The Rhetoric of Citizenship, Slavery, and Immigration: Fashioning a Language for Belonging in English Literature

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Abstract

With the rise of transnational migration, political factions ration the status of citizen against global diasporas, positioning citizenship as the primary space to assert opposition to hybrid forms of identity and multiculturalism. Simultaneously, however, contradictory ideals of inclusion compete using the same language, leading to confusions of citizenship rhetoric. This rhetoric—the vocabulary used to talk about citizenship, including in government legislation, in print and digital channels, and in everyday public life—obscures citizenship's deep normative divides, while exaggerating the nationalistic character of political membership. Located at the intersection of literary and citizenship studies, my dissertation constellates the literary text with issues of state governmentality and rhetorics of belonging in order to examine citizenship rhetoric from a literary perspective that is attentive to its affective and imaginary registers. Instead of citizenship as a form of rootedness, I foster a methodological approach that centres the role of movement—and in particular, the drive for authority over movement—in the imagining and practice of citizenship, in turn revealing the migratory and diasporic threads that underwrite modernity. While postcolonial and ethnicity studies have unravelled the complexity of national and ethnic belonging, my dissertation complements this existing scholarship by converging on citizenship rhetoric as a discursive formation shaped and altered by literature. I trace literature's role in configuring citizenship with sustained focus on Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative*, Frances Burney's *The Wanderer,* Mary Shelley's travelogues and *Frankenstein*, Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno,* and Brian Friel's *Translations*. While historically rooted, this project is forward looking and considers how eighteenth and nineteenth century imaginings of the citizen still inform contemporary political practices.

Acknowledgments

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE - Introduction

There's a moment early on in Franz Kafka's *The Trial* where Josef K. makes a crucial error in judgement. Two men have come to arrest him at his apartment for reasons that aren't clear and at the behest of an office they won't reveal. After entertaining the idea that this is an elaborate joke, Josef K. decides that "if this was a farce, he was going to play along" (7). It is arguably this moment when he decides to "play along" that seals K.'s participation in a convoluted series of misadventures that will ultimately lead to his death. His decision to play along is followed by a tragically ironic statement: "He was still free." At no point after this disclosure will there be any indication that K. is in fact free. Requests for identification papers and fruitless discussions with the guards about the extent of the "Law" add increasing gravity to an arrest K. had a moment earlier considered a charade and a mistake. Confident in his rights as a citizen, K. professes his innocence and conveys trust in a process that will see the matter resolved. A moment later, however, K. is determined to "bring this show to an end" (9) but has seemingly lost the capacity to stop the performance. Instead, he only reinforces both the ambiguous level of control the guards wield over him and the vague notion of law that underwrites his guilt. Having acquiesced to a game he doesn't know how to play, K. is forced to feel his way through a bureaucratic labyrinth in which the promise of the law as a logical and concise path towards justice never comes to pass.

Part of the naïveté of Josef K. is embodied in his enduring confidence in the power of language to signify the truth and convey the peculiarity of his situation, despite recurring evidence to the contrary. He continually stresses the absurdity of his experience in the belief that

merely describing it will lead to its collapse, but he does not acknowledge that the "Law" itself, which appears to be the source of his problems, can weather logical contradiction. In fact, by all appearances the entrapment of individuals in exceedingly distressing networks of legal and political policy is precisely what underwrites the law's function. Initially confident in a belief that citizenship's discursive and performative aspects would allow his innocence to be exhibited publicly for guards, judges, and his fellow citizens to identify, Josef K. instead confronts the fact that any claim to or presentation of virtue and belonging can be quickly rendered hollow. Even references to the "Law" as a systematic or definitive thing for which persons like himself may depend on turn out to be empty signifiers. Josef K. in turn discovers a complicated labyrinth of rhetorical and visual codes behind his citizen status, none of which he is familiar with and none of which seem to carry the meaning or significance he thinks they possess. Those who are seemingly adept at discursively negotiating the "Law" end up being unhelpful, cynical, or suspicious.

Josef K. arguably embodies the existential anxieties of the modern subject under convoluted systems of bureaucracy, increasingly muscular state surveillance apparatuses, and the seeming hollowness of a rhetoric for rights. Even though the twenty-first century is marked by nationalist movements that have intensified the notion of sovereign territorial borders, the absence of explicit national markers that could situate Josef K. and his country geographically or politically does not weaken the enduring relevance of *The Trial* in a discussion of literature and citizenship. This focus is partly buttressed by the circumstances of Kafka's authorship, writing in German from a minority position within Prague as a Czech Jew, as explored by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Caution, however, must be taken when reading Kafka politically or allegorically. The very absence of national markers in *The Trial*, for example, are themselves

indications that the story's concerns may lie well beyond issues of state or governmentality, and Deleuze and Guattari work against a reading practice that roots interpretation of Kafka in the usual suspects of literary analysis, such as symbolism, allegory, or correspondences. "We won't try to find archetypes that would represent Kafka's imaginary," they write, "[w]e aren't even trying to interpret, to say that this means that" (7). Citizenship itself risks being one such archetype that could very easily be "interpreted" through *The Trial*. Citizenship also evinces a territoriality both literally in terms of its emergence alongside a specific, territorial space within which citizen status is operative and conceptually within disciplines as a fixed conceptual field. Citizenship is, in other words, an interpretive structure that contradicts the explicitly *de*-territorial and rhizomorphic qualities of Kafka's writing. Indeed, Josef K.'s mistake in his approach to the "Law" is to treat is as systematic and therefore logically coherent when it remains anything but—or as Deleuze and Guattari put it, the "single machine of justice" possesses a unity that is only "nebulous, an influence machine, a contamination" such that "there is no longer any difference between being outside or inside" (8).

There is nonetheless something to be said for how Josef K. can be read as a modern subject precisely because the politics of his distressing and absurd situation can easily register for readers of both the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. *The Trial* can convey affectively for anyone felt caught in the weird domestic space of a nation that singles out persons with the status of both foreign and belonging, or pushes them up against the seeming impenetrability of the legal or state system. Part of this, as I suggested, results from the way signification functions (or, rather, doesn't function) within the story, constantly slipping and failing to provide the sort of foundation K. expects, including around the nature of his rights before the law. How did we get to this point where a story that recites an enduring rhetoric of modern politics and the collapse of

signification endures in constituencies well beyond the local particularity of early-twentieth-century Bohemia? How can literature in turn function as a contestation of this rhetoric? How does it redirect it or, conversely, reinforce it? How does literature and citizenship even intersect?

Answering these questions requires leaving Kafka behind and slipping further back in time from which modern discourses of rights and membership emerges and from which patriotic and nationalist cues continue to derive. As such, this project sustains considerable focus on the period between 1760 and 1860 but with an eye casted firmly to the contemporary period and beyond. During that initial timeframe, citizenship emerged in the Anglo-Atlantic and French-Atlantic worlds as a generalized moniker of national belonging that was nonetheless distinct from other forms of political membership, becoming in turn a heavily romanticized mode of activity synonymous with statutory recognition, national identity, and enfranchisement. My temporal coverage reflects how the emergence of documentary citizenship concurrent with the Age of Revolutions up until the American Civil War continues to impress beyond the middle of the nineteenth century and into contemporary practices of being political. The reasons for focusing attention on the period between 1760 and 1860 in part reflects this period's enduring legacy on the two countries that comprise the primary focus of this study: Britain and the United States. Moreover, though globalization has disrupted the traditional function of the nation-state, the Enlightenment liberalism that envisioned a civic nation composed of voluntary participants continues to weigh (at least implicitly) on imaginings of both political community and exclusionary policy. Reforms and revolutions in political structuring in France, Haiti, and the United States emphasized natural rights and social contracts that centred male citizens in the process of governance. These developments were followed by the dominance of the nation-state in the Westernized world, which wed ethnonationalist purity with state governance and clearly

defined sovereign borders. The economic exchange that typified various forms of commerce in eighteenth-century empires and beyond ensured that notions of citizenship migrated between otherwise geographically and culturally disparate locations. At the same time, the promise of citizenship as a recognition of naturally endowed rights and privileges was contradicted by the transatlantic slave trade, imperial conquest, and lack of equal franchise for women and racial and ethnic minorities, all of which depended on the strategic evacuation of particular rights or recognitions from persons deemed adjacent or alien to inclusion.

A focus on citizenship rhetoric more specifically derives from its import. As Linda Bosniak notes, to "characterize practices or institutions or experiences in the language of citizenship is to afford them substantial political recognition and social value," such that to describe "aspects of the world in the language of citizenship is a legitimizing political act" (20). Owing perhaps to its conceptual robustness, citizenship has extensive semantic reach, signalling a host of occasionally contradictory conditions and features. Citizenship can invoke opposing ideals of inclusion and exclusion, denoting both privileged membership in a community or, conversely, statutory and social recognition of rights that persons already have naturally, in turn affirming a Liberal humanism with roots in the European Renaissance and Enlightenment— indeed, Sylvia Wynter writes that the "Right of Man" upon which Liberal humanism stakes itself is the "defining premise that underlies both our present order of knowledge and its correlated mainstream aesthetics" (113). The rise of transnational migration during the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries has subsequently resulted in the emergence of political factions that ration access to citizenship with the intent to exclude exilic and diasporic persons. This exclusionary approach to citizenship has most visibly taken the form of anti-immigrant ideologies and subsequent attempts to transform those ideologies into actual, concrete policies to limit new

arrivals. Joost van Spanje noted in 2011 that the emergence of right-wing political parties that espouse immigration restriction constituted "[o]ne of the most significant changes in established democracies over the last two decades" (293), with Spanje pointing to the success of Germany's *Die Republikaner* (REP) and the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ). While the reasons for their success are multivalent, right-wing parties in the twenty-first century have generally opposed "the idea of the multicultural society" (Spanje 295), which involves differing levels of commitment to an ethnically, culturally, or religiously homogenous citizenship regime. Various other parties have had varying levels of success or failure in elected representation but have nonetheless contributed to a shift in political discourse towards anti-immigrant ideology. Some of these parties include the British National Party (BNP) and the UK Independence Party (UKIP) in Great Britain, the *Rassemblement National* (formerly *Front National*) in France, *Vlaams Belang* (VB) and *Démocratie Nationale* in Belgium, *Fremskridtspartiet* (FrP) in Denmark, and the Republican Party (GOP) of the United States.

The importance of rhetoric in this context also relates to how these political parties or grassroots organizations incite activism. Christian Joppke (1998), for example, suggests a "gap between a restrictionist control rhetoric and an expansionist immigration reality" (266) under globalization. Part of this gap rests on the nature of sovereignty itself, which involves "formal rule-making authority and the empirical capacity to implement rules" (Joppke 267). Though several aspects of public life have been slowly surrendered to private enterprise in many democracies, authority over immigration and citizenship remains closely coveted by the state. Sovereignty though is rarely, if ever, absolute. In Western democracies that contain successful and vocal anti-immigrant ideologies, political parties may espouse an anti-immigrant rhetoric without actually wielding the full extent of state power against immigrants, or they may attempt

anti-immigrant policies but implement them unsuccessfully because the nature of sovereignty itself does not allow for absolute control over cross-border movement. In both cases, the anti-immigrant rhetoric used to incite activism against immigration obscures the reality of high immigration in a globalized world or the limits of sovereign power in controlling migration more broadly. The intricacies and complications of this gap between rhetoric and policy need not concern us here because the affective and aesthetic register of the rhetoric itself is partially what grounds my study. A concrete reduction in the number of immigrants to a country may not in fact register at all to the anti-immigrant hardliner, who is instead relieved by the belief that their country has robust sovereign power and is willing to exercise it even if the markers of this exercise are entirely shallow or illusory.

Citizenship's elastic cultural purpose means that anti-immigrant rhetoric can instrumentalize citizen-status towards excluding racial, ethnic, and religious persons, even while opposing political factions simultaneously elevate citizenship as the ultimate progressive ideal of inclusion, or as a method for expanding the pool of candidates deserving of equal recognition. The widespread acceptance of the international passport system after the First World War, in which individuals follow stringent documentary controls for the purpose of movement across borders, has helped facilitate ethnonationalist policy in a globalized world of mass migration by narrowing the number of channels for legitimate or legal forms of travel. States have the technology to smooth the operation of both economic exchange and human mobility while simultaneously working towards official policies of exclusion—a position previously thought to be oxymoronic, the idea being that to be open for business means open to people. On the one hand then, the initial promise of citizenship at the conclusion of the eighteenth century as an emancipatory condition remains arguably unfulfilled at the dawn of the twenty-first. On the other

hand, the role of citizenship as a technology for state governments to wield stronger and deeper levels of control over the civil, political, and social domains of their subjects remains a powerfully enduring feature of citizen status.

Citizenship poses something of a methodological problem, however. Firstly, and probably the most evident: citizenship is always a relationship with a specific state or nation or people, which makes a sufficient study of the topic dependent on clarifying what (if at all) these particular types of citizenship have in common. Citizenship emerges in a wide range of disciplines and choosing one perspective inevitably involves abandoning others. Secondly, citizenship can be partitioned not just historically or geographically but also conceptually and many scholars have taken this as an invitation to theorize specific types of citizenship, such as economic, postnational, transnational, and cosmopolitan, each with its own family of behaviours and normativities. In this sense, citizenship is an inflationary concept—the number of meanings or connotations can grow exponentially. Lastly, modern citizenship's synonymity with documentation (the rhetoric of "undocumented" is today used interchangeably with noncitizen or non-belonging) forces both scholars and non-scholars alike to establish a manner of reading when approaching citizenship as both an abstract topic and a specific type of experience or public behaviour. My word choice of "reading" is meant to signal two different connotations: both the physical act of reading and the more general capacity of comprehension. This emphasis on reading conceptually links the reading of literature with citizenship as itself a manner of reading or comprehending a population. This introduction will set forth my intervention in imaginings and theorizations of citizenship and why literary texts are being prioritized as the type of documentation for which a resourceful understanding of both citizenship and literature can be derived.

Section A
Citizenship in the Twenty-First Century

The timing of my analysis and my historical focus may seem at first reading to be unnecessary. After all, some scholarship has suggested that citizenship has weakened over the last few decades owing to a combination of developments related to global interconnectivity and general apathy for the political process. In the United States, Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone* (2000) famously warned that a decline in civic engagement since the 1960s had corresponded to declines in the activities underwriting a healthy democracy, to which he heaped considerable blame on the television. Spectatorship, Putnam suggested, a key consequence of excessive television consumption, cannot coexist with a robust and active citizenship. Around the same time as Putnam, Matthew Crenson and Benjamin Ginsberg (2002) also saw citizenship on the wane but for reasons separate from a trend towards civic disengagement and instead towards the willful dismantling of public and civic institutions by monied elites in favour of privatization. The disassembling of these institutions was likewise the undoing of democratic accountability to which citizens were encouraged to participate, shifting governance to unaccountable private entities. Alongside television and privatization, global-spanning innovations in commercial trade, banking, intra-governmental policy, and digital technology in the decades after World War II were perhaps expected to inaugurate a fundamental re-orientation in what it meant to be a citizen, of what was involved in the crucial activity of being political and of political membership. The onset of a postcolonial, globalized world defined by cross-border exchange and high levels of transnational movement seemed antithetical to the fundamentally insular quality of citizenship. National belonging was likewise to be replaced by international membership

arrangements and a global citizenry unbounded by traditional territorial boundaries. A concern

for national sovereignty was to evolve into more sophisticated commitments to human rights

unencumbered by state borders or provincial worries. New forms of citizenship—cosmopolitan,

multicultural, economic—were meant to signal the redundancy of the nation and the emergence

of new allegiances that extended beyond previously well-established loyalties. Paula Mathieu

writing in 1999, for example, remarks that transnational trade and tariff arrangements divest

political power from national and local communities and migrates authority towards global

entities, like the World Trade Organization, adding an additional layer of governance to which

laws are to be crafted and litigated. In these circumstances, it would be unclear where citizens

would appeal for change. Mathieu's point is that a "new vision of citizenship" would emerge as

international policy on trade prompted by global capitalism reshapes "traditional notions of

citizenship by limiting the agency individuals can achieve through civic participation in electoral

and legislative matters" (112). "Globalization decreases the importance of national sovereignty,"

Mathieu writes, "and redefines citizenship in economic terms," which involves "defining

political agency around the roles each of us plays in the cycle of global production and

consumption" (ibid). In other words, citizens would abandon their commitments to national

sovereignty in favour of exercising power through economic means.

Mathieu articulates a familiar concern regarding global capitalism's effect on the capacity

of states to govern their populations, positioning capitalism itself as something of an alternative

to the state to which citizens can cast their allegiances, although one that is fluid across borders,

unencumbered by physical territory, and unaccountable outside monetary exchange. Mathieu

suggests these circumstances invite an "economic citizenship," a readjustment of the boundaries

of civic participation that sees the citizen exercising agency via their economic positionality as

consumers. However, other scholars like James C. Scott argue global capitalism is in fact an extension of state-based ambitions for standardization and simplification. While "the state may in some instances be the defender of local difference and variety" in the post-Soviet world of "capitalist triumphalism," "large-scale capitalism is just as much an agency of homogenization, uniformity, grids, and heroic implication as the state is" (Scott 8), mirroring in some crucial respects previous moves towards uniformity that defined Napoleonic France. In other words, global capitalism is an instrument of the state in its quest for legibility rather than a usurper of nationalistic affiliation. Mathieu potentially overdetermines the role of the citizen in capitalist exchange where "money talks, not people" (ibid). Money talks at the behest of the states that govern the conduits of monetary exchange.

All this is to say, alternative forms of citizenship, like the one Mathieu elaborates, have not entirely transpired, and instead have done little else but reveal the ambiguity of the term "citizenship" to denote membership more broadly, an ambiguity I explore in more detail in the next section. The actual content of the term—its legal profundity, complicated origins, and exclusionary history—have been evacuated in favour of a romanticized semiotics in which citizenship is merely a convenient metaphor for belonging, irrespective of the history of that belonging, whether it has, for example, been preconditioned on ethnically exclusionary immigration policy, cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples, racially informed mass incarceration, or violent jingoism. These features of citizenship have arguably *not* been reconciled, even if certain nations have sought to legally codify an inclusive citizenship regime. Citizenship's convoluted legal structure and discriminatory history is largely forgotten next to a handy rhetoric replete with affectations for a utopic national space populated exclusively with ideal members.

Alongside this forgetting of the history of the concept of citizenship is a post-war period characterized by "both the instrumental emphasis on the rights of man and the rapid growth of declarations and agreements on the part of international organizations," which Giorgio Agamben suggests "have ultimately made any authentic understanding of the historical significance of the phenomenon almost impossible" (*Biopolitical*, 153). The phenomenon in question is the 1789 *Déclaration des Droits de L'homme et du Citoyen* of the French Revolution, which represents "the originary figure of the inscription of natural life in the juridico-political order of the nation-state" (ibid). The *Déclaration* constitutes the formal emergence of biopolitics by locating the politically neutral condition of bare life—"the pure fact of birth"—as a central political task, which becomes "the earthly foundation of the state's legitimacy and sovereignty" (153). The *Déclaration* partially influenced the U.N's Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, helping to inaugurate the post-war period, which Agamben argues has been characterized by an incapacity to appreciate the biopolitical significance of the yoking of *zoē* with *bios* (bare life with politics). Agamben, alongside Hannah Arendt, Angela Naimou, and Joseph R. Slaughter, identifies the rhetoric of the declaration of human rights and the citizen as the forging of an essential gap between person and human, the former being a legal distinction and the latter being the bare life upon which personhood is inscribed. Slaughter, referring to the U.N. declaration, suggests that "the term 'person' became a mask for the human, a rhetorical feint for not naming the human itself as a question" (18). The state becomes the crucial mechanism for recognizing the rights persons are supposed to have inalienably as human beings, and thus also endows itself with the authority to determine those unworthy of recognition or status. Naimou identifies this as a paradox, namely that the gap between person and human is forged precisely in order to disavow that any such gap exists in the first place. "Legal 'person' and 'human being' are

invoked as if one and the same," Naimou writes, "when they are not equivalent or interchangeable as performative speech act" (19). The cleaving of human from person forged in the eighteenth-century encounter with inalienable rights fundamentally altered the rhetorical landscape of citizenship, allowing for speech to derive from two different poles of political existence and giving meaning and legal force to those national and international documents attesting to the rights of man. This theoretical partition between person or citizen and human in turn complicates theories of citizenship wherein citizen is a performed or enacted role. When the marginalized or disenfranchised attempt to perform a political mimesis to negotiate the limits on their subjecthood, what role do they enact, or rather, what community do others perceive them as wishing to join?

Citizenship's robust function as legal or statutory recognition and a form of surveillance has ensured that it remains resilient in the face of perceived threats to its integrity. Predictions of citizenship's demise have failed to appreciate how its re-articulation generation after generation has resulted from the sheer extent of its conceptual and rhetorical reach. Far from being a political dinosaur—an unstable Enlightenment ideal relevant only for the purposes of statecraft—citizenship has solidified as a supple form of political belonging and affective register alongside the state's success at exercising authority over populations. Part of this success may be attributed to the fact that established, legitimated political communities (namely nations, but previously the church and *les éstats*) continue to be widely assumed as necessary for the recognition and enforcement of rights. At the behest of the nation, states have in turn successfully positioned themselves as the most effective, if not only, institution that can legitimate inalienable rights, and function to protect a particular national sovereign space where those rights are recognized, which has the consequence of casting the refugee (supposedly the

figure that most exemplifies the bare fact of rights) as paradoxically the figure most in need of protection.

Part of the continued endurance of citizenship can be attributed to an overestimation of globalization as a competing form of allegiance. While certainly national identity, so often conflated with citizenship, has been somewhat dislodged, "globality can only constitute 'belonging' in the most flimsy and liminal of senses" (Hedetoft and Hjort, xvi). In turn, the threat that globalization has been prophesized to pose to the nation-state have only ignited "reaffirmations of old-style nationalism in nostalgic, secessionist, or 'new racist' forms" (ibid). Globality may not stimulate the same emotive attachment as nationalism or ethnicity, but it has nonetheless led to novel forms of mythologizing and imagination in the form of conspiracy theories about global systems of domination that threaten to erode or erase prepolitical communities, even though these conspiracies arguably conflate globality with systematicity. Though different in kind from literature, these conspiracies arguably serve similar purposes in terms of imaginatively defining the parameters of a community or explaining processes that operate in far wider context than the nation. Ironically, these reactionary political movements, much like nationalism itself, happen to be themselves a transnational phenomenon: they are replicated across the globe in response to identical pressures, what Ulf Hedetoft and Mette Hjort term the "'McDonaldization' of cultural and political differences" (xvi). Consequently, citizenship has only grown in cultural and affective significance as some states employ it as a buttress against the encroachments of globalization.

Citizenship therefore remains of pertinent concern, not least because, as I'll explore in the next two sections, its discursive and performative foundations suggests a role for literature in its configuration and reform.

Section B
Reading Citizenship and Citizenship as Individual Enactment

What do mean when we talk about citizenship? Randolph Bourne captures the seeming simplicity and universality of the concept: "The Country, as an inescapable group into which we are born, and which makes us its particular kind of citizen of the world, seems to be a fundamental fact of our consciousness, an irreducible minimum of social feeling" (3). Bourne's basic summary is qualified by a condition of feeling that is "essentially noncompetitive" and could describe the "non-political aspects of a people" (ibid). Similar to Bourne, J. David Cisneros summarizes citizenship "[a]t its most basic level" as "membership in a community" (376), without any sense of politicization or antagonism. Beyond this definition, however, once we consider the citizen as a political existence, the content of citizenship becomes highly contestable, owing to its historical and geographic contingency and the several co-productive processes of being political, which includes statutory recognition, public performance, civic engagement, and psychological attachment. Citizenship can be a type of public behaviour and a legal status or honorific, both of which are distinct but may still inform each other. Werbner and Yuval-Davis (1999) ascribe the contestable nature of citizenship's definition to a fundamental aporia underwriting its modern instantiation: citizenship is both a "regulating force of modernity" (1), putting limits on exercises of freedom, representation, difference, state power, and social space, while also forging an arena of self-expression and significance. The result is that these "opposed impulses" that underwrite citizenship make it a "complex, ambiguous imaginary" (2).

Citizenship is not simply a bureaucratic, legally binding membership status but an organic group identity, a legitimating personal experience, a public service, and a sentimentalized (if not fetishized) imagining of personhood deeply embedded in the transhistorical mythologizing of nationhood and community. These imaginings require continuous negotiation as the demands on persons and their associative rights (if any) are contested by shifts in values, group formations, or governmental authority that may undermine or circumvent predominating customs regarding the role and function of the citizen. As such, citizenship has accrued significance well beyond the arena of modern statecraft, jurisprudence, or administrative bureaucracy, becoming a multimodal, transnational, transhistorical, and transcultural condition. Perhaps owing to citizenship's historical transformation from a strictly administered status denoting a handful of privileged persons to an imprecise rhetoric for anyone who belongs to a political community, citizenship has slowly emerged as a handy conceptual vessel for which anyone can fill with meaning, allowing for its emergence in contexts as disparate and distant as Athenian-style democracy in Ancient Greece to contemporary globalized capitalist markets. This also means that citizenship rhetoric is open to accusations of misuse and misappropriation.

Despite romanticized invocations of Athens as an originary state of Western citizenship, which recur often in discussions of political membership, citizenship "remains a thoroughly modern invention" (Werbner and Yuval-Davis, 2). There still remains an extensive historical and cultural contingency that renders citizenship a messy concept to elaborate. Even though citizenship today connotes simplicity—the most banal and quotidian acts of public life, and arguably the most basic form of political membership—the discrepancy between exercises of citizenship and the forceful attempts by major geopolitical actors to render certain peoples in a

perennial state of non-citizenship continually complicates any broad engagement with

citizenship. Several adjacent though distinct terms also deter easy definition, most crucially

culture, nationalism, and belonging, all of which converge with any discussion of citizenship but

none of which are wholly equivalent. Though "historically coexisting within a single social

field" (Werbner and Yuval-Davis, 1), the gulf between citizenship and nationalism has come to

define the so-called postnational era in which globalization has galvanized existing divisions

within the nation-state between legal membership, ethnicity, racial identity, religious affiliation,

and so on. Citizenship's emphasis (at least in democracies) on individual rights, rational self-

rule, and an indifferent system of laws has conflicted with nationalism's "appeals to communal

solidarities and primordial sentiments of soil and blood" (ibid). Among all these possible objects

of study, why then focus on citizenship? Is nationalism or culture not a more fruitful arena for

exploring the aesthetics and sentiments of belonging? Is ethnicity not a more primordial and

forceful form of affiliation? To answer this question, I begin by quoting at length Hedetoft and

Hjort (2002) and their definition of national belonging:

> …national belonging follows from neither nature nor culture in any simple forms—though this is
> how it is often discursivized—but is the result of complex social and historical processes whereby
> the political, sovereign communities that we know as nation-states reinvent themselves as
> prepolitical, simplistic, and "ethnic," partly in the mirror of selective histories of glory, heroism,
> and destiny, partly by drawing on anthropological paradigms of kinship, blood, and territorial
> rootedness. (xii)

Hedetoft and Hjort imply a distinction between the intricate processes that underpin national

belonging and how it subsequently becomes "discursivized." Nationalism is only one such

structure of belonging, and national belonging is not the same thing as citizenship nor culture—

in turn, legal citizenship does not *ipso facto* confer belonging to or inclusion in a national

community, which may define itself along distinctly non-legal lines. It is here where a distinction

between state and nation finds strong articulation. How nationalism and national belonging get

17

"discursivized" can obscure these distinctions or conflate them entirely, in part to reframe national belonging as a prepolitical given and the state or state government as a natural extension of national interest.

These conflations are certainly strategic. Michael Billig (1995), for example, notes an "ideological consciousness of nationhood" in justifications for state-sanctioned acts of war in the Persian Gulf and Falkland Islands, and uses these episodes as a departure point for discussing the misleading idea that nationalism is peripheral and the crude dogma "associated with those who struggle to create new states or with extreme right-wing politics" (5). What Billig refers to as the "eve of battle rhetoric" draws upon enduring imagery and clichés to flag the moral necessity of patriotic service at a time of national or international crisis, but Billig does not think the resulting ideology surrounding this evocation of nationhood is a "temporary mood" (5) that moves in from the periphery and then shrinks back once the crisis has been resolved. Instead, a "banal nationalism," as Billig calls it, underwrites those "ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced" on a daily basis (6). Billig's argument is somewhat prefigured by Randolph Bourne, who during the First World War had identified the affective and ideological centrality of war to the health of the state, although Bourne more succinctly recognizes how these nationalist feelings differ from the state. Bourne writes that the "nation in wartime attains a uniformity of feeling, a hierarchy of values culminating at the undisputed apex of the State ideal, which could not possibly be produced through any other agency than war" (6). This "uniformity of feeling" provokes citizens to identify themselves with "the whole" and coerces minority groups into obedience, lest they suffer a "white terrorism" conducted by "the Government" and directed against "all persons or movements that can be imagined as connected with the enemy" (13). These operations of the nation and the government contact the state

insofar as it is "States that make wars and not nations, and the very thought and almost necessity of war is bound up with the ideal of the State" (Bourne 14). As such, the continual, incessant flagging of the nation by the government as a means of underwriting a state's declaration of war is directed at the heart of the citizenry. As such, even though Billig and Bourne are thinking broadly in terms of the state and nation, an "ideological consciousness of nationhood" has arguable grown to encompass the intimate practice and articulation of citizenship, melding the diverse discursive sources of political belonging along with it.

A distinction between the complex processes of belonging and its discursive re-articulation reflects how, as Hedetoft and Hjort continue, political communities attempt to constitute themselves as "prepolitical, simplistic, and 'ethnic'," in part to convey their identity and belonging as an organic homogeneity. This homogeneity—while potentially constituted by a lengthy process of "cultural honing, ethnic mixing, and social assimilation or exclusion" (xiii)— is frequently "little more than official discourse, a thin veneer of a common identity covering up the coexistence of a multiplicity of culture and, sometimes, identities too" (ibid). In other words, an identity that is not organic or prepolitical but a strategically assembled guise built over time. Even though Hedetoft and Hjort are dismissive of the way national belonging ends up discursivized, insofar as this discourse establishes potentially dangerous illusions of homogeneity that inform official and unofficial policies of exclusion, my interest lies precisely with the formation of so-called "official discourse." Citizenship rhetoric, I am suggesting, constitutes one of the ways the "official discourse" of national belonging comes to be read and circulated—or, in other words, citizenship is one way in which nationalism, belonging, and culture come to be discursivized. I therefore focus on citizenship not as an attempt to unravel the core of its definition but to explore the potential disjunct between citizenship rhetoric and the

complex reality of citizenship's manifestation. Werbner and Yuval-Davis suggest that citizenship is not simply the legal relationship between person and state but something far more total, a relationship "inflected by identity, social positioning, cultural assumptions, institutional practices and a sense of belonging" (4). As such, they argue that approaches to citizenship "must go beyond a purely formal, jural analysis" (ibid), to which the present study agrees. My analysis addresses citizenship as a totalizing classification by focusing on literature from a historical period when citizenship methodically emerged from local distinctions to the full breath of national inclusion.

Hedetoft and Hjort implicitly signal this scholarly direction as well. They note that despite the current postnational era, "globality—or, for that matter, Europeanness—is not an emotionally convincing substitute for nationality, no matter how intellectually and morally appealing such wider identifications might be" (xviii) and that the "basic organicism of national belonging manifests in our reified way of talking about it, and dispels any thoughts of constructing a wholly civic, rational nationalism" (xix). Here we have an acknowledgment of how rational or moral considerations cannot always overcome the emotive force of national belonging. Indeed, citizenship, rather ironically, has arguably become a form of prepolitical affiliation in certain countries like the United States, even though it is paradigmatically a mode of being political. This condition of "prepoliticality" can foster an unthought sense of belonging: one's affiliation or rootedness is an unearned given and thus never rises to become a fully conscious issue.

Where then to begin? What are even the right questions to ask? Citizenship's contingency leads Robert Asen to conclude that what counts as citizenship is entirely the wrong question to ask. Contemporary assessments of citizenship "differ in examining the types of activities that

people engage in and the frequency with which people engage in these activities, but these assessments tend to converge in seeking answers to the question of what counts as citizenship" (190), which then relies on elaborating conditions that will inevitably shift over time. In other words, the conditions of citizenship can suffer obsolescence. Civic participation, for example, will transform organically as new methods and means of participation replace previous ones. As Asen puts it, tracking membership in the "Order of Elks over 50 years, for example, may not reveal the ways in which declining membership in fraternal organizations has been supplemented by increased participation in other ways" (190). Nor does the fact of membership tell us anything informative about particular aspects of patriotism that may accompany citizenship, a point made by Hedetoft and Hjort when they argue that membership in a "republican order with clear constitutional principles" fails to explain the "emotional attachment and overt manifestations of sacrifice and sentiment that clearly characterize the patriotism of U.S. citizens," or why immigrants to the U.S. from myriad ethnic and cultural backgrounds subsequently "conduct a politics of recognition as Americans" (xiii). Citizenship as equivalent to membership is only trivially true and thus insufficient for explaining that aspect of being a citizen that centres this study: the aesthetic and romantic (in a literary sense) dimension of citizenship.

Membership's lack of explanatory heft leads Asen to voice a fundamental concern with counting citizenship: "doing so may circumscribe agency by presenting a set of activities for people to adopt" (191), potentially in a zero-sum way. The problem? In "prescribing particular forms of participation, public fora deny particular subjectivities to people whose identifies lie outside 'universal' bourgeois norms" (193). Avoiding the stifling confines of an imposed and singular notion of subjectivity requires nothing less than re-conceiving what we mean when we talk about citizenship. Asen, therefore, reframes the question entirely, suggesting instead that the

query we should ultimately be concerned with is *how* citizenship is enacted rather than asking *what* counts as citizenship.

This reframing leads Asen to float a more performative or discursive view of citizenship, one that weighs more substantially on engagement and rhetorical negotiation in a public sphere. Contra popular definitions of citizenship as the possession of particular rights or privileges, Asen emphasizes the spatiotemporal depth of citizenship as a process that involves "fluid, multimodal, and quotidian enactments" (191), which also invariably involves "potentially uncontrollable and unruly" practices in a public realm (192). Citizenship contains both extremes, denoting the most banal aspects of daily life and potentially the most radical, such as violent protest or resistance. Citizenship is, therefore, rather paradigmatically a mode in its most basic definition (i.e.: a manner of doing something, in this case being political). No singular or collective act or behaviour constitutes the pivotal condition by which citizenship is determined, and though *legal* citizenship may be obtained in virtue of the accident of one's birth in a particular nation or earned after an arbitrary window of naturalization, legal citizenship is but one condition of belonging and in some circumstances not even the most valued.

Asen suggests a number of advantages to a discursive view of citizenship, two of which I will mention here. Firstly, such a view renounces ideal, archetypal, iconic, or paradigmatic citizenship figures by which a judgement of best practices can be made because they constitute a potential imposed subjectivity. Secondly, and just as significantly, the discursive view accounts for how citizenship and citizen are not the same thing: citizenship can be enacted or performed by noncitizens, which, as I'll explain below, is a longstanding strategy for the marginalized or disenfranchised to insert themselves into a national or political community—in Chapter Two, I consider how Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative* constitutes such a strategy. Conflating

citizenship with citizen threatens to ignore the performative and discursive activity of a significant assortment of political actors both in the contemporary globalized state inflected by high rates of immigration, emigration, and travel, as well as historically in the early nation-states whose populations were mostly composed of the disenfranchised, such as women, racialized persons, labourers, and the non-propertied. A distinction in citizenship and citizen may seem contradictory. Who is citizenship meant for other than for citizens? As Linda Bosniak explains, "common sense tells us that citizenship is—of course—*for citizens*" but, in the United States at least, "status noncitizens are, in fact, not always and entirely outside the scope of those institutions and practices and experiences we call citizenship," in part because "many of citizenship's core attributes do not depend on formal citizenship status at all but are extended to individuals based on the facts of their personhood and national territorial presence" (12-13). This creates the intriguing disjunct that citizenship and citizen are not interchangeable, not only performatively but legally as well, since constitutional protections (again, in the United States at least but historically in other countries as well) often extend to noncitizens in virtue of their presence in the country. We can, therefore, make sense of the notion of the citizenship of noncitizens—indeed, methodologically, we find a more fruitful analysis of citizenship by focusing almost exclusively on those figures whose presence within or astride a particular territoriality helps to highlight the contours of citizenship.

There are certainly many implications to consider with the notion that citizenship and citizen are distinct, but for now the import of Asen's insight on citizenship as discursive is this: searching for a definitive definition of what constitutes citizenship fundamentally ignores citizenship's ontology as a modality for being political. The more salient approach concentrates on the means by which persons attempt to enact citizenship, which are elastic, contingent,

conditional, and negotiable. An illuminating example of this discursive or performative view of citizenship is Isaac West's exploration of transgender citizenship. West, in a similar vein to Asen, conceives of citizenship as the "communicative negotiation of the actual or perceived rights, obligations, and privileges among members of a collective" (6). West explicitly avoids theorizing citizenship as a strictly "state-centered form of recognition" (ibid) and instead suggests that while "official forms of citizenship such as the right to vote or work legally are conferred onto certain bodies and not others," these "categories of state recognition are not materialized in a self-executive manner; instead, they are articulated unities generated by a practice of citationality that may appear to be extradiscursive when in fact they are materialized in and through their rhetorical recirculation and rehearsal of previous iterations of these symbols and signs" (7). In other words, citizenship is a form of articulation often circulated through particular symbols or significations that are evocative of a community or shared identity. Regardless of how citizenship may materialize in any number of historical or cultural contexts, structurally speaking it involves the performative and rhetorical re-enactment and re-iteration of various "symbols and signs." Importantly for the present analysis, emphasis on articulation positions citizenship as contextual, citational, strategic, and enacted through engagement with both the state and other subjects, giving rise to the "opportunity to continually contest our rhetorical relations with objects, ideas, and each other" (West 7). This discursive view of citizenship is not meant to eclipse citizenship's material conditions (which remain relevant) but to contextualize them as specific forms of articulation within an overall discursive structure or network. Citizenship is "performatively reproduced from innumerable points in contingent situations by individuals with unique motivations and understandings of what being and acting

like a citizen means" (West 8). As such, according to West, citizenship "can be *nothing but mimicry*" (Cisneros 382).

By citing the predominating rhetoric and manners in which citizenship is performed, particular groups can assert political agency even if the overall legal structure of citizenship that denied them inclusion remains intact. The act of resistance that constitutes their emergence as citizens is not necessarily found in the forceful deconstruction of a political regime but in the struggle for everyday citizenship practices for persons long denied public recognition as rights-possessing agents. As Belinda Stillion Southard remarks, in "attempting to create a likeness in political power between their members and political leaders, protest groups necessarily accept some of the institutional rituals, reifying their exclusion and the exclusion of others, limiting the liberating potential of their social protest" (19). In other words, mimesis is a strategy for legitimacy, and by implication part of this mimesis will involve the production of literature as a type of ritual or protest that both enfranchised and disenfranchised political subjects create. This may seem problematic, insofar as piecemeal reform leaves intact the mechanisms that created the conditions for oppression in the first place, but West remains somewhat optimistic, suggesting that demands for equality, freedom, or recognition are "much more complex than any unreflecting adoptions of assimilationist attitudes" (8). Because of West's emphasis on citizenship as discursive, the rhetorical and mimetic gestures that the disenfranchised employ to assert their claim to rights (or any other value wed to citizenship) can potentially transform the relationship among persons, state governments, and ideas in a fundamental way, even if this transformation has no immediate legal ramifications. West uses the example of a transgender person laying claim to equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which is an act of articulation that explicitly yokes that person's self-identification

as transgender with a definitive constitutional principle. Even though the person's articulation may legally fail owing to "judicial scrutiny," the "law may not be as important as the potential leverage gained by this unity of distinct elements in response to someone who would otherwise deny its value as a truth claim" (West 7-8); "A demand for trans equality," West continues, "can reverberate throughout the discursive field, altering not only the meaning of equality, but also the elements involved in the articulation itself" (8). Put more colloquially, the needle may shift even if the law does not. The space for the enactment of citizenship does not necessarily require the law's sanction.

This isn't to suggest that the law should be entirely removed from our purview, and indeed my analysis will confront various legal regimes and developments related to citizenship and immigration, in part because the law partially configures citizenship as an affective relation. For example, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, border customs at international airports, passports and other documentation, constitute "everyday representations of law and order that are 'live'" (Valverde 12). They are sometimes the most directly felt experiences of the law and can become intimately associated with the broader character of a nation. The discrepancy in how these borders, embodied in the figure of checkpoints and armed guards, are felt inform how citizenship itself emerges as a combination of legal and affective registers.

West's conception of citizenship somewhat presupposes a democratic process where the levers for effective change can theoretically be pulled by any member, not just those who wield extensive political or legal power. Under more oppressive circumstances, the opportunity to articulate citizenship would conceivably not be so readily available. West's conception also implies a distinction between two forms of activism, one that targets its energy at the broader discursive field of rights articulation and the other that aims at reforming the legal and statutory

26

apparatus of a country. Both can be targeted simultaneously, but they are nonetheless not equivalent, which still raises the question of which is the best or most effective strategy of articulation. While the law is not an autonomous sphere separate from the discursive whole that constitutes citizenship, it still constitutes a distinguishable field that can distract from other avenues of reform—indeed, West explicitly says that "we need not concern ourselves first and foremost with proposing legal reforms" (19) and that the history of litigation in pursuit of civil rights protections for transgender people has resulted in an "archive of failure" (21). West argues that viewing citizenship restrictively through the prism of statutes or law is a "narrowly tailored reading practice" that explicitly adopts "normativities" and relies on the spurious notion that "citizens faithfully adopt and follow the state's mandate when they act as citizens" (17). As a result, scholarship that limits itself to "official state texts […] embraces an impoverished sense of the rhetoricity of citizenship and its corresponding agencies" (ibid). Citizenship as modality extends well beyond the parameters of either the law or the state, which unnecessarily obfuscates the multivalent ways citizens and noncitizens alike perform citizenship—performances which, it should be added, do not always concern what is the normative content of citizenship. As mentioned previously, even the most banal and quotidian of public performances can constitute citizenship along with the more palpable forms of social protest that often get romanticized as the height of citizenry duty.

Overemphasis on statutory conditions unjustifiably obscures how citizenships is not monolithically a legal status. Part of what West is rejecting is the notion of a legal hegemony where the law forecloses the horizon of what is performatively possible, at least within the context of citizenship. West argues that preoccupation with "official legal texts," at least from an academic or scholarly standpoint,

neutralizes the radical potential of rhetoric per se in its treatment of rhetoric either as an instrumental tool in a reformist legal project, guided by the principle that better or different legalese would result in more equitable distributions of justice, or, alternatively, as legal discourses that avail themselves only as ideologically determined discursive traps. (17)

In other words, obsession with the legal dimension of citizenship conceals the potential of rhetoric to reform/transform the enactment of citizenship or to foster a more equitable public space. West views overemphasis on the law as an unjustified "evacuation of human agency" from examinations of citizenship and generally inadequate for capturing all the ways persons, such as transgender persons, form unseen relationships with other citizens and the state.

West makes an insightful point, but it potentially overlooks the way "official legal texts" and the law in general are comprised of distinctly non-legal rhetorics. Part of what is required to circumvent legal hegemony is to forge a reading practice that recognizes not just other forms of rhetoricity that constitute citizenship's enactment, but the extent to which the legal text is also not strictly a legal document. This distinction I'm making is meant to ultimately recognize the elements of literature and literary imagination that have inflected the official legal text, but it's also meant to offer an avenue for recognizing the other discursive regimes that make the legal text a multivalent cultural item. I say "reading practice" in light of West's point that an overemphasis on the law implies a reading practice that narrowly focuses on one type of discursive regime (namely a legal one). What would an alternative reading practice look like? What texts would comprise its purview? I argue it partly involves identifying how other forms (the novel in particular) have infiltrated the legal text in explicit and subtle ways. Such a reading practice will be inherently interdisciplinary by focusing on where the boundaries between discursive regimes (in this case, between law and literature) bleed into one another and confound simple or strict genres of discourse. As will be elaborated more fully in Chapter Two and Three, I concentrate on the role of sentimentality and mercantile speculation as integral features of both

law and literature in the eighteenth century and use this historical focus as a departure point for reading Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative* (1789). As will be discussed in those chapters, the law also has the capacity to withstand logical contradictions, which it has done so with brutal effectiveness for the last three centuries, especially where it concerns denying the oppressed relief from their oppression—a point similarly made by Paisley Currah (2009, 250) in the context of transgender rights. Despite a legal history replete with examples to the contrary, especially in the United States, there remains an enduring expectation that "definitional chaos," as West terms it, resulting from the law's attempts to define the criteria for citizenship or personhood, will fall apart at the first sign of inconsistency or contradiction. Simply revealing these inconsistencies can result in no meaningful change, and if legal activism is the goal, then the fact that the law can withstand "definitional chaos" must be taken into consideration or, more maximally, recognized as the limit of legal activism as a tool for liberation.

West makes a key methodological point when examining citizenship, one which stresses a distinction between particular enactments of being political and a generalized analysis of citizenship as a concept. Since my own examination relies on using specific examples of literature as case studies for thinking about citizenship in a way that is analogous to West's focus on individual acts of articulation, his justification for choosing this approach is worth quoting directly:

> The choice to operate from the particular is an act of critical humility intended to avoid presumptive pieties associated with dogmatic renderings of the inescapability of normalizing pressures of genders, sexualities, and citizenships, those unfortunate coin of the realm in many corners of queer studies, which relies on a guaranteed set of relations inimical to the perspective of articulation. (9)

There are two key points to gather from this. Firstly, that focusing on individual cases instead of a generalized outlook (what West calls "critical humility") recognizes the fundamental role of human agency in the practice of citizenship irrespective of legal regulation on behaviour or

social norms. Indeed, the potentially deeper point West is making is that any approach to studying or reading citizenship that ignores the micro in favour of the macro will be incomplete or uninformative. Secondly, citizenship's fractious quality and historical and cultural contingency means that a search for a permanent set of relations to underwrite citizenship is, in some sense, both impossible and intellectually suspect. It also unnecessarily forecloses the possibility of reforming what citizenship means normatively among persons. While certain strands of nationalism or legal thinking may wish to define citizenship as a permeant set of moral relations among persons, such an approach could conceivably be an ideological argument for denying admission to persons perceived as outside the moral order of a nation or state. The conditions for citizenship's enactment, and this includes its normative content, are inherently elastic and fragmented.

While my examination of citizenship rhetoric will spend considerable attention on the legal text, and while I also agree with West that the law should not be the only horizon of concern, my focus on literature in part emerges from its role in mobilizing citizenship's enactment in concert with or against the grain of prevailing legal theory on political personhoods. Literature is one narrow form of articulation that can nonetheless capture the density of human experience or political subjecthood in a way other written modes cannot. Even though West advises against strict focuses on the material conditions of citizenship (in comparison to the larger discursive whole), I suggest that literature should be a scholarly priority in virtue of its capacity to capture a fuller picture of those individual enactments that West centres his own analysis around. Indeed, West argues that the notion of "the public" should be reconceptualized as "textually based collectivities dependent upon the interpretation, appropriation, and recirculation of their animating texts among strangers" (22). In other cases,

certain works of literature constitute some of the few textual resources we have for articulations of citizenship not in the present day. Additionally, I focus on logical contradictions within the law precisely because of the contortions and imaginations that are required to sustain them as legally binding. Definitional chaos can be strategically deployed and revealing of the extent to which "kinds of domination are being imagined as forms of social good," as Lauren Berlant puts it (13). In other words, when analyzed comparatively, literature and law can give competing or, conversely, harmonious speculations on the extent of personhood and citizenship, and avoid the "flattening of subjectivity" (West 21) that can follow an analysis too strictly wed to one type of textual articulation.

Asen's and West's insight acknowledges the degree to which citizenship is self-representation. Their insight is also evident in moments where historically marginalized or disenfranchised groups mimic the rhetoric and gestures of enfranchised political agents as a means of both resistance to prevailing citizenship regimes that exclude them and as a performance of what their political agency would look. By performing citizenship without being citizens (either honorifically or in law), noncitizens may achieve social or statutory recognition discursively without immediate legislative or legal victory. This is not merely theoretical but historically true. Ivy Wilson (2011) explores how African Americans during the Antebellum period in the United States "challenged the forms of U.S. liberal democracy by engaging the art forms of rhetoric and visuality" (2-3). Belinda A. Stillion Southard (2011, 2) argues that the American suffragette movement successfully deployed a "rhetoric of political mimesis" by enacting "key political rituals and rhetorics in order to empower themselves as US citizens" during the presidency of Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921). Political mimesis is, according to Southard, "a strategy of political empowerment in which disempowered rhetors mimic political

rhetorics, rituals, and practices to assert political agency, constitute political identities, and earn

political legitimacy" (18). This move towards activating the dynamics of rhetorics and mimesis

to effect women's enfranchisement was owing in part to concurrent, historically specific

conditions that attended the decade before the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment that

secured predominately white women the right to vote. Chief among these historical conditions

was the abject failure of litigation to bring about a legal remedy for the lack of women's rights

and suffrage. Between 1848 (the year of the Seneca Falls Convention that essentially inaugurated

the suffrage movement in the U.S.) and 1913, American courts had routinely refused to

recognize women's rights,[1] and legislatures likewise did not always take up the mantel of

enfranchisement—quite the opposite in fact, women found their citizenship *more* abridged

during the opening decade of the twentieth century, as seen in the 1907 Expatriation Act that

stripped women of U.S. citizenship if they married a foreigner (Southard 7). Half-a-century of

legal defeat more or less forced suffragettes to look elsewhere for effective strategies,

culminating in political pressure being mounted on the Wilson Administration and a call for an

amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Wilson's "rhetorical presidency"—broadly defined by

Southard as the emergence of a presidency that acts as a surrogate of and appeals directly to the

American electorate instead of Congress (3)—made his office the primary target of attention for

the subsequent National Women's Party that took on the mission of advancing white women's

enfranchisement through a campaign of political militancy. The NWP rejected moderate and

reformist strategies in favour of a campaign of open agitation and provocation—a militancy that

rejected traditional means of persuasion or appeal to traditional political actors. Alongside these

developments was the rise of progressivism, which had some significant conceptual slippage.

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[1] The U.S. Supreme Court case *Minor v. Happersett* (1875), for example, ruled that because the U.S. constitution grants no class of citizen the right to vote, women also therefore have no right to vote.

Wilson's motivation to "restore and empower those who endured the physical and spiritual costs of industrialization" (Southard 5) enlivened marginalized groups to demand the spoils that progressivism was promising, even though Wilson espoused a "cultural homogeneity and the preservation of racial and gendered hierarchies to help cultivate a national community" (6) populated by white men. Just as importantly, the emergence of a new form of U.S. nationalism in the late nineteenth century—ignited by the "virulent antiforeign sentiment" (Kersh 262) in response to new waves of immigration—led to imaginings of a national community that women were keen to see themselves a part of. Negotiating their way into the spectre of national identity was not going to come about just through legal or legislative victories (to which there were few anyhow). As Rogan Kersh frames it, nationhood and nationalism involve a process of "rhetorical affirmation and reproduction" (16), and to insert oneself or one's group into the national community required having those discursive exchanges that underwrote imaginings of the nation as a particular space populated by particular people.

Part of what had to be discursively negotiated with respect to women achieving enfranchisement was the prevailing conception of citizenship as underwritten by civic participation and/or individual autonomy, neither of which were typically available for women. They encountered precisely the problem Asen elaborated with regards to the iconic or ideal citizen, namely a singular and imposed subjectivity that coerced noncitizens to abandon ties to other community affiliations or identities (such as those defined by gender, race, class, sexuality and so forth) or simply made the ideal subjectivity unavailable. The role of militancy for the National Women's Party was partly rooted in the fact that women performing as full citizens was itself a form of social protest. As Southard argues, the NWP "exacted its militancy by adopting the accepted rhetorics and rituals of political behaviour in a manner that simultaneously

challenged and reified shared meanings of nation and gender" (16-17). However, pirating or ventriloquizing the rhetorics and behaviour of political agency did involve at least partially reinforcing the institutional power that had imposed the oppressive conditions in the first place. Even though the NWP was committed to a form of militancy, it did not call for the dismantling of the patriarchal political economy but instead implicitly endorsed its rituals and exclusionary logics. The cultural hegemony the NWP were ostensibly fighting was in essence only reified by their acts of political mimesis. This was the case despite the importance of their social protest to negotiating and ultimately alleviating some of the gendered boundaries that had been built around citizenship and which had made citizenship in the United States a fundamentally gendered notion.

