what becomes an explicit argument that African Americans should emigrate. His first strategy in this argument for the best solution is to share with the African American community

some hard truths they must face. He states that "we must abandon all vague theory, and look at *facts* as they really are; viewing ourselves in our true political position in the body politic" (emphasis in original 173). He adds that they must also move past wishful thinking, arguing that "to imagine ourselves to be included in the body politic, except by express legislation, is at war with common sense, and contrary to fact" (173). He tells them that unless white American legislators create "express legislation,—that is, legislation that clearly states Black Americans are citizens in the body politic—they are not and existing laws guaranteeing rights do not apply to them. For his contemporary readers, he urges them to accept the hard truth that existing laws do not protect them and to pretend they do is crazy—that is, "at war with common sense." He then remarks that "legislation, the administration of the laws of the country, and the exercise of rights by the people, all prove to the contrary. We are politically, not of them, but aliens to the laws and political privileges of the country. These are truths—fixed facts, that quaint theory and exhausted moralising, are impregnable to, and fall harmlessly before" (173). Delany wants his readers to understand that the options they pretend they have to improve their lives are, among other things, "quaint theory"; he wants them to begin to realize that the flight option he proposed earlier is the only one open to them.

Delany continues his call to action, a common trait of the jeremiad, with further evidence that African Americans will not achieve equality in the United States. Delany points out that "our descent, by the laws of the country, stamps us with inferiority—upon us has this law worked *corruption of blood*" (emphasis in original 173). Earlier, Delany defined corruption of blood as the process by which a person is "degraded and deprived of rights" (170) granted to enfranchised citizens because of a "legal acknowledgement of inferiority of birth" (170). Bringing the argument full circle makes his case for emigration a rational decision because Blacks have few

avenues for equality in a nation that has made their very existence legally inferior. To speak to the lack of avenues for overcoming this fact, Delany advises his readers to "depend upon no promised protection of citizens in any quarter. Their own property and liberty are jeopardized, and they will not sacrifice them for us. This we may not expect them to do" (Delany 171). He concludes this point by stating that "besides, there are no people who ever lived, love their country and obey their laws as the Americans" (171). Delany's hint of sarcasm—that Americans love their laws yet consistently violate them— does not overshadow his claim that there is no safe quarter for African Americans in the United States.

After pointing out the lack of options for Blacks in America, Delany points to previous examples where emigration has acted as a solution for oppressed peoples. This section serves as backing for his call to action and represents a transformation of the jeremiad because it goes beyond a call that appeals to faith. Rather, Delany uses historical evidence as backing for his proposed action. In chapter seventeen, "Emigration of the Colored People of the United States," he explicitly addresses the need for African Americans to emigrate from the United States. The opening paragraph informs readers that emigration has served as a solution for past groups: "that there have been people in all ages under certain circumstances, that may be benefited by emigration, will be admitted; and that there are circumstances under which emigration is absolutely necessary to their political elevation, cannot be disputed" (175). He emphasizes (by repeating the point) that other groups in history have found emigration is the only way they can improve their circumstances. He identifies several examples, including when he states, "this we see in the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt to the land of Judea; in the expedition of Dido and her followers from Tyro to Mauritania; and not to dwell upon hundreds of modern European examples—also in the ever memorable emigration of the Puritans, in 1620, from Great Britain,

the land of their birth, to the wilderness of the New World" (175). Here Delany refers to examples of emigration that come from the Biblical story of the Exodus, Greek mythology, and the English Puritans that settled in America which comprise a wide range of history and provide readers with successful examples of emigration. Delany uses these examples to encourage his readers to consider his solution. He then addresses what he expects his readers' emotional responses will be to this suggestion: "this [the benefits of emigration] may be acknowledged; but to advocate the emigration of the colored people of the United States from their native homes, is a new feature in our history, and at first view, may be considered objectionable, as pernicious to our interests" (175). Delany is careful to note that what he proposes has not been done before and is controversial. His anticipation of potential objections is important for him to show that his proposed solution is thought through. But he then goes on to underscore for readers that "this objection [to emigration as a reasonable solution] is at once removed, when reflecting on our condition as incontrovertibly shown in a foregoing part of this work" (175). Here he reminds his African American readers that the previous 175 pages of *Condition* have carefully detailed the degree to which they are oppressed and likely to remain that way if they stay in the United States. Delany then moves readers towards the next phase of his argument where he presents them with his ideal location for emigration.

In the chapter, Delany continues his use of the jeremiad by also issuing calls to action that urge his audience to follow his proposal. He posits that "the time has now fully arrived, when the colored race is called upon by all the ties of common humanity, and all the claims of consummate justice, to go forward and take their position, and do battle in the struggle now being made for the redemption of the world" (197). What this means is that the institution of slavery is a mark on the world and the freedom of Blacks is necessary for redemption. Delany

concludes the chapter with a final call to action. He tells his readers that "in going, let us have but one objective—to become elevated men and women, worthy of freedom—the worthy citizens of an adopted country" (200). Delany makes clear the importance of African Americans emigrating to elevate themselves. Delany's comment also implies that the only purpose for emigrating is for the elevation of Black Americans. Lastly, Delany suggests that this audience "go not with an anxiety of political aspirations; but go with the fixed intention—as Europeans come to the United States—of cultivating the soil, entering into mechanical operations, keeping of shops, carrying on merchandise, trading on land and water, improving property—in a word, to become the producers of the country, instead of the consumers" (200). Here Delany urges his readers to become what he argues they cannot be in the United States—producers—which he sees as vital for one's claims of citizenship.

These two chapters present Delany's solution to overcoming the injustice and oppression that African Americans face in the United States. In these chapters, he calls for specific action and urges his readers to act now. Doing so shows us how Delany transforms the jeremiad from a genre that laments societal conditions and calls for the audience to move closer to God into one that promotes concrete action on the part of the audience. In short, Delany transforms a genre from one that perpetuates or maintains current conditions into one that works for him and the African American community.

In chapter twenty-two, "Thing as They Are," Delany appeals to logic in order to convince his audience to accept the argument he has presented. Rather than conclude the text after the previous chapter, he offers additional reasons. He opens the chapter by stating "in presenting this work, we have but a single object in view, and that is, to inform the minds of the colored people at large, upon many things pertaining to their elevation, that but few among us are acquainted

with" (204). He adds, "unfortunately for us, as a body, we have been taught to believe that we must have some person to think for us, instead of thinking for ourselves" (204). He continues this line of reasoning when he explains that "we have been standing comparatively still for years, following in the footsteps of our friends, believing that what they promise us can be accomplished, just because they say so, although our own knowledge should long since, have satisfied us to the contrary" (204). This passage appeals to logic because Delany highlights that what friends [white abolitionists] say is not what occurs. His comments are also a veiled critique of the ACS and their plan to relocate free Blacks to Liberia. While he does not explicitly mention them here, he does note that "the most ordinary white person is almost revered, while the most qualified colored person is totally neglected" (204). Delany continues to transform the genre into a usable one through his urging of African Americans to think for themselves rather than follow the words of white abolitionists and what their "own knowledge" should have long since satisfied to the contrary.

In his concluding chapter, "A Glance at Ourselves—Conclusion," Delany reminds readers why his call for emigration is necessary for the elevation of African Americans. He states that "we love our country, dearly love her, be she don't love us—she despises us, and bids us begone, driving us from her embraces; but we shall not go where she desires us; but when we do go, whatever love we have for her, we shall love the country none the less that receives us as her adopted children" (216). Delany again returns to the metaphor of the United States as a woman and mother, one that has rejected her children [African Americans]. Delany again calls for African Americans to resist her will knowing that upon emigrating, they will be received welcomingly from their new home country. Delany presses further noting that "every other than we, have at various periods of necessity, been a migratory people; and all when oppressed,

shown a greater abhorrence of oppression, if not a greater love of liberty, than we" (217). Delany recalls past people that have fled oppression to show that his solution is logical and rational. He shifts to an emotional appeal when he posits that "we cling to our oppressors, as the objects of our love. It is true that our enslaved brethren are here, and we have been led to believe that it is necessary for us to remain on that account. Is it true that all should remain in degradation, because a part are degraded? We believe no such thing" (218). Here Delany again laments the state of African Americans and the willingness of free Blacks to stay in a country because they have been taught that they must not leave. Delany counters this narrative by claiming that "we believe it to be the duty of the Free, to elevate themselves in the most speedy and effective manner possible; as the redemption of the bondman depends entirely upon the elevation of the freeman" (218). Delany sees the elevation of Free Blacks as necessary and argues that this can only be accomplished outside of the United States.

In these final chapters, Delany reiterates his call for the emigration of free African Americans. Rather than ending the text prior to these chapters, Delany takes the opportunity to continue to transform the jeremiad into a genre that works to meet his needs.

Conclusion

In *Condition,* Delany uses the jeremiad in order to familiarize readers with a common trope, one that focuses on the lamentations of African Americans. The jeremiad often encourages readers or listeners to turn to prayer to achieve their salvation. Standing by and waiting for salvation is not what Delany sees as the solution to the problems of African Americans. Rather, he argues that Blacks need to take action to free themselves. Delany's solution is conscious raising followed by direct political action rather than moral reform. The jeremiad does not account for such a solution; therefore, Delany must transform the genre to suit his purpose. The

jeremiad, while an effective genre for bringing about moral reform and a return to good values, does not fully meet Delany's purpose and thus requires him to transform the genre. *Condition* serves as a model for what Delany advocates for the Black community—direct political action as a pathway to freedom. Just as he alters a genre that confines his abilities, so too must African Americans take action to alter their current position.

Chapter 3: Transforming the Novel: *Blake or the Huts of America*

Blake or the Huts of America (1859, 1861-1862) is Martin Delany's second book-length work. It is the story of Henry Blake, a slave from Mississippi whose wife, Maggie, is sold away to a plantation in Cuba. After Maggie is sold, Blake escapes the plantation and travels throughout the United States, urging African Americans to fight for their freedom with the end goal of reuniting with her and leading others to freedom. During this time, Blake also leads a group of his family out of the South and into Canada. He then heads to Cuba, where he reunites with his wife and helps plan a slave revolt. The text's final chapters have gone missing or were never finished. Delany organizes the text around Blake's travels through the South, and we witness his narrow escapes from slave patrols and his cunning ability to outsmart and outwit plantation owners, keeping him one step ahead of those who seek his capture. Blake is the central figure, and our understanding of other characters comes only through his interactions with them. Blake is the driving force behind all actions that follow the sale of his wife, Maggie.

Delany wrote *Blake* in two parts, which were, as noted, published serially, with the first half appearing in *The Anglo-African Magazine* and the second half appearing during the early part of the Civil War in the *Weekly Anglo-African Magazine*. While in *Condition* Delany addressed the lot of Free African Americans and offered ways they could successfully elevate themselves (including leaving the US altogether), in *Blake*, he addresses the lot of slaves, and through his characters, he models ways for these African Americans to think and live that will also improve their lives. While historically *Blake* has been assumed to be and studied as a novel—a literary genre— a strong argument can be made that it is rather a didactic narrative.

For a definition of didactic narrative, I turn to Russel Poole, who notes that didactic literature is an elusive body to define but that "it aims to teach and at its heart lie

pronouncements about conduct and morals, about skills and resources, and about nature and the environment" (Poole 1750). In her article "Introduction: Approaches to Didactic Literature—Meaning, Intent, Audience, Social Effect" Juanita Feros Ruys argues that didacticism is the blending of authorial intent and audience reception that poses questions centred on the creation of meaning (Ruys 2008).

I open this chapter with a discussion of what scholars have noted about the text. I show that previous researchers often referred to *Blake* as a novel, although some have suggested a rather poorly written one. I contend that *Blake*, although resembling a novel and having novel-like characteristics, is not just a novel. Rather, Delany steps outside the conventions of a novel because he is more concerned with all African Americans understanding the full scope of oppression and injustice they face in the United States.

In the next section, I discuss what scholars have said about *Blake*. I show that while the majority of scholars view the text as a novel, we need to be asking a different question. We should not ask whether or not *Blake* is a well-written novel and instead focus our attention on how the novelistic qualities function rhetorically. By approaching the text as a didactic narrative, we can better understand how Delany constructs the text and its characters.

Previous Scholarship on the Genre of Blake

The most notable observation to be made after examining the literary scholarship on *Blake* is that literary critics have had great difficulty classifying the text's genre. While the balance of opinion seems to be that it is a novel, it has also been called a Black Nation novel, a neo-slave narrative, a self-mythologizing novel, and a continuation of the Black tradition. The lack of consensus by scholars to classify *Blake* suggests that there are a variety of ways to approach the text. In this review of the literature on Delany's second text, I start with those

critics who have labelled *Blake* a novel. Then I turn to those scholars who have assigned other generic labels to the text.

In her 1973 review of *Blake*, Julianne Malveaux argues that "we must view *Blake* as a historical fiction" because "it has historical bearing, because it documents the conditions of the times" (55); however, she also notes, "but in dealing with the stark realities of slavery, Delany was sometimes inclined to let his strong [B]black feelings overshadow what he knew to be real" (Malveaux 55). Malveaux's remarks on the plot of *Blake* are telling because she implies that Delany's text lacks the realism found in other contemporary novels. Additionally, Malveaux critiques the style of the text, adding, "*Blake* is not an outstanding novel in literary terms. The main plot often stems to minor sub-plots which add little to the development of the novel. Delany, like the other novelists of his time, sometimes reverted to grandiose language that is not very suitable to a novel such as *Blake"* (56). The fact that Malveaux dismisses the text's literary prowess is important because, although it *looks* like a novel, I do not believe Blake was written as a novel. Instead, I interpret the shift from what Malveaux calls "main plot" to "minor sub-plots" as Delany's shift from arguing his main claim to expanding related minor claims. She concludes that "even though *Blake* is not a literary masterpiece, it is fairly well written. And beyond the literary imperfections that *Blake* had, we can clearly see Delany's message: [B]black is beautiful; [B]black people must unite, [B]black people must revolt" (56). Malveaux views *Blake* as a novel and therefore she critiques it according to what are literary standards. However, *Blake*, I contend, supports reading the text as an argument that presents itself as a novel. Malveaux's critique of *Blake*, then, rests on her assumption that the text *is* a novel and, although she accounts for its historical bearing and attempted goals, she concludes that the language is inappropriate for/unsuited to a novel. Other critics share Malveaux's misunderstanding that *Blake*

is a "bad novel," but I believe we should view *Blake* as a carefully crafted argument for an alternative way of thought and action where the characters are used to represent and develop Delany's claims.

A similar critique of *Blake* comes from Addison Gayle, Jr., who describes *Blake* as, "a fragment" (20) and asserts that this fragmentary quality is "partly responsible for the implausible plot sequences and the overall episodic quality" (21). Labelling the plot sequence as "implausible" tells us that Delany's writing does not subscribe to the typical conventions found in other African American novels. Additionally, Gayle Jr.'s comments suggest that Delany was preoccupied with his arguments and not necessarily with developing the plot. Rather than view *Blake* as a poorly written novel, we should view it as text that makes a complex and challenging argument while simultaneously modelling an alternative way of thinking and acting. Such a reading would account for what literary theorists view as poor writing because it would mean that Delany was not attempting to write a novel but what we might refer to as a didactic narrative.

Gayle Jr., like Malveaux, views the text through a literary lens, labels it a novel, and finds the plot to be disjointed and the overall quality low. Additionally, Gayle Jr. calls the text, "a sprawling, cumbersome book, the first picaresque novel by a black writer" (20). Lastly, Gayle Jr. notes, however, that "despite these flaws, and despite inept characterization and stilted dialogue, the novel is the most important by an African-American before Sutton Griggs's *Imperium in Imperio*" (21). According to this scholar, what makes *Blake* "the most important" is the description of Black life in America and the antebellum South in particular. Gayle Jr.'s critique of the text focuses on literary characteristics such as the plot and dialogue. While this critique has been made within literary circles, we should consider that Delany is trying to do something

other than write a "good novel." Gayle Jr.'s criticisms are often paired with encomium—"sprawling" and "cumbersome" is followed by "picaresque" and "the most important." This mixture of criticism and praise highlights the obvious difficulty of scholars to classify and conceive of *Blake* as a novel. I argue that this difficulty is due to Delany's focus more on his message and less on its aesthetics. Similar to Malveaux, Gayle Jr. tallies the ways that *Blake* contributes to our understanding of its place in the *literary* canon. While both acknowledge the importance of the text, they are also critical of its style and development—its *literary* quality. What both scholars overlook is that Delany may be pursuing goals in *Blake* that do not fit neatly into the traditional generic conventions of the novel. I propose that by analyzing this text from such a perspective—that Delany writes *Blake* to provide his readers with a model of resistance that includes thoughts and actions that will lead to freedom for African Americans—we can gain a more accurate understanding of the text's contributions to African American culture and history.

Floyd J. Miller also classifies the text as a novel and in his introductory comments on its significance: "Delany's novel is clearly the most important [B]black novel of this period and, for the social historian, one of the most significant and revealing novels ever written by an Afro-American" (xii). Miller's praise for the text ignores the literary aspects and instead evaluates it from a socio-historical perspective. Doing so leads Miller to appreciate the cultural and historical significance of *Blake*. I contend that *Blake*'s cultural and historical importance also stems from its rhetorical elements. One example of this link is when Miller describes *Blake* as "an accumulation" (xix) of Delany's "prewar thinking" since the novel includes "bits and pieces drawn from diverse experiences [of Delany's] dating back as far as 1840" (xix). He taps into some of the rhetorical decisions that Delany makes when constructing his argument. Therefore,

by drawing from "bits and pieces" of diverse experiences, Delany can develop his ideas in a more well-rounded way which helps to build a stronger argument thus linking the cultural and historical significance to his rhetorical elements. Miller posits that "the novel's larger ideological concerns are more omnipresent; yet the very persistence of certain themes also indicates an accumulation of commitment toward particular stances" (xix), which hints at larger goals such as modelling a form of resistance to oppression and indicating a pathway to Black elevation.

Lastly, Miller argues that "as a montage of personal observations and experience, contemporary political debate and incidents drawn from slave narratives, *Blake* is a much more complex (and truthful) rendering of mid-nineteenth century [B]black experience than either *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or William Wells Brown's *Clotel*" (xxi). In this passage, Miller offers two additional generic labels for *Blake* (beyond the novel): the montage, a genre from the visual arts, and the slave narrative, another literary genre. Miller recognizes *Blake* for its rich description (montage) and the gritty plot turns and descriptive violence (slave narrative). That Miller assigns two generic labels from different artistic fields (fine arts and literature) demonstrates *Blake*'s hybridity as a text. That is, Miller can argue that *Blake* is a montage and that it is also a slave narrative (and others can argue that it is a novel) because Delany has incorporated characteristics from multiple genres into his text. However, I contend that the text is best described as a didactic narrative because we can see the inclusion of multiple genres as a rhetorical strategy to build an argument. In support of his classification as a slave narrative, Miller also notes that "other incidents in *Blake* show that Delany was well-acquainted with several of the existing narratives as well as the fugitive-slave lore which circulated widely within both abolitionist circles and the abolitionist press" (xxii). As Miller notes, Delany was well-aware of the slave narrative and had the knowledge to write one. Miller states that "based on whatever reading about Cuban history

and society he [Delany] was able to do, Delany's treatment of Cuba reflects an uncanny accuracy in portraying Cuban slavery and the complex racial composition of Cuban society as well as the interrelationships between Cuban political developments and the interests of both Southern expansionists and Cuban exiles" (xxii). Miller highlights Delany's knowledge of both the genre and the complex political climate that he discusses in *Blake*.

Delany's familiarity with the narratives of his contemporaries suggests that he was aware of the potential impact and reception of the genre as well as its limitations, an awareness that may have led to his decision to write a novel that is, in fact, much more than a novel. In other words, he transforms the novel into a didactic narrative. Delany would have been aware of the popularity of both Stowe's and Brown's texts and the impact they had on the abolitionist movement, which was substantial, considering that Brown's book was the first to have a play made after a book and Stowe increased awareness of the movement. This awareness suggests that he would also have understood the appeal the genre would have with the abolitionist community, and this knowledge could have influenced his decision to incorporate aspects of this genre into *Blake*. Additionally, Delany would also have understood the potential limitations of the genre, so he did not write *Blake* as a slave narrative but as another genre—one that literary critics have identified as a (lower quality) novel—that uses elements from the slave narrative (and, in fact, the novel) to create a hybrid genre that overcomes the limitations of these named (and well known) genres. He combines elements of several genres because no existing genre would allow him to accomplish his rhetorical goals for the work. Lastly, that critics have commented on the quality of the text supports my conclusion that *Blake* is not a novel but a didactic narrative because Delany sacrifices aesthetics to more clearly and effectively deliver the message.

Consequently, I believe we should read *Blake* as *more* than a novel. Specifically, when we examine both the rhetorical situation that produced *Blake* and the strategies that Delany employed, we can see that *Blake* is doing more. Delany wants his readers to have a full understanding of the oppression and injustice that plague all African Americans. Had Delany decided to write a traditional novel that describes the experiences of one character, his audience may not grasp the depth of Black oppression in its entirety. Therefore, as I show, Delany steps outside of the conventions of a novel to didactically articulate the scope of the problem. Employing the rhetorical strategy of indirect discourse, Delany uses the narrator and main character to engage his readers with ways of thinking and acting that he sees as essential for overcoming the oppression that Blacks face in the United States. Additionally, through the narrator and main character, he offers an alternative vision of Christianity for his audience, one that rejects the preachings of white American Christians. Delany writes *Blake* to present an argument that models (through the title character, Henry Blake) a way of overcoming systemic oppression in the United States.

Other scholars who have discussed *Blake* have done so to varying degrees and have assigned it a variety of generic labels. Robert Levine (2003) describes *Blake* as Delany's "romantic conception (or fantasy) of heroic [B]black leadership" which "focuses on the efforts of a single [B]black leader to bring about a hemispheric slave revolution in the Americas" (17). Making this case, Levine, perhaps inadvertently, mischaracterizes Delany's text by highlighting its aspirational vision of Black leadership as "romantic" and "fantasy." Levine's classification of Blake as a "fantasy" undermines Delany's purpose for the text because it dismisses any credibility or validity of Delany's argument. Levine suggests that the text offers insight into Delany's conception of black leadership contained in a "self-mythologizing novel" (17) in which

"Blake attempts to teach the plantation slaves a new way of thinking about slavery and religion" (17).

Levine's critique echoes that of Bernard Bell (1987), who argues that "*Blake* is in part the fictionalized adventures of the author, a political activist" (50) which emphasizes "showing rather than telling" (52). Bell's labelling of *Blake* as the "fictionalized adventures of the author" also diminishes the credibility and validity of the text. That Bell and Levine separately view *Blake* as a form of self-aggrandizement initiated by its author is problematic. Because they see the incidents in the book as reflections of Delany's personal experience, they both fail to account, in their reading, for the rhetorical situation/exigence that produced the text on the eve of the Civil War. The abolition movement was in full force and the South was threatening to secede to maintain the institution of slavery. Meanwhile, African Americans were relegated to a bargaining chip between the federal government and the Southern states. To dismiss the text as fantasy or the fictionalized adventures of the author similarly dismisses Delany's goal for writing. Although Bell's view that Delany attempts to mythologize himself in his work is shared by some scholars, we should also consider readings such as Bell's problematic because they dismiss Delany's work as shameless self-promotion (52). They reduce this text, with its complex and multifaceted argument aimed at overcoming the oppression that Black Americans—and especially *enslaved* Black Americans—suffered in the nineteenth century to a self-aggrandizing act of self-promotion. Such readings prevent us from understanding clearly what Delany accomplishes in this text, which is to present his audience with alternative forms of thought and action that he believes will lead Black Americans towards freedom and prosperity.

In his discussion of *Blake*, Bell notes Delany's use of "music, poetry, and prayers in *Blake,*" and he argues that with these additions the text "also transcends its sociohistorical

functions by revealing Delany's aesthetic kinship with William Wells Brown in drawing on folklore, the Bible, and abolitionist literature to sharpen his narrative" (53). I would add that Delany's use of music, poetry, and prayers illuminates his strategic approach of showing rather than telling a variety of aspects of Black culture. These strategies also build the persuasive value of his argument through an appeal to ethos because it shows that Delany understands Black culture and values. Levine's and Bell's critiques not only provide a few insights into the possible strategies Delany employs in *Blake* but also highlight the limits of readings that underplay the rhetorical aspects in this text, such as his use of the main character as a model for how to think and act to resist racial oppression.

Other scholars see Delany's *Blake* as expanding on the tradition of his contemporaries and, like Miller, note the text's resemblance to a slave narrative. For example, Adenike Marie Davidson (2008) states that "Delany follows his literary contemporaries in his abolitionist theme, expanding on the structure of the slave narrative, and examining financial independence as a means towards combating racism and oppression" (28). Delany's decision to propose financial independence as a means of combating oppression shows that he has a larger goal for *Blake* that extends beyond creating descriptive portraits of enslaved people's lives to depict ways that African Americans can alter their thought processes and actions to resist oppression and achieve racial uplift. Davidson then notes that "Delany's novel diverts from the templates of other antebellum African American fiction through the use of a full Black protagonist, a blatant disregard for a white audience, a willingness to abandon 'Christianity' and Christian ethics, a move away from presenting either the North (including Canada) or Europe as a haven by centring freedom in the Caribbean, and presenting the possibility and necessity of Pan-African unification against white supremacy" (28). Delany's text does appear meet Davidson's

description and Davidson goes so far as to identify five ways in which *Blake* differs from other African American fiction of the period and also touches on an important aspect of *Blake*: Delany's decision to use the characters and the narrator in the text as a model for thought and action. While her characterization of *Blake* offers considerable insight, her claims that Delany is willing to abandon Christianity and Christian values require some qualification. I would argue that Delany does not seek to abandon Christianity nor Christian values: rather he seeks to reject the values held by white Christian slave owners. Although Davidson recognizes "the importance of examining *Blake* as one of the foundational pieces in the African American literary tradition," she argues that "it's more pertinent to establish the text as the building block for the Black Nation novel in African American literature" (31). Davidson's argument that the text is a "Black Nation novel" indicates that she does not see it as simply a piece of the African American literary tradition. The Black Nation novel, as Davidson defines them, are novels that contain themes of Black Nationalism that would later serve as central parts of the Black Power Movement of the 1960s.

In addition to Davidson's claims that Delany expands on the work of his contemporaries, other literary scholars commend Delany's portrayal of Black life in America. Jean Fagan Yellin (1972) argues that the inclusion of "disparate elements [genteel set pieces, sentimental poems, authentic black folk tales and songs, and harsh sketches of slave life]" makes *Blake* "a vigorous montage of black life midcentury" (199). Here Yellin links the genre of 'montage' (also mentioned by Miller in his reading) with the poetry, music, and folktales that enrich the text. Robert Reid-Pharr (1996) describes *Blake* as "an exemplar of 'the nationalist aesthetic' in that its impetus is to demonstrate the contours, the borders, of the 'national landscape'" (qtd in Blount and Cunningham 78). This description of *Blake* characterizes Delany as an author detailing

Black culture within American society. William Jeremiah Moses focuses on different aspects of the text to identify the genre when he says that *Blake* "was Delany's substitute for a slave narrative. Second, it was inspired by the slave revolutionary tradition, which was sometimes nationalistic. Third, the novel is intimately tied to religious racialism that is such an important factor in nineteenth-century writing. Finally, *Blake* is an expression of the Pan-African strivings of Delany and his circle" (149). In this passage, Moses identifies some of how the text is an artifact of its time and place. For example, he raises two new points: the importance of religious racialism in nineteenth-century American literary writing and what he calls 'the Pan-African strivings" that he attributes to "Delany and his circle." Moses' phrasing here does not entirely capture the contributions of Delany's *Blake* or his other texts. Rather, it diminishes the considerable effort, thought, and strategy that Delany put into his arguments/texts as mere "strivings."

Delany uses *Blake* to express his desire to unite African Americans and Blacks more broadly around shared experiences. Moses also describes *Blake* as, "a typical exhortation to revolt by a free black pamphleteer" (151), and compares the text to *Walker's Appeal* and the *Ethiopian Manifesto* (151). Moses' description of *Blake* is accurate because while Delany does follow the characteristics of the novel, his goals appear to be beyond the scope of what a novel can achieve. That Moses also sees the text as closely resembling *Walker's Appeal* points towards the text being more than a novel because, as discussed with *Appeal*, the goal of the text is to bring about change through concrete action. These descriptions—that *Blake* is an exemplar, a substitute slave narrative, an expression of pan-African strivings, and a typical exhortation to revolt— complicate earlier classifications of *Blake* as a novel. What this list of competing genres assigned to *Blake*, explicitly or otherwise, shows is a complicated text that does not easily fit into

the typical generic categories. Moses's comments highlight a key aspect of the text which is that many scholars attempt to pin down *Blake* within the literary canon. From slave narrative substitute to "typical exhortation to revolt," *Blake* has been classified using literary terms. These various descriptions arise because the text has been read as a literary rather than rhetorical text. Scholars have approached *Blake* from multiple perspectives including nationalistic, historical, sociological, and literary. What all these scholars have in common is their description of *Blake* as a literary genre. In fact, to view *Blake* solely as a novel forces us to overlook what Delany is doing and how he is doing it.

Much of Delany's argument for emigrating from the United States hinged on African Americans' ongoing inability to achieve equality and justice in America. In *Condition*, Delany concludes that emigration is the only reasonable solution after thoroughly examining African Americans' situation. He bases this conclusion on the recently passed legislation of The Fugitive Slave Act that Delany sees as denying African Americans protection under the law and their rights and liberties in the hands of white Americans. In *Condition*, Delany made this argument central, whereas, in *Blake,* he embeds it along with others. Delany argues that African Americans will never receive justice and equality in the United States. He presents this argument to his audience through his depiction of the white characters of the text.

Delany undertakes the work of composing *Blake* for various reasons that suggest he has goals beyond the activity of merely writing a traditional novel. As previously mentioned, Delany writes *Blake* partially to correct what he views as an inaccurate portrayal of Black life in Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Secondly, he uses narrative as a rhetorical strategy to illustrate for his readers how racism and religion have served to perpetuate the oppression of Blacks in America.

Additionally, he uses the title character to model an alternative way of thinking and acting for African Americans to overcome white oppression.

Delany chooses to write a didactic narrative because he wants to make a complex, multifaceted argument that would be difficult both to motivate readers to read but also for them to follow and understand if it was presented as, for example, a political manifesto. What the genre allows him to do is create emotionally fraught vignettes of the oppression that slaves in the nineteenth-century US endured and to offer, as he did in *Condition*, strategies to help them to improve the quality of their lives. The emotional appeals that are created when readers engage with a novel's characters and situations serve to keep them reading even when they might be shocked or put off by an underlying message that, if delivered as a manifesto or essay, could be quickly and easily abandoned.

While literary scholars classify *Blake* as a novel, I see Delany's approach as relying on the genre more as a rhetorical strategy. This is not to say that their classification is without merit, but to understand what he is doing, we need to see the text as more than a novel.

The Didactic Narrative: *Blake, or the Huts of America*

I approach the text by analyzing how Delany employs two major novelistic strategies in unconventional ways. The first strategy is the use of indirect discourse as spoken by the narrator and the main character, Henry Blake. Next, I examine the interactions depicted between his characters that model a new way for African Americans to think about and act in the situations they find themselves in. I show that Delany's characters differ from a traditional novel because their purpose is to serve as a role model for African Americans and less about contributing towards the furthering of the plot. In short, the characters serve primarily argumentative functions rather than plot development functions. I approach the text through close reading to

show how Delany steps outside the conventions of the novel to address his readers and didactically articulate the scope of oppression and injustice that African Americans face in the United States.

The Use of Indirect Discourse

In this first section, I discuss how Delany's use of indirect discourse as spoken by the narrator and Henry Blake moves the text outside the conventions of the novel. In each incident, I show how Delany uses the narrator and Henry Blake to speak to his audience to educate them about the depth and breadth of the oppression that holds Black Americans' inequality and powerlessness.

Indirect discourse enables rhetors to convey to readers their level of expertise and trustworthiness. In other words, indirect discourse allows the author to establish their ethos in a fictional text. Dawson defines indirect discourse as "the ways in which omniscient narrators draw attention to the narrating instance to rhetorically perform their narrative authority: mobilizing the function of narration via overt commentary and direct address to the reader; displaying the proleptic knowledge of history enabled by the spatio-temporal distance of the narrator from the storyworld" (166). While Dawson's definition focuses on the role of the omniscient narrator, I see it as relevant to Delany's text because the narrator, as well as Blake's dialogue, both internal and when interacting with other characters, largely fulfills the role of the omniscient narrator as Dawson describes it. Delany employs indirect discourse in order to present his audience with information that he sees as essential to overcoming their current state of oppression. This particular strategy proves effective because the author, through the trust established by characters or the narrator, can relay information and arguments on behalf of the author. Rather than providing readers with access to the consciousness of characters (Dawson

166) the use of indirect discourse in *Blake* serves as a window into Delany's solution for the enslavement of African Americans.

Delany's emphasis on the argument rather than the aesthetics is established in the opening of the text. In chapter one, "The Project," he introduces readers to the text through indirect discourse. Delany does not initially mention characters nor provides any context for the scene mentioned. Rather, the narrator notes that "on one of those exciting occasions during a contest for the presidency of the United States, a number of gentlemen met in the city of Baltimore. They were few in number, and appeared little concerned about the affairs of the general government" (3). Delany's opening may not offer us any insight into the text but it does provide a veiled critique of the men he mentions. Opening in such a manner puts more emphasis on the critique and less on the development of the plot, which shows that his purpose moves beyond writing a novel that tells a story. As the narrator adds, "though men of intelligence, their time and attention appeared to be entirely absorbed in an adventure of self-interest" (3). Not until the next sentence do we learn that among the men is Colonel Stephen Franks, whom we will later learn is the owner of the main character, Henry Blake. Delany charges that Franks and others have little concern for who governs the country as they are more absorbed with personal interests. Such a critique suggests that men like Franks have little worry that their position in life will change with the government and are free to pursue their interests. In this case, the reader would know little about the men mentioned so such a critique would appear to be lost on Delany's audience but he does not appear to be interested, at least in this opening, in developing a plot as much as he is in developing an argument, an argument that the complacent slaveholders and men of business described. This chapter serves as a starting point in the construction of Delany's argument that those in power in the US are interested in the advancement of slavery.

Delany follows with more indirect discourse when he contrasts the experiences of Blacks and whites on the day of the Sabbath. The narrator describes the scene: "when the bells began to signal the hour of worship, the fashionable people seemed en masse to crowd the streets. The carriages ran in every direction, bearing happy hearts and cheerful faces to the various places of worship" (13). The narrator contrasts this white experience with that of slaves when noting that "whilst peering over every gate, out of every alley, or every kitchen door, could be seen the faithful [B]black servants who, staying at home to prepare them food and attend to other domestic duties, were satisfied to look smilingly upon their masters and families as they rode along, without for a moment dreaming that they had a right to worship the same God, with the same promise of life and salvation" (Delany 13). Delany contrasts the Black servants with the white churchgoers to show that even in a situation where equality should be expected, inequality is visually obvious. The two passages are critical to understanding Delany's view of the role the slave owners' version of Christianity plays in maintaining racial inferiority. Here Delany uses the narrator to make his argument, using the descriptions provided as evidence of the inequality African Americans endure. Here in chapter five, we see Delany's narrator address—before his central characters are even introduced—one of his major arguments in the text: the claim that Christianity, as practiced by white American slave owners, serves to maintain the institution of slavery and to exacerbate African American oppression.

Delany makes extensive use of his narrator (and later his characters) to critique white American Christianity, which advocates that African Americans rely on or follow pro-slavery versions of Christianity. For example, following the sale of Maggie and the escape of Henry Blake, Mammy Judy and Daddy Joe are described as

> Falling upon their knees, the old man offered an earnest, heartful prayer to God, asking his guardianship through the night, and protection throughout the day, especially upon

> their heartbroken daughter, their runaway son-in-law, and the little grandson, when the two old people retired to rest with spirits mingled with joy, sorrow, hope, and fear; Alicey going into the great house. (Delany 36)

Through this use of indirect discourse, the narrator relays to Delany's readers the importance of taking action as opposed to relying solely on prayer. In this passage, Delany's characters, after praying for God's intervention, resume their usual evening routines, retiring to bed for the elder pair, and the young woman, Alicey, heading to the great house. Delany shows his audience that these prayers do not lead these African Americans out of bondage; quite the contrary, in fact, Alicey—described earlier as "the pride of the evening, in an old gauze orange dress of her mistress, and felt that she deserved to be well thought of" (33)—heads as usual into the great house to endure her evening routine, presumed sexual assault by Mr. Franks. In this passage, Delany uses the scenario to depict a binary situation where Henry Blake, a man of action and knowledge, is on one side, and the other slaves, fearful, naive, and passively accepting of their fate, on the other.

