

ABSTRACT POLITICAL THOUGHT OF THEOPHILUS SCHOLES: AN INTERPRETIVE STUDY

African Reclamationism and the Political Thought of Theophilus Scholes: An Interpretive Study

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Wigmoor Washington Adolphus Francis

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Black intellectuals from the Caribbean adopted discursive strategies that were highly critical of European racism and imperialism. A particular set of such strategies are herein called "African Reclamationism," which represents a conscious endeavour to reclaim a history of ancient Africa that had been obscured by Euro-American racist scholarship. Against prevailing assumptions that colonial Blacks lacked a history and were incapable of governing themselves, was juxtaposed the Reclamationist assumption that Africans were indeed a people of history, and a history, moreover, which housed the arts, sciences, and philosophies of which European civilization was now the principal beneficiary. Therefore, this history demonstrated Black capacity for self-rule. It is within this broad context that the ideas and arguments of Theophilus Scholes are examined. Scholes falls within the tradition of African Reclamationism and, as such, this dissertation explores his viewpoints and values necessarily in relation to those of other Black radicals operating within this tradition. These others include Baron de Vastey from Haiti, Edward Blyden from the Danish West Indies, and John Bruce from the United States. From post-Revolution Haiti to post-emancipation Jamaica, and from West Africa to the United States and beyond, this dissertation investigates the political thought of Theophilus Scholes within the framework of African Reclamationism.

Keywords: Theophilus Scholes, Baron de Vastey, Edward Blyden, John Bruce, African Reclamationism, imperialism, colonialism, racism, Christianity, history.