Nonetheless, the efforts by the NWP and other early-twentieth-century suffragettes signaled the degree to which citizenship was and still is dependent on performative enactment in order to retain meaning and substance. Suffragettes extended the realm of the public sphere by aggressively occupying social and political spaces that were configured to exclude them, most explicitly the voting booth. Alongside these forms of protest, the rhetorics of citizenship were commandeered for purposes of negotiating the gendered boundaries of citizenship and ultimately extending the franchise to historically disenfranchised persons. Admittedly, part of the success of the suffragettes during the Wilson Administration was owed to historically specific conditions that buttressed their political mimesis, but such mimesis would only have been possible if citizenship functioned as Asen described, namely as a modality or method for public performance, an enactment that requires discursive negotiation of the public sphere and the quotidian.

Other scholars besides West, Southard, and Asen have stressed citizenship as a type of performance or enactment. May Joseph, for example, notes that while "there is no easy consensus about what citizenship means, how it is imbibed, and what it entails," we are nonetheless "constantly impinged on as citizen-subjects, operating between the legal, the cultural, and the political, often in tandem, in our everyday gestures" (4). In a very similar fashion to the scholars mentioned previously, Joseph approximates citizenship as a "performed site of personhood that instantiates particular notions of participatory politics" (ibid) and which is "infused with public images, official definitions, informal customary practice, nostalgic longings, accrued historical memory and material culture, comforting mythologies of reinvention, and lessons learned from past rejections" (5). The result is that citizenship is "not organic but must be acquired through public and psychic participation," and though the mechanisms for citizenship's enactment are multivalent and involve any number of interacting social processes, the "categories through which we understand and experience full and satisfying citizenship" are often initiated "by the state's need to invent and contain its subjects" (3). Joseph's description situates citizenship as a tension between the amorphous social levers that configure citizenship's enactment on a daily basis and the legal and state apparatuses that employ citizenship as a technology of discipline. No picture of citizenship is complete without acknowledgment of these mutual, sometimes oppositional, processes. Additionally, in focusing on the performative aspects of citizenship, Joseph's account reminds us of citizenship's intimate locality. While nationalisms and globalization are both important frameworks to keep in mind when discussing citizenship of the contemporary period, each individual enactment is only initially perceptible in the local context in which it takes place. That is to say: even though citizenship over the last two centuries has hardened to become a nationalistic affiliation, its

actual concrete manifestation in public and private life remains perceptibly local, despite assessments of citizenry behaviour as "American," or "British," or "Canadian" or so forth—this lexicon of affiliation inevitably obscures how being political only rarely manifests beyond a rather limited sphere.

Similar then to West's and Southard's emphasis on mimicry, Joseph conceives of citizenship as a "scenario filled with anxious enactments of citizens as actors" (ibid). However, Joseph also deepens what is at stake in any enactment of citizenship by stressing how performance incites questions of authenticity. Joseph doesn't shrink from the obvious metaphor of theatricality that underwrites this view of citizenship as performative enactment and in turn extends that metaphor to capture the danger of a mimesis that fails to convince its audience, remarking that the "stock characters include authentic citizens; inauthentic minorities; noncitizens with ambivalent political allegiances such as migrant workers, immigrant aspirants, expatriates, and international travelers; emergent political subjects such as youth, women, and the poor" (5). This framing is important for Joseph's own analysis of the "disaffected space of inauthentic citizenship" (2) while also acknowledging how some performances are deemed inauthentic irrespective of the ability to act patriotic, and are instead derivative of caricature or stereotype. Accusations of double allegiance or no allegiance can be readily thrown at the person who does not perform citizenship in familiar or expected ways. Racially, religiously, or ethnically coded archetypes of citizenship can displace attempts to authentically perform as citizens.

Lauren Berlant makes a similar point regarding the performative structure of citizenship, suggesting that it is "both public-sphere narratives and concrete experiences of quotidian life that do not cohere or harmonize" and which is delimited in public expression via the "rhetoric of

citizenship" (10). Sharing points with West's analysis, Berlant argues that citizenship cannot be examined as strictly a "juridical category" because it likewise constitutes a "horizon of social practice and aspiration" (98). Though specifically remarking on the United States as a distinct citizenship regime (as did West and Southard), Berlant emphasizes citizenship as a public practice or performance that encompasses the banal motions of everyday life—indeed, Berlant's central point is that contemporary notions of citizenship have collapsed the public-private/political-personal distinction all together "into a world of public intimacy" where a "nation made for adult citizens has been replaced by one imagined for fetuses and children" (1). Berlant, writing in the 1990s, argues that the "American fetus and the American child" constitute the sort of authentic citizenship archetype or patriotic personhood that Joseph alludes to and which Asen criticizes—what Berlant elsewhere calls the "iconic citizen." As Berlant explains, children and fetuses have not yet succumbed to the historical and cultural processes that will shape their identities along axes of race, ethnicity, sexuality, religiosity and so on, which is precisely what makes them appealing icons for a post-Reagan conservatism seeking to re-orient notions of the citizen away from multiethnic urban living, secular public service, or other liberal conceptions. The child and fetus are still "tacitly white" and still contain "the blueprint for the reproductive form that assures the family and the nation its future history" (6), but the "supericonicity" of the child and fetus reveals the impossible aspiration at the heart of the American citizenship regime, namely a figure whose subjecthood is prepolitical, naïve, ahistorical, and deeply private. Berlant is of course critical of their iconic status, remarking that "what gets consolidated now as the future modal citizen provides an alibi or an inspiration for the moralized political rhetorics of the present and for reactionary legislative and juridical practice" (6). Owing to this fundamental naivety and helplessness, the point then of the active citizenry is

envisioned as constructing and maintaining "surrogate legal and technological systems to substitute for the mother's dangerous body and fallen will" (Berlant 98). These maternal figurations in the concept and practice of citizenship are not emergent with a Reagan conservativism but in fact recognizable at the origin points of Anglo-Atlantic citizenship regimes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As I'll briefly explore in Chapter Two, Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, an essential novelization of both crisis and political subjecthood, ultimately revolves around the attempt and failure of motherhood in intimate connection with racial destiny.

Berlant captures the discontinuity between the actual experiences of being a citizen, which may involve any number of unassuming tasks, and the popular narratives of citizenship that sentimentalize and valourize the iconic or archetypal citizen, which has affected the "ways people [perceive] their own social value and the social value of 'Others'" (2). Though Berlant does not mention this, it also reflects a discontinuity I mentioned previously, namely the distinction between citizenship and citizen. The fetus as the iconic citizen cannot be enacted other than by the child or the fetus, neither of whom are consciously political agents. Berlant singles out a decades long conservative campaign beginning with Reagan to "turn the nation into a privatized state of feeling" (11) as an example of sentimentality's negative affect on conceptions and practices of citizenship.[2] The rhetoric of citizenship is not incidental to its experience or content but an important definitional framework for the ways individuals self-identify as members of the public that is being privatized. Berlant is explicit in finding this rhetoric exceedingly corrosive, accusing a "conservative coalition" informed by both "Reagan Republicanism" and its heir "Clintonite liberalism" for "rerouting the critical energies of the

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[2] This is not a suggestion that sentiment is inherently a suspicious motivation. Berlant acknowledges a common paradigm underwriting experiences of citizenship that begin with an emotional or sentimental encounter with a nation and moves towards a more extensive or deeper political commitment.

emerging political sphere into the sentimental spaces of an amorphous opinion culture, characterized by strong patriotic identification mixed with feelings of practical political powerlessness" (3).

Essential to Berlant's thinking on the matter is that the images and representations of citizenship across several types of media matter enormously for configuring how citizenship is enacted in everyday life. These representations serve a dual function: in isolating citizens as "spectators to the publicity that claims to represent them" (ibid), these images are then marketed back to citizens as a way of defining the parameters of aspiration. The result is a "false consciousness of national/capitalist culture" that often emerges in the form of the so-called American Dream, which traffics in uncomplicated language bereft of any reference to the actual conflicts that define the American social landscape. Even though the notion of an American Dream is now an overwrought cultural critique, it still conveys the fusion of "private fortune with that of the nation" that Berlant sees as typifying the collapse of a public-private distinction in American life and resulting in a "vicious yet sentimental cultural politics" (4). This sentimentalism is destructive, according to Berlant, because it sacrifices "political ideas about the nation" to "the development of feelings about it," which in turn transforms nationality into a "zone of trauma that demands political therapy" (8). Coupled with the positioning of the child and fetus as iconic citizens, the result is an infantilization of American political discourse, a broad rhetorical gesture that rephrases impersonal historical processes like income inequality or immigration into a prism of intimacy and individual choice, which in turn delimits how citizenship is to be enacted, understood, read, and written. Berlant sums up the American citizenship landscape at the turn of the twenty-first century thusly:

> In the patriotically-permeated pseudopublic sphere of the present tense, national politics does not involve starting with a view of the nation as a space of struggle violently separated by racial, sexual, and economic inequalities that cut across every imaginable kind of social location.

Instead, the dominant idea marketed by patriotic traditionalists is of a core nation whose survival depends on personal acts and identities performed in the intimate domains of the quotidian. (4).

An identifiable consequence of citizenship rhetoric in an American context is the transformation of citizenship from public participation or civic duty to the sum total of an individual's private life alienated from larger historical, economic, or social processes and performed in the intimate domain of the everyday. Even though Berlant is writing specifically about the United States, she nonetheless captures, along with the other scholars so far mentioned, an important structural feature of citizenship: the role of rhetoric in the configuration of citizenship's enactment. Rhetoric can rephrase seemingly obvious causal links between impersonal historical events and the resulting expressions of citizenship into questions of national existence that hinge on the intimate sexual passions of a population or the intimate movement of an immigrant across a national border. Note, for example, that Southard's elaboration of suffragette political mimesis hinged on *de*-infantilizing women's participation in public spheres they were otherwise barred from occupying in part because they were caricatured as less rational and mature than their male counterparts. Recognizing the individual autonomy of women as adults and not as domestic-bound, quasi-servants in part hinged on re-aligning gendered notions of citizenship as a reserved space and status for male adults through rhetorical appropriation and enactment. The key shift that Berlant identifies with Reaganism (and which distinguishes American political culture) involves a reversal of citizen archetypes of the early twentieth century from connoting the rational adult male discursively engaged with other adult males to the genderless, unthinking fetus that adults have a duty to protect.

Berlant's insight, I suggest, can be extricated from its historical and geographic specificity and combined with the Asen, Joseph, and West to give us a well-rounded portrait of the contemporary citizen at the turn of the twentieth-first century. From these theoretical

explorations emerges a citizenship that balances upon a number of interrelated conditions: rhetoricity, performativity, and maturity. Berlant's "iconic citizen" happens to lack all three.

Section C
Alterity and Citizenship as Group Formation

Laura Brown (1993) casts considerable skepticism onto the critical reach of alterity because of what she sees as the "theoretical pitfalls of the 'other'" (33):

> Productive and important as it has been for these critics of colonialism, the category of the "other" seems nevertheless to have stymied systematically the possibility of a dialectical critique of colonial culture. It forecloses an approach that works through alterity to the mutual interaction between positions of oppression. And it sometimes also precludes finding a place for the voice and the struggles of the native even in the massive and complex edifices of power that seem to surround and contain all resistance. (32)

Alterity has occasionally been invoked by scholars as a monolithic structure to the detriment of both the persons unceremoniously branded as "other" and the more dialogical critiques of otherness that seek to reveal the robustness of the term. Even though Brown concentrates on colonialism, her insight needs to be heeded because, firstly, genealogically there are links between the colonial 'other' and the 'other' integral to modern citizenship, and secondly, contemporary studies of citizenship face an extensive catalogue of critiques of alterity that may muddle the comprehension of alterity's multivalence and specificity—hence why, as we will see in this section, Bosniak basically dispenses with the term altogether in favour of "alienage" and Engin F. Isin goes to considerable lengths to explain that alterity does not manifest in singular, easily comprehendible ways. Nonetheless, alterity cannot be avoided in a discussion of citizenship. As Billig points out, if "the imagining of foreignness is an integral part of the theoretical consciousness of nationalism, then foreignness is not an undifferentiated sense of 'Otherness'" (80). In the following section, I concentrate on contemporary theorizations that

outline the complex manifestations of alterity in citizenship. Simultaneously, I continue my analysis of citizenship rhetoric that began in Section B with an exploration of discursive views of citizenship.

So far we've seen that citizenship refers to several possible conditions (not all of which are compatible with one another), including as a form of legal or statutory recognition, political capital, public enactment, psychological attachment and so forth. Citizenship is a dominate modality for imagining or portraying the exercise of any number of political or politicized activities ranging from the trivial and banal to profound acts of political activism. Some scholars, like Asen, have stressed the inherently public nature of citizenship's enactment, which by implication suggests the existence of private spaces where citizenship does not fully feature. Other scholars, however, like Berlant, stress that in the post-Reagan U.S. a "public intimacy" has replaced the public-private distinction all together such that citizenship features in every aspect of life. Additionally, I've so far focused on citizenship from the perspective of the individual which has prioritized questions of individual performance and rhetoric. From the perspective of the state, citizenship is a form of legal personhood that clarifies a population's relationship with authority, asserts a state or nation's territorial sovereignty, affirms control over political subjects, and fosters a mechanism by which members may be legitimated or excluded in a political community. Structurally, then, citizenship is "divisible, comprisable—indeed, fragmented" (Bosniak 81-82), but also a technology or strategy for both the affirmation of rights or agency and the exclusion of unwanted members. Citizenship is simultaneously a type of legal or conceptual device for the privileged to maintain a particular political order and a way for the disenfranchised to obtain rights not immediately recognized through rhetorical and political mimesis.

The symbolic resonances of citizenship—intimately captured in any number of cultural productions, be they national anthems, political campaign advertising, retellings of national beginning, and so forth—obscure the experience of political belonging, which paints a far less comprehendible picture. Citizenship has been as marred over the last three centuries by tedious managerial contests and bureaucratic disorders as by pitched ideological battles and bloodshed. Navigating the sources of citizenship as the premier political status can be easily overwhelmed by the more palpable ideological contests that have configured citizenship as not just a perfunctory status but a weaponized cultural form to be wielded against minorities and outsiders. What Bosniak calls "citizenship romanticism" (11), rather than confusing the actual content of citizen status, reveals just how socially and symbolically powerful citizenship has become, even during the age of globalization when the decline of citizenship may have seemed a natural consequence. Roger Brubaker sums the issue thusly:

> In global perspective, the very institution of citizenship, tying particular persons to particular states by virtue of the morally arbitrary accidents of birth, serves as a powerful instrument of social closure and a profoundly illiberal determinant of life chances. True, states are open at the margins to citizens of other states – but only at the margins. Seen from the outside, the prosperous and peaceful states of the world remain powerfully exclusionary. (230)

In contrast to idyllic impressions of citizenship as an emancipatory status, Brubaker alludes to both the arbitrary nature of citizenship and its current functioning as a technology or strategy for arresting unwanted persons at the margins of inclusion. Citizenship may feature prominently in Westernized imaginings of justice, but it overlaps with nationalistic iconography that traffic in sentiments of belonging and patriotic aesthetics that obscure individual experiences of identity in favour of a homogenous citizen-status. Citizenship may be "commonly portrayed as the most desired of conditions, as the highest fulfilment of democratic and egalitarian aspirations" (Bosniak 11), but it also poses as a soft tyranny that effaces difference in favour of culturally homogenous subjectivities.

Suffice to say the alternative position, the abolition of citizenship, has hardly registered, so entrenched is the concept of citizenship to contemporary political and social functioning. This entrenchment is reflected in the rhetoric surrounding immigration. As Edwin F. Ackerman (2013) notes, the "language of illegality has permeated the conversation about immigration in the past decades to the extent that arguments have become tautological: illegal aliens should not be legalized because they are illegal" (72). This lexical commitment to referring to persons, rather than actions, as illegal inflects visions of citizenship as therefore the state of being legitimate, not just legally, but culturally and politically as well. Indeed, as Ackerman notes, the infiltration of illegality into conceptualizations of citizenship and immigration have only become more prevalent and was "not a framework for public debates about unauthorized immigration for the better part of the 20th century" (73). There is "no obvious reason why we should frame the debate over unauthorized immigration as fundamentally an issue of lawfulness" (74), and as such the prominent presence of illegality in discussions of citizenship and immigration should be treated as strategic from anti-immigrant hardliners and ethnonationalists, rather than a clarifying or natural method for thinking of political belonging.

Instead of being situated on a binary between legal and illegal, citizenship should be thought of as merely one narrow way of "being political," as Isin puts it (x). Hector Amaya similarly argues that citizenship, owing to its inherently exclusionary function, "should not be the horizon of politics" (Cisneros 380). It would be a mistake to suggest that citizenship as a status has some sort of ontological fixity. Citizenship is a contingent, negotiated, contested space defined by multiple convergent modalities, including literature.

While citizenship has operated as a way for states to simplify their populations into legible categories that can be documented, controlled, and "embraced," its normative content

remains decidedly opaque, which is reflected in the multivalent ways we talk, represent, and

confer citizenship. Bosniak is particularly attentive to how citizenship rhetoric, rather than

functioning as a device for the marginalized or disenfranchised, may also galvanize inherent

tensions in citizenship as a normative concept:

> In one respect, what we have here is a semantic problem: the term citizenship has multiple
> meanings, and this creates confusion. But the trouble runs deeper than sloppiness of rhetoric. In
> fact, I have come to believe that the confusions of citizenship rhetoric are themselves a symptom
> of a more profound condition, one of substantive political theory. Citizenship is not just divided
> conceptually, it is divided normatively, and the ambiguities that plague our citizenship-talk often
> reflect this ethical divide. (13)

What is this ethical divide Bosniak identifies at the core of citizenship? Bosniak sees a "basic

ethical ambiguity" (11) deriving from the historical contest between liberal and republican

traditions of citizenship. These two traditions have two divergent views of citizenship, the liberal

tradition emphasizes an "internal or endogenuous perspective" that sees citizenship as a

universalist ethic and an opportunity for inclusion. The republican tradition, however, is

primarily concerned with the edges or thresholds of a political community, positioning

citizenship as a status to be rationed—as Bosniak succinctly frames it, "limitations on its

availability mark the limitations on belonging" (12). To put in simpler terms, the liberal cloaks

the citizen in rights or liberties while the republican emphasizes membership in a bounded and

exclusive political community. An identifiable contest, both in theory and in practice, develops

between the supposedly "soft" interior space of the nation, where borders are ostensibly absent,

and the "hard" exterior space that constitutes the nation's sovereign boundaries and where the

process of exclusion actually takes place (Bosniak 14). Bosniak notes, however, that this process

of exclusion, what she calls "alienage," does not always stay confined to the border regions of a

nation but follow the noncitizen as they traverse the supposedly soft interior space of the

community. Alienage "entails the introjection of borders" (14), as Bosniak terms it, which

complicates this simple picture of soft versus hard, or inclusion versus exclusion, and reveals

how the normative stakes in citizenship do not just disappear once the border is out of sight.

As such, this normative divide does not operate as a true binary between inclusion and

exclusion. As Bosniak makes clear, there is still extensive conceptual and normative slippage

between these two poles, but she nonetheless warns that embracing citizenship as a normative

benchmark poses a problem precisely because the subsequent rhetoric we use to convey

citizenship in normative terms can mean the opposite of what is intended. Appropriating

citizenship rhetoric for the purposes of political mimesis is thus far from simple and risks

reifying and legitimating the exclusionary political theory that instigated the mimesis in the first

place—or, in other words, to the detriment not only of those noncitizens who cannot so easily

ventriloquize as citizens, but also to the detriment of the person or group re-articulating the

rhetoric they use for asserting their agency.

The idealization and sentimentality surrounding the status of citizen (which forges an

imaginative and emotional attachment with a particular state of belonging) contradicts its sordid

history, even for those whose citizenship status is arguably secure, obscuring the ethical

ambiguity Bosniak identifies, namely citizenship as a category of exclusion instituted with the

express purpose of stigmatizing or alienating unwanted members and citizenship as a category of

inclusion meant to recognize rights everyone possess. As such, the relationships that constitute

citizenship are not simply exclusionary or inclusionary, but dialogical (Isin 29). Elaborating this

dialogical character brings the sociology of citizenship into purview. Citizenship vexes the

relationship between individual self-image and participation in a homogenous group identity.

The graduations and complexities that may differentiate one group from another, or may stress

what a particular group takes as its most fundamental priority, do not always manifest in the

popular speech that surrounds citizenship as a fundamental tenant of democracies. Instead, an often simplistic citizen archetype obscures the density of political activity and may put demands on the subject to forget personally-felt disagreements for the sake of national, cultural, or racial forms of affiliation. These demands can be differentially experienced based off whom is afforded the benefit of the doubt, and conditions of war may intensify the perceived need to distinguish between patriot and stranger.

Citizenship is therefore a highly complex polyphony of relationships constituted by various strategies and technologies for group formation. Citizenship is a fundamentally relational conception—to be a citizen is to exist in some form of relation with other people. Isin argues that this relation is with alterity because the "other" is the central figure in relation to which citizenship accrues meaning (29), to the degree that otherness makes citizenship possible. This relationship with alterity need not be antagonistic or alienating. Group identity "always includes views about 'others' without which life narrative would lose both their meaning and their function"; various "narrative strategies" help to attribute value or devalue what makes a particular group, in this case citizenship, a meaningful affiliation (Isin 30). As Isin elaborates, it is "important to distinguish between the logics of alterity that constitute strangers and outsiders as immanent identities and the logics of exclusion and enclosure that constitute aliens or barbarians as transitive or exterior identities" (30). These terms—strangers, outsiders, aliens, barbarians, and so forth—are often synonymous in casual conversation, and although they may overlap, alterity is not monolithic. Subtle variations in alterity are significant enough to distinguish between, for example, the racial slave in the Antebellum U.S. and women during the same time period, both of whom were disenfranchised from full citizenship but who could associate or belong to the United States in materially different ways. Put more simply, there are

measurable differences between types of alterity that can be determined by their positioning in or outside social space. As such, assessments of citizenship along a spectrum that contains only two polls, inclusion or exclusion, misses the degree to which the relationships that ground citizenship are dialogical.

Significant amounts of negotiation are embedded in what *sort* of relationship citizenship has with alterity, and the confusion or conflation of these different relationships is the incapacity or unwillingness to distinguish between the myriad ways otherness can manifest and make citizenship a meaningful group identity. This also means that plotting the different instantiations of citizenship along an incomplete spectrum of exclusion and inclusion cannot be done without ignoring the "logics of alterity" that embody political subjecthood alongside the logics of exclusion. Isin elaborates:

> While the logics of exclusion would have us believe in zero-sum, discrete, and binary groups, the logics of alterity assume overlapping, fluid, contingent, dynamic, and reversible boundaries and positions, where agents engage in solidaristic strategies such as recognition and affiliation, agonistic strategies such as domination and authorization, or alienating strategies such as disbarment across various positions within social space. (30)

Binary oppositions may have tactical significance for the anti-immigrant hardliner who wishes to define all noncitizens as enemies or outsiders, but they fundamentally miss the complexities of group formation that transpire *within* social space. A narrow, exterior view of politics as merely the contest between nations or states disavows a significant portion of the political relationships that are actually constitutive of daily life. Isin singles out Carl Schmitt's notion of the political as a paradigmatic example of this unproductive view of politics (where it concerns explaining the intricacies of group formation). Schmitt frames the political as a binary between friend and enemy to the extent that a "world in which the possibility of war is utterly eliminated, a completely pacified globe, would be a world without the distinction of friend and enemy and hence a world without politics" (35). Schmitt's notion of politics is incomplete insofar as the

48

elimination of the friend-enemy dichotomy would be the end of only one type of relationship by which being political is possible. There are other types of strategies for group formation—Isin distinguishes between solidaristic, agonistic, and alienating—where the relationship with alterity does not render the other an enemy and where war or domination are neither a productive nor preferred form of politics. These strategies impact both alterity and "friendship" as dynamic forms of relationship.

While alienating strategies are certainly palpable and emotionally provocative, such as those used by anti-immigrant political factions to frame some noncitizens as enemies or aliens, they should not be overemphasized in comparison to forms of group formation where elimination or effacement is not the intended goal, nor should we assume that the rhetoric at play in framing group formation as a strict dichotomy between good and bad or members and non-members actually captures the nature of the relationship between citizens and noncitizens, or even between citizens and other like-minded citizens. Indeed, wholesale elimination of alterity would spell the end of the political relationships that make group identities meaningful, or at least eliminate the meaningfulness of citizenship. As Isin explains:

> …merchants and artisans in the polis or sansculottes and workers in the metropolis are examples of strangers. While estranged from citizenship, they were nonetheless considered as belonging to the city and they could associate with citizens via solidaristic or agonistic strategies and technologies. By, contrast, slaves in the polis, vagabonds in the eutopolis, or refugees in the cosmopolis were constituted as outsiders, neither belonging to the group nor interacting with it, but belonging to and necessary for the city in which citizens and strangers associated. They were typically, though not always, constituted via agonistic and alienating strategies and technologies. (31)

There are a couple of points to be made regarding Isin's analysis. Firstly, the imminence of other groups within social space that define the internal struggle for group solidarity can go farther in explaining how, for example, the anti-immigrant hardliner does not in fact wish to efface the noncitizen but to instead position them on the threshold, thus ensuring the meaningfulness of

their own membership and inclusion as citizens.[3] Julia Kristeva (1991) in her exploration of the semiotics of foreignness and strangeness, appears to recognize this quality in the connotation of "foreigner" itself, suggesting they are "[n]either the apocalypse on the move nor the instant adversary to be eliminated for the sake of appeasing the group" (1). They can nonetheless provoke a productive crisis for those whose belonging goes unquestioned because the foreigner "comes in when the consciousness of my difference arises" (ibid), fostering potentially intensified bonds of social or ethnic cohesion.

Isin alludes to the role of slaves in the Ancient Greek city-state and also slaves in the Antebellum U.S. as an example of those who were "estranged from citizenship" but still belonging to particular slave-holding states via individual masters. As such, though they did not feature in the public spaces that constituted the polity, they were nonetheless present in the private spaces that also underwrote the nation. By placing the noncitizen, slave, immigrant, migrant, or refugee on the periphery, they may claim that the threat of invasion or subversion is perennial without ever having to declare war (this imagined threat of rebellion by slaves will be revisited throughout my analysis). In this example, the distinction is between domination that is absolute and ends with the effacement of the enemy (and the declaration of victory), and domination that leads to neither effacement nor even subservience but the maintenance of political regimes that hold the citizen and noncitizen in a more or less static relationship to one another, one where the noncitizen will never actually gain the upper-hand but where the power differential isn't so great as to render the noncitizen superfluous. This does not suggest that assimilation is not possible or permissible. Kristeva notes, for example, how a conscious and

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[3] What does this mean for those who wish to resist anti-immigrant ideologies? Put simply, direct advocacy for more inclusive forms of citizenship against prohibitive and segregationist policy must contend with an entirely different axis upon which citizenship balances—an axis occupied entirely by visions of the "other." Alterity cannot be eliminated from citizenship.

concerted attempt at assimilation can be "flattering" as the foreigner valorizes and celebrates the "civilization where he seeks shelter" (39)—indeed, such flattery may be constantly demanded of the foreigner as a way to prove that their allegiance no longer lies with a former home. I'll explore potential examples of flattery in my analysis of Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative* in Chapter Two.

Secondly, these various gradations in group identity shows how a rhetoric or vocabulary for citizenship that is strictly dichotomized between belonging and non-belonging fundamentally misses citizenship's dialogical character. Lost in the sentimental and romanticized rhetoric of citizenship are the nuances between full enfranchisement and the differing levels of invisibility for women, racialized peoples, refugees, stateless persons, guest workers, and the poor. Importantly, these various categories and subcategories are shifting and historically contingent, so while certain types of relationships may recur over time or emerge in disparate cultural contexts, it is nonetheless "much more important," Isin writes, "to understand the nature and origins of the relationship between dominant group and minority group than it is know the marks by which people are identified as members of either" (35). Categories of sex, gender, ethnicity, or race, for example, are themselves "incidental, arbitrary, and unessential but strategic" (ibid), and defined less by abstract theorizing and more by a specific set of historical conditions whereby their particular relationship with another group identity is dominant. In any case, the erasure of nuances within and among groups from the purview of cultural and political power centres, or from the methods by which these groups and relationships are narrated, implicates citizenship rhetoric in the material conditions and possibilities of being political.

In sum then, the nuance of alterity is reflected both in and among groups, which is especially the case if the group identity at issue is as broad and historically varied as

citizenship—an identity where the relations that predominate include various subgroups, orientations, power differentials, and legal institutions. Isin is not just emphasizing that a number of dynamic relationships constitute citizenship but seeks to provide an analytic of how group values become virtues and how alterity is a productive notion for the establishment of vice upon which the dominate group or subgroup stakes its value system. Citizenship in particular is embedded in figurations of vice and virtue. Indeed, the function of technologies and strategies of citizenship are to establish the noncitizen as an inferior status through stereotype and other prejudicial figurations. Isin, therefore, understands citizenship as a "kind of identity within a city or state that certain agents constitute as virtuous, good, righteous, and superior, and differentiate it from strangers, outsiders, and aliens who they constitute as their alterity via various solidaristic, agonistic, and alienating strategies and technologies" (35-6). Importantly, Isin notes that these "values become virtues in the process of the construction of myth and images" (30). We see here how the outline of literature emerges organically from a discussion of citizenship, and how creative practices in general figure as technologies or strategies for the forms of alterity that ground it. The importance of literature for defining the parameters of citizenship was understood well before modern citizenship regimes first emerged in the late eighteenth century. Well prior to modernity, poetics (in all its various forms) was essential to Ancient Greek conceptions of citizenship. Poetics "helped the aristocracy forge a specific identity and distinguish itself from groups that it constituted as its other" (Isin 90), which in turn could be circulated between city-states and among subsequent generations. Reconstituting poetic works as a means of underwriting one's group identity was also itself a "form of symbolic capital of citizenship that sustained its definition against others who were immanent in the polis" and it is

in this sense that "poetic practices of citizens constructed narratives that helped them establish their own superiority to and distinction from strangers and outsiders" (ibid).

In other words, poetics possessed a multi-functional role for the ruling political class by endearing a particular group formation, distinguishing outsiders or strangers, and constituting a loose corpus of works or traditions for circulation (the reproduction of which served as an instrumental form of symbolic capital) that could ensure that values of citizenship endured over time. Poetics was therefore deeply embedded in a larger cultural movement towards indemnifying a group as citizens. For contemporary literary analysis, it likewise textures readings of the canonical Greek works as derivative of a political, literary, and legal culture gripped by concerns over the multiple variations of alterity that existed just beyond the threshold of the citizen and which were integral to citizenship's meaningfulness as a group identity. As Isin summarizes:

> The fundamental question about poetics is not that it was "political" in the simple sense of serving particular interests, but in the sense of creating, embodying, and transmitting a perspective from which good from evil, noble from base, virtue from vice, honor from dishonor, greatness from pettiness, and magnificence from poverty were made distinguishable, and by virtue of that fact, were also made questionable and contestable. (92)

Though Isin does not delve further into the literary side of this argument, we nonetheless receive some important methodological points for forging a fresh analysis devoted to the modern conception of citizenship and the concurrent print culture that resulted in literary forms, such as the novel or long-form prose text. Examining the intersection between literature and citizenship cannot simply involve a search for depictions of citizens or the circulation of political interests, in part because literary forms embody and configure a broader citizenship culture in ways that go deeper than just representation. Rather, citizenship (as a type of social capital and institutionalized ritual) is discursively constituted through creative works like literature, which are at once narrativizations of contests among citizen and noncitizens and a form whose actual

53

physical production constitutes the performative enactment of political agency by the author. Literature in this context does not need to serve particular interests to be "political"—in fact, calling literature "political" is not at all informative.

Both Bosniak and Isin warn against taking citizenship rhetoric at face value for a very simple reason: appearances can be deceiving. The reality of citizenship is not always reflected in its rhetoric. However, if citizenship rhetoric is used to collapse alterity into a singular exilic figure or to obscure the dialogical and ambiguous character of citizenship itself, then this is at minimum informative of how certain groups are envisioning citizenship, namely as an uncomplicated moral category that distinguishes belonging from non-belonging.

The rhetoric of citizenship is a distinguishable site of literary and cultural analysis that is deeply implicated in citizenship as both a public subjectivity and a practical tool wielded by states. In particular, literature and the literary text are both historically and conceptually implicated in citizenship rhetoric for two primary reasons. Firstly, a focus on literature derives in part from its decisive function in the "apparatus of cultural fiction" (Brennan 2004, 217) that constitutes the communities we wish to be members of (or are forced to be members of), and its utility as an experimental space to objectify the form and function of being political. Secondly, literature has a role in the exercise of "symbolic power," which Isin elaborates as "crucial in politicizing struggles" (29). He continues:

> Symbolic power is the power to make groups and to consecrate or institute them in particular through various strategies and technologies. It is the power to make something exist in the objectified, public, or formal state, which only previously existed in an implicit or embodied state; this happens only when the group is named, designated, or selected as such. (29)

Acts of naming are central for delineating and legitimating group identities that were previously ill-defined or unstable and could not be instrumentalized as a legible category of person for the purposes of representation and control. No group, according to Isin, can ever be "homogenous

and unified entities with an absolute overlap of interests among their constituent members" (29), requiring some other dominating or overlapping vision to impose solidarity across a particular grouping, or to create antagonisms among other groups in order to forge new assemblages. The authority to bring about or impose these group distinctions—or the capacity to denote one's own group identity as virtuous or superior by casting other groups as inferior—do not arise *ex nihilo*. Alongside the notion of symbolic power, defining otherness requires what Isin calls "symbolic capital," which only diminishes if group solidarity is weak, and which "consists of images, expressions, knowledge, ideas, information, and beliefs that mobilize the views of the dominant as well as the dominated" (38-39). At stake in buttressing particular group formations is the capacity to continue wielding symbolic capital in such a way as to affirm the virtuosity of one's own group identity, to the extent that less dominate groups internalize their inferiority, although the "key strategy," Isin argues, "is to conceal that the inferior status of the dominated group derives not from the very conditions of their stranger or outsider situation and the oppression associated with it, but from the characteristics that the dominant group attributes to it" (36). In other words, the strategy involves projecting inferiority onto another group until they internalize that inferiority as generated from themselves.

Literature may be understood as a "technology of citizenship" (Isin ix) insofar as it constitutes a type of capital that is objectified as a cultural commodity. A technology of citizenship, according to Isin, delimits the possible expressions of being political by producing outsiders and strangers that contrast with citizen as the more virtuous status, shaping and altering the types of relationships that can be imagined and constituted. These technologies operate through racialization, stigmatization, marginalization and additional othering processes that constrain the possibility of "being political," which Isin defines as constituting "oneself

simultaneously with and against others as an agent capable of judgment about what is just and unjust" (x). These technologies therefore do not strictly operate towards the formation or maintenance of association and cohesive identity but likewise dissociation and estrangement. Moreover, these technologies are not for the singular purpose of domination, which Isin argues is not even "the most important or coveted action" (33). Isin points to early European city charters as an example of a technology of citizenship—charters which functioned to legitimate existing unequal political arrangements for both higher authorities and the city inhabitants, some of whom were expressly excluded from representation or political power. The charter represented an exercise in both symbolic and "real" power.

The centre of citizenship's significance and functioning is a legitimating process of exclusion and alienation, or more specifically of alterity. Nationalistic insularity can pass as civic virtue under these technologies and the emergence of an iconic citizen leads to gradations extending backwards from that ideal. These gradations can be delineated by exclusionary categories, by public behaviour (such as expressions of overt patriotism), or by government-mandated conditions such as the fulfilment of work or residency requirements, or military conscription. While obviously not as effectual in the same manner as a city charter or state constitution, literature contributes to the production of alterity that Isin identifies as the central relationship underwriting citizenship as an objectified form of symbolic capital and an essential tenet of institutionalized forms of capital such as education and accreditation. Literature can convey and distribute particular stereotypes or archetypes of citizenship that legitimatize group identities or group power differentials, or literature can novelize colonial and imperialistic fantasy, buttress an official or pseudo-official language, mythologize national space, or contribute to school curriculum grounded in canonical texts that depict enduring imaginings of

the iconic citizen. In short, if literature is a technology of citizenship, it is not simply because literature represents citizens as characters or nations as settings. Rather, literature is embedded in the forms of capital that are essential to group formation more broadly (social, symbolic, etc.); literature contains and circulates a rhetoric of citizenship that is integral to citizenship's performative enactment or public, discursive negotiation; literature has the capacity to represent the density of politicalized experience in a way other creative forms cannot. Literature might not directly facilitate dominating exercises of power but neither is domination the express interest of states or groups that maintain citizenship regimes. Negotiating power arrangements whereby groups may form solidaristic or antagonistic relations with another allows for the formation of strangers, outsiders, and aliens by which the virtuous citizen may be defined and constituted. Literature does not need to contribute directly to the exercise of power, or even be concerned with power, to be a technology of citizenship. Indeed, an obsession with unravelling how literature relates to power potentially constitutes a needless distraction where it concerns citizenship.

This is not to suggest that literature *only* operates as a strategy or technology of citizenship. New or novel imaginings of being political may be depicted in literature, or current regimes may be challenged or contested in literary texts. But any conveyance of citizenship, whether implicit or not, likewise conveys the ethical ambiguity at its heart, even if the central preoccupation of a literary text concerns an inclusionary understanding of citizenship. Literature is a vessel of migration conveying specific imaginings of the citizen from their initial modern emergence in the eighteenth century into the contemporary period, as well as a nationalist, colonial, and imperialist technology for defining and presenting citizenship to successive generations. Part of this fact is simply historical: the rise of the novel in English, for example,

proceeds somewhat closely the formal establishment of the Westphalian model of national sovereignty in Europe in 1648, which codified an international system of statehood that "places the border as a permanent and *static* barrier that stands at the frontier of a country's territory" (Shachar 812). This border "serves a crucial role in delimiting (externally) and binding (internally) a nation's territory, jurisdiction, and peoplehood, correlating with a notion of fixed 'legal spatiality'" (ibid). These borders strictly define the "foreigner" as someone who is beyond the bounds of the state, whereas previous conceptions of "foreignness" likely concerned persons from the next village or province. In some crucial respects, states continue to operate under this Westphalian model, and as such the Westernized novel has yet to historically, culturally, or socially exist outside this international system of statehood. Subsequentially, all representations of the person and citizen in English novelistic fiction has been in relation to or derived from a specific understanding of the state.

In sum, literature has historically operated as a technology of citizenship by contributing to (while at times resisting) the formation of a common rhetoric for classifying persons as citizens. Such an operation may reside in the broader production of a generic "national" literature, where both preferred and problematized subjectivities are rendered, where idealized populations may be depicted, and where particular groups may be categorized by vague, uninformative taxonomies (i.e.: "Asian," "Hispanic," "Jewish," etc). As such, singular works which contribute, justify, transmit, define, or constitute these categories can also be read as technologies of citizenship. Other examples may be found in the structures of political authority they depict, defend, naturalize, resist, or engage.

The site of the present analysis is not strictly the abstract theorizing of the nation or of transnationalism but directed towards citizenship rhetoric, which may be bounded by national

sentiment and a common language or may likewise migrate across borders and find translation

and expression in differing historical and cultural contexts. Despite citizenship's current nation-

boundedness, it likewise transcends national borders in terms of its capacity to refer to any form

of political belonging, not just one circumscribed by the state. Indeed, the central role of

language reconfigures our approach from a strictly national context[4] towards other forms of

analysis that can be attentive to the literary modalities replete throughout citizenship rhetoric's

transnational and transhistorical significance, as well as the current era of "new cartography," as

Ayelet Shachar (2009) has termed it, in which borders are fluid precisely so that they may be

erected wherever the immigrant, refugee, or noncitizen may go. The importance then of

imagination—specifically of colonial and national fantasies in imagining the extent and depth of

political belonging—steers us towards literature and its historically central role in recording and

conveying rhetorics to describe persons in political contexts in which their citizenship or

subjecthood is negotiated through performative acts of public subjectivity or through

novelization and documentation. In both cases, the practice of citizenship is being discursively

negotiated.

In Chapter Two, I inaugurate my analysis by reading Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting

Narrative* (1789) which, though technically an autobiography, deploys several novelistic

techniques and tropes and refracts them in critically interesting ways. I read Equiano's text as the

discursive and performative attempt to insert himself into British political and social space, and

as a means of pursuing an abolition to the slave trade by depicting himself as a reader of English

literature, as a Christian convert, and ultimately as a proactive citizen. I suggest that Equiano's

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[4] Linda Bosniak argues that scholars should avoid treating national societies as "the total universe of analytical and moral concern" (15) in part because nation-states no longer exercise singular authority over typologies of citizenship.

text reveals the enduring importance of the chattel slave to imaginings of citizenship in the Anglo-Atlantic world via the centrality of the metaphor of slavery to the English antityrannical tradition, the rhetoric of which Equiano appropriates in his attempt to forge a human rights discourse that extends to racialized persons. I contribute to existing scholarship on Equiano by positioning his autobiography as a bridge between the pre-eighteenth century rhetoric of freedom and liberty that he deploys and the subsequent rhetoric of citizenship that has helped to inure revolutionary ideals of political belonging in contemporary imaginings of citizenship. Moreover, I suggest that latent within Equiano's autobiography is a concern for issues of governmentality where it concerns the management of imperial contact between persons like himself and the state government of Great Britain, which manifests, for example, in his coded theorizations of American Indigeneity as a condition of religious un-enlightenment in need of conversion. Throughout his autobiography, I argue, Equiano evinces the perspective of an agent of the state attempting to pacify formerly violent encounters between Great Britain and racialized and Indigenous persons into either economically beneficial forms of exchange or the smooth exercise of state power over colonial subjects, which often involves conversion to Christianity.

In Chapter Three, I broaden my focus from Equiano's *Narrative* to the legal and cultural milieu surrounding slavery in Great Britain by reading his text alongside the court decisions of Lord Mansfield, an influential British judge of the late eighteenth century whose emergence in abolitionist literature has a complicated and nuanced history. Truly transatlantic in his influence, I read Mansfield's decisions in *Somerset v. Stewart* (1772) and *Gregson v. Gilbert* (1783) to focus more extensively on how the slave figured legally and commercially in Great Britain and the United States, and how the attempt to protect the institution of slavery led to seemingly paradoxical and absurd intellectual foundations to modern citizenship regimes. I argue that

Mansfield and Equiano might have shared some ideological overlaps in terms of a shared

commitment to commercial enterprise as a conduit for liberty. In turn, I argue that Equiano's at

times explicit support for British hegemony in the Atlantic limits the scope of his emancipatory

message and should caution against readings of his autobiography as strictly a resistance

narrative.

In Chapter Four, I conduct a comparative analysis of Frances Burney and Mary Shelley

as a departure point for examining how citizenship is conceptually and practically grounded in

movement, to the extent that popular associations of the citizen with rootedness or homeness

fundamentally betrays its modern genealogy as permission for travel. I read *The Wanderer* and

Frankenstein as two texts that implicitly engage with the transmutation of the racial slave into

paranoia of racialized refugees and how this fear coincided with complicated feelings around the

emergence of documentary surveillances, like passports, to function as both travel documents

and an indication of citizenship. Burney and Shelley's engagement with the racial slave and

refugee is further complicated by the centrality of the metaphor of slavery to proto-feminist

writing—a metaphor I address recurringly throughout my analysis. While travelling as a

temporary, leisurely pursuit emerged following the Napoleonic Wars as an ideal activity of the

upper classes, the phenomenon of tourism coincided with both the abolition of the slave trade

and the spectre of slave rebellion, as the success of the Haitian Revolution inured paranoia of

more uprisings across the Atlantic world and especially the United States, where slaves

constituted an increasingly large portion of the population in Southern jurisdictions. Some white

European elites derided the requirement of documents for travel and novelized their excursions

in travelogues and guidebooks, which coincided with, firstly, European governments seeking to

instrumentalize passports as a means of exercising authority over movement and, secondly, with

some American states seeking to further constrain the movement of racial persons, both free and enslaved.

In Chapter Five, I turn my attention from the Atlantic world and Continental Europe towards the Western Hemisphere, where I situate Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno* within the discursive and violent attempts to forge a post-slavery United States. In keeping with my overall focus on the racial slave, my analysis reads Melville's novella historiographically and comparatively against Antebellum U.S. law and politics that sought to invent and contain the fugitive slave—a sort of precursor figure to the "illegal" immigrant or refugee whose entry into a particular jurisdiction singled them out as fugitive or criminal. I argue that Babo's revolt constitutes an attempt to forge a post-citizenship regime built on African repatriation and that the actions of Amaso Delano, the primary subject of narrative attention, foils the attempt by reeling Babo and his crew into the legal and political sphere of an American-led Western political order. I suggest that Delano's actions are analogous to U.S. domestic policy surrounding the racial slave, who are arrested on the periphery of inclusion in a way that prefigures the forced and coerced positioning of the immigrant as neither belonging nor entirely expelled but always held at the border, either literally in detention camps or imaginatively in the minds of citizens whose own solidarity and patriotism are forged around outsiders as threats to national sovereignty.

In Chapter Six, I conclude with Brian Friel's *Translations* (1980), uniting my analysis around an examination of Friel's work as a reinterpretation of official or institutional historical narratives as a means of revealing the fluidity of indigeneity and foreignness. My reading of *Translations* emphasizes how continued engagement with the historical period that is the focus of my project is necessary because of how origin events, state practices, and intellectual traditions from the period endure in contemporary notions of citizenship in the Atlantic world. I

explore how Friel contests the rigidity of contemporary citizenship rhetoric by portraying the constant acts of translation that occur between historical time periods, between cultures, and within a shared language. This more expansive and robust notion of translation also rethinks the practice of historical analysis itself by situating it as a form of linguistic and cultural transformation, rather than a benign transcription of the past. The profundity of this rethinking comes into starker relief in the context of contemporary state governmentality and nationalist movements that continually and incessantly flag particular histories to provoke patriotic feeling, justify large-scale wars, energize an ideology, or, as Michael Billig has put, reproduce the nation on a daily basis. Friel in particular dislodges mythologies of Irish or Gaelic purity by depicting the fluid intermixture of indigeneity and foreignness as a result of inter- and intra-cultural and linguistic translation with Great Britain in the decades after the 1798 Irish Rebellion. Alongside this focus, I also examine how the British survey of Ireland and the pursuit of Anglicization around which the play is set constitutes a process of legibility central to the functioning of modern citizenship regimes.

CHAPTER TWO – Equiano, Afro-British Citizenship, and the Rhetoric of Antityrannism

Olaudah Equiano addresses his autobiography to members of British Parliament to whom he hopes his "genuine Narrative" will "excite in your august assemblies a sense of compassion for the miseries which the Slave-Trade has entailed on my unfortunate countrymen" (41). Framed as a letter, the address outlines the content of his subsequent narrative which, though "devoid of literary merit," aspires to plead the cause of abolition while venerating Christianity and Great Britain, the knowledge of which Equiano is thankful to have despite being "torn away from all the tender connexions that were naturally dear to my heart" (ibid). Great Britain's "liberal sentiments, its humanity, the glorious freedom of its government, and its proficiency in arts and science, has exalted the dignity of human nature," and so Equiano's plea for Parliament to act rightly "when the question of Abolition is to be discussed" conveys the nation's moral principles as unfulfilled but within reach (41). Just as significantly, by publicizing his address in the opening of his autobiography Equiano imparts the first of many identities he will demonstrate throughout, namely that of concerned citizen. Though it seemingly narrows his intended audience to sitting politicians whose votes on the matter of abolition are amenable, the letter depicts Equiano as a principled Englishman *and* African whose petition seeks to set the nation on a moral course, not necessarily the work of a self-interested writer.

The Interesting Narrative (1789) is thus written in the voice of a fellow citizen whose petition for abolition derives from a place of authenticity and personal experience, not monied interest or political connection. From the very beginning, Equiano establishes his credentials by performing a familiar exercise in the practice of citizenship: letter writing, political involvement, and knowledge of public policy. Even though Equiano's status as an Englishman is contested by

an emergent and ethnocentric concept of race that positions his hybrid identity practice of Afro-Britishness as impure, he nonetheless performs as a citizen in his discursive engagement with both Parliament and the public, whose opinion on abolition is also sought after. At the same time, Equiano's opening letter reveals the complexities of his social praxis and political activism. Financially supported by hundreds of subscribers, the list of which he includes after his letter, his autobiography arises from a theological-political movement for abolition in search of authenticated accounts that can steer the hearts and minds of the British nation towards antislavery—a sort of phantom editorializing that would have influenced Equiano's life-writing. Such a campaign, however, had to challenge an economic and legal regime that sought to render racialized persons in a permanent state of subjugation and exploitation.

This and the next chapter situate Equiano's authorship and discursive performance of *The Interesting Narrative* alongside several other British authors who helped configure the political and legal milieu of Great Britain in implicit and explicit ways prior to 1789, when Equiano published his autobiography. I am intentionally using an expanded definition of "author" to include not just canonical writers like John Milton, Aphra Behn, and Daniel Defoe, who will be discussed in this chapter, but also Lord Chief Justice William Murray, 1st Earl of Mansfield (referred throughout as Lord Mansfield), whose authorship of several key British court cases reverberated on a transatlantic scale and who will be discussed in the next chapter, in particular his judgements in *Somerset v. Stuart* (1772) and *Gregson v. Gilbert* (1783). *Somerset* concerned the legal status of slavery within Great Britain and *Gregson* concerned the *Zong* massacre of 1781, the latter of which exhibited the extent the law was willing to go to protect the slave trade through the fashioning of debilitating legal personas that positioned the slave as both person and thing or animal. As such, that chapter will examine how the law rivalled literature during the

eighteenth and early nineteenth century for the production of culturally significant fictions, specifically legal fictions that imagined racial persons as rightless entities whose only recourse to humane treatment or manumission was the benevolence of their masters.

The conflation of racial identity with slavery served an essential organizing principle in the developing citizenship regimes of Britain and the United States. The resulting legal personas, which compounded slaves' captivity and denied them the capacity or competence to contest their servitude, emerged alongside the personas fashioned and distributed by literature, which occasionally contested popular and public visions of belonging, citizenship, and subjugation. The profundity of Equiano's address to Parliament in the opening of his autobiography derives from the fact that a former slave is challenging the institution that sought to render him voiceless. Unable to receive legal standing in most of the Atlantic world, he turned instead to the court of public opinion to make his case. As such, alongside a critique of the legal debate over personhood, I examine Equiano's contemporaneous attempt in *The Interesting Narrative* to forge a type of persona that would invigorate Black persons with a level of spirit, sentiment, and rationality that had been largely unrecognized by both the law and the public. My analysis is going to track how particular narrative techniques and tropes germane to eighteenth-century novelistic fiction emerge in Equiano's *Narrative* and how, more specifically, they facilitate his self-insertion into the British polity. I will likewise show how Equiano develops a rhetoric for human rights and liberty that includes racialized persons and which pre-figures the now prototypical lexicon of citizenship as the recognition and protection of those rights. My contribution to the extensive scholarship on Equiano is to consider how his *Narrative,* in its deployment of literary techniques for his self-presentation, attempts to assuage white anxiety and legitimatize the Afro-British community by depicting himself in his Christian conversion and

merchant activity as a governable subject of the British empire. In other words, he makes palatable the idea of himself and all racialized persons as Westernized citizens by situating himself as candidates for state management.

Why focus on Equiano's *Narrative,* though, if it is not strictly a novel? Equiano's work is a collation of eighteenth-century sources and fictional narrative techniques that influenced the writing of subsequent literary fiction and non-fiction, not just the slave narrative. Indeed, Cathy Davidson suggests that it "resembles many eighteenth-century novels (both American and European) in its first-person autobiographical narrative pretext while also fitting the generic conventions of many autobiographies of the time (again, both American and European) in its novelistic emphasis on self-creation" (19). Tanya Caldwell similarly remarks that "the *Narrative* itself shares the world, the experiences, and the language not of Frederick Douglass but of Johnson and Burke, Smith and Defoe" (280). The resulting work, transnational in its origins and influence, functions as "slave narrative, sea yarn, military adventure, ethnographic reportage, historical fiction, travelogue, picaresque saga, sentimental novel, allegory, tall tale, pastoral origins myth, gothic romance, conversion tale, and abolitionist tract, with different features coming to the fore at different times, and the mood vacillating accordingly" (Davidson 19). Equiano takes creative license to plot his life in an intriguing way to the extent that we can accurately assess him as an author who novelizes his experience, in turn opening up his work to a literary analysis attuned to the various tropes and narrative techniques he employs. Treating Equiano as a literary author and as a participant in the broader eighteenth-century literary trend of novelization is not to undermine the truth of his account (although he did potentially embellish some of his autobiography) but to instead recognize the role of novelistic fiction in the abolitionist movement. Literary technique was part of the Black writer's arsenal in conveying

their dignity and psychological depth. The genealogy of Equiano's *Narrative* is thus rooted in an English-language literature that incudes writers like Milton, Behn, and Defoe, which in turn positions these authors as suitable for comparative analysis with Equiano.