Delany also uses the narrator to present the rationale for Blake's mission. As Blake approaches a river at the outset of his journey to free African Americans from bondage, the narrator describes Blake's mission as "a mighty undertaking, such as had never before been ventured upon, and the duty devolving upon him, was too much for a slave with no other aid than the aspirations of his soul panting for liberty" (69). The narrator's description here recalls the Biblical story of Exodus where Moses leads the Jews out of Egypt and to the Promised Land because, similar to Moses, Blake also feels the weight of a mighty undertaking of leading his people to freedom. Although having earlier proclaimed his distrust of religion to Mammy Judy and Daddy Joe, Blake finds his journey soon brings him closer to God. As the narrator states, "reflecting upon the peaceful hours he once enjoyed as a professing Christian, and the distance

which slavery had driven him from its peaceful portals, here in the wilderness, determining to renew his faith and dependence upon Divine aid, when falling upon his knees, he opened his heart to God, as a tenement of the Holy Spirit" (69). This passage is significant in two ways. First, it illustrates how Delany uses his narrator to communicate with his readers. Instead of dramatizing Blake's spiritual renewal, Delany uses his omniscient narrator to show that distance from white American slaveholder Christianity is what brings Blake and, metonymically, all African Americans closer to god.

Secondly, this quotation presents an alternate means of following the Christian faith that dominated nineteenth-century American life. Blake never abandons Christianity, contrary to what Davidson asserts. Rather, Delany proposes that African Americans follow the scriptures without the corrupting influence of slaveholder interpretations. Also part of the alternate means of being a faithful Christian that Delany offers is the nature of leadership that he advocates through his main character. He distinguishes Blake, his model for an African American male who could lead his people out of slavery, from the other slaves based not only on his education and insight but also on his ability to use that knowledge. For example, the narrator suggests that people with Blake's intellect have a responsibility to lead: as the narrator puts it, Henry Blake carries "responsibilities in a shape of which he had no conception" (69). While he might believe he is leaving the plantation to recover his wife, he is, in fact, leaving to free not only Maggie but all of his enslaved brethren in the American South. I would argue that here Delany implies that his readers share similar responsibilities as Blake to the Black community. And also like Blake, those that share his important qualities are also often unaware of the responsibility they have to help other African Americans. Delany believes that those similar to Blake have the responsibility to develop ideas and methods for leading their communities out of bondage.

At the same time, Delany does not diminish the burdens of leadership in this passage. His narrator notes that what Blake is doing is a "mighty undertaking, such as had never before been ventured upon, and the duty devolving upon him, was too much for a slave with no other aid than the aspirations of his soul panting for liberty" (69). The phrase "was too much for a slave with no other aid" suggests that Blake was distinct from other slaves "panting for liberty" because he understood the importance of action and a willingness to see those actions through. In this description of Blake's duty, Delany's narrator includes and explains the role religion should play in African Americans' lives. As noted, the passage illustrates an alternate means of following the Christian faith. To this point in the text, Delany has shown how white American slaveholder Christianity does not bring African Americans closer to God; rather, it serves (and seeks) to make them content with their enslaved lot in life. However, Delany helps his readers to understand from this episode with Blake that it is only when freed from bondage and away from the influence of white preachers that he is able to reclaim the power of his faith. The passage teaches his readers that they must know how to overcome their oppression before they are able to act.

Delany uses his narrator and indirect discourse to show his readers the path towards legitimate spiritual independence, one that does not require following the teachings of white American (slaveholder) Christians. Delany illustrates the problem with legitimate spiritual dependence on white slaveholder Christianity when Blake decides to flee and encounters a "huge squad of alligators" (69). The narrator informs us that "his first impulse was to surrender himself to his fate and be devoured" (Delany 70). Yet, rather than succumb, Blake figures out how to escape by "seizing the fragment of a limb which lay in the cove, beating upon the ground and yelling like a madman, giving them all possible space" to which "the beasts were frightened at

such a rate, that they reached the water in less time than Henry reached the bank" (70). The narrator then notes that Blake's escape serves "to strengthen his fate in a renewed determination of spiritual dependence" (70). Delany uses indirect discourse to inform the audience that figuring out the best course of action rather than waiting for divine intervention, which he characterizes as "surrendering," is essential for African Americans to escape their current situation, especially since waiting for divine intervention has not borne much fruit for them to that point. In this, as in many cases, the combination of faith and strategic action that Delany advocates proves fruitful. The narrator states that "while gazing upon the stream in solemn reflection for Divine aid to direct him, logs came floating down, which suggested a proximity to the raft with which sections of that stream is filled, when going but a short distance up, he crossed in safety to the Louisiana side. His faith was now fully established, and thenceforth, Henry was full of hope and confident of success" (70). Because Blake took action to escape (frightening the alligators away with noise), he received a gift from God in the form of the log flowing downstream.

The passage demonstrates how Delany combines multiple rhetorical strategies—he uses indirect discourse, but he also uses the strategy identified by Jacqueline Bacon as self-help rhetoric, which she defines as "the moral advancement through education, economic self-sufficiency, and religious commitment" (Bacon 23). This particular passage serves as an example of self-help rhetoric because it seeks to educate readers that a commitment to faith leads to their advancement. Delany employs self-help rhetoric's emphasis on the power of education. A significant role of the narrator and Henry Blake is to educate readers about the difference between the oppressive nature of white (slaveholder) Christianity and Delany's vision of an active and, for African Americans, liberating version of Christianity. We see this version at work in the passages above, specifically where Delany shows his model, Blake, demonstrating the

proper way to combine faith and sensible/strategic action. Delany's concept of action calls for one to act in ways that will achieve one's goals. This concept of action is evident when Blake writes down the names of plantations he passes so that he can tell slave patrols that he is searching for his master's horse which the narrator describes as "shrewdness and discretion" (68).

In *Condition*, Delany laid out his didactic philosophical version for improving Black life, and in *Blake* he presents the narrative version, where he uses his main character, Blake, to model the attitudes and behaviours that he believes will help Black Americans improve their lives. To fashion his model, Delany incorporates the rhetorical strategies of self-help and indirect discourse. The use of these strategies hints at Delany's goal of providing his audience with a solution for racial uplift that starts with rejecting the version of religion preached by white American (slaveholder) Christians. In passages such as these, we can see how Delany's text moves beyond the genre of the novel because Delany constructs his main character to deliver his arguments to his audience. Each scene, each encounter is crafted as a teaching moment where Blake can model for the audience how to think and act.

What Delany is doing in the preceding series of episodes is laying out a narrative argument for the value for his readers of having a Christian relationship with God that is outside the control of white slaveholders. I argue that this strategy suggests that Delany is going beyond writing a novel. That is, we understand narrative to be rhetorical because, as James Phelan informs us, (the narrative of rhetoric) "is telling a particular story to a particular audience in a particular situation for, presumably, a particular purpose" (Phelan 4). Here Phelan identifies for us the possibility that narrative can be used to accomplish a particular argumentative/rhetorical purpose. In the following passages, we see Delany developing what becomes a trend in the text

where Blake or the narrator discuss a concept that readers are familiar with and understand in a particular way (in this example, faith) but propose understanding it in a new way. In the incident already mentioned, Blake finds himself standing on the bank of the river, surrounded by alligators, while a steamer ship approaches his location. The narrator notes that "[Blake's] first impulse was to surrender himself to his fate and be devoured, as in the rear and either side the bank was perpendicular, escape being impossible except by the way he entered, to do which would have exposed him to the view of the boat, which could not be avoided. Meantime the frightful animals were crawling over and among each other, at a fearful rate" (70). His escape by frightening the alligators by banging a tree limb "served to strengthen his faith in a renewed determination of spiritual dependence" (70). The passage demonstrates the relationship between faith and strategic action and the interdependence of the two.

While Delany spends ample time critiquing white slaveholder Christianity, he also uses the narrator to address additional issues that he sees as part of the system of oppression of African Americans. Specifically, he examines the ingrained American cultural assumption that what makes whites superior is the colour of their skin. The narrator elaborates this point: "these feelings engendered by the whites have been extensively incorporated with the elements of society among the colored people, giving rise to the 'Brown Society' an organized association of mulattos, created by the influence of whites, for the purpose of preventing pure-blooded Negroes from entering the social circle, or holding intercourse with them" (Delany 109). Here the narrator argues Delany's point that white Americans organized the "Brown Society" to segregate mixed-race citizens and thereby continue the oppression of anyone who had a past relation of African descent. What Delany conveys to his readers is that the obstacles are so numerous and obdurate that equality and uplift are not attainable. In this narrator's aside, Delany highlights the

systemic oppression and racism that Blacks in the United States face. This passage is important because it creates such a dramatic break in the narrative thread of the story. The aside pauses the plot and Delany uses the narrator to address his audience and inform them of the efforts of white slaveholders to keep African Americans from seeking a path to freedom. For readers to understand why it is necessary for Black Americans to emigrate from the US, they have to understand the conditions of life for this group in the southern states such as South Carolina. A novelist might vividly describe a series of experiences that Blake could have while travelling through this state that viscerally recreates these conditions for readers (and Delany does this, to a certain extent), but by using only the novelist's tools Delany cannot guarantee that readers will be able to extrapolate from this single Black person's experience to all Black people's experiences to fully understand the depth and breadth of the oppression that maintains Black Americans' inequality and powerlessness. I argue that Delany feels he has to step outside the conventions of the novel to have his narrator address his readers and didactically articulate the scope of the problem. It is clearly far more important to Delany that his readers learn and understand the cultural assumptions and ideologies that enslave their minds (as well as their bodies) than it is that he writes a novel that critics (and later scholars) will applaud for its impeccable plotting and stylistic artistry.

The Use of Characters as Argumentative Functions

In this section, I examine specific interactions between characters that show how Delany uses the characters, not to develop a plot or theme, but to advance his argument. The dialogue is used to reinforce positions that show the resistance by white slaveholders to making any societal changes that might lead to or facilitate the freedom and liberty of African Americans.

Delany uses the interactions between characters to argue that there is no safe haven for African Americans in the United States. He also argues that, contrary to what northern abolitionists state, the North harbours many of the same prejudices as the South despite the absence of slavery. In a conversation that takes place in chapter three, slaveholder Colonel Stephen Franks converses with Mrs. Ballard, a northern woman described as possessing the highest intelligence. Delany shows his readers that the whites of the North, represented by Mrs. Ballard, share the same sentiments about Black Americans as the whites of the South. Franks asks Mrs. Ballard, "how will the North go in the present issue?" (Delany 4). "The present issue" in Franks' question refers to the application by judges in the North of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which required runaway slaves captured in the North to be returned to the South. Mrs. Ballard eventually responds, "you do not understand me, Colonel, we [white power brokers of the Northern states] can have no interests separate from yours; you know the time-honored motto, 'united we stand,' and so forth, must apply to the American people under every policy in every section of the Union" (4). Here Delany emphasizes for readers that the free states of the North cooperate with the South to maintain the institution of slavery; consequently, he underscores for his readers, there is no safe place for African Americans (free or enslaved) in the United States. This cooperation is then clearly identified by Franks, "True, Madam Ballard, true! I yield the controversy. You have already done more than we of the South expected. I now remember that the Judge himself tried the first case under the Act, in your city, by which the measures were tested" (Delany 4). Here Delany highlights the fact that Northern cities such as Boston, New York, and Philadelphia have, as Madam Ballard states, tested the law and upheld it, a fact that cements his claim that the North and South cooperate to maintain the institution of slavery. Additionally, Ballard states, "He [the judge] did, sir, and if you will not consider me

unwomanly by telling you, desired me, on coming here, to seek every opportunity to give the fullest assurance that the judiciary are sound on that question" (5). Delany's decision to place this discussion early on in chapter three suggests that he wants to construct an argument that moves the reader from a premise (slavery infects all people) to an eventual conclusion (his alternative way of thinking and acting will help readers overcome this infection). The Fugitive Slave Act allowed for the arrest of free Northern Blacks and for them to be sold into slavery at any white person's whim. Rather, the "free states" and the slave states of the south are united around the national economy because, although northern states did not see themselves as oppressing Black people, the union maintained profitable enterprises.

In addition to his premise-based structure in the early part of the text, Delany also uses the characters as conduits to make claims about the oppressive conditions African Americans face in the United States. Delany offers evidence of the lack of access to equality for African Americans through Mrs. Ballard. It is Mrs. Ballard, the northerner, who insists on the sale of Maggie, the wife of Henry Blake. Maggie is a slave, described as having a "mutual attachment" (5) with the wife of Colonel Franks, Maria Franks, and further described by noting that, "Maggie had long been the favorite maidservant of her mistress, having attained the position through merit. She was also nurse and foster mother to the two last children of Mrs. Franks, and loved them, to all appearance, as her own. The children reciprocated this affection, calling her 'Mammy'" (Delany 5). Delany strategically mentions the closeness of Maggie and both Mrs. Franks and her children as a way to critique the lack of humanity of the institution of slavery. Although these people all love each other, Maggie is still removed from the household. He posits that the institution overrides any sense of humanity. Delany constructs Mrs. Ballard as a

northerner precisely because he wants to critique Fugitive Slave Laws and the North's cooperation in maintaining the slave institution.

However, Delany does not end there, as Mrs. Ballard directly interferes with Mrs. Franks' household. Mrs. Franks's conduct towards Maggie is described as "more like that of an elder sister than a mistress" and it is related that the two women "sometimes wore dresses cut from the same web of cloth" (Delany 6); Mrs. Ballard views this behaviour as "an objectionable sight, especially as she imagined there was an air of hauteur in her [Maggie's] demeanor" (6). Mrs. Ballard is described as "determined to subdue her [Maggie's] spirit" and "acting from this impulse, several times in her absence, Mrs. Ballard took occasion to administer to the maid severities she had never experienced at the hands of mistress" (6). Mrs. Franks, as the narrator states, "took no further notice of it, designedly evading the matter" (6). Delany presents Mrs. Ballard as the aggressor in this instance because he wants to show not only how this woman from a Northern state is envious, petty, and racist, but also how Northern and Southern whites are both active participants in the slave system; this characterization supports his argument that the only way for African Americans to achieve equality and freedom is to emigrate because they will never overcome the obstacles in the US. I argue that Delany transforms the genre in this text through the use of more than the "normal discursive means of persuasion" (Bowers et al. 3). He accomplishes this by using the characters as conduits to deliver his argument to his audience. In other words, the characters function as rhetorical tools meant to educate and show the audience that the United States maintains multiple obstacles to opportunities for liberty and prosperity for Black Americans.

Delany also uses the characters to highlight the similarities between white northerners and white slaveholding southerners, thus making the case that African Americans will find no

safe haven in America. Delany makes this argument through the participation of Mrs. Ballard in the sale of Maggie when she presses Mrs. Franks to sell Maggie to her to work at her home in Cuba. Sitting in the parlor, Mrs. Franks laments the potential sale of Maggie, stating, "I can't, I won't let her go! She's a dear good girl! The children are attached to her, and so am I" (7). She expresses her regard for and emotional attachment to Maggie. At that point, her husband piles on, and Mr. Franks admonishes her for her lack of reason, "Maria, my dear, you've certainly lost your balance of mind! Do try and compose yourself" (7). He identifies his wife's regard for and attachment to the slave as mental instability. Mrs. Franks is frustrated by Mrs. Ballard's preference for a "well-trained slave" (7). Mrs. Ballard remarks, "I must have a slave, and of course I prefer a well-trained one, as I know all yours to be" (7).

Delany uses this early conversation to deliver two messages. First, Mrs. Franks expresses her love for Maggie, which then seals Maggie's fate because she is treating a slave as a person. Second, the white Americans around Mrs. Franks view her equal treatment of Maggie as unseemly and unacceptable and thus see it necessary to save Mrs. Franks from herself. What the interaction between these characters shows is that many whites in Northern free states treat Black Americans the same way that white southerners do—as inferior and subhuman—supporting his contention that because of this treatment and lack of regard there is no safe place for African Americans in the United States. Delany's moves in the early part of the text suggest that the goal is more than to write a novel because he appears to build the plot around the argument rather than the argument stemming from the plot.

Delany continues to use the characters to argue that African Americans will not achieve freedom in the United States. His argument via the conversation between the Franks and Mrs. Ballard demonstrates the lack of regard for Black life by some whites in the community. As Mrs.

Franks pleads to keep Maggie, Mrs. Ballard interjects saying, “I’m really astonished at you to take on so about a Negro girl! You really appear to have lost your reason. I would not behave so for all the Negroes in Mississippi" (8). Delany uses the northerner, Mrs. Ballard, to show that she would never feel an attachment to a “Negro girl” and that she would not protest or expose any emotional attachment as Mrs. Franks has done even if doing so would result in her becoming the owner of all the Blacks in Mississippi. Such a move, to disavow the possibility of kindly feelings towards any Black person, allows Delany to show that southern sentiments are shared by the northerners, which eliminates the possibility for equality anywhere in the United States. Additionally, Delany shows that slave-owning is not limited to southern whites. Although Mrs. Ballard resides in the north, she *is* a slave owner.

This exchange also serves as a critique of the Fugitive Slave Act because it highlights the fact that slave-owning is not necessarily limited to southern states. Mrs. Ballard, a northerner who owns a Cuban plantation, is an example of how the Fugitive Slave Act has enabled whites to expand the oppression of Blacks beyond borders, which Delany sees as northern support for southern slavery. Lastly, the exchange points to a broader goal of the text, one that requires Delany to rely less on the aesthetics of the novel. Here Delany advances one of his major claims, that the United States is not a safe place for African Americans nor one where they will find freedom and prosperity. To do this, he deploys the character interaction to develop an effective argument rather than to advance the plot (which he would probably do here if he were merely writing a novel).

As the interaction continues, Mr. Franks responds to Mrs. Franks, stating, “I have been watching the conduct of that girl for some time past; she is becoming both disobedient and unruly, and as I have made it a rule of my life never to keep a disobedient servant, the sooner we

part with her the better" (8). Delany's narrator then clarifies for his readers the nature of the disobedience and unruly behaviour that Franks describes as Maggie being "true to her womanhood, and loyal to her mistress having more than once communicated to her ears facts the sounds of which reflected no credit in his. For several repulses such as this, it was that she became obnoxious to her master" (8). Here Delany uses the nature of the relationship between Maggie and Franks (Maggie's father,) to remind readers of the brutality of institutional slavery where white men such as Franks can rape their female slaves, father children such as Maggie, and then seek to rape their own daughters (understood by Delany's readers as incest) and remain within the law as it is interpreted by white American/slaveholder Christianity. In Maggie's case, being true to her womanhood is grounds for Mr. Franks to sell her because he, similar to many slave owners, did not view slaves as people and was threatened by anyone that would seek to claim their humanity. These early interactions show the depth and degree of oppression that Blacks face in the United States. Although these exchanges between Mrs. Ballard and the Franks resemble scenes we may find in a novel (and at this stage, the text may appear to be solely a novel), Delany uses these exchanges to make claims to develop his broader argument. Delany looks to cement this argument when the northerner, Mrs. Ballard, questions Mrs. Franks—worried about the reaction Henry Blake will have to the sale of Maggie— "why you speak of your Negro slaves as if speaking of equals" (8). Mrs. Ballard concludes by stating, "make him [Blake] know that whatever you order, he must be contented with" (9). Within this context, Mrs. Ballard expresses a commonplace sentiment among white slave owners that it is the lot of slaves to be content with whatever their masters choose to do. Here Delany shows the status quo for slaves in the United States. These conversations among these white Americans are meant to frame the response to such sentiments that are carried out through the rest of the text. In other

words, these interactions function as conduits for Delany to guide readers from premise to conclusion. The interactions are essential for building Delany's argument which suggests that they are the central reason for the text.

In this passage, Delany describes the similarities between white northerners and slaveholding southerners to illustrate his claim that slavery has the ability to corrupt what humans see as just or moral. Delany's narrator describes Mr. Franks as "a fine, grave senatorial-looking man, of medium height, inclined to corpulency, black hair, slightly grey, and regarded by his slaves as a good master, and religiously as one of the best men" (10). Here Delany makes the point that Franks is seen by the slaves he owns as a good master and by the community at large as one of the best men religiously, a description that points to the corrupting nature of slavery where a person who owns another person is still seen as good. Delany argues through this passage that no slave owner, no matter how well regarded he might be, is exempt from values that degrade not only African Americans but also themselves.

This description of Mr. Franks demonstrates the corrupt nature of slavery because it highlights how a slaveowner such as Franks (about whom we learn some of his hideous qualities) can be described and regarded in a positive manner. Delany then contrasts Colonel Franks with Daddy Joe when Franks interrogates Daddy Joe of the whereabouts of Maggie. The narrator notes that "the slaves [including Daddy Joe], from their condition, are suspicious; any evasion or seeming design at suppressing the information sought by them[slave owners] frequently arouses their greatest apprehension" (Delany 11). The suspicions and apprehension of the slaves directly contradict the previous claims that the slaves view Colonel Franks as a good, religious man. What Delany implies with these two passages is the corrupt nature of slavery where goodness is skewed to overlook or ignore some fundamental flaws.

Delany follows his discussion of the corrupt nature of slavery with a description of the lack of agency slaves like Daddy Joe have. As Daddy Joe heads into town and learns that Maggie has "gone under the hill" (11), meaning that she has been sold, he is described as "falling upon his knees" and "raising his voice in supplication of Divine aid" (11). Daddy Joe's response to the sale of his step-daughter, which is to seek help from God, demonstrates an argument that Delany maintains throughout the text—that African Americans should not rely solely on assistance from God. Evidence to support this argument can be found in the scene that follows where a member of a patrol instructs Daddy Joe to "stop that noise" and orders him to "trudge along home" (12). Daddy Joe responds by saying "Tank'e seh" and the narrator notes that Daddy Joe did so "with a bow, feeling grateful that he was permitted to proceed" (12). The interaction provides readers with insight into Delany's argument against an overreliance on religion as a means of attaining freedom. Daddy Joe seeks help from God and instead receives orders from the slave patrol to trudge home. Rather than feeling grateful for receiving any assistance from God, Daddy Joe finds himself being thankful that these (implicitly threatening) white men deign to allow him to return unharmed to the plantation.

Delany shows readers that African Americans will receive little help if they rely solely on prayer for overcoming or reversing the heartbreaking effects of their oppression. This argument is supported when the narrator notes, "after a fervent and earnest prayer to God for protection to themselves, little grandson Joe, the return of his mother their only child, and blessings upon their master and the recovery of their mistress, the poor old slaves retired to rest for the evening, to forget their sorrows in the respite of sleep" (12). Here we see the limits of relying on prayer as Mammy Judy and Daddy Joe are only able to find relief from their sorrows through sleep, thus

suggesting that sleep rather than prayer is more effective in relieving the pain of African Americans.

Delany describes Blake's travels and experience through the southern United States where he calls on other slaves to take action. During Blake's meeting with fellow resisters, Seth, Phebe, Kits, and fifteen other plantation leaders, a slave named Tib is arrested for attempting to lead an insurrection. The narrator notes that

> intelligence soon reached all parts of the city, that an extensive plot for the rebellion of the slaves had been timely detected. The place was at once thrown into a state of intense excitement, the military called into requisition, dragoons flying in every direction, cannon from the old fort sending forth hourly through the night, thundering peals to give assurance of their sufficiency, and the infantry on duty traversing the streets, stimulating with martial air with voluntary vocalists, who readily joined in chorus to the memorable citing words in the Southern States of—Go tell Jack Coleman, The Negroes are arising! (Delany 106-07)

Delany details the reactions of the city to the call from Tibs for "Insurrection! Insurrection! Death to every white!" (106), and the description of the number of military units mobilized communicates to his readers that the white reaction is extreme and out of proportion to what is warranted in response to one lone man's attempt to overthrow white Americans' control of slaves. In this passage, Delany illustrates the level of fear that white Americans have that Blacks will seek to break the bonds of slavery. This fear leads to extreme measures of control, evidence that Delany uses to call for emigration because he cannot see, and as his readers now understand, what might induce white Americans to allow equality and freedom for Blacks. I argue that these passages are another instance of when Delany extends beyond writing a novel because he includes this incident more to issue a warning that white slaveholders will fight to maintain the institution of slavery than to advance a particular point in the plot. Here Delany uses the minor plot point involving the slave, Tib, and his ill-chosen rebellious words to show how slaveholders

respond to any situation that resembles an uprising with extreme force. Using Blake's travels through New Orleans, Delany shows the extent to which whites are willing to go to maintain the institution of slavery, and he expects readers to extrapolate from this picture of them tenaciously clinging to this institution to the unlikeliness of these same white people ever granting equal rights to Black citizens. These passages show us that *Blake* is highly tuned for didactic purposes; thus the evaluative criteria are irrelevant. Reading through a purely aesthetic lens is to miss the point of Delany's project, which is to transform the novel form for very explicit rhetorical work.

Henry Blake as a Model for Thought and Action

In this section, I show in greater detail how Delany uses the main character, Henry Blake, as a way to present his audience with an alternative form of thinking and acting. Delany develops scenarios where he can use Blake to model for readers shrewd thought and specific action. His use of Blake demonstrates how Delany seeks to educate his readers which suggests that the text is best described as a didactic narrative rather than a traditional novel.

Delany introduces Henry Blake, his title character, to readers and uses this character right away as a model for thought and action. As primarily the only well-developed character, Blake articulates Delany's key arguments, and he clearly stands apart from the other characters both in his manner of speech and his outlook. That is, Blake stands apart because he does not speak the vernacular as other characters do, and his outlook differs from that of many of the other characters. Also, Blake is the only character that the audience learns anything about, beyond the surface level. Delany describes Henry Blake as, "a pure Negro, handsome, manly, and intelligent" (16) and also mentions that he is "a man of good literary attainments...having been educated in the West Indies" (17). That the main character has been educated outside the United States is significant for Delany because he regards the US as a corrupting rather than improving

influence. Delany gives us this detail to communicate that Blake's education has not been influenced or tarnished by whites. Additionally, Delany's description of Blake as "pure," "manly" and "intelligent" is interesting because it presents Blake as untarnished by white blood and therefore beyond any critique from readers that would discount his intelligence or argue that his abilities were coming from his white bloodlines. Lastly, his description as manly makes Blake a suitable role model because he is able to maintain his masculinity in an era that so often saw Black men emasculated. Delany aims to provide African Americans with an alternative way of thinking and acting, and these descriptions show that he values Black pride and wants to relay that to his audience. Delany's description places value on Blake's Blackness and intelligence. It also distinguishes him from other slaves in particular, due to his level of intelligence. Blake mirrors a common vision of Black leadership in the United States—one that resembles Du Bois' vision of the talented tenth, which asserts that one-tenth of the population of African Americans should be especially singled out to be educated and then viewed as leaders of the Black community.

Readers encounter Delany's strategy of distinguishing Blake from the other characters when he returns to the plantation to learn that his wife, Maggie, has been sold. As Mammy Judy, Blake's mother-in-law and Maggie's mother, grieves and advises Henry to pray, he responds by stating, "don't tell me about religion! What's religion to me? My wife is sold away from me by a man who is one of the leading members of the very church to which both she and I belong" (16). Henry Blakes's statement that Colonel Franks, the slave owner, and man that sold his wife, is also the leader of his church, invites readers to recognize and then acknowledge the hypocrisy of pro-slavery Christians in the United States as one should not be both a church leader and a slave owner, for a major tenet of the Bible is "love thy neighbor as thyself." Delany uses our first

interaction with Henry Blake to highlight the control that whites assert over African Americans. He lays bare the extent of the physical and spiritual control that allows them to sell Black bodies at their whim while presiding over the spiritual salvation of those same Black bodies. When Blake critiques the hypocrisy of white Christianity in the US, we see an example of Delany's strategy, which is to show his readers that their only choice for eluding white oppression is to follow the response represented by his character, Henry Blake. In this episode, Blake continues to critique white slaveholder Christianity, stating, "it is useless for me to stand here and have the same gospel preached into my ears by you [Mammy Judy], that I have all my life time heard from my enslavers" (16). Delany uses the words by Blake to model a way of interpreting pro-slavery Christianity as hypocritical and a key influence in the continuous oppression of African Americans.

Rather than simply identifying the hypocrisy, however, Delany models in his main character a new way of thinking critically about Christianity that excludes the influence of white slave-holder Christians. Delany addresses this new way of thinking when Blake distinguishes between the spiritual and physical worlds and the futility of waiting for faith to bring about change when he says, " I'm tired looking the other side; I want hope this side of the vale of tears. I want something on this earth as well as a promise of things in another world" (16). He states that both should be attainable in this world. Delany uses this exchange between Mammy Judy and Blake to model for his readers the appropriateness of seeking a better life on earth as opposed to accepting their current state. Again, Delany uses the title character to speak directly to his readers and reject notions that somehow slaves in the United States are *content* with their lot. His characterization contradicts the sanitized and wishful-thinking version presented in Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. This offers another example of Delany transforming the genre

because his use of the title character to speak directly to his audience and to refute real-world claims that slaves are content suggests that the text fits the definition of a didactic narrative that presents truth to his readers.

After the sale of Maggie, Delany devotes a large portion of the text to describe Blake's dissatisfaction with the decision and his reaction to it. I contend that Delany intends for readers to see Blake's behaviour as modelling a way of resisting white oppression. In the previous example, as I noted, Blake rejects white slaveholder teachings that African Americans should accept whatever their slave masters decide to do as God's will and wait patiently for Him to bring about their freedom. Such teachings, Blake contends, extend their oppression. More specifically, Delany uses the title character to model an alternate form of thought and action. In his first encounter with Mr. Franks after the departure of his wife, Henry Blake refuses Franks's order to accompany him and Mrs. Franks on horseback. Blake responds, "when I last rode that horse in company with you and lady, my wife was at my side, and I will not now go without her! Pardon me—my life for it, I won't go!" (19). Blake's statement is notable because he refuses the directions of Franks because he does not want to continue on as normal after the sale of his wife. Colonel Franks responds by stating, "not another word, you black imp!" or I'll strike you down in an instant" (19). Blake's anger is met by Franks's infantilizing reference to him as a "black imp," underscoring one of the many ways that white slaveholders dehumanize Black Americans. Blake responds by stating, "Strike away if you will, sir, I don't care— I won't go without my wife!" (19).

The interaction serves multiple purposes. First, Delany uses the episode to show readers a Black man taking a stand, and secondly, it demonstrates white sentiments towards Blacks and

specifically, the response of white slaveholders to Black resistance. Mr. Franks responds to Blake's resistance when he states,

> hold your tongue, sir, or I'll cut it out of your head! You ungrateful black dog! Really, things have come to a pretty pass when I must take impudence off my own Negro! By gracious!—God forgive me for the expression—I'll sell every Negro I have first! I'll dispose of him to the hardest Negro-trader I can find. (19)

Mr. Franks refers to Henry Blake, a slave, as "ungrateful" because he refuses to cooperate after the sale of his wife. His response also shows the reaction to Blake's firm response and disapproval of the sale of Maggie. This response only makes the earlier description of Mr. Franks— "a fine, grave senatorial-looking man, of medium height, inclined to corpulency, black hair, slightly grey, and regarded by his slaves as a good master, and religiously as one of the best men" (10)—look more ironic. Delany argues through this episode that no slave owner, no matter how well regarded he might be, is exempt from falling victim to the degradation that the slave system imposes on both slave and owner.

The second purpose of this interaction is to model a firm and logical form of African American resistance to degradation. Blake's refusal to ride without his wife present solicits a response that Delany wishes to highlight in order to show that slavery corrupts all of society and strips people of their humanity. Mr. Franks names Blake's behaviour as insubordination, rather than recognizing it as the grief or reproach that would be justified in such a situation, because then Franks would have to acknowledge Blake's human feelings and his own role is causing them. It is easier for Franks to label Blake's grief as impudence because then he can focus on the potential link to rebellion, which is always a short step away in slaveholders' minds, and justify his swift and brutal response.

Delany uses his central character, Blake, to advance his model of resistance or agitation further in the chapters that recount events following the sale of Maggie. When Henry informs Mammy Judy and Daddy Joe of his plans to run away, he shows them (and Delany demonstrates to his readers) the level of commitment necessary to gain freedom in the United States. Blake says, "even was I to take the advice of the old people here, and become reconciled to drag out a miserable life of degradation and bondage under them, I would not be permitted to do so by this man [Colonel Franks], who seeks every opportunity to crush out my lingering manhood, and reduce my free spirit to the submission of a slave. He cannot do it, I will not submit to it, and I defy his power to make me submit" (29). The passage fits into Bowers et al. concept of the rhetoric of agitation because Blake, as a slave, is outside the normal decision-making establishment. In this case, Blake is overtly advocating for significant change through his resistance to what Bowers et al. call "agitation" or when those outside the "normal decision-making establishment encounter resistance within the establishment and require more than the normal discursive means of persuasion (Bowers et al 3). Delany uses Blake to show that any attempt for freedom will have to come outside established means. He also uses the text to make the case for Black elevation outside the normal discursive means because while his text may resemble a novel, his goal is not to write a text that develops a plot or characters but to construct an argument. This approach is what Bowers et al. would refer to as symbolic behaviour because the text has" a referential function in which it stands for something else" (3). In this case, the text's classification as a novel is symbolic because the work Delany is doing signals that his goal is to accomplish more.

Delany wishes readers to understand that Henry Blake is not simply a runaway slave. He represents a prophet and teacher. This is yet another angle that Delany addresses with his readers.

Freedom and uplift, as presented in the text, do not come easily nor to those who sit by and wait. As previously mentioned, Blake recognizes that "salvation" must be seized. In addition, Delany posits that salvation also requires knowledge. One instance where Delany acknowledges this requirement is in a discussion between Mammy Judy, Daddy Joe, and Henry on the eve of his departure. While enquiring about the amount of money Judy and Joe have, Joe responds by stating, "las' time ah count, da wah faughty guinea uh sich a mautta, an'ah put in some six-seven guinea mo' since dat" (30) to which Blake replies, "then you have some two hundred and fifty dollars in money" (30). The interaction is an example of the difference between slaves like Mammy Judy and Daddy Joe and Henry Blake. Daddy Joe lacks an understanding of how to convert money whereas Blake has the ability to understand both what Daddy Joe possesses and how it translates to dollars, thus exhibiting an ability to bridge the education gap between slaves and educated members of society.

On the surface of this passage, we see that Blake has the ability to add, yet Delany is after something else here. Upon rejecting the offer of Mammy Judy to take the money, Blake responds by stating,

> I'm incapable of stealing from anyone, but I have, from time to time, taken by littles, some of the earnings due me for more than eighteen years' service to this man Franks, which at the low rate of two hundred dollars a year, would amount to sixteen hundred dollars more than I secured, exclusive of the interest, which would have more than supplied my clothing, to say nothing of the injury done me by degrading me as a slave. 'Steal' indeed! I would that when I had an opportunity, I had taken fifty thousand instead of two. (Delany 31)

The words of Blake offer insight into the argument Delany attempts to make regarding the state of Black life in America. What is unique here is that Blake makes the case for reparations while challenging the idea of stealing suggested by Mammy Judy. Blake claims that the taking of clothes and money is not stealing but just compensation for what is owed to him for his labour.

He adds that any additional materials that he has taken are to compensate for the fact that he has been enslaved. Blake has the knowledge to understand what Mammy Judy does not—that Mr. Franks' theft is greater because he profits from the theft of their freedom and labour. Particularly, Delany argues that slave owners stole both enslaved African Americans' humanity and their ability to earn compensation for their labour. Delany uses Blake to relay the message to his readers that enslaved Black Americans have been robbed for generations of their freedom and labour, with no end in sight. Again we see Delany's use of the main character to present his argument to his readers. The role of Blake in the story is beyond that of advancing the plot of the story. Delany has created multiple scenarios where he can use the main character to model a different and novel way of thinking and acting.

Delany's dual critique of pro-slavery American Christianity serves to position Blake as the spokesman for Delany's model of taking action to achieve freedom and prosperity. Part of his vision is communicating an alternative view of religion and how to use it. Blake says, "you must make your religion subserve your interests, as your oppressors do theirs! They use the Scriptures to make you submit, by preaching to you the texts of 'obedience to your masters' and 'standing still to see the salvation,' and we must now begin to understand the Bible so as to make it of interest to us" (41). What Blake points to here is the need for African Americans to begin to use the Bible to make it serve their interests by rejecting the misreadings of slave-holders that quote it as admonishing slaves to be obedient to their masters. What Blake offers instead is a reading that exhorts the individual to be obedient to a legitimate master (God) and not to a mere human (slave-holder) who has declared himself the master and arms himself with a whip to enforce obedience, an illegitimate master who does not treat others with the love and compassion which the Bible exhorts (i.e., "Love thy neighbour as thyself") them to do. Although in this passage

Blake is addressing another character, I contend that we should understand this passage as also being directed at Delany's audience, another example of him extending the concept of indirect discourse beyond the omniscient narrator to encompass his protagonist as well. Here when Blake implores his listeners to re-envision the role of the Bible in their lives while simultaneously pointing out how white American slave-holder Christians use it as a way to maintain their oppression of those listeners, we also hear Delany advocating that his readers use and quote the Bible to critique those slaveholders' sins and to support and strengthen African Americans' desire and to argue for their right to be free.

