

B/N Manley, Edna.

run the gamut of carving. It's very exhausting work; very exacting. Whereas, this other work is made of good Jamaica earth and good Jamaica fire; so that you have the elemental quality of earth and air and fire. Whereas, I was always so attached to the wood which had grown out of good Jamaica earth — but, still, it's the same world: still the world I live — and love — in.

McF. Tell me — let's talk a bit about when you went to school. You went to art school in London? St. Martins?



*The Lillies of the Field (drawing) 1947 Bolivar Gallery*

MANLEY Oh goodness, I went the whole gamut! I went to about five different art schools. No, I went to the Royal Academy. I got chucked out of the Royal Academy for behaving badly. I simply used to go and absorb and move on. I was a rebel. And I wanted many aspects of sculpture. I was never interested in anything else except drawing and sculpture. I never was a painter; though I have since done a little — and might, yet. But, I went to four or five schools. And afterwards went over to Paris, on a holiday. I never wanted to be anything else, really. That — and riding horses. And, I hope, a good housewife.

McF. And you taught art in London, I think, for a bit, before you came out to Jamaica?

MANLEY No. No, I've never taught. I took the Royal Drawing Society diploma for teachers. And then decided that — I just couldn't take teaching. But the funny thing was that, the minute a teacher was desperately needed here in the time between 1938 to 1940, I just simply loved it.

McF. Well, of course, this has become your special character in relation to Jamaica: that of teacher and guide to young creative spirits.

MANLEY Mind you, I'm going to tell you a secret. The fine arts are not my favourite arts. If I could live my life over again, I'd be a novelist. But my favourite art is poetry.

McF. Have you ever written poetry, then?

MANLEY No, not really. I mean, everybody writes a little poetry — when they're in love or unhappy. But I think that I would say that poetry — and per-

haps music — if you look at most of my work, I think it's poetic in origin. It's not structural in origin. It's born of a love of words and rhythm. That kind of feeling.

McF. Would you say it was literary?

MANLEY I don't think it's merely literary, no. You can be poetic without being literary, I think.

McF. Yes. Of course.

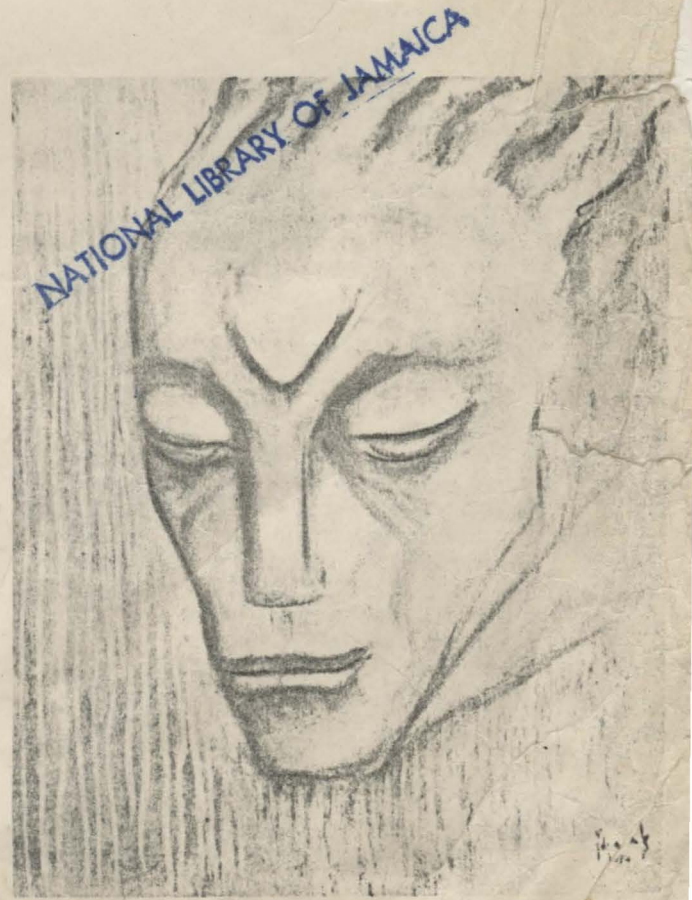
MANLEY There's a difference, yes.

McF. Yes, certainly. I'm trying to evolve a kind of perspective that goes right through from the days when you first started to learn to carve — to create, whatever the medium: to express yourself. And, taking your life as if it were a journey, how would you place your carving in relation to the plain facts of your existence; between, say, the time when you went to school first to learn to carve — and your life as it later developed and as you came to be known to us here in Jamaica?

MANLEY How much of my carving is autobiography — is that it? Well, I think, when I came to Jamaica my whole approach to my work changed. I just — was totally and absolutely inspired. Don't forget, my mother was Jamaican; and I'd grown up with the most nostalgic stories of Jamaica. And I just felt I'd come home. And, I think, all the way the two are simply inextricably tied up together. I mean, all my early work was — things like 'Rachel' and the early carvings of 'The Mountain Girl'. They're all sold and gone away, now. But it was always the people of Jamaica.

McF. In a sense, you always *thought* Jamaican?

MANLEY Always, yes. And then, when the great moments came, and I realised that I owed something — not



*The Angel (drawing) 1970 Collection of the artist*