Owing to the multivalence of Equiano's identity, contemporary scholarship often isolates particular aspects of his self-presentation in order to elaborate how his autobiography evinces specific genres or identity practices beyond the slave, including orphan, Christian, missionary, merchant, mariner, soldier, Afro-Briton, author, and so on. Indeed, since Equiano's *Narrative* became in the 1970s what Ramesh Mallipeddi calls the "ur-text of black literary tradition" (924), scholarship has not exhausted a work that is brimming with interpretative possibilities, even though it is ostensibly a straightforward non-fiction memoir. Throughout this chapter, I will call on existing scholarship that explores Equiano narrowly within some particular aspect of his work and use that to build a broader portrait of Equiano's religico-political subjecthood. While full attention to each one would require a much longer project, this chapter attempts to at minimum address how some of Equiano's identity practices figure in his self-presentation as an Afro-British citizen.

Chapter Two and Three are to be read as companion pieces. The current chapter is focused on Equiano's *Narrative* while in the next chapter, I'll focus more on elaborating the cultural and legal milieu surrounding slavery in Britain in the late eighteenth century using the case *Somerset v. Stuart* as a point of departure. Also in Chapter Three, the intricate details of the *Zong* massacre and the subsequent trial *Gregson vs. Gilbert* will be explored in the context of Lord Mansfield's significant legal presence in the Atlantic world. Equiano played a critical role in elevating the *Zong* massacre from an obscure episode of insurance to a chief concern of one of Britain's most vocal abolitionists, Granville Sharp, who was also one of Equiano's subscribers

for the publication of his autobiography. Despite Sharp's and Equiano's efforts, the *Zong* massacre did not generate high levels of legal or public interest in the same way *Somerset* did. For now, however, I begin with an analysis of Equiano's *Narrative*.

Section A
Equiano's Countrymen and Collective Identity

By the time Olaudah Equiano purchased his manumission in 1766, he'd been a slave most of his life, escaped death multiple times, had lost good friends and gained new enemies, and struggled to gain redress before the law. In his memoir he styles himself "Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa" (the full title of the work being *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*). "Vassa" was an imposed European name forced upon him by a British naval officer while "Equiano" was his given Igbo name assigned as an infant, but he nonetheless includes both on the title page despite their seemingly oppositional meanings—one an indication of his origins as a free man, the other of his slavery. Whereas previous freed slaves had authored works under one of their names (either their Christian name or their slave name) or a combination of the two,[5] Equiano chose to include both but separated by "or," an indication of both alternative and addition. From being treated like less than human to affirming more than one identity, Equiano took a decidedly different turn when it came to the figure of the author. Formerly in absence of full personhood, Equiano made up for it by affirming more than one persona—his answer to his mistreatment was a surplus of identity.

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[5] The two most well-known autobiographies by former slaves by the time Equiano wrote his were those of Ignatius Sancho and James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw respectively.

Equiano's choice to include both of his names is part rhetorical, part legal. Even though he was initially opposed to the name "Gustavus Vassa," given to him by Michael Henry Pascal, a British lieutenant (79), the name acquired instrumental value later in life as Equiano sought to settle in London as an Afro-British subject and merchant. Vassa was the name by which Equiano signed contracts of marriage, trade, or legal will; Vassa was the name by which he accrued his wealth. His British identity as Gustavus Vassa was in part purely instrumental, a way for him to navigate English society as a Black man in a country that had ostensibly prohibited slavery in 1772 with *Somerset v. Stewart*. Equiano was "Gustavus Vassa" for his political personhood and for all civil and legal purposes in Britain, yet he nonetheless gave both names as author of *The Interesting Narrative*, a plural or hybrid identity practice that subverted the unity expected of the authorial and legal subject and especially of the writer of an autobiography. His dual identity as the African and the European—as the former slave and the converted Christian, as the world traveller and successful merchant—were articulated in place of a singular figure of authorship. Equiano's choice was not simply an attempt to sell books or assert his authenticity as an African with an Indigenous (Igbo) name—although the names certainly accomplished both. The book does ultimately arise from abolitionist and spiritualist discourses that prized eyewitness accounts and testimonials on the horrors of the slave trade. The welter of abolitionism in which Equiano wrote certainly invited him to affirm the authenticity of his account by any rhetorical means, which included providing an authentically African name alongside a Christian name, a testament to both his religious conversation and self-possession. But the dual naming was also a genuine expression of his plurality and a choice that could have exposed him to legal challenge. "By (re)appropriating the name Olaudah Equiano," Peter Jaros writes, "Vassa boldly attaches his authorial identity to a name unprotected by documents of manumission, reference, inheritance, or

copyright, even as he retains the name Gustavus Vassa, to which such document refers" (6).

Equiano's own stance on his name actually appears quite ambivalent, perhaps because, as he relates in his memoir, the name Gustavus Vassa was arbitrary and only affixed after physical violence from Pascal. Equiano nonetheless appropriates the name Vassa (in some sense from the clutches of Pascal's violence) in order to successfully forge the legal and economic relations denied to slaves and other Black Atlantic subjects. The memoir and the name both affirm Equiano's self-possession, which he purchases through the buying of his freedom. He successively instrumentalizes his hybridity in pursuit of several ends, including the achievement of a commercial identity in an early capitalist marketplace and for the "relief of his suffering countryman" (41), the latter of which he explicitly frames himself as an "instrument." His hybridity likewise reflects the two different poles of his transatlantic existence (Africa and Europe, and to some extent North America) as well as his religious conversion and spiritual rebirth. *The Interesting Narrative* is thus part of a series of overlapping personifications that Equiano rhetorically enacts over the course of his life as a way to achieve some level of humane recognition, although in doing so, Jaros argues, Equiano reveals the extent to which the act of personification is a performative that everyone commits in order to sustain a social and political life, not just the former slave. Rather than a given, personhood is depicted as enacted through rhetorical exercise (whether written or verbal), especially in contexts where one's humanity is not self-evident (Jaros 16).

Equiano's *Narrative* details his childhood growing up in a province of the Kingdom of Benin, including his abduction as a young boy, his purchase on the coast and subsequent slavery, his survival of the brutal Middle Passage, his work aboard military vessels, his self-funded manumission, his conversion to Christianity, his acquisition of British identity, and his eventual

success as an enterprising merchant, which included a stint running a slave plantation. *The Interesting Narrative* is exemplary of the slave narrative as a transcultural form that's written both within and against the dominate culture, and this is established from the title page when he includes both of his names. In the time between his renewed freed status and the late 1780s, the slave narrative had remained largely disparate and unformed, but his memoir helped cement a new genre that combined the devotional aims of spiritual autobiography and abolitionism with the eye-witness recounting of the slave trade and calls for sympathy, not just for Equiano himself but, by implication, all Africans who had similarly suffered as he had.

To alight sympathetic movement in his audience, Equiano describes traumatic and harrowingly sad moments early in his life that would portend his forced traffic into chattel slavery. For example, he relates how, as a child in the African interior, a rival tribe kidnapped him and his sister and they were subsequently estranged:

> When we went to rest the following night they offered us some victuals; but we refused it; and only comfort we had was being in one another's arms all that night, and bathing each other in tears. But alas! we were soon deprived of even the small comfort of weeping together. The next day proved a day of greater sorrow than I had yet experienced; for my sister and I were then separated, while we lay clasped in each other's arms. (62)

Equiano accentuates the arbitrary cruelty that the European slave trade has wrought on inter-African tribal relations, as the existing practice of slavery among the interior—which had hitherto been conducted as a result of war and punishment rather than strictly commerce—leads to him and his sister being separated in an acutely distressful scene. Family separation was a regular feature of the transatlantic slave trade, and Equiano's singular experience gestures to the countless minor tragedies and traumas as a result of European demand for Africans to sell-off their own countrymen. At the end of chapter two, Equiano relates another incident of separation. After surviving the Middle Passage and arriving in Barbados, merchants and prospective buyers rush to claim the healthiest slaves, which invariably results in "dearest friends and relations"

being forcibly parted and thus "prevented from cheering the gloom of slavery with the small comfort of being together and mingling their sufferings and sorrows" (76). Collective suffering forms bonds of solidarity that are subsequently broken by the continual process of separation that a slave must go through in their conveyance from Africa to plantations in the Americas. Equiano as a result poses a stark question to the "nominal Christian" reading his work: "Is it not enough that we are torn from our country and friends to toil for your luxury and lust of gain? Must every tender feeling be likewise sacrificed to your avarice?" (ibid). Equiano amplifies the affective register, noting how the slave trade erodes sympathy among whites and either worsens Black trauma or desensitizes them. Indeed, Equiano describes losing the "small remains of comfort I had enjoyed in conversing with my countrymen" as a result (77). Evacuated of affection from the cruelties of the trade, he cannot even do what is, firstly, a basic function for intimate contact, and secondly, a key instrument for fostering solidarity with fellow slaves. He later affirms the importance of a rhetorical agency after the rest of his "companions" have been conveyed elsewhere, leaving him "no person to speak to that I could understand" (ibid).

Up until the traumatic incident with his sister, Equiano had devoted an entire chapter detailing the depth and intricacies of his Eboe society, which he was also being estranged from. Still a child of twelve years old at the time, there can be no confusion regarding the source of his enslavement: he was kidnapped. Indeed, in this moment he happens to embody three figures that Mallipeddi's calls "quintessentially sentimental," namely "an orphan, child, and slave" (925). Yet, as Mallipeddi continues, Equiano's self-presentation as a sentimental figure, in which he is the hapless victim of cruelty and misfortunate, is matched against his "heroic self-making" (ibid), thus depicting himself both as a familial person robbed of relationality and a fearless individual whose freedom is almost entirely self-generated.

On the one hand, Equiano's appropriation of sentimentalism is complicated by a self-presentation that is as equally concerned with his evident victimhood at the hands of a cruel European imperial force as it is his individual journey towards liberation. To further complicate things, sentimentalism "became the literary mode of empire in the eighteenth century" (2), as Lynn Festa notes, in conjunction with growing British and French imperialism. "In an era in which imperial reach increasingly outstripped imaginative grasp," Festa continues, "sentimental fiction created the tropes that enabled readers to reel the world home in their minds" (ibid). This helped elevate sentimentalism as a prevailing conduit for reading and thinking encounters of the self and "the Other," which in this context includes Black Atlantic subjects like Equiano living either within Europe or close enough to sustain contact with the European sphere.

Racial, cultural, and geographic differences could be personified in literature in a way that assuaged white anxiety about identity loss, either by attempting sympathetic depiction or affirming hierarchies in which white Europeans remained dominate. Sentimentalism could likewise function to protect against perceived threats to British or French identity by fostering clear demarcations between themselves and those who lived elsewhere. There was the possibility that emotion and feeling could foster sympathy between people and thereby establish a shared humanity grounded in sentiment. Sympathy "breaks down the borders that support the categories of self and other," Festa writes, but it's a division "sentimentality endeavors to reassert" (6). Sympathy had to be managed if it was to protect a national identity from the threat of dissolution via contact with peoples previously consigned to the elsewhere. As such, feeling could operate as a "form of social and cultural differentiation" by creating a "template for the human grounded in the fact that others excite or experience emotion" (Festa 3). Rather than inviting "similitude," Festa warns, sentimentalism offered a novel way for Europeans to feel or pity other persons

while maintaining structures of exclusion. Feeling becomes a way to designate value alongside (rather than in strict contest with) reason or rationality, and if anything helps render unfamiliarity an even more pernicious threat to overcoming contempt for persons deemed other or alien. Festa therefore concludes that "the sentimental governance of emotion […] welds the affective response to other people to broader structures of human classification in order both to include *and* exclude individuals from the class of humanity" (7).

Sentimentalism was therefore a vital literary mode to comprehend the ever-expanding collection of peoples and worlds now within reach of direct contact, and by implication control or management. Indeed, the distance between sentimentalism and state governmentality was shorter than it may appear. Mallipeddi notes that in eighteenth-century Britain, "sympathy and sentiment were the ideological weapons of an economically ascendent class, which sought to integrate the subordinated members into the body politic by modeling social relations upon the intimate sphere of the family rather than the coercive apparatus of the state, thereby familializing the political realm," in turn "mediating the relations between English citizens and their colonial subjects, generating a fantasy of identification across racial and national divisions" (924). Equiano's emphasis on his lost family connections after being enslaved positions him as the orphan in need of adoption, thus putting himself in subject positions that will register as familial to his reader. Such an approach shows, as Mallipeddi points out, how the discourse of sentimentalism could be appropriated by women and racialized persons to construct their own subjectivities, instead of sentimentality being purely a "form of power flowing from the upper echelons of the social hierarchy to its bottom, from the metropolitan center to the colonial periphery" (924). In this way, Equiano somewhat reverses the logic of sentimental attachment by

commandeering its rhetoric and narrative tropes in order to self-constitute as a figure worthy of relationality and inclusion within an English social and political space.

Of course, his memoir personifies not just himself but every slave whose humanity remains willfully ignored, but scholars like Festa remain critical of this overall trope of personification in sentimentalism even if Equiano manages to conduct it in a critically interesting way, as Mallipeddi suggests he does. "Personifying a tree does not make a tree human, and neither does personifying a slave," Festa writes, "extending the *representation* of humanity is evidently not the same as treating others as human beings" (166). The redundancy of personification of people who are already persons might create the "*effect* of humanization" (Festa 167) but without any requirement of treating them better or differently or by abolishing imperial and colonial structures. Sentimental petitions for abolition arguably distracted from the legal petitions which would (and eventually did) have a transformative effect on the slave trade, or the structural petitions that could have reformed colonialism as the dominant mode of contact between peoples. While Equiano does occasionally address his reader in a way that mirrors the abolitionist rhetoric he admired in Granville Sharp and Thomas Clarkson, his autobiography also discursively negotiates between the two polls of direct address and narrative density. As opposed to the numerical reduction of the enslaved to a value on an accounting sheet, Equiano demonstrates psychological and emotional depth and in turn signals that his fellow "countrymen" likewise possess similar personality by constituting them in a coalition of feeling, who he was subsequently speaking on behalf of in writing to Parliament. Indeed, as Mallipeddi summarizes, far from "avoiding or shying away from the sentimental, then, *The Interesting Narrative* fully embraces it in an effort to convey the social anomie of enslavement" (924).

But Equiano does not singularly rely on sentiment or sympathy to move his audience towards accepting the evilness of the slave trade and the moral necessity of its abolition. He also proclaims that any rational person would likewise agree. At the end of his first chapter, he lays this out explicitly:

> Let the polished and haughty European recollect that his ancestors were once, like the Africans, uncivilized, and even barbarous. Did Nature make *them* inferior to their sons? And should *they too* have been made slaves? Every rational mind answers, No. Let such reflections as these melt the pride of their superiority into sympathy for the wants and miseries of their sable brethren, and compel them to acknowledge, that understanding is not confined to feature or colour. (60)

Even though Equiano says Africans are "uncivilized," a prevailing stereotype, he does nonetheless affirm that such perceived unsophistication does not justify the cruel treatment wrought upon them by Europeans, and that this conclusion is accessible to rational minds. Indeed, not only is it accessible but it likewise should compel sympathy for the continued suffering of those in the slave trade. Whether by reason or sentiment, the evils of slavery are palpable. Moreover, Equiano affirms that the "uncivilized" conditions of Africans is not an immutable feature in virtue of their complexion or nationality but open to reform and negotiation.

Equiano's elaboration of his childhood foreshadows a crucial narrative pattern that structures *The Interesting Narrative*: a recurring reminder of existential precarity in moments of tranquility, happiness, or stability. Davidson terms this trope the "existential rug-pull" (20) because, as she points out, these moments of apparent tranquility are nearly always followed by threats of exhortation, violence, or humiliation. This pattern imbues the narrative with a perpetual sense of impending doom and Equiano himself with an almost cursed aura. The source of this precarity wavers between Equiano's religious and racial identity. At times, Equiano suggests that both his misfortunate and miraculous escapes from danger are tied to Christian observance, using his own experience as anecdotal evidence that heeding God's word leads to

77

better fortune. Other times, it's clear that the source of Equiano's precarious situation results not just from slavery itself but "slavery's precondition of what we could now call 'race'" (Davidson 20). No matter how severe his religious observance, it is "precisely and repeatedly Equiano's ethnicity and, panoptically, his skin colour (even more than his place of birth) that makes him susceptible to recapture" (ibid), although his Christian conversion does endear him to those whites who do treat him humanly. Even though Equiano's capacity to comport himself in the face of injustice is certainly inspirational, the reader is not meant to forget that Equiano's vulnerability results from the European transatlantic slave trade. It is because of his kidnapping from his free state in Eboe and humiliation aboard a slave ship, both predicated on his perceived race, that he continually finds himself in such an existentially precarious position where his lack of civil rights are directly implicated in his harrowing encounters with mortality. Even upon purchasing his manumission, Equiano discovers that the limited reach of the law in North America results from the close proximity between slavery and skin complexion in Eurocentric imaginings of persons, and that Black persons in general could not find legal redress. As such, from the point in which he is stowed aboard a slave ship, it is explicitly white persons who "repeatedly provide the agency for Equiano's anxiety" (Davidson 20).

This is not to suggest that Equiano or his audience possessed deterministic ideas about race, which by the late eighteenth century still had "uneven importance in various cultural, political, and economic realms" (Wheeler 310). Other significant factors besides race impress upon Equiano's character just as strongly, and this is reflected in his emphasis on religious and national identity alongside his depiction of the racialized ideology that underwrites some of the injustices he experiences. In some novels, such as most famously in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe,* religious education constitutes a means by which to acculture the "fictional Other" into English

society (Wheeler 312), and Equiano's detailed depiction of his own instruction and conversion in Christianity attests to this. In a sense, Equiano depicts himself as the ideal racialized other who takes it upon himself to assimilate into British cultural and religious norms evidenced by his voluntary baptism and conversion to Christianity. At the same time, Equiano's autobiography captures a point in which race was still an emergent concept with correlations between complexion and deep-seated racial identity beginning to bond in the popular and scientific imagination.

The most evident expression of the negotiation of race and skin complexion appears early on in *The Interesting Narrative* when Equiano describes seeing a girl scrubbed of dirt:

> I had often observed that when her mother washed her face it looked very rosy; but when she washed mine it did not look so: I therefore tried oftentimes myself if I could not by washing make my face of the same colour as my little play-mate (Mary), but it was all in vain; and I now began to be mortified at the difference in our complexions. (84)

Equiano becomes hyperaware of his complexion and it accompanies a feeling of mortification. Unlike other aspects of himself that are alterable, his complexion cannot wash off. On first reading, the scene may appear to depict race as an indelible substratum, but the notion of skin complexion for Equiano and his eighteenth-century audience did not necessarily connote race in the way a contemporary or even nineteenth-century audience would. As Wheeler points out, the racist conjecture that complexion is determinative of intelligence or moral sophistication "represented an emerging minority position in Britain" by the 1770s (309). Indeed, Equiano's larger pedagogical aim is to introduce to his majority white audience an author whose complexion is indeterminate of moral, religious, and national character, and counter the ideology of racialized difference that was an emerging justification for enslavement and the economy of the transatlantic slave trade. Equiano's relating of his childhood attempt to wash away his skin colour should be read alongside the various other points in the work where he speculates on

79

complexion, where he elaborates a "great many [instances]" that show how "the complexions of the same persons vary in different climates" which "it is hoped may tend also to remove the prejudice that some conceive against the natives of Africa on account of their colour" (59). The attempt to wash his skin of its complexion depicts an early, naïve attempt by his childhood self to deal with unfavourable connotations of race on the path towards his more sophisticated and complex negotiation of race in the later chapters of the work, where he expresses both pride in his racial identity and concludes that complexion is indeterminate of his capacity to be British and Christian. In advocating for abolitionism, Equiano strikes a delicate balance between openly prodding his audience on emergent issues of race and depicting the depth of his emotional and psychological journey.

This moral, religious, and racial indeterminacy is embedded structurally and rhetorically in the composition of *The Interesting Narrative,* evidenced by the multiplicity of generic conventions and the unstable meanings surrounding rhetorics of community and belonging, such as "my countrymen." The phrase "my countrymen" is particularly elastic. Equiano's use of the term shifts over the course of the work, connotating different collectives of people whose communities are not necessarily staked to national or continental origin. Equiano frames himself as an instrument for the relief of his "unfortunate" and "suffering countrymen" (41), a seemingly transparent reference to those enslaved through the slave trade. Yet the term suggests a solidarity in plight or feeling rather than strictly nationality, ethnicity, or geography, and the "country" in question could be applied liberally to the continents of both Africa and North America, wherever the racial slave may originate. Christine Levecq suggests that Equiano, like other transatlantic writers of slavery and the slave trade, "used feeling in order to convey a particular political ideology" (14) and Vincent Carretta (2010) suggests Equiano "employs pathos to appeal to his

readers' emotions by representing himself as a man of feeling so overwhelmed by his afflictions that he passively anticipates death with thoughts of suicide" (85). Feelings of sympathy could be activated in readers as a means of insinuating a common humanity, and for Equiano particularly this appeal took on a distinctly international or cosmopolitan tone as he sought to induce a sense of "feeling global," Levecq argues (14), to the extent that a "version of world citizenship" is on display in *The Interesting Narrative*. Readers caught between the contested rhetorics of freedom and slavery could still find something appealing in Equiano's memoir through his understanding of Enlightenment-era cosmopolitanism, appeal to common moral feeling, or his religious conversion narrative.

The centrality of feeling to the designation of his countrymen is affirmed in the opening of chapter one, when he writes how his sufferings were great if he were to consider himself a European but when compared to "most of my countrymen" he regards himself as a "*particular favourite of heaven*" (45). Here the difference between Europeans and Africans is partially delineated by the nature of their suffering. The possibility of forming solidarity to effect relief from that suffering emerges from the shared experience of slavery, and because that slavery is also explicitly racialized, the contours of Equiano's "countrymen" are drawn around a multiplicity of conditions besides nationality or even politics itself. After all, Equiano and his countrymen do not suffer a figurative, political enslavement[6] to a tyrannical state, which might circumscribe the nature of their oppression to a matter of legal and political will, but literal captivity and chattel status inured by a fluid, transnational network of buyers, sellers, sailors, ships, ports, and plantocracies. If anything, Equiano's complex signification of "countrymen" suggests the inadequacy of Western rhetorics of belonging to the plight of slaves and former

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[6] The distinction I'm implying here between figurative, political enslavement and chattel slavery is developed by Mary Nyquist in *Arbitrary Rule*, which I address in more detail below.

slaves, whose affiliations and allegiances are intercontinental, whose racial identities mask extensive ethnic and linguistic diversity, but whose shared emotional toil or captive conveyance across an ocean forges a new sense of community. This is community unlike that of oppressed groups in Europe or North America who still suffer under the thumb of autocrats or patriarchies but whose "enslavement" is more figurative than literal—or whose enslavement is at minimum distinguishable from the chattel slavery that Equiano experiences.

Elsewhere in *The Interesting Narrative*, however, Equiano does not adhere to this expansive definition of "my countrymen." After his manumission, Equiano is hired to help purchase slaves for plantation work in the West Indies and he writes that he chose his "own countrymen" (221). Here he cannot mean the same thing as before because all the persons before him are technically his countrymen insofar as they are suffering in chattel slavery—in the moment Equiano encounters them they have in fact suffered precisely the same transatlantic crossing he had once survived. Indeed, earlier in the work, while held captive aboard a slave ship, he writes of "my wearied countrymen" in reference to some fellow slaves who chose to drown themselves (73). Yet he nonetheless appears to distinguish a more specific tier of "countrymen" distinct from all those who suffer chattel slavery in the moment in which he must choose slaves for plantation work. The term then appears far narrower, but the condition that distinguishes some slaves as his countrymen in this instance goes unelaborated. A few pages later, Equiano appears to revert back to his original meaning, writing of his "poor countrymen, the slaves" (227).

This contraction and expansion of terminology depicts Equiano in the act of writing, as he negotiates the amorphous coalition of racialized persons that has formed from the transatlantic slave trade. Equally under negotiation is the rhetoric of belonging itself which Equiano shapes

around a condition of slavery that is affective and existential. Alongside this moulding, he likewise engages with an emergent category of race that promises to further distance Black Africans from full personhood and political enfranchisement. Taken together, Equiano has forged a personal narrative that advocates for the presence of Black Africans in the legal and political process while expanding the emergent discourse of human rights of the late eighteenth century to include the racialized and enslaved. Just as significantly, while he does later petition for the repatriation of Africa by former slaves, he also advocates for the integration of Black Africans into British society, embodying an Afro-British identity practice where the place of residency is free-chosen. Nonetheless, while Black solidarity was an essential political mechanism for abolition, it also required persons like Equiano to dispense with their once familiar cultural arrangements in favour of a more equitable coalition. Equiano in particular speaks of being destined to high status were he still present in Eboe, where his family was part of a hereditary higher caste, and his description of the almost paradisiacal community in which he was raised suggests a longing for return.

Unlike the writings of abolitionists Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, or Ottobah Cugoano,[7] Equiano couches his condemnations of slavery within a larger narrative framework that loosely borrows from the travel narratives, ethnographic accounts, and fictional novels of the eighteenth century. While the opening letter is a direct address, Equiano routes his antislavery message through a religious narrative of spiritual rebirth. This approach somewhat prefigures Frederick Douglass's later suggestion in a speech in 1852 that "scorching irony, not convincing argument" was needed in abolitionist writing (2018, 56). "Must I argue that a system thus marked with blood, and stained with pollution is wrong?" he asked, "No! I will not. I have better

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[7] Both Cugoano and Clarkson, like Sharp, also subscribed to the publication of Equiano's autobiography.

employments for my time and strength than such argument would imply" (72). Douglass recognized in his American context that there was "not a man beneath the canopy of heaven, that does not know that slavery is wrong for *him*" (2014, 372), and that thereby the opposition to abolition was not because arguments for it were not impassioned or compelling enough. Though Equiano wrote during a different political and cultural climate to that of Douglass—one that crucially lacked the same levels of broad awareness of the slave trade or slavery—he nonetheless prefigures Douglass's espousal of literary indirection for moving readers towards sympathy for him and the enslaved.

Part of this strategy required at least some imaginative invention. Equiano's subversion of a single authorial subject reflects the fact that his narrative is not an act of one writer but a collation of literary sources, Biblical quotations, philosophical digressions and, as Carretta suggests, accounts of other peoples' experiences Equiano likely overheard during his travels, which he then appropriated for the figure represented in the book (2007, 47). The accusations of deceit or falsification that plagued Equiano fundamentally neglected the degree to which the autobiographical genre was and remains a literary achievement dependent on artistic reconstruction. Parts of Equiano's story were potentially embellished but this need not compromise assessments of the work. By incorporating so many sources, Equiano displays the intertextuality of the antislavery discourse as well as the intertextual tradition in which he was writing. Multiple significations occasioned slavery and the slave trade and navigating them would overwhelm any writer who assumed singular authorship. Equiano's hybrid authorial subject somewhat eases the burden of conveying the numerous discourses and rhetorical strategies implicit in composing an account of the Atlantic world.

Equiano's memoir is therefore not strictly *self*-affirmation, but an attempt to expand the pool of candidates deserving of attention and emotional expenditure, particularly those who existed in a negative relation to the law. Indeed, Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative* emerges from a coalitional political movement that sought to weed out disingenuous white abolitionists whose commitment to the cause was merely rhetorical (Smith 2010, 27), and to bring together Afro-Britons, like Cugoano, towards a Black solidarity that at once advanced abolitionism and ensured cohesiveness among a small, racialized population in a majority white country. As James Walvin in *The Black Presence* notes, London's Black community in particular showed "unmistakable signs of community and cohesive social behaviour" that was in part necessary to live in an "alien white city" (14). Stories of survival that candidly bore witness to individual experience were necessary but they also spoke of a broader and pressing transnational concern.

Equiano was clearly sensitive to accusations of self-interestedness and attempted to forestall them early on. He warns in the very first chapter that it is "difficult for those who publish their own memoirs to escape the imputation of vanity," not to mention that "what is uncommon is rarely, if ever, believed, and what is obvious we are apt to turn from with disgust" (45). European sensibilities ensnare the former slave in an impossible bind: hoping to speak of their experience, what they relate will come across as too extraordinary to be believed, but if they alternatively speak of their experience as the cruelly normalized happenings of a system of exploitation that involves millions of people over multiple generations, then their experience is hardly novel and the reader's attention will similarly be lost. Indeed, Equiano admits that "there are few events in my life, which have not happened to many" and that it is "not a little hazardous in a private and obscure individual, and a stranger too, thus to solicit the indulgent attention of the public; especially when I own I offer here the history of neither a saint, a hero, nor a tyrant"

(45). He again more or less apologizes to the reader in chapter two for potentially trying their

patience with his experience growing up in Africa, hoping that the "reader will not think I have

trespassed on his patience in introducing myself to him with some account of the manners and

customs of my country" (61). As mentioned previously, alongside this evident display of

modesty, Equiano speaks of his "countrymen" in a way that ties the experience of slavery to a

singular political and cultural cohort whose shared suffering, on the one hand, makes Equiano

feel humbled and thankful to God for having faired relatively well-off for a slave. On the other

hand, it also invites Africans who have escaped slavery to assemble and collaborate regardless of

potential tribal or provincial differences for the sake of the emancipation of all Black persons

still suffering in the trade or in the institution of slavery.

The willingness of Afro-Britons like Equiano and Cugoano to jettison their indigenous

rituals and significations was not simply done in favour of appropriating a Westernized political

structure, because the resulting coalitional politics they forged constituted a transnational

alternative *within* the unequal and hierarchized regime of Britain and the Anglo-Atlantic world in

which white male property owners were the only enfranchised citizens. Alongside a Black

solidarity Equiano is also explicitly appropriating a Westernized cultural mode (the

autobiography, the long-form text) in order to reach an expressly white audience in hopes of

furthering the abolitionist movement. This still constitutes a loss because, as he mentions, his

country back in Africa was "almost a nation of dancers, musicians, and poets" (48). In other

words, they were producers of culture, the artifacts of which Equiano can no longer access or

replicate. His Indigeneity has given way to an Afro-British solidarity. This Afro-British

solidarity and its distinctly African transnational foundations are not a stretch for Equiano, who

by the age of twelve had acquired "two or three different tongues" (66) after being kidnapped

from his village and conveyed across the African interior. Passed between a succession of nations, as he calls them, he claimed new languages along the way.

Section B
Equiano's Piety and Politico-Theological Reading Practice

Of crucial importance in the early pages of his work, Equiano establishes that he was born free, which structures the entire narrative around a *return* to freedom instead of a linear path from slavery to emancipation. This somewhat cyclical trajectory is accompanied by an unpredictable plotting that lends *The Interesting Narrative* its particular volatility as Equiano descends from freedom to servitude and ascends haphazardly to a place of relative freedom again—a narrative pattern that mirrors the physical motion of a seascape or the rising and falling of a ship at sea. To further the analogy, the cyclical nature of Equiano's journey also mirrors the cyclical route of the transatlantic slave trade and the Atlantic itself as a cyclical economic network. The geographical components of the trade are thus embedded in the narrative structure of the work. Yet, at the same time, it is crucial to remember that the slave is not the primary figure through which Equiano depicts himself. In elaborating his free-born status and to then conclude with his return to freedom, the slave is not the operative grouping he appears to consider paramount in his self-representation. Other identities, most explicitly Christian but also merchant, prevail over his identity as a slave or former slave. Readers must be cautious in using the slave as the figure by which they know of eighteenth-century racialized persons like Equiano.

This is especially the case in the context of his conversion to Christianity, which does not follow the same cyclical narrative structure as that involving his free status. While there are multiple different events of Equiano's life that serve as viable candidates for re-invention, the

work in relation to his religious identity roughly echoes the tripartite structure of a conversion narrative, of which St. Augustine's *Confessions* is paradigmatic, although Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* presents a well-known fictionized example as well. Indeed, as Philip Gould points out, the early slave narrative, like that of Equiano, "might be read as a religious genre," owing to the seamless rhetorical overlap between the "languages of spiritual and physical liberation" (14). The "ability of black autobiographers to signify on religious and political registers," Gould continues, "simultaneously lay largely in the elasticity of the language they used" (14). Part of the appeal to white abolitionists lay precisely in how the Black autobiographer could be used to disseminate religious ideas, spiritual values, or elicitations of conversion, in which their experience of a very real physical captivity is intentionally conflated with a spiritual but figurative captivity—a conflation facilitated by the language of liberation and salvation that was legible in Western religious discourses on freedom. In turn, multiple other registers of liberation could be conveyed through or adjacent to a spiritual sense of liberation. This includes more political notions of liberation present in the rhetoric of citizenship borne from Black authors asserting their self-ownership as a freed men, which becomes striated with a rhetoric of spiritual salvation, signified at once by baptism or conversation and second by documentary evidence of belonging.

The short distance Equiano establishes rhetorically between his religious and political deliverance conflates his emancipation with learning English, reading the Bible, being a "gentleman," wearing European clothes, serving on English ships, and ultimately writing in a literary and textual register legible to white British and American audiences. The elevation of 'Englishness' as a distinctly civilizing gesture associated liberation with the achievement of a British and Christian identity and not just the practical or legal act of emancipation, hence why

some opposed to the slave trade, notably Thomas Jefferson, were nonetheless convinced of white superiority. Jefferson in *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787) affirms that differences between Black and white persons are 'fixed in nature' (Plasa 12) leading him to rationalize an end to the slave trade without abandoning his commitment to Black inferiority. As such, the supposed universality of freedom and liberation still had racial hierarchies and geographies of citizenship and national identity drawn upon it.

Equiano's choice to elevate his spiritual rebirth as one of the primary narrative trajectories alongside his physical captivity and liberation reflects the rhetorical and financial sources that elevated the slave narrative as a distinct literary mode. As Philip Gould explains,

> Evangelical groups like the Methodists and Baptists, who emphasized the central importance of the individual's "new birth" (and which, as Africanists have noted, resembles the West African tradition of ecstatic soul possession), took an interest in black autobiographic because of their spiritual value in disseminating religious ideas and thereby converting souls. These groups often assumed the role of publisher – the agent financing and taking risks on publication. (15)

Narrow channels for publication and dissemination cultivated a specific type of narrative telling with an easily copied rhetorical style—a story which, while expressly antislavery, was nonetheless possessed by ulterior motives. Religious organizations that were also abolitionist expanded the range of the slave narrative from its initial origins in antislavery political pamphlets, which directly petitioned for the end of the slave trade, to a complex literary mode that ensconced demands for abolition in a narratively and rhetorically rich style appealing to both the politically astute and popular audiences. Organizations, whether religious or humanitarian, that patronized Black Atlantic writers helped to establish "a sort of transatlantic print culture, which overlapped with those of evangelicalism, political radicalism, and popular culture" (Gould 15). The story of the slave narrative was as much concerned with growing support for abolitionism as it was the emergence of an antislavery print culture.

The expansion and diversification of antislavery print culture meant that by the time Equiano was writing in the late 1780s, Black writers had robust rhetorical strategies at their disposable. In Equiano's case, his critical success involved his capacity to render his story legible in registers both familiar and urgent to British audiences. "Rhetorically," Gould writes, "the languages of spiritual and physical liberation overlapped considerably" (14), a point strikingly embodied by Equiano in his lengthy journey towards conversation to Christianity, which positions his captivity as two-fold: physically as a slave and spiritually as a non-Christian. Equiano's conversion is multifaceted, and part of a larger discursive shift in which the formerly religious performance of conversion finds some meaningful leverage in other parts of society, such as the reformed criminal, or in Equiano's case, the conversion from African to European. The "rhetorical power of personal experience," phrasing which Gould (17) applies to James Forten, may just as easily be seen in Equiano, who seemingly understood that as forceful as Granville Sharp's or Thomas Clarkson's direct petitions were for ending the slave trade, the narrative complexity of autobiography could be more appealing, hence perhaps why Equiano opens his work with a familiar form of direct address only to then defer to the density of life writing. Indeed, as Carretta remarks, "an autobiography is an act of rhetoric" because "any autobiography is designed to influence the reader's impression of its author, and often, as in the case of the *Interesting Narrative*, to affect the reader's beliefs or actions as well" (2007, 46). Such actions may take the form of petitioning the British government to abolish the trade, to convince readers to financially divest of the trade, or to incite readers to treat Black Africans with a level of moral deference they might otherwise have not shown.

As such, Equiano's recurrent references to the Bible, for example, are at least partially strategic, establishing a familial link for his readership between his story and the Biblical

narrative, which reels Christian philosophy into the fold of abolitionism. It also helps to conflate his religious conversion with the various other forms of conversion Equiano accomplishes. In fact, his autobiography's "basic narrative pattern," Adam Potkay argues, re-enacts the books of Genesis and Exodus, positioning his experience as an "allegory of spiritual deliverance" (681). As such, we cannot discount the potential genuineness of Equiano's religious devotion. Eileen Elrod cautions against simplistic readings that assesses "the author's piety as something of a maneuver: The savvy African, knowing what his British and American audiences need in order to accept him as a credible narrator, uses religion as a mask for social critique" (409). Elrod also warns that the "formidable forces of acculturation" that Equiano encounters should not be used to dismiss his commitment to Christianity (ibid).

In working towards his freedom and emancipation from the physical bounds of slavery, Equiano gives equal attention to his spiritual voyage from a life constrained by sin to Christian rebirth. The semiotic distance between actual slavery and spiritual renewal was short enough that the slave narrative could easily traffic in both narrative registers, appealing to any British and American sensibilities which might be turned off by political volatility while conveying the distinctly political and moral ends of an antislavery and abolitionist movement. The complexity of Equiano's self-expression as a religious man has implications for the social and political critique his work aspires to accomplish alongside the recounting of his spiritual journey, and this complexity is reflected in the religious passages he occasionally references. These passages show Equiano's active and methodical engagement with scripture and religious literature. The reader in turn receives more than just textual evidence for Equiano's Christian beliefs but fragments of a detailed hermeneutics developed from his lengthy conversion process. When pieced together, Equiano's understanding and vision of liberty appears to derive not just from a political climate

steeped in a rhetoric of freedom (a discourse largely monopolized by white middle and lower-class gentlemen) but also from his firm belief in the Bible as a "text for oppressed peoples" (Elrod 410). Only by "appealing to scriptural narratives of liberation" (Elrod 415) can he communicate the content of his manumission and escape from the clutches of slavery. In turn, we cannot really understand Equiano's political and economic liberation absent an acknowledgment of his conversion to Christianity, presented as a form of spiritual liberation.

In some instances, Equiano appears to use the Bible to approvingly reference violent resistance as a response to oppression. For example, he relates his encounter with a Black man who used his "few leisure moments to go a fishing" but would frequently have his master steal his fish:

> One day he said to me, very movingly, 'Sometimes when a white man take away my fish I go to my maser, and he get me my right; and when my maser by strength take away my fishes, what me must do? I can't go to any body to be righted; then' said the poor man, looking up above 'I must look up to God Mighty in the top for right.' This artless tale moved me much, and I could not help feeling the just cause Moses had in redressing his brother against the Egyptian. (127)

This aligns with Equiano's recurring attention to the legal incapacity of Black persons (free or not) to find redress or retribution for crimes committed against them. The situation informs the fisherman's theology: the only justice for the severely oppressed can be found in God Almighty. While Equiano describes being "moved" by the man's "artless tale," and even though he agrees that God's justice transcends all humanly forms of justice, Equiano also articulates evident displeasure with the life of indignity found in the fisherman's story. Equiano's subsequent reference to Moses, a Biblical figure who repeatedly used violence in moments where God's intervention was absent, is therefore intriguing. While a precise reference is not given, Elrod suggests Equiano is referring to Exodus 2 where Moses murders an Egyptian he had witnessed beating a Hebrew slave. If so, Equiano situates the violence visited upon enslaved Africans through an institution of racial and economic exploitation alongside an Old Testament theology

of violent retribution embodied by Moses. Elrod suggests that "Equiano's use of the Bible here entirely contradicts his half-hearted-endorsement of [the fisherman's] philosophy to look for justice only in spiritual terms—[…] suggesting instead the rightness, perhaps the necessity, of personal agency, even when it means engaging in acts of violent resistance" (419). As a result, Equiano prods the sympathies of his audience by inserting into his own story a Biblical narrative of human-sourced retribution that invites white Christians to side with the enslaved Hebrews, and to convey that allegiance into their contemporary situation in the eighteenth century wherein the British are equivalent to the Egyptian enslavers. The story thus provokes its white audience to essentially flip their allegiances and to recognize that violent resistance to white slaveowners is at minimum understandable, if not justified.

Employing Christian philosophy and religious rhetorics in the service of an abolitionist or antislavery cause was a fraught contest because the Bible was just as resourceful for pro-slavers. As Dayan points out, the "strict letter of the Old Testament mattered more to pro-slavery apologists in the [U.S.] South than the presumed spirit of the Gospels"; "Leviticus recognized," Dayan continues, "the existence of slavery in articulating the rules necessary to keep the slave— when an alien and not an Israelite—incapacitated and forever outside the community" (145). While the "children of Israel" may not buy or sell each other, the "stranger" that walks among them are not equally protected from being a possession and can in fact be rendered an inheritance (ibid), although Equiano might have anticipated this argument and sought to suggest that Black Africans were "children of Israel" and thus not eligible to be bought and sold as strangers. He writes, for example, that his tribe "practised circumcision like the Jews" and that like them also, "our children were named from some event, some circumstance, or fancied foreboding at the time of their birth" (115) before elaborating the etymology of his own name. While Equiano

remarks that he cannot ascertain the reason why there are "difference[s] of colour between Eboan Africans and the modern Jews" (120) he nonetheless intimates that Africans and Europeans have shared lineage to the Jewish Israelites.

Equiano's apparent admiration of Moses's violence is affirmed a few pages later in referencing John Milton's *Paradise Lost*—which in this context positions the profundity of slave rebellion alongside the most Biblical of all insurrections: the rebellious angels of heaven (although the voice he chooses to re-articulate happens to be Beelzebub, Satan's primary subordinate). At the moment he turns to Milton, Equiano temporarily abandons his narrative and instead acquires a prophetic tonality, elaborating his witnessing of torture and oppression while stationed in the West Indies in order to then prod his reader with pointed interrogations: "Why do you use those instruments of torture? Are they fit to be applied by one rational being to another? And are you not struck with shame and mortification, to see the partakers of your nature reduced so low? But, above all, are there no dangers attending this mode of treatment? Are you not hourly in dread of an insurrection?" (128). Equiano's rather overt threatening of insurgency is couched in sharp questions to the reader regarding the way violence naturally fosters frustration in the oppressed for whom death becomes preferrable to slavery. The untenableness of the institution is thereby reflected in the looming threat of insurrection that attends every slave ship and plantation. Equiano follows up with a passage from *Paradise Lost*:

> —No peace is given
> To us enslav'd, but custody severe;
> And stripes and arbitrary punishment
> Inflicted—What peace can we return?
> But to our power, hostility and hate;
> Untam'd reluctance, and revenge, though slow,
> Yet ever plotting how the conqueror least
> May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice
> In doing what we most in suffering feel. (2.332-40).

In quoting Milton's Beelzebub, Equiano puts into familiar terms what he had been trying to convey: "what peace can we return?" The collective "we" in this context is transposed from the fallen angels to the racial slaves of the transatlantic system. Equiano follows this passage with his suggestion that masters must treat slaves humanly in order to extinguish their fear of rebellion: "But by changing your conduct, and treating your slaves as men, every cause of fear would be banished" (128). When read alongside his earlier appreciation for Moses's violence, Equiano appears to endorse non-peaceable resistance to slavery in contrast to the fisherman's theology that emphasizes God's intervention and post-death divine retribution.

Mary Nyquist (2014) suggests that Equiano uses Milton to, firstly, juxtapose "the institution of Euro-colonial slavery and Milton's hell" (210), which "evokes the 'horror' with which Equiano's readership would have become familiar through Gothic literature, the most sensational effects of which owe much to *Paradise Lost*" (220). Indeed, Equiano appropriates the language of the Gothic tradition directly, writing of "fresh horror" that "chilled" his heart and cycled "dreadful" imagery across his mind (115). The emotional and traumatic impact of captivity is given extensive attention by Equiano in a way that not only emulates the emergent Gothic novel, but also offers his own contribution to the genre by detailing how the supernatural or unexplained terrors of the Gothic have real-world correlates in the form of human-made devices for torture and exploitation. Equiano transposes Milton's hell from the "domestic interiors of inhospitably feudal, often Roman Catholic European nations of Gothic fiction to the geographically remote colonial plantations that for coercively transported Africans are hostile to life itself" (Nyquist 2014, 222). In doing so, Equiano "lays claims to the affectively arresting subjectivity normally reserved for bourgeois Europeans" (ibid) and thus appeals to the literary tastes of England's novel-reading public who have been trained to "read signifiers of tyranny and

slavery ideologically, as evidence of arbitrary, tyrannous rule" (Nyquist 214, 224), all the while positioning the reader in the rare position of inhabiting the psychological depth of a Black protagonist whose suffering they are invited to sympathize with. As such, by routing his antislavery message through the English antityranny discourse and its religious inflections, Equiano can indirectly establish that slaves hold revolutionary potential in their resistance to the British plantocracy without resorting to the forceful direct address of other abolitionist literature.

Secondly, the citation to Milton exposes a distressing contradiction: "the God he appeals to for justice is—or would at least seem to be—the God who in *Paradise Lost* inflicts the suffering of the damned" (Nyquist 2014, 216). Equiano recurringly agonizes over whether he, if not all of his fellow countrymen, constitute the damned who God is obliged to punish and these meditations are continuous with his latter insistence on Christian missionary work in Africa and abroad. Contemporary critiques wishing to assess Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* as an antislavery polemic must contend with this seeming endorsement of Eurocentric stereotypes of Africans as religiously unsaved, despite what Nyquist (2014) assesses as the "immense epistemological and political implications" of his "appropriation of the discourse of human rights" from a strictly intra-European context to the "categorically unfree and non-European" (218). In other words, Equiano still challenges the ontology of slavery that positioned Black Africans as fundamentally beyond rights despite his emphasis on "saving" his non-Christian countrymen.

In using Milton, Equiano shows his British reader how they already possess a vernacular for violent revolution. Nyquist notes, for example, that Equiano's "rhetorically elevated antityrannism"[8] would have been especially familiar given "England's mid-seventeenth-century

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[8] Nyquist elaborates this term in a separate work, *Arbitrary Rule* (2013). Her use of "antityrannism" is borrowed from Kurt A. Raaflaub who uses it in reference to Athenian democracy. Nyquist acknowledges her extrication of the

radical discourse but also New England's relatively recent War of Independence" (2014, 217).

Equiano asserts an "early modern and Enlightenment English radicalism" which argued that the

slaveholder's ownership of other human beings is a "divinely prohibited" form of political rule

(ibid), so even though he is furthering a unique human rights discourse that includes the racial

slave, such appeals are couched in ideological figurations familiar for the era. Laura Doyle has

similarly noted Equiano's appropriation of a "Saxonist rhetoric" of freedom and inherited rights

underwriting the "peculiarly English legacy of liberty" (202). Additionally, the timeliness of

Equiano's text just before the French and Haitian Revolutions would have further inured these

associations in the mind of his contemporaneous British reader.

Indeed, alongside its contribution as a religious genre, the latent presence of political

revolution adds to the way *The Interesting Narrative* functions as a highly robust text that

manages to narrativize not just the life of a single Black man but seemingly the entire history of

the Atlantic world from 1660 onwards. The extensiveness of both Equiano's physical travels and

his literary influences means his autobiography can function as the narrative of multiple political

revolutions upon which modern citizenship regimes in North America, Western Europe, and the

Caribbean are built, particularly the Bloodless Revolution of 1688, the American Revolution,

and the Haitian Revolution. The simultaneous presence of both spiritual and physical captivity

underwriting the narrative structure and trajectory of Equiano's autobiography in part depends on

the elasticity of "slavery" in the English political tradition to signify on religious and political

registers, transforming the figure of the slave into a robust metaphor for various forms of

oppression, not just chattel bondage. The notion of figurative slavery was an important

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term from its historically specific application, but finds it illuminating nonetheless for its representation of the
"tyrant's subjects as figuratively enslaved—enslavement that seeks to dishonor and disenfranchise citizens who are
meant to be 'free'" (1).

imaginary to the ideology of antityrannism even though it didn't necessarily extend its petitions for freedom to actual, racialized slaves.

Analytically, however, a conflation between spiritual and physical liberation poses some interpretative problems. Nyquist (2013) grounds her study of political oppression on the fact that "figurative slavery—ethical, psychological, or spiritual as well as political—appears in countless cultural and historical contexts" (4) without being explicitly distinguished from *literal* slavery and without acknowledgment of *why* slavery became the operative condition for representations of tyranny. This question is especially pertinent in a British context because of the legacy of the English Civil War and the emergence of women writers contesting gendered oppression. Why, for example, did nascent movements for women's rights in the eighteenth century find slavery a productive imaginary for conveying their own (political) enslavement? These questions prod the at times unsignalled appropriation of slavery as a metaphor for oppression that does not involve the physical captivity or chattel status of literal slavery, which in turn obscures the ideological complexity of antityrannism. Tyranny is a "term of abuse" that "charges a ruler with obtaining power unconstitutionally or with ruling in defiance of laws and customs over citizens who are thereby metaphorically enslaved by his behaviour" (Nyquist 2013, 5). In a sense, a claim of tyranny is only made by citizens or by persons deserving of citizen-status and its protections—it is a charge of lawlessness and a claim that particular cherished political values are degraded or abandoned. The problem, as Nyquist (2013) explains, is that

> Figurative, political slavery occludes features of chattel slavery that do not support its case, exaggerating carefully selected points of comparison at the expense of major socially and legally sanctioned differences. More specifically, it trivializes two features of chattel slavery that create the conditions necessary for maintaining the legal fiction that an enslaved human being can be property: first, the traumatic dislocation of those to be enslaved from homeland, kin, and cultural communities, known since [Orlando] Patterson as "social death," and, second, the dehumanizing dishonor entailed by the ongoing instability of social identity, indefinitely perpetuated by the ever-present possibility of further sale or death. (6)

Enlightenment and Anglo-Saxonist rhetorical appeals to political slavery "highlight the injustice of treating freeborn citizens *as if* they were, or were about to become, enslaved" (Nyquist 2013, 7) in part because they help sustain the slave as a legitimate legal personality whereby a person is equivalent to property in law. It arrests the enslaved in a degrading position of involuntary servitude striated by threats of mortality and separation. These appeals perhaps also suggest the degree to which the rhetoric of antityrannism was (and in some respects remains) an impoverished discourse that struggles to convey the injustice of political oppression without reference to chattel slavery, which at minimum shows the enduring legacy of the figure of the slave in British, Anglo-American, and French imaginings of democracy and citizenship. In these imaginings, slavery is a resourceful figuration because it conveys the inherit injustice of full citizens being denied particular rights or privileges, without actually condemning slavery itself as an injustice. The treatment of slavery as a generic figure applicable to any manner of oppression situates chattel slavery as merely one type of slavery, rather than the most harmful and paradigmatic variety upon which the very possibility of modernity is dependent.

Of chief concern then when reading Equiano is that the ideology of antityrannism in English political discourse doesn't entail opposition to chattel slavery, since the content of tyranny is a specifically unlawful or unconstitutional exercise of power over citizens. While "opposition to transatlantic slavery was of only marginal importance to political antityrannism, antityranny discourse was a defining feature of abolitionism" (Nyquist 2014, 229), and this discrepancy burdened authors like Equiano and Cugoano with the task of convincing readers that the racial slave was as much a victim of tyranny as the politically oppressed. Ideologically, there is no contradiction in maintaining chattel slavery as a legitimate, lawful institution while also opposing a figurative, political enslavement under a tyrannical regime. The task thus befalling

Equiano and the abolitionist movement was how to navigate the problematical appropriation of slavery as a metaphor by the English antityrannical tradition while extending freedoms thought deserving for only white male citizens to the chattel slave. While political and chattel slavery were discursively entangled, Equiano's attempt to elevate the English's longstanding vocal opposition to tyranny to include slaveowners was still a relatively novel development with the onset of a more concerted effort at abolitionism in the latter half of the eighteenth century. In turn, as Nyquist suggests, abolitionism "contributed a novel, semantic register to the figurative political 'slavery' conventionally vituperated by political antityrannism"—a register that was crucially "absent from sixteenth, seventeenth, and early eighteenth-century radicalism" (2014, 229).