In his descriptions of the character, Delany uses Henry Blake as a model for an ideal leader of the Black community. As noted, he describes Henry Blake as both shrewd and discrete (68) and notes that "being a scholar, he carefully kept a record of the plantations he had passed, that when accosted by a white, as an overseer or patrol, he invariably pretended to belong to a back estate, in search of his master's racehorse" (68). Delany shows how Blake uses his shrewdness to outwit the whites he encounters who would apprehend him if they realized he was a runaway slave. While all African Americans must be willing to combine faith and strategic action, Blake symbolizes the level of wit and imagination a leader of the African American community must possess. Delany's use of Blake to educate his readers about the necessary requirements of an African American leader shows that his goal is to do more than write a novel. Delany shows that a leader must be shrewd and determined to overcome oppression. An example of the level of determination required is indicated in an incident while Blake is aboard a steamer heading downriver, and he encounters an old acquaintance named Lewis Grimes. Grimes informs Blake that he is a free Black who was stolen and is now en route to Texas " to be enslaved for life" (82). Blake immediately questions why Grimes does not leave the steamer

instantly. Not satisfied with Grimes' responses, Blake says, "well don't you submit, die first if thereby you must take another into eternity with you! Were it my case and he ever went to sleep where I was, he'd never waken in this world" (82). Blake urges Grimes to fight against becoming a slave and if he is likely to lose his life fighting, then make sure that he takes his captor with him when he goes. Then Blake goes one further and tells his friend that if it were him, he would kill his captor the first opportunity he got to ensure that he escaped. Grimes responds, "I never thought of that before, I shall take your advice the first opportunity" (82). As with other interactions, Delany's argument, thus, reveals the purpose of his text, which is to provide his audience with an alternative way of thinking and acting that may give them an opportunity for freedom. Grimes, like many other African Americans, has been resigned to accept his fate at the hands of white Americans. Blake, on the other hand, travels to the southern states educating African Americans and encouraging them to take action. Rather than producing a novel, the text itself should be viewed as an extension of Henry Blake, circulating, educating, and calling others to act.

Delany's transformation of the novel into a didactic narrative extends beyond advocating the blending of faith and action. For example, when he compares African Americans as a group with the Israelites of Egypt, he connects African Americans and a revered past civilization, a tactic that subtly counters arguments of Black inferiority because, despite their enslavement, the Israelites were led to freedom by God. In addition, Delany describes Blake as travelling from plantation to plantation "sowing the seeds of future devastation and ruin to the master and redemption to the slave, an antecedent more terrible in its anticipation than the warning voice of the destroying Angel in commanding the slaughter of the first born of Egypt" (83). Here he compares African Americans to the Jews to achieve several purposes. First, the comparison

reinforces his argument that African Americans are a nation within a nation (rather than an inferior group of Americans justifiably subjugated to a superior group of Americans), similar to the Jews in Egypt (who also were a proud nation unjustly subjugated). Delany's use of this trope is not uncommon as Scott M. Langston informs us of "the book's [Exodus] reception history shows that competing groups have simultane- ously invoked its traditions in contradictory causes. This is vividly demonstrated in the appeal to the exodus in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by African Americans, white northerners, and white southerners" (7) and notes that "all three groups claimed the authority of Exodus. Enslaved African Americans understood themselves as God's people struggling against the pharaoh of American slaveholders, and abolitionists used it to denounce the institution of slavery" (Langston 7). Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, this move refutes the view that African Americans are Biblically tied to their current state in life. In other words, the move aligns African Americans with the Israelites, who escaped bondage and were considered the chosen people of God, thus refuting arguments that African Americans are destined to be enslaved. Delany returns to the argument that he presented in *Condition* so that his readers can intellectually and emotionally understand the urgency of his message that they need to rethink their thoughts and actions if they wish to create a better life for themselves and their families. These moves speak to a larger goal of the text, one that cannot be effectively accomplished through the novel genre.

Delany's didactic narrative is further seen through the use of minor characters to highlight the broad injustices that African Americans face. Using a sequence of episodes involving both Northern and Southern whites, he seeks to dispel any idea that equality is an option for African Americans. In the first example, Delany describes how Blake, shortly after his escape and concealed from view, observes a slave patrol. Delany's account of the behaviour of

the members of the patrol reminds readers of the full scope of the oppression of enslaved African Americans. One of the members of the patrol describes a raffle they are holding in which five dollars allows members to win prizes that include "that fine horse and buggy of Colonel Sprout, a mare and colt, a little Negro girl ten years of age, and a trail of four of the finest Negro-dogs in the state" (94). The inclusion of the girl among the other "prizes" illustrates the level of dehumanization African Americans suffer at the hands of whites. In this passage, a human child—a girl is sandwiched into that list as if she were similarly a beast. Delany shocks his readers by showing how nonchalantly a Black girl serves as a prize in a competition. Additionally, this incident also shows how all classes of whites are implicated in this level of oppression. Unlike the wealthy slave owners, the members of the slave patrol are working-class whites, showing that those who view African Americans as inferior are broader than readers may have seen to this point. Through this scene, Delany sets the stage for his argument for an alternative way of thinking and acting. The patrol party, which polices Black movement, also views hunting Black individuals as "sport." This episode supports Delany's argument that African Americans will find no white allies to their cause in America.

While the previous passage demonstrates the difficulties African Americans face in the United States, I return here to Delany's use of Blake to model what he sees as necessary for Black leadership. In the next incident I discuss, Blake has made his way to Cuba, where he meets Seth, a spiritual leader, and other leaders among the slaves' plantation. Delany uses this meeting to distinguish between spiritual leaders and leaders of the resistance. When Seth asks Blake to lead them in prayer, he responds by claiming that, "I am not fit, brother, for a spiritual leader; my warfare is not Heavenly, but earthly; I have not to do with angels, but with men; not with righteousness, but wickedness. Call upon some brother who has made more of the grace of God

than I" (103). He states clearly to his listeners that his concern is with earthly goals, and his targets are men and their wickedness. By putting these words into Blake's mouth, Delany identifies leading African Americans out of bondage as an earthly (not a heavenly) goal. He argues that Blake, as this kind of leader, must concern himself with these earthly goals and leave the spiritual leadership to other types of men. The way Delany contrasts the roles of a spiritual leader and a resistance leader in this passage further reinforces that the text is a didactic narrative rather than a novel. Delany uses the main character to speak to his audience and deliver his message that to bring about actual change they must take concrete action. Delany's goal of convincing his readers to adhere to his alternative approach for thinking and acting is what drives the text. Rather than develop the characters in a way that allows the reader to connect with or relate to them, they only serve to drive his argument, thus making the classification of didactic narrative better suited. What I describe here is that Delany forgoes the strategy of sympathy or identification that Wayne Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1983) argues distinguishes much fiction and creates its power. When Booth mentions "what we call 'involvement' or 'sympathy' or 'identification,' is usually made up of many reactions to author, narrators, observers, and other characters" (158), he is describing the degree to which authors attempt to connect with their audience. Delany's decision to use characters to drive the argument and not as a way of connecting with the audience suggests that his goal goes beyond writing a fictional text.

Blake continues his response, stating, "if I ever were a Christian, slavery has made me a sinner; if I had been an angel, it would have made me a devil! I feel more like cursing than praying—may God forgive me! Pray from me, brethren!" (Delany 103). He implicitly compares himself to Seth and the others, who presumably have not been so damaged by their experiences as slaves, because they inhabit a state that still allows them to pray (while Blake feels he can now

only curse). Perhaps Delany is suggesting here that such a leader is necessary--one that has turned away from slaveholder Christianity and towards what that version of religion would regard as "sin . . . a devil . . . cursing," if he is to lead his people out of bondage. In this passage where Blake emphasizes his own sinning nature and his unfitness as a spiritual leader, Delany invokes the Biblical story of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt only to find that he is unable to enter the Promised Land because of his past sins. Here Delany subtly connects Blake and Moses, possibly because it is a familiar trope to his contemporaries and also because it offers his readers a blueprint for the type of faith required to end African American oppression. The interaction between Blake and Seth helps the audience understand the roles that each of these different types of leaders plays in African Americans' fight for freedom, and this scene serves as a deliberate move by Delany to educate his audience, thus providing more evidence that the genre of this text is more didactic than a novel. Again we see a scenario where a character (Seth) interacts with Blake to advance Delany's argument rather than to develop the plot or establish a connection with the reader.

During his travels to inform other slaves what is needed to achieve their freedom, Blake further explains the need for strategic action. He preaches the need for careful planning. As Blake converses with Seth and the other plantation leaders, a "distracter" is quoted as saying, "betta wait tell yeh git free fo' ye 'temp' scrow oveh people dat way!" (Delany104; that is, the distracter argues that Blake should more actively pursue his own freedom before he presumes to present himself as an earthly leader. Here the distracter suggests that any attempt at freedom is futile and would screw over those that participated. Blake's response demonstrates that a leader must be selfless and willing to fight for all African Americans, free or enslaved. His response also models the necessity for shrewd thinking and specific action when he states, "listen a

moment to me. You are not yet ready for a strike; you are not yet ready to do anything effective. You have barely taken the first step in the matter" (105). Blake's response to the "distracter" shows readers the necessary planning needed to end their oppression. Delany again uses Blake to show his audience what is necessary for a leader to possess to guide African Americans out of bondage. Blake follows up by stating,

> you must have all the necessary means, my brother, for the accomplishment of your ends. Intelligence among yourself on everything pertaining to your designs and project. You must know what, how, and when to do. Have all the instrumentalities necessary for an effective effort, before making the attempt. Without this, you will fail, utterly fail!(105)

Delany again uses the interaction between Blake and others as a moment of teaching. In this instance, he argues that to be successful African Americans must be both intelligent and prepared. We see this in his conversation with the "distracter" as he informs him that to be effective requires preparation. We can read this as an indirect address to the audience because the warning is meant to extend beyond the story to the reader.

These passages are examples of a didactic transgression which may explain why some literary critics have described the text as a bad novel. That is, Delany often creates moments that appear to slow down the plot in order to advance his argument. As I have argued, Delany uses his characters and creates situations to develop his carefully crafted argument rather than creating a storyline that contains an argument. In other words, Delany places the development of the argument before that of the characters. I further argue that we should understand the text as Delany's attempt to craft a new genre that allows him to draw on the emotional arguments, similar to what Bowers et. al refer to as the rhetoric of dissent, that a novel affords while also constructing an argument that shows readers why he believes that African Americans can never achieve equality and freedom in the United States.

Learning and understanding cultural assumptions and ideologies are important for Delany, but he also encourages his readers to acquire technical knowledge. As Blake travels through the South, he returns to Mr. Franks's plantation in order to rescue his family. In one passage, Blake leads Daddy Joe and Mammy Judy towards freedom in the north. Before they depart, Blake explains how they can avoid becoming lost by focusing on the North Star. Blake offers, "an explanation by which you can tell the North Star, when or from whatever place you may see it. The two stars of the Dipper, numbered 6 and 7, are called the pointers, because they point directly to the North Star, a very small bright star, far off from the pointers, generally seeming by itself, especially when the other stars are not very bright" (Delany 132). Blake continues his instruction on how to read the stars stating, "the star numbered 8, above the pointer, a little to the left, is a dim, small star, which at first sight would seem to be in a direct line with it; but by drawing a line through 7 and 8, leaves a space as you see between the star 6 and lower part of the line; or forms an angle (as the 'book men' call it, Andy) of ten degrees" (Delany 132). Blake's technical knowledge of the stars distinguishes him from the others, the knowledge that Delany emphasizes is essential to a good leader. In describing Blake giving instructions to Andy to help him guide his party north, Delany draws a parallel between Blake and the angel Gabriel guiding the shepherds and wise men towards the birthplace of Jesus. However, Blake's approach is more logical than Gabriel's because the former refers to each star by the number, making it easier for Andy to understand and remember. This passage is important because it models Delany's approach of combining faith (the angel Gabriel) with action (labelling of the stars) to lead this group of slaves to freedom. In other words, Blake is teaching Andy, and his audience indirectly, that to achieve freedom, one must be prepared with knowledge, yet maintain their faith in order for their actions to be successful. Blake refers to the North Star as "the slave's great

Guide to Freedom" (132) and asks "do you all now understand it?" (132). These lines are another example of Delany's use of indirect discourse to not only address his characters but also his audience.

Delany's rethinking of the white slaveholding version of Christianity reverberates throughout the text. In part two of the text, Blake lands in Havana and is reunited with his wife, Maggie. As they "sat together in the neat and comfortable little back room, assigned to them in the humble abode of old man Zoda and wife Huldah Ghu" (190), Maggie'sexperiences apart from Blake are mentioned when the narrator notes, "here was told that unparalleled tale of sorrow to a husband never expected again to be seen by the wife" (190). At this moment, Delany has the narrator summarize her experiences, and this summary begins by reminding his readers of what caused their separation. Also woven into this summary is a description of the immoral treatment Blacks endure in the United States. The narrator states, "goaded and oppressed by a master known to be her own father, under circumstances revolting to humanity, civilization, and Christianity, she had been ruthlessly torn from her child, husband, and mother, and sold to a foreign land, all because, by the instincts of nature—if by the honor of a wife and womanhood she had not been justified—she repelled him" (Delany 191). Delany again uses indirect discourse to critique the hypocrisy of white Christian slave-owners. The narrator states that Franks sells Maggie because she refuses to have sex with him, evidenced by the statement, "by the instincts of nature...she repelled him." The narrator states that such an act is revolting against Christianity, indirectly pointing to the hypocrisy and farce that is white slaveholding Christianity. In this passage, we see how Delany invites his readers to rethink the role of religion in their quest for freedom as Delany points to the need for Blacks to reject the exploitative nature of white slaveholding Christianity. His continued use of interactions between characters points to his use

of indirect discourse to make his case for African Americans to take strategic action to achieve their freedom.

The narrator also details the inhumane treatment that Maggie was subjected to as motivators of her wavering faith which serves to show that the Christianity of the white slaveholder is not sufficient to sustain African Americans. This description segues into the next section where the narrator continues to discuss Maggie and Henry's experiences after the sale of Maggie. The narrator describes Blake's reaction to Maggie's being sold as "maddened to desperation at the tearing away of his wife during his absence from her child and home" (191) and reminds reader that "he [Blake] had confronted his master at the hazard of life, been set upon the auction block in the midst of an assemblage of anxious slavetraders, escaped being sold, traversed the greater part of the slaveholding states amid dangers the most imminent" (Delany 191).

The passage highlights the ways that Blake's situation following the sale mirrors that of Maggie because the passages are structured to paint them each as victims. They receive actions; they are victims of the slave system. However, the narrator marks the difference between the two passages by highlighting that Blake "escaped being sold, traversed the greater slaveholding states amid dangers the most imminent; been pursued, taken and escaped, frequently during which time, he, too, had his faith much shaken, and found his dependence in Divine aid wavering" (191). In this section, Blake becomes the doer, escaping victimhood and traversing countries, although his faith too had been shaken. This moment demonstrates to his readers that shrewd and specific action can transform Black lives from victims of slavery to people with the ability to control their own fate. Again, Delany uses the actions and experiences of the characters to support his argument. The effects of this transition are seen when the narrator concludes the

passage by noting that “but God to them, however their unworthiness, had fully made manifest Himself, and established their faith in His promises, by again permitting them to meet each other under circumstances so singular and extraordinary” (Delany 191).

Blake and Maggie’s experience after they parted emphasizes what happens when one stops being the receiver of actions and the victim of the slave system and takes action to resist one’s oppressors. Maggie’s cruel treatment was the direct result of Franks’s inability to subdue her, which shows that she too resisted oppression just as Blake did. That both resisted, yet only Blake was successful in evading cruel treatment, whereas Maggie’s was compounded by her refusal to submit and accept different brutal treatment raises questions of gender and leadership that are not addressed by Delany yet cannot be ignored. We know from *Condition* that Delany was quick to acknowledge the achievements of Black women, yet in this didactic narrative, men—particularly Henry Blake—function as the main motivators for change, which calls into question leadership and gender roles as they appear in the text. Secondly, the narrator notes “God’s promises” which alludes to the passage in the Bible of God’s promise to the Israelites in which he promises that if they obey God and have faith, He will lead to the promised land. Delany does not end his argument for an alternative vision of religion with the reunion of Maggie and Delany; rather, Blake’s time in Havana provides multiple moments where we see Delany develop a complex argument that consists of calls to rethink the role of religion and the need for concrete action.

Delany constructs a complex argument to distinguish the ways that Blake differs from other bondmen. After the reunion with his wife, Blake travels to meet with his cousin, “the distinguished poet of Cuba, Placido” (Delany 192). During their meeting, Blake states, “if Heaven decreed my advent here—and I believe it did—it was to have my spirits renewed and

soul inspired by that stimulating appeal [Gods' decree for Blake to travel to Cuba], such as before never reached the ear of a poor, weary, faltering bondman" (Delany 196). Blake then states that his arrival in Cuba was decreed by Heaven and follows with the comment that "I thank God that it has been my lot to hear it [God's decree that Blake reach Cuba], culled fresh from your [Placido's] fertile brain. Were there but a smoldering spark nearly extinguished in the smothered embers of my doubts and fears, it is now kindled into a flame, which can only be quenched by the regenerating waters of unconditional emancipation" (196). Here Delany underscores the difference between Blake and other slaves: Blake's destiny is to hear God's decree and have the faith to act upon it. Delany uses Blake's words in this passage as an instance of indirect discourse to invite his audience to see how Blake reached this revelation—through direct action.

The conversation between Blake and Placido then explicitly critiques white preaching (again) when Blake tells Placido that, "I often think of the peaceful hours I once enjoyed at the common altar of the professing Christian. I then believed in what was popularly termed religion, as practised in all slave states of America; I was devoted to my church, and loved to hear on a Sabbath the word of God spoken by him whom I believed to be a man of God" (197). Blake describes the common religious practice of African Americans in the United States, the devotion to a religion preached by men claiming to be men of God while acting as anything but by simultaneously enslaving Black men, women, and children throughout the South. Delany highlights this hypocrisy for readers while he offers them a version of Christianity that rejects the deceptive preachings of white slaveholder so-called Christians. Blake speaks to this deception when he states, "but how sadly have I been deceived! I still believe in God, and have faith in His promises; but serving Him in the way that I was, I had only 'the shadow without the substance,'

the religion of my oppressors. I thank God that He timely opened my eyes" (Delany 197). He emphasizes that for enslaved Blacks, the white slaveholders' version of Christianity had felt like a sustaining faith but was, in fact, an empty promise. In Placido's response that " I believe you are right; I long since saw it, but you are clear on the subject. I had not thought so much as that" (197), we see another example of indirect discourse by Delany meant to reinforce Blake's words and invite his audience to share a similar moment of realization with Placido. Blake responds to Placido's confirmation by stating "then as we agree, let us at once drop the religion of our oppressors, and take the Scriptures for our guide and Christ as our example" (Delany 197). The conversation between Blake and Placido serves as indirect discourse aimed at readers to model logical reasoning that entails African American rejection of white American slaveholder Christianity. Through indirect discourse, Delany offers a revised version of a faith that rejects white preaching and places individual African Americans as readers/interpreters of the Bible and Jesus' behaviour as the example to follow.

This conversation between Blake and Placido goes beyond the attempt to persuade readers to make the logical decision to adopt Delany's proposed version of faith. He also uses the conversation as a teaching moment, having Placido ask, "what difference will that make to us? I merely ask for your information, seeing you have matured the subject" (Delany 197). Placido's question positions Blake as the teacher, and to the latter question he responds, "the difference will be just this, Placido—that we shall not be disciplined in our worship, obedience as slaves to our master, the slaveholders, by associating in our mind with that religion, submission to the oppressor's will" (Delany 197). In this Blake identifies how slaveholder Christianity has served to oppress African Americans by insidiously associating faith with submission to "the oppressor's will" rather than to God. Delany continues to expose the ways that slaveholder

Christianity handicaps enslaved African Americans as Placido responds to Blake, "I see,Henry, it is plain; and every day convinces me that we have much to learn to fit us for freedom" (197). Placido's response reflects his fear that a mindset exhorted to submit to the will of one's oppressor might leave adherents ill-prepared to embrace freedom fully. His response, however, is a common argument that Delany rejected. He makes this rejection clear through Blake's response, "I differ with you, Placido; we know enough now, and all that remains to be done, is to make ourselves free, and then put what we know into practice. We know much more than we dare attempt to do. We want space for action—elbow room; and in order to obtain it, we must shove our oppressors out of the way" (Delany 197).

Blake espouses Delany's muscular vision of religion that requires both faith and action. The combination, as Delany argues, is essential to achieve the liberation of African Americans. Delany argues in this text that white slaveholder Christianity is a tool of oppression and must be rejected. He uses indirect discourse through the narrator and dialogue to advocate for a revised understanding of faith that suggests that Black Americans should have direct access to God's words in the Bible rather than through a slaveholding, self-justifying filter. Delany's vision also stresses the importance of African Americans also blending action and prayer to achieve their freedom. Delany's argument in *Blake* is complex and multifaceted, and his argument for a new understanding of Christianity is just one thread of his larger argument.

Conclusion

Blake or the Huts of America has long been cast as Delany's only attempt to write a novel. Literary scholars have critiqued the text's style and prose, often remarking that it is poorly drafted or clumsily developed. These critiques assume that Delany was writing just a novel. After a rhetorical examination, we see that Delany's text transforms the novel as he seeks to

achieve his goals. *Blake* combines three arguments— the need to rethink the role of religion for Black Americans, the need for African Americans to emigrate from the United States, and the need for appropriate leadership to model for Blacks how to resist oppression, and how to achieve freedom and equality. While some scholars have suggested that *Blake* serves as a response to Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the strategies he uses throughout suggest that Delany's text is more fluid than a slave narrative and cannot be so easily classified. When we consider the rhetorical aspects of *Blake*, including the fact that the arguments drive the plot structure, we can see how the text transforms a novel into an explicit teaching tool, a didactic narrative. Similar to *Condition,* Delany draws from a popular literary genre but ignores the limitations and adjusts his text to meet his purpose. His text also serves as an example of the rhetoric of agitation because Delany's decision to transform the text from novel to didactic narrative shows his willingness to move beyond the normal means of discourse to persuade his readers.

Chapter 4: Transforming the Recommendation Report: *Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party*

Martin Delany's third full-length text, *Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party* (1861), has been described by scholars such as Toyin Falola as "the first of its kind in tone and focus" (Delany 17), which highlights its importance for the period. He remarks that *Official Report* "clearly presents the conditions in West Africa and what immigrants would encounter on arrival" and adds that "his [Delany's] report provides clear information on the way of life, diseases and their treatment, climate, soil, animals, plants, and people to show that resources existed to develop settlements and economies" (Delany 18). While many scholars consider *Official Report* to be an important work, few[5] have commented on the particular genre of the text. As I have discussed in the previous chapters, Delany may select a particular genre for an extended argument that he wants to make but he generally does not adhere to that genre; rather he reworks it to create a new type of text that supports what he wants to achieve as he communicates with readers. *Official Report* is no exception to this pattern. While scholars such as McClish have suggested this text is "an instance of generic transformation," Delany, in fact, creates a text that departs from the genre so that he can use it as a tool to advocate for, as he calls it, "the regeneration of Africa" (Delany 243).

In this chapter, I argue that rather than writing a travel narrative, (a genre commonly used for travelers to Africa), that documents each aspect of his pilgrimage to Africa, Delany uses what today would be considered the recommendation report to provide his audience of African Americans with an argument for how they can improve their lives by emigrating to

[5] Glen McClish, in his article "Transforming the African Missionary Narrative: Rhetorical Innovation in Martin Delany's Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party" (2013), provides an extensive rhetorical analysis of *Official Report.*

Yoruba/Lagos and engaging in agricultural activity there that will give them economic power that will force slave-traders from the continent. Not only will their choice of mass emigration end the slave trade in Africa, but Delany also intends that it will end the slave trade in the US because the more suitable climate for growing cotton and sugar in Africa will bankrupt American plantation owners by outcompeting them in producing these crops. While the period and nature of his trip might have resulted in a travel narrative, Delany is more interested in constructing a compelling argument, so he employs what today is the genre of the recommendation report. Delany's use of the recommendation report enables him to document the landscape, people, and culture of Yoruba in a way that removes the focus from the writer (common in the travel narrative) and places the emphasis on the aspects he sees as important. His innovative approach— from his use of pronouns, attempting to remove himself from the text and to secularize a typically religious text— recasts the genre to fit his purpose of convincing African Americans to emigrate to the Yoruba/Lagos areas. I begin the chapter with an overview of the characteristics of a nineteenth-century travel narrative, followed by a brief discussion of Delany's travel partner, Robert Campbell's, *A Pilgrimage to My Motherland* (1861), to show that Delany's goal for the journey and his text are very different from those by other people who made the voyage to Africa and wrote about their experiences. From there I discuss the scholarship of *Official Report* as background before I summarize and present my rhetorical analysis of the text.

Notable Features of the Travel Narrative Genre

In this section, I discuss the nineteenth-century travel narrative genre. I include this overview because it provides context for a discussion of Robert Campbell's travel narrative, written during the same journey as Delany. Campbell's text contrasts with Delany's *Official*

Report, which enables me to highlight Delany's goals for writing his text. Rather than providing an exhaustive discussion of the genre's characteristics, I discuss the context in which Delany is writing. The travel narrative represents a common genre for authors who travel to foreign lands and seek to document their journey. Therefore, understanding Campbell's book and the travel narrative more broadly illustrates the unique characteristics of Delany's text more clearly. Additionally, because many authors used the genre to document their travels to Africa and other lands, we can see the unique approach that Delany makes.

In the introduction to his collection of essays on travel writing, Tim Youngs identifies notable characteristics of the travel narrative which include: exploring "large uncharted parts of the world," "a motivation of travel based on the desire to fill in the blanks, that once discovered, many of those places would be commercially exploited, and lastly, that ideologies of race impacted on the representation of those places, as well as on dealings with those that inhabited them" (Youngs 2). These characteristics provide some context for many of the texts written by Western travellers to the continent of Africa during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Specifically, they point to the potential economic motive(s) for these texts. In addition, as Youngs' comment about "ideologies of race" (2) suggests, authors of these travel narratives [eighteenth/nineteenth century] sought to use their texts as mechanisms whereby they could solidify stereotypes of Africa and its people. Rebecca Jones echoes this sentiment in her full-length monograph "Nigerian Travel Writing and Literary Culture in Yoruba and English" when she states that

> Travel narratives describing such expeditions [as Campbell and Delany undertook to Africa] often positioned themselves as establishing objective truth about the world through faithful eyewitness observations and evidence. Yet, these seemingly disinterested, not explicitly imperial expeditions nonetheless often mobilised rhetorical figures that manifested mastery and conquest of the landscape, such as the commanding

> gaze from a vantage point through which travelers represent themselves as "monarch-of-all-I-survey." (Jones 28)

Here Jones makes an important point that applies to many nineteenth-century travel narratives when she raises the idea that such texts differ radically between idea and practice. She notes that while not explicitly imperialist, the authors often presented their travel narratives as imperial research. Their completed texts often resulted in framing Africa and its people as inferior. That is, the narratives served to reinforce the author's inherent bias, and instead of being an avenue to "fill in the blanks," they became a means to impose preconceived notions of inferiority onto the land and people. Jones adds that "in the imperial era of the late nineteenth century, some travel writers sought to affirm supposed European cultural superiority by representing Africans in explicitly hostile and racist terms" that emphasized the "technical deficiency and mental incapacity " of the Africans and described "'scenes of apparent witchcraft, savagery, and cannibalism'."[6] Jones emphasizes that many authors used their accounts of their travels as an occasion to represent Western culture as superior.

Carl Thompson describes a similar idea in his book *Travel Writing* (2011) when he discusses how historically, travel narratives often characterized foreign lands and people as "other," which attributed negative characteristics to groups of people in order to set them apart from the author and their culture. Thompson notes, in their defense, that "all travel writing must, arguably, engage in an act of othering since every travel account is premised on the assumption that it brings news of people and places that are to some degree unfamiliar and 'other' to the audience" (133). In other words, Thompson acknowledges that othering in travel narratives is somewhat inherent, but recognizes that what is "more debatable, however, is whether *all* travel

[6] Here Jones is citing Tim Youngs' *Travellers in Africa: British Travelogues 1850–1900* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 65.

writing inevitably ‘others’ other cultures” (133, emphasis in original). Here Thompson informs us that not all travel writing intentionally “others” but the practice is inherent in the act of travelling to a foreign land and documenting experiences through a visitor’s lens. Thompson expands this argument by providing further detail for why othering takes place. He notes that “the motives behind such pejorative or patronising portrayals of other cultures may be various; often these motives will be unconscious and **over-determined** springing from a complex mixture of emotions” (emphasis in original 133). Thompson adds that these instances of pejoratives tend to legitimize the traveller’s conduct towards people they meet and their conduct towards the cultures they encounter (133). In this passage, Thompson lists several potential motivations for travel writers choosing to “other” the land and people that they encounter. Historically, travel writing was used to depict Africans as inferior to Europeans and African cultures as inferior to European cultures and to justify the widely held belief in their inherent inferiority. The perpetuation of these beliefs in the accounts published by visitors thus served to reinforce arguments for white supremacy and the need to civilize foreign lands through colonization and religious conversion. Additionally, these accounts also justified enslaving the “othered” peoples, which some of the nineteenth-century travel writers were doing.

Thompson’s text also discusses the ideological dimensions of travel writing and the rhetorical purposes for authors to “depict other groups and cultures in a hostile or condescending way” (134). Thompson cites Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) as a “foundational text for both postcolonial and travel writing studies” (134). Although Said’s text specifically addresses the “Orient” (i.e., Egypt, the Middle East, India, China, and Japan), Thompson argues that travel writing and ethnography contain the same stereotypes as Said identified and the assumptions that Said notes can also be applied to travel narratives of Africa. Thompson argues that these

stereotypes represent a discourse that "denotes an accumulated archive of knowledge and imagery which comes to shape a culture's attitudes and assumptions on a given topic, and which accordingly dictates what is likely to be regarded as true, and as proper knowledge, in that subject area" (135). In other words, Thompson argues that nineteenth-century travel narratives created what became accepted as common knowledge within European/Western culture about foreign lands and people, and this stereotyped knowledge shaped European/Western attitudes and government policies towards them. In this way, the accounts provided by authors of travel narratives greatly influenced Western attitudes and beliefs regarding foreign lands and people including Africa and Africans.

The scholars discussed above note the ways that, historically, travel narratives were inherently racist and imperialist. This racism and imperialism often manifested in several ways that we can consider to be common tropes of travel narratives. These include a discussion of illness that comes with travelling abroad. Additionally, the authors describe the dangers (both real and imagined) experienced on their journey. Lastly, authors tended to contrast the people, landscape, and culture with those of the West. Both Thompson and Jones note that the goal of the travel narrative was not to objectively document the authors' travels and the cultures they encounter but instead to present them as "other" and, oftentimes, inferior. Understanding that travel narratives of the nineteenth century often presented the author as brave for taking the journey and characterized both the people and cultures they encountered as inferior is important for reading Campbell's text and the genre in general.

The Travel Narrative of Robert Campbell

In this section, I briefly discuss the travel narrative of Robert Campbell titled, *A Pilgrimage to My Motherland: An Account of a Journey Among the Egbas and Yorubas of*

Central Africa, in 1859-60 (1861). I include his text because it highlights the difference in approaches that the travel companions take. These differences, I argue, indicate that Delany and Campbell had vastly different goals for their texts. Whereas Campbell seeks to document much of his experience, Delany sets out to build the case for the emigration of African Americans to Central Africa. My discussion here is not exhaustive, but rather I point to specific passages which enable us to see how Delany's approach is remarkably different and serves his purposes for writing.

Delany was accompanied on his trip by Robert Campbell. Campbell also documented his travels to Africa but in a more traditional way than we see Delany doing in his text. That is, Campbell writes a travel narrative that is traditional in form and content. In the following sections, I discuss the characteristics that show Campbell's text to be a traditional travel narrative. I show that he discusses many of the common topics found in travel writing including: dealing with illness, informing readers about the potential risks they may face, and documenting the risks the author encounters, while also contrasting the people, landscape, and religions with the West. Campbell's narrative does contain slight differences from traditional travel narratives because his goal is not to present the people and culture he encounters as inferior but to highlight the positives of his motherland. Campbell does offer some critiques that can be considered harsh and influenced by his Western upbringing but his text, outside a few occasions, uses a pattern of acknowledging danger or risk only to follow with comments of assurance.

Campbell on the Topic of Illness

A topic commonly explored in travel writing is the issue of illnesses encountered/experienced when travelling abroad. Campbell addresses this topic in his opening chapter. Upon landing in Africa, Campbell notes that "affairs were in a bad condition, the yellow

fever, or as some say, a malignant form of bilious fever had appeared there [Freetown, Sierra Leone], and swept off more than a third of the white inhabitants, while the small pox was busy among the natives" (10). This account of the illness that greeted him and his party follows a common trait of travel narratives that highlights the dangers of travelling in a foreign land. He returns to the topic of illness in chapter two when he remarks that "like many localities on the coast of tropical countries, it is unhealthy. The prevailing disease is fever with chills: with common prudence, however, there is nothing to fear in this disease; but if the person suffering from it will blindly persist in the use of alcoholic stimulants, the consequence might be serious" (17-18). While illness is a concern often discussed in travel narratives, especially the author's bout with and ability to overcome it, Campbell's approach is slightly different. Here he recognizes that the illness is present but he does not wish to disparage what he refers to as his "motherland." He follows by assuring his readers that "after passing through what is called the acclimating process, which lasts during twelve or fifteen months, one is seldom troubled again with fever" (18). The passage shows us how the goal of a writer shapes the approach to the text. In this instance, Campbell does not want to speak negatively about his motherland and he also wants to offer a balanced view of illness in Central Africa. He shows his readers that, yes, they may get sick initially, but will rarely be sick after that, thus beginning a pattern where he presents his readers with potential risk and follows with statements of assurance.

Campbell and the Dangers of Africa

In addition to a discussion of illness, the travel narrative also commonly features the author's encounters with risk or danger. On this topic, Campbell includes several entries. While anchored off the coast of Lagos, Campbell remarks that he "ventured to go on shore in their [some natives that invited him ashore] boat, which, however, I would not have done had I been

aware of the great risk I incurred" (14). In this passage, the risk Campbell describes is boarding a canoe to be escorted to shore by some natives. Campbell adds, "could one but have divested himself of the sense of danger, the scene was magnificent" (14-15). Again we see Campbell fulfilling the conventions of the genre of travel writing such as creating a sense of suspense and danger and remarking on the beauty of his motherland. Campbell further comments on the dangers he encounters when he notes that "the bar of Lagos is dangerous chiefly on account of the large number of sharks which are always ready to make a repast on the bodies of the unfortunate occupants of any boat capsizing there" (16). Here he continues the trend of noting that dangers exist only to follow with a point of reassurance. He says, "the difficulties of the bar are not, however, insuperable: small vessels can always easily sail over it into the fine bay within, where they can load or unload with little trouble and without risk" (16). We see here how Campbell uses the travel narrative genre to comment on the potential dangers of his journey. We also see how the travel narrative genre can be both entertaining—alluding to possible risk—and a tool to invite other visitors—noting that the difficulties are not insuperable. Campbell follows a tradition of travel writing by describing the potential risks of travelling abroad. What distinguishes his text from others is that he often follows these descriptions with passages that offer assurances to his readers.

Campbell, Africa, and Contrasts to the West

As travel narratives often do, Campbell contrasts his experiences in Africa with those of his life in the United States. While this would be a natural tendency on the part of any writer, in travel narratives, this move is used to promote a sense of Western superiority. While Campbell employs this move, his purpose is not to proclaim Western superiority. In one instance, Campbell comments on the natives he encounters, stating that "the natives are very industrious, and

manufacture tolerably fine articles of jewelry. The women both of this palace and of Acra wear a strange-looking appendage to their dress immediately at the base of the lumbar region" (12). The appendage which Campbell refers to was used by women to carry their children. Although not a direct contrast, Campbell's mention of the "strange-looking appendage" notes the difference in how women in Africa carried their children. Campbell's observation notes the obvious differences between Africa and the west here but he does not do so in a way that claims superiority. He also notes the difference in government, stating that "the government of Abbeokuta is peculiar, combining the monarchical, the patriarchal, and no small share of the republican" (36). Campbell's decision to describe the government as "peculiar" is implicitly critical in the same way that "strange-looking" and "tolerably fine" are in earlier passages. Interestingly, Campbell might have chosen neutral language in these instances but his decision not to highlight a common characteristic of the travel narrative is supported by Thompson's argument that travel narratives inherently "other" the cultures they encounter and depict them in condescending ways (Thompson 133-34). Describing the government as "peculiar" continues Campbell's soft approach to contrasting Africa with the West. Again, Campbell does not indicate that the choice of government makes them inferior, but he is clear to note the difference for those thinking of emigrating.

Campbell on the Yoruban People

Campbell's narrative offers a unique perspective because unlike previous authors of African travel writing, Campbell traces his ancestry to the continent. During an interview with one chief, Campbell was asked "from what part of Africa did your grandmother come from?" (38), to which Campbell notes that "I could not give him a satisfactory answer" (38). The interaction shows the damage done by the slave system. The response Campbell receives

provides a unique perspective. Campbell says that "He [Ogubonna] remained silent for a short time, and at last said: How can I tell but that you are my own kindred, for many of my ancestors were taken and sold away" (38). Campbell informs his readers that "from that day he called me relative, and of course as every other African had as good a claim to kindredship, I soon found myself generally greeted as such" (38). Campbell's interaction offers readers a new perspective because he shows readers the generosity of the African chief who appears unconcerned with Campbell's inability to identify where his grandmother was from. Lastly, Campbell distinguishes the Yorubans from commonly held stereotypes of all Africans when he states that "the people are not nude, as many suppose Africans to be generally. Of course we except children and even they are not always so. The apparel of a man consists of a shocoto, cloth, and cap" (45). Again we see how Campbell uses the genre of the travel narrative to dispel some of the myths that may prevent other African Americans from travelling to Yoruba.