The profundity of Equiano's opening letter to British Parliament thus comes into starker relief in this context because it poses as the legitimate accusation of an English citizen to his political representatives of charges of tyranny against a merchant and slaveholding class, whose failure to extend a more benevolent attitude towards the enslaved is providentially unjustified. Equiano evinces a rhetorical agency through his use of the epistolary tradition, hitherto dominated by the persona of white male writers, as a means of outlining the atrocities of the slave trade, which he both suffered and bore witness. Indeed, prior to his autobiography Equiano had regularly contributed letters and book reviews but under his imposed European name Gustavus Vassa. Significantly, with *The Interesting Narrative* he signed his epistle under his original African name Olaudah Equiano. In turn, he implies a resemblance between himself and a concerned citizen through the epistolatory form itself, which functions as the performative enactment of citizenship as a form of rhetorical exercise and public engagement. He is, in other words, exercising a common citizenry duty by informing his political representatives of the need

for change. Given that slaves were legally property and bereft of civil status, they were thus by implication absent from the social, political, and economic levers of public life, instead arrested in the private sphere of their owners. As a former slave, Equiano reaches beyond the threshold between private and public to directly address and recommend the actions of the polity to which he is not acknowledged as a member.

As a result of this broader engagement with the antityrannical tradition, Nyquist derives some significant implications from Equiano's invocation of Milton's Beelzebub: "to make violent resistance a defensible response to the tyrannous violation of basic, human rights" (2014, 220). When considered alongside his incisive prodding of his reader, Equiano's "rhetorical questions imply that slave insurgency would be what radical political theorists consider legitimate political resistance" and as such Equiano's citation of Milton "boldly constitutes enslaved Africans as potential revolutionary subjects" (ibid). In line with Nyquist, Elrod suggests Equiano "offers no censure, no hint of criticism of the urge for justice," (419), even when it involves violence.

At first reading, these critiques by Nyquist and Elrod seem to contradict Equiano's personal ambition to seek his manumission "by honest and honourable means" (135), which don't necessarily discount the use of violence but certainly appears to involve the peaceable purchase of his freedom through the fair acquisition of wealth. At minimum, it may constitute Equiano admitting that while violent resistance to slavery is justified and unavoidable, he himself would take no part, preferring instead more peaceable means of liberation. While Nyquist suggests that Equiano is not attempting to 'demonize' enslaved Africans by implying "fellowship with the denizens of Milton's hell" (221), elsewhere Equiano problematically positions his unconverted countrymen as unsaved although candidates for salvation, thus putting them on the

periphery of civilization. So while Equiano commits himself to values of harmonious and peaceable liberation from chattel slavery that spring directly from his emerging religious devotion, he cannot promise his fellow, unconverted countrymen will not resort to violence for achieving their freedom in a way that mirrors the pre-Christian theology of Moses or the restless fallen angels of heaven. Although Equiano does appear to appreciate Moses's violence or the sentiments of Satanism as articulated by Beelzebub, it's also clear that Equiano's piety emerges from an involved and difficult engagement with the Biblical narrative as a piece of Western literature—an engagement that continually sees him experience severe bouts of depression and thoughts of suicide.

A way to resolve this apparent contradiction between violence and non-violence in his *Narrative* is to consider how, firstly, Equiano's citations to Milton do not seek to venerate Satan but to clarify the condition of chattel slavery as equivalent to Milton's hell. Here Equiano finds in canonical British literature a rhetorically rich register of Gothic horrors that can help convey the reality of slavery and function as affecting tools for the abolitionist cause. In this context, the fallen angels serve as handy ciphers for outlining the conditions of their fallen status. Their simultaneous call for insurrection, while informative of slave psychology, is only one part of the larger portrait Equiano is trying to draw. Alternatively, Equiano's citation of Milton is restricted to the salient political radicalism of Satanism. Nyquist makes a distinction between Satan and an ideology of Satanism, which contains extensive antityrannical registers that can explain how Equiano can cite Beelzebub's call for violent revolution without endorsing Satan himself as a figure—whose character is otherwise vengeful, jealous, individualistic, and petulant—and without explicitly suggesting that violent resistance is justified. Beelzebub's speech specifically invites the fallen angels to emerge in solidarity against the imposition of the divine, whereas

Satan acts as a singular agent of chaos. As such, Equiano "does not actually call for violent revolution but rather employs its threat as a figure for the injustice of the status quo and the justice of armed resistance" (Nyquist 2014, 232). Under this reading, Equiano cites Beelzebub while simultaneously distancing himself from the most radical implications of Satan's doctrine. Indeed Carretta (2010) asks whether Equiano quotes a "demon promoting violent resistance to implicitly dissociate himself from that position even as he expresses it?" (91). Carretta's immediate answer acknowledges the possibility that Equiano is "provocatively suggesting that he is more sympathetic to the cause of violent rebellion than to the status quo defended by the hypocritical Christians he has been addressing" (ibid). Given Equiano's earlier establishment of a slave solidarity grounded in shared suffering, he arguably finds some ideological harmony with Beelzebub's appeal to collective resistance rather than Satan's individualistic vengeance.

Equiano's appreciation of the liberational potential of violence may also be complicated by his later success at peaceably achieving manumission. Indeed, his conversion process involves a crucial reassessment of suffering. On the frontispiece of *The Interesting Narrative,* Equiano includes a portrait of himself holding a Bible open to the Book of Acts 4:12 ("Salvation is found in [Jesus Christ], for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved"). Equiano's choice to include visual citation of Acts 4:12 prior to the actual beginning of his narrative suggests its central importance to his religious identity and conversion. Within the actual narrative, Equiano invokes Acts 4:12 not retrospectively but concurrent with his actual conversion while working aboard an English merchant ship travelling to Spain. During the voyage, he contemplates committing suicide but reframes from drowning himself after a piece of scripture suddenly impresses upon his mind: "that no murderer hath eternal life abiding

in him" (1 John 3:15). He subsequently uses his time to read scripture until a fateful day casts things into stark clarity:

> In the evening of [the 6th of October], as I was reading and mediating on the fourth chapter of the Acts, twelfth verse, under the solemn apprehensions of eternity, and reflecting on my past actions, I began to think I had lived a moral life, and that I had a proper ground to believe I had an interest in the divine favour; but still meditating on the subject, not knowing whether salvation was to be had partly for our own good deeds, or solely as the sovereign gift of God; in this deep consternation the Lord was pleased in upon my soul with his bright beams of heavenly light; and in an instant as it were, removing the veil, and letting light into a dark place, I saw clearly with the eye of faith the crucified Saviour bleeding on the cross on mount Calvary… (205-206).

The bloody spectacle of Christ's suffering passes across his "eye of faith" and it leaves an indelible mark on his sense of self. Initially confused on the workings of salvation—whether it is achieved through good deeds or as a gift from God—he becomes enlightened to the role of the saviour upon mediating on Acts 4:12. While previously the rhetoric of salvation could be read both spiritually and politically, and often times Equiano doesn't explicitly distinguish between the two senses of the word, in this moment he has already achieved his manumission, although the struggle for more extensive enfranchisement endures. As he continues:

> I saw the Lord Jesus Christ in his humiliation, loaded and bearing my reproach, sin, and shame. I then clearly perceived that by the deeds of the law no flesh living could be justified. I was then convinced that by the first Adam sin came, and by the second Adam (the Lord Jesus Christ) all that are saved must be made alive. It was given me at that time to know what it was to be born again, John iii. 5. (206)

Equiano recounts multiple instances of humiliation throughout his narrative but here situates those individual moments within a broader Christian paradigm of suffering. The common humanity that Equiano recurringly preaches takes on a more precise form, specifically in terms of the sinful burden that Christ bears for all persons, and which relieves individuals from the existential precarity of enduring the marks of original sin alone. In turn, the liberation that Equiano embodies through his manumission and then conversion is steeped in a Protestant theology of spiritual rebirth, provoked by a serious and prolonged attention to scripture and spiritual meditation. Moreover, an attentive reading practice—and a sustained attention to the

book as an object—becomes a prerequisite of not only Equiano's conversion but his capacity to endure the humiliations of slavery and racial prejudice.

The political implications of Equiano's conversion extends into his adjacent attempt to acquire British identity under the name Gustavus Vassa. On one level, Equiano's Christianity made his claim to Britishness more palatable for his white audience because it suggested conversion could still function as a method for taming racialized figures like former slaves, whose presence within Britain were increasing. On another level, his conversion speaks to a broader cultural and political concern regarding the governance of colonial subjects. Roxanna Wheeler notes, for example, that the "mid-eighteenth-century literary focus on conjugal relations, rather than on a master/slave dynamic, occurred when the British empire was shifting emphasis from territorial acquisition to issues of governance" (316). British imperial concerns had evolved since Defoe novelized colonial contact towards questions of governmentality that anticipated more extensive and long-lasting relationships with colonialized subjects. Religion remained a promising instrument for overcoming the ambiguities of racial identity and in pursuit of the ambitions of state power.

Equiano espouses the liberating potential of scripture that is nonetheless couched in a successful campaign of conversion via his contact with British overseas merchants, sailors, and military men. As Elrod points out, Equiano's "admiration for the Christian colonizing work of the West" will likely "seem to us patently contradictory" (410). Indeed, the success of Equiano's acculturation appears complete with his enthusiastic commitment to the sort of Christian missionary work that functioned as an important instrument of both settler colonial practices in North America and imperialism in Africa. Equiano doesn't just 'admire' colonizing initiatives, he actively attempts to conduct missionary work on behalf of institutional religion, detailing his

failed participation in a British campaign to repatriate Sierra Leone and convert its inhabitants——in fact, Carretta suggests *The Interesting Narrative* was in part written as an "explanation and justification, or *apologia*, for his behaviour in the Sierra Leone affair" (2010, 81). Earlier than that, Equiano had taken it upon himself to preach individually the word of God in the hopes of converting those he saw as unsaved. In one instance, Equiano shared a transatlantic voyage with "four Musquito Indians" who he was "very much mortified in finding that they had not frequented any churches since they were [in England], to be baptized, nor was any attention paid to their morals" (219). Equiano subsequently "took all the pains" to instruct some of them in the doctrines of Christianity, which included blatantly anti-Catholic propaganda. Like his other missionary work, however, the process fell apart.

Indigenous persons figure in Equiano's imagination in a way that seems contradictory to his celebration of his own Indigenous African origins, but which in other ways align with a politics of empire that violently effaces non-European forms of social, political, and religious relationality. As we've already seen, Equiano's emphasis on his Christianity occasionally replaces binaries of citizen and non-citizen or even whiteness and Blackness—the condition by which Equiano comes to distinguish persons often rests on their differing levels of piety. Even within a framework of Britishness, he further delineates between white sailors who evince religious devotion and those who don't, admonishing the latter for their ignorance. As such, even though he acknowledges, for example, that the "four Musquito Indians" he encounters were "brought here by some English traders for some selfish ends" (218), which appears to acknowledge their exploitation, he likewise calls one of them a "poor heathen much advanced in piety" (219), evincing the colonial-religious rhetoric he has so far deployed throughout his autobiography to distinguish the saved and unsaved. Not long after, with an ethnographic

perspective typical of European narrativizations of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, Equiano writes of trading with "unenlightened Indians" (222), again showing how his theorization of Indigeneity has been overcome by metrics of Christian devotion.

In fact, Equiano explicitly cites and re-enacts Christopher Columbus's deception of Indigenous persons in Jamaica, which he had read about in a book, in his attempt to suppress the behaviour of an "Indian governor." The approving affirmation of Columbus's practices situate Equiano's actions squarely within a paradigm of coloniality. Tiffany Lethabo King and Sylvia Wynter's explication of the ideological milieu surrounding Columbus is relevant here and clarifies Equiano's participation in a post-Columbus European order where Indigenous persons are effaced into categories of piety, even while Equiano as a Black man is "being transformed into secular forms of human otherness (irrational, lack, symbolic death)" (King 16). As King writes, "Columbus's humanism is a hybrid form in which the residual ideologies of the religious order that place the Christen over the heathen (evil, unbaptized) still linger and influence the newly emerging form of secular humanism" (ibid). The primacy of religious identity for Equiano re-asserts a division between Christian and Man from which Liberal humanism emerges and favours the secular individual as the primary "political subject of the modern European state," as Wynter explains (137). Even though Equiano continually stresses the possibility of salvation through Christian conversion, thus implying the providential danger of remaining "unenlightened," his merchant activity that funded his manumission aligns with a secular humanism that "privileges the bourgeois individual as a self-contained and competitive economic subject within the capitalist system" (King 15-16). Wynter and Rinaldo Walcott both note how the centuries-long transformation from a religious to a secular humanism, most

famously and brutally signified by Columbus's 1492 journey, led to new imaginings of the "genres of the Human." As Wynter explains:

> …all other human beings who did not look, think, and act as the peoples of Western Europe did were now to be classified not as *Enemies-of-Christ* but, rather, as the Lack of "true humanness," allegedly because of their lack of the Western European order of rationality (over-represented as rationality in general); this, as a Lack that determined that they should be discursively and institutionally classified as *Man*'s Human Others—that is, as Caliban to Prospero—and, as such, held to be as justly expropriated of their lands and allocated to their labor roles as serfs and racialized slaves, as the peasants in the medieval order had been held to be justly condemned to their manual labor role, given their imputed wicked indulgence in the carnal lusts of the flesh. (139-140)

These genres of the human, secularly conceived, were subsequently "logically classified, and institutionalized, as 'Indians' and 'Negroes'," as Wynter notes (140). Part of the profundity and seeming contradiction underlying Equiano's citation to and re-enactment of Columbus emerges from the implicit genres of the human that inform his engagement with Indigeneity as a presence that needs institutional and colonial management. Here the spectre of a state apparatus imposed to oversee those perceived as incapable of self-governance emerges, and which appears to situate Equiano's contact with the "Musquito Indians" as an implicit endorsement of what King calls "conquistador humanism" (16), insofar as the promise of conversion configures his contact with them. These institutional configurations and the genres of the human upon which they are founded are also responsible for the emergent category of Blackness that Equiano faces in contact with Europeans that refuse to see him as anything other than a slave. As such, readers face the distressing reach of colonialism in *The Interesting Narrative* via its capacity to recruit Equiano into practices of state-sponsored conquest, even though Equiano himself never directly forces conversion or participates in acts of violent land reclamation. Nonetheless, the implication is the push for a Christian hegemony in which the inclusion of Indigenous and racialized persons into the emergent citizenship regimes of Great Britain and the United States are very much dependent on their religious conversion and enduring subordination.

Equiano's commitment to colonial practices of conversion are also sourced from the complex ideological foundations of abolitionism in late eighteenth century Britain, which borrowed the rhetoric of antityrannism. This rhetoric, however, was "[f]requently in the service of nationalism and imperialism" and whose "themes, figures, and motifs […] played a role in the poetry, drama, tracts, and other literary genres that directly critiqued transatlantic slavery" (Nyquist 2014, 229). In other words, Equiano's lexicon developed from a discourse of political radicalism with an appealing antityrannical message that recurringly trafficked in nationalistic and imperialistic themes. While we may wish to locate in Equiano's autobiography a discourse of resistance, at minimum by stressing his narrative as antislavery polemic, a search for the ways he counteracts the forces of imperialism that led to his enslavement also reveals the narrative of a man who confronts the failure of British Christians to live up to their own moral principles, transforming his mission from a strict return to freedom to a broader ambition of preaching the word of God for both the converted and unconverted.

Section C
Equiano's Merchant Activity, Diasporic Condition, and the Importance of Travel

The spiritual and political registers that have so far been the primary focus of my analysis have yet to more fully acknowledge the economic forces behind chattel slavery underwriting a distinction between figurative and literal captivity. The economic and monetary dimensions of the transatlantic trade further nuance Equiano's intervention in the discourse of tyranny and freedom, and the subsequent citizenship regimes of the Atlantic world where liberty will become further conflated with a specifically *commercial* autonomy with the onset of industrialization. Equiano's depiction of relations between white Europeans and Black Africans as an engagement

that need not be violent or contractual but harmonious and friendly in part depends on appealing directly to Christian affectations, in part by revealing that his own interior self is mapped by emotions and psychological depth. At the same time, Equiano as a committed patron of mercantilist capitalism, envisioned equal relations between peoples partially in materialists terms. As such, even though Equiano does occasionally attack slavery as a pernicious social institution that unjustly dictates relations among Europeans and Africans (dehumanizing both in the process), he also re-constitutes these relations still within an economic interaction predicated on exchange.

Previously I mentioned how Equiano commits himself to achieving manumission by "honest and honourable means" and considered this as a latent admission on Equiano's part that violent resistance was an untenable strategy for an emergent Christian like himself.[9] I briefly suggested that what Equiano means by "honest and honourable" can be read narrowly as the fair acquisition of wealth to purchase his manumission, in turn receiving documentary evidence of his freedom. This interpretation emerges because Equiano relates considerable enterprising spirit even before his master off-handily suggested that were Equiano to recoup the cost of his purchase ("forty pounds sterling money"), he would be set free (141). Prior to realizing he could buy his manumission from his master, he had "endeavoured to try [his] luck and commence merchant" (131) by buying a glass tumbler for the equivalent of three pence and selling it in Montserrat for six pence. He subsequently continued to buy and sell glass tumblers by using the ship's trading routes (the same as those used by slaving vessels) to move his product between markets. In other words, Equiano instrumentalizes the trade routes that directly led to his enslavement as a means of rescuing himself from that enslavement. Upon hearing his master

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[9] While Equiano did participate in naval campaigns for Britain, this was only in virtue of his master at the time being a British officer. In some sense he had no choice, and he never mentions taking someone else's life in battle.

affirm a path for liberty, Equiano becomes more energized by the potential for commercial enterprise to be the source of his liberation and he commits himself to the continued accumulation of currency to become his own master and throw off the yoke of chattel status—to become, in a word, a self-possessor rather than a possession. At the moment of his master's promise, Equiano's capital only "amounted in all to a dollar" (132), but it wasn't necessarily the grind of generating wealth that posed problems for him. He writes of travelling between islands in the West Indies for "upwards of four years, and ever trading as I went, during which I experienced many instances of ill usage, and have seen many injuries done to other negroes in our dealing with Europeans" (132). Trading goods as a Black African in the West Indies was hindered by white Europeans who saw them as "strangers as well as slaves" (133), and thus neither members in a system of exchange nor persons with any legal right to property. Even the seemingly disinterested realm of economics could provide no refuge for Equiano from the torments of racial oppression.

This "ill usage" extended to problems receiving promised wages for work, which required Equiano to use other white persons as a means of obliging employers to pay him. During one instance, Equiano received wages in dollars "after much entreaty," but some of the coins "were copper, and of consequence of no value" (144). As with his earlier captivity in Africa, Equiano here encounters the peculiar ontology of currency as a form of imaginary or speculative value, which likewise buttresses his master's assessment of him as equivalent to forty pounds sterling. This precarious system of value does not immediately catch Equiano's critical gaze—he does not, for example, openly critique how his master came to value him at forty pounds sterling; in fact he regularly evinces pride at being an extremely valuable worker to his masters, even though this puts him in the unfortunate position of being indispensable. Not long

111

after the incident with the cooper, Equiano again confronts the pitfalls of this ontology. At the

moment in which his manumission is heart-wrenchingly close, he writes of a man who promised

him and his captain the contents of his will upon his death. Upon this man's eventual expiration,

Equiano and the captain rush to uncover what they expect to be a substantial windfall, at least

enough for the former to secure his manumission. With almost tragicomic deliverance, Equiano

describes how he and the captain encountered a nest of trunks with a "great number within one

another," forcing them to keep opening a series of smaller trunks in search of the man's

supposed fortune (154). Eventually, they reach the smallest one in a moment fit for anti-climactic

reveal:

> But when we took up the trunk, and began to examine the supposed treasure and long-looked-for bounty, (alas! alas! how uncertain and deceitful are all human affairs!) what we had found! While we thought we were embracing a substance we grasped and empty nothing. The whole amount that was in the nest of trunks was only one dollar and a half; and all that the man possessed would not pay for his coffin. (154-155).

With great pathos, Equiano confronts another hollow promise, here signified by a tiny empty

trunk meant to hold the means for his liberty. These moments in which monetary value appears

as an almost mysterious, ungraspable, ephemeral entity contrasts with his earlier upbringing in

Africa in which bartered goods held their value in themselves. In the West Indies, however,

Equiano depicts an Atlantic economy in which men have a precarious relationship with objects,

crucially embodied by the paired conditions of currency, whose value is only speculative, and

human beings who are reduced to mere property. This peculiar ontology underwrites everything

from insurance, to slavery, to the very notion of coins holding monetary value.[10]

Yet Equiano nonetheless defends the system of transnational exchange that buttresses the

Atlantic economy, suggesting that the system could still be maintained without the slave trade,

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[10] I explore the issue of monetary value in more detail in Chapter Three.

namely by supplementing human beings with other goods or cargo. For example, he elaborates

on multiple occasions the commercial viability of Africa for Britain without the slave trade,

writing that a "commercial intercourse with Africa opens an inexhaustible source of wealth to the

manufacturing interests of Great Britain" (250). He even goes so far as to suggest that

abolitionism is good business:

> If I am not misinformed, the manufacturing interest is equal, if not superior, to the landed interest, as to the value, for reasons which will soon appear. The abolition of slavery, so diabolical, will give the most rapid extension of manufacturers, which is totally and diametrically opposite to what some interested people assert.
> The manufacturers of this country must and will, in the nature and reason of things, have a full and constant employ by supplying the African market. (250-251)

This passage is arguably more politically astute than it is economical, as Equiano emphasizes a

sector of the British economy that is not just of monetary importance but also of national

significance—a petition on behalf of the rural industries whose production directly buttress both

the nation itself and the functioning of the empire abroad. In other words, Equiano outlines a

solution for Britain to retain its dominate positionality in the Atlantic world and beyond by

essentially selling abolition as good for both slaves and empire.

As such, Equiano's "ideological appropriation of capitalism" (Fichtelberg, 472) in order

to secure himself financial independence inflected his vision of the marketplace as means to

equality and civilization. Levecq captures the philosophical precariousness of this position: while

"neo-liberal globalization and unfettered enterprise" potentially offered avenues for conveying

"values of mutual recognition and respect" (capitalism as a means for exporting notions of the

'common good'), it likewise positioned abolitionism as reliant on ideologues of "imperialism,

and cultural superiority" (Levecq 16)—an ideological situation aligning with abolitionism's

appropriation of the antityranny lexicon that trafficked in themes of nationalism and imperialism.

The "emancipatory potential of imperialistic coercion" via Britain's voluntary suppression of the

slave trade involved using colonialism as a lever against slavery (ibid). However, ideologies of racial difference would remain uncontested in this scheme because economic exchange does not attack the intellectual foundations underpinning these differences. In fact, the proslavery argument for the slave trade as having a "civilizing" effect on Africans could be maintained by implying that colonial contact built on any economic transaction could "civilize" British trading partners. Indeed, Equiano makes this point explicitly, writing that "[i]ndustry, enterprize, and mining, will have their full scope, proportionally as [Africans] civilize" (251).

Equiano's advocacy for a type of commercial liberty wherein anyone may "commence merchant," as he puts it, in pursuit of escaping financial servitude is entangled with his suggestion that Britain can retain its powerful position in the Atlantic world. Here the different aspects of his personality—his physical liberation, spiritual liberation, and economic positionality—intersect at the emergence of the modern citizen-subject. Equiano's engagement with the varied rhetorical and ideological traditions explored so far came at a crucial historical moment in which the seeds of nation-based citizenship, controlled and catalogued by a bureaucratically complex state apparatus, are just beginning to take recognizable form. The broader abolitionist attempt to elevate antityrannism from a narrow political register to more extensive opposition to chattel slavery (and by extension oppression of racialized persons) is significant for the subsequent literary and legal imaginations of citizenship as both membership in a polity and protection of inalienable rights. It also attempts to establish specifically *racialized* resistance to oppression as a legitimate form of political insurgency by positioning this resistance as ideologically consistent with popular revolutions against tyranny.

At the same time, however, Equiano's sense of citizenship to Great Britain—which he performs by petitioning Parliament—is paired with what Levecq calls his "international

egalitarianism" and a "world citizenship anchored in a negotiation between communities and political needs" (21). Part of this world citizenship emerges from Equiano's "highly sophisticated theory of diaspora and internationalism" in which he works on constructing a "diasporic black identity defined by much more than the vagaries of transportation and enslavement" (ibid). Instead, prototypical diasporic connotations of dispersion and loss are replaced with a "fluid and ever-changing identity" in which nostalgia for an ancestral homeland is counteracted by Equiano's equally powerful ambition for English residency and identity. While a shared humanity that trumps racial or religious categories of belonging certainly finds articulation in Equiano's *Narrative*, he also asserts that England was "where my heart had always been" (165), distinguishing his admiration for a globalized sense of belonging as a vaguely idealistic category separate from his sentimental attachment to Britishness. As a result, his expression of a specifically *Afro*-Britishness is not predicated on longing for physical or emotional return or the reclamation of a 'pure' African identity, but instead rooted in the maintenance of hybridity—as affirmation that African-ness and European-ness are commensurable. Levecq implies, however, that Equiano's acculturation into a British citizenship regime isn't that surprising given the way he describes his original African village as a "society organized around clearly republican principles" of labour, defense, and community-mindedness, and populated by people whose physical beauty connotes the classical proportions of Greco-Roman figures (21-22). If this is an accurate account—and not merely an example of Equiano placating European fears of African "others" by depicting his village as possessing similar political values—then his worldliness is in some sense circumscribed by a Eurocentric contest between liberal and republican traditions, which serves as the political prism through which Equiano understands both his belonging to Europe and his origins in Africa.

Ross J. Pudaloff does suggest that part of Equiano's representation of his village as an "ideal republican society" (510) may be a strategic attempt to cast doubt on republicanism itself and to in turn endorse a Liberal humanism variously shaped by commercial liberty on the one hand and Calvinism on the other. He offers up a depiction of Eboe society, here associated with republicanism, constituted by "virtue, simplicity, war, lack of money and commerce, slavery and stability" (Pudaloff 511) only to then implicitly rebuff their structure as untenable:

> In simplest terms, Equiano rejects this social ideal because it fails the crucial test of time itself in failing to protect the young boy [i.e.: himself] from change. The republican tradition sought nothing more than to find means to stabilize the social structure, to protect against what it called fortune. That, however, as readers of *The Interesting Narrative* recognize, is exactly the term and concept which Equiano says cannot be guarded against. Fortune—and its opposite, misfortune—rule life. (ibid)

Pudaloff's reading requires accepting that Equiano largely conceals this opposition, forcing readers instead to rely on other potential indicators as signalling Equiano's rejection of republicanism. These may include the narrative absence of nostalgia and longing for his homeland, or the recurring emphasis on fortune as the key arbiter of life's trajectory. Any political system that cannot weather change, embodied for example in the march of civilization that appears to colour Equiano's view of history and colonial contact, cannot in turn prepare future generations from the nature of time itself. This opposition may also be found, as Pudaloff suggests, in Equiano's "long and arduous education" that eventually convinces him that he can "achieve his freedom only by reconstituting himself and his relationships to society in fraternal rather than paternal terms" (512). Whereas in Eboe his social and political position were determined via his father, and whereas his surrogate father figures (like Pascal) often betrayed him, a more robust and expansive understanding of kinship underwrites Equiano's commitment to forging networks of transaction, as opposed to positioning himself close to or underneath privileged persons who may or may not assist him in securing independence.

Of course, Pudaloff's reading suggests something of a hidden ideological motive behind Equiano's choice to elaborate his upbringing in Eboe and his subsequent emphasis on fortune, which has implications for the sort of polity that Equiano envisions for Britain and his fellow countrymen. So far I've explored how Equiano's interest in Christianity was partly configured by his desire to manage misfortune, but here we must consider how this desire was equally a search for a more robust political and social space that could evolve with the whims of providence or the dynamism of international commerce, something Eboe both lacked. If Eboe poses as both ethnographic case study and cautionary tale within the *Narrative*, then Equiano's diasporic condition and pursuit of an Afro-British citizenship is likewise an attempt to advocate for an English polity that avoids the same mistakes as his interior African society, which was partially isolationist, overly traditionalist, and dominated by a system of paternal, hereditary rule.

The ways in which a citizenship rhetoric is therefore coded into Equiano's *Narrative* is multivalent. Firstly, the rhetoric of fortune is not simply deployed to convey his personal struggle with adversity but likewise a politicized lexicon warning of the dangers of stringent republicanism and severe notions of civic virtue invested in impossible ideals of independence. This rhetoric attempts to clear a conceptual space for a practice of citizenship that reflects the fluidity of Britain's international presence and which would conceivably allow for persons like Equiano to emerge as viable candidates for political and social belonging, despite their hybridity or lack of hereditary or aristocratic credential.

Secondly, a citizenship rhetoric is identifiable through the at times implicit conflation of free status with the acquisition of British (or American) subjecthood that moves the abolition of the slave trade and slavery into a grander gesture of "civilizing" the African descendent and securing British imperial supremacy in the world, in line with a reading of Eboe as an intriguing

and charming society that Equiano nonetheless rejects as a viable political ideal. There are moments where Equiano seems to counteract this imposition, but the relatively chaotic trajectory of the plot and his own occasional ambivalence towards his diasporic condition don't allow for unequivocal assessments of his work as either a text of Black resistance or the product of an assimilated non-European. In some sense, his autobiography may be the last place critics need to look if they seek to understand the heart of Equiano's social praxis.

Thirdly, as I have so far been emphasizing, the more salient feature of his work is his incisive transformation of a rhetoric of antityrannism into what in retrospect can be readily identified as a modern discourse of human rights, which is then localized to Great Britain through his opening petition to Parliament. This transformation underwrites his petition for moral deference for all racialized persons but also, just as significantly, a claim to a social, political, and legal personality that will in time become indistinguishable from the modern practice of citizenship in a democratic polity. In other words, Equiano's autobiography is a rhetorical attempt to assert himself as an Afro-British subject into the political-public realm reserved for enfranchised members of the nation, perhaps even a vague blueprint for others to discursively negotiate their way towards inclusion.

Of course, Equiano's rootedness in Britain must be acknowledged alongside his expression of diasporic identity, in which varied types of travel constitute his personality as a Black Atlantic subject or transatlantic figure whose autobiographical representation is itself recited through multiple examples of coerced, forced, and free movement—and it was movement that was revealing of the slave's peculiar legal status.[11] In effect, by the time European states had established a robust and effective citizenship regime, they had, firstly, extensive practice

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[11] I explore the centrality of movement to citizenship in Chapter Four.

controlling human movement through the forced migration of the racial slave, and secondly, experience forging the notion of a Black Atlantic subject whose movements were the constitutive element of their identity. In other words, the slave trade functioned as an essential testing ground for the creation of subsequent categories of person that legitimate prejudicially imposed limitations on travel.

On the one hand, Equiano's *Narrative* is reflective of modern statecraft obsessions with the legitimate means of movement through his emphasis on his autobiography as likewise a travel narrative, framing some of his marine voyages as the adventurous whimsy of a restless soul. He attributes, for example, his travel to a "roving disposition" and a desire "of seeing many different parts of the world" (188). At the same time, however, he struggles to claim some authority over his own movement after living most of his life bereft of the capacity to decide his travel itineraries, detailing how his early financial struggles as a free man constantly coerced him to take on new work at sea. Here we must acknowledge that "travel" is a fraught and contested term. James Clifford, for example, in "Notes on Travel and Theory" acknowledges travel's "connotations of middle class 'literary' or recreational journeying, spatial practices long associated with male experiences and virtues" (1989). Geraldine Murphy similarly notes that travel "connotes a voluntary, temporary change of environment" constituted by "autonomy, leisure, self-cultivation, and intellectual curiosity" which "bespeak the privileges of class, gender, and […] race" (551-552). Despite these significations, Clifford proposes that the term "travel" is worth saving, while bell hooks casts suspicion on any "theory of the journey that would expose the extent to which holding on to the concept of 'travel' as we know it is also a way to hold on to imperialism" (173). As hooks goes on to explain:

> Travel is not a word that can be easily evoked to talk about the Middle Passage, the Trail of Tears, the landing of Chinese immigrants, the forced relocation of Japanese-Americans, or the

plight of the homeless. Theorizing diverse journeying is crucial to our understand of any politics of location. (173)

Unthought or untheorized application of the term "travel" can obscure the differential sources, motivations, and experiences of journeying, or may catalogue history in a way that softens the violence of particular systems of movement. Travel for some is an "encounter with terrorism" and an "encounter with the terrorizing force of white supremacy" (hooks 174)—a fact as accurate for Equiano as it is today, as he describes his first encounter with white men as evoking horror. This discrepancy in the experience of travel dislodges the term as a handy and robust category to which we can look for a universal meaning of movement. It also points to how modern citizenship implies a theory of travel centred on validating certain types of journeying. For example, citizenship legitimates the interrogation of racialized persons based on perceived threats of nonbelonging or transgressivity both at the border and in public space more generally. Simultaneously, citizenship can legitimate the eased movement of white persons, which then constitutes them as the source of terrorism in Black experience and imagination. As hooks notes, to name "whiteness in the black imagination is often a representation of terror" (172), and the facilitation of this terror depends in part on modern citizenship regimes that invest in white persons the authority to both interrogate or expel racialized persons and to move with eased capacity that makes their presence hegemonic and inescapable.

In an eighteenth-century context, to name what Equiano does as "travel" will thus require acknowledging the discrepancy between the varied sorts of movements he accomplishes and the movements of the European bourgeoisie that likewise label and novelize what they do as "travel." Here Equiano's autobiography is particularly resourceful, because he reveals the importance of particular generic conventions in rendering travel intelligible: travel is not simply a bare chronology but invested with narrative potential that may legitimate the travellers arrival

to a particular destination or conversely render their arrival illegitimate or even impossible. In turn, an *authority* over travel—be it invested in a slaveholder, the state, or the individual— becomes the key condition by which Equiano configures his particular approach to the diaspora and by implication his political and legal personality. Here the limited connotation of travel as an upper-class pursuit somewhat re-emerges, for although many people travel in a mundane sense, the "symbolic traveler," as Murphy writes, is constituted as "white, male, and European, as subject rather than object, observer rather than spectacle" (552). Equiano's emphasis on travel therefore forces the sort of retheorization that hooks petitions because it shows him in the act of claiming or reclaiming his positionality as a subject and observer of worldliness, rather than a spectacle along someone else's journey. In other words, Equiano narrativizes travel as a strategy for demonstrating his autonomous subjecthood. By implication, his ability to recognize and enact a form of world citizenship depends on his positionality as a travelling observer.

As such, Equiano represents not just travel in general but a specific type of narrative trope that centres on journeying as a key element in self-constituting and, more broadly, the entire destiny of a people. This trope reels the travel narratives of Daniel Defoe and Aphra Behn into the conversation, and which points to how Equiano's *Narrative* can be located alongside literary texts that pretend as non-fiction but novelize what Laura Doyle calls the "*ur*-plot" of Anglo-Atlantic and African-Atlantic works, namely a "ruinous water crossing" that "marks the crisis point in a journey towards freedom that realizes a race's destiny" (205), or which constitutes the nature of a group's diasporic condition. The "race" in question may be white puritans pilgriming to Turtle Island or Black Africans escaping the bonds of slavery. In either case, imprecise categories of race emergent in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century gain definition through a transatlantic crossing coerced by crisis. The presence of this "*ur*-plot" in

Oroonoko but particularly *Robinson Crusoe* and Equiano's autobiography leads Doyle to consider both works as "dialectically interdependent" and "turned toward each other in their racialized freedom telos" (205). Even though *The Interesting Narrative* is categorized as quasi-historical, there remains a degree of "novelization" underwriting Equiano's text that is identifiable not only in the parts of his story he invented but also in his creative choices surrounding narrative trajectory and plot structure. The difference, as Doyle suggests, is that *The Interesting Narrative* "works as a counter-narrative, one that presses hard on the race-freedom logic of the Atlantic economy while also operating within it" (197). Doyle argues that the content of this "counter-narrative" derives from Equiano's "shrewd recasting of the tropes of the Anglo-Atlantic narrative of captivity and liberty" (212), which revolve around his fuller acknowledgment of the agency of racialized persons in the maintenance and functioning of the Anglo-Atlantic world. Whereas Crusoe consistently undervalues the importance of racialized persons like Xury or Friday to his own prosperity by reconfiguring himself as *their* saviours, Equiano makes explicit his role as a Black man in the survival and fortune of his white crew members even in moments when he has no obligation to do so.

Intriguingly, Equiano centres Black agency in a way that had been largely missing from seventeenth and eighteenth-century British narratives of the Atlantic world while also *de*-centring the Atlantic world itself as a sort of *de facto* topographical centre around which the rest of the globe revolves. Equiano counters an emphasis on the Atlantic world by spending extensive narrative attention on his interior African upbringing where the Atlantic Ocean is neither present nor known and bears virtually no influence on his people's lives and customs. For example, Equiano depicts the interior "nations" through which he passed as culturally and linguistically harmonious—to the degree that he does not admit of encountering true strangeness until reaching

122

closer to the Atlantic coast, "the inhabitants of which differed from us in [manners, customs, and language]" (68). Crucially, these differences amount to the use of iron pots, European weapons, a predisposition to violence, sharpened teeth, lack of religious rituals like animal sacrifice, and inter-gender sleeping arrangements. The complex interculturality of the African interior where language and ritual occasionally overlap erodes the closer Equiano gets to the Atlantic, where coastal African nations are in contact with white Europeans, and where Equiano in particular will encounter the Anglo-Atlantic world. In other words, the closer Equiano gets to contact with whites, the more cruel and violent the African nations become. Even the nature of slavery changes. Whereas before Equiano would as a slave-child of a neighbouring African nation be almost fully integrated with his master's family—eating dinner with them, playing with the free born—once sold to the whites, he was immediately chained and segregated. Whereas Equiano "never met with any ill treatment" (66) while a slave to other Africans, once aboard the slave ship he is flogged for the slightest insubordination and held below the ship's deck. The nature of his transaction as a slave likewise changes from a simple barter without any hint of monetary profit to the emergence of currency for purchasing his servitude by the time he is sold in the vicinity of the Atlantic.

As such, once the Atlantic does emerge, it figures as a well of evil and cruelty, the source of linguistic and behavioural corruption via European contact with coastal African tribes, and the mooring point for persons Equiano initially identifies as white cannibals—an image that reverses expectations for his white British and American audience. Instead of an indispensable geographic abyss upon which European civilization is dependent, the Atlantic appears as an almost Satanic nether region that Equiano wishes he had never known and for whom no one should want to be affiliated with.

The liminal position of both resistance and acculturation that *The Interesting Narrative* embodies—and which Equiano himself embodies in the form of a hybridity, both European and African—contributes to its generic confusion, although as I've suggested previously the degree to which Equiano's text can be read as counter-narrative needs to be qualified against the colonizing initiatives he both admires and advances through his Christian missionary work. Equiano's particular "ethnographic gaze of the Other" leads Murphy to label his position "dissident colonialism" (553). If anything, Equiano writes in a language of religico-political liberation that would be familiar to an American protestant tradition rooted in mythologies of religious pilgrimage, although given Equiano's preference for England and recurring but accurate condemnation of North America as a despotic place for Black persons, it can be sure he did not consider the United States as the new promised land. Nonetheless, and just as significantly, the rearticulation of the "*ur*-plot" in Equiano's text puts it in dialogue with both the British novelistic tradition exemplified by *Robinson Crusoe* and the founding mythologies of the American nation and the genealogy of American literature (hence why Equiano could also be read *as* American literature).

Despite their disputed candidacies for first English novel, both *Oroonoko* and *Robinson Crusoe* place the origin of English novelistic fiction squarely on issues of crisis. Doyle stresses these crises as the ignition point for a liberatory endeavour by a white Anglo-Atlantic subject whose eventual freedoms are only possible through racialized figures. Behn's achievement as a woman writer is dependent on her narrativization (and possibly invention) of a Black prince while Crusoe's escape from the island is dependent on Friday, and even earlier his escape from slavery was dependent on Xury. Rather than strictly personhood, racialized persons in *Oroonoko* and *Robinson Crusoe* embody a vessel-hood—a vaguely maternal figuration in which the

freedom of a white person is carried forth by the racialized persons they subordinate. In some cases, such as with Imoinda, this vessel-hood is not a metaphor: Imoinda's pregnancy quite literally signals the tragic fall of Oroonoko and the successful suppression of his resistance movement against the English colonialists in Surinam (insofar as the prospect of a child born into slavery is the ultimate ignition point for Oroonoko's failed rebellion). Oroonoko's death by implication preserves the English colony. He is subsequently dismembered and his body parts are sent to other plantations as a means of intimidating other slaves (83).[12]

Not to be overlooked, however, is the degree to which the crises that ground either text are not simply personal but distinctly political and potential analogies for larger forces at work. *Oroonoko*, for example, emerges from a crisis of political authority inured by the ascension of King James II to the British throne and the birth of his son, James Francis Edward Stuart, that signalled a Catholic line of ascension—another way in which maternity as vessel-hood signals both the future of the nation and its potential demise. The subsequent Bloodless Revolution of 1688, which saw the fall of James II and the coronation of a Protestant monarchy, appears embryonic to Behn's authorship. She dedicates the work to a fellow supporter of the Catholic monarchy and suggests that Oroonoko had "heard of the late civil wars in England, and the deplorable death of our great monarch" (23)—a reference to Charles I, the father of James II, who was executed by Oliver Cromwell and his Parliamentarians.[13] Moreover, Oroonoko shares some similarities with James II: the former suffers a tragic fall precipitated by acts of betrayal by Englishmen he thought were his colleagues and Oroonoko's name when enslaved in Surinam is changed to "Caesar," a nickname that was similarly given to James II.

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[12] The English colony of Surinam was eventually given over to the Dutch, which Behn laments in *Oroonoko*.
[13] The fact that Oroonoko is said to "deplore" the execution of Charles I, a ruler almost completely outside his own cultural sphere, somewhat overdetermines where the text lies ideologically.

These ideological underpinnings of *Oroonoko* signal a concern of political ascension. The political tumultuousness that Behn witnessed and the subsequent overthrow of her preferred monarch is reproduced both narratively in terms of the rightful heir (Oroonoko) suffering an unjust fall from favour and structurally in terms of the work's disjointed narrative form. As such, the depiction of a strong and ordered monarchal power in the figure of Oroonoko is undermined by a disordered text with multiple unsigned narrators and emergent generic conventions. Prior to *The Interesting Narrative*, *Oroonoko* was a rare work of English-language literature in which the undisputed protagonist and hero was a Black man and the constant presence of revolt in *Oroonoko* likewise reflected a sense of crisis around contact with Indigenous and racialized persons that were both candidates for conversion and threats to empire. Equiano redirects the nature of this crisis by both lamenting his lost opportunity for political ascension in his native village, where he would have been promised a higher social status, and celebrating his successful though rough inclusion into a Western politico-religious order, where in some sense he finally achieves the political subjecthood he was initially owed in Eboe, although clearly not at the same rank as he would have achieved had he remained in Africa. In other words, while Behn initiates English novelistic fiction through the crisis and tragedy of a racialized protagonist failing to achieve his due recognition, Equiano ultimately resolves the crisis, or sets out a resolution to it, by demonstrating his successful acculturation into the British social and political sphere.

CHAPTER THREE - Lord Mansfield, Equiano, and Commercial and Legal Identity

In the previous chapter, I examined how Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative* contributed to the emergence of a human rights discourse through his elevation of an English antityrannical tradition to include the racial slave, coding his autobiography with petitions for both the physical liberation of the enslaved and also dignified legal personalities that invested Black persons with the tools to work towards political and cultural reform without the need for violent resistance. I suggested that the historical circumstances of Equiano's publication situated his contribution at an important nexus for citizenship in the Atlantic world and that he in turn discursively works through the presence of racialized diasporic communities in the Western polity in a way that attempts to raise racialized persons above figurations of the slave. In turn, I suggested that Equiano implicitly concerns himself with the state management of non-Europeans in a British imperial order. In the following chapter, I continue my analysis by focusing on the legal and cultural milieu surrounding slavery in the Anglo-Atlantic world that sought to ensnare persons like Equiano in the debilitating legal persona of the slave, thus arresting them on the periphery of inclusion but not regulation. My departure point for this analysis relies on an expanded definition of "authorship" to include the legal judgments of Lord Mansfield, which I analyze adjacent to Equiano's autobiography. I consider both as attempts to discursively and imaginatively negotiate the role of racialized persons in the Anglo-Atlantic world rooted in notions of liberty that crucially exempt women, racialized persons, and the working class from full political and legal existence. Even though they contributed to two different discursive regimes, I'm examining the points where their particular approaches converge or contest one another.

The textual record of *Gregson v. Gilbert* and *Somerset v. Stewart* produced by the British court is being read alongside an expressly literary work to emphasize that both participate in certain "novelizing protocols" (Baucom 16), specifically the trope of personification—a trope that remains an essential imaginative tool for thinking and codifying personhood and by implication citizenship. The notion of "novelizing protocols" is not merely a reference to narrativity or narrativization, but a broader component of what Ian Baucom calls "speculative culture" (32), which positions the eighteenth-century fiction novel as a device or technology designed to "train readers to mediate the financial revolution's new world of speculative transactions and mobile property" (ibid). Baucom's point, however, goes further than suggesting that novels are essentially training manuals for an emergent capitalist culture initially unaccustomed to monetary values being entirely speculative or imaginative. Rather, Baucom sets out an epistemology that weds the "bidirectional flow of insurance and historicism" with the "novelized critical imaginary" underwriting novelistic fiction (40-41), which together in a sort of tripartite inter-dependent framework "helped to permit the emergence of that finance culture in the first place and which our own hyper-financialized 'present' inherits from this eighteenth-century 'past'" (41). Put more simply, the notion of "knowing" characters in a novel is functionally analogous to knowing the speculated value of insurance or knowing particular individuals through historical study. Baucom specifically points to insurance brokers and slave ship financers knowing the value of the slaves they technically owned but never met as a method of knowing that served as an identical epistemological underpinning to that of the reader knowing characters in a novel.

Equiano's *Narrative* is an ideal textual grounding for this theoretical framework because, as explored in the previous chapter, he depicts his assimilation to a European culture of

speculative financing. In the early years of his captivity and while still in Africa, Equiano's conveyance to the Atlantic coast from the interior unfolds alongside the shift from a barter system to a reliance on objects like coins or shells as possessing a set monetary value. The relationship that he and his captors have to objects becomes corrupted, transforming from a culture of use-value to one of invisible, speculated value. Physical currency like coins can only promise a certain numerical worth—an unfortunate and precarious ontology that Equiano will encounter again in his attempt to collect enough money to purchase his manumission. Despite this precarity, Equiano evinces a commitment to merchant activity that appears to endorse a vision of the human as partially constituted by an individualistic and competitive engagement with a proto-capitalist marketplace.

Both Equiano's autobiography and the court records of Mansfield's judgements are being treated as derivative of a broader speculative and imaginative enterprise that was present in Western thought in the late eighteenth century—and not just present but *essential* to the monetary valuations and commercial practices that underwrote the slave trade. I explore how the development of these novelizing protocols, which informed not just novelistic fiction but the long-form text more generally, emerged from the same matrix of imagination, epistemology, and writing/reading that underwrote the perceived commercial value of the slave trade, the codification of slavery in law, and the subsequent abolitionist response. In other words, while the fictions rendered in literature are different in kind from legal fictions, they are part of the same speculative enterprise that priced human lives, produced legally and culturally significant personas, and forged national mythologies wherein ideal citizens or archetypes could be placed. Baucom suggests that we continue to operate under the same speculative enterprise that underwrote the slave trade (what he refers to as the "long contemporaneity" and the "long

twentieth century"), which embraces an emphasis on the rhetorical exercise of personification in order to represent and treat human beings as persons. My intervention in this analysis is to consider more deeply the category of citizenship and the genres of the human that implicitly underwrites the citizen's emergence as a state-mandated subjecthood. Citizenship is here considered a form of personification that has since been extricated from its literary inheritances for the purposes of governmental administration and management. My argument therefore redirects from Baucom and his concerns over the speculation invested in monetary valuations towards the speculative and discursive apparatus that underwrites citizenship.

Lord Mansfield also contacts the world of novelistic fiction where his judgment in *Somerset v. Stewart*, explored in the next section, inspired literary responses to the prospect of abolition, which most famously includes Jane Austen's choice to name Thomas Bertram's estate "Mansfield Park" in her novel of the same name (1814), a title Margaret Kirkham calls "allusive and ironic" (116). Kirkham argues that "in making Sir Thomas Bertram a slave-owner abroad, and in exposing the moral condition of his wife in England, Jane Austen follows an analogy used in the *Vindication* between the slaves in the colonies and women, especially married women, at home" (117). Here the figurative, political enslavement embedded in the English antityrannical tradition, discussed in the previous chapter, re-emerges as the figure of the literal slave offers a rhetorical and conceptual comparison for conveying all experiences of oppression. With Austen, however, the comparison goes deeper as the "language of law and property, and the language of capture and captivation as applied to marriage and sexual relationships, is shown to be indecent" (Kirkham 118). The distinction between slaves as property (through labour) and women as property (through marriage) is conflated by Austen, or implied as uninformative, through the oblique presence of Thomas Bertram's Antiguan plantation, the profits from which underwrite

Mansfield Park, as Edward Said has extensively addressed. The profundity of this comparison is all the more revealing of the ways Austen codes *Mansfield Park* with an anti-slavery message meant to gesture to the continued oppression of women, despite the moral proselytizing in her own time surrounding the barbarity of the slave trade as a commercial practice. Indeed, Michael Karounos suggests that one can "easily conclude that Austen's *Mansfield Park* is, in fact, an anti-slavery novel" (731), suggesting that Miss Fanny is herself a "slave" to the estate. Britain had abolished the trade in 1807 just a few years prior to the publication of her novel, which had occasioned abolitionist Thomas Clarkson to comment on the restored moral rights of slaves. Yet, as Austen novelizes, this undeniably significant development did not prompt identical considerations of women's continued oppression under the institution of marriage.

In light of this historical context, Austen's choice to name the estate "Mansfield" is meant to invoke Lord Mansfield's supposed anti-slavery credentials via his popular association with the decision in *Somerset* that slavery was not lawfully permitted in England. As Kirkham mentions, the supposed irony in the name "Mansfield Park" thus derives from the fact that Thomas Bertram is a slave-owner who owns an estate named for an anti-slavery judge, upon which Miss Fanny then confronts the unequal conditions imposed upon women. As I'll explain in the next section, it's likely that Mansfield's judgement in *Somerset* was misunderstood or mistakenly transcribed, which deflates the ironic potential of Austen's choice to name Bertram's estate after him on the grounds that he outlawed slavery in England. As Jerome Nadelhaft puts it, many in both Britain and the United States mistakenly believed that "Lord Mansfield had with one sweeping judicial blow destroyed the institution of slavery in England" (193). Nonetheless, Austen's engagement with the legal realm in a way that is expressly intertextual with the testimony of Mansfield's supposed judgment in *Somerset* offers a departure point for discussing

131

more broadly the ways in which Mansfield has been mistakenly situated as an anti-slavery advocate within subsequent anti-slavery literature and how the rhetoric surrounding metaphorical slavery comes to inflect claims to full citizenship.

Section A
The Case of *Somerset v. Stewart*: Slavery in England after 1772

While slavery existed prior to European colonialism, the transatlantic system was unique in its mass, intercontinental transport of captive Africans to slave markets and plantations in the Americas, which in turn established and buttressed a global network of exchange underwritten by the participating nations' commercial, financial, political, and cultural institutions. The legacy of this scheme for the buying, selling, transporting, and exploiting of human begins are located in nearly every aspect of modernity. The transatlantic slave trade constituted the largest forced human migration in history, and the commercial routes and transnational connections this industry forged were indispensable for the establishment of global trade routes and systems of law that sanctioned the transformation of human beings into chattel. The map on which modernity is drawn was essentially forged by slavery and slave trade routes. As Robin Blackburn summarizes, the development of the trade and the institution of slavery is inextricable from the advances of the eighteenth century and is

> associated with several of those processes which have been held to define modernity: the growth of instrumental rationality, the rise of national sentiment and the nation-state, racialized perceptions of identity, the spread of market relations and wage labour, the development of administrative bureaucracies and modern tax systems, the growing sophistication of commerce and communication, the birth of consumer societies, the publication of newspapers and the beginnings of press advertising, 'action at a distance' and an individualist sensibility. (4)

As a result, New World slavery is implicated in nearly every aspect of post-Enlightenment modern life. It initiated a network of processes that positioned the slave trade as the economic

engine of major port cities and served as a social and cultural pivot around which nation-states were willing to stake their fortunes. The slave trade brought "people separated by an ocean" into "vital relationship with one another," furnishing "new webs of social trust" and "new social identities" (Blackburn 4) that still endure today. Angela Naimou argues that the "legal slave" casts a particularly long shadow beyond the Atlantic and onto subsequent citizenship regimes:

> the figure of the legal slave continues to be enormously productive in contemporary forms of legal personhood, it haunts the archive and contemporary black life but also moves across and beyond those sites, to other categories of personhood deemed at once exceptional and junked, washed away, wasted, cast out, disposable and ruined. (19)

One of the most important of these modern legal and political inventions is not strictly citizenship itself, but the liminal category invented for slaves that the trade and New World Slavery relied on for its operation. It is the *rejection* of a rationalized, logically consistent code for the status of persons in law that allowed for the gradations in personhood that led to the disenfranchisement of women and racial minorities. In fact, even more broadly than citizenship, the very notions of freedom and liberty "so saturates hegemonic Euro-American ideologies that it is difficult to grasp that its emergence as a political ideal is contingent on numerous historical particulars, including the institution of chattel slavery" (Nyquist 3).

The idea that slaves were wholly equivalent to things or to cargo is a slight misconception. Slaves were not "outside" the law nor were they recognized in law as just objects. Instead, their status was under continual negotiation owing in part to a recognition that a strict dichotomy between person and thing was untenable in a system of laws which strove to deny any notion of social and civil life to slaves, who were nonetheless undeniably human with wills and responsibilities. The strict distinction between person and thing was and remains a rhetorical feint, a result of the fact that the concept of person "implies an apprehension of *things*" (Dayan 139). The concept of a person is a legal fiction rather than an inalienable condition that

133

allowed for legal rhetoric to distinguish between differing degrees of servitude and servility. As Bryan Wagner puts, "slavery's indignity is not about being turned from a person into a thing but rather about being in a position where it does not matter if you are a person or a thing" (74). Slaves were still legally persons but persons in a taxonomy circumscribed by vague, questionable forms of assessment that deemed them the "unfreest" of persons. "Examples ranging from proofs of animality," Colin Dayan notes, "to marks of reason or imbecility—and a great deal in between—became part and parcel of judicial work" (139-140). Slaves were permanently disabled in law or suffering permanent incapacity, such that the authority wielded over them by their masters was close to paternalistic, although later in the Antebellum U.S. lawyers "had to be cautious in ascribing mental incapacity in slaves, since slaves had to be held responsible for crimes" (Dayan 163; 147). As Wagner summarizes, throughout the history of slavery stretching back to antiquity there were "moments when slaves had to be treated as legal persons, particularly in criminal trials where volition had to be recorded to hold the slave accountable" (74). While in terms of civil law slaves were essentially "mindless effigies of the human," in criminal law they remained "natural persons" who ranked above "infants, idiots, or lunatics," all figures who could reasonably be held not responsible for their actions" (Dayan, 164-5). Slaves were dead in law, civilly dead that is, until they committed a crime, at which point they were reinvigorated with the sort of spirit and intention that would afford punishment and attribution of responsibility. As such, the legal rhetoric around slaves was an exercise in how far the law could go to construct a form of personhood farthest from any notion of actual life without denying the obvious life slaves possessed. While this may seem contradictory and illogical—the enslaved are essentially held as both person and thing simultaneously—Wagner points out that slavery's

endurance as an institution emerged precisely because it centres this cruel duality as a "precondition for the system's normal operation" (74).

The instability of meanings, the lack of precision in categories of personhood, and figurative possibilities in the notion of things gave pro-slavery lawmakers and the pro-slavery public ample space to imagine and codify the slave, and not just racially but by gender as well, further partitioning both the notion and experience of personhood. Gender differences factored into the purchase and selling of slaves as well as in the nature of captivity and the use of violence. Surviving accounting sheets from slave ships, for example, distinguish between men, women, boys, and girls (TNA[14], C 109/401), and surviving testimony from crew serving aboard slaving vessels document how violence dispensed by captains and crew onto slaves as a means of control could be explicitly gendered (see *King v. Kimber*[15]).

The so-called "Orthodox View," put simply, defines legal personhood or legal personality as the lawful capacity or competence to hold rights and duties (Kurki 2019), and thus affirms a positive relation between persons and the law that recognizes what rights and duties can be possessed or exercised. To exist in a *negative* relation to the law involves the willful attempt to deny that such rights or duties are lawfully possessable or exercisable. To be disabled in law is a type of legal construction or fiction attached to particular persons with the express purpose of rendering them as rightless entities, as socially and civilly dead, and as extraneous individuals—in other words, their disabilities are only decipherable in law and do not manifest in any physical or psychological way. Dayan employs the term "negative personhood" for those

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[14] Archive Key: NMM refers to National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, TNA refers to the National Archives at Kew, UK, and BL refers to the British Library, all located in the United Kingdom.

[15] John Kimber was a British slaving vessel captain that was charged and acquitted by a British jury in the murder of two slave girls aboard his ship the *Recovery* while anchored off the coast of Africa. Testimony from the surgeon and third mate, published in political pamphlets after the trial, suggested that Kimber's flogging, which led to the deaths, was intimately tied to the fact that both slaves were women.

disabled by law, which includes slaves, criminals, detainees, and (to a degree) animals.[16] The notion of possessing a negative relation to the law—for the express purpose of trapping the slave in servile status—was multifaceted but nonetheless relied on tortuous reasoning in order to essentially compartmentalize and dissociate types of actions within a society, only some of which were performable for the slave. In particular, while the slave could not perform civic duties germane to fully enfranchised citizens, these needed to be distinguished from *criminal* actions that were most assuredly still possible for the slave. In other words, the apparent one-to-one relation between punishability and recognition-in-law was far from clear because while the slave could break the law, the law in turn provided little to no protection.

As such, while some American courts were apt to find slaves punishable for their actions, this had to be done in such a way that the master's claim to slaves as property was not infringed.[17] The slave was still technically property but personified as an agent of culpability, requiring the law to, as Dayan frames it, "birth this being" every time a crime was committed but then shrink away in matters of non-criminal action. In fact, lawyers "had to be cautious in ascribing mental incapacity in slaves," a condition pro-slavers sought to ascribe to racialized persons as a justification for denying them emancipation, because "slaves had to be held responsible for crimes" (Dayan 147). A paradox thus emerged between racial taxonomies perpetuated by white slavers who believed in the inferiority of Black persons and a racist system of American laws that needed to ascribe rational capacity or competence to slaves to render them

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[16] Kurki (2019) elaborates the contemporary confrontation over animal rights by noting that animals do not need to be lawfully persons or to be capable of possessing rights to be afforded welfare protections. His point makes clear how an (over)emphasis on the "rights paradigm" in legal and cultural discourse obscures how legal and moral deference can be afforded to entities without also bestowing legal personality.

[17] It is a misconception that property or animate things like horses or dogs were not liable for committing crimes. As Dayan points out, in British law up to 1846 even inanimate things were capable of manslaughter, for example. They could be "possessed" with a will that made them guilty of certain actions. Known as "deodand," this early modern form of law served as a stepping-stone towards treating slaves as both property and animate things capable of committing crimes.

culpable for crimes. "Given the necessities of civil incapacity for sustaining servile status," Dayan continues, it "should not be surprising that the task of judicial reasoning is double: to pry away consciousness from the slave in civil society, but to reattach it once the slave enters the region of crime" (148). The imaginative underpinnings required to sustain this reasoning in law leads Dayan to explicitly call it "fiction," a fiction that originally arose from perceived economic necessity on slavery and the slave trade but which would find its most gruesome expression in Antebellum U.S. law that sought to codify not just the slaves lawful disability but the entire racialized population of the United States, free or otherwise. This judicial legacy remains an active presence in twenty-first century American jurisprudence, such as through the continued recognition of "civil death" for convicted felons, a status originally applied to slaves.[18]

It is a misconception that slaves were *legally* inhuman or nonperson, for it was precisely through a specific recognition in law (namely, a negative one) that slaves could be subjugated and subordinated. "As a legal fact," Orlando Patterson notes, "there has never existed a slaveholding society, ancient or modern, that did not recognize the slave as a person in law," and this fact is demonstrated in the "legal response in slaveholding societies to the delicts of slaves: in all cases the slave is held legally and morally responsible" (22). Frederick Douglass recognized this in a speech in 1852. In reference to the considerably larger number of capital crimes that could be committed by slaves than by whites, he asked "What is this but the acknowledgment that the slave is a moral, intellectual and responsible being? (2018, 70). Slaves were not outside or adjacent to the law any more than the criminal in part because they needed to still be held culpable for their actions, requiring some minimal level of legal identity. Prior to

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[18] The legacy of legal slavery can also be recognized in landmark Supreme Court cases, not all of which overturned oppressive laws but in some cases sought to ignore that any problems around racial injustice exist (see *Shelby County v. Holder*).

New World slavery, the *Digest of Justinian* commissioned by Roman emperor Justinian I in the sixth century A.D. recognized that by natural law 'all men were born free' and only by contrary to natural law can slavery persist, in turn forcing a discrepancy in law between free men and slaves. The spirit of this law finds conceptual harmony with British philosopher John Locke who, over a millennium later, wrote in his *Second Treatise of Government* of a non-natural slavery as a form of deferred death penalty for one who had already forfeited his right to life as a result of a state of war (IV.22). In short, Locke suggested slavery was not a natural condition of men or women— contra Aristotle, no one was born a slave—and any natural rights bestowed by God could not be voluntarily forfeited or transferred to another person. The only means by which the natural condition of men could be changed was by entering into a state of war whereby a person designs to take another person's life and property. In conditions of war, persons still have the right to self-preservation and thus the right to destroy that which threatens his own destruction. The fruits of war include the acquiring of slaves. In essence then, slavery is the continuation of a state of war between persons (namely an owner and a slave). Significantly, however, Locke's theory of persons does not justify the transgenerational slavery that would later underwrite the inter-American slave economy, which was dependent on slaves begetting slaves in order to buttress the slave population.

The *Digest,* like Locke and other theories of law that would come after it, makes no attempt to deny that slaves are persons but rather present slavery as a "fact of life and a product of arbitrament of war—of sheer power" (Finnis 23). Slavery, John Finnis explains, "as an institution of the law is maintained by sheer power, long after any war or war-captivity, and is imposed upon persons who were never party to war" (ibid)—a condition which requires not simply an unwillingness to recognize rights or a judicial abdication, but an active and calculated

attempt to withhold rights from particular persons by codifying that exercise of sheer power in law. Over the course of the European transatlantic slave trade and the inter-American slavery economy, the Antebellum U.S. enacted manifestly absurd legal reasoning in the service of restraining racial slaves in positions of lawful disability. Dayan points to *Bailey v. Piondexter's Executor* (1858) heard before the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals as an example, a case which proceeded the infamous Supreme Court case *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857)[19]. The verdict flatly declared slaves had "no legal capacity to elect between freedom and slavery" (Grattan 428), which rested on a notion in close proximity to that of legal personhood: will or choice. The case concerned John Lewis Poindexter, whose last will and testament gave his slaves the choice to either be freed—which required them to leave Virginia[20]—or remain enslaved and be publicly auctioned. When Poindexter died in 1835, ownership of the slaves transferred to his widow. By the time she died nearly two decades later, the number of slaves had reached thirty. Poindexter's executor sought to activate the clauses of the will, but when it came to the clause governing his slaves election to be emancipated the heirs of Poindexter subsequently became defendants against the will's executor. The case eventually reached the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals which determined that Poindexter's testator allowing for his slaves to choose manumission was void. The majority opinion determined that Poindexter had "endeavored to clothe his slaves with the uncontrollable and irrevocable power of determining for themselves whether they shall be

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[19] In sum, the Supreme Court in *Dred Scott* decided that Black people held no rights that white persons ought to recognize.

[20] An 1806 amendment to the Virginia Manumission Act of 1782 required manumitted slaves to leave Virginia within one year or remain enslaved (Dayan 142), and as such "emancipation was accompanied by exile" (114). This amendment severely limited the power of slave owners to free their slaves, a consequence that Virginian legislators were willing to impose because, firstly, the supposed good-intentions of slave owners threatened the racial and economic order that slave-holding states had built, and secondly, manumission was inflated as a dangerous enterprise for society.

manumitted," which is a "legal impossibility" (Grattan 450). Slaves could not legally choose *for themselves* to be free.

The capacity to sustain this imagined space where the slave was deemed cargo without being a literal thing, was legally barred from choosing manumitting, and yet was legally culpable for committing crimes did not emerge *ex nihilo*. John Locke, David Hume, Aphra Behn, Daniel Defoe and others all contributed to an English-language corpus composed of imaginings of servitude that were circumscribed by religion and race, and mythologized alongside events of national significance.[21] Defoe provided "realistic" fictions that conveyed a colonial fantasy wherein non-white persons invited their own subjugation in the presence of their European counterparts, while Locke provided the legal and philosophical justification for slavery via his own fictionalized world of man's supposed originary "state of nature." Literary and legal regimes worked in concert to arrest racialized persons in subordinate positions that functioned to buttress cultural beliefs in European superiority and secure dependable access to cheap labour.

The extensive liminal spaces that were opened up by an economic and ideological insistence on slavery and the slave trade called for the production of new imaginings of the person to which literature and literary works filled the gap. These imaginings had to, as Dayan frames it, "make intelligible some hardly new, though ever-malleable connections: between humans and non-humans, persons and things, bodies and minds" (151). In the campaign to abolish the transatlantic slave trade and later the institution of slavery, various strategies arose for how best to work around these indelible categories to endow racial slaves and Black persons more broadly with a level of spirit and rationality that the law would not grant or was actively opposing. The notion of inalienable rights certainly represented a significant contribution

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[21] Both Locke and Defoe also had, at one time or another, financial interests in slaving voyages.

towards abolishing both the slave trade and slavery by undermining one of slavery's central philosophical justifications, namely that there existed differences between races that were categorical and metaphysical, but it wasn't enough and could not address the transatlantic and trans-cultural foundation of the slave trade.

There were nonetheless legal events in the latter half of the eighteenth century that affected how writers like Equiano were to configure their public personas in pursuit of abolition. The first of these significant legal events was *Somerset v. Stewart*. Equiano was not living in England in 1772 when this sensational legal verdict was handed down by Lord Mansfield in the case of *Somerset,* which appeared to render the institution of slavery inoperable within the country. Though Mansfield's judgment was likely misunderstood, when Equiano settled in England and wrote his autobiography, the debate around slavery and the slave trade on both sides of the Atlantic had been significantly impacted by the *Somerset* decision and had rallied the abolitionist cause towards a peaceable, legal means to ending British participation in the slave trade. It is therefore essential to first understand the dynamics of *Somerset* and how it contributed to the legal and cultural environment from which Equiano wrote and published his autobiography.

Somerset concerned James Somerset, a Black man purchased on the African coast who was shipped to the colony of Virginia via the Middle Passage where he became a slave. He managed to avoid plantation work, however, after being purchased by Charles Stewart, a customs officer. Like Equiano with his master, Somerset travelled with Stewart to England, but two years later while in the city of London Somerset fled and disappeared for two months. Stewart eventually reacquired Somerset and sought to ship him to Jamaica, but his plans were thwarted by Londoners who "applied to Lord Mansfield for a writ of habeas corpus ordering the

captain of the ship to produce Somerset before the judge" (Webb 456). The writ was granted, although Mansfield was initially hesitant to let the case go forward, hoping instead that the parties for Stewart and Somerset would settle without need for a trial. No agreement ever came to fruition, and the case finally went to the Court of King's Bench in 1772. The question the court needed to resolve was "whether to apply English law, which was the law of the forum of the King's Bench, and which forbade forceful removal of a slave out of the country, or Virginia law, which was the law under which Stewart held Somerset, and which permitted such forceful removal" (Webb 456). Francis Hargrave, an advocate for Somerset, framed the question as one unconcerned with "whether slavery is lawful in the colonies, (where a concurrence of unhappy circumstances has caused it be established as necessary;)" (Lofft 500). In other words, Somerset's case said nothing about the legal, moral, or economic conditions of slavery in the Americas or of the slave trade, to which Britain was the most active participant.

In a somewhat ironical fashion, Hargrave elevates England as a moral bastion where "freedom is the grand object of the laws, and dispensed to the meanest individual" (Lofft 501), even if the country is likewise invested in the slave trade's continuation. The "air of England was too pure for slavery," he reportedly said. Hargrave suggests that to let Stewart essentially *re-*enslave Somerset and ship him to Jamaica would mean that the "laws of an infant colony, Virginia, or a barbarous nation, Africa" have prevailed (ibid). The implication of returning Somerset to the possession of Stewart would be the admission that England's laws are inferior to a "barbarous nation" like Africa or to an "infant colony" like Virginia. Mr. Alleyne, another advocate for Somerset, echoes Hargrave's sentiments but extends it a step further, arguing that the "horrid cruelties, scarce credible in recital, perpetrated in America, might, by the allowance of slaves amongst us, be introduced here" (Lofft 503)—an argument that suggests that, firstly,

America is a morally worse place than England because it permits slavery within its borders, and secondly, that slavery is a morally corrupt institution that can transform civilized nations into cruel and barbarous places. Without having directly advocated for the abolition of slavery or the slave trade, both Hargrave and Alleyne argue that Somerset is legally free. Mansfield seemingly agreed:

> The state of slavery is of such a nature, that it is incapable of being introduced on any reasons, moral or political; but only positive law, which preserves its force long after the reasons, occasion, and time itself from whence it was created, is erased from memory: it's so odious, that nothing can be suffered to support it, but positive law. Whatever inconveniences, therefore may follow from a decision, I cannot say this case is allowed or approved by the law of England; and therefore the black must be discharged. (Lofft 510).

Mansfield elaborates a judgment consistent with his broader judicial philosophy. He did not see "the validity of theoretical justifications of slavery" but did nonetheless endorse the "widely assumed mercantile importance of the slave trade" (Oldham 1988, 45). Derek Webb cautions against reading Mansfield's judgement as an unambiguous decision in support of slavery's unconstitutionality, and James Oldham flatly declares that "neither the specter of freed slaves nor the question of the validity of a slave contract was fully resolved by Somerset" (46). Nadelhaft likewise summarizes Mansfield's decision as containing "no such positive law doctrine," arguing instead that he had "simply ruled that a slave could not be shipped from England against his will (194). As Nadelhaft also notes, Mansfield "took notice of the interpretation of this decision" and attempted to correct the record, although he did so rather belatedly in 1785, some thirteen years after the case (195). Read narrowly then, Mansfield's decision pertains only to Somerset and not the emancipation of all slaves. In keeping with popular skepticism of abolitionism, Mansfield agreed that while individual examples of cruelty were morally reprehensible and should be rectified where possible, they did not condemn the entire slave trade or slavery as an institution.

Nonetheless, *Somerset* was received almost immediately as a far more substantial and consequential judgment than Mansfield intended, at least partially because of the "incomplete" (Nadelhaft 200) account of the case from court reporter Capel Lofft, which I've been quoting from. Nadelhaft also casts blame on "newspaper printers, readers, and almost everyone involved in the case" who had for months primed themselves into believing *Somerset* hinged on a rigid binary of "slavery or freedom for all of England's slaves," rather than a narrow case involving one man (196). Somerset himself tried to persuade relatives to escape to England under the belief they would be immediately emancipated upon setting foot in the country, and only a year after Mansfield's ruling, other court cases started citing *Somerset* as rendering all slaveholding in England as retroactively illegal (Webb 461). This was far from the intent of the decision, and though some legal judgments were made based on erroneous readings of *Somerset*, on the whole Britain successfully maintained slavery and the slave trade for another four decades after Mansfield's ruling. Nonetheless, Kirkham in her reading of Austen's *Mansfield Park* correlates the defense counsel's argument that "England was too pure an air for slaves to breathe in" (Lofft 501) to Austen's "English, feminist" approach to ideals of "liberty, equality and fraternity" (Kirkham 118), embodied in her representation of Mr. Rushworth's house as a "prison-like atmosphere" (Kirkham 119) that motivates the young to "wish for air and liberty" at Mansfield Park (Austen 64). As Kirkham argues, "Fanny's need for fresh English air is stressed again and again; 'she requires', as Crawford ironically sees, 'constant air and exercise… ought never to be long banished from the free air and liberty of the country'" (119). As such, the idyllic rendering of pure English air as a metaphor for the moral purity of England threatened by slavery in *Somerset* is taken up by Austen in her representation of Mansfield Park, although with marked irony given the estate's connection to Bertram's Antiguan plantations.

Of course, part of the assumption Austen and Kirkham are making is that Lord Mansfield's judgment in *Somerset* was an implied endorsement of the defense counsel's characterization of English air as too pure for the ignobility of slavery, such that James Somerset's condition could function as a vehicle for rendering the entire institution of slavery inoperable within the country. Kirkham repeats this (misleading) interpretation when she writes that Mansfield's judgment "established that slavery was illegal in England" (117). Moira Ferguson provides a more nuanced articulation of the judgment, writing that "no slaves could be forcibly returned from Britain to the Caribbean" and acknowledging that Mansfield's ruling was "widely interpreted to mean that slavery in Britain had been legally abolished" (130), even though the latter is not entailed by the former. But Ferguson doesn't consider this discrepancy in reading Austen, instead suggesting that the "intertextualizing of Lord Mansfield's ruling warns and censures all those who try to further impose their will on the already subjugated" (ibid), which affirms a rather definitive reading of Mansfield's ruling as outlawing slavery in England. Gabrielle White in her study of Jane Austen and slavery acknowledges these erroneous readings of *Somerset* and provides a fuller examination of the influence of the abolitionist movement on Austen's writing.

Nonetheless, the problematic nuance of Lord Mansfield's decision in *Somerset* has been continuously misunderstood since the judgment was handed down in 1772, which dampens representations of the judge as an anti-slavery advocate. For the purposes of literary studies, it should be acknowledged that Austen's irony in naming the estate after Lord Mansfield is built upon a flawed articulation of his decision in the case, potentially derived from Austen's reading of *The History of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade* (1808) by Thomas Clarkson, another subscriber to Equiano's *Narrative*, who writes that the "great and glorious result of the trial was,

That as soon as ever any slave set his foot upon English territory, he became free" (31).[22] This is

potentially another way Austen encountered the metaphor of pure English air, as Clarkson quotes

at length a poem by abolitionist poet William Cowper[23]:

> We have no Slaves at home—then why abroad?
> And they themselves once ferried o'er the wave
> That parts us, are emancipate and loos'd.
> Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
> Receive our air, that moment they are free;
> They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
> That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
> And jealous of the blessing. (Clarkson 43)

Here again we find a simplistic reading of Mansfield's decision in *Somerset* as immediately

emancipating any slave who comes under the jurisdiction of English domestic law ("if their

lungs / Receive our air, that moment they are free"). Indeed, Eric Williams in his seminal

Capitalism and Slavery (1944) assesses Cowper's claim that "Slaves cannot breathe in England"

as the "license of the poet," and that the notion that *Somerset* was the beginning of the end of

slavery in the British Empire as "merely poetic sentimentality translated into modern history"

(45). Williams hints at a larger trend of the late eighteenth century: abolitionist literary works

proliferating an inaccurate portrayal of Mansfield as an anti-slavery legal reformer. *Somerset*

could buttress idyllic representations of England as a moral and liberatory space that aligned with

nationalistic sentiments of British superiority, but this was at odds with the scope of Mansfield's

ruling and the reality still facing racialized persons either residing with the country or labouring

under colonial plantations. Moreover, it gave the false impression that other forms of oppression,

such as those levelled on women, were inconsistent with the restoration of moral rights

apparently granted to slaves by Mansfield. *Somerset* was a small and rare legal victory for one

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[22] Michael Karounos notes that Austen likely read this and another work of Clarkson's on abolition, *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Particularly the African* (1786).
[23] Gabrielle White also notes that the "poetry of William Cowper was read aloud within Jane Austen's family" (136).

man among a series of attempts by the British legal and political establishment to protect the institution of slavery, including by Mansfield himself who a decade later in *Gregson v. Gilbert* reportedly compared slaves to horses.

By implication, Austen's naming of Mansfield Park purpurates both a misreading of *Somerset* and a nationalistic representation of the English landscape as embodying principles of liberty, which, as Austen novelizes, were nonetheless unfulfilled by the continued subjugation of women through marriage. An example of the irony that Kirkham argues is embryonic to Austen's authorship of the novel is rooted in her engagement with inaccurate portrayals of Mansfield as a rare institutional champion for slaves' rights and whose judgment in *Somerset* revealed England as a country capable of emancipating other oppressed peoples through the nation's enduring attachment to liberty.

Figures far more influential than Austen also misinterpreted Mansfield's decision, including actual judges. The influence of *Somerset* was truly transatlantic, resonating across in the United States in part because multiple different schools of thought regarding slavery found the case a resourceful well of interpretation. Over the next fifty years, "the view that Somerset had abolished slavery in England had been consistently expressed by many attorneys and judges in state courts, and had evidently permeated a substantial segment of American legal culture," although primarily in the North (Webb 461). Indeed, the case found its way into significant U.S. Supreme Court cases, including *Prigg v. Pennsylvania* in 1842 and *Dred Scott v. Sandford* in 1857 (Nadelhaft 193-194), both cases which contributed to the ignition of the American Civil War.[24] Even in the Antebellum U.S., "intellectual pamphleteers, Supreme Court Justices, state court judges, United States Senators, and United States Congressmen," composed of both

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[24] I discuss these cases and their historical context in more detail in Chapter Five.

Southern pro-slavery apologists and various stripes of abolitionists, "gave extensive attention to this case and considered it of great significance," although they interpreted "wildly different theories about what *Somerset* actually accomplished in England, and what it meant for slavery in America" (Webb 457). The problem was that Mansfield seemed to have given license for the moral law to supersede the legal existence of slavery while also explicitly acknowledging that slavery was justified if positive law allowed for it (i.e.: not customary or habitual). His decision was therefore just vague enough that *Somerset* could serve as a vehicle for advocating both an anti-slavery and pro-slavery position, even though Mansfield's rhetoric regarding slavery as an "odious" institution was unapologetically direct and abolitionist in tonality. Radical abolitionists in the U.S. after the revolution even sought to extricate *Somerset* from its purely English context and expand its coverage to the United States. The reasoning was simple: English law was binding in the colonies prior to the revolution, which meant that Mansfield's ruling that slavery was illegal in accordance with English law extended to any colonial possessions that were "constitutionally required to keep their laws in conformity with the laws of the home country" (Webb 463). Even though Hargrave had explicitly made both a moral and legal distinction between England and her colonies in support of Somerset's emancipation, post-revolution radical abolitionists sought to bond English law to the American colonies into a single transatlantic legal regime. American independence did not undermine this ambition because U.S. courts after the revolution "adopted the great bulk of English common law and most interpreted *Somerset* to stand for the proposition that, in the absence of specific legislation or constitutional provisions authorizing it, slavery was contrary to natural law, 'odious' and thus prohibited under common law tradition" (Cotter 31). *Somerset*, therefore, had precedence.

Such an interpretation did not win the day. More moderate abolitionists were, in a sense, in agreement with pro-slavery apologists in reading *Somerset* very narrowly. Slavery had not been abolished by Mansfield's ruling; rather slaves could "continue to be held in England in a qualified manner when brought there from another country, but could not be forced against their will to return to their former country" (Webb 468)—a far less revolutionary decision that Webb suggests aligned with Mansfield's true intentions on the matter. In fact, pro-slavery apologists went further, reading *Somerset* as legitimating Virginia law on slavery, regardless of how "odious" it might be. Mansfield distinguished English law as separate from the laws that originally led to Somerset's enslavement, while noting that slavery was legally justified when made by an act of positive law. Constitutional protections in the United States for slavery after the revolution constituted positive law, and therefore Mansfield's ruling affirmed slavery's legal legitimacy.

The particulars of Mansfield's decision therefore resist a definitive interpretation of *Somerset* as outlawing slavery in England—indeed, there's an argument to be made that Mansfield essentially protected the institution by outlining how it could remain legally justifiable. As will be explored in the next section, another reason to resist hagiographic portrayals of Mansfield derives from his decision in *Gregson v. Gilbert* in 1783, which, firstly, surprised abolitionists who had erroneously believed *Somerset* was an expression of his anti-slavery sentiments, and secondly, revealed that the true motivation behind Mansfield's judicial philosophy likely derived from his commitment to an emerging commercial liberty to which the slave trade was merely peripheral.

Lost in the extensive amount of legal wrangling that would follow *Somerset* was the man himself, James Somerset, whose personal story was all but obscured by the implications of his

emancipation. Abolitionist sought to tokenize his existence, while Mansfield, not willing to upset the established order, provisioned a justification for slavery via positive law into his decision to grant Somerset's request to stay in England. It is within this precarious though hopeful legal environment that Equiano arrived in England and from which his autobiography emerged as a way to demonstrate the density of Black experience. While Austen locates the racial slave on the periphery of her narration, Equiano filled out what was fundamentally missing from the attempt to use particular Black persons as instruments for stressing Great Britain's legal and political commitment to slavery.

Section B
The *Zong* Massacre and the Matter of Horses

Equiano's involvement in the British abolitionist movement was not isolated to his authorship of *The Interesting Narrative* but reflected in an extensive social praxis that included legal activism. Equiano's attentiveness to a discourse of legal personality reflected how the law constituted an at times antagonistic discourse that could not supply imaginings of Black persons as anything other than slaves. Casting off the figure of the slave as the pre-emptive mould for knowing racialized persons required campaigns of both cultural and legal significance. Equiano himself had personally confronted manifestly unequal applications of the law in the West Indies, where he could find no legal redress for crimes committed against him. He recounts the difficulty of securing his wages for work upon vessels after buying his freedom and the attempts by white men to recapture him into slavery with almost no legal recourse. Equiano describes having bags of fruit he was intending to sell stolen from him by white men and receiving "not the least redress" (133) upon seeking justice from local authorities. By having his items stolen and finding

no means for legal retribution, the theft signals not just a precarious right to own property but the obstacles to selling that property as a means of improving one's conditions and commercial enterprise. Equiano's manumission was, after all, funded by his mercantilist inclinations and so depended on the success of owning and selling his things. In his attempt to generate capital, Equiano confronts the resolve of both British and North American courts to legally justify the subjugation of racial persons into the singular figure of cheap, commodified labour, which resulted in manifestly absurd and at times paradoxical court decisions that seemed easily refutable. The shared conviction of judges, merchants, and racial ideologues in the necessity of the slave trade ensured these absurdities were, while logically suspect, legally coherent. Law "is not to be mistaken with logic," as Dayan writes (152).

The most famous case Equiano sought to bring to wider public attention was *Gregson v. Gilbert* concerning the *Zong* massacre of 1781, heard before the Court of King's Bench and presided over by Lord Mansfield, who did not decide the massacre as a case of murder but of marine insurance. "Of the countless slave-ships of the British Empire," Jeremy Krikler writes, "only two can lay claim to an infamy that extends beyond the world of scholars: the *Brookes* and the *Zong*" (29, 2007).[25] Scholars have perhaps not exhausted what can be said about the *Zong* massacre insofar as additional documentation may someday be found, but Srividhya Swaminathan also warns that the *Zong* has been "overvalued with respect to its contemporary significance" (485). Part of the *Zong*'s endurance as microhistory is attributable to the accident of its perseverance in the archive and the now famous figures who were linked to the case (namely Mansfield, Sharp, and Equiano), not necessarily because it concerned an emblematic

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[25] That only two slave ships of the thousands that sailed the Atlantic have remained well-known beyond small circles of scholars attests in part to the deficiencies of the archive, which today remains filled with noticeable absences in between the documentation that survives.

practice of the slave trade. My focus on the *Zong* is routed through Equiano's involvement in publicizing the case, which reflects his attention to the law as an adjacent imaginative enterprise he directly confronted in his everyday experience as an Afro-British Londoner. Indeed, his residency in London meant he had unrivalled proximity to the major legal centres of the British empire where cases involving slavery were heard and to the politicians that had the legislative capacity to reform the law. Additionally, *Gregson* when read alongside *Somerset* provides a far more accurate portrayal of Mansfield's judicial leanings that likewise reveals the misguided attempts by abolitionists and anti-slavery writers to elevate the judge as an institutional champion of liberty.

Since entering popular consciousness, the *Zong* massacre has stood out as illustrative of the "brutality of the slave-trader's calculus" (Krikler 30), which masked human beings as cargo and insurable commodities with a set monetary value. Such a calculus feigned rationality in an otherwise speculative and chaotic enterprise. It is the relatively narrow court case on insurance, *Gregson v. Gilbert*, that brushed ever so close to the question of whether slaves were chattel[26] but which nonetheless avoided deciding on the *principle* of slavery itself. Instead, Lord Mansfield kept the focus tapered to a question that could in no way be construed outside the unique circumstances of the *Zong*: "whether there was not an Absolute Necessity for throwing them [i.e.: slaves] overboard to save the rest" (NMM, REC/19), that is whether Luke Collingwood, the captain, was justified in jettisoning his (human) cargo.

For these reasons, a focus on the massacre derives from the contest that underwrote the trial—a contest over where in law the slave resides, as either insurable chattel/property or as human beings with just enough legal recognition to be the victim of homicide. The *Zong*

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[26] It's no coincidence that "chattel" and "cattle" in English derive from the same source, namely "capitale," as in head.

massacre is still an important case to consider because it documents a British jurisprudence struggling to define the person at a critical historical juncture in the development of modern citizenship. Within a decade of the trial's conclusion, several essential documents to the theorizing of citizenship emerged. The *Déclaration des Droits de L'homme et du Citoyen* coincides with the French Revolution, the U.S. constitution is ratified (Article 1, Section 9, Clauses 1 will prohibit the U.S. Congress from restricting the importation of slaves until after 1808), the Haitian Revolution shocked the European colonial project, and abolitionists successfully lobbied the British Parliament to more thoroughly regulate the slave trade (important steps preceding the slave trade's eventual abolition in Britain in 1807). *Gregson* was extraordinary not for the legal influence it displayed but because Lord Mansfield ensured the case was argued narrowly around issues of insurance. What we nonetheless receive in revisiting the trial is how readily Mansfield and the court system were willing to traffic in figural and metaphorical language in order to protect both a hierarchy of persons and the speculative enterprise of monetary valuation and investment upon which the slave trade depended. A vast network of financing and insurance in metropolitan Europe was staked to the slave trade. Slaves were not literally cargo, so to sustain the illusion that they *were* cargo and thus insurable commodities required Mansfield to accept that "cargo" was a not a literal descriptor but a metaphor, a practical allegory for the purposes of economic exchange. Slaves as cargo was a convenient legal fiction that could sustain both the insurance industry and the trade itself.

Though of little legal significance, *Gregson* was revealing of a British cultural and political logic where a hierarchy of servitude, closely aligned with emerging taxonomies on race, justified the continuation of the slave trade and insurance industry over the claims to rights of the

racial slave. In a contest between the humanity of persons and the economic integrity of Great Britain, priority fell on the latter.

More is known about the *Zong* massacre than most atrocities committed during the slave trade and the details that are thought to be known are these: in September 1781, the *Zong* departed the Guinea coast with 442 slaves intended for sale in Jamaica. In late November, the crew sailed past their intended destination, having "mistaken Jamaica for Hispaniola," an unfriendly Spanish colony (Arvind 113). With water and provisions running short and worsened by the error in navigation, captain Luke Collingwood ordered his crew to throw some of the living slaves overboard, ostensibly to save the rest. Over the next few days, men, women, and children thought to be sick or dying or beyond recuperation were "jettisoned" from the ship, even after it rained and water supplies partially recovered. The ship eventually made it to Jamaica on 22 December and six days later landed 208 slaves of the original 442,[27] selling on average for £36 each (Webster 291; Lewis 365). The *Zong* eventually returned to Liverpool in July 1782 (Lyall 364) whereupon the ship's owners, the Gregson syndicate, sought reimbursement for the value of the "jettisoned" slaves.

Popular and scholarly interest in the *Zong* can be credited to two people: Equiano and Granville Sharp (Sharp is also credited with bringing *Somerset* to the King's Bench). Sharp commissioned a written transcript to be made of the proceedings of the *Gregson* trial after hearing about the massacre from Equiano[28]; he concurrently sought to initiate charges of murder against the ship's crew through Admiralty court. Sharp was not himself a lawyer but had taught himself law, had fostered close relationships with lawyers, and had become a minor public figure

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[27] An astonishing mortality rate of 47% at a time when the average for British ships was under 15%. Despite such a high rate, the ship still made a profit on the voyage—an indication of just how lucrative the slave trade was.
[28] "Having been earnestly solicited and called upon by a poor Negro, for my assistance to avenge the blood of his murdered countrymen" (BL, T.35.[2], folio 1).

by the time of the *Zong* massacre owing to his involvement with *Somerset*. Sharp attempted to assemble his lawyerly connections and clout to provoke some sort of legal action against the *Zong* crew, and to this effect he wrote fiery letters to the Admiralty, surviving copies of which now reside in the British Library and the National Maritime Museum. The letters are written in a theological and sentimental rhetoric which frames the institution of slavery as fundamentally opposed to God-given natural rights—a rhetoric which would affect the rise of sentimentalism in abolitionist literature in both Britain and the United States, most notably in Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—sentimentality being here understood as a "rhetorical practice that monitors and seeks to master the sympathetic movement of emotion between individuals and groups of people" (Festa 3). Sharp's combination of sentimentalism and religious fundamentalism would exert a profound influence on how abolitionists framed their opposition to slavery, namely in terms that targeted the public's moral compass and emotional centre. In his letter to the Admiralty on the matter of the *Zong* massacre, Sharp frames his efforts as being "for the sake of national Justice" (BL, T.35.[2]), implicating not just those involved in the trade, but the British nation that underwrites it. Later in the letter, he writes with theological fervor:

> Thus it was unhappily demonstrated that there is nothing, howsoever gross and absurd, which some professors of the Law accustomed to Sophistry, and hackneyed in the prostitution of their oratorical abilities for hire, will not undertake to justify, relying on their studies powers of perversion like those "double hearted Men of old," who said with tongue we will prevail – our Lips are with us, who is Lord over us?" But if we must one day "render an Account of every idle world," how much more awful will be the condemnation of that perverse Oratory, which patronizes and defends the most violent of all oppression, even wilful Murder, the superlative degree of unrighteousness! (BL, T.35.[2])

In this passage, Sharp refers to the Bible twice, firstly with Psalm 12, where the Lord is said to "cut off all flattering lips, *and* the tongue that speaketh proud things," particularly of those that speak from a "double heart." The second reference is to Matthew 12:36, where men who speak "idle word[s]" shall give an account of it on judgment day. Sharp is critiquing the power of

rhetoric and this critique is twofold. Firstly, it identifies how certain "professors of Law" are corrupting the profession by prostituting themselves to sophistic arguments and "perverse Oratory" in order to justify "wilful Murder"—and part of Sharp's reasoning is that those who traffic in perverse rhetorics will have to answer for it before God, and God's judgment will likely be severe given the degree of unrighteousness they defended. Secondly, Sharp is inserting a religious rhetoric that frames the use of perverse oratory as a Biblical matter; "idle" words are not ephemeral or inconsequential but a divine matter that will have to be addressed before God. As such, the correct way to articulate the *Zong* massacre is as an act of profound unrighteousness and wickedness. Sharp is thus implying that he is neither exaggerating nor hyperbolic in his assessment of the case; he is using words correctly, at least in line with God's law and judgment. The doctrine that should be directing our actions and our oratory is not in English Common Law (although there is no justification for murder to be found in there either) but should always defer to those laws of nature handed down by God, which clearly dictates that regardless of what human law says about slaves, there is no justification for their willful murder.

Sharp has an additional target in mind in his letter, namely a doctrine of utilitarianism (although the philosophy of utilitarianism was not formally articulated and published by Jeremy Bentham until several years after the trial):

> But there never can be a necessity for the wilful Murder of an innocent Man because wilful Murder is one of the worst Evils that can happen amongst Men, so that the plea of a necessity to destroy a few Men in order to save many, is not only the adoption of a declared damnable Doctrine ("Let us do Evil that good may come") which is extreme wickedness, but it is also extreme ignorance! for it is obvious that the death of many by Misfortune is properly in the hand of Divine providence, is not near so great an evil as the Murder of a few or even of one innocent Man; the former being the loss of temporal lives, but the latter endangers the eternal Souls (BL, T.35.[2])

A utilitarian code that deems the killing of some men in order to save others is unjustified no matter the logic behind the reasoning, and Sharp defends this position with his usual theological

inflection. While "temporal lives" may be lost or saved on account of circumstances, persons'
"Souls" are endangered when wilful murder is carried out as a matter of necessity, especially in
circumstances that can only have come about through the "hand of Divine providence." Sharp's
critique is not confined singularly to a utilitarian philosophy but the entire scheme of market
rationality wherein men's lives are reduced to values in a monetary equation and the economic
integrity of Great Britain is prioritized over the eternal souls of men. For Sharp, regardless of
economic rationality or utilitarian philosophy, the slave trade was neither morally nor
providentially justified, a truth that could be readily ascertained by simply articulating the
brutalities of slavery and by activating a sense of emotional and moral feeling in his audience.

Despite the power of Sharp's rhetoric, Marouf Hasain Jr. argues that "a large number of
eighteenth- and nineteenth-century audiences felt themselves caught in material and discursive
spaces that cannot be adequately characterized by the binary poles of pro-slavery or radical
abolitionist rhetoric" (504). Hasain's argument is meant as a disclaimer against thinking that the
sentimentalism that occasioned the abolitionist lexicon, like that of Sharp's or Equiano's, was
always that effective in inuring anti-slavery attitudes in the general public. The case of the *Zong*
in particular is at once an exemplification of Sharp's powerful rhetoric in addressing the
brutalizing practices of the slave trade, and likewise of the court's success in 'containing,
deflecting, managing, or domesticating' the "rhetoric's of sentimentalism" (Hasain 506). For
those who had no interest in immediately abolishing the slave trade, the *Zong* case was
successful in positioning Sharp and abolitionism more broadly as radical and unrealistic (as
uninformed of the moderating and rational discourse of court proceedings), while staving off any
legal or legislative attempts at abolition—for the time being.

Sharp, regardless of the effect of his rhetoric, readily understood the importance of documentation and helped to create a textual record of events that would end up surviving to the present. It is Sharp's decision to station a court reporter at the trial and transcribe proceedings that directly led to the *Zong*'s enduring notoriety and survival in the archive. The transcript is the single most informative source not only of the massacre but of court operations in the eighteenth century, and it's likely that without the transcript, the *Zong* massacre would not have entered posterity to the extent that it has. Sharp in his letters to the Admiralty surmises that the real motivation for drowning the slaves was to recoup the value lost from the supposed error in navigation. In the eighteenth century, marine insurance did not cover the "natural death" of slaves, which simply meant, according to John Weskett in 1781, that ship's owners could not claim damages on a slave that died from "disease or sickness" or if "the captive destroys himself through despair, which often happens" (525). Testimony presented at trial claimed that the crew only "jettisoned" sick or dying slaves in order to save the rest, but if the crew had left the slaves to die 'naturally' of sickness or lack of food and water, then the *Zong*'s owners would have to write them off as loss (BL, T.35.[2]). By intentionally drowning them under supposed conditions of duress, the crew could transfer the value of the loss of the slaves from the ship's owners to the underwriters. Already by the time of the massacre, the *Zong* had taken an above-average amount of time to reach North America (roughly eighteen weeks instead of the customary six according to court testimony) and had been laden with a "proportionally large number of slaves for its size" (Webster 289). Sharp's accusation suggests that the crew sought to revert some of the owner's losses on the unusually lengthy voyage by intentionally drowning some of the slaves.

Answering the question of whether Collingwood was justified by the conditions to jettison living slaves was exacerbated by the lack of impartial witnesses. The only two witnesses

to testify of the massacre, first mate James Kelsall and passenger Robert Stubbs[29], were either confidantes of captain Collingwood (who was himself dead from illness only a week after reaching Jamaica in late 1781) or simply untrustworthy—and to further compound the situation, Kelsall never testified in court, only by affidavit. Both men "played a key role in the events they record and would have had good reason to disguise or misrepresent their part to a greater or lesser degree" (Lewis 357). Collingwood's death shortly after reaching Jamaica had been preceded by a lengthy illness, which meant Collingwood was likely not even captaining the ship during the crucial period when the navigational error occurred. He might also have been absent when the decision was made to drown some or all of the slaves. Either Kelsall or Stubbs might have been in charge and would thus have reason to conceal their involvement, although Kelsall was demoted from first mate at some point during the voyage for quarrelling with Collingwood. "It would have been convenient," Andrew Lyall writes, "for both Stubbs, Kelsall and the ship's owners to blame the late captain to divert any blame from themselves" (75).

What we do know of the massacre derives in large part from Stubbs' and Kelsall's testimony. Not even the precise name of the ship has been confirmed. Sharp in his letters gives the *Zurg* as an alternative, although this confusion likely results from the ship's origin as a Dutch vessel sailing under a different name.[30] Jane Webster (2007) remarks that the ship was called the *Zorg* (287) when it was captured by the British, whereas Lewis says *Zorgue* (359) and writes that it has "long been supposed that *Zong* is a misreading of *Zorg*, a shortened form of the Dutch name *Zorgue*" (n.16). A summary of the massacre presented on the equity side of the Court of

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[29] Stubbs had been described as a "wicked and treacherous character" by a previous captain he had sailed under, had four of his own slaves onboard, had previously governed a slave-trading port, and had potentially contributed to the *Zong*'s navigational woes (Lewis 359; 360).

[30] The Dutch origin of the ship also suggests the crew was far from nationally or ethnically homogenous but a diverse and polyglot assembly of sailors.

Exchequer, a case initiated by the *Zong*'s underwriters, gives the ship's name as "Zong or Zorg" throughout the extensive document (TNA, E 112/1528), whereas papers from the High Court of Admiralty for 1780-81 list a captured Dutch merchant ship by the name "Zorge" (TNA, HCA 32/491/9). Oldham doesn't distinguish and simply lists them all as potential names (299), although the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* lists a ship called the *Zorg* that was "captured by the British" in 1780, a year before the massacre.

In addition to the varying names of the ship, the number of slaves who died has likewise varied. Krikler in 2007 says 130 were killed (30), although later in 2012 remarks that 133 were ordered by the captain to be drowned (393); Arvind writes that "132 slaves were thrown overboard to drown in the sea" (114); James Oldham (2007) writes "approximately 130 slaves were thrown overboard" (300); first mate Kelsall testified in his affidavit that "the outside number of drowned amounted to 142 in the whole"; Sharp lists in his letters to the Admiralty that 122 were killed, one who jumped overboard but was later recaptured, and ten who, "terrified with what they had seen of the unhappy fate of their Countrymen," jumped overboard and likewise drowned (BL, T.35.[2]). Equiano initially wrote to Sharp that 120 were thrown alive into the sea, although Sharp's lawyers in their formal attempt at prosecution list 130 (Webster, 294; 295). Another issue, as Krikler notes, is that the massacre did not occur all at once but in stages over several days.

Part of the discrepancy in the number of killed is also the result of the lost logbook of the captain, which would have recorded not only the number of slaves but also mortality rates and causes of death for both crew and slave. Webster casts suspicion on the logbook's convenient disappearance, which is not mere conspiracy. The underwriters initiated a process of discovery in the Court of Exchequer concurrent to the King's Bench proceedings from which *Gregson v.*

Gilbert was conducted with specific intention of finding the logbook, but no mention of whether

the process was successful has been found, potentially an indication that the Gregson syndicate

settled out of court. Moreover, the purveyors of slaving voyages (as operations whose primary

motive was profit) kept meticulous financial records, which involved tracking slave deaths.

Surviving textual documentation of the slave trade includes signed and dated accounting sheets

that detailed who was in command for which portion of the voyage, a breakdown of the slaves

purchased in Africa by age and sex, a list of "Charges" incurred in the operation of the vessel,

the payment of wages to crew, the names of purchasers, and the revenue each slave generated

from their sale. For example, a slaving vessel's accounting sheet signed 23 November 1772

(around a decade prior to the *Zong*) displays "Accompl Sales of 284 Negroes Imported in the

Ship Meridith Cornelius Quick Master from Sierra Leon and Sold on Deed of Mess[vs] Sam

Sandys &c° Merchants of Liverpool owners of Said Ship" (TNA, C 109/401). The sheet

documents the number of slaves by "Men," "Women," "Boys," and "Girls," how many were

sold, the names of the purchasers who eventually bought them, and the profit incurred in their

purchase. The *Zong*'s documentation likely would have appeared similar to the *Meridith*'s. The

loss of any slave would be documented, regardless of whether it counted as an insurable loss or

not. In fact, ship's surgeons (which Collingwood was initially) regularly kept an independent

account of slave and crew deaths, as their pay was "closely tied" to slaves being delivered alive

(Webster 290; 26f.).

Additionally, Collingwood's ineptitude at navigation was then and remains today a point

of contention. Lewis describes Collingwood as an "experienced slaver" (358), whereas Webster

notes he took "between nine and eleven previous voyages, though none as master" (288). He was

firstly a ship's surgeon and had never captained a ship previous to the *Zong*, although its

unconfirmed whether he was even a qualified doctor. Collingwood's journey from ship's

surgeon to master despite having no experience in the latter role was swift and perhaps

unexpected even for Collingwood. In February 1781 the *Zong* (while still a Dutch ship) was

captured by a British privateer from Bristol on the African coast after the British government

sanctioned reprisals against the Netherlands, which authorized certain vessels to "seize ships and

goods to make good the losses suffered by other merchants" (Lewis 359).[31] 244 slaves were

already on board (Webster 288). Richard Hanley, master of the slaving ship the *William*, bought

the *Zong* at the behest of his ship's owners, a merchant's syndicate based out of Liverpool led by

William Gregson, John Gregson, James Gregson, George Case, James Aspinall, and Edward

Wilson (i.e.: the Gregson syndicate), all of whom are named in an information presented to the

Court of Exchequer (TNA, E 112/1528). Collingwood was the *William*'s surgeon at the time of

the *Zong*'s purchase by Hanley and the syndicate (Webster 288). Unable to purchase more slaves

himself, Hanley appointed Collingwood as master of the captured *Zong*. Collingwood, now

accomplishing double duties as both master and surgeon, was capable enough to purchase

additional slaves, bringing the ship's total to 442 by the time it departed the African coast, a

proportionally large number for the *Zong*'s tonnage (ibid). How Collingwood was able to

navigate to the Caribbean but not spot Jamaica has dampened suggestions that missing his

intended destination was an honest mistake, although as mentioned previously there were

indications Collingwood was also unwell and had given command to passenger Robert Stubbs

for some of the voyage (Lewis 362).

Upon the ship's return to England, now without the captain it initially left Africa with,

the Gregson syndicate sought the value of the drowned slaves from their underwriters under the

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[31] According to Lewis, the reasons for this declaration included Dutch support for the Americans during the
Revolutionary Wars of 1776 (359).

assumption that Collingwood's actions had been justified by "absolute necessity" (Hasain 507). The underwriters disagreed, claiming that Collingwood's actions constituted "ignorance," if not "improper conduct," which was the true cause of the death of the slaves (ibid). Any 'perils of the sea' that might have occasioned the *Zong*'s journey were secondary to the genuine cause of her troubles, namely Collingwood's error in navigation. Unable to settle out of court, a trial before a jury at Guildhall in March 1783 presided over by Lord Mansfield was subsequently brought by the Gregson syndicate against their underwriters "to collect insurance for the slaves claimed to have been lost by absolute necessity (valued at £30 per head)" [32] which resulted in a verdict in favour of the syndicate (Oldham 2007, 300). In this first trial, of which very little is known, the question posed to the jury was decidedly lacking in universality or moral sentiment: was Collingwood forced by circumstances to jettison his cargo, which constituted human beings in this case (Webster 291)? Was there a condition of "absolute necessity" in the captain throwing his cargo overboard?

The jury had initially found in favour of the owners, but a new trial—what would become *Gregson v. Gilbert*—was ordered due to inconsistencies in the plaintiffs' declaration and testimony. The Gregson syndicate had claimed during the first trial that the delay to the *Zong*'s arrival in Jamaica was a result of the ship being "foul and leaky," but this was determined to be an unsupported allegation (Hasain 513). The second trial was eventually argued in May 1783 and presided over by Lord Mansfield again and two other judges of the Court of King's Bench.[33] Despite Sharp's attempt to initiate a trial on charges of murder, *Gregson v. Gilbert* was "not a

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[32] Lewis notes that the average sale price of the surviving slaves "comfortably exceeded" their insured value, which undermines the suggestion that the *Zong*'s crew, worried about incurring an unprofitable voyage from the navigational error, attempted to defraud the ship's insurers by jettisoning slaves (365).