Campbell also comments on the technology and working conditions of the natives. In one passage he notes that "although the native blacksmiths frequently execute very fine productions of their art, yet their apparatus is very rude" (49). Campbell's comments here are in contrast to his previous description of "tolerably fine" jewelry that represents another moment where his bias is exhibited. Later he discusses weavers, stating that "the apparatus of the weavers is very simple" and of farmers, he states, "the implements of the farmers are only two, a billhook and hoe" (50). His passages do not suggest that the natives are inferior but rather they show that they are able to produce quality goods despite their antiquated processes/equipment.

Campbell on Religion

The topic of religion, particularly the extent to which the natives in the visited country were Christian, was commonly found in nineteenth-century travel narratives and African

missionary narratives specifically. Common among missionary narratives[7] was the extraordinary effort exerted by authors to distinguish between Christianity and African religions. The apparent goal was to characterize African religions as superstitious. In his text, Campbell takes a similar approach. In one passage he states, "there are many Mussulmans among the Akus, but chiefly the people are heathens" (74). His reference to the people as heathens differentiates the natives from practicing Christians or Muslims in a negative way. Keeping with his pattern of observation followed by reassurance, Campbell describes an encounter with King Alake of Abbeokuta where he [the former] "explained to him the object of his visit, which he [Alake] was pleased to hear" (28). Campbell's visit was to assist in the procurement of land for African Americans to emigrate. Campbell also notes that "he [Alake] observed that for people coming with such purposes, and for missionaries, he had great 'sympathy' and would afford every encouragement" (28). Campbell informs his readers that those willing to emigrate would be welcomed and re-assures them that the King of the regions welcomes people looking to settle.

Conclusion

Robert Campbell's text provides us with an example of a nineteenth-century travel narrative. Campbell's text is a chronological narrative of his experiences and observations of his journey through Lagos and Yoruba. Throughout the text, he is the protagonist at the center of the action, as is traditional in travel narratives. Campbell writes to describe his motherland to his readers and to make it both appealing and welcoming to them. He presents his journey to readers in the first person and offers a chronological account of his time in Central Africa. I include this discussion of Campbell's text in order to contrast Delany's unique approach to writing *Official Report*.

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[7] See Thomas Jefferson Bowen's *Central Africa* (1856) and John Livinstone's *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (1857).

Various Responses to Delany's *Official Report*

The scholarship on Delany's work has largely focused on the purpose of his trip to Africa—to sign a treaty to secure land for a settlement for African American emigrants—and largely ignored the rhetorical aspects of the text (Kytle, Bell, Ullman). For example, Ullman documents in great detail the treaty between regional leaders and Delany, only pausing to discuss *Official Report* in the context of the trip and treaty signed (1971). However, Toyin Falola is one exception; in his introduction, Falola links *Condition* and *Official Report:* "when [*Conditions* and *Official Report* are] read together, the focus is clear: the creation of a Black nation" (18). Of *Official Report,* Falola also notes, "with the skill of an explorer and an eye for detail, he [Delany] recorded various aspects of life and economy that would be valuable to Black emigrants" (17-18). Additionally, *Official Report,* as Falola says, "clearly presents the conditions in West Africa and what immigrants would encounter on arrival" (18) and adds that "his report provides clear information on the way of life, diseases, and their treatment, climate, soil, animals, plants, and people to show that resources existed to develop settlements and economies" (18). Falola's observations inadvertently point to the purpose of Delany's text, which was to present Africa in a positive light by providing a view of Africa that rejected the common views found in African travel narratives (mostly written by missionaries). If we follow Falola's logic, we should see *Official Report* as more than a version of the African missionary narrative or even a travel narrative because we can link the purpose of the text with the rhetorical strategies Delany employs to persuade his audience.

Eric Sundquist, in his book *To Wake the Nations* (1993), argues that *Official Report* "set forth a plan for emigration that included one of the first strong articulations of Ethiopianist or Pan-African political philosophy" (Sundquist 188). Sundquist's statement speaks to Delany's

wish to bring his Black audience closer to their African roots by presenting an accurate depiction of Africa. Earl Ofari in *"Let Your Motto Be Resistance"* (1972), a text which focused mainly on the works of Henry Highland Garnet, says of Delany, Garnett, and Robert Campbell that their "actions must be regarded as significant feats of the early Black nationalist movement. They pushed beyond rhetoric. Through their own efforts, Black men had established ties with an African people" (Ofari 84). Ofari's comment shows the level of investment of Delany as he firmly believed in what he advocated for: that is, he travelled to Africa and spent some months there doing research to confirm that the African people would welcome Black settlers from the US. Ofari's statement is also of interest because he seems to be using the term rhetoric in the talk vs. action sense with rhetoric being merely the former.

Victor Ullman contrasts the works of Campbell and Delany in *Martin R. Delany: The Beginnings of Black Nationalism* (1971). Ullman focuses on what Delany chose to omit from his text such as the specific details of the illness he contracted early in his trip. Ullman states that "invaluable as the document proved to be in London, Canada, and the United States, it does not tell the full story of Delany's experiences in Africa" (Ullman 227). While Ullman's statements suggest that Delany misrepresented his experiences, I would argue that Ullman's statements suggest that he has misunderstood the genre of Delany's text, assuming it is a travel narrative when it is not. Certainly, a travel narrative might call for an extended description of the protagonist's epic struggle to overcome his infection with a regional disease, but a business report would not. A business report on the viability of emigrating to central Africa to engage in the agricultural industry would discuss said disease in proportion to its potential threat level to emigrants' ability to pursue business. Thus, Delany chose to exclude such details as might deter potential immigrants in the short term and have no bearing on their experience long-term.

Unlike the narrative of Campbell, Delany titles his book "Report" which, as McClish suggests, "indicated a generic shift from travelogue, which entertains and amuses as much as it instructs, to a text type that provides data concerning a set of topics and issues for the purpose of answering specific questions and providing recommendations" (McClish 119). The title itself declares the text's genre and demonstrates the approach Delany decided to take to persuade his audience. McClish further notes that "downplaying the particular voice of a writer, reports are often produced by committees teams and are intended to appear objective, rational, and authoritative—integrating, if required, multiple perspectives and positions" (McClish 119). McClish's description of the stark difference between the style and authorial voice of Delany's report and the narratives by others such as Bowen and Campbell affirms that Delany is writing neither a missionary narrative nor a travel narrative.

McClish has completed the most extensive analysis to date of the rhetorical moves and strategies in *Official Report*. His analysis provides significant evidence for reading the text as something other than a traditional travel or missionary narrative. McClish argues that *Official Report* "should be read not as a failure or a weak imitation of an earlier genre but as an instance of resourceful generic transformation" (109). McClish's point is that if we view the text as "a weak imitation of an earlier genre" (such as a missionary narrative or a travel narrative), we ignore the resourcefulness of Delany's rhetorical skill in transforming genres and this willful ignorance constitutes a refusal to understand what he is doing in the text. Equally important, McClish suggests that *Official Report* "serves as a significant example of constitutive rhetoric that functions not merely to invite blacks to participate in a group consciousness but also to unseat a reigning ideology" (132).

While McClish analyzes Delany's general rhetorical skills demonstrated in *Official Report*, I want to examine the individual rhetorical strategies that Delany uses to demonstrate the extent to which Africa is a desirable destination for African American emigration. I show that Delany does not write (nor ever intended to write) an African missionary narrative or even an African travel narrative, but rather he writes a recommendation report to convince his readers that the Niger Valley is the ideal destination for emigration. Additionally, I show that Delany views his journey to Africa as a business trip, made with the intention of procuring land for African Americans to emigrate to. He does this by negotiating a treaty with Okukenu Alake, the African Chief, for a large tract of land within his territory. Additionally, Delany argues that African Americans can improve both their own lives and those of native Africans by bringing an economic solution to the problem of slavery and the slave trade. I argue that Delany's text is not, therefore, merely a modified version of a missionary narrative. My analysis shows that *Official Report* can be read more profitably as a recommendation report.

Official Report has been categorized as a combination of multiple genres (bricolage) and as a travel narrative, specifically a version of a missionary narrative. Delany's unique situation and subsequent approach to writing his text calls for consideration of another classification.

Characteristics of the Recommendation Report

In this section, I discuss the characteristics of the recommendation report to show that Delany's text best resembles the genre with some variations. I open the section by highlighting previous scholarship of *Official Report* that describes and assigns various genres to it. I then move to a discussion of the recommendation report generic conventions.

Many scholars find Delany's *Official Report* difficult to characterize. For example, Levine focuses on Delany's use of bricolage; however, this approach is problematic because it

applies a literary term to a text that does not do the work of a text that uses bricolage. A bricolage is a work that pulls from a variety of available things. Delany does not pull from a wide range of items; rather, he includes only materials directly related to his trip. In his analysis, McClish concludes that the text is an appropriation of the missionary narrative. I do not see Delany's text as a missionary narrative because, unlike Campbell, Delany does not follow a chronological order nor does he focus primarily on his personal experiences. As the scholarship suggests, *Official Report* is difficult to categorize and requires closer examination.

One genre that scholars have not suggested might apply to this work by Delany is the recommendation report, yet a compelling argument can be made that this is exactly the genre that Delany has chosen for *Official Report*. Before I get into a discussion of the reasons why I think this genre fits Delany's text, let us explore some of the characteristics of this genre. Carolyn Rude's article "The Report for Decision Making: Genre and Inquiry (1995) provides an overview of the genre of what she refers to as the decision making report[8]. She notes that "conventions for structuring reports for decision making are far less fixed than those for correspondence, instructions, proposals, and scientific reports" (Rude 170). Rude adds that "no standard outline beyond the introduction-discussion-conclusions structure provides a dependable formula concept of the report for decision making to serve in the place of ready examples" (171). Rude's comments open the door to viewing *Official Report* as a recommendation report because as she states, the conventions are far less fixed and would thus allow for variation. David McMurrey notes that "a recommendation report starts from a stated need; it offers a selection of solution options, presents a detailed comparative analysis of the options, and then recommends one, some, or none" (McMurrey np). He emphasizes a key motivator of the recommendation report,

[8] Rude notes that other scholars refer to the decision report in various ways including the "feasibility report" the "recommendation report," "the analytical report," and the "problem-solving report."

that it is written to solve a problem or fill a need. Therefore, the goal of a recommendation report is to provide the reader with the best option for solving a specific problem. The genre then provides authors with a solutions-based approach to writing. It allows authors to move from problem to solution in an effective way for readers.

Drawing from Miller's concept of rhetorical genres, Yates and Orlikowski propose a concept that they call "genres of organizational communication" (301). Yates and Orlikowski argue that "this concept can be applied to a wide range of typical communicative practices" (301), which include the report and the recommendation letter. This concept, as Yates and Orlikowski note, "allows us to examine the production, reproduction, and modification of different types of organizational communication" (301). This concept helps us to understand that Delany's use of the recommendation report constitutes a "typified communicative action invoked in response to a recurrent situation" (301). That is, Delany wrote this text because he undertook the trip after being commissioned by the National Emigration Convention of Colored Men rather than by his own whim to visit "the motherland," as Campbell characterized it in his travel narrative. As noted, the goal of a recommendation report is to research a solution to a widely recognized problem. *Official Report*, then, is Delany's response to the committee that authorized his fact-finding mission. They wanted him to determine the feasibility of African Americans prospering if they emigrated to begin farming in the Niger Valley. The "recurrent situation" mentioned by Yates and Orlikowski refers to the situation in any organization that, when it has a problem that needs to be addressed, it commissions someone to research the problem and develop solutions. The recommendation report is the appropriate genre that responds to the recurring need to find the best solution. The recommendation report is a prevalent and

conventional genre in business and technical communication; it is much less frequently found in literary studies.

I am arguing that *Official Report* is best described as a recommendation report, and what is clear is that, like the other texts that Delany has written, it also departs from the traditional features of that genre too. Delany documents his trip to provide a solution to lifting African Americans out of bondage and into a place of economic freedom. His text contains both public and personal goals. First, Delany's public goal is to report to the Cleveland Committee about his trip to the Niger Valley to explore its feasibility as a destination for the emigration of African Americans from the United States. His personal goals are to construct an argument directed at African Americans to persuade them to consider emigrating to Africa to improve their lot in life and escape their life of oppression in the United States. Secondly, Delany wants to establish a farming operation in the Niger Valley that will elevate African Americans, regenerate Africa, and end slavery in both Africa and the United States. The rhetorical strategies of the recommendation report allows Delany to meet these goals. Delany's opening chapters serve as the introduction to the recommendation report which provides the purpose of the trip and report. His middle chapters resemble a recommendation report where he describes his travels in Africa and then settles on the Yoruba/Niger Valley as his recommended option and finally, he ends his text with justification for his recommendation. Delany's text does not fully adhere to the genre because he does include passages that resemble the travel narrative although he might have felt that these elements were important to persuading his intended audience.

The Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party and the Transformation of the Recommendation Report

In this section, I examine Delany's text to show that it is best described as a recommendation report where he proposes his solution to the continued enslavement and oppression of African Americans in the United States. While many visitors to Africa wrote travel narratives, including his travel partner, Robert Campbell, Delany's text discusses his trip more through the lens of a recommendation report. Delany carefully documents the landscape and the people not to inform readers about their unique features but with the goal of convincing his readers that the Niger Valley is an ideal location for African Americans to emigrate. A close look at his rhetorical strategies demonstrates how Delany uses the genre to meet his goals, departing when necessary and employing its characteristics when suited. While Delany was not intentionally using a genre that was not in existence, we can best understand his text through this lens.

The decision to title the text "report" also accurately describes what Delany is doing in the text. Rather than narrating his daily activities, Delany uses his trip to document important aspects of the continent and its people to show his audience that African is a viable destination for emigration. In his discussion of this text, Robert Levine has argued that Delany opens with and continues throughout with "bricolage," a concept from theorist Claude Levi Strauss *(The Savage Mind* 1962), that Levine defines as a "(post) modernistic technique which takes bits and pieces of writings and reassembles those 'found' cultural materials into something new" (Levine 7). Levine's description is suitable from the perspective of literary studies because scholars from this field apparently have not taken Delany's title at face value, perhaps assuming his choice of a report is metaphorical or ironic. Yet from the perspective of the field of rhetoric, the fact that he

labels the text a report cannot be overlooked. The decision to title the text a report not only informs his readers of the type of account of his trip he gives but also requires Delany to include documents that highlight the importance of his journey and provide him with the agency he needs to establish his report as credible beyond mere missionary or tourist-like first-person experiences.

When we view *Official Report* through our twenty-first century lens, we see a strong resemblance to a recommendation report. I argue that his text does not fully adhere to this genre because his personal and professional goals require Delany to address two distinct audiences—the Cleveland Commission that sponsored his trip and African Americans that he seeks to convince to emigrate to Central Africa. While Delany begins with genre sets that adhere to the generic guideline, in a few chapters, Delany breaks from the genre to address those readers who are potentially willing to emigrate. Therefore, *Official Report* is best understood as a precursor to what we would consider today to be a recommendation report, although Delany's text does not completely follow the twentieth-century genre.

As I discussed in chapter one, Bitzer's concept of rhetorical situation[9] is central here in explaining the relationship between the author and the audience(s). Bitzer argues that "in any rhetorical situation there will be at least one controlling exigence which functions as the organizing principle: it specifies the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected" (7). In other words, the controlling exigence determines the audience that the rhetor addresses. Smith and Lybarger argue for the removal of the term "constraint" and advocate for a "re-orienting" of Bitzer's model to "account for multiple exigencies, multiple audiences, and the plethora of

[9] Bitzer defines the rhetorical situation as "a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence" (6).

constraints they impose on or derive from any situation" (210). As scholars (Edbauer, Smith, and Lybarger) argue, exigence is also created, which accounts for the presence of dual audiences.

I argue that the theories presented by these scholars enable us to understand how *Official Report* can be read as a precursor to the twentieth-century recommendation report. Because Delany has both personal and professional goals for his text, it must be written for two distinct audiences. I show that the opening chapters contain documents related to his first audience—the Cleveland Commission that has sponsored his trip. The documents he presents in the first few chapters of Official Report serve as an exigence for his text and help to explain his use of the genre of recommendation report for this text. Next, I argue that Delany breaks with the recommendation report in later chapters to create an exigence for African Americans to consider emigrating to Central Africa. Support for this reading comes from Smith and Lybarger, who argue that "the goal of the rhetor is to find an audience with two key properties: first, the power to correct or improve the exigence, and second, agreeing with the perception or susceptibility to persuasion" (200). In Delany's situation, these properties are divided amongst his two audiences. The members of the commission have the power to correct or improve the exigence, while the African American community must agree with the perception or susceptibility to persuasion.

C*hapters 1-4: Documentation and Genre Sets*

In this section, I discuss Delany's inclusion of documents that outline the problem that the Cleveland Convention and Delany's journey and subsequent text aim to address. I argue that these documents follow the genre of the recommendation report and make up the necessitated genre set.

Delany's approach aligns with Amy Devitt's concept of genre sets, which she describes as "texts [that] form networks of interaction" so that "each text connects to the previous text in a

chain of reactions" (340). More specifically, Devitt argues that "in examining the genre set of the community, we are examining the community's situations, its recurring activities and relationships" (340). In other words, understanding the genre set of a community enables us to better understand a community's rhetorical situations and issues they encounter. In Delany's case, the inclusion of official documents is part of the genre set that constitutes the recommendation report for the situation (ending African American oppression) that the Convention seeks to end.

As I discussed earlier, exigence is created by the author (Edbauer), and the documents that Delany reproduces in *Official Report* work together to create a strong exigence for his text. His inclusion of the documents provides the context for his trip and indicates why he would have decided to write a recommendation report rather than a travel narrative.

Delany opens the text with the inclusion of a document that provides agency for his report by providing readers with a scope of the Cleveland Convention. In chapter one, "Political Movements," Delany presents a document that, as he states, "was sent on, and shortly appeared in the columns of 'FREDERICK DOUGLASS' PAPER,' Rochester, N.Y. and the 'ALIENED AMERICAN,' published and edited by Wiliam Howard Day, Esq., M.A., at Cleveland, Ohio, US, which continued in those papers every issue, until the meeting of Convention" (Delany 229). Delany presents readers with the importance of the convention to demonstrate the relevance his journey and subsequent text have to the mission of the Cleveland Convention. Opening the text with this document also corresponds to the established convention of the genre of recommendation report because the document is used to establish the problem that his text seeks to address. Titled "Call for a National Emigration Convention of Colored Men," the document states that "the time has fully come when we, as an oppressed people, should do something

effectively, and use those means adequate to the attainment of the great and long desired end—do something to meet the actual demands of the present and prospective necessities of the rising generation of our people in this country" (Delany 229). The convention document helps us to see both the goals of the Convention and those of Delany's text. The convention sought to identify ways to lift African Americans out of their current state of oppression and Delany's text provides solutions for doing so. From the perspective of this text being a business report, Delany's goal in this chapter is to explain the context of his trip to Africa. He wants to establish that his trip was motivated and supported by the National Emigration Convention Executive committee, which was created at this convention. He further wants to establish that this Executive body granted him the agency to act to bring change that would enable African Americans to lift themselves out of their current state.

Delany chooses to open the text in this fashion to accomplish two objectives: one, to meet the demands of the genre, and two, to highlight the importance of his journey to all African Americans and the text he produces to inform them of the outcome of his trip. Carolyn Rude notes that recommendation reports tend to rely on good reasoning for decision making and reaching conclusions (173). Delany includes the document because it clearly identifies the problem he is addressing and assists readers in following the logic of his conclusions. Second, the documents provide Delany's journey and his text with the agency to present a potential solution to the problem stated in the document. Delany burnishes the ethos of the Cleveland Convention in his opening by describing the measures taken to ensure all members are credentialed, (230) which suggests an organized movement that applies strict standards. The mention of "strict standards" informs readers of the importance of the Convention and assures

readers that the Convention worked to bring meaningful and tangible solutions to ending the enslavement and oppression of African Americans.

Delany introduces the second document in chapter two, "Succeeding Conventions," where he mentions additional conventions and lists the General Board of Commissioners of the Cleveland Convention where he is named as Foreign Secretary. The document is a resolution from the Board on September 1st, 1858, that states, "Dr. Martin R. Delany of Chatham, Kent Country, Canada West, [will] be a Commissioner to explore in Africa, with full power to choose his own colleagues" (Delany 235). Important in this passage is the point that the resolution grants Delany the agency to explore Africa as a representative of the credentialed members of the board, which provides legitimacy to his report because it has been backed by those who support the cause of emigration. From his choice of title to the inclusion of correspondence that supports his exploration, Delany uses the early chapters to develop a narrative that exhibits a clear necessity for his trip—one that is professional, business-related, and purposeful. Delany notes the strict standards for admittance to the Convention, which relays to his readers the seriousness of their discussions at the Convention and therefore of the fact-finding mission to Africa that he undertook on their behalf.

Readers are introduced to additional documents in chapter three. Delany includes several letters of correspondence that provide the impetus to discuss his decision to include Robert Campbell in the journey to Africa rather than some of his close friends. Interestingly, Delany includes two letters, one from Robert Douglass and the other from James H. Wilson, who both declined to travel to Africa. Delany notes that "they all agreed that the scheme was good; and although neither of them entered personally into it, all fully sanctioned it, bidding me God-speed in my new adventure, as a powerful handmaid to their efforts in contending for our rights in

America" (Delany 237). Delany's inclusion of these two letters would seem to undermine his efforts to gather support for his mission, but instead, he turns it into a positive affirmation for his exploration. In turn, he uses the situation to provide a rationale for including Robert Campbell. He states that "I have been the more induced to give the letters of Mr. Douglass and Dr. Wilson in favor of Mr. Campbell, because some of my friends were disposed to think that I 'went out of the way to make choice of an entire stranger, unknown to us, instead of old and tried acquaintances'"(243). The passage shows Delany's flexibility and openness during decision-making. While subtle, his comment assures readers that he can be trusted because rather than choose an old friend, Delany invited Campbell because his goal is to fulfill the duty of his assignment. In fact, he assures his audience that he "had but one object in view—the Moral, Social, and Political Elevation of Ourselves, and the Regeneration of Africa, for which I desired, as a *preference*, and indeed the only *adequate* and *essential* means by which it is to be accomplished" (emphasis in original, Delany 243). Delany establishes the validity of his exploration through a mix of statements such as the one above and the inclusion of multiple letters and documents that build some of the logic for his argument. Here, in particular, Delany explains why he chose Campbell to address criticisms he faced in this decision. Campbell's later contact with British individuals complicated and undermined Delany's efforts, who wanted to make the trip relying on Black men without any interference by white men.

Delany's inclusion of documents continues in chapter four, "Arrival and Reception in Liberia," where Delany includes a series of correspondence that details his connections in Liberia and the warm welcome he receives upon his arrival. In an opening letter to the President of the Republic of Liberia, Delany states, "I have arrived, Sir near your Government, and expect soon to meet other members of the party. Any aid, orally, documentary, or in the person of an

Official Commissioner, which you may please give to facilitate the mission in Liberia will be gratefully and highly appreciated" (Delany 255). The letters demonstrate to readers both the appropriateness of the genre (the documents represent genre sets) and that he conducted this trip as a business trip rather than a pleasure/tourist trip which underscores that this is not a travel narrative. Additionally, he includes a letter from Edward Blyden and others that states, "the undersigned, citizens of the city of Monrovia, having long heard of you and your efforts in the United States to elevate our down-trodden race, though those efforts were not infrequently directed against Liberia, are glad to welcome you, in behalf of the community these shores; recognizing, as they do in you, an ardent and devoted lover of the African race and an industrious agent in promoting their interests" (Delany 256). Delany uses Blyden's letter to highlight the importance of his journey. Additionally, the document responds to questions that Delany infers his readers might have that constitute obstacles to making the decision to emigrate. Similar to the previous passage, the inclusion of the letters follows the conventions of the recommendation report and links the documents with his mission in Central Africa.

Also in the chapter, Delany uses documentation to discuss what he refers to as "acclimating fever" (260). Rather than focusing on short-term graphic details, Delany uses his correspondence with citizens of Maryland, Liberia, to discuss his illness. In the letter to Delany, the citizens inform him of their "warmest interest in the important mission which has called [Delany] to the coast of Africa" (260) and add that "should your [Delany's] health permit, to favor us [Maryland citizens] with a public interview before you leave" (261). Here we see a strategic approach to making it seem natural to, thus, include this correspondence. The letter from the Liberian citizens resembles a letter Delany or anyone else may receive in the United States. The citizens write to inform Delany of their interest in his mission. What is not prioritized

in their remarks, however, is his illness. In his response, Delany opens by stating, "your note of the 23rd inst., requesting me, should my health permit, to appear before the citizens of your country, is before me, and for the sentiments therein expressed I thank you most kindly" (261). Delany adds, "as I have reason to believe that I am not convalescent from my second attack of native fever, should my health continue to improve I shall start on an exploration for the head of Kavalla river" (261). What Delany's response shows readers is that his illness (often dramatized in missionary narratives) is insignificant and can be easily overcome. More important, however, is the purpose of his trip. Delany does not focus on the details of his illness because readers of a recommendation report would not expect to encounter that. Instead, they would have questions about illness in general because if they were contemplating emigrating, they would not care so much about whether they might get sick for a few days but rather are they going to continually get sick from life-threatening illnesses.

After calming potential anxieties his readers might have about illness in Africa, Delany shifts the discussion to a primary reason for his journey. Delany was commissioned to travel to the Niger River Valley to sign a treaty with local leaders for land to be used by the Convention of African Americans to emigrate to. Delany signs the treaty as part of his efforts to support the Cleveland Conference's emigration plan. He includes a copy of the treaty agreement in *Official Report* as evidence that demonstrates to his readers that land is actually already available to potential emigrants. Delany mentions the goal of signing a treaty to obtain land for African Americans in chapter seven, "The Interior-Yoruba," and describes the activity that preceded the signing of the treaty: "after a stay of five weeks, visiting almost everything and place worthy of note, being called upon by many of the most noted persons, among whom were several chiefs" (284). He uses this description as a segue to the introduction of a letter he reproduces from King

Docemo of Lagos which grants Delany land to settle. He adds that "when after several interchanges of 'words' between us [Delany and King Docemo of Lagos] the following instrument of writing was 'duly executed, signed, sealed, and delivered'" (284). He follows this statement with a letter he received from King Docemo which "granted, assigned, and made over, unto Doctor Martin R. Delany, for his use and the use of Heirs and Assigns forever, All that Piece of Ground, situated on the South of the Premises and Ground" (285). Delany includes the documentation of his agreement with King Docemo to provide evidence that his commissioned purpose was achieved. This particular document serves as a contract and is included as evidence that he successfully completed the Cleveland Conference committee's commission. Delany also uses it as support for his recommendation that Lagos and Yoruba offer the best location in Africa for African Americans seeking to emigrate to escape oppression in the United States. The treaty is key to Delany demonstrating further that this plan for emigration is not an empty promise. The degree of detail that he presents about his travel experiences and knowledge gained naturalizes Africa as a logical place to settle, and it demonstrates that the Niger Valley is, therefore, not impossibly alien to those African Americans who decide to emigrate.

After his discussion of the agreement he reaches with King Doecemo, Delany transitions to a discussion of the land. This is a logical transition because now that he has informed his readers that he has procured the land, he needs to convince them that it offers a viable solution to the problems they face. In chapter eight, Delany considers the suitability of the land secured for emigrants for agriculture in response to concerns he assumes readers might have about the arability of the land. Delany divides the chapter into two sections. First, he documents some of the crops that Africans in the area grow to show that Africa is capable of producing the same or the equivalent crops that are grown in the United States. Second, he addresses misconceptions of

African communities that pervaded travel narratives. In the section "Agricultural Products," he notes that "the agricultural labor of this part of Africa is certainly very great, and merits the attention of every intelligent inquirer" (291). Delany dismisses the notion that Africa cannot produce crops as well as America by suggesting that any serious inquirer would see that African agriculture is successful. Here he manages his readers' response and perspective by refuting claims that Africa is inferior. From the perspective of a recommendation report, Delany's argument that African agriculture is equal to the United States points to potential economic opportunities that make convincing his recommendation for Yoruba and the Niger Valley as a destination for emigration. When discussing the method used by Yorubans to extract oil, Delany states, "they [Yorubans] have regular establishments for the manufacture of the palm oil, with vats and apparatus (simple though they be), places and persons for each process" (292). He comments on this simple process not because it possesses valuable information for his readers, but because it is another opportunity to confront and refute previous statements by other writers that characterize Africans as lower-skilled than Europeans or Americans.

Continuing the first section, Delany refutes accounts by other writers who have described a primitive and inefficient method used by Africans of extracting palm oil. He emphasizes that "there is no such method of extracting the oil, as the mistaken idea so frequently reported by African traders from Europe and America, that the natives bruise the nut with stones in holes made in the ground, thereby losing a large percentage of the oil" (292). Delany's goal here is to counter previous accounts that place Yorubans in a negative light as being unskilled and wasteful. Additionally, it also addresses concerns that prospective emigrants might have by demonstrating that getting into agriculture in Yoruba might be more easily accomplished than they think because the native Yorubans are not unskilled or uncivilized, as they may have been

characterized by others. He ends the section by stating that "even among the crudest they know better than this" (292), making clear that no inhabitants of Africa use this process. While this passage may seem like a digression, supplying superfluous information about African manufacturing processes, I would argue that it can be explained as part of the recommendation report genre. Reassuring readers that they would be greeted by people capable of assisting in not only the working of the land but also the processing of its crops adds convincing evidence to Delany's assessment and recommendation of the Niger Valley as a feasible destination for African American emigrants.

Delany also uses the chapter to address what he sees as a misrepresentation of the structure of domestic affairs in African communities. He rejects those authors' labelling of some African domestic relationships as instances of "slavery," stating that "it is simply preposterous to talk about slavery, as that term is understood, either being legalized or existing in this part of Africa" (309). His phrase "as that term is understood" refers to the type of slavery that was currently practiced in the US. Describing the domestic relationships in Africa, he notes, "the system is a patriarchal one, there being no actual difference, socially, between the slave (called by their protector *son* or *daughter*) and the children of the person with whom they live" (emphasis in original 309). What Delany describes is a system that recognizes the humanity of those that are enslaved. Delany notes that "such persons intermarry, and frequently become the heads of state: indeed, generally so, as I do not remember at present a king or chief with whom I became acquainted whose entire members of the household, from the lowest domestic to the highest official, did not sustain this relation to him, they calling him *baba* or 'father,' and he treating them as children" (emphasis in original 310). Delany describes a situation in which the relationship between the chief and slaves is paternalistic, rather than one of "master" and "slave,"

because, in Africa, even slaves have access to means of elevation. His approach here serves two purposes. First, his documenting of the culture satisfies the genre of the recommendation report because Delany's task was to cover all aspects of the region. More importantly, Delany makes the point that slavery in Africa is more humane and civilized than in the US, which implies that African Americans would be emigrating to a culture that is more enlightened and civilized than existing American culture.

To describe the success of his mission, Delany, in chapter fourteen, "Success in Great Britain," opens with mention of "a note of invitation" where both he and Campbell "met a number of noblemen and gentlemen, interested in the progress of African Regeneration" (Delany 361). Delany notes that he "made a statement of our Mission to Africa, imparting to the first of their knowledge, our true position as independent of all other societies and organizations then in existence. Mr. Campbell also made some remarks" (361). Interesting in this statement is the contrast between Delany's description of his remarks and the brief mention of Campbell's remarks. Delany is clearly the leader and the passage marks the distinct mission Delany undertakes. His comments are immediately followed by a letter that he received from the African Aid Society extending an invitation to attend a meeting "to decide on a further course of action" (Delany 362). His inclusion of this letter implies the level of importance of his journey, and the inclusion of multiple supporting documents marking the return of his trip suggests a level of excitement at his potential findings. These documents create a genre set that reveals a clear and persuasive larger context for the recommendation report because they provide an exigence both for his trip and the written report.

Departure from the Recommendation Report and a Shift in Audience

In this section, I discuss the ways in which Delany departs from the conventional structure of the twentieth-century genre of recommendation report and how he shifts his addressed audience from those affiliated with the Cleveland Commission to African Americans more generally who may consider emigrating to Central Africa. The reason for his departure can be seen in the distinct goals he has for the text and the difference between the exigence provided by the commission and the exigence he creates. Specifically, Delany uses first- and second-person pronouns to establish a link with his readers (Burkean identification) to include them in his journey and persuade them to emigrate to Central Africa.

Delany's initial departure from what we would recognize as the (twentieth-century) recommendation report genre occurs in chapter three, "History of the Project," where he opens with a description of the "winter of 1831-32, being then but a youth, I formed the design of going to Africa, the land of my ancestry" (236). The opening suggests a deeper calling for Delany's travels as he is fulfilling a childhood aspiration. Injecting his personal reasons for the trip contrasts with the previous efforts to establish the professional nature of his trip and serves as an example of Delany departing from the genre to build the persuasiveness of his argument for those readers considering emigration to Africa. This approach also differentiates between his personal and professional goals. He later adds,

> This design I never abandoned, although in common with my race in America, I espoused the cause, and contended for our political and moral elevation on equality with the whites, believing then, as I do now, that merit alone should be the test of individual claims in the body politic. This cause I never have nor will abandon; believing that no man should hesitate or put off any duty for another time or place, but 'act, act in the *living present*, act' *now* or *then.* (emphasis in original, Delany 236)

Delany includes this passage to assure his audience that he is fully committed and emotionally invested in finding a solution that will bring freedom for African Americans. He reminds them

that he has been fighting for Black elevation his whole life and ends by proclaiming "this has been the rule of my life, and I hope ever shall be" (236). Through this injection of the personal, Delany seeks to show his readers that, while his trip to the Niger Valley may have been part of a business trip aimed at helping them improve their current situation, he also made the trip for personal reasons. This sharing of the blend of personal, business, and professional reasons for going to Africa serves to demonstrate to readers that Delany was motivated by a higher mission than acting for the Cleveland Convention. In addition, he was fulfilling a lifelong dream and furthering his activist work on behalf of his fellow African Americans.

Delany continues to address a broader audience through the use of second-person pronouns. For example, in chapter nine he places his audience alongside him during the journey. He does this through his use of the second-person pronoun "you" under the section titled "Coffee, Air, Fruits" Delany begins by stating "so soon as you have taken your bath and put your morning wrapper, even before dressing, you may eat one or more sweet oranges, then take a cup of coffee, creamed and sweetened, or not, to your taste" (320). In this quotation, Delany invites readers to imagine themselves immersed in a pleasant morning routine where they relax and enjoy the fruits of the bountiful land around them (eating oranges and drinking coffee, fixed the way they like it best). Here he paints readers into a scene where they are successfully established and prospering on their own farms in Africa. The vivid detail in this scene creates an emotional appeal to readers and acts as a marketing tool that invites readers to imagine a prosperous life in Central Africa. This passage performs two functions in Delany's text. First, the use of the second-person pronoun to project readers into the scene contrasts sharply with conventions of a travel narrative, which characteristically center on the *author's* interactions with the land and people. Here Delany has removed himself as "the author" and substituted his readers, creating a

(highly effective) marketing strategy that invites readers to imagine their new future outside the US. Second, this passage functions as an engaging emotional appeal that serves as evidence to support Delany's recommendation in this report of the Niger Valley as a feasible destination for African American emigrants.

Delany uses this strategy of projecting readers into his text through the use of direct address throughout chapter nine. Under the section entitled "Drinks," he opens with "let your habits be strictly temperate, and for human nature's sake, abstain from the erroneous idea that some sort of malt or spirituous drink is necessary" (320). The title of the passage suggests that Delany will discuss drinks but instead he reminds his audience of the importance of maintaining what he determines to be a morally correct lifestyle. Again, he uses "you" to address his readers as Delany places them in Africa with a gentle exhortation to live morally. This example, similar to the previous one, performs several functions in Delany's report. First, he uses it to contrast descriptions found in common missionary and travel narratives that paint Africa as wild and dangerous. He subtly points out to readers that emigrants who drink to excess will, in fact, import wildness and danger to Africa that it otherwise lacks. Second, he invites his audience to envision a life in Africa that is the opposite of their current experience in the United States.