[33] Webster states that *Gregson v. Gilbert* was also a jury trial, but there's no mention of a jury in Sharp's transcript nor in the summary of judgment published by Stanley Douglas in 1831 (*Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Court of King's Bench*).

criminal case" (Webster 291). For the ship's owners, the "ultimate basis of [their] argument in

the *Zong* was that slaves were chattel, and that the case should therefore be treated as one of

goods" (Arvind 118). As counsel for the Gregson syndicate claimed during the trial,

> Your Lordship will observe this is the Case of Chattels or Goods it is really the case of throwing over goods for to this purpose and the purpose of this Insurance they are goods and property and whether Right or Wrong we have Nothing to do with it. This property the Human Creatures, if you will, have been thrown overboard… (NMM REC/19)

The counsel suggests that the matter before the court transcends any concern for morality

("…whether Right or Wrong we have Nothing do with it"), under the argument that this is

irrelevant for the case at hand. The implication is that this is a case that purely concerns the word

of the law, namely whether slaves are chattel. "It has been decided, whether wisely or unwisely

is not now the question," John Lee, Solicitor-General, purportedly claimed during trial, "that a

portion of our fellow creatures may become the subject matter of property" (*Gregson* 630).

Mansfield did nothing to displace this thinking. At the opening of the trial, he reminds the court

that the matter of the *Zong* is "a very singular case" (NMM, REC/19) that did not weigh on the

broader principle of slaves' rights or slaves as chattel or the moral question of slavery. Mansfield

"went to great pains to frame the issues in terms of ordinary insurance law" (Arvind 143),

although not necessarily because he was a proponent of slavery or the slave trade.[34] Both

Oldham (1988) and Arvind claim that Mansfield was far more ambivalent, torn between weak

justifications for slavery and the "mercantile importance of the slave trade" (Oldham 45).

Mansfield's approach to the issue recognised on some level that slavery was an instrumental

feature of English commercial practice. Deciding in favour of the underwriters would involve

acknowledging that slaves were *not* chattel in law (were not a type of mobile good that could be

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[34] Krikler (2007) suggests that Mansfield's personal view was that slaves were essentially animals and were to be treated as such where it concerned matters of cargo (36), however other scholarship contradicts this assessment of Mansfield's views, see Oldham (1988) and Arvind (2012).

insured from loss), which potentially could have meant the end of English involvement in the slave trade (Arvind 141; 142)—a seemingly worthy conclusion at a time of rising abolitionist sentiments, yet Mansfield was apparently not prepared to make such a ruling, though he flavours his remarks in court with seeming discomfort for the trade: "tho' it shocks one very much," he reportedly said, before declaring that "the case of Slaves was the same as if Horses had been thrown overboard" (NMM, REC/19). For all of Mansfield's rhetoric expressing disdain for the slave trade, it "seems as though the pursuit of predictable insurance laws for slavers," Hasain writes, "was seen as an essential part of England's political economy" (514).

John Baker Holroyd, 1st Earl of Sheffield, wrote in 1790 that Mansfield was aware of the "mischiefs which would flow from a hasty abolition of the slave trade" (Oldham 46), which included the familiar economic argument made whenever serious threats of abolition arose. Sheffield characterizes abolition as deciding "the fate of Bristol and of Liverpool; places of more consequence to the empire by their active and useful pursuits, and by the revenue derived from them, than half…the buroughs in the island" (47)—an explicit endorsement of metropolitan Britain that would become the calling card of British imperialist culture. Sheffield, though, also advanced the idea that abolition would *worsen* the plight of slaves because "*our ships* [i.e.: British ships]" would not be used: "they would go better in our shipping when well regulated," he wrote, "than in the promiscuous shipping of other countries, perhaps under no regulation at all" (46). More regulation of slave trade was Sheffield's proposal as an alternative to abolition. Despite the obvious perils of shipping, Sheffield imagined slaving vessels as if British borders were kinetic and extended to include them, turning ships into mobile national spaces that were somehow meant to be a better method of transportation for slaves than comparable slaving vessels from the Dutch, Spanish, or French. Of course, regulations on slaving voyages, which

took months from the time of leaving British port to returning with traded goods, made Sheffield's notion of an "improved" slave trade all but pure fantasy—the delusional imaginings of a conservative partisan who by the 1790s could no longer deny the abhorrent treatment of slaves but who likewise was unwilling to endorse abolition. While slave deaths could be reduced through some regulation, a focus on mortality rates was a distraction from the structures of oppression that facilitated cruelty in the first place. The institution of mercantile capitalism and slavery still invested enormous amounts of digression with crews who could administer any number of cruelties unseen. A reliance on the benevolence of masters and captains was a poor response to demands for better treatment of slaves. Moreover, ostensibly "humanitarian" government measures intended to assuage concerns over brutality in the slave trade didn't always address that arm of the financial industry that invested heavily in trade operations.

Mansfield's disclaimers regarding the abhorrence of slavery are, of course, little consolation for the thousands more slaves that would die or be rendered into perpetual, trans-generational servitude over the next three decades of the trade.[35] Why then did Mansfield favour commercial interests over a clear opportunity to challenge an unhumanitarian practice if it's also true that he was to some degree opposed to slavery? The question is partway answered by Mansfield's fears of economic collapse if the slave trade was ceased or curtailed—concerns which would return most notably in 1791-2 when British merchants, sailors, ship owners, and plantation owners petitioned against Parliament taking up the issue of the slave trade's abolition under various warnings that it would lead to commercial ruin and the weakening of Britain.[36] Indeed, according to Hasain, a key premise to the Gregson syndicates case for being reimbursed

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[35] British involvement in the slave trade formerly ended in 1807 with the passing of the Slave Trade Act. Slavery, however, was not ameliorated until 1833.

[36] These petitions are located at the Parliamentary Archives, UK: HL/PO/JO/10/3/284/9A, 10A-B, 11, 21, and 22.

the value of the drowned slaves was that "England's laws need to prioritize the defense of slaver's rights to help bolster the political economies of the British transatlantic trade" (507). As good a judge as Mansfield was—he is now lauded as a reformer and moderniser of English common and commercial law—he "perhaps realized that many British merchants (and other subjects) would have suffered economic hardship if all these insurance disputes were transmuted into murder investigation" (Hasain 515). In other words, the universal rendering of slaves in law as victims of homicide was taken to mean the collapse of the entire practice of the slave trade. Mansfield assumed there was some threat of economic breakdown and wasn't willing to risk it on the back of what could instead be construed as a narrow case of maritime insurance, although Arvind theorizes that Mansfield's approach was informed by an equally broad transformation occurring in British common law around the time of the *Zong* massacre. A "new type of order was emerging," Arvind writes, around a "commercial society" that the law was not yet able to accommodate (147). The emergence of a powerful commercial sector and accompanying commercial liberty was threatened by older operations of power that sought to preserve their influence via traditional institutions like patronage and guilds. These motions by the "old order" undermined the potential for a new type of civic virtue rooted in economic means and protected by a body of commercial law. Mansfield's concerted attempts to renovate commercial law in light of these transformations would unravel if a large portion of the commercial sector (i.e.: the slave trade) were to collapse. As Arvind summarizes, the "fear, or wariness, of the consequences of tampering with the institution of slavery" likely resulted from "Mansifled's close identification with the mercantile interest, and the grand project that was the major focus of his judicial career: the construction of English commercial law" (142). Even though he had ostensibly ruled in *Somerset*, where it concerned James Somerset himself, that English common

law did not recognize slavery, it was nonetheless English commercial custom to recognize slavery and the treatment of slaves as goods.

Mansfield's commitment to renovating English commercial law over and above the evident humanitarian concerns emerging from the slave trade was not his personal endeavour but part of a larger project by civic humanists "concerned with the question of how persons could be given the degree of autonomy necessary to participate fully in the polity as a citizen" (Arvind 147). Commerce in particular had occupied a controversial positioning in relation to this question, most evident in eighteenth-century confrontations over the rhetoric of "luxury." Italian economist Ferdinando Galiani in 1751 directly addressed this rhetoric in his treatise *On Money* in which he calls the issue of luxury a "spectre" that "wanders among us, never seen in its true light, or recognized for its efficacy" and potentially akin to "terrestrial happiness" (214). Luxury's "spectre" arose from its incision in matters much broader than just economics, stressing the moral and political arrangement of Europe itself. As Arvind summarizes, for "'republican' thinkers who emphasized the need for civic virtue," commerce could function as a "vehicle for the introduction of 'corrupting' luxury," whereas those who "emphasized the importance of liberty […] saw commerce and the luxury that it produced in society as being a means through which self-interested action could promote the common good" (147). This latter view got a philosophical and ideological boost most famously from Adam Smith who in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) outlined how luxury naturally arose from a human instinct for "bettering our condition, a desire which, though generally calm and dispassionate, comes with us from the womb, and never leaves us till we go into the grave" (453). As Istvan Hont notes, the "philosophical point of this definition of 'luxury' was to show self-love in a positive light, as a counter to Christian and republican moral rigorism" (380). Moreover, there's good reason to

speculate that Mansfield and Smith shared similar commitments to commercial liberty, in part because Smith sent a "presentation copy of the first edition of *The Wealth of Nations* to Lord Mansfield" (Arvind 148), a seemingly clear indication that Smith valued Mansfield's philosophical and legal acumen. Just as significantly, it suggests that a prevailing legal thinking ensconced both men that increasingly "saw commerce—and commercial liberty—as being of central importance to broader civil and personal liberty, and thus, ultimately to replace the classical notion of civic virtue" (Arvind 147).

If Arvind is correct in his assessment that Mansfield's unstated commitment to commercial custom informed his decision in *Gregson*, then we're led to what appears to be on first impression a stark, almost tragic irony: Mansfield and Equiano, the former slave who drew Sharp into publicizing the murder of slaves aboard the *Zong*, shared some ideological overlap in their respective commitments to commercial practice—or, at minimum, Equiano does not entirely contest a commitment to commercial practice as a means of buttressing civic and personal liberty so long as it doesn't entail the slave trade. Both Equiano and the decision in *Gregson* are products of British trust in commercial venture as a conduit for liberty and contact between disparate peoples (or between an imperial state and its colonies). As explored in the previous chapter, in the rare moments in which he absconds from his narrative to directly address the reader, Equiano outlines his belief that economic trade with Africa could still function as a viable contribution to the British economy even without the slave trade, placating his critic's fears of the racialized "Other" with claims that African contact with European merchants would further civilize the continent, which aligns with Smith and Mansfield's broader philosophical commitment to commerce as a benefit rather than a corruption of civic virtue. Even though Equiano does not himself evince a cultivation of luxury, he nonetheless implies a distinction

between the slave trade as a singularly corruptive practice—evidenced by its damaging effect on West Africa—and a broader system of commercial enterprise that can be conducted morally. In other words, Equiano attempts to soften the apparent conflict between two visions of liberty, namely the slave's interest in emancipation and the British commercial industry's interest in commercial freedom—though both are grounded in an Enlightenment humanism, they are not identical. Mansfield certainly appeared to recognize the two as oppositional, hence his decision to prioritize one over the other. Rather than outright contesting British commercialism insofar as it conducted the slave trade, Equiano somewhat aligns with Mansfield in suggesting a moral practice of merchant activity that could potentially promise identical or near identical civic and personal liberty for Africans as it did for himself and British subjects within England.

Ross J. Pudaloff provides some explanation for why an ideological overlap between Equiano and Mansfield is not that surprising. As he writes, "[p]raise for commerce and manufacturing emanating from many eighteenth-century radicals (Thomas Paine, for example) drew upon a logic that exchange and commodification could produce a subject where none had heretofore existed, indeed where there had been no place for that subject to stand or be" (500). Prior to the interventions of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, or Henry David Thoreau, the idea of collapsing oneself to a monetary value was not necessarily connotative of outright exploitation or the loss of an authentic self but a potential conduit for public identity—an intriguing prospect, Pudaloff suggests, for those who had hitherto "existed only as negatively defined by the absence from the public realm, from discourse and from power" (500). This may partially explain why Equiano does not pause on learning that his value is forty pounds sterling, instead seeing the reduction of his being to precise currency as the conduit for his public persona. Commercial exchange could serve as the slave's escape from servitude rather than strictly the reason for their

exploitation. In this way, Equiano's *Narrative* "shares in the eighteenth-century conviction that civilization, the market, progress, and freedom are interdependent" and in turn codes scenes of economic transaction with this belief that trade models social contact "by defining each participant in any social relationship as a free person" (Pudaloff 512-13).

Contemporary readers may be frustrated by Equiano's commitment to "honest and honourable means" even in moments of injustice and severity that appear to invite violent resistance, but the mutual dependence that Equiano sees as underwriting commerce dictates a certain level of civility and the cultivation of polite social contact that strikes at the heart of English social relations in the eighteenth century. As John Brewer has extensively explored, Britain in this time saw the emergence of a bourgeois middle class who were neither "patrician elite" nor the labouring poor that attempted to escape the precarious work of economic clientage to aristocratic patrons while also guarding against the "vicissitudes of the open market" (200) through collective action like clubs, lodges, and associations. In turn, the "opening up of politics and of enterprise went in tandem" and the "link between radical politics and commercialization, forged by voluntary associations, could hardly have been stronger" (Brewer 200, 201). As such, rather than the unequal verticality of social relations in Britain's patronage system, Equiano depicts commerce as promising a more horizontal arrangement that positions every participant as equal in virtue of their interdependence in economic transaction—which then likewise opens up the possibility of new forms of politics rooted in solidaristic association and collective action staked against the interests of the aristocracy. By implication, Equiano's vision of national identity and citizenship is inescapably involved in his economic thinking, as it proposes endorsing the freedom of a British middle class against the imposition of elite patrons.

Section C
The Matter of Insurance

The maintenance of the slave trade and the integrity of the insurance industry's speculative valuation of slaves' monetary worth ultimately concerned the language of 'jettisoning' cargo. The perils that supposedly justified jettisoning was crucial if the Gregson syndicate was to receive reimbursement from its underwriters. Such language also obscured the manifest difficulty in parsing insurance policy in the eighteen century, both in general and especially for "human cargo." Despite Mansfield's claims of the *Zong* being "a very singular case," the proceedings "exposed *for the first time* the problems that human 'cargeoes' posed for insurers" (Webster 296). At the time of the massacre, "insurance policies covering slave cargo," Oldham (2007) writes, "used the same standard printed form that were used for all marine insurance policies" (300), making no meaningful distinctions (at least in terms of the standardized language) between inanimate and human cargo. Owners and underwriters could still attach or alter the form to account for risks posed especially to the transportation of slaves. Issues arose, however, from redundancies and contradictions between standard clauses and the information imputed by the parties involved. A great deal of interpretation was thus left up to ship's owners, underwriters, and ultimately trial judges for deciding precisely what a particular insurance policy was meant to cover. In 1779, just two years before the *Zong* massacre, a "standard single-page form" (Oldham 2007, 301) was adopted by New Lloyd's which was meant to standardize the language around the risk underwriters were expected to cover, and which displays how easily confusion could arise:

Touching the Adventures and Perils which we the Assurers are contended to bear and do take upon us in this Voyage, they are, of the Seas, Men-of-War, Fire, Enemies, Pirates, Rovers, Thieves, Jettisons, Letters of Mart and Countermart, Surprisals, Takings at Sea, Arrests, Restraints and Detainments of all Kings, Princes, and People, of what Nation, Condition or Quality soever, Barratry of the Master and Mariners, and of all other Perils, Losses and Misfortunates that have or shall come to the Hurt, Detriment, or Damage of the said Goods and Merchandises and Ship, &c. or any Part Thereof. (Wright and Fayle, 128).

The extent of this policy meant that the risks that underwriters were answerable for could arguably be any manner of misfortunate incurred during a transatlantic voyage, and indeed it was the last phrase in this above quoted policy upon which rested the crux of the Gregson syndicate's claims for reimbursement (Oldham 2007, 302). This phrasing was later removed by the Slave Trade Act of 1788 (also known as "Dolben's Act") regulating British shipping, although only after much prodding from Sharp. Further amendments to the act in 1799 finally prohibited the collection of insurance from slaves thrown overboard (Hasain 516), although sixteen years after the *Zong* massacre.

The volatility of Atlantic-based shipping in the seventeenth and eighteenth century made insurance on slaves as chattel a regular feature of the financial industry as a means of covering various forms of "perils of the sea" (Webster 296). Samuel Marshal in his 1802 *A Treatise on the Law of Insurance* explains perils of the sea (when "taken in the largest sense") to mean "all those accidents and misfortunates to which ships and goods at sea are exposed, from causes which no human prudence in the insured can prevent or control; *quod fato contingit, et cuivis, quamvis diligentissimo, possit contingere*" (131).[37] Marshal distinguishes between perils occasioned by the "waves and tempests, rocks and sands" and perils that "proceed from causes which may exist when the winds and waves are all propitious; such as enemies, fire, and the unskilfulness or wilful misconduct of the master or mariners, &c" (ibid). James Park in his 1787 *A System of the*

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[37] Roughly translated, "that fate happens, and to everyone, no matter how careful, this could happen."

Law of Marine Insurance (written four years after *Gregson*) explained that "every thing which happens to a ship, in the course of her voyage, by the immediate act of God, without the intervention of human agency, is a peril of the sea" (61), infusing otherwise mundane insurance policy with theological origins for maritime calamity, which echoes Sharp's religious rhetoric and its convergences with human law as well as Equiano's Protestant theology and his concerted devotion to salvation. Park elaborates:

> …every accident happening by the violence of wind or waves, by thunder and lightening, by driving against rocks, by the stranding of the ship, or by any other violence which human prudence could not foresee, nor human strength resist, may be considered as a loss within the meaning of such a policy; and the insurer must answer for all damages sustained, in consequence of such accident. (ibid)

Save for damages incurred by an unskilled crew, nearly any event may be part of an insurance contract. Marshal would agree in 1802, suggesting that all manner of risk may be covered by insurance except for certain exceptions occasioned by the fault of the insured (such as negligence on the part of captain or crew), by "public policy," or, tellingly, by the "interests of humanity" (132). Ship's owners had to weigh which risks were worth the cost of coverage against the chance of running a profitable voyage. Conceivably any event that could lead to a loss of cargo could be covered by insurance, but underwriters would likely charge higher premiums or it'd be difficult to prove that a particular event was the source of a loss of cargo.

At issue in cases of insurance of slaves was nothing less than the very definition of mortality, for the border between natural death and death by the 'perils of the sea' was sometimes confused, despite subsequent law and litigation meant to distinguish the two. It was not really the life of a slave that concerned ship's owners because they could still incur a profitable voyage even if a percentage of their slaves died 'naturally,' and indeed the 'natural death' of slaves during the voyage was not only expected, but financially accounted for. In insurance claims, underwriters and judges had the macabre task of discriminating causes of death

174

in slaves in situations where it wasn't always certain what precisely induced a slave to perish. Any slave's death arguably had multiple potential indirect causes that might be insurable, even if the resulting manner in which the slave died was arguably 'natural' and therefore uninsurable. In general usage, however, perils of the sea typically involved some direct, active extraordinary event, "customarily violent incidents of weather, war, piracy, etc.," (Oldham 2007, 307).

The regulations on insurance policy in 1788 were purportedly meant to protect the lives and health of slaves on the transatlantic voyage, but the degree to which these regulations were effective was questionable and claimed concerns for humanity were similarly suspicious. Regulations simply forestalled a conclusive end to the trade (and to slavery in general) under the supposed belief that brutality aboard slaving ships could be managed through government regulation, but such regulation was always ambitious. Slaving ships once out of port were subject only to the oversight of those who had a monetary interest in seeing the slave trade continue. Moreover, Lloyd's standard policy remained largely in place; the actual source of the slave trade's brutality did not suddenly change either. Marshal in 1802 condemns what such insurance policy had led to with regards to the treatment of slaves:

> It is to be lamented, that with us also, the unfortunate objects of this cruel traffic have been too much considered as mere merchandize; and the insured upon this trade formerly recovered, under the common policy, for any loss sustained in the voyage by the mortality of the slaves, whether they were thrown over-board, in cases of supposed necessity, or died a natural death, or perished by the perils of the sea. *British* humanity has long bewailed the sufferings of these unhappy victims. (133)

The attempts at regulation over the closing decades of the slave trade did not de-mystify the language that ended up remaining, and further claims of insurance against slave losses would be decided in court, although not in such circumstances as those aboard the *Zong*.

Insurance on slaves posed unique issues. Most "foreign countries," for example, prohibited "insurances on the lives of men" as a matter of public decency, such as in France

175

where free men were "above all valuation" (Marshal 132). Yet, Marshal notes, quoting French policy on the matter, France did not apply this principle to "slaves.—Negroes" because they were considered "articles of commerce, and capable of valuation," and as such there was "no reason why the lives of such persons should not be the subject of insurance" (132). Oldham (2007) explains that justifying the insurance of slaves in a legal environment in which "insurance upon lives" had a long history of being prohibited derived from the fact that

> since it was permitted to insure persons captured 'to the amount of their ransom against re-capture, or any death except natural death', it had become a practice by analogy to insure 'negro captives', bought in Africa, against loss 'by the perils of the sea, or by death; but the case of natural death is always excepted'. (303-4)

Slaves were exceptions to a general prohibition on insurance upon lives because they could occupy two important insurance categories: articles of commerce (i.e.: chattel) and captive. However, unlike other articles of commerce, slaves could revolt, mutiny, or cause insurrection; they could cause harm to others or themselves. No other cargo could, for example, commit suicide or erase their entire imposed monetary value through an act of will. For the purposes of insurance, slaves were treated under the assumption they would act as any person would under conditions they felt unjust, which meant resisting imprisonment and servitude, or committing suicide. Even if insurance policy regarded slaves as property, such policy likewise had to recognize their agency if an accurate apportionment of risk was to be determined. "[E]very time it was acknowledged that human 'cargoes' could attempt to seize control of a ship," Webster writes, "*personhood* was implied in court, undermining the legal status of slaves as cargo," (297). Mansfield's suggestion that the matter of throwing slaves overboard was equivalent in law to the jettisoning of horses was in this sense clearly wrong. There were undeniable differences between horses and slaves that were coded into insurance policy that even the ardent pro-slaver could not deny. Mansfield attempts to constrain the slave's claim to moral and legal deference by

re-asserting their object status, a logic that functioned to limit the implications of personification which threatened to unravel British commercial dependence on slaves as chattel. While slaves were undeniably persons in a limited sense, a fact readily available to insurance underwriters, intimations of their condition as objects in a moment of transit and financial transaction could also be applied in opposition to humanitarian claims that slaves in virtue of their profound likeness to persons were by implication the target of homicide rather than simply "jettisoning." In other words, by the time the sentimentalist mode found broad literary and cultural purchase in Britain and by the time an expanded human rights discourse wed to national destines had emerged in France, Haiti, and the United States, an extensive and well-worn legal apparatus had effectively dressed the racial slave in the guise of an object, thing, or animal.

Gregson accrued little legal significance in the 1780s partially because it affirmed the status quo and partially because Mansfield, as previously mentioned, narrowed the scope of the trial's implications to just the matter of the *Zong*, but the case nonetheless exhibits how a contest over the personification of objects was not limited to a sentimentalist literary genre. Instead, the negotiation of object and subject was a discursive practice that infiltrated both law and literature and had implications beyond the scope of British insurance policy. Slaves could not be maintained simply as articles of commerce, but they were likewise denied full personhood. They occupied instead a liminal space between property and person that required a great deal of imagination and imagined value to sustain in law. This confused, volatile status would reach all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court a generation later in 1829 in the case *Boyce v. Anderson,* where the court decided that the "law regulating the responsibility of common carriers does not apply to the case of carrying intelligent beings such as negroes." The case involved a convoluted series of events wherein a slave-owner escaped along with his slaves from a steamboat, the

Teche, which had caught fire, only for the slaves to later drown from a yawl that was attempting to rescue them and bring them aboard another steamboat, the *Washington.* The slave-owner subsequently sued the operator of the *Washington* (the steamboat that tried to rescue them, not the one that caught fire) for the value of the lost slaves. Even though the sinking was a result of negligence on the part of the captain, the court determined the slave-owner could not recover the value of his slaves as if they had been a "common package." Chief Justice John Marshall in his decision argued that slaves possess "volition" and "feelings" and by every measure "resembles a passenger, not a package of goods" (Dayan 152). Marshall affirmed, with echoes of sentimentalism, that the condition of possessing "volition" and "feelings" is an adequate template for the human. Counsel for the plaintiff (i.e.: the slave-owner) argued, however, that while slaves might *resemble* passengers, this resemblance only amounted to the slave being an "animate article of transportation" (ibid). In other words, slaves were merely personified objects.

Marshall identified an interesting conceptual rubric for recognizing the humanity of slaves without granting them full emancipation or personhood, namely the condition of "resemblance." Read in light of Mansfield's willingness to allow litigation over the willful drowning of slaves (also in transit), Marshall's decision seems positively humanitarian. The resemblance to mere cargo cannot be sustained because, firstly, the obvious "volition" and "feelings" slaves possess, and secondly, while in transit they are more akin to passengers than cargo, therefore making the latter an insurable cargo but not the former. Conversely, Mansfield accepted from the beginning of *Gregson v. Gilbert* that the resemblance slaves do possess was *not* with persons, but with cargo (specifically horses was his comparison). Mansfield would likely have agreed with counsel for the plaintiffs in *Boyce* that the stronger resemblance to which slaves had was with cargo, which makes their loss an insurable matter, even if they likewise

possessed a resemblance with passengers. Mansfield's comment about horses admits that a logic of resemblance was guiding his decision to give the case standing, but he nonetheless did not see fit to apply that logic in the other direction, towards the other (obvious) resemblance slaves possessed, namely with persons. Mansfield decided the precedent of slaves resembling cargo was to prevail in *Gregson*.

The manifest absurdity of *Boyce* should not be lost: the highest court in the United States was given the task of affirming in law that some human beings have volition and feelings, and that these conditions should go some way towards determining why their arbitrary monetary value cannot be recuperated, namely because they resembled an uninsurable category. Just as importantly, however, the wavering legal status was revealed when slaves where specifically in transit.

To Mansfield it must have seemed perfectly justifiable to limit the implications of the *Zong* case to within the realm of marine insurance regardless of clear moral questions that occasioned the crew's actions and clear logical problems with affirming slaves as akin to horses or objects. Counsel for the underwriters were not arguing for the end of slavery or the slave trade, and despite "its importance to abolitionists," Oldham remarks, "the case was unremarkable as a matter of legal doctrine or precedence" (2007, 310), for it posed a highly unusual scenario unlikely to recur. For all the brutalities of the slave trade, Webster notes, "the jettison of living slaves from the *Zong* was clearly, even by contemporary standards, a most unusual event" (292), and there was no indication that the *Zong* massacre was part of a broader practice of drowning slaves in transit as a means of defrauding insurance underwriters. Yet such framing of the case also ignores how Mansfield and the court had implied 'objectivist rhetorics' at the expense of moral and emotive arguments which were just as pertinent, and which naturalized the crew's

actions and the slave trade in general under a rubric of economic rationalizing. Abolitionist outrage fell not singularly on the possibility of similar massacres but on the revelation that the calculus that led to the massacre was in common practice, that certain legitimating metaphors and figurations immobilised the slave into objects personified but not fully persons.

As such, the slave and Black Atlantic subject were essentially caught between various logics of personification, in particular a sentimental mode and a legal mode. These modes were not necessarily in contest but could effectively work in concert to define both the slave's generational servitude and representation. The law rendered slaves as essentially chattel or *res* (i.e.: a thing), as socially and civilly dead, and the sentimental mode framed a slave's escape from the bounds of chattel status as the speaking of an object. To be thought of and represented as even nominally a person was equivalent to the reanimation of an inanimate thing, which defined the relation slaves had with personhood as an exercise in acquisition or demonstration of various features or behaviours deemed an expression of subjectivity. Of course, slaves were always persons even if the law treated them as property, and as such the notion that Equiano's autobiography was the case of a former object attesting of his agency and feeling falls on a perverse reasoning that concedes ground to the logic of resemblance informing both Mansfield's and Marshall's decisions regarding slave insurance. The trope of personification that reads Equiano's text as the spirited account of a former thing fundamentally ignores the way the object status *is* the cruel imposition—it ignores the law's reliance on metaphorical and figural imaginings to think and treat a person as object and reconfigures the slave's emancipation into a perverse question. As Lynn Festa (132) frames it, if things do possess subjectivity, then is it right to subjugate them? To achieve personhood for slaves becomes little more than mimicry, and the contest over civil rights becomes a depraved evaluation of behaviour where the onus to

demonstrate subjectivity falls on the racialized person. The burden of casting off object status

falls unjustly on the person rather than the legal and cultural discourses that imposed it.

As such, the emphasis placed on Equiano and the slave to talk, speak, to use language

may seem an innocent request, but it still forces a person who is already a person to prove a

status they should never have been denied. Moreover, is an emphasis on language even the best

conduit for demonstration? The "unity of the autobiographical 'I'," Festa writes, "depends upon

the capacity of language to impose wholeness upon the fragmentary self," but this creates a new

problem: "[Paul] de Man fears that the trope [of personification] may turn," Festa continues,

because "the word may replace the person, as the living subject that conjures a past self is

supplanted by the mask of the other" (133). In other words, rather than reflecting subjectivity,

language use and language writing forges an insurmountable distance between the word and the

speaking subject, further estranging the racial slave from the full emancipation of being neither

object nor subject but an undisputable person.

The *Zong* case involves competing recontextualizations of the drowning of slaves—

between Sharp's abolitionist reading, which was inflected with theological reference, the

plaintiffs pro-slavery defense of British commercial calculus, and Mansfield's "ambivalent and

moderate, legal position" (Hasain 503)[38]—which arguably and ultimately saw Mansfield's

approach win the day. So successful was Mansfield's approach that subsequent commentary on

the trial largely erased any intimation of Sharp's presence or the presence of a forceful

abolitionist rhetoric that took issue with the court's dispassionate contextualizing of what was by

any measure a massacre. Indeed, British newspapers gave little to no coverage of the trial despite

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[38] The present analysis has attempted to undercut the notion that Mansfield's decision was anything but ambivalent or moderate; it instead affirmed a logic of resemblance that casted the slave as cargo despite evident shock at the massacre.

Sharp's and Equiano's efforts at publicizing the case. Part of this may derive from the banal insurance language which prevailed in distancing the case from murder or moral scandal—another way Mansfield successfully controlled the case, contextualizing the circumstances in language which dispassionately rendered mass death as a question of marine insurance. The *Zong* crew's drowning of slaves, still shackled when thrown overboard, becomes subsumed behind the rhetoric of policy and the rights of ship's owners and underwriters, rather than the rights of slaves or the language of emotive and moral outrage at both the crew and the impotent judicial response.

The importance of this contest among rhetorics reflected in the case cannot be dismissed and is a primary reason why the *Zong* massacre deserves re-articulation. Baucom characterizes the *Zong* case as a critical moment of "novelization" in which the "novelizing protocols" (16) of the owners, underwriters, and Guildhall court (i.e. the first jury trial) were likewise on trial in *Gregson v. Gilbert*, in addition to the conduct of captain and crew. Mansfield's verdict might have undermined the syndicate's claims of absolute necessity (thus stifling their attempts to reclaim from their underwriters the value of the drowned slaves) but in doing so he also sanctioned the "novelizing protocols" of both the syndicate and underwriters, both of whom framed the drowning of slaves as a matter of insurance and which suspended slaves in the liminal space of personified object. A rhetoric of market rationality and proto-capitalist logic also prevailed—a rhetoric which fundamentally made slave's rights illegible in the language of calculus and arithmetic that underwrote transatlantic exchange.

The "fiction of value encoded in the *Zong*'s marine insurance policy" was sustained, justified, and allowed to proceed on Mansfield's verdict (Baucom 16). The opposing narrativizations construed by Equiano, Sharp and the abolitionists were faint or unaffecting, apart

from Mansfield's inconsequential disclaimers that the case was shocking and uncommon—a slight and insignificant concession. Nonetheless, the notion of an objectivist, impartial approach to the case of the *Zong* is largely a convenient fiction because the speculative apparatus that permitted and underwrote the monetary valuation of slaves remained in place, and in fact had not at any point been on trial. For the purposes of the trial, slaves were a type of good or property thrown overboard in a moment of emergency and in conjunction with a form of risk that underwriters were willing to cover, namely 'perils of the sea,' and the unquestioned normality of this transaction in British commerce was where the force of abolitionist arguments lied. Mansfield failed to see—or failed to act upon—that the justification for this calculus was itself worthy not just of judicial critique but outright banishment.

The court thus proceeded as if drowning slaves was the equivalent of discarding horses. Questions of murder failed to emerge because neither the plaintiffs nor the underwriters nor the judges sought to consider the ship's owners as anything other than law-abiding men of industry who had legally acquired insurance on their (human) cargo. In fact, Steven Wise frames Sharp's attempts at initiating charges of murder against the crew as "unusual" (207). The matter at issue was largely the same that had dogged the first jury trial: whether the circumstances of the crew jettisoning cargo derived from perils of the sea as outlined in the owners insurance policy for the voyage, whether a condition of absolute necessity could be proven. Regardless of Mansfield's views and approach, the verdict was always going to be decidedly unsatisfying for Sharp and the abolitionists: a condition of absolute necessity had not been proven and a new, third trial should be undertaken for determining the precise "Payment of Costs" (NNM REC/19), although no evidence of a third trial exists. The system of slave trading and valuation was permitted to continue. Mansfield in his final decision remarks:

> This is a very uncommon case, and deserves a reconsideration. There is great weight in the objection, that the evidence does not support the statement of the loss made in the declaration. There is no evidence of ship being foul and leaky, and that certainly was not the cause of the delay. There is weight, also, in the circumstance of the throwing overboard of the negroes after the rain (if the facts be so), for which, upon the evidence, there appears to have been no necessity. There should, on the ground of reconsideration only, be a new trial, on the payment of costs. (Douglas 630)

Mansfield reminds the court again that this is a singular case before deciding that the ship's owners could not prove necessity and moves for another trial to determine whether the Gregson syndicate should be paid by their underwriters. Sharp's hope for a new trial before the Old Bailey, where charges of murder could be heard, were dashed.

Whether *Zong*, *Zorg*, *Zorgue*, or *Zurg*, scholarly and non-scholarly engagement with the massacre inherently involves engaging not directly with the grisly event but with the textual items that have survived and which contextualize the massacre in contradictory rhetorics of law, moral opposition, and emotive reaction. The horrors aboard the *Zong* can only be vicariously witnessed through testimony of those present, and those present had a vested interest in construing the massacre as a highly unusual state of affairs justified by the circumstances. The *Zong*'s relative popularity as a topic of scholarship may in part be answered by its display of the economic calculus that rendered slaves insurable cargo, in part by an apparatus of critique that finds the massacre a convenient item for a micro-historical analysis, and in part by the presence of Mansfield whose earlier decision in *Somerset* set up unrealistic expectations that he would decide in favour of the natural rights of slaves. But such an approach may ignore the salient features of the case, mainly as a specific, identifiable, practical case study of a rhetorics of market rationality being legally sanctioned at a time when supposedly universal emancipation was soon to be declared. The case also serves to debunk the abolitionist literature that had sought to elevate Mansfield as an alley of the racial slave.

A search for narrative closure—a filling in of the gaps left by the archive—is an understandable motivation, but an inadequate approach. The *Zong* massacre at no point forces scholars to name those who died because slaving operations didn't provide names of slaves, only their membership in a numerical summary of ship cargo. Those in search of some logic to understand what drove the crew to purposefully drown the sick and dying will be disappointed to find that such logic was either unique to the *Zong*—thus rendering such a micro-historical analysis largely unrevealing of a transnational institution that transported millions of slaves in arduous, brutalizing conditions—or a ubiquitous feature of slave trade operations on the Atlantic, at which point the *Zong* is nothing special, perhaps even undeserving of the attention it has received. Writing about the 1791 murder of a slave girl during the Middle Passage known only to scholarship as "Venus," Saidiya Hartman remarks, "Yet the exorbitant must be rendered exemplary or typical in order that her life provides a window onto the lives of the enslaved in general" (2). Hartman's assessment is not just confined to the case of Venus. Interest in individual cases from the slave trade often force a dichotomy in its re-contextualizing, between "exemplary" and "typical," in order to serve as revealing of a more general historical practice, of an entire enslaved population, or, in terms of the present analysis, of a particular prevailing rhetoric. Hartman continues:

> There are hundreds of thousands of other girls who share [Venus's] circumstances and these circumstances have generated few stories. And the stories that exist are not about them but rather about the violence, excess, mendacity, and reason that seized hold of their lives, transformed them into commodities and corpses, and identified them with names tossed-off as insults and crass jokes. The archive is, in this case, a death sentence, a tomb, a display of the violated body, an inventory of property, a medical treatise on gonorrhea, a few lines about a whore's life, an asterisk in the grand narrative of history. (2)

Venus, along with so many other figures of the slave trade, become commodities of scholarship in pursuit of some explanatory framework that is often the pretence of one context or genre to the obfuscation of another. Venus and the victims of the *Zong* massacre were articles of commerce,

insurable commodities, participants in a grand medical experiment that sought to diagnose human beings as fit for labour and continual, generational subjugation (rationalized with pseudo-scientific racial taxonomies that justified Black servitude and white rule)—and each of these discourses may justifiably lay claim to the story of the slave trade, but each is critically incomplete on their own. The problem of "grasping" the slave trade involves the continuation of dehumanizing methodologies, even if they have an admirable purpose of revelation. These gestures of "grasping" surrender to the same logic of exhaustion and legibility that underwrote the attempts by merchants, underwriters, and pro-slavery governments to systemize the slave trade into a rational apparatus of exchange—an administrative bureaucracy that would find purpose and effect at the initiation of modern, documentary citizenship regimes. Gestures of grasping were apparent in *Gregson* when Mansfield gave standing to the insurance claim, which represented the *Zong* crew's decision to massacre slaves as conducted with rationality, with calculated reason under conditions of duress. The court as a space of decision and legal pronouncement helped to frame the documentation and testimony as arising from, if not good intention, at least good thinking. In grasping the *Zong* massacre as a question of good decision making by the crew—as arising from a fundamentally rational state of mind, rather than ineptitude, or hatred—what got erased and unrecorded was the undeniable chaos that must have actually occurred aboard the ship as slaves, still bound to chains, were thrown overboard and drowned, shouting in a language the slavers did not care to know who shouted back in a language the slaves did not understand. The massacre took more than a day; no one could possibly surmise the situation aboard as anything other than chaotic. It's a chaos that cannot be adequately rearticulated in the language in which these sentences are written—a chaos illegible in the format of a dissertation.

Contemporary scholarship on Mansfield's approach in the *Zong* case continues to re-articulate the same 'objectivist and detached' rhetorics that casted the death of the unnamed slaves as a matter of insurance. The mask of law and policy—of judges, plaintiffs, counsels, victims—is re-applied onto a case that is admitted by the same scholarship to be beyond the confines of judicial language. That the integrity of contemporary citizenship regimes owes a great deal to the legal wrangling that ensured slaves were situated as less than full persons (but not quite inanimate things) with no claim to civil status goes unmentioned, other than as a natural feature of modernity. The archive in part invites dispassionate renderings from the overwhelming amount of accounting sheets and monetary evaluations that constitute our textual window into the slave trade, which Hartman warns constitutes its own "episteme":

> There is not one extant autobiographical narrative of a female captive who survived the Middle Passage. This silence in the archive in combination with the robustness of the fort of barracoon, not as a holding cell or space of confinement but as an episteme, has for the most part focused the historiography of the slave trade on quantitative matters and on issues of markets and trade relations. (3-4)

As illuminating as the archive might seem—as thankful as we might be for what did survive—it is also the case that the "archive is inseparable from the play of power that murdered Venus and her shipmate and exonerated the captain" (Hartman 11). The same can be said of the victims of the *Zong* massacre.

Part of the hostile reaction to the case of the *Zong* (at least among abolitionists) was the seeming inadequateness of the language of law and insurance in addressing the clear horrors of the massacre, hence Sharp's emphasis on a rousing theological and sentimental lexicon that addressed slavery as condemned by God. A particular episteme was tacitly accepted in *Gregson,* an episteme that would come to define the "long twentieth century" in which we continue to reside. As Baucom writes, "if, for Walter Benjamin, the nineteenth century is the century that enthroned the commodity, then the long twentieth century" is "that which makes sovereign the

value form legally secured in the *Zong*'s marine insurance contract" (17). Our current era extends the conditions of the eighteenth century from which the possibility of the *Zong*'s occurrence emerges, namely the forging of a "mutual and system-wide determination to credit the existence of imaginary values" which did not, like other commodities, arise after the point of exchange but instead proceeding it (Baucom 17). "Such value exists not because a purchase has been made and goods exchanged but because two or more parties have agreed to believe it," Baucom elaborates, independent of any evidence that the commodity in question, in this case slaves, even exists (ibid). Merchants and underwriters who invested in slaving vessels never saw the commodities they bought, insured, and sold, and could never confirm for themselves what precisely occurred between the moment their ship left British port for Africa and the moment, several months later, when it returned. The value *and* the commodity were both speculative. In the current era of global capitalism in which virtual commodities like stocks, bonds, and cryptocurrency have value, the point may seem banal, but at the beginning of our "long twentieth century" such imaginary value was novel and arguably a key feature for the sort of commercial liberty Mansfield envisioned.

The financial and commercial apparatus heavily invested in the speculative manoeuvring that would render a slave both cargo and person converges with the speculative enterprise underwriting the novel throughout the eighteenth and subsequent nineteenth century. This correlation is not accidental but part of the same broad cultural motions that facilitated the European Enlightenment, the emphasis on rationality and universal knowledge acquisition, the emphasis on mercantilism (which would later be superseded by the Industrial Revolution), and the establishment of a commercial form of liberty which invested the individual with monetary autonomy.

CHAPTER FOUR – Refugeehood, Travel, and Documentary Surveillances in Burney and Shelley

In the previous chapters, my examination of the racial slave and Black Atlantic subject only briefly addressed movement in relation to Olaudah Equiano's *Narrative*. The significance of movement was not simply that Equiano's residency in England and acquired identity of Gustavus Vassa were a result of transnational movement, but that the notion of modernity itself was drawn from New World Slavery and the Atlantic world's triangular routing from Europe to Africa to North America and back. While these sorts of political or politicized movements were not the primary focus of the previous chapter, they nonetheless remained implicit throughout my exploration of the various personas—legal, religious, sentimental, and so forth—that were fashioned and conveyed by literature alongside other discursive regimes.

In this chapter, my examination focuses on the central role movement has played in the forging of citizenship archetypes and how the content of the accompanying citizenship rhetoric (the actual words and meanings they convey) are simultaneously assessments, descriptions, or expectations of movement—a claim that may seem slightly paradoxical given contemporary connotations of citizenship as a form of rootedness, a freedom from coerced travel or a freedom to essentially stand one's ground. These sentiments ultimately betray the extent to which individuals and populations have ceded or lost the authority over movement to the state, although this expropriation has waxed and waned. As such, the current chapter expands on issues of movement by concentrating on the cross-border obstacles faced by Frances Burney (while she was writing *The Wanderer)* and Mary Shelley (just before writing *Frankenstein*). Both Burney and Shelley confronted a shifting landscape of transnational travel in the form of border enforcement and documentary surveillance within relatively close proximity of one another

189

(1812 and 1817 respectively). Both Burney and Shelley recount personal experiences with documentary checks that portend the modern encroachments on cross-border movement that would emerge a full century later. Indeed, the early nineteenth century constitutes an important juncture in the history of the passport for a number of overlapping and concurrent reasons: increased travel in Europe strained an underdeveloped passport system, state ambitions of knowing their populations did not match the technologies available for gathering this information, and the intended strictness of passport laws did not match how easy they were to circumvent. It was within these decades that the first attempts were made to transform the passport, which had already existed in some form for well over a century, from a document of questionable value to one of surveillance, national origin, and citizenship that travellers were expected to carry. Alongside this increased managerial and functional significance, the passport likewise gained newfound import as a symbolically powerful document and an attestation of superior social capital. Passports merged as emblems of national space as state governments with varying levels of success positioned passports as documents with more consequence than strictly forms of travel permission.

This chapter focuses on the period roughly between 1789 and 1850 when ambitions of controlling movement in Europe by Continental governments and later the British resulted in mixed success. Travelogues from the nineteenth century, such as that of Richard Burton's pilgrimage to Mecca in 1853 in which he disguised himself as an Arab, could be clearly circumscribed by an imperial and empiricist desire for knowledge and authority. Burton in particular, as Jaś Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés note, situates the "Western traveller" as someone who does "not fulfil himself through a renunciation of identity in the face of a transcendent sacred reality" but rather finds "his pride gratified and his sense of a superior self affirmed

through the accomplishment of a very different project" (2)—a project configured by a map drawn by European dominance. As Elsner and Rubiés summarize, "what separates the Renaissance traveller, a freelance adventurer prompted by the discoveries of the Portuguese in India, from the Victorian traveller operating under the auspices of the British empire is the strengthening of the methods and structures of knowledge and domination" (3). Yet part of the appeal of these sorts of travelogues, and most evident in Burton, is what Elsner and Rubiés identify as the turn to exoticism, which renders his account as much a militaristic and scientific endeavour as it does a paradigm of Romantic travel and the East in particular as an ideal site for Romantic travelling.

With Burney and Shelley, however, we find travel writing variously espousing grand tours of Europe, the bribing of customs officials, and the easy circumvention of travel restrictions. While these accounts still fit into the broad and disparate genre of travel narratives that are conditioned, produced, received, and ideologically underwritten by European imperial culture, Burney and Shelley detail a source of common moral education for elite and monied men (namely, travel), thus tinging their accounts as unique from their perspective as women writers but still attesting to a form of upper-class commonality. As Melissa Calaresu explains, the Grand Tour in particular "did assure a commonality of experience among the sons of European elite, reinforced by the sharing of a humanist education based on reading ancient Latin and Greek texts, and by the uniformity of itineraries as laid out by the guidebooks" (140). Travelling along storied routes through France, Switzerland, and Italy was an intimately literary affair because it involved for the conscious, educated traveller an engagement with geographies already encountered in canonical works, and which likewise defined the path for pilgrimage.

However, alongside these accounts of upper-class travellers and tourists, white European and American authors, politicians, and public figures incited moral panic around fugitive slaves and slave rebellions, envisioning a distinctly racialized boogeyman whose prominent feature was the physical tact to move freely and to in turn upend the established Western political order. This panic was received in divergent ways; for the French and British, the possibility of slave rebellion was geographically distant but still a matter of economic prosperity; for the United States, the concern was far more palpable and framed as an intimate, domestic threat to all white persons. The actual threat posed from fugitive slaves or slave rebellion was intentionally inflated by pro-slavers and slave-holding U.S. states, and even though suspicions were still casted onto the movements of the poor or the peasantry, the explicit racialization of movement—i.e.: the assessment of movement as innocent or suspicious depending on perceived racial identity— could be seen in U.S. laws that sought to dissuade and impede the movement of all Black persons. In particular, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 led to the kidnapping of free Black persons in the northern states by Southern slave owners. [39]

It is therefore of particular interest to my analysis that both Burney and Shelley, working within divergent genres, embedded racialized figures in explicit acts of cross-border travel at an important historical and political juncture from which so-called modernity emerged. In turn, this chapter concerns movements which are not simply travel-in-general but any type of movement that was a central concern of the state. John Torpey has argued that authority over movement is a constitutive element of the modern state.[40] The origins of citizenship are invested not only in attempts by states to embrace and conscript their male population into military service but also to

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[39] I explore this Act in more detail in Chapter Five.
[40] Max Weber argues that this constitutive role is embedded in the legitimate use of physical violence (33) but Torpey's argument borrows this exact rhetoric to argue that movement is similarly expropriated from the individual; authority over movement and physical violence are thus co-productive elements of the state.

sequester a majority of their population into a governable geographic space and seize the authority of movement from its people. Torpey's analysis concerning modern statecraft obsessions with monopolizing the authority on the legitimate means of movement is pertinent to this chapter and will thus be elaborated in the first section.

Slavery will remain of pertinent concern for this analysis not least because of my claim in the previous chapter that the slave is the central legal and cultural figure upon which modern citizenship regimes are founded. Apart from this relatively abstract theorizing, my argument is borne from the fact that European and American slavery is embedded in maritime landscapes and infrastructures and more specifically the ship as the physical instrument of so many convergent features of modernity: racialized brutality, commerce, ethnic politics, and imperialism. Slaving ships were the means of industrialization and modernization that, as Paul Gilroy advocates, "need to be thought of as cultural and political units rather than abstract embodiments of the triangular trade" which likewise provide a "different sense of where modernity might itself be thought to begin," namely in the "constitutive relationships with outsiders that both found and temper a self-conscious sense of western civilisation" (17). The two texts that centre this chapter, Burney's *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* (1814) and Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), feature shipping as one among many forms of transnational movement that are constitutive elements of their protagonist's identity, although the ship in particular has not been a central image for interpreting either of these works, not least because of how fleeting the ship or shipping or even the ocean is in their respective narratives. Both easily lend themselves to readings that emphasize the national interior or a national imaginary—*The Wanderer* narratively unfolds through Juliet's successive movements, literal and symbolic, towards the British interior while Victor Frankenstein gallivants seamlessly through Europe and is placed politically and

193

geographically in the landlocked city of Geneva. The ocean in turn serves as that channel by

which Juliet escapes France, the protective moat around Britain (which helps foster an

antagonistic identity with Continental Europe), or an abyssal region to be traversed for the sake

of imperialist expansion. My analysis of movement will work in part to re-centre the maritime

alongside the landscape via the imprints of slavery and slave shipping which dot both works,

insofar as the representation of racial figures at the beginning of the nineteenth century is

simultaneously a call back (at least implicitly) to the Middle Passage, as well as the transnational

roots of modern citizenship. In a similar way in which a "self-conscious sense of western

civilisation," as Gilroy put it, emerges from contact with outsiders, contact with the sea or ocean

or with shipping tempers an awareness of a national interior space that is simultaneously free to

traverse for some and an opportunity for state surveillance. In this way, both Burney and Shelley

evince a common configuration germane to European travel narratives, namely a combination of

"universalist claims with a national focus" (Elsner and Rubiés 47)—a melding of an interior and

outer vision.

  The Wanderer all but disappeared after two print runs and would not be republished until

1988 (Doody, xxxix), likely because of the initially sour critical response to the work. On the

other hand, *Frankenstein* has been an indelible feature of popular culture since the 1820s. As

such, part of my analysis of *Frankenstein* is invested in its reception, whereas *The Wanderer* has

to be critiqued against the backdrop of its swift disappearance from cultural memory and belated

re-publication 170 years later. Some other key overlaps, however, help to ground my reading of

both texts. Both are set around the 1790s and novelize the ideological milieu of the French

Revolution for a new generation of readers (and respond to conservative reactions to the

revolution). Both likewise depict transnational movement—more than this, movement

constitutes a fundamental feature of both works. This movement is not merely the tourism of the upper-class or the symbolic movement of social or financial advancement but the literal movement across land and sea that affirms, solidifies, or alters a character's political status. Indeed, movement is a constitutive element of the identities of citizen, noncitizen, foreigner, and stranger. As such, this movement cannot be analyzed separately from some larger political or governmental apparatus that claims or aspires to exercise authority over movement within its territory.

I argue that both works are significant bridging texts in terms of their representation of race and citizenship. *Frankenstein* in particular is a key text by which Anglo-American culture transmuted the displaced and emancipated figure of the slave into paranoia of the racialized refugee or émigré. In this chapter I hope to illuminate why Burney and Shelley should remain pertinent texts for contemporary theorists: firstly, because both texts provide remarkable portraits of the failure of European states to exercise authority over the movement of their members, and, secondly, they portray a mix of legitimated and fugitive movement that, though historically specific, shares some key commonalities with contemporary immigration in a globalized world.

Section A
'Racial Cross-dressing' and the Politics of Arrival in Burney's *The Wanderer*

Before elaborating the history surrounding the passport in Europe in the early nineteenth century and as a departure point for my analysis, I begin with Burney. Burney's biography and literary output invite examination owing, firstly, to her celebration of cultural and linguistic hybridity (she was herself both "Fanny Burney" and "Madame d'Arblay"), multiple encounters with transnational movement, and peculiar representations of race. The novel's opening scene

involving the protagonist's irregular arrival to England while dressed in blackface will be analyzed alongside Burney's own harrowing emigration under circumstances of war, which she experienced during the novel's gestation. The issue of slavery as a metaphor for other forms of oppression will re-emerge here as Burney represents the conflation of racial and gendered oppression in the form of the protagonists conscious dressing as a Black woman. In line with Mary Nyquist's analysis on the matter, I have so far critiqued this metaphor as an unjustified compounding of the discrepancy between literal, chattel slavery and other forms of unfreedom that has consequences for the resulting citizenship rhetoric emergent in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The obscuration of the material differences between experiences of oppression can likewise stifle effective strategies for ensuring the disenfranchised are included in social and political space. In my reading of Burney's *The Wanderer*, I will deepen my critique of slavery as metaphor by considering how, on the one hand, the spectre of the racialized refugee emerges from imaginings of freed and rebellious slaves following Britain's withdrawal from the slave trade and the lengthier project of amelioration of slavery, and how in turn this representation of the freed slave was received in the United States (an analysis I deploy here in preparation for Chapter Five wherein I examine Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno*). On the other hand, I consider how types of movement distinguishes the supposed threat posed by the solitary female traveller and racialized person that underwrites some European and American paranoia of social and political unrest. As such, state governmentality lingers in the background of my analysis as the means of containing particular subjects that are seen as transgressive in their freedom to move seamlessly across borders.