Again, he shifts the focus of the report from the author to the reader. He creates this shift because he is writing a recommendation report, and this discussion constitutes his advice to potential emigrants that will help them succeed and prosper in this pleasant and hospitable land. For example, he recommends to his audience, that when venturing outside, "always taking your umbrella or parasol, because no foreigner, until by a long residence more or less acclimated, can expose himself with impunity to a tropical sun" (320). This passage, similar to the others, provides knowledge for his audience but also distinguishes him as a guide to readers from others

because he demonstrates a knowledge of the land that only natives would have. Taking this insider knowledge stance with his readers seeks to alleviate any potential reservations they might have about emigrating. More importantly, his use of "you" shifts the focus from the author (a focus characteristic of traditional missionary narratives) to the reader. He uses this strategy because his goal is to show readers that Africa is a place ideal for emigration; he is not writing a travel or missionary narrative, both of which genres presuppose rhetorical purposes or motives that Delany does not have, so he does not seek to perpetuate the idea of Africa as savage and exotic as writers of those genres have done. In fact, his goal is the opposite. Delany presents to his readers a competing view of what previous travel writers to Africa have perpetuated. He describes the people and landscape in a familiar way so that his audience can envision themselves living there.

In addition to using second-person pronouns strategically to bring readers into the scenes he is describing, Delany also uses first-person pronouns as a way of creating identification with his readers. Kenneth Burke describes identification as ranging "from the politician who, addressing an audience of farmers, says, 'I was a farm boy myself,' through the mysteries of social status, to the mystic's devout identification with the source of all being" (x). In other words, identification is what closes social gaps between the rhetor and the audience. In Delany's case, the use of "I" helps him close the gap with an audience that he is trying to persuade to relocate to Central Africa. In the section "Never Sultry," Delany discusses African illnesses again in the context of the area's climate; this time he aims to dispel the reputation for danger that illness in Africa has gained through other writers' accounts by likening it to illnesses of North America. Delany states that "I am certain, even now, that the native fever of Africa is not more trying upon the system, when properly treated, than the native fever of Canada, the Western

and Southern States and Territories of the United States of America" (Delany 322). Part of Delany's task in this section is to dispel previous accusations of danger that Africa is said to contain. In order to convince readers that emigration is safe and appropriate, he needs to refute these claims.

To establish identification with his audience, Delany continues his use of first-person pronouns in the section "Dress, Avoid Getting Wet," which in itself is a suggestion. He tells his readers, "I have frequently been wet to saturation in Africa, and nothing ever occurred from it, by pursuing the course laid down. Always sleep in clean clothes" (Delany 323). Here he notes that he has frequently gotten "wet to saturation in Africa" without contracting an illness (as, presumably, documented by writers of travel and missionary narratives about Africa). He also admonishes readers to change into clean clothes before going to bed at night, implying that this is another way in which he has avoided becoming ill. Here Delany's use of "I" in this passage breaks down any potential social gap between him and the audience because he comments on a situation in which they may find themselves, and he shares his strategies for avoiding illness in that situation. This combination of sharing his own experience and directly addressing his readers creates a relationship that resembles Burkean identification (i.e., "You and I are on the same team. I am sharing my knowledge/experience with you to save you from becoming ill.") These strategies to build a relationship with African American readers who might be contemplating emigrating to Central Africa are, obviously, not conventional features of the genre of recommendation report, at least as we have come to understand the genre in the twenty-first century. In the section "Test of Night Air" appears a third instance where Delany uses first person to recount a personal experience. He writes, "while in Liberia, I have traversed rivers in an open boat at night, slept beyond the Kavalla Falls in open native houses, and at the residence

of Rev. Alexander Crummel, Mount Vaughan, Cape Palmas, I slept every evening while there with both window and door as ventilators" (Delany 324). Here Delany recounts his own personal experience to set his readers' minds at ease by showing them that the climate in Africa is not that different from the United States. One can safely breathe the night air without contracting a serious illness. This passage in particular elicits an emotional appeal of calm or ease from his audience while also seeking to create identification because, similar to the last passage, Delany shares experiences that his readers may also experience themselves. These passages are the few instances in this text where Delany explicitly uses "I."

Delany uses first person, as I have been showing, to inject himself into the discussion. This tactic might be expected of writers of travel and missionary narratives, but I would argue that his usage differs in significant ways from writers of those genres. For example, Delany does not present a narrative organized in chronological order that recreates for readers his personal experiences on the trip. His goal is not to provide a step-by-step narrative. Rather, he uses "I" sparingly and in specific situations to accomplish a personal goal (as opposed to business report genre-related goals) in the examples I have discussed so far in chapter nine, which is to ease potential worries his audience may have about emigrating to Africa. Delany makes Africa seem not strange or hostile but manageable or pleasant. He wants his readers to see that Africa is a place they could settle in and be happy. Delany's goals are to persuade readers to see Africa as an ideal location to emigrate. He is not just refuting that Africa is foreign and barbaric; he is showing (rather than telling) his readers that Africa is a place where they could prosper.

Return to the Recommendation Report and the Proposal of a Solution

This section discusses how Delany now returns to the recommendation report genre and addresses his primary audience. Delany returns to the genre in order to continue his mission of demonstrating the viability of Central Africa as a plausible destination for emigration.

Delany returns to the characteristics of the recommendation report and to addressing his primary audience because he needs to present his solution and the backing for it. Delany returns to the dominant genre format in chapter nine when he transitions from a discussion of drivers to aspects of life in Africa that he believes could be improved. This discussion is important because it advances a key goal of the text, which is to promote Central Africa as a viable option for emigration. Delany takes a practical view of African society which aligns with the conventional purpose of a recommendation report. That is, he suggests improved infrastructure. In a section titled "Cesspools," he states, "one important fact, never referred to by travelers as such, is that the health of large towns in Africa will certainly be improved by the erection of *cesspools*, whereas now they have none" (emphasis in original 331). This stance contrasts that taken by writers of missionary narratives, who generally recommend more missionary intervention. Instead, he focuses on the physical problems that, once solved, would help raise Africans' standard of living. Therefore, rather than contrasting the presumed barbarity of Africa with the "civilized" Western world as other writers had done, he offers solutions for improving infrastructure. In his suggestions for improvement, Delany points to concrete actions that would improve daily life in Africa while noting that those with the power to take action should not abuse that power. Delany's goal is to highlight the potential of the continent as a home for emigrating African Americans. He wants his audience to view emigration as practical rather than a dangerous proposition that requires moving to a foreign land filled with dangers.

A key aspect of Delany's proposed solution is to end religious missions to Africa. In chapter ten, he specifically addresses the "Missionary Influence," where he acknowledges the positive impact of missionaries but argues that it is time to shift away from recruiting new missionaries to Africa. He opens the chapter: "to deny or overlook the fact, the all-important fact, that the missionary influence had done much good in Africa, would be simply to do injustice, a gross injustice to a good cause" (332). He offers a more specific comment when he notes that "the advent of the Protestant Missionaries into Africa, has doubtless been effective of much good, though it may reasonably be expected that many have had their short comings" (332). Here Delany presents that rare thing, an objective view of missionary work in Africa. He notes that both good and bad have come from their presence. However, Delany's recognition of the good done by missionaries in Africa is immediately qualified in this section, entitled "Protestant Missionaries." Delany defines Protestant as "all other Christian denominations than the Roman Catholic" (332) and states that he "would not be regarded either a bigot or partialist so far as the right of humanity are concerned, but facts are tenable in all cases, and whilst I readily admit that a Protestant monarch granted the first letters-patent to steal Africans from their homes to be enslaved by a Protestant people, my numerous friends...must bear the test of truth, as I shall apply it in the case of the Missionaries" (332). In this passage, Delany acknowledges that Protestants are responsible for the enslavement of African Americans yet informs his readers that his purpose is not to revisit their moral failings but "to enquire into and learn every fact, which should have a bearing on this, the grandest prospect for the regeneration of a people, that ever was presented in the history of the world" (332-33). Delany represents his work in Africa as an objective researcher seeking to learn all that he can. This strategy allows Delany to confront the racist history of Christianity while maintaining a level of objectivity represented by his curiosity

to uncover or learn every fact. Doing so allows Delany to "report" what he uncovers rather than demonstrate a bias that would allow some readers to easily dismiss what he says.

Delany's documenting of the role of the Roman Catholic church in slavery appears on the surface as a general discussion of the current demographics of missionaries in Africa, yet a further look illustrates his distrust of one version of Christianity that he views as supporting the institution of slavery (Protestant Christianity also supported slavery but he does not overtly criticize them as he does Catholicism). As he continues in the section "Influence of Roman Catholic Religion in favor of Slavery," Delany discusses the absence of Roman Catholic missionaries in Africa but does note that "every slave-trading point on the coast at present where the traffic is carried on, are either Roman Catholic trading ports, or native agencies protected by Roman Catholics" (333). This observation leads Delany to ask the question "does not this seem as though slavery were the legitimate successor of Roman Catholicism, or slave-traders and holders of the Roman Catholic religion and Missionaries?" (334). As the title of the section suggests, Delany is not pondering the answer but only planting the question in the mind of his audience to guide them towards his claim. He answers his question by stating, "it certainly has that appearance to me; and a fact still more glaring is, that the only professing Christian government which in the light of the present period of human elevation and national reform, has attempted such a thing, is that of Roman Catholic Spain" (334). In short, during a period where much of Europe had already banned slavery, and countries such as France had moved to ban slavery in colonies, Delany argues that the Roman Catholic church has sought to control the slave trade of Africa. This section may reflect the animosity traditional between Protestant and Catholic believers. Delany could have similarly indicted American slaveholders and supporters, many of whom were Protestants. His decision to be selective in his critique is important to note

because Delany wants to drive out Catholic missionaries while also inviting the emigration of African Americans. To do so, he needs to distinguish for his readers which groups of missionaries are to be trusted. Delany makes this distinction known because he wants to "call the attention of the Christian world, that no one may murmur when the day of retribution in Africa comes—which come it must—and is fast hastening, when slave-traders must flee" (334). This discussion documents the situation on the ground, yet it also signals to his readers that Africa must become a continent free from slavery.

Delany concludes his discussion of religion by critiquing the use of Biblical scripture by missionaries who wrote before him. Missionary writers such as Bowen used Biblical scriptures to advance a Western Christian worldview, one that maps over Africa and Africans, whereas Delany uses religious references to promote Africa as a viable option for African Americans to emigrate to. He walks a difficult line because he cannot disregard the work of missionaries, yet he rejects the descriptions that previous missionaries established. As noted, in chapter ten, Delany acknowledges the positive influences made by missionaries and applauds them, noting that he is "indebted to the Missionaries generally, wherever met with, whether in Liberia or Central Africa, for their uniform kindness and hospitality" (Delany 335). While he appreciates the friendly treatment he has enjoyed in his interactions with contemporaries, who are missionaries to Africa, Delany also takes them to task for focusing solely on "preaching and praying" (336) as their means of civilizing African citizens: "I would suggest for the benefit of missionaries in general, and those to whom it applies in particular, that there are other measures and ways by which civilization may be imparted than preaching and praying—temporal as well as spiritual means" (Delany 336). Here Delany argues that the time for missionaries in Africa has ended and the time has come for economic options to be pursued.

After his critique of religion and his call for the end of religious missions in Africa, Delany discusses economic solutions. In chapter eleven, Delany shifts towards providing recommendations for improving the lives of African Americans and uplifting Africa by urging the move away from preaching and towards economic solutions. It is divided into four sections, and in this chapter, he acknowledges the past benefits of Christian missionaries before calling for a shift towards secular/economic means for improving the continent. In the third section, Delany contrasts the emigration plans of the Cleveland Convention with the ACS's scheme to show that the Convention's plan seeks to benefit Africans as well as those who would emigrate. He concludes his discussion in the chapter by highlighting what he sees as necessary for Africa to be made whole after the slave trade.

Whereas previous narratives have emphasized the important role of religion in civilizing Africa, Delany writes in the section "What Africa Now Requires" that "from the foregoing, it is very evident that missionary duty has reached its *ultimatum"* (emphasis in original Delany 338). His choice of "ultimatum" deserves a closer analysis. The Cambridge dictionary defines an ultimatum as "a warning, usually the last and most threatening one in a series, in which someone is told that if they take a particular action, something unpleasant will happen to them." This definition suggests that missionaries need to leave freely before they are forced to. We can understand Delany's phrasing as a warning for missionaries. He discusses this "ultimatum," suggesting that the regeneration of Africa must come from the efforts of Africans from the African diaspora and not through the conversion of natives by white missionaries. He elaborates his perspective that missionary work in Africa has reached its useful end, noting that "the missionary has informed him [the African native] that the white man's country is great, that the wisdom, power, strength, courage, and wealth of the white man and his country are as much

greater than him and his" (Delany 339). Here Delany describes the view of Western civilization (as characterized by the religious teachings of white missionaries) that he imagines Africans have received through mission work. This passage is important because it prepares readers for the full elaboration of his argument that mission work is no longer needed in Africa. He goes on to analyze the impact that missionaries have had on Africans, and in doing so, he walks a fine line between acknowledging the hospitable treatment he has personally received from missionaries and emphasizing why these same generous white missionaries should now consider their work done and return to their home countries. Thus, these passages show how Delany both praises the missionaries' work of bringing Christianity to Africa while also criticizing their implicit arguments of white supremacy. To do this, Delany poses the question that he envisions all Africans asking, "of what use is the white man's religion and 'book of knowledge' to me, since it does not give me the knowledge and wisdom nor the wealth and power of the white man, as all these things belong to him?" (Delany 339). Here Delany says that he cannot see the value of the religion and the Bible (book of knowledge) to Africans because neither has brought them educational knowledge or material success. He concludes that he feels "justified in asserting that this state of things has brought missionary efforts to their *maximum* and native progress to a pause" (emphasis in original Delany 340). He suggests that until Africans gain that education their progress towards civilization has stalled and since white missionaries have proved to be unwilling or unable to provide that education, they have taught Africans all they can. As he argues, the contributions of missionaries have been exhausted as they are not capable of nor willing to develop educational or economic opportunities for the people of Africa. Thus, Delany believes that the time has come for missionary work to end so that African Christian leaders can emerge and assume roles of power and influence in the African Christian Church that have long

been held by white missionaries. This current status quo, according to Delany, must end for Africa to prosper.

In noting that missionary work has accomplished what it can in Africa, Delany argues that now is the time to transition from religious solutions towards secular and economic solutions: "religion has done its work, and now requires temporal and secular aid to give it another impulse" (Delany 340). Delany argues that what is required for Black uplift now is not religion but industry, agriculture, and business that will make available to Africans economic success as well as social and cultural power in their communities. Delany transitions from a discussion of the limitations of religion to considering how the next phase of Western Cultural influence might help to regenerate African and Africans, as well as to relocate African Americans.

Delany continues his analysis of what is required to achieve this transformation from religious to secular improvements in the section "The Proper Element as Progressive Missionary Agencies," when he argues that "to be successful, these [establishment of social relations] must be carried out by proper agencies, and these agencies must be a *new element* introduced into their midst" (emphasis in original Delany 342). The new element that Delany refers to is "descendants of Africa being the only element that can effect it" (342). The assertion highlights the purpose of Delany's text, which is to convince his readers that they are the key to his plan to regenerate Africa. They, not more missionaries, can save Africa, as well as raise their own chances of prosperity if they emigrate to Africa.

It is important to acknowledge the imperialist undercurrent to Delany's statements here and his solution as a whole. His proposed plan for regenerating Africa is not to help native Africans achieve financial success, status, and power, but to bring in Black Americans to occupy

the positions of wealth, power, and status currently held by white missionaries in Africa. The native will continue to assist the newcomers in usurping these leadership roles within their communities. Whereas white missionaries sought to "civilize" Africa through the Christian religion, Delany seeks to make Africa whole by ushering the return of Blacks that were stolen and forced into slavery in the United States.

Continuing in chapter eleven, Delany highlights the differences between the Cleveland Convention and that of the ACS. Delany opens the section "Precaution against Error in the First Steps" by stating that to ensure "that no mis-step be taken and fatal error committed at the commencement, we [Delany and the Commission he represents] have determined that the persons to compose this new element to be introduced into Africa, shall be well and most carefully selected in regard to moral integrity, intelligence, acquired attainments, fitness, adaptation, and as far as practicable, religious sentiments and professions" (342-43). Here Delany describes the characteristics that good candidates for settling in Africa would need to have to ensure that the vision of regenerating Africa and Africans that he proposes in *Official Report* succeeds. In this opening Delany presents essential characteristics that any African American wishing to emigrate to the Niger Valley from the United States should possess. Delany argues that not all African Americans would make good candidates. His comments suggest that only the best and brightest would qualify, which echoes statements discussed in previous chapters that anticipates Du Bois' theory of a talented tenth. The theory of the talented tenth, presented by Du Bois— which argues that a tenth of the African American population should be educated and made leaders—is relevant here because Delany acknowledges that not all African Americans would make good candidates for emigration. He adds that "Africa is our fatherland and we its legitimate descendants, and we will never agree nor consent to see this the first

voluntary step that has ever been taken for her regeneration by her own descendants—blasted by a disinterested or renegade set, whose only object might be in the one case to get rid of a portion of the colored population, and in the other, make money" (343). Delany's rejection of a "renegade set" is a critique of the ACS and their dishonest reasons (the removal of free Blacks from America) for supporting the emigration of free Blacks from the United States.

Delany ends by stating, "we cannot and will not permit or agree that the result of years of labor and anxiety shall be blasted at one reckless blow, by those who have never spent a day in the cause of our race, or know nothing about our wants and requirements" (343). In this statement, Delany critiques the ACS and proponents of the movement whom he sees as promoting their own wishes without having made any effort to understand the needs of African Americans. In presenting this credo, Delany distinguishes between his beliefs and those of the ACS. His use of "we" when laying out these beliefs distances his readers from the ACS by aligning Delany's beliefs with his audience. Delany moves to the next phase of his argument by considering the possible ways his plan could be subverted or ruined. One way is if the wrong type of people are sent from the United States who cannot be successful or who destroy the possibility of a good relationship with native Yorubans. Here Delany describes the threat to the success of the emigration plan and proposes ways to avert these dangers. This passage illustrates a key feature of a recommendation report because Delany considers or anticipates the potential obstacles his proposal may face and provides strategies for avoiding them.

In the final section of chapter eleven, titled "National Character Essential to the Successful Regeneration of Africa," Delany identifies what changes he believes Africa requires to enable it to be made whole again. He notes that "to become regenerated, [Africa] must have a national character, and her position among the existing nations of the earth will depend mainly

upon the high standard she may gain compared with them in all her relations, morally, religiously, socially, politically, and commercially" (344). Delany sees the continent's path to regeneration as being through the ability of its people and those emigrating to cultivate the high regard of other nations through their dealings with them. Delany locates the agency with African Americans and their ability to improve the lives of native Africans. While the passage may also imply that Delany is arguing that African Americans can "save" Africa, I see his comment of regeneration as implying that in order to heal both Africa and its people (native and foreign-born), African Americans must return to their homeland. Delany's assertion highlights a key component of his solution: for Africa to heal, it must be made whole again, something it has not been since the beginning of the slave trade.

Delany's final passage in the chapter illustrates his investment in his commissioned journey. He concludes by stating that "I have determined to leave to my children the inheritance of a country, the possession of territorial domain, the blessings of a national education, and the indisputable right of self-government, that they may not succeed to the servility and degradation bequeathed to us by our fathers" (344). Here Delany notes that he and other African Americans do not want to leave a legacy so long as they live under the oppression of slavery. Delany argues that only through emigration to Africa will African Americans have the opportunity to escape a lifetime of degradation and to leave their children a country of their own and a chance for prosperity. Delany sees the return to Africa as the path towards elevation for African Americans in the US. He sees emigration as the opportunity for African Americans to remake their lives and to achieve equality, self-government, and the conditions necessary to reach their full potential.

A key aspect of the last section is Delany's claim that the regeneration of Africa must come through commercial means. He discusses this idea in chapter twelve, "To Direct Legitimate

Commerce," where he opens the chapter similar to how he ends the previous one—by defining what he believes is necessary for a nation to be successful. He posits that "as the first great national step in political economy, the selection and security of a location to direct and command commerce legitimately carried on, as an export and import metropolis, is essentially necessary" (345). What Delany notes here is that for a nation to establish a political economy, it must have land. Making this point highlights key aspects of the current state of life for African Americans. First, they do not have access to land in the US and therefore do not have the ability to develop commercial independence. Second, one purpose for the trip was to sign a treaty with African kings to acquire land (as discussed in my analysis of chapter seven). Here he reminds his readers that he has accomplished the first step. Delany then adds that "the facilities for a metropolis should be adequate—a rich, fertile, and productive country surrounding it, with some great staple (which the world requires as a commodity) of exportation. A convenient harbor as an outlet and inlet, and natural facilities for improvement, are among the necessary requirements for such a location" (345). Here he elucidates the second set of requirements necessary to establish a successful political economy. The land for which he signed the treaty, the Niger River valley, contains all of the characteristics he has noted here. As he was commissioned to do, Delany emphasizes what Africa has, rather than what it lacks. These proposed requirements follow the genre of a recommendation report. As these passages and a large portion of the text demonstrate, Delany's goal was to provide the Cleveland Commission with information necessary to make their proposed emigration movement successful.

Conclusion

Delany's *Official Report* offers his solution to the problem of Black oppression and enslavement in the United States. Delany's text proposes that in order for African Americans to

achieve freedom both economically and politically, they must emigrate from the United States. While the common genre of text written by visitors to Africa was the travel narrative (including one written by his travel partner, Robert Campbell), Delany's text is best characterized as a recommendation report that augments the genre at times to meet additional goals that he has for this multipurpose text. Previous analyses of this work have provided multiple explanations about the text contents and Delany's motives yet have often overlooked how he seeks to convince African Americans that they can achieve personal success and freedom by emigrating to Africa. Delany uses the genre to highlight positive aspects of Africa through detailed descriptions of the land, its people, and potential. His referral to his text as a "report" removes the perception of subjectivity and replaces it with that of the objective researcher seeking to present a nuanced perspective of the problem of slavery and the potential solution that emigration to Central Africa offers. The use of the recommendation report allows Delany to meet the needs of his dual audiences. His initial audience, the Cleveland Commission, requires that Delany detail the current situation in Central Africa and propose what is necessary for their plan to be successful. Delany's personal goals for both his trip and the text require that he broaden the scope of his audience from the commission to the broader African American community that he wants to convince to emigrate to Central Africa.

Chapter 5: The Reclaiming of History: *Principia of Ethnology: The Origins of Race and Color*

Delany's final full-length text, *Principia of Ethnology: The Origins of Race and Color* (1879), was written in the aftermath of Reconstruction where Delany witnessed firsthand the expulsion of African Americans from political office and the institution of Jim Crow laws. Delany wrote *Principia* to refute the oppressive theories of social Darwinism and polygenesis as arguments claiming Black inferiority. Carol Marsh-Lockett notes that *Principia* "stands in opposition to racism such as that set forth in Thomas Carlyle's 'Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question' and theses of such Americans as Dr. Samuel G. Morton of Philadephia, who forwarded his argument for 'Negro Inferiority' based on 'cranial difference'" (78). That is, scholarship on *Principia* highlights the activist nature of Delany's text as he rebuts arguments by his contemporaries that sought to characterize Black people as, in all ways, "lesser than" white people and to justify the discriminatory treatment that Black people received. Delany appears to have had two goals for his text: first, to rebut the claims of polygenesis (the theory that human beings have multiple origins), which he does by using the Biblical story of Noah and his sons, and second, to instill pride in his fellow African Americans by tracing the history of civilization back to Africa.

To accomplish these goals, Delany begins with the treatise genre, defined by Merriam-Webster as "a systematic exposition or argument in writing including a methodical discussion of the facts and principles involved and conclusions reached," before transforming it into a hybrid text that fuses scientific knowledge with Biblical interpretation. Delany uses the treatise genre as a starting point because, characteristically, it presupposes an argument that contains scientific or objective evidence. And Delany's argument does contain scientific and objective evidence, specifically from the fields of Anatomy, Anthropology, and History.

However, it also includes Biblical scripture, which represents a radical departure from the treatise genre. Treatises generally do not treat (or use) Biblical scripture as valid scientific evidence, because it relies on both faith and interpretation, dimensions that are not recognized as elements of scientific inquiry. Despite the fact that Biblical Scripture is generally rejected as evidence in the kinds of scientific arguments proposed in treatises, Delany incorporates it into his treatise and treats it as equally valid in his argument as traditional/conventional scientific evidence. I argue in this chapter that it is this action of incorporating Christian scripture as equivalent in weight to "scientific" evidence that transforms the genre of *Principia of Ethnology* into something other than a treatise.

Delany's *Principia,* which is a study of the principles (Principia) of anthropological differences between peoples (ethnology), is an important text in my analysis of his work because, unlike previous texts where he transforms genres, in this text, Delany adds another wrinkle by combining evidence from science and theology. In his title, Delany possibly alludes to this established genre, echoing similarly-titled texts, such as Sir Isaac Newton's 1687 text, *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* [Natural Philosophy of Mathematical Principles, very roughly translated] which discusses the laws of motion and gravitation, and Rene Descartes' *Principia Philosophiae* (1644), which discusses key principles of philosophy and scientific law. Delany's title suggests that he is engaged in the same type of work that we find in Newton and Descartes. In Delany's case, he is discussing the philosophical debate of his day regarding the origins of racial differences in the human species. While proponents who supported slavery (and were white supremacists) expounded the theory of polygenesis (that the white race is categorically/genetically distinct from non-white races), Delany argues for the theory of monogenesis (that all human beings share the same genetics with skin color just a superficial

difference). In the tradition of Newton and Descartes, Delany assembles a range of scientific sources of evidence to elaborate and support his argument. Interestingly, he also incorporates theological evidence (Scriptural accounts from the Bible) and presents it alongside his scientific evidence, treating it as having equivalent weight and significance. Based on his strategy of including *and* treating Scripture as scientific evidence, I would argue that he transforms the treatise, as a genre, into something original.

As I have noted, in *Principia*, Delany rejects theories of social Darwinism and polygenesis and supports the theory that there is a single origin for the human species. Other scholars who have written about this text have also noted how Delany combines Biblical scripture with scientific theory and evidence. For example, Tommie Shelby describes *Principia* as Delany's "most comprehensive attempt to build a case for black originality and superiority" (673), noting that Delany offers "a part theological and part biological account for the origin of races" (673). Here Shelby judges this text as thorough in its rebuttal of white supremacist accounts of the inferiority of dark-skinned people. He also highlights Delany's strategy of incorporating both theological and biological evidence to support his argument. Shelby's comments support my reading of *Principia* as a transformation of the treatise genre because of this combination of theological and biological accounts. What Delany is doing with this approach is using multiple fields of study to build an argument that counters polygenetic claims. From a twenty-first-century vantage point, the approach of combining theological arguments as if they hold scientific weight is unconvincing. However, when Delany is writing *Principia*, texts such as *Primeval Man* by George Campbell, the Duke of Argyll, use a similar approach. Combining theological and scientific arguments would have been less controversial during the nineteenth century.

I begin this chapter with a brief discussion of polygenesis and its influence on nineteenth-century understandings of race and how it influences Delany's approach to *Principia*. From there I discuss the characteristics of the treatise genre, as found in Newton's text, to provide some context for my eventual analysis of Delany's text. I then discuss the theory of quasi-logical argumentation because I believe that it helps us understand the strategies Delany is using to create a compelling argument for monogenesis. I also include a brief analysis of Campbell's *Primeval Man*, which serves as a major influence for Delany's approach to his text. Next, I summarize the scholarship of Delany's book to show how scholars have interpreted *Principia*. Lastly, I conduct a close reading of the text to show how *Principia* blends a variety of topoi, stock formulas used by rhetors to produce arguments (faith, anthropology, anatomy), in order to refute arguments of polygenesis. Delany's use of several topoi suggests that the principles of race require an understanding of the Bible as well as physical and social sciences. Additionally, *Principia* resembles a genre similar to Newton's text, yet Delany's inclusion of Biblical scripture transforms the genre and addresses a broader audience while he still continues to advocate for the rights and freedoms of African Americans in the postbellum United States.

Discussion of Polygenesis

The theory of polygenesis is an important catalyst for Delany's argument in *Principia* because of how it contributed to the continuation of white supremacy in the nineteenth-century United States. Chris D. Willoughby defines polygenesis in his article "'His Native, Hot Country': Racial Science and Environment in Antebellum American Medical Thought" as "the belief that each human race was a distinct species with separate origins" (330). They argued that people with colored skin had originated from a different species than people with white skin, so humans did not share a common *homo sapiens* ancestor. This view contrasts the theory of

monogenesis,which argues that all humans belong to one species, despite differences in outward appearance, having evolved from a common ancestor. It is easy to see how the former theory might be used to justify the oppression and subjection of people with non-white skin. And it was. For example, the theory of polygenesis was embraced by white slaveholders because it enabled them to justify the enslavement and brutal treatment of African Americans on the grounds that white human beings were an advanced species and their duty was to use and control the lesser species, both animal and human. A society where the dominant group believes in multiple origins is one that will be inherently unequal and one where equality would never be possible. Willoughby also notes that "historians of racial science have often focused on how polygenesis co-evolved alongside the emerging sectional crisis over slavery in the United States" (330). Willoughby notes that the theory of polygenesis in the US was developed to meet the need of white southerners to justify the enslavement of African Americans. We know that polygenesis was accepted primarily in the southern states because, as Willoughby states, "scholars of antebellum slavery and medicine have emphasized how medical knowledge about race was constructed on the ground, in the interactions among white physicians, white planters, and enslaved patients, with medical pedagogy occupying an ancillary role in the dissemination of racial theories[10]" (330). That is, historians of the period have concluded that "scientific" evidence to support the theory of polygenesis came largely from white doctors and slaveholders who contributed to the published medical literature based on their interactions with and treatment of enslaved patients. These descriptions of interactions and treatments played a role in the spread of race-based theories such as polygenesis. Perhaps more importantly, Willoughby notes that "these works usually frame polygenesis and racial medicine as distinctly southern branches of

[10] Willoughby notes that nineteenth-century French physicians argued that "medecine should be rooted in imperial observation and tailored to the specific environment and background of each patient" (330). See Erwin H. Ackerknecht, Medicine at the Paris Hospital, 1794-1848 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), 8-12.

knowledge, constructed under the exigencies of defending an unstable slave society" (330). Willoughby explains that historians view race-based medical knowledge and polygenesis as being mainly valued by the south because they helped support slavery as an institution in that society.

During much of Delany's lifetime, the theory of polygenesis played a major role in justifying and facilitating the continued enslavement of African Americans and in bolstering the arguments of white superiority. In the antebellum era, white slave owners used it to justify the enslavement of African Americans, whom they viewed as inferior human beings. Willoughby states that "polygenesis could not be seen simply as politics or natural history influencing medical education; theories of race were understood as the underpinnings of practice during the antebellum era" (331-32). Willoughby emphasizes that the theory permeated how medicine was practiced throughout much of the South. It formed the foundation for white supremacy and consciously and subconsciously influenced the treatment of African Americans. Later, during Reconstruction, it was used to argue, among other things, that Blacks were incapable of holding political office. Of the pervasiveness of this theory, Willoughby notes that "polygenesis had a significant influence on these concepts of medical environments and therapeutics, as a theory of human origins and of the natural order of the races" (331). Willoughby's discussion illustrates a country where many of its inhabitants adhered to a belief that, because they were an inherently inferior species, African Americans were incapable of being contributing members of society.

Polygenesis shaped American society during the nineteenth century and consequently, it provided the context for Delany's rhetorical situation. In *Principia* Delany seeks to dislodge this theory that was deep-rooted in American society. To accomplish this goal, Delany needed to construct an argument that appeared objective and logical. I argue that he found the genre of the

treatise to be an ideal starting point. As we have seen in previous chapters, Delany was well-familiar with the affordances of the genres he chose, but he was also aware of their various constraints. He refused to allow his own ideas to be similarly constrained; instead, he transformed the genre to meet his goals. Before we examine Delany's text and the ways that he transformed the genre, we must first understand the generic characteristics of the scientific treatise itself.

Characteristics of the Treatise Genre

As noted, Delany characterizes his fourth text as a treatise by naming it *Principia of Ethnology*, a title that alludes to the treatise genre and texts similar to Newton's *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*. Delany invokes Newton's text and others like it because he wants to communicate to his readers that this text is not literary (or even an argumentative text in the rhetorical sense) but a treatise on the origins of race. Both Newton and Delany structure their texts around a series of questions. This strategy suggests to readers that the author is seeking to uncover the answers to those questions to understand or get at the truth rather than persuade an audience via an argument. Additionally, based on the title, readers would expect an objective text rather than a subjective one. Therefore, before we turn to Delany's text, we need a firm understanding of the treatise genre and its characteristics.

The treatise genre, according to the Oxford dictionary is defined "as a written work dealing formally and systematically with a subject." The treatise, as a genre, is not relegated to a specific field as examples such as Newton's *Principia,* Descartes' *Principia of Philosophy* (1644), Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651), and Leonardo Da Vinci's *Treatise on Painting* (1632), illustrate. Amy Sloan, in *Basic Legal Research: Tools and Strategies* notes, "the goal of a treatise is to address in a systematic fashion all of the major topics within a subject area... To

provide a comprehensive treatment of the subject's major topics, a treatise will explain the legal rules in the subject area, analyze major cases and statutes, and address policy issues underlying the rules" (45-46). Sloan's description, while referring specifically to a legal treatise, ultimately captures the main purpose of the genre. The treatise, then, is a genre that discusses systematically all aspects of a topic or field. Additionally, by providing a comprehensive treatment of the subject's major topics, we can infer that such a thorough discussion is meant to leave little room for rebuttal.

As we have noted, a treatise can address any topic or field. Scholarship on the features of a legal treatise is a useful guide to some characteristics of the genre. Theodore Plucknett refers to the treatise as a "textbook." He notes, "it begins with a definition of the subject matter, and proceeds by logical and systematic stages to cover the whole field. The result is to present the law in a strictly deductive framework, with the implication that in the beginning there were principles, and that in the end those principles were found to cover a large multitude of cases deducible from them" (19). While the specific references to legal topics are less relevant for my purposes, I think Plucknett makes an important point that the treatise relies on deductive reasoning to cover a topic and leads readers systematically to a logical conclusion. Therefore, deduction is the primary method of a treatise. The use of deductive reasoning enables the author to lead readers to an objective exploration of the subject matter and to a "scientific" conclusion.

Delany models *Principia* on the genre of the treatise. As we will see, he uses deductive reasoning to develop answers to the questions about the origins of humans that he poses in his text. The treatise genre provides one important context needed to understand Delany's *Principia.* A second important context for *Principia* is another nineteenth-century treatise, *Primeval*

[hu]Man, written by George Campbell, which influenced Delany's decisions about how to organize his text and how to structure his argument.

Discussion of *Primeval [hu]Man*

Next, I turn to *Primeval [hu]Man*, written by George Douglass Campbell. This text is relevant to understanding Delany's *Principia* because he uses it as a model for his own content and argument structure. That is, he does not imitate Campbell, but he does use similar rhetorical strategies. Therefore, this quick overview of Campbell's *Primeval [hu]Man* will help explain how and why Delany takes the approach we see in *Principia*. Rather than provide an exhaustive analysis of the argument he makes in this section, my goal is to examine how he integrates theological and scientific material into his discussion. I focus on Campbell's integration of theological and scientific evidence because I believe that it was this rhetorical method that Delany adapted for use in his *Principia of Ethnology*.

In 1868, George Douglass Campbell, the Duke of Argyll, published *Primeval [hu]Man: An Examination of Some Recent Speculations*. This text was motivated by a paper by Sir John Lubbock, "The Early Condition of [hu]Mankind," published the previous year, that refuted "a[n earlier] lecture on "The Origin of Civilization" (1854) by Dr. Whately, the late Archbishop of Dublin" (Campbell 1). All three of these texts presented an argument about the origin of the human species. More specifically, Whately argues that humans of the lowest degree can never raise themselves to a higher condition, even when brought into contact with superior races (Campbell 2). Lubbock disagrees with Whately and argues that "the primitive condition of [hu]mankind was utter barbarism" (Campbell 4) and suggests that "existing savages" are not the descendants of advanced humans but all races that are now civilized are children of groups that

were once barbarous (Campbell 4). In other words, all humans were at one point barbarous but civilized groups were able to rise out of the position while others were not.

Cambell refutes some of the major points made by Lubbock and Whately in their white supremacist theories of the origins of humanity. Campbell's text is of particular interest to our consideration of Delany's *Principia of Ethnology* because, as I have noted, it clearly influenced Delany's approach in his text. To better quantify the degree and nature of this influence, we will delve briefly into Campbell's text to explore his organizational strategies. Additionally, Delany adopts many of Campbell's claims for a single origin of the human species. Campbell divides his text into three sections: The "History of [hu]Man," where he indicates gaps in human history; "The Antiquity of [hu]Man," where he points to discrepancies between time measured in years and time measured by historical events; and "[hu]Man's Primitive Condition," where he questions humanity's ability to acquire knowledge. In my analysis, I show how the concepts and arguments made by Campbell were later adopted and complicated by Delany.

In his introduction, Campbell summarizes Whately's position on the origins of humans as follows: that "men [humans] in the lowest degree, or even anything approaching to the lowest degree, of barbarism in which they can possibly subsist at all—never did and never can, unaided, raise themselves into a higher condition" (1-2). In other words, he states that Whately believes that humans of the "lowest degree" (i.e., the lowest degree of civilization) have no ability to improve their situation because they are not capable of learning or being educated. Campbell further summarizes Whately's argument: that "even when they [lowest degree humans] are brought into contact with superior races, it is extremely difficult to teach them the simplest arts; that they 'seem never to invent or discover anything,' because even 'necessity is not the mother of invention except to those that have some degree of thoughtfulness and intelligence" (2). The

passages that Campbell cites from Whately's remarks seem to suggest that the people from the least civilized cultures lack the ability or intelligence to think of solutions to problems in their lives, or, as Whately phrases it, they are unable to invent things that would improve their lives. Campbell offers us this summary of Whately's view as a precursor to his summary of Lubbock's critique of it. Campbell summarizes Lubbock's critique: "his [Lubbock's] conclusion is, that the 'primitive condition of [hu]mankind was one of utter barbarism;' that from this condition certain races have independently raised themselves; and, of course, that, instead of existing savages being the degenerate descendants of ancestors who were more advanced, all races now civilized are the children of men who were once in the same low condition" (4). In this summary, Campbell highlights Lubbock's point that early humans were all barbarians and that while some groups obviously were able to lift themselves out of this barbarism to become "civilized," others were unable to do so. Campbell refers to this argument as the "Savage Theory" (5) (that is, all early humans were savages; some managed somehow to civilize themselves). Campbell opposes the viewpoints espoused by both Whately and Lubbock, and his text, *Primeval [hu]Man,* presents a counterargument that highlights the weaknesses of Whately's and Lubbock's claims about the origins of humanity. Campbell also notes that "it will be observed that both arguments [by Whately and Lubbock] are avowedly conducted irrespective of any belief in the Mosaic narrative of Creation" (6). Campbell makes this statement to ensure that his readers understand that neither Whately's nor Lubbock's argument requires them to believe in the Christian Biblical version of creation. Campbell then uses this gap in the arguments presented by Whately and Lubbock to include reference to "the Mosaic narrative of Creation" in his own argument. He wants to include Biblical evidence in his argument because doing so helps him account for or explain aspects of his argument that neither science nor religion can accomplish independently.

Campbell organizes his text into three topics that he argues must be dealt with separately. These topics are: the "Origin of [hu]Man[ity]," "The Antiquity of [hu]Man[ity]," and "His [sic] [humanity's] Mental, Moral, and Intellectual Condition" when first created. This approach enables Campbell to create an argument that leads readers to his conclusion that there can only be one creation for all of humanity (in other words, all humans are the same species, in contemporary terms). Addressing these topics allows him to frame his approach in such a way that his discussion appears both objective (he's only answering questions) and logical.

Campbell on the Origin of Humans

In the opening of this section, Campbell discusses the origins of and offers his explanation for the creation of humanity. He begins by claiming that humans have little understanding of their own process of creation. His strategy here is to pose a series of questions that enable him to fill in gaps that he sees in the arguments made by proponents of arguments for humanity having multiple origins such as Lubbock and Whately.

In his discussion of the "Origin of [hu]Man[s] [sic]," Campbell establishes one of the key tenets of his argument, that the existence of a clear method is evidence that a single creation produced humanity. The first question is 'what is the Origin of [hu]Man[s]?', where he discusses the "method of his [sic] creation or introduction to the world" and adds, "the human race has no more knowledge or recollection of its own origin than a child has of its own birth. But a child drinks in with its mother's milk some knowledge of the relation which it stands to its own parents, and as it grows up it knows of other children being born around it" (38). Here Campbell explains that while individual humans lack a clear understanding of their personal creation, they learn from an early age about their own existence through their experiences observing the creations of other types of new life, human and otherwise. He adds that while a similar

experience extends to lower animals, “but no such experience ever comes to us casting any light on the Origin of our own Race, or of any other” (39). In short, while we humans can learn of our place in the world, Campbell argues that no experience can teach us of our origins. He notes that we know that there must be an origin story because “Paleontology has most certainly revealed that the introduction of new species has been a work carried on constantly and continuously during vast but unknown periods of time” (40). In this instance, he points to the study of plants and fossils as evidence of a continual process of introducing new species. Through this discussion of individual human experience and paleontological records, he is able to move his readers to the next logical step of his argument.

After establishing a historical pattern to explain the origin of human creation, Campbell presents readers with a question that guides them towards his conclusion. Campbell states that “when once this fact [the continuous creation of species] is clearly apprehended—whenever we become familiar with the idea the Creation had had a History, we are inevitably led to the conclusion that Creation has also had a Method” (41) and follows by asking “what has this method been?” (41). Campbell’s line of reasoning creates space for him to present his argument. He adds that “so far, therefore, as belief in a Personal Creator is concerned, the difficulties in the way of accepting this hypothesis are not theological. The difficulties are scientific” (44). In other words, theology has provided an explanation for the origin of man, but explanations by science are incomplete and therefore less convincing. Campbell explains that “there are parts of that [geological] record which are singularly complete, and in those parts we have the proofs of Creation without any indication of Development” (45). Here Campbell notes that existing geological records prove that Creation did happen (i.e., humans came into being); his follow-up point is that the geological record does not show development or genetic changes (what today we

might call "evolution") in humanity. In fact, he adds, "there are many indications which tend to show that all organisms have been equally incapable of modification since the earliest monuments of [hu]Man" (47). Campbell makes this argument to support his major claim that therefore there must be one event of creation for all humankind. Here he lays the groundwork for his larger argument for a single origin for all human beings. As he suggests, there is no evidence that human beings or any race of humans have been modified at any point so that they are superior to others.

Campbell on the Antiquity of Man

In this section, Campbell shifts from discussing human origins to tracing the history of ancient humans. He begins by distinguishing between two concepts of time—time relative and time absolute. Next, he introduces evidence from a variety of disciplines to explain how we can fill the gaps in our understanding of human history with a combination of scientific and faith-based evidence.

Campbell bases his argument for the origin of humanity on a concept that he calls "time relative." He argues that the chronological order for humankind that is often presented only accounts for what he refers to as "time-absolute" and does not consider "time relative" (78). Campbell defines time-absolute as "time measurable by years," and time-relative as "time measurable by an ascertained order or succession of events" (78). Campbell makes this distinction because he wants to show that while we can account for a series of events in human history, we cannot accurately determine the time between these events. He wants to show that there are large gaps in time that can explain how human civilization evolved over time. Large gaps in time would suggest that human civilizations developed slowly as archaeology and

anthropology can account for, but history (Campbell references Hebrew history specifically throughout the text) cannot. This would seem to support Campbell's main claim that the evolution of humanity was slow and that there was no possibility of multiple creations. He opens the chapter by noting that "in passing from the subject of [hu]Man's Origin to the subject of his [sic] Antiquity, we pass from almost total darkness to a question (what is the history of humanity?) which is comparatively accessible to reason and open to research" (76). Campbell's observation of this gap is followed by his claim that "evidence bearing upon this question may be gathered along several different walks of science, and these are all found tending in one direction, and pointing to one general result" (76). In this opening, Campbell shows readers that our understanding of human history does not fully account for potentially large portions of time. Doing so is important for the larger implications of his argument for a single origin for all human beings. Whereas proponents of polygenesis, or multiple origins of human creation, point to moments in history to justify their belief, Campbell argues that large portions of unaccounted time are not blanks but, in fact, scientific evidence.

Campbell notes the different types of evidence that existed to illuminate this aspect of human history for his readers. He organizes this evidence into three categories: 1) narratives and accounts by humans themselves; 2) archaeological and geological evidence existing on earth; and 3) evidence supporting the advancement of non-white civilizations. He states that "first comes the evidence of History, embracing under that name all literature, whether it professes to record events or does no more than allude to them in poetry and song" (76-77). Here Campbell refers to written and possibly oral accounts of humanity's early experiences (as opposed to archaeological or geological evidence). Next Campbell explains, "then comes Archaeology, the evidence of Human Monuments, belonging to times or races whose voice, though not silenced,

has become inarticulate to us" (77). In the early part of this section, Campbell shows that while we can point to a succession of events (what he calls, time-absolute) what we do not understand is the time interval between these events (what he calls, time-relative). He notes that only History (Hebrew history) gives us any understanding of time-absolute but "from all the others (Archaeology, Geology, and Ethnology) we can gather only the less definite information of Time-relative" (79). One example that he gives to demonstrate his point is the Tribes of the Gentiles.[11] Campbell states that this story "conveys the idea of movements and operations which probably occupied long intervals of time, and many generations of men" (80-81). This example shows readers that although time absolute accounts for specific events, it does not account for the time in between (time-relative). Campbell redefines our understanding of the previously monolithic idea of time by dividing it into time absolute and time relative. He distinguishes between the two types of time because he wants to highlight the gaps in human knowledge about our own origins. He then uses this idea of gaps to promote the concept of time relative because it allows a space for justifiably turning towards stories of the Bible and science. To begin, he states that "no other history than the Hebrew History even professes to go back to the Creation of [hu]Man[ity], or to give any account of the events which connect existing generations with the first Progenitor of their Race" (79-80). He refers to the chapters in the Old Testament of the Bible ("the Hebrew History") as one source of human history that does account for the time span between "existing generations" and "the first Progenitor of their Race." In using this example, he does acknowledge that "the sole object appears to be, to give in outline the order of such transactions as had a special bearing on Religious Truth and on the course of Spiritual Belief" (80), a motive for the recounting of generations very different from his own use.

[11] Here Campbell references the Lost Tribes of Israel and descendants of Japheth (son of Noah). Japheth is considered to be the progenitor of Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Mesech, and Tiras; or, roughly, the Armenians, Lydians, Medes, Greeks, Tibarenians, and Moschians, the last, Tiras.

One topic that Campbell discusses in this chapter that is central to my analysis is the origin of race. Pointing to the tendency of civilizations to document "their domestic habits, their foreign war, their religious beliefs" (96), as the place where Archaeology and History often meet, Campbell suggests that "this testimony bears a question of paramount importance in determining the antiquity of the Human Family. That question is not the rise of Kingdoms, but the origin of Races" (97). He notes that "the fundamental problem to be solved is this: can such varieties have descended from a single stock? And if they can, then must not a vast and indefinite lapse of time have been occupied in the gradual development of divergent types? (97-98). Campbell's if-then sequence invites readers to accept that a single creation better explains the large gaps in time. The if-then sequences can be persuasive because it presents a deductive argument that follows if one premise is true, then the following must also be true. We see here the scaffolding of Campbell's argument: the introduction and definition of time-absolute and time-relative, followed by a discussion of Hebrew History and ending by making the point that we do not have an accurate understanding of time relative. Campbell's organizational structure is important because it presents the argument in a logical, structured way that is often seen in a treatise. Campbell sees two main questions as central to the topic of the antiquity of the human family. These questions are when and how did the differences in humans begin. He notes the obvious physical differences between human races and acknowledges that they are exaggerated before stating "we are naturally impelled to ask When and How did they begin?" (97). Campbell follows this statement by noting that:

> these are two separate questions; but the one bears upon the other. The question When stands before the question How. The fundamental problem to be solved is this: Can such varieties have descended from a single stock? And if they can, then must not a vast and indefinite lapse of time have been occupied in the gradual development of divergent types? (97-98)

His line of questioning here follows his main argument that time-absolute does not allow us to understand time-relative. In short, if humans share the same origin, then there must be a period of time that has not been accounted for. Campbell sees this explanation as the only one possible to explain how such distinct differences could occur.

Campbell points specifically to Blacks as evidence of a large portion of time that must be unaccounted for. His example to support this argument is the "Negro." Campbell argues that the features of the Negro—"the blackness of colour, the woolliness of hair, the flatness of nose, the projection of lips, which are so familiar to us,—all these had been fully established and developed thus early in the known history of the world" (99). Campbell also points to documented moments in the history of Negro nations that "go far to show that the race was then more able to maintain a contest with other races than it has ever been in recent times" (100). Campbell identifies moments in history that are not fully covered in Biblical scriptures. He accounts for these discrepancies by saying they are due to the difference between time-absolute and time-relative. While the Bible can account for moments in Human history, it does not account for the time that passes between the major events it discusses. Campbell notes that these moments can be accounted for through such fields as geology, and archeology. Here he makes a skillful argument that demonstrates how theological and scientific evidence can be combined to provide insight into human history. As I will show later, Delany employs a similar strategy in his text.

Campbell ends the section with clear remarks that illustrate his argument for his readers. For example, he states that "we must indeed be very cautious in identifying the interests of Religion with any interpretation of the language of Scripture upon subjects which are accessible to scientific research. We know from past experience how foolish and how futile it is to do so"

(127-28). Thus he concludes that "the older the Human Family can be proved to be, the more possible and probable it is that it has descended from a single pair. My own belief is that all scientific evidence is in favour of this conclusion; and I regard all new proofs of the Antiquity of [hu]Man[s] as tending to establish it on a firmer basis" (128). This final remark marks a clear distinction between scientific evidence and Biblical scripture. He argues that whereas scientific evidence can tell us more about time-absolute, Biblical writings can inform readers of time-relative.

Campbell on [hu]Man's Primitive Condition

In his third and last section, Campbell poses several questions about the primitive state of human beings. As with the previous chapters, he opens with a question that he intends to answer over the course of the chapter. In this instance, he asks, "what consciousness had Primeval [hu]Man of Moral Obligation, and what communion with his [sic] Creator?" (129) followed by the question: "what were his [Primeval [hu]Man's] innate powers of Intellect or Understanding?" (129-30) and lastly, "what was his [sic] condition in respect to Knowledge, whether as the result of intuition, or as the result of teaching?" (130). Much as we saw in the previous chapters, Campbell's line of questioning guides readers towards his eventual conclusion. As he did in the opening chapter, he engages arguments made by Archbishop Whately and Sir J. Lubbock in order to refute their claims.

While I will not make a detailed analysis of this section, I do want to note a couple of important points from Campbell's argument here. Most important for my project is his discussion of the condition of the first humans. He notes that both Whately and Lubbock describe their early condition as "utter barbarism" (132). Campbell rejects this claim, stating that "it could not

properly be said of such a Being, on the ground merely of his ignorance of mechanical arts, that he was in a condition of 'utter barbarism,' if he were at the same time conscious of moral obligations and obedient to them" (131-32). Here Campbell refutes the claims of Lubbock and Whately of what constitutes "barbarism." For Campbell, barbarism entails more than ignorance of mechanical arts. He adds that "it is, of course, open to a theorist to assume that the First Man was both ignorant and bad, or that the sense of right and wrong was rudimentary and wholly uninformed" (132). Campbell disagrees, claiming "but all I desire to point out here is, that there is no necessary connection between a state of mere childhood in respect to knowledge, and a state of 'utter barbarism'—words which, if they have any definite meaning at all, imply the lowest moral, as well as the lowest intellectual condition" (132). Campbell says here that early humans may have been like children, that is, lacking in knowledge, but still adhering to a moral code. He means to emphasize that lack of knowledge is not indicative of barbaric behavior in early humans. Here he refutes the idea that primeval humans were inherently barbaric and only over time did they become civilized. By refuting this notion, he is also refuting arguments that polygenesis theorists make to justify white supremacy and the enslavement of Africans. In other words, if primeval humans were more like children, equipped with the ability to learn and grow, and all humans stem from one origin, then arguments that Africans are primitive and therefore barbaric have no standing. I point this out because, as I discuss in my analysis of *Principia*, Delany makes a similar case for an inherent ability for human capability.

Final Thoughts about Primeval [hu]Man

Campbell's *Primeval [hu]Man* provides some guidelines for Delany's *Principia*. Campbell makes clear distinctions between what religious and scientific inquiry can offer us about the history of humanity. Delany emulates this aspect of Campbell's text, drawing on

evidence from both science and theology to craft his argument. Although Delany does not take up Campbell's idea about time-absolute and time-relative, his decision to treat all evidence, whether faith-based or scientific, suggests that he sees the need to include both to cover any potential weaknesses in his argument or potential rebuttals.

Campbell's text is relevant to my analysis of *Principia* because it served as a blueprint for Delany when he was formulating his own argument and organizational approach. Similar to Campbell, Delany identifies individual claims by proponents for multiple creations and then refutes them by appealing to scientific means. Delany, like Campbell, poses questions that, as he answers them, enable him to move readers towards logical conclusions that support his argument.

Background and Previous Scholarship of Delany's *Principia*

In this section, I briefly discuss both the background of *Principia* to provide some context for the text and previous scholarship about it to show that many scholars have tended to avoid discussing its generic classification.

Historical Context for Principia of Ethnology

Principia of Ethnology (1879), the final work by Delany, was written following the failure of Reconstruction in the South and the passage of widespread legislation across the US to suppress the Black vote. *Principia* is a complex text that has as its main goal to refute a broad spectrum of claims of Black inferiority. The argument that Delany features in *Principia* probably developed organically out of his experiences during and following the Civil War. To understand the complexities of this work, we review briefly the historical records both about Delany's

experiences during this period and scholars' assessments of the impacts these experiences had on him, all of which resulted in him writing *Principia of Ethnology*.

Two important employment experiences contributed to Delany's ideas for the argument that he later presented in *Principia*. First, shortly after the start of the Civil War, he was commissioned as the first Black major in the Union army tasked with recruiting other African Americans to enlist. Through this experience, he developed an optimism that a new age was dawning for African Americans in the US (Adeleke 2020). The second experience occurred after the Civil War when he worked for the Freedman's Bureau in South Carolina. According to historian Tunde Adeleke (2020), "Delany's commission into the Union Army and subsequent appointment as a Freedmen's Bureau sub-assistant commissioner finally secured for him the acceptance and recognition that long eluded him. Based on his personal experience, Delany saw (at least thought he saw) the dawn of a new age in America" (Adeleke 89). As Adeleke notes, these two experiences served to raise Delany's profile across the country, transforming him into a national figure. During the early days of Reconstruction, Delany saw this era as an opportunity for both races to prosper. Adeleke suggests that Delany's optimism lead to his call for Black leaders to practice "moderation and advised them to trust in the ultimate wisdom and power of God, the same God who saw them through the Civil War and the destruction of slavery" (Adeleke 90). For Delany and other Black leaders in the South, the strategy of moderation would prove to be unwise because much of what they managed to accomplish during the early days of Reconstruction would eventually be undone.

As Reconstruction progressed, Delany's experiences working for the Freedman's Bureau were also where he witnessed its failures first-hand. Levine notes that this era marked a turn in Delany from a national figure into "a southerner, basing his national politics in local actions in

the towns and villages of South Carolina" (Levine 2003, 377). Here Levine marks Delany's shift from a figure focused on the advancement of all African Americans into an advocate for the advancement of Blacks in the southern United States. During this period, Delany worked to remake the South as a place where African Americans could flourish economically, socially, and politically. Delany's complex life during Reconstruction provides much insight into the argument he makes in *Principia* and Delany's experiences during Reconstruction would have heavily influenced his argument as well. As white Southerners pushed back against African Americans holding political office or influencing society on the grounds that they were an inferior race, Delany felt compelled to challenge the basis of these arguments.

Delany's primary goal in *Principia* is to refute existing arguments in the culture that mark African Americans as inferior in all human capabilities. He does this by opposing an oppressive intellectualism that was circulating among the public discourse of the time based on Darwin's "survival of the fittest" theory, which was being used to support arguments of Black inferiority. As Dennis (1995) notes, "Bernier and later Gobineau (1853/1915) set a pattern in racialist thinking by linking color to behavior and human ability. Notwithstanding, the racist logic of these thinkers, though mostly declarative and deeply rooted in the idea of European supremacy and 'colored' inferiority, lacked a grand and global philosophical and political framework within which it could logically operate" (244). As Dennis highlights, these nineteenth-century thinkers linked behavior and ability to skin color, which served to justify their racist ideology and provided a framework from which to operate. Dennis also then explains how Social Darwinism functioned during this time. He states that "others like Herbert Spencer (1874), who first coined the phrase "survival of the fittest," reasoned that Darwinist principles were intended to buttress the case that biological evolution could be equally applicable to human societies" (245). Dennis

explains, “Spencer reasoned further that human societies, like biological species, operate according to the principles of natural selection, are governed by competition and fitness, and evolve from an undifferentiated (homogeneous) and primitive state to one of differentiation (heterogeneity) and progress. Those too weak or ill-equipped to compete, or those who are unwilling and unable to do so, he reasoned, ought not to be given an artificial boost to keep them on Nature's battlefield” (245). What Dennis describes here is a version of Darwin’s theory of evolution applied to human races to justify slavery and the defeat of pro-equality policies during Reconstruction; this version supports Spencer’s philosophy of white supremacy. Spencer’s beliefs form the backdrop of those arguments that Delany sought to refute in *Principia*.

To accomplish this refutation, Delany includes evidence from scientific fields such as anthropology and biology, but he also includes, drawing inspiration from George Douglass Campbell in *Primeval [hu]Man*, evidence from Biblical scripture. In particular, Delany responds to Campbell’s central question in *his* text about, “ the Origin of Races… When and How did they begin?” (Campbell 7), and part of his answer presents an interpretation of Biblical scripture and its role in the teaching of history. That is, Delany uses theological accounts of the origins of humanity to strengthen the historical context for his argument.

Previous Scholarship of Principia

Previous scholarship on *Principia* is sparse. Scholars who have written about this work have tended to focus on three areas of the text: 1) Delany’s so-called “nationalist language choices,” 2) Delany’s rebuttal of multiple creations of humans (polygenesis) and 3) Delany’s text as a racial manifesto.

A few scholars have focused on what they call Delany's "nationalist language choices." It is unclear what these scholars mean by this phrase but they may be referring to Delany's decision to highlight the contributions of Egypt and Ethiopia to human knowledge and civilization. They ground this evaluation in his claims that Africa was the epicenter of civilization, specifically the Egyptian and Ethiopian nations, two nations that he discusses at length in the later chapters of the text. Other scholars have noted Delany's attempts to expose falsehoods about Africans. For example, biographer Cyrill E. Griffith argues that "because of the rape of Africa and the enslavement of four millions of its sons and daughters in the South, Delany decided it was time for a Black leader to expose the 'lie' that Africans were inferior, and reveal how this racial falsehood began" (Griffith 102). Specifically, the lie that Delany seeks to expose is the lie that whites are superior because God created them to be. Griffith notes that Delany refutes the stereotypes of Black people promoted by proponents of slavery.

Other scholars note Delany's rejection of white supremacy. For example, Ullman describes the book as "Delany's last gesture of defiance to the white world" (Ullman 510) and states that "Delany's work is refreshing.[12] Whether his premise is right or wrong, at least his argument has a semblance of logic" (Ullman 511). Ullman also notes "a goodly portion of the book is given over to repetitious proof of the ascendancy—intellectually, economically, politically, and socially—of the early Ethiopian and Egyptian empires under the sons of Ham and their descendants" (Ullman 512), while also claiming the text "was Delany's last meaningful expression, his last real effort to fight the white intellectually" (Ullman 514). Ullman makes some interesting points about *Principia*, Delany's motives for writing it, and the text's quality.

[12] Ullman contrasts Delany's *Principia* with Thomas Carlyle's "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question", Dr. Josiah Clark Nott's "Types of Mankind" and Dr. Samuel G. Morton's work on the 'cranial difference school of Negro inferiority' (510).

For example, in the first quotation, he identifies “the white world” as Delany’s principal audience for the text. However, a close reading of this text suggests that Delany is addressing a mixed audience. As I will mention in my upcoming discussion, Delany addresses both Black and white readers of his time. Therefore, to assume that he writes only to white readers is a misunderstanding of the complexity of Delany’s rhetorical situation and exigence for this work.

Ullman also acknowledges that he finds the work “refreshing” but he does go on to question Delany's argument, “whether his premise is right or wrong” (a phrase often used when the speaker means to imply that the writer’s premise is wrong). Ullman’s questioning of Delany's main premise in the work— that the Biblical story of Noah’s sons provides valid evidence that Black people and white people share a common origin— suggests that Ullman does not fully appreciate Delany’s rhetorical strategies in this text. Ullman describes *Principia* as “repetitious,” and “a last meaningful expression,” and he characterizes its argument as “maintaining a semblance of logic,” all comments that contain negative connotations that subtly undermine the quality of Delany’s work in Ullman’s readers’ minds in this, and perhaps all of his previous texts. Ullman’s comments represent the kind of scholarship that has contributed to English Studies undervaluing Delany's contributions to African American literature and his peripheral position in the English Literary Canon.

What Ullman and others may overlook is that in all of his works Delany uses all of what Aristotle has called “the available means of persuasion” (Aristotle 37). For example, in *Principia*, Delany does not mix theology and science because he is unaware of the differences between the two. Rather, he uses both because he recognizes that including them maximizes his persuasive power for his multiple audiences. The fact that he gives equal weight to scriptural

evidence as any scientific evidence suggests that he believes his audience would find it equally compelling.

Other scholars offer different perspectives on the text. For example, Roy Kay (2011) argues that *Principia* is "more than just an articulation of Afro-Asiatic myth of African superiority; it is a racial manifesto" (Kay 95). While I do not share Kay's description of the text as promoting African superiority, Delany clearly asserts known facts about early Egyptian and Ethiopian civilization and cultural practices that refute suggestions that early Africans were barbaric. Kay adds, "in language that echoes the race theories of the era, Delany writes that the three races are substances and as such are "indestructible," "pure," and fixed types by God. Racial identity and separation are substances and feelings innate to the human species, and are part of God's plan. Both race and geography are not only phenomenal, natural, and essential, but they are also divine. For Delany, the difference is substantial; it is not a figure of thought" (95). As Kay suggests, Delany sees the difference in race as substantial and he labels it "part of God's plan," which points not to polygenesis, but a method of one creation.

Finally, the title's apparent reference, although largely overlooked by Kay and the other scholars who have written about *Principia*, to Newton's text and Kay's claim about the genre of the work, that it is "a racial manifesto," do suggest a blending of genres or at the very least, some difficulty among scholars to reach a consensus on how to classify the text. As I have discussed in chapter one, the manifesto is defined as a declaration of intentions or motives of the author or group. Kay's definition implies that *Principia* is less a treatise and more a declaration by Delany on behalf of Blacks. While Delany's text does address issues of race, he presents his argument in a manner that is pragmatic and deliberate. His decision to title the text *Principia* suggests that he is more interested in developing a logical explanation than stating motives. The fact that many

scholars did not assign any generic category to *Principia* only reinforces this notion. It also appears, based on the evaluative comments made by several of these scholars, that they assume that the views expressed in *Principia* are Delany's personal views. For example, Ullman describes the text as a "last meaningful expression," suggesting that some scholars may have lost sight of the fact that Delany offers an interpretation of Bible stories as evidence (along with historical accounts and scientific data) to support his larger argument, a forceful rebuttal of the theory of polygenesis and the widespread conviction in the US that Black people are inferior. Delany's careful and thoughtful approach demonstrates that *Principia* is not a manifesto but a carefully considered argument.

Analysis of *Principia of Ethnology: The Origins of Races and Color*

Delany's *Principia* offers an answer to Campbell's question of the origins of the races of people. To do so, Delany presents a "quasi-logical argument" that combines evidence from Biblical scripture as well as from social sciences. The concept of quasi-logical argumentation was first described by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca in *The New Rhetoric*. They define quasi-logical arguments as those "that claim to be similar to the formal reasoning of logic or mathematics" (193). In other words, quasi-logical arguments resemble logical or mathematical arguments but they are actually not. The key distinction that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca make in contrasting logical and quasi-logical arguments is that quasi-logical arguments give only the appearance of being logical or mathematical but do not fully adhere to the laws required of either. The concept of quasi-logical argumentation is important for my analysis of Delany's text because it helps to explain how and why he blends scientific and religious evidence in order to combat arguments for polygenesis. As we have seen with previous texts, Delany writes for

multiple audiences in *Principia of Ethnology,* and he combines scientific and religious evidence to construct an argument that would appeal to various groups.

Audience and Structure

As mentioned, Delany would have targeted more than one audience for *Principia*. The fact that he chose to title his text *Principia* indicates that one of his audiences would have been those versed in other treatises such as the examples mentioned above. We could argue that Delany recognized the potential effectiveness of the genre and the level of objectivity that it provided an author. His decision to include faith-based evidence along with scientific fields suggests that Delany was not writing solely for that one audience, the one that was educated enough to recognize the allusion to books by Newton and Descartes. This audience would include well-educated and sophisticated white people, but also a number of African Americans like himself who had access to education. Rather, it suggests that similar to his previous texts, he also targets a broader audience of people, Black and white, who were perhaps less well-educated in science and history but who were devout Christians and very well versed in the Bible. These readers would find the evidence from Scripture both accurate and compelling. While it might be tempting to split these two audiences along racial lines, I think it would be a mistake to assume that Delany is not also addressing devout white Christians who would respond to the theological evidence, if it were effectively presented, with equal conviction as devout African American Christians. His goal in these Scripture-based arguments is to counter the white supremacist arguments circulating in the culture that also drew upon theological evidence for support. Additionally, Delany treats Biblical evidence and evidence from other fields of knowledge as interchangeable, which suggests that Delany wants his topic to be understandable and accessible from multiple perspectives. However, the fact that he includes so much theological evidence and

that he keeps returning to it after offering scientific evidence suggests that his religious readers are an important audience for Delany.

Understanding the target audiences of *Principia* enables us to better understand how and why Delany structures the text the way he does and why he might present science and faith-based evidence as equally important. First, we explore how he structures his text. Similar to Campbell's *Primeval [hu]Man*, *Principia* begins by establishing the scope of his argument through a series of questions. The questions suggest that the text is a traditional treatise aimed at supplying readers with information that seeks to uncover truths. From there, Delany constructs a timeline of events that uses as evidence a literal interpretation of the Bible. After establishing the timeline, Delany introduces Biblical explanations for the physical differences in skin colour and cultural differences in language. He also includes anatomical (i.e., scientific) evidence to show that humans have the same colour beneath the top layer of skin. His explanations combine Biblical narrative and scientific evidence, which he presents as equally valid. The combination of these forms of evidence suggests that Delany is targeting his various audiences.

Establishing the Project and Scope

In this section, I discuss the opening to *Principia* and analyze its organizational structure. I show that similar to a treatise, Delany develops a deductive argument and his first step is to establish the project and define its scope. This approach allows Delany to set the parameters of his argument and the terms to head off potential rebuttals to his argument.

Delany begins by setting the scope of his project and establishing the boundaries of his research. As I have noted, he includes theological data within these boundaries. In this text, Delany takes the position that humans originated from a singular creation and are all descendants

of the same stock (i.e., Adam and Eve). In his opening, he states, "this [the origin of humanity] is a subject of very great interest to social science, which as yet has not been satisfactorily treated. We propose in this inquiry, to give our deductions and conclusions, after mature deliberation and much research" (Delany 9). In this description, Delany presents his text as a logic-driven report that reaches conclusions deductively and is based upon extensive research. In his second paragraph, Delany rejects Darwin's theory of evolution in favor of Biblical teachings. While this may be surprising to a twenty-first-century audience, it is in fact fairly reasonable (and logical) during Delany's era.[13] Delany informs his readers that "the Singular and Plural theories of the Creation or Origin of [hu]Man, have been fully examined and duly considered, accepting the Mosaic or Biblical Record, as our basis, without an allusion to the Development theory" (Delany 9). Delany acknowledges that he has reviewed the theories of Creation, considered them, and concluded that the Mosaic or Biblical record is the most appropriate basis for his argument. This approach suggests that the Bible is the starting point for his argument.

As I have mentioned, Delany establishes the Bible as a primary source for his argument, and he engages the argument of polygenesis not solely through science but also on Biblical grounds. He further establishes the grounds for his argument by demarcating his territory. He explicitly rejects the origin theories, "of Champollion,[14] Nott,[15] Gliddon[16], and others, of the Three Creations of [hu]Man; one Black, the second Yellow, and the last White, we discard, and shall not combat as a theory, only as it shall be refuted in the general deductions of this treatise" (Delany 9). By referring to specific theorists, Delany acknowledges the existence of additional

[13] Avlar Ellegård notes that critics of Darwin complained that his theory was not inductive which "deserted the true British scientific tradition inaugurated by Bacon and brought to fruition by Newton (362). Additionally, he notes that Dawrin's critics "attacked the assumptions [of his argument] denying that a scientist had any right to make assumptions at all" (363).
[14] Jean-Francois Champollion is credited with deciphering Egyptian heliographs.
[15] Josiah Nott rejected monogenism and evolution in favor of polygenism.
[16] George Gliddon collected and studied human skulls that he used to argue for polygenism.

arguments but rejects them outright by informing his readers that he will not address them. He informs his audience that he supports a single-origin creation when he declares, "in treating on the Unity of Races as descended from one parentage, we shall make no apology for a liberal use of Creation as learned from the Bible. In this, we find abundant proof to sustain the position in favor of the Unity of the Human Race" (Delany 9). Here Delany argues that the Creation story of the Bible contains an abundance of evidence to support his argument for a single-origin creation.

The use of the Bible as evidence for "one parentage" offers readers the first hint of a quasi-logical argument. That is, Delany presents evidence from the Bible as if it were scientific evidence ("We shall make no apology for a liberal use of Creation as learned from the Bible"). He designates it as scientific (i.e., logical) evidence even though Biblical evidence cannot be verified the way evidence from Anthropology can be. In other words, Delany does establish a relationship between claims and evidence but the evidence used stems from a text grounded in faith and requires the audience to accept the warrant that the Bible is to be taken literally, that is, as known facts. Delany's strategy of using Biblical teachings in a similar fashion as scientific evidence would appeal to an audience that looks to the Bible as a source of history. I would argue that his audience who regard the Bible as factually true would look favorably on this strategy.

We can then turn to another example in the opening where Delany signals that the Bible will be central to the project of this text. He includes a reference to the New Testament story of Jesus calming the waters when he claims that "upon this subject ethnologists and able historians frequently seem to be at sea, without chart or compass, with disabled helm, floating on the bosom of chance, hoping to touch some point of safety; but with trusty helm and well-set compass, we have no fears with regard to a direct and speedy arrival, into the haven" (Delany 9). The passage is telling because Delany states that because he relies on Christian sources

(Scriptural narratives as a form of scientific facts) he will arrive safely and correctly at his answer to the question. In short, God will guide him to the correct answer in his research and analysis. Delany's strategy here is to mix science and theology in order to appeal to his diverse target audiences. His line of reasoning suggests that one cannot separate faith and reason which he demonstrates by signalling to his readers that theology and science together can explain the origins of the human species but neither can do so independently.

Delany and the Original Humans

In this section, I discuss Delany's timeline of human history that commences with the creation of Adam and Eve and extends to his era. I show that Delany's decision to include this timeline serves to establish the parameters of his argument and to appeal to his faith-based audience. The rhetorical advantage to creating a logical timeline from creation to the present is that it allows Delany to set the parameters on the topics that he wishes to engage. To refute Delany's argument one would have to address his timeline and thus would have to argue on Delany's grounds. Once he has mentioned his timeline, he can then present his evidence in support of monogenesis.

In chapter two, "The Creation of Man," Delany traces events from the creation story of Adam and Eve through the Fall of the Tower of Babel and thus continues to rely on the Bible as a principal source of evidence for his argument for monogenesis. First, he claims that "Man, according to Biblical history, commenced his existence in the Creation of Adam" (Delany 10) and informs his audience that "this narration is acceptable to us" (10). Here Delany communicates to his readers that he (as well as they) agree that they are all the descendants of Adam. This agreement is important because it establishes that all humans are descendants of the

same line. Here Delany attempts to scaffold the argument by beginning with the Creation story from the Bible. He states that "the history of [hu]Man[s] from Adam to Noah is very short, as given by Moses in the first chapter in the Bible, and though we learn of the existence of communities and cities, as the first city Enoch, built by Cain in the land of Nod, called after his first born, for aught we know, there were no legally established general regulations" (Delany 10). It is important to note that Delany claims there were no legally established general regulations in that period. He mentions this because he wants later to identify Egypt and Ethiopia as the initial civilizations that established general regulations. What Delany wants to do through this scaffolding is to establish a timeline that leads directly to Egypt and Ethiopia as the first cities to establish regulations (that is, rules that create a civilized society). Thus, the (Black) African cities of Egypt and Ethiopia (not Europe) are the first "civilized" communities documented in human history.

Delany further imposes labels identifying as history various stories and key moments from the Bible. His labels from History serve to transform these "stories" from the Bible into epochs of human history: "during the abode of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Paradise, we shall call the period of the'Original Law;' from going out of the Garden till the dispersion from the Tower,[17] the period of the 'Law of Necessity;' and after the dispersion on the Plains of Shinar,[18] the period of 'Municipal Law'" (Delany 10). Thinking about Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden as the period of "Original Law" suggests that this initial creation was God's creation in its true form. Delany's label of the fall of the Tower of Babel and the dispersion as the period of necessity implies that God made adjustments to his creation not out of want but the

[17] Delany refers to the Tower of Babel Genesis 11:1–9, which was used to explain the use of different languages around the world.
[18] Represents the supposed location of Babylon.

need to divide people into groups. The label Municipal Law notes the laws developed by the dispersed people of the earth. Delany uses the labels to move his readers through his arguments. Delany uses labels that he assigns to these Bible stories to lead his readers in chapter 3 and to articulate the series of questions that drive his project.