The Wanderer, as the title intimates, is a work concerned with travel that is existential as well as literal. Burney wrote the novel, her last full-length work of fiction, from a position of

cultural and linguistic hybridity and amidst intense political turmoil that she experienced both intimately as an English expatriate living in France and vicariously through her husband, decorated general Alexandre d'Arblay, who went in and out of favour with French regimes. The novel took well over a decade to write during which Burney faced personal tragedy in the form of a dying sister and a breast cancer diagnosis—for which she received a mastectomy without anesthesia in September 1811, an experience she detailed in a letter to her sister in 1812—as well as political obstacles from a European continent redrawn by the Napoleonic Wars. The resulting literary work, while clearly borne of her multiple transnational movements between England and France, prioritizes the personal experience of one women's immigration and financial hardship over a generalized critique of the revolutionary politics from which the story is intimately tied— or at least that's how Burney frames her work. The fictionalization of an émigré's return to England under an intensified anti-immigrant political climate finds familiar resonances not just for a nineteenth-century reader with passing knowledge of the French Revolution but for a modern audience in a globalized economy striated by cross-border movement.

Burney herself had experienced a harrowing escape from France during the months of July and August of 1812, an escape which began with a "sad" trip from Paris to Dunkirk—sad "from the cruel separation which it exacted, and the fearful uncertainty of impending events," she wrote (884, 2001). The plan was to board a ship in Dunkirk with her son Alex and sail for Dover, but due to the state of war between the two countries a vessel could not legally travel between England and France, meaning a ship and its passengers wishing to cross the channel had to disguise their intentions. Burney's husband had managed to find such a ship, which would alight in Dunkirk "under American colours, and with American passports and License" with the premise of returning to the United States but would instead make a stopover in England (note

197

that the American passports and licenses are for *leaving* France, not for entering England). The prohibited journey, if successful, meant Burney would finally return to her native country after ten years of exile in France and see her father, who was sick and whose condition was worsening, but it likewise meant "cruel separation" from her husband who would stay behind, the reason for her initial sadness at leaving Paris. General d'Arblay had himself been in exile in England during the revolution but his favour had been restored temporarily under Napoleon, leading the couple to move to Paris where Burney subsequently became an exile in France.

While in Dunkirk, Burney wrote that she was "compelled, through the mismanagement and misconduct of the Captain of the Vessel to spend the most painfully wearisome – though far from the most acutely afflicting – 6 Weeks of my Life" (885). The weather was uncomfortably hot and with the captain looking for more passengers to ferry, Burney was left to wander for weeks in the liminal space of neither arrival nor departure. She could not return to Paris to wait out the six weeks, lest the captain decided for a speedy exit, nor feel secure that at least her entry to England was assured: capture at sea by French authorities was a prospect. With very little to do but wait, Burney requested the incomplete manuscript of *The Wanderer* be sent to her from Paris in the hopes that her severe boredom and anxiety from waiting to leave could be tempered—a work that would end up being her last full-length novel and most critically panned, garnering less lasting attention relative to her other more celebrated works, *Evelina* (1778), *Cecilia* (1782), and *Camilla* (1796). If Burney's own illicit travel wasn't enough, even the migration of a simple manuscript from Paris to Dunkirk was laden with risk of discovery. Documents, specifically of a political nature, could not simply be exported out of the country. Permission to transport them required disguising that England was the ultimate destination for both Burney and her luggage. Additionally, Burney had to affirm "that the Work had nothing in

it political, nor even National, nor possibly offensive to the Government," which she did, and thanks also to d'Arblay, the manuscript managed to make it to Burney without being thoroughly examined (887-8).

In truth, *The Wanderer* is deeply political despite a title and preface that prefigure the work as apolitical romanticism. A novel of manners as well as historical fiction, it opens with upper-class English travellers escaping Robespierre's France owing to the increased climate of terror and political persecution. These travellers continually comment on the revolution from a safe geographic distance, although sometimes ignorantly (most of the characters never seem able to correctly pronounce "Robespierre"). The French Revolution figures the plot, the tide of general suspicion casted upon the protagonist (Juliet), and the sensibilities of the British, although in her preface addressed to her father Burney writes that any readers "who expect to find here materials for political controversy; or fresh food for national animosity; must turn elsewhere their disappointed eyes" for all they will instead find is a "composition upon general life, manners, and characters" (4). Burney's disclaimer of being apolitical in her writing is perplexing, not only from the revolutionary events which haunt the work but the explicit British class politics she targets: the "female difficulties" in the subtitle are a reference to Juliet's struggles as a woman to gain financial independence in a patriarchal society without resorting to traditional feminine roles. Juliet's attempts to contest the financial obstacles to a distinctly feminine liberation have been the primary focus of contemporary scholarly renewed by the work's republication in 1988, but *The Wanderer* is also arguably one of the earliest literary English works to depict a recognizably modern form of immigration circumscribed by competing foreign policy, custom checks, cultural and racial hybridity, emphasis on individual documentation, and the figure of the nation-bound refugee fleeing state-based political violence

or persecution against the backdrop of two modern Westernized citizenship regimes. Even though this opening scene only occupies a few of the opening pages, it prefigures all of Juliet's exploits over the course of the work.

Perhaps Burney sought to cast her work as apolitical to protect against expected criticism regarding the work's depiction of the British upper classes; or to secure the appeal of readers of the etiquette novel who may be dissuaded by the work's explicit reference to contentious political events. Burney was also keenly aware that one's personal success or failures could not be read as sanctions or indictments for the prevailing political climate. For reasons that will soon become clear, irrespective of Burney's disclaimers regarding the non-political nature of her writing, we can nonetheless read a narrative of political intrigue invested in Juliet's attempt to perform particular subject positions as a means of re-entering the English social sphere.

Despite the manuscript's safe arrival to the French coast in the summer of 1812, this was far from the end of Burney's journey. The manuscript subsequently had trouble clearing the custom house at Dunkirk; Burney writes that a French police officer "began a rant of indignation and amazement, at a sight so unexpected and prohibited, that made him incapable to enquire, or to hear the meaning of such a freight" (889)—an encounter she mentions in the preface of the novel but for some reason leaves out the officer's indignant rant, choosing instead to relate the manuscript's initial troubles as merely a minor hiccup in its conveyance to England. Thanks to a local English merchant along with the forged American licenses, what would become *The Wanderer* was cleared to travel with Burney, but the event led her to remark in her journal on "such unexampled strictness of Police Discipline with respect to Letters or Papers" between England and France (890). She was aware that along with the passports for herself and son, her passage across the channel was remarkably lucky and doubts that had Napoleon been in Paris at

the time (instead of at war on the Russian front), Burney would not have secured the necessary documentation to return to England under the auspices of going to the United States.

After six weeks "consumed in wasteful weariness," the voyage involved a "sickening Calm" in which their ship "could make no way, but lingered two days and two nights" (904). Burney remained bedridden almost the entire journey, but the ship would not land at Dover under its own authority. Instead, a few miles from shore the vessel was apprehended by British authorities: the War of 1812 had broken out against the United States while Burney was waiting for passage to England, and the ship as an American vessel was seized. Burney and her son, who was initially accused of being born in France, were technically captured rather than rescued, prisoners in their own country albeit temporarily.

The shared difficulties in crossing borders for Burney and her manuscript were re-articulated in *The Wanderer*, a work which, as previously mentioned, announces itself as concerned with travel, and not just any travel but specifically "wandering," a "quintessential Romantic activity," as Margaret Doody remarks, "as it represents erratic and personal energy expended outside a structure and without progressing to a set objective" (vii). The act of wandering Burney refers to in her title is spiritual and symbolic, involving seeing and traversing cartographies that are not purely geographic, although the *physical* act of wandering may nonetheless contribute to the inner voyage the wanderer undertakes. Juliet is easily identifiable as the wanderer of the novel's title, yet the Romantic ideal courts suspicion when carried out by a solitary figure that is both feminized and racialized. In turn, Juliet's practice of wandering incites expressly negative assessments: she's referred to as an "illegitimate stroller" (86), a "frenchified stroller" (75) (a key turn of phrase that identifies "Frenchness" as a corruptive, foreign influence), a "vagabond" (ibid) (an accusation that has specific cultural purchase in the period as

a travelling robber), and a "needy travelling adventurer" (75). While the Romantic ideal of wandering may still be possible in theory, in practice the act can invite accusations of vagrancy and itinerancy for those who are not imagined as legitimate, solitary travellers.

The work opens in the 1790s with a perilous escape across the channel as several British travellers flee Robespierre's Reign of Terror under cover of darkness intending to return to "that blessed shore!" (22). Just before departure, however, a mysterious figure beckons in French for permission to join them. There's initially some confusion, but its soon determined that the agonized voice belongs to a woman. As a sea officer already onboard exclaims, "A woman, a child, and a fallen enemy are three persons that every true Briton should scorn to misuse" (12). The woman is allowed onboard despite continued consternation from other travellers, a small bit of light revealing only that she is dressed in "ordinary attire" (ibid). Upon reaching safer waters, passengers speak more freely without fear of alerting French authorities and address the unknown late arrival. Much, much later we find her name to be Juliet, but both the reader and the characters within the novel mostly know the protagonist as "Incognita" and "Ellis." A fed-up passenger on board calls her "dulcinea" (13), the imagined love-interest of Don Quixote. Later she will be given the name Ellis after trying to collect letters addressed to "L.S.", which is an additional pseudonym and which further ensconces her in disguise. Margaret Doody reasons part of Burney's choice in naming her L.S. may involve the first two letters of L.s.d. (or £sd), the Latin abbreviation for the currency pounds, shilling, pence (xvi), which would clearly mark Juliet as an exchangeable commodity or form of property. The fact that she emerges in the narrative as a Black woman and is then identified by the same initials as currency would further align her with that of a chattel slave in a moment in which she is being exchanged between two

202

countries, one of many transactions she will have to overcome in order to achieve some level of independence.

When the day finally dawns, daylight reveals the Incognita to be dressed in tattered clothes and heavily bandaged around the face and hands, but the others in the boat continue to try and place her socially and religiously. While Juliet does speak English, it is remarked that she speaks with a "foreign accent" (17). Mrs. Maple soon demands an extensive itinerary of Juliet's origins. Another passenger remarks that "Her dress is not merely shabby; 'tis vulgar. I have lost all hope of a pretty nun. She can be nothing above a house-maid" (ibid) and a moment latter that "If […] she has one atom that is native in her, how will she be choked by our foggy atmosphere!" (18). The question of Juliet's nationality occasion a political discussion regarding the ongoing revolution in France at which point, "the stranger, having taken off her gloves, to arrange an old shawl, in which she was wrapt, exhibited hands and arms of so dark a colour, that they might rather be styled black than brown"; moreover, a "closer view of the little that was visible of the muffled up face, perceived it to be of an equally dusk hue" (19). Juliet appears to be a Black woman and her apparent racial identity ignites a fury of interrogation, whether she is from the "West Indies" or "somewhere off the coast of Africa" (ibid). The passengers do not as yet know the multiple levels of concealment with which she has dressed herself, initially under darkness of night, then clothing, and now blackface.

Once landed in England, some of the fellow travellers continue to pester Juliet, hectoring her with questions regarding her real name (still unknown at this point), her origins, and her reasons for travelling to England. Mrs. Maple desires the landlord of the inn to which the passengers are temporarily residing to take notice "that a foreigner, of a suspicious character, had come over with them by force" (26)—an obviously misleading retelling of how Juliet had

peaceably boarded their vessel. Harleigh, a later love interest, refuses to take on Mrs. Maple's suspicions, to which she responds that she will inform the magistrates herself. At the possibility of having the authorities arrive, Juliet proclaims "I am no foreigner,—I am English!" (ibid). Her initial status as a political refugee dissolves as her admission suggests that while perhaps French-sounding, Juliet is returning home. Soon, however, her other layer of disguise unravels. Juliet's "dark hue" appears to be "smeared and streaked" and a day later "to be of a dusky white" (43). The next day, the metamorphosis is complete as Juliet's skin has "changed from a tint nearly black, to the brightest, whitest, and most dazzling fairness" (ibid). This causes Mrs. Ireton to remark "for 'twas but an hour or two since, that you were the blackest, dirtiest raggedest wretch I ever beheld; and now—you are turned into an amazing beauty!" (43). Juliet had boarded the ship ostensibly black and arrived in England white.

The reveal of Juliet as white also clarifies the nature of her hybridity which aligns more closely to that of Burney's than it does to Equiano's, namely a hybridity that is not racial but entirely within the dimensions of a white European sphere. While clearly inflected by Burney's transnationalism, the opening of the work is peculiar—a white woman appropriates a racialized appearance ostensibly to hide her own identity and assist in her escape from France, even though such an appearance would hinder cross-border movement rather than expiate it. Juliet's appearance generates multivalent readings from her fellow travellers, some of whom infer her Blackness as a sign of geographic origin, while others imply racial mixture owing to the proximity to England. Suffice to say, several disparate racial discourses are converging in this scene. But how are we to read Juliet's racial appearance knowing later that she will shed it? How are we to even describe it? Sara Salih (2007) calls Juliet's temporary complexion a "racial cross-dressing" (48), a phrasing that intimates a dramatic disguise or theatrical costume. Salih's

terminology aligns with the depiction of performance and amateur theatre throughout *The Wanderer*, which constitutes a major subplot and would place Juliet's racial appearance along a thematic continuum of recitals and routines, with questions of where the essential Juliet resides, what aspects of identity are inherent and which performative. Coupled with the novel's focus on gender and class-bound social etiquette, Burney seems to subsume Juliet's initial appearance as a Black woman as one among many roles or temporary dressings that Juliet acquires to escape France, as one of many disguises used to smuggle herself out of a dire situation. Indeed, quoting Salih again, "Her appearance in racial drag in the first scene of the novel is only the first in a series of transformations (narrated and represented) from white to black, from female to male, from aristocrat to working class – and back again" (2007, 50).

The difficulty navigating the various convergent racial discourses present in this opening scene results at least partly from a rhetorical and conceptual slippage between race, culture (two concepts that were essentially interchangeable in this period), gender, and nation but also aesthetics and sentimentality. Juliet's status is quickly surmised by the travellers from assumptions of race/culture grounded in familiar aesthetic markers of feminine beauty, which ultimately lead to the conclusion that she is foreign—later revised to English but hybrid with France. These aesthetic markers are revealed to be unstable or wrong insofar as the connotations drawn from them turn out to be wholly inaccurate. Juliet is revealed as white, exceedingly talented and (much, much later in the novel) of noble birth, in contradiction to the assumptions that she was a vagabond, former slave, or domestic servant. In denying the reader easy access to the protagonist's point of view, Burney breaks with the sentimentalist mode of late eighteenth century fiction that sought to "persuade potentially skeptical readers that their characters are worthy of sympathy" (Sharren 705). In contrast to Equiano who sought to use sympathy as a

means of expanding the appeal of abolitionism, readers continually face disruptions to straightforward sympathetic or empathetic connection with Juliet, beginning with the simple refusal by either Juliet or the narrator to reveal a name. The plot of *The Wanderer* essentially revolves around a protagonist who evades identification and thus likewise resists an informed reader. To make matters worse (for the reader), the narrator is complicit in Juliet's silence rather than a helpful omniscience. This technique is not whimsical but, as Kandice Sharren continues, Burney's response to a "social and political climate that policed who could be considered sympathetic" (ibid):

> *The Wanderer*'s indictment of a society that demands external indicators of social value above personal, virtuous characteristics potentially includes its own readers, unless they can prove through sympathetic identification with its nameless and unfixed heroine, their own value. (722)

Sharren suggests that the narrator essentially denies responsibility for the reader's sympathetic identification with the protagonist, passing the burden onto them to facilitate the connection. In profound contradistinction to *Frankenstein*—where Victor constantly prostrates himself to the reader in a craven want for sympathy or the creature who openly demands compassion—Juliet appears not only unwanting of sympathy but resisting or abhorring the very nature of sympathetic movement in the first place. In other words, not only are the aesthetic markers of assessment (so central to European understanding of the world) wrong about Juliet, but the sentimentalist mode that renders characters as empathetic personas is likewise suspicious. Foundational modes of intelligibility, particularly for how Europeans conducted colonial encounters with non-whites, are potentially being undermined by Burney. In the context of Juliet's entry to England, these sentimental modes acquire political resonance as well, since by implication these external indicators of social value cannot account for who should or should not be permitted as members of the British polity.

For those who witness Juliet's multiple changes, the shedding of what at the time would have been read as essentialist categories of race and gender would have been unnerving, although Salih suggests readers of the era likely "would have been relieved that a gleaming white heroine – albeit culturally French – emerges from the 'stained' skin that the heroine wears in the novel's opening pages" (2007, 51). Indeed, many characters praise Juliet's new appearance when she does eventually emerge as white, having taken her previously black skin as a sign of dirtiness and vulgarity, even if Burney does not intend for us to agree with these assessments. As Gilroy observes, the thinking through of racial difference as either taxonomic or biological was of central concern to "those European attempts to think through beauty, taste, and aesthetic judgement that are the precursors of contemporary cultural criticism" (8). Even characters like Elinor, Mrs. Maple, and Mr. Ireton, who initially cause Juliet the most consternation, seem at least relieved to know Juliet is white. The work itself does not offer a cohesive vocabulary for the moment. Firstly, the symbolic resonances of an ostensible Black woman traversing the ocean at a time when the slave trade is dominated by the British amounts to little more than a comment by Mr. Riley that the traveller may be West Indian or African and later that Juliet, upon appearing white, was previously dirty and wretched, an explicit display of Enlightenment aesthetic markers in the determination of culture, and by extension race. Secondly, cognitive markers are also implicated as the travellers openly surmise Juliet's silence as a sign of degeneracy. Lastly, the rhetoric they apply is connotative of high ideals of beauty (Juliet is explicitly said to possesses a "dazzling fairness") as well as a sort of proto-anthropology. The earlier reference to Juliet being "choked by [England's] foggy atmosphere" by Mrs. Maple, for example, while perhaps slightly tongue-in-cheek, implies that her racial difference amounts to either a cultural or biological aversion to European climates.

Intriguingly, Burney reverses the symbolic associations around English air from that of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, where the pure air of England—as explored in the previous chapter—embodies the liberatory culture and moral superiority of Great Britain, but also the hypocrisy of women's oppression in a nation that supposedly recognizes the rights of racial slaves. The notion that Juliet could not breath England's air is ironic in this context because the other characters still think Juliet is a racialized person and potentially an African slave, and thus the English air is precisely the thing that is supposed to liberate her. Instead, the notion of English purity signifies to Mrs. Maple that Juliet's combination of "othered" personalities prevents her from acclimatizing to the liberatory atmosphere of England. More than this, Juliet is potentially a threat to the very integrity of the British nation and as such should be showered with considerable suspicion, as if she were an agent of corruption in pursuit of ruining the country from within. Part of this perceived threat is not singularly invested in her racialized identity, but also apparent loneliness as a woman in solitary journeying. The whereabouts of a husband or son or some other male companion that could explain either her origin or destination or who would be accompanying her under normal circumstances constitutes to Mrs. Maple some immoral or degenerate behaviour, an escape or betrayal of a domestic setting, or a loosening of morals or circumvention of gender norms that she sees as essential to the British nation more broadly. In sum, she combines several difference sources of fugitivity that some of her fellow passengers deem unworthy of Great Britain, and as a result wish to arrest her in a permeant state of exile, dispossessed and homeless.

On Burney's part, Mrs. Maples comment about the English atmosphere can be read as a coded indictment of British claims to moral superiority as Juliet's exilic condition is perceived by some of the passengers as reason for her to be denied permission to enter, which is

exacerbated by the fact that Juliet refuses to perform expected markers of social value as a means of securing uncorrupted passage into the country. Even though Juliet by every outward appearance is in a vulnerable and isolated position, this motivates disdain and suspicion rather than compassion or care, at once revealing the limits of sentiment as a spur for moral action and also the hypocrisy of British claims to liberty.

We therefore see an additional dimension of strangeness that underwrites the interrogative personality of Mrs. Maple and the charitable gestures of Harleigh. Mrs. Maple can only see an example of transgression in which Juliet's companionless journeying implies a rejection of important gender norms that underwrite British cohesion—perhaps accustomed from Juliet's time in revolutionary France, since the revolution signalled not just political instability but a deeper cultural and social resistance to conventions of gender and marriage (in this regard Mrs. Maple would aligned ideologically with Burke and the broader conservative reaction to the events of 1789). Harleigh, on the other hand, sees Juliet's solitary journeying as a call for his male patronage, hence his willingness to cover the cost of her channel crossing and later to become obsessed with courting her affections. Crucially then, an additional impediment to movement beyond the nature of the passport as documentary surveillance is apparent in Burney and Juliet (and also Shelley, as I'll explore in the last section) in the form of gendered conventions for companioned travel, which reels the issue of marriage into the fold. Here a metaphor of captivity sourced from the conflation between figurative and literal enslavement, as explored in Chapter Two, re-emerges in the form of women travellers who are metaphorically chained to their male companions, even while conducting what is ostensibly a freeing or liberating journey.

In turn, the rhetoric that Juliet's fellow escapees from France used to describe her ("vagabond," "Frenchified stroller," etc.) can likewise be read as gendered assessments of her indecency at travelling alone, in addition to the racialized nature of these accusations. Mrs. Maple in her attacks on Juliet comes to embody a nationalistic defender of the British realm as morally superior while suggesting that contact with outsiders will corrupt that moral purity rather than reform or assimilate the migrant or refugee. Juliet's ostensible independence as a woman threatens to erode the sanctity of the national space, and as such Mrs. Maple essentially tries to imprison Juliet the moment they reach the English shore, both literally by attempting to alert the magistrates and more figuratively by keeping her in a position of financial dependence. In other words, Mrs. Maple attempts to police Juliet's arrival in a way that mirrors an agent of the state. When that fails, she then tries to involve an actual agent of the state to reprimand Juliet.

Of course, in some sense, Mrs. Maple need not do anything because the social and cultural conventions surrounding solitary women is implied by Burney as already imprisoning, metaphorically signalled by Juliet's dressing as a racial slave. The use of racial persona as a metaphor for the oppression Juliet faces as a woman would be a familiar trope for readers of proto-feminist writings attracted to the language of slavery as conduits for discussions of feminine subjugation going back to Judith Drake and Mary Astell in the late 1600s (Salih 1999, 304). Astell in particular used the racial slave as a convenient analogy for the strictures of marriage that would echo throughout the eighteenth century as subsequent women writers like Mary Collier and Mary Wollstonecraft took up the comparison. Yet the obviously racial overtures of the work remain frustratingly unexplored within the novel itself as the issue of race is quickly discarded by Burney once Juliet has been revealed as white. Her whiteness is depicted as essential to Juliet; there is nothing else beneath her white skin to reveal. While so many other

aspects of her character remain contingent and negotiable—her class and social standing, for example—ultimately her whiteness is presented as ontologically secure. Juliet's shedding of her Blackness positions whiteness as an ontological default of humanity with graduations descending backwards from there. It likewise positions Blackness as debris or discard for whites to use and abuse at will. The characters and nineteenth-century readers of *The Wanderer* initially discomforted by the intimation that race may in part be indeterminative of essence or virtue are instead affirmed of their belief that their own whiteness is inalienable and rewarding of particular privileges and social status. In other words, Burney instrumentalizes race as a convenient form of disguise for her protagonist to appear more mysterious, to obscure Juliet's origins wrapped up in revolutionary politics, and to analogize feminine subjugation as close or equivalent to that of the chattel slave.

  The Wanderer reflects a white imaginary of racial difference, as in these categories are derived entirely from within the West and from a position of Western contact with non-whites, that discards the felt experience of racialized prejudice in favour of a handy literary trope or performative dressing. While Burney's witty undressing of the British upper classes might acquire more poignancy if the person they falsely derided and interrogated ended up being a figure farthest from her initial appearance, the instrumentalizing of race for literary purposes cannot be ignored in critical assessment of *The Wanderer*. Juliet's shedding of disguises results in a political volatility as her fellow émigrés, who are British citizens returning to the comfort of their middle to upper-class lives, jockey to ascertain precisely how she relates to the rest of them (citizenship is, after all, fundamentally relational). Her initial appearance as a foreigner, refugee, or stateless person—a racial refugee from either the West Indies or Africa as Mr. Riley surmises (19)—leads Mrs. Maple to threaten alerting the "magistrates" to Juliet's presence, at which point

she exclaims that she is in fact English and not French, at least by nationality. Throughout these opening passages, references to the shore alludes at not just a geographic point where land meets sea but as a figural or metaphorical configuration to distinguish between the liberty and morally superior climate of Great Britain and the dangerous and ideological space of France. Yet despite alighting on physical land, Juliet continues to be treated by some of the other travellers as if the shore had moved with her, as if she'd never really exited the ship. The disguises add to her predicament, but as she sheds them they likewise eliminate the successive borders Juliet must cross to naturalize, or rather re-naturalize, in the eyes of her fellow Britons, who are comforted that Juliet has revealed herself as not a foreigner or a refugee but instead a talented, humble, intelligent, white woman of modesty, good character, and (crucially) British nationality. After Juliet is overheard playing the harp with tremendous skill in the home of Mrs. Maple,

> All, except Harleigh, remained nearly stupefied by what had passed, for no one else had ever considered her but as a needy travelling adventurer. To him, her language, her air, and her manner, pervading every disadvantage of apparel, poverty, and subjection, had announced her, from the first, to have received the education, and to have lived the life of a gentlewoman. (86)

The lesson they've learned from the experience (save for Harleigh) is not the hubris of their relentless and unjustified suspicion casted upon foreigners and vulnerable human beings—the seemingly obvious lesson to be gathered from this episode—but rather that their own positions of privilege are secure. The implication is that for those who cannot so easily shed their racial identity, the shore shall move with them, denying them the unfussed movement afforded to Juliet once she is revealed as white, although Juliet remains a convenient target even as details of her identity slowly emerge. "She is at the same time alterity," Debra Silverman writes, "otherness even to herself" (72). With Juliet's various costume changes, however, her alterity is "altered" during the course of the work, "so that by the time the novel concludes," writes Salih, "the unfathomable 'other' has been converted into a reassuringly 'native' subject, who may assume

her rightful place in the upper echelons of English society without disturbing existing social or racial structures" (1999, 302). Juliet's alterity intimates that the otherness that denies her a smooth channel for arrival is contingent and inscribed from without rather than from within, yet this fact remains unseen by the other characters who continue to treat Juliet as a suspicious foreigner whose political dispossession, solitary condition, and shady allegiances render her a potential enemy of the British nation.

The manifest singularity of Juliet's exodus derives from the fact it was successful, for any other person of presumed racial and lower-class background would likely not have had the opportunity to convey themselves into English territory and society the way Juliet does. A distinctly modern politics of immigration defined by networks of custom checks and interrogative gazes emerged to catch Juliet, and it is only by inexplicably becoming white does she avoid worse. Burney herself is thankful that her own personal connections and recognition (even Napoleon knew of her) could soften the trouble of bypassing border enforcement, while also keenly aware that post-revolutionary Europe in imposing draconian custom checks is flirting with a new type of control that threatens to hamper the sort of transnational movement so integral to her disposition as a cultural hybrid of English and French. It's no wonder Burney thought of the French Revolution as an event impossible to ignore, just as the Glorious Revolution of 1688 had been for writers a century earlier, but it isn't just the act of migration and the threat of restrictive customs that Burney so interestingly decides to inaugurate *The Wanderer* with—Juliet's fellow émigrés take it upon themselves to enact strict immigration control in the absence of authorities for reasons that are racial, gendered, class-based, and grounded in hearsay. A culture of anti-immigrant sentiment familiar to twenty-first century readers informs their ruthless interrogation of Juliet. In the absence of identifiable "magistrates" with which to conduct

deportations, Juliet's fellow citizens take it upon themselves—under the banner of national

interest—to racially profile and cross-examine the assumed foreigner, whose alterity is manifest.

They persist in asking for her name and their interrogations are sustained even as Juliet's identity

becomes clearer and characters move away from England's shore. These interrogations are in

part hypocritical: the "ship of fools" (Doody, xvi) that Juliet boards is patroned by British

tourists leaving France who fail to extend hospitality or even indifference to Juliet, who is

decidedly not a tourist to either country. Her cultural duplicity gives her claim to essentially both

shores but this is read by Mrs. Maple and others as a sign of shifting allegiances, if not a spy.

The symbolic significance of the ship in this moment is extensive. The lifeline for wealthy

travellers to return home as well as the economic and cultural engine of Great Britain prior to the

invention of the steam engine, the ship is a highly protective space for Mrs. Maple and the others

who are resistive to Juliet's boarding. Juliet's presence changes the dynamics of the ship from

the means of repatriation to the conveyance of racialized foreigners. In a sense, the ship signals a

new type of politics with the boarding of Juliet. The ship is the instrument of both her physical

conveyance from France and racial transformation from white to black and back to white,

although unlike the resonance of the slave ship as the site of captivity and torture for

bondpersons, Juliet sprints towards the vessel as an object of salvation. The inversion of this

imagery is only apparent to the reader until after the voyage has commenced.

In choosing to focus on a political émigré with her novel, Burney likewise depicts the

forces of stereotype and personification that others attach to Juliet in the absence of a name or

identity—and the name she is initially given, Ellis, being contrived, carries no social weight and

as such cannot protect her from the continued suspicions of others (Silverman 70). Even though

the novel was not widely read, Burney's deployment of race in disguising her protagonist gives a

short glimpse of the burgeoning racial politics of the nineteenth century, where race and cultural differences were understood interchangeably and where fear of slave revolts and racial mixture came to preoccupy the imagination of whites on both sides of the Atlantic. Juliet's conveyance to England is thus especially pernicious for the nineteenth-century reader because it portended the successful infiltration of former slaves into majority-white countries that were supposed to be geographically separate from their colonial possessions. For Britain, slave rebellion was distant and detached from everyday English life, even if they were economically disastrous. Juliet's physical arrival on English shores ostensibly as a Black woman at least symbolically brings Britain's participation in slavery and the slave trade home.

Burney's difficulty escaping France along with Juliet's portrays the degree to which national sovereignty is not purely horizontal. Shorelines make poor substitutes for political borders because shores cannot move the way national dimensions can, nor can shores reflect all the invisible walls which make arrival an insurmountable elevation. The relative ease in placing boundaries onto a flat representation of territory belies all the other mechanisms of border enforcement, or of governmental or colonial operation. The cartographic makeup of a state is not just horizontal but layered and three dimensional. In the case of Juliet and *The Wanderer*, her arrival is initially stalled by the prohibitive cost of traversing the English Channel and when she does manage to reach England, she is routed between temporary spaces as her stay at the inn and her attempts to hire a stage-coach are hindered by her reliance on the charity of fellow travellers. For Juliet, however, her financial and solitary predicament essentially immobilizes her at the shore and renders her a dependent to whomever is willing to underwrite her stay.

Juliet confronts borders embedded in racial, gender, and class relations. For example, in the absence of robust infrastructural arrangements like border security or police officers, Mrs.

Maple attempts to literally steer Juliet (still in blackface) away from the national interior and figurately into the recesses of belonging, where no comfortable claim of arrival can be made and where Juliet can be continually scrutinized and hounded as a "foreigner," which is not merely a political status but a pejorative laden with intimations of untrustworthiness and the impossibility of truly belonging to England. Various racial and ethnic paradigms are erected to slow, imbed, stifle, and ultimately halt Juliet's possibility of arrival. Alongside them is the limited economic infrastructure available for women. Juliet requires charity from her fellow travellers to initially survive in England; in fact her passage across the Channel was not self-funded but spontaneously and voluntarily paid for by Harleigh. While certainly an admirable act, Harleigh's donation nonetheless re-articulates an abolitionist discourse in which the plight of slaves and Black persons was dependent on white benevolence and philanthropy instead of direct empowerment or legislated equality. Juliet may move physically across the channel and through the mists of darkness, but she is in this opening scene immobilized—immobilized by financial difficulty, by her fellow travellers, by the text, by the persona of the wanderer.

Section B
The Importance of Movement: Embrace, Legibility, and Restriction

The attempt by some of Juliet's fellow passengers to essentially act as agents of the state in slowing and interrogating the movements of a suspicious figure offers an opportunity to engage more critically with the central role of movement, and specifically the authority over movement, in imaginings of citizenship and transgression. Though the escape from France that opens Burney's *The Wanderer* is conducted against the backdrop of war and revolutionary

216

violence, the paranoia around foreign actors generated from this historical moment does not fade once relative peace is restored. In this and the next section, I take a more extended look at the history surrounding documentary surveillances and cross-border movement in the early nineteenth century before moving on to Shelley's *Frankenstein.*

John Torpey argues that the invention and history of the passport extending back to the eighteenth century (and its fundamental significance for citizenship) has involved an unrivaled concern by states for controlling the movement of their subjects—not necessarily restricting it, but rather to monopolize the *authority* of movement. This authority has the effect of establishing the now widely accepted notion (even among some contemporary immigration advocates) that certain movements (and in turn people) are "illegal." The racial, ethnic, and religious subtext of precisely *which* movements happen to be illegal originates with the states' effective monopolizing of the legitimate means of movement via its authority and capacity to know and document its population. Torpey argues that this lengthy process of monopolization is "associated with the fact that states must develop the capacity to 'embrace' their own citizens in order to extract from them the resources they need to reproduce themselves over times" (2). The capacity and motivation of states to "embrace" their own subjects has explicitly involved boundaries being drawn between nationals and nonnationals, between citizen and non-citizen. The term "embrace" reflects the individual and collective attempt by states to grasp the populations that compose them in order to exhort certain demands, what Torpey terms "penetration" (13). The effective "penetration" of society is what allows states to effectively provision goods and serves, but also extract resources from its population, control movement (both internally and internationally) and reproduce with ideal members. As Torpey writes:

> Modern "nation-states" and the international system in which they are embedded have grown
> increasingly committed to and reliant upon their ability to make strict demarcations between

mutually distinct bodies of citizens, as well as among different groups of their own subjects, when one or more of these groups are singled out for "special treatment." (15)

The capacity to make these demarcations has not always been effective, but the historical trend of states struggling to identify and discriminate their populations for the purposes of "embracing" their citizens or subjects has also been disrupted by cruel and appalling successes, notably the Nazi regime's effective identification and extermination of Jews, Romani people, homosexuals, and the disabled, as well as racially-motivated immigration policies in the United States in the late nineteenth century that effectively excluded the Chinese.

Both Burney and Shelley implicitly document the failures of European states to successfully control the movement of their subjects, and indeed Torpey remarks that it is only within the late twentieth century that states have "been able to monopolize the authority to regulate movement in an exhaustive as well as successful manner" (8). Part of this latent success should not simply be attributed to the invention of adjacent digital technologies allowing for more seamless data collection and surveillance—the formation of states into distinct national spaces (i.e. the nation-state) populated by "nationals" was gradual, along with the "centuries-long labors of slow, painstaking bureaucratic construction" that underwrote the passport system (Torpey 11). Global capitalism has not ultimately dislodged the authority of states to embrace their citizens—states can still effectively control their populations by restricting or narrowing the legitimate channels for physical mobility.

In line with Hannah Arendt's elaboration of the refugee as beyond the horizon of political community and therefore paradoxically beyond rights, Torpey elaborates how stateless persons pose an existential threat to states because they constitute movement outside their sphere of embrace and penetration—or more accurately, refugees are a consequence of a worldwide collective endeavour by states to embrace and penetrate their respective populations. May Joseph

218

similarly captures how movement in general "resists easy notions of community or nation" and in turn "dislodges the entrenched categories of nation and state by introducing the workings of capital to the production of cosmopolitan as well as local citizenship" (8). Movement and the subsequent "mobile modes of expressive citizenship" constitute a threat to the integrity of the state as a static entity by "generating historically new fissures of discord within nationally produced notions of citizens as social practice" (Joseph 7, 9). The globalized economy that has facilitated the explosion of movement and new mobile modes of citizenship may, on the surface, seem a promising historical development that heralds the end of the state's monopolized authority, or at least the shattering of its clunky arrangement. Joseph, however, assess this intuition as optimistic:

> On the contrary, the enticing logic of consumption as the great leveler of nations, national identities, and competing modes of citizenship conceals the exclusionary and nondemocratic tendencies embedded in this logic that contradict the hard-fought battles for alternative venues of public citizenship waged by various political identities. (8)

Perceptions of heightened mobility in a globalized world as inherently progressive and facilitated by the incontrovertible flow of capital misses how increased movement of goods has not always translated to eased movement of persons. Joseph's point is twofold. Firstly, assumptions around the speediness of global exchange has caused misconceptions around the comparatively less efficient movement of persons, and in turn has transformed persons "in states of dispersal, whether voluntary or coerced, [to] become redundant commodities" (8). Secondly, it obscures the strength of resistance to eased movement for a majority of the population and the intimately local contests over national belonging that more acutely effect the daily life of the citizen or the displaced. As Shachar notes, immigrants "are seen as the vanguards in testing 'the new world order'" in part because "their authorized (or more so, *un*authorized) movement across borders

symbolizes the impossibility of enforcing strict immigration controls over access in an increasingly interdependent world" (813).

Rhetoric regarding immigration in the contemporary United States, for example, may intimate a concern for national integrity if borders are unfortified and shores unguarded, but one source of U.S. government consternation over "illegal" immigration is deeply embedded in a longstanding desire to exercise full authority over movement, especially the movement of minorities—a desire that Torpey identifies in the infant nation-states of the late eighteenth century. As such, successive governing administrations in the U.S position irregular immigration as a secession of authority, regardless of ideological or political differences. The Obama Administration, for example, was no less active than the Bush or Trump Administrations in arresting and deporting Hispanic and Latino persons, even though the former was by appearances less concerned with forging an ethnonationalist American state than the latter administrations, which conducted immigration control with much clearer racial and ethnic subtexts. The expectation that nations have the power and authority to restrict movement was just as integral to the ostensibly liberal (although powerfully centrist) Obama Administration as it was for the far-right administrations of Bush and Trump. An explanation of why ostensibly opposed political factions may adhere to the same ideology of movement is perhaps captured by Ulf Hedetoft and Mette Hjort in their introduction to *The Postnational Self* (2002) when they note the "convergence of ethnonationality, state territory, and 'homogenous' cultural practices" in countries where "their primary belongingness never really becomes a fully conscious issue" (ix). An implicit ethnonationalism unable to be distinguished from geography or contingent cultural behaviour inures the birthright citizen or protected political subject from ever having to consider or address issues of nonbelonging and illegitimate movement.

All that is to say, economic concerns can still impress upon national governments without dislodging their authority to restrict movement. Torpey notes, citing David C. Lyon, that the "exigencies of contemporary life are such that mobility must both be *smoothed* in the interest of the circulation of goods and persons and *filtered* to constrain the movement of unwanted elements" (xiii). Far from facing redefinition, citizenship has remained remarkably consistent as a means for states to establish and exercise authority over movement, which in the post-9/11 period has become ever more effective—to the extent that populations either self-regulate or find documentary controls a necessary component of national security. The ethnonationalisms that have attended documentary controls since the emergence of modern passports are seemingly rendered unimportant or contextualized as the paranoid fantasies of human rights activists.

That being said, citizenship has been buttressed in part by nationalistic factions seeking to create or maintain racially and ethnically homogenous units via highly restrictive immigration policy, difficult paths for permanent residence, and intensified documentary controls. Yet as forceful as these developments have been for indemnifying citizenship, their influence should not be overstated when juxtaposed to equally influential growth in the capacity of governmental bureaucracy for taxation, military conscription, and delivery of public services and social benefits, which are not merely innocuous policy goals adjacent to the content of citizenship but serve as essential structuring components in the perseverance of the nation-state. These services and benefits—such as poor relief or welfare, healthcare, pension benefits, and other social services—as varied as they might be from state to state, not only rely heavily on the documentary identification that has occasioned modern citizenship, they have likewise served as powerful methods for governments to "embrace" and "penetrate" their populations. To ensure that the "wrong" people do not receive services funded by taxpayers in part relies on the

effective capacity for governments to distinguish persons individually such that their claims for

services and benefits are deemed genuine (likewise their potential conscription into the military

can be smoothly administered). Indeed, as James C. Scott argues, these services are the result of

protracted attempts to rationalize and standardize complex social arrangements into more

"legible" and "administratively more convenient" formats that are easier to govern (3). As an

example, Scott points to cadastral maps initiated by the state to identify taxable property that

organized areas into various blocks of land and created a category of regulation by which such

taxation was normalized (ibid). In other words, an otherwise disparate use of agriculture was

given force of law and made legible through mapping. As Michael Mann suggests, the "unusual

strength of modern states is infrastructural" (60, 1993) and this strength has really only

occasioned the last few decades with the advent of ever more advanced surveillance and

documentary technology. Christian Joppke agrees, writing that the decision to "accept or reject

aliens has not been relegated to actors other than the state, the infrastructural capacity of modern

states has not decreased, but increased, over time" (267), despite intimations that globalization

would weaken national sovereignty. Scott argues that the

> premodern state was, in many crucial aspects, partially blind; it knew precious little about its
> subjects, their wealth, their landholdings and yields, their location, their very identity. It lacked
> anything like a detailed "map" of its terrain and its people. It lacked for the most part, a measure,
> a metric, that would allow it to "translate" what it knew into a common standard necessary for a
> synoptic view. As a result, its interventions were often crude and self-defeated. (2)

Modern states can be distinguished by their increasingly effective methods at gathering

information on their subjects through the combination of a robust administrative bureaucracy and

"sharply defined interests" (11), as opposed to premodern states characterized by unformed

policy goals and partial blindness towards its subjects—or, borrowing Scott's language, a

condition of modern states is the successful 'translation' of their populations into "legible"

categories and modalities that smooth the practice of governance, standardize regulation, and

foster a cohesive foundation for citizenship adjacent to feelings of nationalistic solidarity. The "administrative ordering of nature and society," Scott argues, bolsters the "concept of citizenship and the provision of social welfare" but also potentially a "policy of rounding up undesirable minorities" (4). Whereas premodern states shared many of the same concerns that continue to concern the modern state, like taxation, the former had to make do with whatever taxes were simple to administer, difficult to circumvent, and therefore easier to collect, even if these taxes failed to generate sustainable revenue. Other forms of taxation were harder to enforce owing to lack of information and administrative capacity. It is perhaps no coincidence then that formal citizenship in the modern sense emerges in the eighteenth-century alongside developments that allowed for states to reach farther across and into their populations than was previously capable, hence the extensive amount of time I spend on this crucial window of time. A state's capacity to "embrace" and "penetrate" their populations was finally beginning to match their ambitions.

Citizenship fosters legibility of a population with the upside of facilitating popular social services and the downside (to put it mildly) of discriminatory policies against immigrants, racialized persons, vulnerable minorities, and "undesirables,"[41] which includes restrictions on cross-border movement. Like many other categories that foster legibility, citizenship is meant to simplify a population to allow for a "high degree of schematic knowledge, control, and manipulation" which involves, as Scott terms it, a "constriction of vision" (11; 12). This constriction will, invariably, involve blindness to whatever happens to fall outside the field of vision—ostensibly anything that does not contribute to a nation's defined interests, or in the case of commodity management, the isolation and exploitation of instrumental value. As Torpey

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[41] This isn't to suggest, necessarily, that the acquisition of information for the purposes of the provision of social benefits is directly responsible for exclusionary domestic and foreign policies, but rather that the robust, bureaucratic administration that allows for the effective provisioning of social benefits naturally lends itself to the establishment of xenophobic, exclusionary immigration policy.

notes, the embrace and penetration of a political community by a national government has historically been conducted with the intention of extracting resources, be it for taxes or populating a military. A close relationship, if not a symbiotic one, exists between maintaining sentiments of national solidarity and the 'translation' of a nation's population into narrow, legible categories that ease governance. Of course, such a "constriction of vision" may not be entirely utilitarian in purpose but expressly discriminatory towards marginalized or stigmatized groups—a willful blindness of "undesirables." Citizenship can be narrowed or widened depending on who is desired to be within the field of vision.

Authority over movement cannot, in some sense, be extricated from this context of embrace, penetration, and legibility that Scott and Torpey describe as integral elements of the successful state. So far my analysis has remained rather abstract, covering the full extent of movement's significance for statecraft over the last three hundred years. In the next section, I begin narrowing my focus, firstly by focusing on specific types of travel restrictions illustrative of attempts by states to monopolize authority over movement in Britain and Continental Europe between 1789 and 1850. This will be followed by an even narrower focus on the individual experience of Burney and Shelley.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Timothy Brennan (2003) has warned that cultural studies has not always come to terms with the "practical issues of management at stake in the making of nations"—what a nation "is capable of managing," he writes, "become[s] inexorably what must be ruled" (46). The appeal of populist ideologies of nationalism as a theoretical lens has (to some degree) obscured the extent to which issues of management, infrastructure, and bureaucracy—what Randolph Bourne distinguished as the "government" separate from the political apparatus of the state—have not

just been the predominating concern of state officials but the deciding factor in the territorial extent of nationhood. So far I've attempted to cast equal attention to the managerial, administrative, and infrastructural capacities of the state alongside the dogmatisms of belonging (be they nationalistic, ethno-cultural, or racial) that have sometimes motivated the turn towards documentary controls.

While the struggle over documentation may seem provincial or domestic and thus narrow in scope, the various contests over national passports or interior travel that defined a state's relationship with its subjects in the nineteenth century reflected the tricky relationship between bureaucratic or managerial capacity, diplomacy in post-Napoleonic Europe, and the growing issue of free movement. In particular, Europe after 1814 saw the emergence of the passport—a document that had no real cohesive design, function, or regulation up to this point—as a personal form of identification and mark of national origin.[42] The passport shifted from being merely a form of permission for travel to a document of surveillance and citizenship, although it sometimes failed at both of these functions. Passports were not guarantees to eased travel either internally or externally, and travel restrictions were not always rigorously enforced[43]—they could be circumvented with relative ease or with simple bribery. Nonetheless, Continental European governments saw the passport as an "aid in their efforts to extract obligations such as taxes and military service" (Anderson 259), even if this was merely an aspiration. The initial obstacle, however, wasn't so much the unrealizable ambition of state government but a different perennial thorn in the backside of an integrated Europe: the British.

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[42] Passports were not always individual forms of documentation. Previous iterations could be used for the travel of families and groups of people, especially for aristocrats who travelled with servants.

[43] Anderson retells the story of Pye-Smith, a British tourist who encountered a border official who was, by every appearance, illiterate (267).

There are various symbolic overtures to the passport's emergence as a document of citizenship and surveillance, but these passport reforms were not initially political and far more dependent on issues of management. The growth of tourism following the fall of Napoleon, particularly from Britain to Continental Europe, strained the existing passport system—or, rather, tourism strained the fact that the system in question was wholly inadequate for handling a trend that no European state had predicted or recognized. Continental governments wanted to treat national origin and the documents attesting to such status as a technology for identifying who among their population was obliged to be taxed and conscripted. As Torpey outlines, "such devices as identity papers, censuses, and travel certificates" were "not merely on par with conscription and taxation as elements of state-building, but were in fact essential to their successful realization and grew, over time, superordinate to them as tools of administration" (18). In other words, some European governments had the ambition of transforming the passport from a specialized document to an all-encompassing administrative tool for documenting their populations. Preventing people from "fleeing these obligations became a goal of most Continental governments in the first half of the nineteenth century" (Anderson 259)— preventative efforts that would be hindered if, firstly, tourists did not possess the proper documentation to differentiate them from citizens and, secondly, there was no system to stop persons from obtaining a foreign passport and using it to claim citizenship to another country. The problem was twofold. Firstly, tourism fostered networks of travel that disrupted state ambitions at controlling movement, which was important if Continental governments were going to successfully keep its subjects within its borders and prevent the "spread of subversive ideas" (ibid). Secondly, tourism fostered a notion of the passport as essentially a license for free travel rather than as documentary control—a notion that was wholly contrary to the passport as a

textual item for stopping subjects from skirting tax collecting or conscription. For British tourists particularly, the passport was not seen primarily as a technology of citizenship but, quite the opposite, a voluntary document to free tourists from possible encroachments on movement, or at minimum oblige minimal verification and a general attitude of hospitality from foreign authorities.

In point of fact, the idea of free travel upon which the tourist identity in part depended was almost entirely illusory. The impressions of the passport as a document to smooth transnational movement was something of a deception underwritten by a British government obstinate in the face of Continental governments demanding more identifying information to be placed on passports, including seemingly obvious details like national attribution, expiry dates, physical description, or even a signature—the British passport up until 1850 contained none of this and was not even printed in English until 1851 (Anderson 259). [44] In a somewhat ironical turn in the context of the United Kingdom's 2016 decision to withdraw from the European Union ("Brexit"), Britain expressed opposition to the very existence of the passport, in part because upper-class British subjects expected the luxury of free and unhindered travel, in part because a mercantilist approach to emigration policy had been succeeded by policies of free trade that encouraged poor British workers rendered jobless in the economic downturn of the 1810s to leave the realm. In fact, the British "sought to export their joblessness by loosening restrains on—or, indeed, positively encouraging—departures" (Torpey 83).

Despite intimations that free movement would be a politically volatile issue, reform to the British passport after 1850 was "not an overt clash of political philosophies" (Anderson 259) but

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[44] One potential reason why the British in the early nineteenth century did not see the passport as an oppressive form of documentation in comparison to their Continental counterparts was that the British passport simply lacked all the information that would make it an effective tool for surveillance.

rather a forced bureaucratic negotiation regarding issues of management that was in response to, firstly, tourism as a viable and legitimate consumer activity, and secondly to the outdatedness of Britain's passport system. Anderson points to early nineteenth century Britain as an exception to Torpey's thesis that the passport was used to monopolize the authority on the legitimate means of movement (what Torpey argues is a constitutive element of the state), although Anderson's critique potentially misses a few key points. Firstly, British passports were expensive at £2.7.6— around £190 adjusted for inflation by the time the fee was finally reduced—which meant very few members of the general public could afford one. By comparison, France issued passports for free. In fact, in 1847 alone, the French ambassador in London issued more passports *to Britons* (10,168), than the British government (785) (Anderson 264).[45] Secondly, while Britain may have not expressed interest in passport regulations, this should not be read as an indication that the British were not interested in policing movement, which it could still do through other means, such as charging prohibitive fees for passports or relying on British subjects to rely on the generosity of foreign governments to issue them travel permission. Britain was concerned enough with the internal movement of its subjects to partially repeal the Act of Settlement[46] in 1795 in the "interest of freeing hands to go where burgeoning capitalist enterprise needed them most," which restored the "physical mobility of English workers" (Torpey 81-82)—incidentally, this "freeing" of the British worker from parish serfdom likewise eased the government's capacity to coerce unemployed labourers out of the country.

In any case, despite issuing passports for most of the eighteenth century, Britain did not keep records of passport issuance until 1795 and did not require Britons to have a passport to

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[45] Britons could in fact obtain passports from several foreign countries, including Belgium, Russia, Prussia, and the Netherlands (Anderson 274).

[46] An act that had been in effect for over a century and had instituted a form of "parish serfdom" that restricted the internal movement of English subjects.

enter or leave the country or travel internally (Anderson 262). This was in profound

contradistinction to Continental governments, which already by 1814 had restrictions on both

internal and external travel and policed their populations through passports. Even though

governments wanted to prevent their subjects fleeing their obligations, a distinctly modern form

of tourism open to a wider range of social and financial classes had emerged (although still

limited), which portended new lucrative streams of income but also the need for a system for

managing the movement of persons. Balancing documentary controls with the eased movement

required for tourism necessitated some reform to the bureaucratic and managerial features of

state government, which the British only accomplished after four decades of stubborn refusal. As

Anderson elaborates:

> The British government was able to disguise the fact that it yielded to the demands of Continental
> governments because the reformed British passport identified Britons as having freedoms,
> including the right to free travel, not held by the subjects of other states. This transition fit easily
> with a notion of Britishness opposed to a despotic Continental Other already inscribed into British
> identity by the 1840s. (262)

Part of the success of passport reforms involved disguising national origin as a point of pride or

prestige rather than for surveillance, although despite intimations of democratizing travel through

tourism, passports were still a luxury only few could afford—and even those who obtained a

passport were not guaranteed unfettered movement. Passports were merely a convenience, and

some guidebooks even recommended against obtaining one.[47] That being said, for those not

conducting diplomatic duties, the appeal of passports was not necessarily sentimental or

convenient but rather (owing to the relatively low number issued by the British government

every year) a mark of status. The passport was a handy material indication of superior social

class. The passport was, in other words, a document of respectability that more or less redrew

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[47] See Louis Tronchet's *Picture of Paris; being a Complete Guide to all the Public Buildings, Places of Amusement, and Curiosities in that Metropolis*, London, 1814, v.

existing class distinctions instead of liberating the lower classes through eased cross-border movement. In fact, non-aristocratic subjects faced added suspicion as the passport became a valuable and even necessary possession to indicate national affiliation, regardless of travel.