He poses the first of these questions in chapter three, stating, "until the Dispersion [caused by the Tower of Babel], Races as such were unknown, but must have become recognized at that time, doubtless at the period of that event, which brings us to the enquiry, What was the Original [hu]Man?" (Delany 11). Here Delany asks a different question from Campbell, who asked, "what was the origin of [hu]man." This question is important because it eventually enables Delany to shift his discussion from the descendants of Noah to the civilizations of Egypt and Ethiopia that he discusses later in the text (and I later in this chapter). Delany uses logos to create a pragmatic answer to this question of human origin. Although he poses the question of the original humans, he has already previously noted that he (and his audience) accept that Adam and Eve are the first humans. Delany does not initially address Adam's skin color because he wants to first establish that both he and his audience agree with the premise that they were the first humans regardless of their skin color. Therefore he presents it as a factual statement that both the audience and he knows to be true. In posing his second, follow-up question, he continues his appeal to logic by stating, "there is no doubt that, until the entry into the Ark of the Family of Noah, the people were all of the One Race and Complexion; which leads us to further inquiry, What was that Complexion?" (Delany 11). This appeal to logos is another example of quasi-logical argumentation as, again, Delany uses stories from the Bible, in this case, the story of Noah's Ark to ask questions that stem from Biblical stories yet are presented with the same weight as other fields of study. We can also find examples of quasi-logical argumentation

through Delany's discussion of race/complexion to Adam and Eve where he attributes their complexion to the derivative of Adam's name. The argument, while adhering to logical relationships between claims and evidence, is grounded in faith that what the Bible states are literal and verified.

Delany moves towards a response that seeks to unpack the answers to these questions of the Original [hu]Man and Complexion. First, he examines linguistic scholarship, stating, "it is we believe, generally admitted among-linguists, that the Hebrew word Adam (ahdam) signifies *red*-dark-red as some scholars have it. And it is, we believe, a well-settled admission, that the name of the Original [hu]Man, was taken from his complexion" (emphasis in original Delany 11). Here Delany appears to ignore any evolutionary arguments and instead focuses on theological evidence. He continues saying, "on this hypothesis, we accept and believe that the original man was Adam, and his complexion to have been clay color or yellow, more resembling that of the lightest of pure-blooded North American Indians. And that the peoples from Adam to Noah, including his wife and sons' wives, were all of one and the same color, there is to our mind no doubt" (Delany 11). In the first sentence, Delany recasts Adam's skin colour (red-dark red) to "clay color or yellow" in this passage, but his main point is to imply that the first human was not white. Delany's sleight of hand here helps establish the variations of complexion that he proposes because it would thus be logical that the variations would be both lighter (white) to darker (Black). Additionally, Delany argues for a literal interpretation of Creation as found in the Bible. Here we see Delany transforming the treatise genre by treating faith-based evidence as indisputable as an explanation for the creation of human existence. Delany establishes an argumentative foundation from which to work. Rather than using scientific evidence, Delany relies on a literal interpretation of the Bible as grounds for his argument. He attempts to scaffold

a logical sequence of events that leads to his main point. If his audience accepts that Adam (and Eve)[19] was the first human and that his name was derived from his complexion, then the logical conclusion is that all humans up to the point of what Delany refers to as the "Deluge" would have the same (dark or **not** white) complexion. More importantly for my purposes, Delany establishes a shared belief with his readers in a literal interpretation of the Bible, which he needs so that he can use it as a major source of evidence. The passage provides an example of how Delany transforms an established convention of the treatise genre (the type of evidence considered valid) to achieve his broader goals.

Skin Tone and the Story of the Flood

In this section, I discuss how Delany uses the Biblical story of the Deluge or Flood to explain the differences in skin tones. His argument in this section is that after the Deluge, the survivors spread out to repopulate the earth. Here I analyze an example of Delany using both scientific and theological evidence to support his claims.

After establishing a common set of beliefs between the audience and himself, Delany develops his argument about skin tones and his explanation for the variations. He uses the "Deluge" or story of the Genesis flood narrative as the starting point for his explanation for the difference in human skin tones. First, he acknowledges that "there are those of the highest intelligence and deepest thoughts, in spite of their orthodox training and Christian predilections, who cannot but doubt the account of the Deluge, touching its universality" (Delany 11). Delany notes that intelligent, deep thinkers of the Christian faith are apt to doubt the story of the Flood. To respond to this potential doubt, Delany turns to non-Biblical evidence to support his point.

[19] Delany does not mention Eve in his discussion of the first humans, which may say more about his audience and the time period than Delany's apparent ignoring of women.

This move demonstrates Delany's willingness to include scientific evidence along with what has, to this point in his discussion, been mainly theological evidence. Let us pause for a moment to reflect on the fact that, although Delany has signalled through his title that *Principia* is a treatise, his readers encounter only theological evidence (presented as if it were factual and scientific) in the early chapters of the discussion. Delany's decision to use the treatise genre and transform it by combining scientific and faith-based evidence points to an ethos of the genre that is one of authority. We need to also acknowledge Delany's claim that intelligent Christians might doubt the reality of the Flood but not the other Biblical narratives. Delany suggests that Christians are not blind in their beliefs and thus able to be critical of Biblical stories. His comment reinforces his argument because if he recognizes that his audience can critique Biblical narratives but fully accept many of the ones he references, then his evidence must be sound. Strategically, Delany grants room for doubt where the importance of his argument would not be impacted and claims unity where it supports him the most.

Delany then offers scientific evidence separate from Biblical accounts that indicates that the Deluge did occur. This evidence suggests a logical argument for the Deluge: "the wide if not universal prevalence among the heathen nations, of a tradition of preserving the memory of some such great catastrophe, has always been considered to indicate recollections carried by descent by the surviving few" (Delany 12). He argues that any survivors would be unable to forget such an event and would thus pass on stories of their experiences to others. His logic is based on the fact that oral history is a practice among heathen nations. Following this aside, Delany returns to discussing the Biblical account, "believing as we do in the story of the Deluge, after the subsidence of the waters, there was but one family of eight persons who came forth from the Ark, to re-people the earth—Noah and his wife; their three sons and their wives" (Delany 12).

Delany notes that the survivors of the Flood (Noah and family) were the ones to repopulate the earth. According to Delany's claim, the people of the earth would have been from one stock and therefore one creation. Delany's strategy is to counter polygenesis arguments from both a scientific and Biblical perspective. Such a strategy, although potentially quasi-logical, shows an author aware of the rhetorical situation in which he is engaged. Offering a literal reading of the Bible that supports his argument as well as offering a scientific explanation are signs of a quasi-logical argument.

Delany continues to offer a literal interpretation of Biblical stories as evidence for the origin of human civilization when he provides a timeline for the story of God flooding the earth. He begins this timeline by writing, "according to Biblical chronology, from the birth of Cain, the first-born of Adam and Eve, to the subsiding of the waters of the Flood, the time was one thousand, six hundred and fifty-five years—1655—the Flood lasting but forty days and forty nights" (Delany 12). Delany offers a total number of days to account literally for the passage of time for the events described, yet in the next sentence, while citing Genesis 8.13, he undermines this time span: "and it came to pass, in the six hundredth and first years, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth: and Noah removing the covering of the Ark and looked, and behold the face of the ground was dry" (Gen 8.13). Delany notes that "we do not pretend to know" what the reference to the six hundredth year means. Although he acknowledges the discrepancies between his literal reading of the Bible and its stated chronology, Delany does not offer further explanation. Rather, he states that "for while chronology curiously enough would seem to make Noah only to have lived about one year after the Flood, the history tells us: 'And Noah lived after the flood, three hundred and fifty years' Gen. 9.28 (Delany 12). This passage is an instance of prolepsis because, while he does not refute

the discrepancy, he does anticipate the potential objection. Interestingly, he dismisses it as a curiosity then attempts to render the objection insubstantial by immediately shifting topics to the next stop on his timeline. He posits that "from the abatement of the waters to the building of the Tower,[20] chronology makes it but one hundred and two years. This computation of time, would seem to agree very well with the number of people who must have accumulated as the offspring of the Four Families[21] who came out of the Ark, the males of which were engaged on the Tower, at the time of the confusion of tongues, and dispersion abroad" (Delany 12). Here Delany reaches a logical conclusion that time accounted for in the Bible and the accumulation of offspring is logical and true.

The Tower of Babel and the Difference in Language

Delany makes an argument to explain the differences in spoken languages among the civilizations of the word. Here he relies on the story of the Tower of Babel and subsequent events to argue that early humans were spread out by God and developed different languages because they became too arrogant when all united. Delany's argument in this section resembles a quasi-logical argument because he relies on faith and logical deduction to develop an argument that appears logically constructed. Additionally, Delany provides an interpretation of the Bible that can be described as a rhetoric of agitation because he shows his African American audience how a text [the Bible] that has been used to oppress African Americans (as he argued in earlier texts such as *Blake*) can be reread as a liberation text. By providing a rereading of the Bible that contributes to the liberation rather than the oppression of Blacks, Delany is able to move beyond "the normal discursive means of persuasion" (For more information about the rhetoric of agitation, please see the discussion in Chapter One).

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[20] Delany is referring to the Tower of Babel found in Genesis 11. 1-9. The story seeks to explain why the people of the world speak different languages.

[21] The Four Families is a reference to Noah and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives.

Delany continues to use the Tower of Babel as evidence of a shared lineage for all humans. His continued use of Biblical stories as evidence for human origins demonstrates that this strategy is pervasive in the text. With his continued introduction of new Bible stories as valid evidence, we can see a fundamental change in the genre of "treatise" in Delany's hands. Whereas the treatise genre often relies on scientific evidence, Delany chooses to include faith-based and scientific evidence and views them equally. In short, Delany suggests that to know the answer to the questions he raises, one must be willing to accept evidence from all of human knowledge. This strategy imparts to readers the need to be open to various types of information and evidence. The story of the Tower is another integral part of Delany's argument because he wants to show that prior to the fall of Babel the people of the earth shared one complexion and language. He then argues that this dispersal was part of God's plan for earth and human civilization. To accomplish this, Delany needs to continue mapping a chronology or timeline that supports his line of reasoning. Consequently, he opens chapter four, "The Family of Noah," by arguing that "Noah and the family were Adamites, himself and wife being undoubtedly of the same color as that of their progenitors, Adam and Eve. And from the Garden of Eden to the Building of the Tower, there certainly was but one race of people known as such, or no classification of different peoples" (Delany 13). Not until the fall of the Tower was there a need to divide by complexion and language and disperse them across the earth. Delany blames the dispersion of people on their "imagining themselves all-powerful" because they achieved unity by all speaking one language. He then offers a logical explanation for God's need to disperse the people of earth: "finally to check this presumption [by humanity of their own power], something had to be done, fully adequate to the end to be accomplished, which was the design of the Divine will" (Delany 13). He then proclaims that "God has a purpose in all that he does, and his purpose

in the creation of man, was the promotion of his own glory by the works of man here on earth, as the means of the Creator" (13). Delany's warrant for this claim, then, is that the more one struggles, the closer to God one becomes. The fall of the Tower of Babel and the consequent dispersal of people, according to Delany, were necessary for humans to understand their own frailty and through this knowledge come closer to God. I would argue that implied in Delany's interpretation of the Tower of Babel is the claim that those people who struggle most to survive are those who become closest to God. Following this line of logic, we could also infer that Delany may also be implying that people of African descent would be closer to God than other races who do not have to struggle to the same extent.

In chapter four Delany invites his African American audience to view the Bible as a liberation text while also continuing his logic-based approach to explain the dispersion of peoples of the earth and the multitude of languages. He states, "whenever we become familiar with the idea that Creation has had a history, we are inevitably led to the conclusion that Creation has also had a method" (Delany 14). In this particular case, the primary data is the Bible. Delany is speaking of Creation as having a history and a method. His reference here to the method of Creation is not to be confused with the method of history as science. In this instance, Delany concludes that readers can look to the history of Creation to understand the method of dispersion.He follows this statement with his third question, "and then the further question arises—what has this method been" (14). With the phrase "we become familiar," Delany continues assuming agreement with his audience while also interpreting Biblical history. Here he asks readers to accept his approach to understanding Biblical scriptures while also recognizing the book used to oppress African Americans, can be transformed into a liberation text.

In this sense, Delany can be read as employing a form of agitation to confront racist readings of the Bible as he engages the discursive structure that is used to maintain Black inferiority. Delany continues to demonstrate his line of reasoning for Creation's method with his claim that "Civilization is promoted by three agencies, Revolution, Conquest, and Emigration; the last the most effective, because voluntary, and thereby the more select and choice of the promoters" (Delany 14). This statement shows how civilization is created and maintained. Delany, whose past texts have advocated emigration, recognizes it (emigration) as the most effective because those that willingly emigrate would be invested in the society they are joining. He also implies that those with the ability to emigrate would be in a better position to promote society. He marks the distinct difference between revolution/conquest and emigration when he explains to his audience that:

> the first [Revolution] may come in two ways—morally and peacefully as the Coming of the Messiah; or physically and violently, as a civil war or conquest by military invasion, the worst agencies of civilization; but which do not fail to carry with them much that is useful into the country invaded. A moral revolution is always desirable as an agency in the promotion of civilization. (Delany 14-15)

Delany makes a correlation between significant moments in the Bible and the United States. He suggests that violent revolutions such as the Civil War represent the worst of society but can bring useful aspects. Here Delany may be referring to the response of the Union Army and the resulting emancipation of slavery as the useful aspects that were the result of the Civil War. This example correlates with the fall of the Tower of Babel and the dispersal of the people across the earth. In this example, the conquest led to the emigration of peoples and the founding of civilizations across the earth. This connection is essential to Delany's argument and he seamlessly incorporates his defense of the Bible as evidence into his explanation for the dispersal of people and diversity of language. We need to look no further than his follow-up question that

asks, “what then was the ‘method’ of the Creator in effecting this desirable separation and scattering abroad the people?” (Delany 15) to see Delany offer a way of logically interpreting the Bible when it does not offer an explicit explanation. When Delany states, “though on this subject the Bible is silent, it is reasonable to believe and safe to conclude, that one of the three divisions retained the old original Adamic tongue, so to speak, or that which they spoke when they commenced building; and that one was that which followed after Shem, the progenitor of the Mongolian Race, and eldest of the sons” (Delany 15). The passage represents the relationship Delany wants to establish between the Bible and his deductive conclusions. In this instance where the “Bible is silent,” Delany compensates with deduction, which he has developed prior to this passage. Taking such an approach allows Delany to rely on both the Bible and logos where the other does not prove adequate, essentially creating two forms of evidence.

Delany’s blending of logic and religion in the chapter continues with his interpretation of the Dispersal story as evidence for a “method of Creation.” To explain the dispersal, Delany asserts, “by this ‘method’ then, of an All-wise Creator, the people lost interest as communities in each other, and were thereby compelled to separate. And it will certainly be conceded by the intelligent inquirer, that there was a ‘method’ in the manner, if allowed a paradox?” (Delany 15). Again, Delany suggests that the Dispersal was a result of God’s method for separating the people of the earth as a way of explaining the differences in language. He also accounts for the difference in races by stating that “there were other changes said to be necessary to the final separation, in addition to that of the languages: the basis of race distinction, establishing the grand divisions” (15). Delany’s interpretation provides the grounds for his argument for monogenesis by arguing that the racial and linguistic differences of people can be explained by God’s method rather than a separate creation for non-white races. In other words, the dispersal

can be used as evidence for the difference in languages and skin tone rather than multiple creations of races. As Delany suggests, God used language and race as a way to separate people. Through the further use of prolepsis or the anticipation of potential rebuttals, Delany addresses the polygenesis theory when he states,

> Is it to be supposed that God wrought a special miracle, by changing for the occasion the external physical characteristics of at least two divisions of the people? He did not. This was not His method; He has a better and even wiser method than a miracle. (Delany 15)

Delany anticipates a potential challenge to his argument for monogenesis and the fall of Babel by dismissing the idea of any distinction of race as anything other than God's method for separating the people of the earth. This is a key move by Delany because he connects his argument for monogenesis to a method for dispersing people and not distinctive creations. He then ties his interpretation of the Biblical story back to the Duke of Argyll's rebuttal to Darwin's theory of evolution. He thanks the Duke for "combatting Darwin's development theory" (15) while also stating "it is not in itself inconsistent with the Theistic argument, or with the belief in the ultimate agency and directing power of a Creative Mind. This is clear since we never think of any difficulty in reconciling that belief with our knowledge of the ordinary laws of animal and vegetable production" (Delany 16). Throughout this text, Delany constructs an argument that combines scientific conclusions and religious interpretation. While not an overt transformation of genres, the text does demonstrate a rhetoric of agitation because Delany challenges polygenesis arguments on their own ground. In short, Delany uses the very texts and sources of authority to refute arguments of inherent Black inferiority.

Delany then moves to equate Biblical scripture and scientific evidence. He indirectly argues that Biblical stories and scientific evidence are similar. In chapter five, "The Origin of Races," he begins to make this argument when he relies on language that his readers will

recognize as drawn from scientific study when he states, "We have shown the 'method' of the Creator, in effecting his design for man to 'scatter abroad upon the face of the face of the whole earth;' to 'multiply and replenish it.' But we have not yet seen, how the division was brought about by the confusion of tongues, so as to settle and harmonize people, instead of distracting and discouraging them" (Delany 16). When Delany refers to the "method" of God's design to replenish the earth, his use of "method" and "design" suggests that the Biblical account is similar to a scientific method. Why this is significant is because Delany makes a correlation between Biblical stories and scientific methods. Delany interprets the Bible and the argument for one creation as being similar to scientific methods. The way that he presents his claims resembles a quasi-logical argument because the evidence he offers is based largely on his interpretation of the Bible. By posing his interpretation of Biblical stories as scientifically supported methods, his argument can be read as quasi-logical. Delany chooses this strategy based on his understanding of his audience, which comprises both whites and educated African Americans of the Christian faith. He continues this strategy with his explanation of the multitude of races stating, "it must be seen, that such an act [the dispersal] of an All-wise interposition was essential, to enable each individual of any one of the now three grand divisions of the new tongues, when seen, to identify the other without speaking; otherwise, there would have been produced a 'confusion worse confounded'"(Delany 17). This explanation for single creation continues Delany's quasi-logical approach to this debate. The fact that Delany presents his interpretation as a logical conclusion based on his reading of the Bible provides his audience with a counter-narrative and engages polygenesis proponents. Engaging these arguments on these grounds is evidence of the rhetoric of agitation because as we have seen in previous chapters, taking aspects of a discursive structure and using them to counter is an act of agitation.

The second half of Delany's chapter moves the reader towards another of Delany's claims of the section as he turns to the Duke of Argyll's discussion of the origins of races. Delany quotes a passage from *Primeval [hu]Man* that says, "and one of the questions on which testimony bears, is a question of paramount importance in determining the antiquity of the Human Family. That question is not the rise of kingdoms, but the origin of races" (qtd in Delany 17). Delany informs his readers that the origins of races are a topic that "we shall hope to solve by the aid of the light of science, and assistance of Divine authority, enabling us to discover the secrets of the laws of nature" (17). Delany explicitly mentions his desire to blend science and faith as a means for constructing his argument. As a rhetorician from a marginalized group, Delany seeks to confront arguments of polygenesis using the same means of persuasion of those that promote it. Therefore, he attempts to present his argument in what might be perceived as using a scientific or objective approach. While the text clearly is not objective, Delany, despite the title of his text, wants his audience to regard his interpretation of the Bible as rational and logical. He continues to discuss the Dispersal by citing *Genesis 11.6-7*, "and the Lord said, Behold the people is one, and they have all one language, let us go down and there confound their language" (Delany 17). He then adds his commentary, that "to separate this family was the paramount object, and to sever their interests in each other, was necessary to this separation" (17). Delany references the quotation from Genesis as grounds to claim that the difference in races was necessitated by the need for dispersed people to identify others who speak the same language. As Delany presents it, both are logical conclusions of God's method and will. By suggesting that the Biblical story of the fall of the Tower of Babel can be used as evidence for the difference in languages and skin colour, Delany seeks to blend science and faith to refute the arguments of Black inferiority that are implied in other theologically supported arguments.

Delany continues his logical structure by offering what he sees as two undoubted facts, “the sons of Noah were three in number: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. That these three sons were the active heads of the people as directors and patriarchal leaders, there is no doubt” (Delany 18). He then states, “there is to us another fact of as little doubt: that is, that these three sons of Noah all differed in complexion, and proportionate numbers of the people—their dependents in and about the city and around about the Tower—also differed as did the three sons in complexion” (Delany 18). Delany’s combination of science and Biblical interpretation should be seen as his attempt to establish an explanation for a single-origin creation. By suggesting that the difference in complexions can be attributed to the difference in the complexions of Noah’s sons, Delany refutes arguments of polygenesis. Delany continues to make assertions, claiming, “that Shem was of the same complexion as Noah, his father, and mother—the Adamic complexion—there is no doubt in our mind. And that Ham the second son was swarthy in complexion, we have as little doubt.” His reading of the Bible asserts that all races of the earth are the descendants of the same family and can be traced back to the story of Noah. He adds that “indeed, we believe it is generally conceded by scholars, though disputed by some, that the word Ham means ‘dark,’ ‘swarthy,’ ‘sable.’ And it has always been conceded, and never as we know of seriously disputed, that Japheth was white” (Delany 18). Here Delany relies on the story of Noah and his sons as evidence that different complexions of people can be attributed to the varying complexions of Noah’s sons. This supports Delany’s argument for a single creation of the human race: that is, all humans are the progeny of Noah (and his wife), no matter what language they speak or what colour their skin may be. Additionally, he posits an order to the races that he identifies, listing Black (or coloured) ahead of white based on their tenure on earth as apparently longer than whites. This move is important because it not only refutes arguments for both

polygenesis and Black inferiority by tracing a single parentage for humans, it also argues that darker races appeared on the earth first. These claims provide the foundation for much of Delany's argument moving forward as he seeks to develop his claims in greater detail, relying on his strategy of blending logical reasoning with Biblical scriptures.

Delany and the Argument for a Single-Origin Creation

In this section, I examine Delany's argument for a single-origin creation through an analysis of his discussion of colour in species. Delany opens this argument by discussing the variations in colour of multiple species of animals before he shifts to discussing variations of colour in humans. His argument, in this case, relies on scientific evidence, specifically from the fields of physiology and anatomy. However, in keeping with his transformation of the treatise genre, Delany also includes Biblical evidence with the story of Noah and his family.

In chapter six, "How Color Originates," Delany argues more explicitly for the single origin of all races. He opens the chapter by quoting the Duke of Argyll when he says, "can such varieties have descended from a single stock? And why not? It is not in itself inconsistent with the Theistic argument, or with belief in the ultimate agency and directing power of a Creative mind" (qtd in Delany 20). Delany opens with this reference to *Primeval [hu]Man*, using it as evidence or support for his line of reasoning. In addition, *Primeval [hu]Man* offers another account that argues for monogenesis that allows Delany to work with and frame his discussion accordingly. For example, Delany follows this opening citation with his own question, which asks, "is it reasonable to suppose that there were necessarily original parents for all the varieties in every species of animals and vegetables?"(20) and follows with "were there necessarily separate creations for each of the same species of different colors among all these animals, beasts and fowls? Certainly not; and no hypothesis can make it affirmatively tenable" (Delany 20). Here

Delany uses an "if-then" structure to make his point. He argues that "if" there were not separate creations for other species "then" it is not logical that there would be for human beings. Interestingly, Delany seems to be blending certain aspects of evolution into his theory for the dispersal of humans from Babylon. He ends this line of questioning with, "and just here, whence comes a black lamb, born of a white stock, a circumstance happening every year on almost every sheep farm, where every ram is white, and not the possibility of a black ram communicating with them?" (Delany 20). Delany uses the example of the sheep and rams to suggest that darker and lighter complexions can be borne out of one another. Delany's line of questioning is a strategy meant to move his readers towards a conclusion that supports his argument. He then adds to this line of reasoning by stating that "this [the variations of color among species] certainly is a theme, worthy of the attention of the leading minds in social science" (20), and he continues by himself taking up the theme, pointing out that "one remarkable fact of a law in procreation, which seems inexplicable, is the sexes [of various animals] always differ in color, the *male* invariably—with occasional exceptions—being white, and the *female*, *dark* or gray" (emphasis in original Delany 21). Here Delany is referring to the color differences in domestic geese, the male being white and the female being "dark or gray." He extends this thought to skin color in human beings, musing "why this should be so we know as little, and probably less, than we do why there should be races of [hu]man, differing in complexion, all from the same parent stock" (21). Through this musing, he attempts to establish a correlation between a broad spectrum of species (geese and humans) to show a clear similarity of a method of creation. We know this because he immediately follows this statement with a quote from the Duke of Argyll (that Delany claims is "wisely stated"), that "Creation has a method! And again: the same language might be applied, without the alteration of a word, to origin of species, if it were indeed true, that new kinds, as

well as new individuals, were created by being born" (qtd in Delany 21). Delany's use of Campbell's words returns to his use of if-then logic because the passage suggests that if creation has a method, then it can explain the variation of species. He uses the Duke as an authority whose ideas reinforce his own claims while also providing a logical framework within which to develop his own argument. Delany is not seeking to incorporate a broad spectrum of texts into the construction of his argument; rather, his strategies appear to rely on a tightly focused text based on his Biblical interpretations mixed with logic and key points from the Duke of Argyll's *Primeval [hu]Man*.

Delany's approach can also be explained by the rhetoric of agitation. As previously discussed, the rhetoric of agitation refers to the theory developed by Bowers, and others that argues that rhetors who use more than the normal discursive means of persuasion can be considered a form of agitation. We could consider Delany's combination of Biblical interpretation and scientific evidence to be a strategy that is emblematic of the rhetoric of agitation because he can be seen as practicing the theory of promulgation, which is defined by Bowers and co-authors as "a strategy where agitators publicly proclaim their goals and it includes tactics designed to win public support for the agitator's positions" (Bowers et al. 23). Ochs et al. offer the example of activist exploitation of the mass media as an important strategy because "the purpose of promulgation include[s] informing the public of the agitator's positions in an effort to win public acceptance of their ideology, value system and beliefs, and policies" (Bowers et al. 23) and "these purposes cannot be fulfilled unless the activists can effectively communicate with the public" (Bowers et al. 23). Bowers et.al recognize the importance of stating goals and winning public support. Delany employs a similar strategy in his text through his combination of faith-based and scientific evidence because it appeals to a wide audience. His

use of "we" throughout the text is meant to incorporate readers into his line of thinking. Additionally, Delany relies on the Bible and *Primeval [hu]Man* as foundational texts that become the starting points for agreement with his audience. In other words, Delany attempts to blend Biblical interpretation and science to offer readers locations where he and they may find communion. Lastly, his decision to title the book *Principia* suggests that his text is of the same genre as Newton's text and can be read and accepted as reaching conclusions through similar logical deductive means.

Delany on the Laws of Nature

A notable strategy that Delany also uses in this chapter is to shift from a discussion focused on Biblical narratives towards one centred on scientific knowledge of the laws that govern nature. In fact, Delany seamlessly transitions between Biblically focused discussions to one based on science, a tactic that, I argue, allows him to transform the treatise genre.

We see him begin to shift towards a scientific explanation for the origins of races later in chapter six as a way of complementing his interpretation of the Biblical story of Noah and his sons. Delany suggests that readers "take a peep into the laws of nature, and for a little, follow them as our guide" (Delany 21) and claims that "our present familiarity with the spectroscope, gives us a knowledge of the properties of the sun, as transmitted through the rays, reflecting all colors of the prism or rainbow. Solid matter of mineral substances, we know to be among these properties" (Delany 21). Delany's turn to the laws of nature for an explanation of the variance in skin colours marks the shift in strategies from Biblical interpretation towards scientific evidence for the origins of races. The shift is evident in the language and method used to develop his argument and indicates his attempts to blend science and religion. Delany continues when he says, "whatever has color then, whether animal, vegetable or mineral, receives these colors

directly from the sun; that is, the essential properties that form or compose them. This is by a physiological process, called elaboration and selection, whether animal, vegetable or mineral chemistry, or the natural functions of these systems, unaided by art" (Delany 21-22). Delany provides his readers with a scientific explanation for variation of colour by informing his readers that the physiological process of elaboration and selection is responsible for the variation we see in nature.

Delany's Use of Scientific Evidence for Complexion Variation

In the following paragraphs, I analyze Delany's use of physiological evidence to explain variation in skin colour. He concludes chapter six with a further discussion of the composition of human skin that details each layer. He then concludes the chapter by returning to the Biblical story of Noah and his family to offer a theological explanation for skin variance. Delany moves to chapter seven and offers a more detailed explanation (which he refers to as a special explanation) for skin colour where he again provides first a scientific explanation before turning to a theological one.

Near the end of chapter six, Delany discusses the anatomy of the human body and the chemistry of colours in nature because for him they are important sources of evidence in his argument supporting monogenesis. He notes that "the human body is covered by a structure composed of three distinct parts; the *cuticle* or external surface; the *rete mucosum*, middle or intermediate structure; and the *cutis vera* or true skin, underlying the other two, covering the whole surface of the fleshy parts or muscular system, called the hide in slaughtered animals" (emphasis in original Delany 22). His use of the technical Latin terms for the layers of skin signal the opening to his scientific explanation for the variation of skin colours. Here Delany does not rely on external sources to develop this discussion of the composition of human skin;

instead, we can only assume that he draws on his training as a doctor for his detailed scientific knowledge of the topic. He demonstrates a command of the information he presents and his established ethos as a practicing physician underpins it as evidence. Delany devotes space in the chapter to a detailed description of each layer of skin. His descriptions lead his audience to a conclusion that implies a single origin for the creation of humans. He states first that "this coloring matter in the Caucasian or white race is *rouge* as we shall term it, the essential properties which give redness to the rose" (emphasis in original 23), followed by his claim that "in the Mongolian or yellow race of Asia, the coloring matter is the same—rouge—modified by peculiar elaboration, and uniformly infused into the rete mucosum, giving the yellow tinge" (23), and he ends by stating "in the African or black race of Africa, the coloring matter is *the same* as that in the other two races, being *rouge* concentrated, which make a pigment—the *pigmentum nigrum* of physiology—or black matter" (emphasis in original Delany 23). Delany's descriptions lay the foundation for his conclusion that "thus the color of the blackest African is produced by *identically the same* essential coloring matter that gives the 'rosy cheeks and ruby lips,' to the fairest and most delicately beautiful white lady" (emphasis in original Delany 23). Delany provides a scientific explanation that bolsters his Biblical interpretations as evidence for a single-origin for the human species. He goes beyond a simple explanation with his claim that the source of white beauty, the pink or red hues that colour lips and cheeks and are much prized in a white person's complexion, is the very thing that makes people from Africa Black, strengthening his rebuttal of charges that Black people are somehow physiologically inferior. He does so by presenting a scientific explanation that minimizes the physical differences.

He then concludes the chapter by returning to the three sons of Noah, stating that "Shem, Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah and wife, who were Adamites and of one complexion, were

themselves of three different complexions, as a means in the providence of God's economy, to the accomplishment of his ends in the progress of civilization" (Delany 26). Delany returns to the Bible for further evidence for the varieties of human complexions that, he concludes, stem from God's master plan to "replenish and multiply" the earth. Delany argues that this would not be accomplished if the people were of all one complexion as there would be no reason to disperse. Therefore, the dispersal was the direct result of God's design in the creation of races because "it fixed in the people a desire to be separated by reason of race affinity" (Delany 27). Delany's return to the Bible rather than ending the chapter with the scientific evidence places emphasis on Biblical explanations rather than scientific ones.

After providing his audience with a corresponding theological explanation for race variation in chapter six, Delany returns to scientific explanations in chapter seven, "Special Explanation on Color" to further explain racial differences. Delany's "special explanation" refers to an explanation of "color that summons physiology with more liberty" (28). He explains that"what causes the color of the negro; what is it, and of what does it consist?" has been an inquiry of the deepest interest throughout all ages, among all nations, with such varied speculations, that have concluded, in addition to the foregoing chapter, to make a special explanation on color" (Delany 28). Delany's opening suggests to readers that he will answer these specific questions whereas all previous discussions have been "speculation." Delany frames earlier theories about the source of Black people's skin colour as "speculation" or other people guessing. He characterizes these earlier explanations in this way to lend further authority to his own explanation which, he emphasizes, is based on scientific evidence, as well as his own authority as an expert who has thought deeply about this topic.

Interestingly, the preamble to his scientific discussion draws on history rather than science. Delany turns to Greek history, in particular, two scholars, Herodotus, whom he refers to as "the learned Greek and father of history," and Strabo, a philosopher, historian, and geographer, and he presents quotations from both of them about the appearance of Ethiopians (who stand in metonymically for Black humans). He quotes Herodotus as saying that "Ethiopians are black and wooly haired" and Strabo as questioning "who has believed the account about the Ethiopians before he saw them?" (qtd in Delany 28). Delany relies on the topoi of Greece and Greek scholars to locate his claim in a historical context, one that includes the seemingly objective observations of Greek scholars about Ethiopians. Here we see how Delany treats all of his evidence as equivalent. Delany does not value one source of evidence (theological) more than the other (history, geology, physiology, etc.). Delany presents Biblical evidence and quotes from Greek scholars as equally compelling. Delany's strategy here is evidence of his transformation of the treatise genre. Delany transforms the genre that presents a complete argument by including evidence from all areas of human knowledge.

Delany then returns to a scientific explanation of the physical difference between Blacks and whites. His return to the discussion of physical difference and the physiology used to support it leads him to pose key questions — "what is the coloring matter which enters the cells of the rete mucosum of the African race producing the 'jet black' complexion, as it is termed? Is homogeneous or heterogeneous—of the same or different nature, to that which composes the color or complexion of the other races?" (Delany 30). These questions, according to Delany, are "the all important inquiry, to answer which satisfactorily, puts at rest forever, the inquiry of age, and opens the book of mysteries on this subject" (Delany 30). Delany's quote here calls on readers to consider his strategy to this point. What he implies here is that by combining

theological and scientific evidence, we can lay the discussion about Black skin to rest. When we consider both faith-based and scientific evidence, we can see a clearer picture of the topic and understand how variations in skin color can be attributed to the "method" of creation that Delany discusses. He also places significant importance on the answer to these questions, stating that "if homogeneous, the black race has a common origin with the other two—Mongolian and Caucasian —races; but if heterogeneous, none with Noah's and consequently, none with Adam's race" (Delany 30). In response to his question: "what is the coloring matter which enters the cells of the rete mucosum of the African race producing the 'jet black' complexion as it is termed?" (30), Delany responds with the previous quote. Again, we see a seamless melding of theological and scientific evidence to support his response. He uses chemistry terms heterogeneous (a mixture of multiple materials) and homogenous (a pure substance) to make a key point. For the colouring matter to be homogenous, it would suggest that Blacks have a common origin with other races. If heterogenous, then Blacks are neither the descendants of Noah nor Adam. This is significant because it would present a dilemma for those that see Blacks as descendants of Noah's son, Ham, and thus cursed to be slaves. Delany's blend of science and theology to address this issue of race (theology) and skin pigment (scientific) pinpoints the shortcomings of arguments he refutes. Additionally, this approach supports Delany's implied argument that to see the entire picture, we must combine evidence from all of human knowledge. Of this topic, Delany concludes that "in the Caucasian it [pigment] is in the most simple elementary constituent; in the Mongolian, in a more compound form. But that which gives complexion to the blackest African, is the *same red* matter; *concentrated rouge*, in its most intensified state" (emphasis in original Delany 30). Delany explains that pigment, the physiological composition of human skin colour, is identical no matter what the race and only varies by concentration.

Next Delany anticipates the potential counter-argument to his claims, counter-arguments that the distinction of skin colour is evidence of multiple creations. These counter-arguments focus on variations in skin tone. He acknowledges this opposing argument in his line of questioning, "why should an elaboration and selection of the same coloring matter take place so differently in the yellow race from that of the white, or be different in either, if in reality descended from the same common origin—one parent stock?" (31). Delany responds, "simply because it is in accordance with the economy of the Creator, to give a general and unerring reproductive system, to each race whereby it should always be known, by its own peculiar characteristics" (Delany 31). In response to his question, Delany provides a faith-based response whereby he suggests that the answer is God's plan. He then concludes, "it is needless to pursue this part of the inquiry further, as just here is where the mysterious, inscrutable wisdom of God comes in" (31). Again, Delany points to a faith-based reason for an anatomical question. In short, Delany argues that the reasons for skin colour variation among white and yellow races are due to God's plan.

Delany on Black Civilization

After offering scientific arguments for the variation in skin tone, Delany returns to the story of Noah and his family. This time he concentrates specifically on Noah's son, Ham, because he wants to discuss the early Black civilizations of Egypt and Ethiopia as part of his goal to show the central role that Africans have played in the evolution of human civilization. Biblical commentators have argued that Ham was the founder of the continent of Africa, and Delany uses his story to show that Black people were among the earliest of human beings. His primary goal through this discussion is to elaborate the evidence he has in support of a

single-origin creation for humans, but a close secondary goal is to highlight two great early Black civilizations that have been credited for advancements in science.

Delany notes that Noah's three sons spread across the earth and " began a new progress in life, as three distinct peoples, of entirely different interests, aims and ends" (Delany 37). Here he suggests that the brotherly connections were severed with the parting and three different races began with their progeny. He contends that "Shem remained in Asia; Ham went to Africa, and Japheth journeyed to Europe, permanently and forever severing their connexion with each other, henceforth becoming different peoples and divided as though they were never united. And then the different Races of the Human Family had just begun. At this time, also, we reckon the commencement of the period of municipal law" (Delany 37). In the first part of this quotation, he emphasizes how the distances travelled by the brothers resulted in psychological as well as the physical distance between them. In the last part of the quotation, he marks this point of separation of the brothers as the start of both Race within "the Human Family" and civic rule, that is, the establishment of government: civilization. Here we see Delany turning again to the Bible for a historical explanation for the diversity of races. He also accounts for the divide between each of the brothers and their peoples which he argues stems from their different interests and aims. What Delany is arguing here is that all people of the earth are creations of God, descendants of Noah's children and therefore all related. If all humans are descended from Noah, then they are all products of a single creation, meaning that there is no evidence to support polygenesis.

As I noted at the beginning of this section, an integral goal for Delany is to highlight the importance of both the Egyptian and Ethiopian societies to the advancement of human civilization. In highlighting the contributions of these societies to humankind's advancement, he

seeks to rebut arguments in general circulation at that time that people of African descent were inferior. Consequently, chapter nine, "Progress of the Black Race," marks a shift in the text as Delany moves from discussing evidence to support a single creation origin theory to educating his audience about the history of Africa and Africans. Consequently, chapter nine follows the story of Ham and his descendants. Delany argues that Ham and his sons spread across Africa. He states that Ham settled "permanently on the Delta, or territory formed by the mouths of the river Nile; while Cush[22]ruled an area that extended from Egypt to Ethiopia (41). Delany reminds his readers that this claim is "indisputable; and it is a fact which learned men will not dispute, that in the early settlement of those countries, Egypt and Ethiopia were united Kingdoms" (Delany 41-42). The purpose of these claims is to note that the ancestry of African Americans is Egyptian and Ethiopian, two of the earliest and more advanced civilizations. While this move is not new for Delany, it takes on additional importance in the argument he makes in *Principia* because he is tracing the lineage of African Americans (not just Black humans). To develop this argument, Delany cites the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus, who claims that "the laws of Ethiopia agreed in substance with those of Egypt" (Delany 42). That is, Ethiopia and Egypt had similar rules of law. Delany further quotes Diodorus Siculus, stating that "the Ethiopians valued themselves upon their being the first nation that had a religious establishment" (42). In addition to maintaining a lawful society, Ethiopia also had an established national religion, further evidence of the country's civilized traditions. By tracing African American ancestry back to the great early human civilizations of Egypt and Ethiopia, Delany reminds readers of the contributions of Africa to the world. Delany also tries to instill a strong sense of pride in his African American readers for their illustrious heritage. Lastly, he cites Greek historians to refute arguments of Black racial

[22] Ham was said to have four sons; Cush, Mizraim, Phut and Canaan. Cush had six sons; Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, Sabtecha, and Nimrod.

inferiority on Eurocentric grounds. That is, he uses the same appeals to (ancient Greek) authority to construct his argument that is often cited by those who argue that Blacks are inherently inferior. Delany's approach is scholarly. His interpretation of the Bible also exhibits appeals to logic and his decision to blend Biblical interpretation with science and history suggests he sees the evidence that each provides as interchangeable.

Delany then shifts from evidence that can be viewed as interchangeable to evidence that is firmly historical. Delany's turn to historical evidence is best seen in chapter fourteen, "Wisdom of Ethiopia and Egypt," where he documents the achievements of the two civilizations. Delany claims that "there is little doubt as to the Ethiopians having been the first people in propagating an advanced civilization in morals, religion, arts, science and literature—the Egyptians of the same race being co-operative, and probably co-ordinate" (Delany 72). Delany remarks that Ethiopia is the birthplace of "advanced" civilization because they established morals, religion, arts, science, and literature. He also notes that the Egyptians, who were also Black, were strikingly similar to Ethiopians. What is important here is that Delany pinpoints Africa, and Africans as the creators of civilization, thus rejecting a Eurocentric view while also refuting claims of Black inferiority. He adds that "every fact in archaeology and ancient research bears evidence of this" (72), which provides broad support for his claim. This is more an appeal to ethos than it is an effort to provide tangible support. In this instance, as we have seen in other sections of the text, Delany wants the reader to receive the text as an objective document that religiously, scientifically, and historically accounts for the achievements of Africa and Africans, which refutes the arguments for Black inferiority by demonstrating the greatness of two Black civilizations.

Conclusion

Principia is best described as a hybrid treatise that combines scientific knowledge with Biblical evidence to refute claims of polygenesis and to show that Africa is the birthplace of human civilization and subsequently Africans are the first peoples of the Earth. Delany's strategy to combine multiple fields illustrates his understanding that he has multiple audiences and that he must engage them in different ways. *Principia* is not a scientific text as Newton's was nor is it merely a religious doctrine; rather, *Principia* is a text that presents all forms of evidence equally. Delany's approach suggests that to discuss a topic completely and to argue a position thoroughly, we must be willing to incorporate all forms of evidence available to us.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have (re)examined the works of Martin Delany, a nineteenth-century African American abolitionist, jack-of-many-trades, and writer, who has been viewed as a minor literary figure in (African) American literary studies. One of my major arguments has been that Delany is more accurately classified as a rhetorician than a literary writer, and in each of my chapters I have tried to show how his predominant purposes in each of his four major texts were associated with the rhetorical tradition, that is, to teach, to persuade, and to move his readers to action. Delany's goal in each text was always to motivate a segment of his audience to do something: in *Condition*, to escape the oppression endured by Black Americans in American daily life; in *Blake*, to change how (enslaved) Black Americans think and act so that they could have a realistic shot at attaining freedom; in *Official Report*, to imagine themselves as free and prosperous farmers in central Africa and to feel confident that emigrating to that country is a good idea; and in *Principia*, to recognize the equality and value of people of African descent. Because of the predominant persuasive purposes pursued by Delany in each of his texts, I argue that scholars should classify him as a rhetorician, rather than a literary writer. As demonstrated in my discussion of *Blake*, the traditional elements of a novel take a backseat in this didactic narrative to Delany's focus on highlighting how American society collaborates to maintain the slave system and to provide a role model for African American readers, who have been taught to think and worship in ways that preserve and maintain the institution of slavery. His goal in this text was to show readers how even the government of free states contributed to the perpetuation of slavery and to educate African Americans on ways to elude the social programming that they had undergone that facilitated slaves accepting their bondage.

A second major focus of my argument in this reexamination of Delany's work has been to explore his creative use of genres. In existing scholarship, the genre of each of Delany's texts has been, in some cases, ignored and in others a source of much confusion, with the text identified as different genres, sometimes within the same scholarly article. I have argued that the source of this confusion may be due to the fact that Delany's strategy of transforming whatever genre he ostensibly begins with into a different genre that, in some cases, transgresses the recognized conventions for that genre (e.g., *Principia* is a treatise that treats theological evidence as equal in weight and value to scientific evidence) or is not an established, commonly recognized genre at all (e.g., *Blake*, which appears to be a novel but prioritizes argument and exposition over plot, dialogue, and character development).

However, there are three common elements that arise out of Delany's treatment of genre in each of his texts. First, he either begins with a familiar and easily recognized genre (*The Condition . . .* and *Blake, or The Huts of America*) or he classifies the genre in his choice of title (*Official Report . . .* and *Principia of Ethnology*). In this way, he seemingly establishes the text's genre from the start, and he more or less meets reader expectations for the conventions of this genre at the beginning. For example, in *Condition*, he begins by enumerating in detail the degree of oppression that Black Americans experience in daily life in the US, inviting readers to see the parallels between this text and the jeremiad. In *Blake*, however, as I have noted, the opening chapters do not immediately signal *a novel* to readers because he describes a series of meetings rather than introducing characters and plot elements. However, he keeps these initial chapters short and introduces specific characters, dialogue, and a plot point in chapter 5. Readers may forget the didactic introduction because these recognizable novelistic conventions tend to overwrite that frame. As I have shown, Delany continues to shift between instructional text and

novelistic conventions as it suits his argumentative goals. Of course, *Official Report* states that this text is a report, and *Principia of Ethnology* alludes to treatise titles by Newton and Descartes.

Second, even as it appears that Delany has communicated the genre of a particular text (explicitly or not), he also includes signs of rebellion against those recognized conventions. For example, he emphasizes in the early chapters of *Condition* that the sorry state of African Americans' lives in the US is not entirely based on their own actions (as is the case in a traditional jeremiad). In *Blake*, the first five chapters are distinctly unlike a novel. In *Official Report* Delany does, indeed, report to members of the Cleveland Conference on the feasibility of central Africa as a destination for African Americans to emigrate to but he also invites African American readers to project themselves into his text and imagine themselves as their own bosses, as prosperous gentlemen farmers in the Yoruba Valley. Finally, in *Principia of Ethnology*, Delany proposes a scientific argument to demonstrate that dark-skinned humans are genetically identical to light-skinned humans but draws evidence to support this argument from theology as well as traditionally recognized scientific fields including paleontology and biology.

Third, in all four of Delany's texts, the innovations he creates in each of the genres he uses essentially transform them so that they no longer fit as an example of the original genre, and they become what I would argue is, if not a new, then a unique genre. I select the adjective "unique" over "new" because the conventions or features of the texts that Delany writes in each case were not picked up and emulated by later authors/writers. One hundred and fifty years later, a treatise continues to be defined as a text that contains logical arguments, supported by scientific (**not** theological) evidence or as it is defined by Merriam Webster as a "systematic exposition or argument in writing including a methodical discussion of the facts and principles involved and conclusions reached" ("treatise"). Similarly, the jeremiad continues to be defined as a genre that:

1) provides direction towards an ideal society, 2) critiques behaviors that are detrimental to achieving that ideal society, 3) shapes the myth of America, and 4) frames societal discontent in religious terms (Harrell Jr. 6). And business reports in the 21st century do not, as a rule, integrate an argument directed at a third party into the original purpose of the report. Nor do novels generally combine self-help models along with plot and character development.

Consequently, I think we have to regard what Delany does with genre in his writing as **not** a remaking of the genres he uses into new generic models that other writers might emulate but rather as a *rhetorical strategy* for a specific rhetorical context. That is, he is a rhetorician who regards genre as an "available means of persuasion" (Aristotle 37) that can be reinvented—even renovated—to respond to the exigence that he is creating (Edbauer 2005). As I have noted, Delany appears to see genre as a fluid concept that he can change at will so that this genre that he selected will allow him to present the argument that he feels he must make to the readers who need to hear (or will most benefit from hearing) it. This attitude that genres are flexible contradicts general genre scholarship's assumption that a given genre is "stable for now" (Schryer 89), the underlying assumption being that this genre might change eventually—in the future—but right now it is structured "like this," with "these conventions." Departures from "these conventions" trigger judgments that the writer "doesn't know what he/she is doing" or that "this" text is a poor example of that genre (judgments, as we have seen, that have been levelled at Delany and his work). However, I propose that because Delany sees genre as a means of persuasion and even established genres as amenable to radical alteration (while still maintaining something of the original genre) in order to achieve his argumentative purpose, his texts can be viewed as case studies of genre *de-stabilization*.

While existing genre theory acknowledges the fluidity of genre and notes that particular genres are "stabilized for now" (Schryer 89), only a few scholars (Devitt, Bawarshi) have examined in a systematic way how writers might *destabilize* a genre. For example, Bawarshi in his article "Beyond the Fixation: A Translingual Perspective on Genre" (2016) encourages us to focus on the interplay between genres (uptakes) and the agency they create. He defines this interplay as a translingual perspective and "invites us instead to think about the agency that is always already part of all genre uptakes, from the seemingly most creative to the most conventional" (247). He encourages this shift in focus (from form to interplay) because

> every genre uptake is taking place within certain asymmetrical relations of power and material, economic, and historical conditions, within and across linguistic as well as spatial and temporal locations, to achieve specific goals (which may not necessarily be the ones conditioned by the genre in use), and subject to memory, emotion, an individual's sense of self, available discursive and linguistic resources, embodied dispositions, histories of engagement, and other agentive factors that genre pedagogies tend to overlook in their focus on genres as objects, artifacts, sites, and mediational tools. (247)

Delany's texts are examples of texts that seek to "achieve specific goals but are not necessarily the ones conditioned by the genre in use" (Bawarshi 247). My analysis in this dissertation, in fact, does just this by identifying how and why Delany radically changes elements of the established genres that he uses so that he can present the arguments that he believes his fellow Americans, Black and white, need to hear.

There are several implications that follow from Delany's destabilizing of these genres: first, his revised versions highlight through contrast the limitations of the genres he initially uses for his texts. For example, the conventional jeremiad exhorts listeners to be faithful to God, yet it will not result in meaningful change in the audience's lives. In this sense, the jeremiad is an aesthetic endeavour rather than a persuasive or practical genre. Similarly, the novel entertains

readers and may offer valuable life lessons, but it does not contain self-help materials[23]. Therefore, while Delany understands the draw of the novel as a form of entertainment, the genre limits his ability to present an alternative way of thinking and acting that will bring about meaningful change to the lives of his readers. Another potential problem with the genre of novel (for Delany) is that readers are not conditioned to take the characters seriously; they expect characters to contain a mixture of goodness and weakness, be someone whom they can feel superior to, rather than being admirable models they should emulate. Thus, the traditional novel, as a genre, potentially inhibits Delany's goal of presenting new ways of thinking and acting in the world as represented by Henry Blake. The travel narrative, or more specifically, the African missionary narrative traditionally highlights the supposed shortcomings of African people and culture. Delany wants to do exactly the opposite in *Official Report*, so he largely avoids the conventions of those genres (announcing the genre in the text title to clarify that it is not a narrative of any kind). Instead, he wants to accomplish two different goals: to fulfill his commitment to the Cleveland Convention by documenting the land, culture, and people, and to persuade African Americans to emigrate to Central Africa. The end result is a recommendation report that has been modified to meet both of his goals. And finally, the treatise is a genre that provides an in-depth analysis of a topic's definitions, characteristics to its conclusions. The traditional treatise relies on scientific evidence to support its conclusions. However, this convention of using only scientific evidence means that Delany would be unable to respond to the theological arguments proposed by white supremacists in the US to argue that Black people are genetically inferior, so he incorporates his own theological evidence to counter and rebut arguments supporting polygenesis. The original genre is limited because Delany wants to include

[23] *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) by Harriet Beecher Stowe is a notable exception.

faith-based evidence in order to show his readers the importance of using all available means of persuasion when refuting racists arguments.

Here is a good time to return to the scholarship of Bowers et al. to describe what Delany accomplishes with his texts. Delany's process of revising (destabilizing) his selected genres has a second outcome: it creates what Bowers et al. have called a rhetoric of agitation. As the authors suggest, "agitation exists when a movement for significant social change meets such resistance within the establishment that agitators must use more than the normal discursive means of persuasion to call attention to their grievances and achieve their goals" (Bower et al. 5). Delany seeks to bring about significant social change (the liberation of African Americans) and uses his texts as ways to engage with "more than the normal means of persuasion" by destabilizing the genres that readers might initially identify or expect when reading his texts. The changes he makes to the genres he uses grab our attention: we are arrested by these works that appear to be a recognizable, stable genre, but are not. The changes he makes to these genres invites us to consider why he has made them and what the implications are for these genre-bending/genre-destabilizing texts.

Delany's texts use two of the strategies described by Bowers et al.—promulgation and solidification. Bowers et al. define promulgation as "a strategy where agitators publicly proclaim their goals and it includes tactics designed to win public support for the agitators' positions" (23). We see this strategy employed directly in *Condition* and *Official Report* where Delany's goals include the winning of acceptance for his positions and solution. In *Blake* and *Principia*, this strategy is also present, albeit implicitly. Delany seeks to win acceptance through his modelling of an alternative way of thinking and acting (*Blake*) and how to refute arguments of Black inferiority (*Principia*). In each of the four texts, Delany uses the strategy of promulgation

because this strategy, as Bowers et al. suggest, enables agitators to explain their ideology through the media (or in Delany's case, the texts he writes).

Bowers et al. define solidification as "the rhetorical process by which an agitating group produces or reinforces the cohesiveness of it members, thereby increasing the responsiveness to group beliefs, values, and ideologies" (29). They add that solidification "includes a number of tactics that are mainly reinforcing rather than persuasive" (29). The tactics included are "plays, funerals and other rituals, songs, art and poetry, slogans, comic books and cartoons, bumper stickers, expressive and esoteric symbols" (29) among others. Delany uses the strategy of solidification his superhero-like figure of Henry Blake (*Blake*) that enables Delany to "energize and motivate his readers" (Bowers et al. 29). Additionally, Delany's use of "we" and the occasional credo in *Principia* seeks to "energize and motivate" through a consciousness-raising approach to refuting arguments of white supremacy.

Through the destabilizing of genres, Delany creates a rhetoric of agitation. Because the regular, traditional genres would not be persuasive nor enable him to accomplish his goals, Delany has to invent genres that are "beyond the normal discourse" to create for himself the tools needed to reach his goals. In short, by transforming literary genres into rhetorical ones, Delany creates a rhetoric of agitation.

Insights about Delany's Work (Argument Specific)

As I have discussed, scholars tend to view Delany through a literary lens, which at times leads to unflattering critiques of his work. Such critiques are not a product of ill intent but rather a misreading of Delany and a misunderstanding of the work he sets out to do. I have argued that Delany is best understood as a rhetorician rather than a literary writer and his texts support this claim. He carefully crafts arguments using literary or non-literary genres as starting points but

eventually transforms them into something different because the established genres do not provide Delany with the flexibility and freedom he desires to build his arguments. Delany's works contribute much to African American rhetoric, and there is more work to be done. As McClish proposes, "historians of rhetoric should continue to investigate such African American rhetorical innovation, paying attention, as I have attempted here, to the relationships between transformational [B]black texts and their white antecedents" (134). Delany's corpus is particularly well suited for the kind of work that McClish describes. But I would argue that Delany is not content to just transform individual texts. Rather, he takes on genres. He selects traditional, established (what Schryer calls "stable for now" [89]) genres such as jeremiads or business reports. These become, in McClish's terms, the "white antecedents" that Delany then innovates into not just "transformational black *texts*" (emphasis added) but works that are transformational at several levels: as texts, as new genres, as self-help manuals for African Americans, as blueprints for social change.

It is productive to view each of Delany's texts as a part of a larger argument that he wants to make. What we find by analyzing the individual arguments is that a common thread runs throughout all the texts, the thread that Delany does not see a future for African Americans in the United States. In *Condition* and *Official Report,* Delany calls for African Americans to emigrate from the United States. In *Blake*, Delany argues that white Americans have no incentive to end the system of slavery and in *Principia*, Delany refutes claims that African Americans are an inferior species of humans. His collective works suggest that Blacks need to rethink their position in American society and take concrete actions to improve their lives and those of future generations, rather than wait for white Americans to have a change of heart and pass legislation that grants Black Americans freedom and their full rights.

I would also point to Delany's (as well as other African Americans' understanding of rhetoric. As Gilyard notes, "the African American investment in strategic language" suggests that "African Americans generally understand rhetorical and/or literate practices to be competitive arenas and have been more disposed to participate in the enthusiastically than to ruminate philosophically about the inadequacy of verbal forms" (15). I point to Gilyard's passage to show that Delany's transformation of genres is not by accident but rather, that he engages in the competitive arena of rhetoric. Thus, I argue that Delany uses literary genres as a way to engage arguments and ideas that oppress African Americans.

How the Texts Work Together

In this section, I discuss how each of Delany's texts work together to present a broader argument that runs throughout his work. I think it best to read Delany's texts as interconnected. While each text is not a continuation of the previous one, the texts combined present Delany's vision for the uplift of African Americans.

In *Condition*, Delany discusses the history of oppression that African Americans have faced in the United States and contrasts their treatment with the slaves of Europe. Delany also discusses the Fugitive Slave Act and argues that Blacks will never have the opportunity to be free in the United States and therefore must emigrate if they wish to prosper. Delany structures his argument by first establishing that Black people in the US are oppressed to a degree unmatched in history. He does this by contrasting the current treatment of African American slaves in the United States with past slaves in Europe. This comparison illustrates that the fate of African Americans is far worse than that of the slaves of the previous empires of Europe, and Delany further claims that "denied an equality not only of political but of natural rights, in common with the rest of our fellow citizens, there is no species of degradation to which we

[Black Americans] are not subject" (44). In these opening chapters, Delany highlights the unprecedented levels of oppression that African Americans face in the United States.

Delany then moves to establish that any improvements in this level of oppression are unlikely. He does this by showing that none of the three levels of law in the US are avenues for ending the institution of slavery. He distinguishes between spiritual law (applied through the medium of prayer), moral law (right and justice), and physical law (hands, limbs, might, and strength). He introduces these categories to explain that prayer has not been effective: [slaves continue] "sending up their prayers to God, invoking His aid in their behalf, asking for a speedy deliverance; but they are still in chains, although they have thrice suffered out their three score years and ten" (66). Here Delany argues that spiritual law should bring about Blacks' end of oppression but has and likely will not do so. Next, he critiques moral law, noting that although God is just, not all who claim to be Christian are (Delany 66) just and because slavery is in these Christians' best interest, they will not be moved to follow moral law; therefore, moral law in the US will not deliver African Americans from slavery. Lastly, Delany suggests that physical law should provide the path to freedom, yet has fallen well short. He states, "that the practical application of principles adduced, the thing carried out, is the only true and proper course to pursue" (67). Addressing free Blacks, Delany presents them with a plan to help them improve their condition in life and to overcome the oppression they live under in the United States.

In *Blake or the Huts of America,* Delany addresses African American slaves and, through his characters, models ways for them to think and live that will improve their lives. He engages his readers with ways of thinking and acting that he sees as essential to overcoming oppression. While in *Condition*, Delany bases much of his argument for emigration on the decision by the federal government to pass the Fugitive Slave Act, which denies African Americans protection

under the law, in *Blake*, he offers situations that illustrate the lack of access African Americans have to justice and equality in the United States. Together the two books provide Delany's African American contemporaries with practical actions they can take to give themselves (and their progeny) a better chance at a life of freedom and prosperity than they can attain by staying in the United States.

As I discussed in chapter three, Delany opens *Blake* by developing an argument that those in power in the US are more interested in the advancement of slavery than its abolishment. His choice of opening focuses more on the argument he wants to make than the aesthetics of the genre of novel because he does not introduce characters first nor does he provide context for the scene. Rather, he begins by showing his readers the backroom meetings of American power brokers that create the reality of oppression that characterizes African Americans' current situation (in 1860). We should not look at such an opening as a poorly written story but as one constructing an argument. As I noted in chapter 3, Delany's use of indirect discourse in *Blake* offers further evidence that he is best read as a rhetorician than a literary writer: his extensive use of the narrator to critique white American Christianity (among other topics) shows that he is more concerned with identifying both white and Black Americans' current ways of thinking and acting than he is with developing a plot and characters in this "novel." Nowhere is this more evident than in the contrast he paints between the characters of Mammy Judy and Daddy Joe, and the main character, Henry Blake. Delany uses Mammy Judy and Daddy Joe to demonstrate the shortcomings of ways of thinking (held by Black and white Americans alike) that rely on prayer to deliver them from bondage. Throughout the text, Mammy Judy and Daddy Joe deal with tragic events, such as the sale of their child (Henry's wife) by falling to their knees and praying to God for relief. Blake's response, rather, is to flee the plantation and find his way to

Cuba to reunite with his wife. Along the way, he travels through the South sowing the seeds of insurrection. Henry Blake, on the other hand, is most often used as a way to speak indirectly to the audience. The contrast between how Henry Blake thinks and acts and the other characters' patterns of thought and strategy distinguishes Delany's alternative way of thinking and acting from the common ways of moral suasion characteristic of this period.

Delany also models an alternate way of responding to white oppression through the interactions he depicts between Henry Blake and the slave owners and other whites he encounters. As I noted, after the sale of his wife, Henry Blake refuses to accompany Mr. Franks on a horse ride and openly confronts his lack of humanity. In scenes such as these, Delany does two things: first, he highlights the brutality of the slave system, for both its ability to sell human beings and, in Frank's response to Blake, whom he vows to sell. Secondly, he models for his audience the strength necessary to confront people like Franks and to resist or actively refuse their commands.

We can also view Delany's third text, *Official Report*, as an extension of the arguments he makes in *Condition* and *Blake*. As we recall, *Condition* discusses the brutal history of the slave system in the United States and the continued oppression of African Americans through laws such as the Fugitive Slave Act, and Delany ends it by advocating for emigration, that is, that African Americans should leave the US and settle elsewhere to achieve freedom, equality, and prosperity for themselves and their children. *Blake* shows the oppression that Blacks face in the US and demonstrates what he sees as the necessary way to overcome it: rebellion.

Official Report continues these arguments and reintroduces a concrete solution for the path to freedom and prosperity—emigration. Working on behalf of the Cleveland Convention, Delany travels to Central Africa to document the land, habitat, and people, and to sign treaties

with local tribal leaders. I showed how Delany took the opportunity to accomplish two goals: to document the land, as requested by the Cleveland Commission, and second, to continue the work of his previous texts, which is to try to persuade African Americans that Central Africa is a viable destination for them to emigrate to. Whereas in *Condition* Delany proposes Central America as a possible destination, his work with the Cleveland Commission, the opportunity to acquire land via treaties with local tribes, and the resulting *Official Report*s suggests that Delany alters his decision about where the best opportunity for freedom is. Through his documentation, Delany argues that the land, people, and climate are similar to that of the southern United States, with the implication that emigrants would soon acclimate to this similar area.

In chapter 5, I discussed *Principia of Ethnology: The Origins of Race and Color*, where Delany combines theological evidence (Biblical scripture) with scientific evidence (anthropology, anatomy) to argue for monogenesis or one origin of creation. The last of Delany's texts, *Principia* was written following the failures of Reconstruction, and it addresses the theory of polygenesis circulating among white Americans in that period—the belief that there were multiple creations and that whites were superior to other races. *Principia*, while not an obvious continuation of Delany's previous arguments, does continue his tradition of modelling a way of thinking for his readers because he highlights the significant contributions that Black people have made to human advancement and emphasizes that these should be a source of pride for all Black people. Potentially responding to contemporary writers of the time who promoted white supremacy through "scientific" evidence such as cranial size, Delany suggests by providing theological evidence that his readers consider all forms of evidence at their disposal when building arguments.

All of Delany's texts share a common argument that outcomes--slaves earning their freedom or a group of humans reclaiming their history—can only be achieved when people embrace alternative forms of thinking or undertake concrete actions.

Rhetorical Contributions

As I have been arguing, Delany is best read as a rhetorician rather than a literary writer because, as we see in his texts, he constructs arguments by using a variety of rhetorical strategies as he writes for ostensibly one, but more often multiple audiences. His work suggests the possibility that scholars working in this period should perhaps rethink abolitionist texts that, while at first look may resemble established literary genres, but may be better understood as something else. While this project focuses solely on Delany's larger works, we must consider a closer look at his work both in his newspaper *The Mystery* and his contributions to *The North Star*, the paper he co-edited with Federick Douglass. We might also consider *Clotel* (1853) by William Wells Brown and Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig: Sketches from the Life of a Free Black* (1859*)* as perhaps functioning similarly to Delany's *Blake.*

Additionally, Delany's approach demonstrates that a text may be classified as more than one genre based on the target audience(s). *Condition* relies on characteristics of the jeremiad, a genre that laments the moral failures of a particular group and urges listeners/readers to repent and move closer to God through prayer. The genre often positions the rhetorician as a teacher or prophet that is well placed to highlight the ills of society. The traditional jeremiad is primarily a Judeo-Christian genre: it is comprised of a lament about the sad state of the daily existence, charges that their immoral behaviour has brought on this sad state, followed by exhortations to these sinners to amend their ways and return to God. This genre does not fit the situation Delany

perceives, which is that African Americans are in a sad state because of *white* Americans' oppression of them.

The question we need to ask is why did Delany choose the jeremiad genre for this text? I think Delany chose it because it allows him to speak to all Americans in a genre they recognize and can relate to. Readers will expect that Delany will exhort African Americans to lead more godly lives to improve their quality of life. However, what he does is describe the oppressed quality of Black Americans' lives and then examine the causes of this oppression. He finds that white American society is structured to oppress African Americans. He concludes that the only way to escape this oppression is for African Americans to move elsewhere.

Delany's version of the jeremiad transforms the genre into something different because he revises some of the genre's fundamental conventions. Rather than exhorting African Americans to live more moral lives, he highlights the role white Americans play in the oppression of Blacks and exhorts them to achieve freedom and equality by departing from the US to a country in Central America where the predominance of brown-skinned people will allow them to join the majority and have a fairer chance to live their best lives. Finally, Delany calls for direct action (emigration) rather than prayer or leading more godly lives as a way of relieving the oppression of African Americans.

As I have noted, *Blake or the Huts of America* has routinely been classified as a novel. Despite originally being published serially, the text contains some generic conventions of a novel: it is a fictitious story that deals with the human experience. It maintains a specific setting and presents readers with a sequence of events. Similar to *Condition*, Delany uses the genre of the novel to give his audience something they are familiar with. However, Delany transforms *Blake* into a didactic narrative because he wants to model an alternative way of thinking and

acting for African Americans in the United States. Using the rhetorical strategy of indirect discourse, Delany relies on the characters, mainly the main character, Blake, to speak directly to his audience and he uses the main character to model a way of thinking and acting for his African American audience. Blake's interactions with whites and Blacks signal to his readers a way of overcoming both the oppression and the sense of helplessness that often characterizes oppressed communities. Rather than rely on prayer and patience as a solution to their oppression, Delany models through the main character how African Americans should think about their state and what actions they should take to overcome oppression.

The Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party is best described as a precursor to the twentieth-century genre known as the recommendation report. Delany's text does not fully adhere to the characteristics of the genre as he breaks from it to address those members of his audience who may be considering emigrating to Central Africa. Delany has two distinct audiences—the Cleveland Commission, which supported his journey, and the African Americans many of whom may have been familiar with his earlier works, who may have been persuaded by his arguments in those texts and are interested in emigrating but fearful that they will not be able to adjust to the radically different environment of Central Africa. These audiences require that he approach the text in ways that will satisfy both. The end result is a text that resembles a recommendation report by documenting the landscape, people, and culture followed by a recommendation for emigration. For the audience he wishes to persuade to emigrate, Delany often addresses them using the pronoun "you" as a way to place them with him along the journey. In these passages, he shows them that life in Central Africa would be similar to that in the United States with the exception that they would have the opportunity to prosper and live free from oppression. We see in these moments how Delany's approach departs from the

recommendation report genre and resembles almost an excerpt from a travel narrative (which is why the text has been variously [and wrongly, I have argued] classified as a travel or a missionary narrative).

Principia of Ethnology: The Origins of Race and Color invokes the treatise, a genre that presents evidence-based arguments about a specific topic. The genre often presents an in-depth analysis of a particular topic by exposing the principles of the subject and its conclusions. The genre provides Delany with a foundation from which he can engage the "scientific" arguments for polygenesis. However, Delany also includes theological evidence in his arguments.

Delany, therefore, transforms the treatise genre by incorporating evidence from the Bible along with evidence from anatomy, anthropology, and history. As with *Official Report*, Delany again writes for multiple audiences. For one audience, his text maintains characteristics of the treatise genre by relying on scientific evidence and investigating the topics' principles and conclusions. For his audience that may find faith-based evidence more convincing, Delany incorporates Biblical teachings and stories as evidence of a single-origin creation. Delany's strategic blending of faith and science allows him to appeal to a broad audience and again models for his readers how to use all available means of persuasion to build an argument.

As I have argued throughout this dissertation, marginalized rhetoricians such as Delany were often forced to rely on more than the "normal discursive means of persuasion" to make their arguments. If we accept that those genre types that Delany chooses for his writings fall within the category of "normal discursive means of persuasion," then we might argue that the changes that he makes to those genres to construct the arguments that he needs to make could be viewed as within the realm of "more than the normal discursive means of persuasion." That is, the normal means—the traditional jeremiad genre, for example—does not afford him the

conventions he needs to make his argument, so he changes those ill-fitting conventions (and in the process changes the genre itself), an act that transforms this "normal" discursive means into something "more than" the normal means. I would argue that Delany's revisions to the genres that he uses might be argued to constitute a rhetoric of agitation, a strategy that not only draws readers' attention to the limitations of the genres that he has revised, but also demands that they acknowledge the instances of oppression that he documents in his work (that the oppressed condition of a group's lives may be caused by external oppressive forces—not their own religious laxity—and strenuous activity--not prayer--is key to improving their situation).

My readings of these texts ask that we rethink the role that genre plays in our reading of them. When we classify his text as a novel or travel narrative, we may overlook the work that he is doing. In the case of Delany's *Blake*, we see how the classification of the text as a novel leads scholars to describe the book as poorly written. When we read the text through a rhetorical lens, we see that Delany was not just writing a novel, but a didactic narrative that aims to teach his audience an alternative way of thinking and acting.

Schryer defines genres as "stabilized-for-now or stabilized-enough sites of social and ideological action" (89). Her definition suggests that genres are both stable (unchanging) and constantly changing, an oxymoronic definition that encourages us, when we examine a genre, to account for attributes and conventions beyond style and form. Delany's texts also encourage us to think beyond a fixed definition, to account for more than the style and form. Delany's texts encourage us to look beyond the rhetorical situation. As I mentioned in chapter one, rhetoric seeks to create change using thought and action. It brings about change through engaging in discourse with an audience. In several of his texts, Delany targets multiple audiences and therefore engages in discourse with each, not independently, but simultaneously and his texts

reflect that situation. When we consider that the rhetorical situation often constrains how rhetoricians construct their arguments, we begin to see how it is possible for Delany to transform literary genres to meet his needs. For example, *Official Report* resembles the recommendation report because he has the obligation to meet the needs of the audience that sanctioned the trip. However, Delany also has his personal goal of convincing African Americans to emigrate to Central Africa. While these goals are not mutually exclusive, they each require a different approach. The end result is a recommendation report that has been transformed to achieve both goals. Delany's strategic approach demonstrates that genres are both stable and constantly changing. Another example, *Blake* contains characteristics of a novel (stable) and is also a didactic narrative that seeks to model alternative ways of thinking and acting (constantly changing).

By returning to Edbauer's argument that exigence is internal, that is, that the rhetorician creates exigence, we can see how Delany's work also offers us new interpretations of genres. Delany creates exigency for his text by shifting from the common responses to slavery of his contemporaries by calling for emigration (*Condition and Official Report*) and a stronger emphasis on concrete actions rather than moral uplift (*Blake*). His approach exemplifies Edbauer's revision of the rhetorical situation, referred to as "rhetorical ecologies" which she sees as not merely the relationship between author, audience, and the text, but the relationships they seek to build. In *Official Report*, Delany seeks to build relationships with two distinct audiences (those of the Cleveland Commission and those considering emigration). In this instance, we should view his approach as dynamic—engaging two audiences with different rhetorical strategies for different purposes.

Delany's texts serve as models for how genres are both stable and constantly changing. Additionally, his texts demonstrate some of the ways in which an author, in their effort to create exigence for those texts, can alter the genres they choose to write. Both instances highlight the need to view Delany's works as more rhetorical and less literary. Some of Delany's texts are carefully crafted arguments that use literary genres as starting points. The fact that he uses this method in each text, to choose a familiar (and sometimes literary) genre that he subsequently transforms into a new genre (or new version of that genre), suggests that his intention was never to adhere to the original genre, but rather to appeal to readers' sense of familiarity before he transforms the texts into genres that not only grant him flexibility and the opportunity to meet his goals but also enable him to engage his readers in grappling with a new perspective on his subject matter and bring them to a more productive way of understanding it.

My project is not without limitations. I have studied one author, four texts, and realize that scholars might have concerns about both the size and scope. I recognize that similar projects often look at multiple authors and texts, but by restricting my analysis to one author and four texts, I was able to show that transforming genres is not incidental of Delany, but a deliberate rhetorical strategy that he used over the course of his writing career. My focus solely on Delany's texts enabled me to highlight his contributions to the field of African American rhetoric. As I have shown throughout this project, I think Delany is best understood as a rhetorician. He approaches each of his texts with carefully crafted arguments and rhetorical strategies. To have included additional authors or texts would not have allowed me to capture Delany's full value to the field.

Although this project focuses on only four texts from one specific author, it raises questions about other African American authors of the nineteenth century. It seems unlikely that

Delany was the only author to transform genres because marginalized voices must find ways to have their voices heard. That is, marginalized voices must be able to create space for themselves within the margins of discourse that is often not available to them. My project calls for future research that revisits African American abolitionist texts that have been similarly devalued in the scholarship as being of lesser quality to assess the extent to which other authors might also have tried to transform generic conventions to meet their specific goals. Analyzing these texts through a rhetorical lens might enable us to better understand how these authors may have tried to construct arguments and use or transform generic conventions to best suit their needs.

This call for additional scholarship also informs my future research. This project looks specifically at Delany and his nineteenth-century texts, but I see similarities of genre transformation beyond abolitionist texts. I hope to continue this trajectory of scholarship by exploring the twentieth-century works of Chester Himes, whose works are often categorized as mystery or crime novels. While vastly different approaches and periods, I see similarities in approaches to genre in order to reach specific audiences and goals.

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