The circumstances surrounding the unequal development of the passport between Britain and the Continental governments made travel restrictions, document verification, or custom checks a novel and provocative experience for British subjects unfamiliar with or unexpecting of having their movements policed, which goes some ways towards explaining why both Burney and Shelley wrote of their encounters with travel regulations, and why unfettered movement emerges as a politized and polarizing exploit in their respective novels. Passports were harbingers of a new political reality for travel that, despite the inconvenience they caused, helped upper-class white Europeans to legitimate their arrivals and departures in a time of increased documentary controls, while criminalizing or impeding the free movements of lower-class and non-white persons. Romantic notions of adventuring and wandering would be somewhat displaced by the barriers erected by passport laws that required government personnel to interpolate travellers, regardless of presumptions or expectations of innocence or good intentions, but these restrictions were easily overcome for the well-off and well-connected. Despite travel remaining a limited social activity of those who had the leisure and the means to do so, tourism lead to a literary industry dedicated to guidebooks, travel accounts, and the development of a "tourist identity" that was auxiliary to national affiliation—an image of the "harmless tourist traveler" which still remains an enduring form of identity and which uses the passport as a symbol of legitimate movement (Anderson 260-1). Those unable or unwilling to travel could live the new tourist lifestyle vicariously through multiple accounts attesting of adventure. Shelley, for example, published two travelogues, *History of a Six Weeks Tour* (1817)

and *Rambles in Germany and Italy* (1844) (her last published work in her lifetime) that, while

seemingly simple narratives of travel, are documents that attest to Shelley's political views of

Europe and her grievances with documentary controls. Burney's journals and letters, while not

formerly published as travelogues, similarly recount episodes of travel that find thematic and

narrative harmony with the genre of travelogue.

In moving onto Burney and Shelley, these developments in the passport are part of the

same discursive framework that both authors were working within, namely in the attempt to

configure an identity defined by its capacity for movement in specific types of spaces.

Section C
The Creature as Slave and Refugee: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Travelogues

Frankenstein has received an abundance of critical scrutiny, and its secure positioning in popular

culture and postsecondary curriculum assures the novel will continue to underwrite a substantial

industry of criticism. More analysis of *Frankenstein* may seem unnecessary, but my argument

relies in part on its emergence as an enduring cultural item, especially in the nineteenth century.

While I will be arguing specifically that the creature just *is* a refugee—and that the politics of the

novel revolve around a conflicting narrative involving both fears of the racialized immigrant and

empathy for the displaced (the creature is expressly a sympathetic figure who readers are invited

to pity)—*Frankenstein* comprises a harrowing duality in terms of its novelization of racial

difference, which threatens to destabilize any critique that claims to offer a definitive reading of

the work. Navigating these intricacies, Elizabeth Young characterizes *Frankenstein* as opposed

to the "racist discourse from which it is drawn" and critical of "imperialist hierarchy" (29) while

nonetheless offering an uneven treatment of the marginalized and displaced. Even though

Shelley was an abolitionist, the antislavery movement trafficked in imagery and rhetoric that depicted Black persons as dependent and pitiable figures in need of white philanthropy. *Frankenstein* is a malleable work and its early reception reflects how the creature may serve multiple purposes: while pitiable and isolated, the creature "incarnates white fears about black power" and racial mixture (Young 27).

The political valences of the creature are multiple and the novel can be read as an allegory of any number of registers be it race, class, imperialism, capitalism, or revolution—all of which conjoin in or contribute to a rhetoric for citizenship. *Frankenstein* is seminal in giving form and content to a citizenship rhetoric that is legible in both Britain and the United States, and which is deeply cognizant of alterity (specifically a racialized alterity). In coalescing an otherwise disparate and pliable concept (i.e.: monstrosity) into a legible family of vocabulary and imagery, Shelley ends up smuggling a politics of the refugee and citizenship into popular culture. I argue that the novel in combining these registers into the elastic concept of monstrosity contributed to the transmuting of late eighteenth century racial discourse surrounding the slave into the xenophobic discourse of the racialized migrant.

These thematic concerns are not entirely surprising when read in light of Shelley's problems with travel documentation immediately prior to beginning *Frankenstein*. Prior to rendezvousing with Lord Byron in Geneva in 1816, where she would get the idea for the novel, Shelley had faced travel restrictions as a result of insufficient documentation at the French-Swiss border, which she recounts in *History of Six Weeks Tour*. Read in light of this experience, *Frankenstein* fantasizes a level of unencumbered cross-border movement that was slowly vanishing in the age of the passport, while also exploring how perceptions of transgressivity were intimately tied to the capacity or incapacity for movement. Critiques of her works have

already forged links between Shelley's biography and her novel in terms of birth and maternity, and similar connections can be surmised between *Frankenstein*'s depiction of cross-border movement and Shelley's extensive European tours. While perhaps issues of movement and travel were not at the forefront of Shelley's thinking when she began writing, especially in comparison to issues of progeny, they are nonetheless explicit features of *Frankenstein*'s narrative trajectory that deserve analysis. In depicting cross-border movement, Shelley contributes, either consciously or unconsciously, to the ongoing discursive contest over citizenship, national origins, and the traveller's identity.

In a letter she includes in *History of a Six Weeks Tour* dated May 17, 1816 at the Hôtel de Secheron in Geneva, Shelley and Percy entered Paris on May 8 and were subsequently "detained two days for the purposes of obtaining the various signatures necessary to our passports" (85). They had "no letters of introduction, or any friend in that city" and were forced to find lodgings while their papers were sorted (ibid). Shelley had entered Paris without issue two years earlier when she and Percy, along with her stepsister Claire Clairmont, had conducted a similar journey from London to Switzerland (via Dover and Calais) without any mention of border enforcement or travel restriction. She assessed herself as "not a good traveller" (1-2) because of her trouble stomaching the choppy seas of the cross-channel voyage and the spitefully hot weather of the summer of 1814. She had lodged successfully in Paris and then continued on towards eastern France apparently without any requirement to show documentation. Instead, on "passing the French barrier" the "surprising difference […] between the opposite nations that inhabit either side" that Shelley considers worth mentioning is that Switzerland is noticeably cleaner (40)—a paradigmatic example of the anthropological gaze that tended to define her travelogues. For example, earlier in the work, Shelley recounts entering the village of Échemines in eastern

France, the inhabitants of which she calls "squalid with dirt" and "disgusting and brutal" in

countenance; the village "seemed entirely detached from the rest of the world, and ignorant of all

that was passing in it" (24). Interestingly, Shelley writes that the "use of passports may easily

account for this"—an assumption that frames the passport as an impediment to travel and which

frames the use of the passport as the mark of an inferior nation or political order.

In 1816, however, circumstances had changed considerably, with Shelley laying blame

on the "escape of Lavalette" (85) for the increased policing. Lavalette was a former high-ranking

general and minister in Napoleon's regime who was arrested during the Bourbon Revolution and

sentenced to death, only to escape from prison with the help of his wife and forged passports

supplied by the British. Incidents like these "reinforced Louis XVIII's fears regarding the

instability of his regime and led him to more vigorously enforce passport controls" (Anderson

266). Her temporary detention in Paris led Shelley to meditate on the political implications of

increased documentary surveillance:

> The manners of the French are interesting, although less attractive, at least to Englishmen, than before
> the last invasion of the Allies: the discontent and sullenness of their minds perpetually betrays itself.
> Nor is it wonderful that they should regard the subjects of a government which fills their country with
> hostile garrisons, and sustains a detested dynasty on the throne, with an acrimony and indignation of
> which that government alone is the proper object. This feeling is honourable to the French, and
> encouraging to all those of every nation in Europe who have a fellow feeling with the oppressed, and
> who cherish an unconquerable hope that the cause of liberty must at length prevail. (86-87)

Shelley expresses evident opposition to the documentary controls imposed by the restored

French monarchy that she frames as an encroachment on liberty. The sour attitude of the French

was not just understandable but laudable when directed towards their government, which gave

her some hope that the "cause of liberty" would overcome the loss of freedom imposed by the

passport laws. Implicit in Shelley's opposition to what she frames as part of a larger initiative

against liberty by the government of Louis XVIII was a freedom to travel, or at minimum the

freedom to travel with as few political obstacles as possible. Shelley would begin writing

Frankenstein just a month later on either June 16 or 17, 1816, and mentions the manuscript for

the first time in a journal entry dated July 24 ("We arrived wet to the skin – I read nouvelle

Nouvelles and write my story – [Percy] writes part of letter").

These were not the end of Shelley's passport woes. After quitting Paris, they made it to

the village of Les Rousses on the Swiss border. From Les Rousses there were two routes to

Geneva, one via "Nion" (now spelled Nyon, formerly an independent village and now a suburb

of Geneva) and the other via Gex: the former involved immediately crossing into Switzerland

towards Lake Geneva and was preferred by the Shelley's due to more favourable conditions,

while the latter required a more treacherous route and would not involve crossing the Swiss

border until closer to Geneva. Shelley and Percy's passport, however, "was for Gex, and we

were told that we could not change its destination" but luckily for them the border regulations,

despite their severity, could be "softened by bribery" (92) and they were able to continue on their

preferred route. A similar incident would repeat for Shelley three decades later in August 1842

during travels with her son and some of his friends, which she documents in *Rambles*:

> Midway on our voyage, we came to the Austrian frontier. The Austrian Government has not
> joined the league which unites the rest of Germany, and has put an end to the annoyance a
> traveller suffered, passing in one day the frontiers of several States, and stopped, and his luggage
> examined at each. However, though the Austrian preserves his right to annoy, he amiably
> abstained. I had given my passport to my maid, but was not even obliged to get out of the boat to
> shew myself, the explanation given by my companions being received even with deference. A
> custom-house officer stepped into the boat: eight gute-groschen [a piece of money similar in
> value to a shilling] caused him at once to exchange an appearance of extreme official severity to
> the excess of considerate courtesy. We were detained but a few minutes, and found ourselves
> admitted in the much-feared Austria with less trouble than we ever before passed a frontier. (II.X)

Restrictive passport laws were again overcome through bribery, revealing the degree to which

the ambitions of Continental governments to police movement were in fact malleable barriers for

those who could afford it. Shelley nonetheless excoriates the Austrian government for the

"annoyance" that travellers suffer from being stopped and examined, especially since the law's

severity did not match the ease with which it could be overcome (Shelley's payment to the Austrian officer amounted to £3 adjusted for inflation). Shelley's frustration with passport laws would be rekindled just a month later in September 1842 as they entered Italy:

> A sad disaster happened on our arrival at Verona. We had each our passport, and the whole was consigned to the pocket-book of one of the party; and when they were asked for at the gates of Verona, the pocket-book was not to be found. Except our passports, and Coutts' lettre d'indication, it contained no papers of importance; but still, after all the annoyance the Austrians give about passports, it was rather appalling. Nothing could be done. It was remembered that when bathing, the pocket-book was safe; it must have been lost since. We were allowed to go on to the inn, and time would shew the result. (III.VI)

Having lost their passports (something Shelley did often), they are forced to stay at a local inn until their papers can be sorted. However, Shelley captures that their detention in Verona is not merely a minor inconvenience but an emotional strain that sours their time and disrupts the very intention of the journey, which is to enjoy Europe. She continues:

> We were promised a paper that would give us free course to Venice — for our Consul was at that city — and we were to be transferred to him, and meanwhile, our loss was made known in the country about. But, though the paper was promised, one or another of my friends was employed the whole morning in getting it properly signed. These delays were vexatious, more from the uncertainty that hung about the whole transaction, which kept us in attendance and perplexity. There was no help. We rambled to the garden… (ibid)

While they eventually did receive their necessary papers for moving onto Venice, the experience was vexatious because it imposed an undue ambiguity as to when they would be able to travel again, forced to wander around the vicinity of their lodgings. Since they seemingly had no ill intentions, the travel restrictions were an inappropriate constraint on innocent travellers. Shelley's palpable frustration reflects a deeper political if not ideological conflict between the underlying managerial ambitions of state government and prevailing visions of travel and affiliation among the well-off.

Policing movement—not just across borders but also internally between villages— brushed up against what Chloe Chard distinguishes as Romantic and anti-Romantic ideals of travel or wandering. While both participate in a type of social practice devoted to "personal

adventure" (11), only the Romantic involves "the crossing of various kinds of borderlines, whether physical (i.e.: geographical) or mental (i.e.: symbolic), the effects of which may involve a sense of threat or destabilisation" whereas the anti-Romantic is equivalent to the tourist that avoids all the "hostile or otherwise disturbing elements of foreign experience" (Ożarska 107). Tourism is merely passive consumption and idleness, while travelling is decisively more active and personally destabilizing. Passports, as forms of travel regulation, confuse this distinction by attempting to funnel all forms of travel along legitimated routes, reducing the possibility of adventure where the full depth of experience in a foreign land can be encountered.[48] Passports likewise impose or reveal arbitrary borders that offer no self-discovery if crossed, unlike the geographic or symbolic borders that force the Romantic traveller to confront the unstable essence of adventure. For example, Magdalena Ożarska points out that the phrase "beyond the alps" used by Shelley in *Rambles* connotates an "obligatory borderline which must be passed in any Grand Tour" (112). The phrase is not merely descriptive but a reflection of a profound existential threshold. The danger such a crossing portends only adds to the profundity of the experience. In their reading of *Rambles,* Ożarska provocatively considers Shelley as a tourist, as the anti-Romantic traveller seeking gratification and recreation—such an observation would not be misplaced for the time and would frame Shelley as signalling the close or waning of the Romantic period. Shelley, Ożarska argues, "hints at her readiness to assume the guise of a tourist instead of a traveller, waiting '*to be* amused' – the use of the passive emphasising a correspondingly passive attitude" (109). Ożarska points to several passages where the intention of Shelley's Grand Tour seems less of an adventure and more of a gentle wandering in search of

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[48] This isn't to suggest that travelling in the Romantic sense has been entirely eliminated since the introduction of the modern passport, but rather that the ambition of the passport has been to create and foster one type of traveller that follows legitimated trajectories.

good feelings. Shelley waits to be shown her way on the map and expresses alarm at inclement weather. The obstacles that naturally accrue on any extensive journey are not contextualized by Shelley as intriguing moments of challenge from which the traveller may learn or find renewed confidence but a distraction from her search for positive sentiments.

In a sense, however, Shelley had already admitted to being a tourist decades before the notion of tourist would find broader recognition, writing in *History of a Six Weeks Tour* that she was "not a good traveller" (1-2) because of her trouble with bad weather. Read in light of Chard's distinction and Ożarska's assessment, Shelley admits at not being a good *Romantic* traveller—not fitting snuggly within the guise of that identity—owing to her resistance to suffering through the unstable and uncomfortable conditions of travel. Shelley appears to call back to this experience in *Rambles,* writing that "[s]everal years before I had been a bad traveller" (I.1). Indeed, the routes she takes in the 1840s are familiar: "Years had elapsed since I had passed down this river", "Memory had painted the Rhine as a scene of enchantment" (I.2), "I remembered the time when it was more natural to me to speak to common people in that language than my own" (1, 56). Even if Shelley is naturally "not a good traveller," to what degree can she avoid being a tourist in the 1840s if the routes and the nature of the Grand Tour are for her an inextricably familiar experience? What border or threshold has she not already passed that could provoke newness? The familiar disrupts the traveller seeking the destabilizing effects of the Romantic sojourn, and as such, it may not be fair to impose a Romantic/anti-Romantic distinction on Shelley's explicit re-experience of an identical route—a journey that Shelley did not intend to be Romantic but a confrontation with the past. If anything, Shelley portends the end of Romantic notions of travelling so long as passport laws become a regular

feature of cross-border movement. More significantly, Shelley configures a tourist identity or proto-tourist identity before its formal recognition in Europe.

i.   The Creature as Refugee

Turning now to *Frankenstein*, both Victor and the creature anchor different poles of social inclusiveness and interact in a political geography where divisions of wealth and labour deny the possibility of progression for those of the lower classes. The creature may be science fiction but Shelley has burdened him with familiar conditions of statelessness and poverty, and he describes a fraught contest with political disenfranchisement, notably rooted in the fact he does not (and in some sense cannot) own property (135). Irrespective of either Victor's or the creature's personal feelings of solitude, the civic and social implications of the creature's alienation are extensive when read in the context of either the burgeoning intellectual theories on race or the French Revolution, the closing years of which transpire in the novel's background. The revolution and the 1789 *Déclaration* had elevated the elimination of documentary controls to the forefront of political thought, although within France at least the practicality of these initiatives were hindered by unforeseen consequences of the collapse of the *ancien regime*. In brief, with the end of feudalism and the remaking of French provinces into new administrative *département*—a move intended to foster national integration but which also sought to eliminate regional customs that impeded a centralized bureaucracy—the frontier regions created to squash the local particularism of the *ancien regime* gave way to the re-introduction of localized passport controls precisely because of their geographical location on the borders of the new nation-state, where the threat of *étranger* (foreigners) was heightened, even if the national inside faced no such tension. With the emphasis on a national citizenry, to be "foreign" or a "foreigner" migrated from its previously medieval connotation concerning subjects from the next region or province to the

now more familiar meaning of non-national, although even within France additional conditions for foreignness were actively floated. *Abbé* Sieyès remarked in his 1789 pamphlet that members of the *tiers-état* were "assuredly foreign to the nation because of its do-nothing idleness" (Torpey 34).

The notion that the peasantry or the lower classes could constitute foreignness, at least symbolically, reflects poorly for the creature's non-propertied status. Already bereft of national or political affiliation, he is additionally wanting of the means for economic self-sufficiency or class solidarity that could constitute membership in the absence of full or partial citizenship. His physical deformity is but one obstacle, and arguably not even of chief concern when compared to the problem of his admission to a community. For all of Victor's ramblings of the creature as a wretch and a daemon whose supernatural strength and agility render him an unrivalled threat to humanity, the creature finds striking similarity with refugees, émigrés, and exiles—in other words, the least powerful figures with the least amount of social or civic capital.

In the context of transnational movement, *Frankenstein* is conspicuously absent of border enforcement or customs officials, perhaps because neither Victor nor the creature are apparently troubled by borders. The creature's movements across supposedly enduring and durable European state demarcations makes the divisions between countries seem pathetically provincial, especially for a figure that is so socially and civically lowly—removed of his physical prowess, the creature typifies a travelling vagabond or brigand (a plunderer or highwayman).[49] By comparison, Victor conducts identical transnational and transcontinental movements via legitimate channels and between recognized social circles—save for his irregular arrival on the Irish shore, an act that is greeted by the local town population as suspicious. Victor's arrival in

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[49] A figure and lifestyle of particular concern to late eighteenth century France, to the extent that passport controls and restrictions on movement were in part passed in 1792 by the Legislative Assembly to combat brigandage.

Ireland is in fact one of the few moments where his movements do not arise from his own volition. Intending to sail to Perth, Scotland to rendezvous with his friend Henry Clerval, a violent storm drives his boat away from the island of Britain and towards the Irish shore, although having admitted that he was "little acquainted with the geography of this part of the world" (179) he is initially under the impression that he is still in England or Scotland. At first joyous at the sight of a "small neat town" and a return to "the neighbourhood of civilized man," Victor encounters townspeople that speak English and in turn assumes his boat has been safely steered back towards Great Britain (180). Upon receiving a gruff response, however, Victor's attitude changes drastically:

> I was exceedingly surprised on receiving so rude an answer from a stranger; and I was also disconcerted on perceiving the frowning and angry countenances of his companions. "Why do you answer me so roughly?" I replied: "surely it is not the custom of Englishmen to receive strangers so inhospitably."
> "I do not know," said the man, "what the custom of the English may be; but it is the custom of the Irish to hate villains." (18)

Victor's expectations around the English are suddenly subverted by the presence of an English-speaking Irish crowd whose inhospitality constitutes a change of custom. Victor, upon being pressed by the crowd, asks "Why am I to give an account of myself? Is not this a free country?", apparently still under the impression he is in England or Scotland and that his status as an upper-class Genevan affords him considerable deference. Fred V. Randel suggests that this exchange between Victor and the Irish "posits a new sense of culture clash; previous transitions from Bavaria to Geneva to Britain lacked this sharply contrastive rhetoric" (482). Whereas Victor had seamlessly conducted intra-continental migration without any abrasive encounters with locals, in Ireland he emerges as a potential foreign terrorist and at minimum a conspicuous stranger whose arrival could not come at a worse time. As Victor soon learns, the creature has murdered his closest friend, Henry Clerval, whose corpse washed up on the Irish shore just prior to Victor's

landing. This brutal act of murder had been invariably motivated by Victor's own violent destruction back in Scotland of a second creature, a bride for the creature, who he had dismembered and casted into the sea.

Randel suggests these two acts of violence are "Mary Shelley's representation of the bloody Irish rebellion of May to September 1798" (482)—a reading that is buttressed by the two possible geographic locations of Victor's Irish landing, both of which are historically significant to the rebellion. The first of which, Ulster, "points to the role of the United Irishmen in preparing Ireland for revolution" and who "distributed selected writings by such authors as Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Constantin-Francois de Chasseboeuf, comte de Volney, Godwin, and Thomas Paine to a wide Irish readership" (Randel 483). Victor happens to stumble upon an essential nexus for the distribution of revolutionary literature and, by implication, an ideology of antityrannism and Enlightenment radicalism. Randel suggests that Victor, in recoiling at the prospect of the Irish materializing as a coordinated and angry mob, "resembles the European intellectuals who flirted with or actively promoted radical ideas at home, but were aghast when overseas colonies chose to apply Enlightenment notions of human rights to their own condition," a situation that mirrors the French revolutionary leaders who "recoiled against the revolutionary aspirations of black slaves in Haiti" (ibid). The alternative location, the Killala region of Mayo, was just as significant and was, as Randel points out, the spot where "French forces landed in 1798 to give military support to the Irish rebellion" (483), which was ultimately defeated.

In either case, the violence that Victor commits to ensure the creature remains isolated begets the murder of Clerval in a sequence that perfectly encapsulates the crisis Victor has created for himself, his family, and potentially all of Europe. At the same time, Shelley pairs these coded references to revolution and radicalism in Ireland with a subversion of prevailing

Irish stereotypes. The Irish are, after all, justified in treating Victor suspiciously, and the "unambiguously Irish" (Randel 485) town magistrate, Mr. Kirwin, is kind and understanding and helps resolve the tension between Victor and the townspeople. In contradistinction to the violent revulsions that the creature experiences that only further enrages him, Kirwin extends diplomacy to Victor, even though his peculiar arrival clearly marks him as a suspect in the murder. As both Lee Sterrenburg and Randel point out, Shelley's early support for radicalism was tempered by distaste for revolutionary violence. She in turn sought to reform her father's utopianism in writing *Frankenstein* by appropriating "several literary conventions from the conservative opposition" (143) and to potentially use her novel to subvert "all ideology" itself (Sterrenburg 144). Shelley's politics are therefore reflected in the peaceable resolution to Victor's confrontation with the Irish, which is crucially brokered by Kirwin's caring attitude and commitment to discourse. Yet Shelley's more nuanced figurations of the Irish contrasts with "Conservative Victorian Englishmen" who "regularly turned the monster of *Frankenstein* into a patronizing figure of Ireland," even though the creature as originally conceived was invested with sympathetic potential and did not include "Irishness in his hybrid composition" (Randel 483). Sterrenburg, in summarizing nineteenth-century readings of the creature as Irish, notes how these figurations derived from a broader ideological opposition to radicalism that saw "reforming or seditious ideas" as transforming the "new classes into political monsters" (168). The creature's education in radical principles positions him as a prime representation of the dangers and inherent violence of revolutionary ideals were they to be acquired by the lower classes and most especially the Irish, even though this reception was not how Shelley coded her work.

On the one hand, *Frankenstein* was recurringly "evoked during subsequent periods of crisis" (Sterrenburg 166) as it effectively captured for some readers the distress of instability

instigated by the demands of the disenfranchised for political and social inclusion. On the other hand, and in line with Equiano, Shelley appears to float the idea that violence can function as a means of emancipation through a forceful, institutional restructuring before undermining its possibility, suggesting instead that peaceable strategies are preferrable to wholesale radical change that might lead to violence. Victor's arrival to Ireland embodies this disposition. His emergence on the shore galvanizes a crisis already in progress—which he had a hand in igniting—but peace is brokered discursively, as Victor is given the chance to explain himself. The possibility of mob violence is avoided.

Ireland itself appears as a peculiar and liminal space. Victor's arrival signals his first experience of estrangement and isolation that is expressly political rather than psychological, as his expectation over cultural customs reveals himself as non-belonging. Otherwise, Victor is a distinctly non-suspicious actor whose travels reflect privilege rather than instability or persecution. When juxtaposed to one another, the multiple acts of movement that both Victor and the creature conduct forges a stark contrast. Victor's capacity to travel mostly unmolested between destinations and to live in other countries without consternation is refracted by the creature's quick travel over identical mileage and territory, which is often motivated by hostility (or potential hostility) from local villagers and must therefore be conducted clandestinely. Movements within *Frankenstein* are, however, not monolithic. Even though Victor and the creature lead one another through various journeys across Europe and later the Artic, Victor's movements are indicative of an aristocratic gentlemen whose secure citizenship status affords him access to unrestricted travel, to the extent that Victor can conduct tourism prior to its more formal and popular emergence in Europe post-1815, while the creature is essentially born stateless. Certainly the prestige of Victor's family explains why he could so easily immigrate to

Bavaria to attend university, although tellingly his physical movement away from the secluded domestic space of the Frankenstein family portended an "omen" (71) of his misfortune, namely his mother passing away. Indeed, Victor's continual rejection of or failure to remain in a domestic space or partnership is almost always followed by some adversity. In Volume II, after Justine has been wrongfully convicted for the death of William, the family retires to a country house in Belrive, a suburb of Geneva beyond the city walls that attests to the family's wealth and social standing. Elizabeth, Victor's bride-to-be, remarks that they "surely shall be happy" so long as they remain "quiet in our native country, and not mingling in the world" (114)—a seeming counter to Victor's aspiration for wandering. While potentially a rejection of an Enlightenment worldliness or cosmopolitanism, Elizabeth is also merely identifying that Victor's transience is the root of his problems and that some time spent in the comforting isolation of the domestic sphere may resolve his anxiety.

Elizabeth is not anti-travel, nor is she attempting to forge the stereotypical domestic image of a homely wife restraining her aspirational husband. Victor upon his father's invitation takes Elizabeth on a scenic tour to the Chamounix valley near where the modern borders of Switzerland, France, and Italy meet. Her remark about "not mingling in the world" can instead be read as coded assessment of her own captivity. Later in Volume III as Victor is preparing to leave Continental Europe, a telling but brief admission from him helps deepen Elizabeth both as a character and her seeming commitment to domestic living:

> It was in the latter end of August that I departed, to pass two years of exile. Elizabeth approved of the reasons of my departure, and only regretted that she had not the same opportunities of enlarging her experience, and cultivating her understanding. She wept, however, as she bade me farewell, and entreated me to return happy and tranquil. (164)

Elizabeth is trapped in a constraining feminine role in which her own aspirations for education and independent travel are denied, despite her membership in a prominent European family.

Victor, obsessed and self-absorbed, cannot see or acknowledge the unrivaled freedom of movement he enjoys and thinks nothing of the fact that his future wife expresses a desire for travel, as evidenced by how little attention he pays her regret. Elizabeth's brief mention in the above passage refers to the unequal allocation of permission to travel to men of Victor's status. Moments after revealing Elizabeth's wish for worldly experience, he suggests that he's resolved to become a "free man" by voluntarily travelling abroad in order to fulfill a promise he made to the creature he created. Rather than being truly an "exile," as he calls it, he is conducting the sort of transnational movement that both his future wife and the majority of France cannot accomplish without potentially running afoul of the authorities. Though Elizabeth appears to lack dimensionality—she seems more like place-setting for Victor than an autonomous person—her character is textured by identical restrictions on feminine independence as Juliet from *The Wanderer,* although unlike Juliet, Elizabeth has no discernable talent that may rescue her from a life of domestic servitude. Victor's near constant protestations about being a slave and a captive to his creation acquires a hollow resonance when compared to Elizabeth, whose captivity is woven into the fabric of European society at large, although arguably not as worse as that faced by women of lower social standing; she is comparatively privileged. Nonetheless, her actions and movements are coerced at nearly every juncture: her marriage to Victor, her living situation, her travel.

Echoes of Shelley's own travel experience resonate here. Both of the European tours Shelley recounts in *History of a Six Weeks Tours* and *Rambles* are accomplished in the company of men—coincidently enough both of whom were named Percy; her husband Percy for the former and her son, also named Percy, for the latter.[50] Not to be lost then in this discussion of

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[50] In fact, Mary Shelley traverses some identical routes with her son as she did with her husband, which causes some painful memories to resurface.

Shelley's travels is the fact that she never travelled alone, as gendered conventions would have obliged her to have a male companion. The travels she mentions, far from being a solitary act of wandering, are thus a co-productive process bounded by the social impossibility of a lonely female traveller.

This combination of both transnational movement and its striation by gender also inaugurates *Frankenstein* in the form of Robert Walton's letters to his sister—the masculine-coded adventure landscape from which the male traveller writes back to the national, domestic interior. Initially writing to his sister somewhere in England from "St. Petersburgh" and "Archangel," both in modern-day Russia, Walton's letters soon abandon indications of location once at sea and instead offer only a date, casting the explorer into an unmapped abyss. Walton expresses a view of travel that despite his seeming scientific indifference aligns with colonial or imperialist ideologies of expansion. He writes that he shall "tread a land never before imprinted by the foot of man" (52) and find passage between countries previously undertaken in months, although once *en route* he expresses some sadness at not knowing when he will see his "native land" again (57). It is not insignificant that Walton and Victor encounter one another on a ship in an area where both are technically foreign, and more or less set adrift in territory unfamiliar to Europeans. The unmoored location in which readers are introduced to Victor will be a recurring image and metaphor. In Volume II, after Justine has been unjustly convicted for murdering William, Victor says he occasionally paddles a small rowboat by himself out into the middle of Lake Geneva and lets the current take him whichever way. In Volume III, as previously explored, rough seas force Victor's boat away from the coast of Scotland, where he had promised to craft a second creature, to an Irish fishing village that ultimately sees him accosted by the townspeople on suspicions of murder.

Walton's description of meeting Victor for the first time is in turn laden with the rhetoric of belonging and alterity:

> He was not, as the other traveller seemed to be [i.e.: the creature], a savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island, but an European. When I appeared on deck, the master said, "Here is our Captain, and he will not allow you to perish on the open sea."
> On perceiving me, the stranger addressed me in English, although with a foreign accent. "Before I come on board your vessel," said he, will you have the kindness to inform me whither you are bound?" (58-59)

Victor is introduced as both European and foreign (in relation to native English-speakers) and his first recorded words are an enquiry about destination rather than rescue. He is delighted to learn that instead of heading to shore, Walton leads a "voyage of discovery" towards the thing he is pursuing. Victor remains nameless in Walton's letters, being referred to as a "stranger" and more affectionally as a "divine wanderer" (62)—a wanderer being, as discussed with Burney, a popular romantic ideal, and a moniker Victor will appropriate for himself as he explores Mont Blanc. When Victor does take over the narration, he begins by assuring the reader that he belongs: "I am by birth a Genevese; and my family is one of the most distinguished of that republic" (64). While this is a seemingly innocent (although slightly self-aggrandizing) declaration to make, Geneva—a quasi-city-state at the time whose history was intertwined with the Holy Roman Empire, the Duchy of Savoy, and the French Empire—was less a republic and more an aristocracy deeply invested in trade and banking, providing both a "Rome for Protestants" (Whatmore 3) and a key nexus for the flow of European capital. Geneva was home to a substantial underclass composed of those not fortunate enough to be citizens or bourgeoisie, even if born in Geneva. Victor's fawning over his heritage obscures his family's implied participation in an oligarchic government that in 1782 had successfully quashed an attempted revolution for democratic reforms. The Frankenstein's relative affluence and prestige will acquire added significance when the creature eventually complains of his low social positioning

and lack of property. Victor ends up manufacturing a figure he openly rejects and alienates in a way that mirrors the oppression of the poverty-stricken lower classes under feudalism or the production of racialized bondpersons in a system of slavery and captivity. In sum, Victor manufactures the modern refugee, and by rebelling and ultimately displacing his master, the creature re-enacts upper-class fears of peasant and slave revolt.

Far from his movements being ancillary, the horror of the creature derives precisely from his ability to defy both physical and political limitations on human movement and to subsequently cross borders undetected. Indeed, the fact that these movements are accomplished unseen by Victor (and by extension the reader) adds to the creature's image as a presence that flouts most humanly restraints. The still burgeoning bureaucratic apparatus for controlling movement in Europe is completely ineffectual in identifying, surveilling, and hindering the creature's travel, which politically at least are comparable to the refugee or migrant fleeing the violence of a hostile majority. Unlike the refugee, however, the creature may theoretically arise in any European locale without any authority capable of slowing or stopping him. He is a distinctly international menace. The creature even says at one point to Victor that "every country must be equally horrible" (151), erasing any meaningful distinctions between regions—indeed, erasing any relevance that history has for contextualizing particular conflicts among peoples apart from those that have engendered severe, miserable inequality.

It's perhaps no coincidence that the creature's predicament finds him in precisely the same location as the elder De Lacey and his family, who are themselves French exiles living in asylum in Germany. The creature is at first admiring of the "cottagers" and their seeming domestic bliss before realizing the distressing level of poverty the family is suffering. As Felix instructs his partner Safie, an Arab Christian from Turkey, through language lessons and

Western history, the creature eavesdrops and comes to learn of the "strange system of human society" and in particular, the "division of property, of immense wealth and squalid poverty; of rank, descent, and noble blood" (135), which is responsible for his and the De Lacey family's misery. Unknown to the creature, Victor is a beneficiary of this inequality that in turn allows him to travel, attend university, and devout time towards the scientific experiment that consequently produced him. Persons without property, wealth, or nobility must be a "vagabond and a slave" (ibid) he assesses—an explicit acknowledgment of his hybridity, which is a hybridity of alterity shared between two contrasting forms of displacement, the slave being in perpetual captivity whereas the vagabond is a form of wandering.

It's worth it to pause on the circumstances surrounding the De Lacey family since at the crux of their asylum in Germany was the use of passports to illegally convey foreigners out of France. Formerly an affluent French family residing in Paris, the De Laceys were forced into exile under convoluted circumstances. The father of Safie, a Turkish merchant, came to Paris from Constantinople but due to his non-Christian religion and wealth is imprisoned unjustly after he became "obnoxious to the government" (137) of France. The merchant's move into France is not unusual; mercantilism had led foreign merchants to enjoy greater privileges concerning emigration than native-born subjects owing to the perceived need of capital to flow freely across borders and between regions. Much like the trial of Justine, the merchant suffers an obvious miscarriage of justice owing to his "religion and wealth" that results in a guilty verdict and a death sentence. Felix, present at the trial, is struck with "horror and indignation" (138) and helps the father to escape prison. Initially resolving to take no reward for his actions, Felix becomes enraptured by the merchant's daughter Safie who in turn becomes intrigued at the "prospect of

marrying a Christian" and "remaining in a country where women were allowed to take a rank in society" (139). Felix puts together a plot:

> The day for the execution of the Turk was fixed; but, on the night previous to it, he had quitted prison, and before morning was distant many leagues from Paris. Felix had procured passports in the name of his father, sister, and himself. He had previously communicated his plan to the former, who aided the deceit by quitting his house, under the pretence of a journey, and concealed himself, with his daughter, in an obscure part of Paris. (139)

It's important to note here that many of the cultural touchstones of the passport we know of today were essentially reversed in the context of late eighteenth century France as Felix seeks to secure passage for the Turkish merchant out of the country. In short, fierce debates in the Legislative Assembly over the reintroduction over passport controls in 1792 (having previously been largely abolished with the onset of the revolution) considered French-born citizens as far more of a threat to revolutionary achievements than the foreigner and thus the ones who needed to be restricted and surveilled, which echoes contemporary state surveillance practices that focus on internal activism and protest. As such, the passports Felix precures must involve permission not just to leave the country but to travel intra-nationally, through the interior to the border— movements that were previously restricted under the *ancien regime*. These sentiments would ultimately change over the course of the 1790s, such that foreigners would come to be perceived in what we'd consider an exemplary condition of modernity: the foreigner as inherently suspect.

Even with increased suspicion casted upon the foreigner, this did not mean eased restrictions for most French-born persons for whom travel outside France remained illegal. Felix's procurement of passports is therefore significant. The fact that he was able to secure three distinct passports suggests some sort of privilege or high rank he could instrumentalize in the form of travel documentation. Prior to 1850, "British and European passports were not individual documents per se" but "might extend to several people" (Anderson 259). Felix successfully conveys Safie and her father to Italy via Mont Cenis and Lyon using the passports that were

precured in the name of the elder De Lacey and Agatha. Eventually, however, Felix's plot is

discovered, his family is imprisoned, and he is forced to return to Paris where a lengthy trial

forces them to quit France for a "miserable asylum in the cottage in Germany" where the

creature discovers them. In other words, Shelley depicts an early example of human trafficking

in a passport system, which the creature then comes in contact with through the De Lacey's.

Indeed, the very possibility of his menacing as a result of his indignation at inequality arises

from his contact with refugees, who unknowingly introduce him to the frustrating timeline of

Western history and to the bliss of domestic life that his physical deformity denies him. As such,

the creature's contact with "foreign" elements energizes his torment of Victor.

ii. The Creature as Slave

The creature's capacity to travel indiscriminately acquires added resonance if we read

him as a racialized figure, as readers of Shelley did in the mid to late nineteenth century. Even

though the creature is occasionally considered as a different species or culture who merely has

the figure of a man, the distinction between these categories and race was often ambiguous

(Gilroy 8). H.L. Malchow details how the creature's Victorian-era migration into visual mediums

like print or stage depicted him within the guise of prejudiced fears of non-whites. Victor's

descriptions make it relatively easy to see how the creature could emerge as a source for paranoia

of fugitive slaves or racialized migrants, although Malchow argues further that Shelley at least

unconsciously "drew upon contemporary attitudes towards non-whites, in particular on fears and

hopes of the abolition of slavery in the West Indies" in her portrayal of the creature (90). Shelley

was certainly exposed to intensified attitudes around racial identity that could waver between the

pitiful figure depicted by abolitionists, the paranoid fantasies of slavery apologists, and the

pseudo-scientific anthropologies of European explorers. Regardless of intent, the creature finds striking resemblance with nineteenth century racial stereotypes. Well before we receive the creature's self-assessment in Volume II, in Volume I Victor describes him as having "yellow skin" and "straight black lips" which contrast with "teeth of pearly whiteness" (83), which evoke either a racialized figure or racial hybridity. By the time Shelley published her novel, a "popular racial discourse" had formed from the remnants of anecdotal encounters with non-whites to form a rudimentary image of Black persons "in which repulsive features, brute-like strength and size of limbs featured prominently" (Malchow 103). The resulting rhetoric of racialized difference saturated both an emerging popular culture and the intellectual class. Moreover, Shelley's parents William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft were abolitionists who voiced their opposition to slavery both publicly and privately.

Receptions of *Frankenstein* in the Victorian period certainly found the creature an appealing representation of European fears of alterity. The creature is not simply a "simulacrum of a man," as Malchow puts it, but is specifically identified as irregular, as larger, more powerful, and darker and sinister in appearance (102). In form the creature parallels the paranoid typecasts of either the Indigenous peoples of the Americas (so-called "savages") or the Black men of Western-produced literature about the Caribbean and Africa. Note, for example, that Victor's youngest brother William upon encountering the creature exclaims that "you wish to eat me" (154)—cannibalism being a common trope attached to both the Indigenous peoples of the Americas and some African tribes. Victor's first contact with his creation echoes the colonial encounter with the unnamed, non-white Other. The creature "muttered some inarticulate sounds" (84) and his appearance sends Victor into various degrees of agitation and horror, all of which typifies the chaos, the struggle with communication, and the foreshadowing of violence that

defined European contact with racialized persons. Victor searches for key aesthetic and cognitive markers to immediately dismiss the creature as wretched and beyond recovery in similar (though exaggerated) fashion to the assessments of Juliet in *The Wanderer*. Failing to align with assumed values of beauty and behaviour, the creature and Juliet are quickly casted outside the community of civilized persons in a manner reminiscent of European colonial contact with non-whites. These principles of aesthetics and rationality informing Victor's assessment of the creature and the travellers assessment of Juliet are not the whims of personal opinion but fundamental modes of intelligibility derivative of Enlightenment reasoning that ultimately fail to accurately reflect either Juliet or the creature, who turns out to be remarkably eloquent and educated.

Prior even to the creature's animation, we learn of Victor's long nights spent in graveyards acquiring cadavers to constitute the creature's frame—quite literally a living corpse. His composition from the remnants of the dead leads Marie Mulvey-Roberts to suggest the creature as emblematic of the slave in that both are civilly or legally dead, insofar as the creature is entirely bereft of civil life or legal standing. While not considered inhuman, the slave existed in a debilitating stasis as a result of being robbed of nearly all rights that allowed them to function as autonomous persons—a living death that mirrors the creature's. Indeed, the creature's form of living death is if anything overdetermined by the fact that he is composed of corpses. More than just a figure of the slave, though, Mulvey-Roberts argues that the novel's framing around sea voyages "evoke the horrors of the Middle Passage within the triangular Atlantic slave trade, slave riots, the vengeful fugitive slave and the plight of enslaved women and their offspring" (53), positioning the creature as performing the life cycle of the slave. Victor's revulsion and horror at the site of his creation is therefore a reaction to the creature's miscegenated appearance, while his pursuit of the creature is "analogous to an escaped slave

being pursued by his master" (ibid). In turn, the creature's crisis of identity as retold to Victor mirrors those that slaves must have experienced after being abducted in Africa, separated from family, and shipped to new locales that were strange and populated by unfamiliar persons. Both Mulvey-Roberts and Elizabeth Young situate *Frankenstein* within the fraught political contest over slavery that unfolded in Britain between 1807 and 1833, the time between the abolition of the slave trade and the amelioration of slavery, with both also noting how the creature's peculiar terror resonated with fears of slave revolts. These fears were differentially felt. As Mulvey-Roberts extensively explores, for Britain the threat of slave riots were somewhat distant (quite literally), effecting remote commercial interests in the Caribbean in comparison to the United States where, as Young explains, slave rebellions were perceived as direct threat to white lives. As such, even though the novel is mostly set in Continental Europe, *Frankenstein* nonetheless had transnational appeal and easily migrated to a North American context, where emphasis was put on the creature as an intimate menace to white domesticity (Young 21).

These relocations of the creature's symbolic resonance from the science fictional to the palpable contexts of slavery and white fear depended in part on the rhetorical overlap between Shelley's novel and the "vocabulary of racial rebellion" as Young puts it (23), a language which was legible on both sides of the Atlantic. *Frankenstein* could be invoked by opposing political and humanitarian interests—a work which prophesied both the unique threat of freed slaves and the antislavery demand for emancipation and humane treatment. As Young continues,

> This was a vocabulary to which David Walker [freed African American slave and author of the antislavery manifesto *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* (1829)] gave nonfictional voice but for which Mary Shelley had provided a fictional blueprint: a story about a monster whose body incarnates the political ideas of collectivity and reawakening and whose behavior signals political revolt. (23)

The creature and the language of monstrosity that he accompanied were convenient sources of meaning for contextualizing the freed Black man and former slave for white audiences in both

Britain and the United States. Even though race was not explicitly drawn by Shelley into the narrative, the "crisis over slavery prompted a heightened interest in the gothic imagery of rebellion, an imagery for which [she] had provided an organizing template" and a cohesive vocabulary (Young 25). Shelley did not originate this language but *Frankenstein* did give tangible expression to it, to the extent that prominent politicians in Britain and the United States, including Prime Minister George Canning, invoked the creature in support of their cause (in Canning's case it was to soften abolitionism in favour of a milder amelioration of slavery). Be it white fears of slave rebellion, liberal commitments to emancipation, or British debates on policy, the creature illuminated what was at stake for a significant amount of people, rendering Shelley's imagined and impossible creature into a popular culture figure of oppression and political resistance. *Frankenstein* was crucial for distributing disparate, unformed language regarding race, species, and alterity into a broadly legible and coherent citizenship rhetoric at the historical juncture of modern political belonging. As Young argues, the novel's early reception shows the "intimacy of the story with questions of national self-definition" and how it relates to specific "questions of national and racial formation in the nineteenth-century U.S. body politic" (25).

Mulvey-Roberts and Young both consider how the novel, specifically with the creature's lengthy self-narration, shares key features with the slave narrative, of which Equiano's *Narrative* was an origin point. Not to be overlooked in how the creature's depiction parallels stereotypes of racialized boogeymen, he likewise possesses agility and ease of movement that aligns with white fears of non-white émigrés taking root in Europe. These movements are both fantastical—Victor describes the creature as a "dreaded spectre" (87) that moves with "superhuman speed" (117)— but also politicized insofar as the creature both avoids detection by state authorities while traversing borders at will, and upends the legitimacy of the justice system as he successfully

frames an innocent white woman (Justine) for murder, leading to her execution. Supposedly robust institutions of government are instead powerless and inadequate in *Frankenstein* to the point of almost complete narrative absence, except for when they fail dramatically, as they do in the case of Justine (and later the De Lacey family who also experiences an unjust trial). The analyses from Mulvey-Roberts, Young, and Malchow are thus as much about the construction of an enduring racialized identity in the nineteenth century as the emergence of a white imaginary defined by the literary and cultural production of alterity. The "vocabulary of racial rebellion," as Young phrases it, is likewise a vocabulary of whiteness that overcomes previous demarcations among national populations and forges a collective bond rooted in taxonomies of race. The previously muddled and untidy meanings of citizenship and foreigner borne from revolution find cohesion in the form of racial classifications that position whites as the dominate subjectivity, and where whiteness could essentially be legislated as a condition for political enfranchisement.

 Frankenstein serves as a bridge between the rhetoric of late eighteenth century racial discourse and the emerging ethnic absolutism of Shelley's Victorian readers. The creature in turn is a bridging figure who emulates both refugee or émigré and slave, and in this way connects two significant cultural and linguistic registers grounding modern citizenship regimes. Previously disparate vocabulary regarding racial difference forged from European colonialism, participation in the slave trade, and Enlightenment anthropology is transmuted into a context of modern citizenship and national self-definition where the integrity of the nation-state as an ethnically homogenous society occupies the forefront of political thought (Gilroy, in brief reference to the painter D.W. Turner, frames it as "ethnico-political"). This amalgamation of slave and refugee in the singular persona of monstrosity is most prominent in the representation of movement. Young, Malchow, and Mulvey-Roberts all consider the creature in the figure of the slave, yet one

condition of slavery fundamentally absent from the creature's characterization is forced captivity or forced movements. His traversing of European territory conveys more strongly that of the refugee, émigré, exile, or vagabond whose movements are still technically coerced but of material difference to that of the chained bondperson forced across the Middle Passage or across the interior of the United States. This is not to dismiss the creature as slave, but rather to suggest that both figures exist simultaneously in the characterization of the creature—indeed, my argument has been that the creature's significance as a figure that bridges the racial discourses of the Napoleonic and Victorian eras is invested in his duality as both slave and refugee.

At the same, this critical reading of slavery in *Frankenstein* relies on the slave as a metaphorical figure who can easily stand in for all forms of oppression. With the creature of course, it is precisely his representation as a *freed* slave that informs his menacing characterization, yet his freed status is not borne from a sustained literal captivity for the purposes of labour exploitation. The creature is the product of a cruel medical experiment that may have symbolic resonances with slavery as itself a cruel medical experiment, but the connection is not complete. Here the creature as a truly science fictional or fantastic characterization re-emerges as his connection to literal bondpersons is tenuous with respect to both his experience and his superhuman abilities, which ensures he will never face any sort of imprisonment, asides from a coerced isolation. His virtually unrestricted level of movement is fundamentally at odds with both the chattel slave and the male companionship that Shelley, Burney, Elizabeth, and Juliet are dependent on for their means of cross-border travel, which makes their journeying always invested or configured around a male presence. Instead, the creature in many crucial respects prefigures the immigrant or refugee whose movements between jurisdictions and across borders is, firstly, coerced and configured by hostile collectives and,

secondly, a constitutive element of their identity.

CHAPTER FIVE - Fugitive Slavery and Melville's *Benito Cereno*

In the previous chapter, my readings of Frances Burney's *The Wanderer* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* had casted attention on the state's aspiration for monopolizing the authority over the legitimate means of movement via representations of transnational excursion in both novels. I concentrated on how figurations of the racial slave in both novels was transmuted into the figure of the refugee and that both of these figures are constitutive elements of modern citizenship regimes. I suggested this conceptual slippage between slave and refugee constituted a material and historical linkage between the late eighteenth century and the Victorian period, or between the rise of abolitionism and the moral panic of racialized émigrés. I concentrated on how this slippage was facilitated by a malleable vocabulary of racial rebellion and monstrosity that was legible in both Britain and the United States—a transatlantic connection helped along by the transnational appeal of *Frankenstein*. The novel was in turn received by some as voicing paranoia about fugitive slaves, especially for American audiences. In the current chapter, I now relocate my focus from Britain to the United States in order to pick up that interpretative thread I had begun (but did not finish) when I considered how Juliet from *The Wanderer* and the creature from *Frankenstein* both embodied the hybridity of refugee and fugitive slave that sourced white paranoia. The text that grounds this chapter is Herman Melville's novella *Benito Cereno*. My choice of text is informed partially from the knowledge that Melville was familiar with *Frankenstein* and potentially understood its coded racial politics. Melville does offer a more direct literary response to Shelley's novel in the form of his short story "The Bell-Tower," but *Benito Cereno* arguably constitutes a more intriguing connection with issues of citizenship, race, fugitivity, and immigration, particularly through the character of

Babo. Initial reception to Melville's novella largely ignored the turbulence of the 1850s in favour of a critique that contextualized *Benito Cereno* within the mystery and gothic traditions of Edgar Allan Poe (Weiner 2), but scholarly consensus has shifted considerably over the last three decades to now readily identify *Benito Cereno* with the political and humanitarian crisis of the U.S. Antebellum period.

Melville in a supplement to his book of poetry *Battle-Pieces* (1866) wrote that "we should remember that emancipation was accomplished not by deliberate legislation; only through agonized violence could so mighty a result be effected" (268). Susan Weiner suggests that through *Benito Cereno*, published a full decade before *Battle-Pieces*, Melville had already explored how "the law fails to find legal solutions to critical crises and instead subverts justice in the name of order" (3), thus necessitating other means for those committed to the antislavery cause. Perhaps Melville like Frederick Douglass, roused by the turbulence of the 1850s, engaged more directly with the idea that slavery's abolition was not going to be achieved peaceably through legislative comprise or jurisprudence but through physical resistance, regardless of whether this was the preferred means. Both Douglass and Melville would arguably in that case had encountered a prophetic realization of violence some years before the Civil War determined what had hitherto been suspected by both writers. *Benito Cereno* thus offers a deeper commentary than might be supposed on first readings on both the legal foundations of citizenship and the rhetorics that sheltered abolitionists and pro-slavers alike from grasping the growing spectre of violent resistance as the only effective tool of the oppressed, especially against a system whose destruction was not going to be delivered via traditional political or legal means.

My own analysis will emphasize Melville's engagement with rhetoric and translation in the context of these broader issues of Black citizenship and its representation. While the political, social, and cultural reach of *Benito Cereno* has already been extensively explored, there is still much to be said with regards to rhetoric and citizenship if we accept, as some critics do, that the story expresses elaborate metaphors between Delano, Babo, the ship, and the 1850s United States.

The plot of *Benito Cereno* is deceptively simple: set in 1799, Amasa Delano, an American captain berthed at an island in the Pacific Ocean, boards the distressed Spanish slaving vessel the *San Dominick*. During his lengthy sojourn aboard, Delano converses regularly with the ship's oddball captain, Benito Cereno, and attempts (and fails) to unravel the source of various anomalies in the ship's condition. After procuring supplies for the suffering occupants, he disembarks only to finally realize a slave revolt had taken place aboard the ship sometime prior to his boarding and that Babo, Cereno's personal servant, was the revolt's ringleader. He helps rescue Cereno and some of the other white crewmembers and suppress the slaves, who are subsequently brought to court and given capital sentences.

There is of course more to be said than just this, as evidenced by the diverse critical reception that has accompanied *Benito Cereno* since its publication, although intriguingly, as Brian Yothers (2020) points out, only recently has scholarship reached the consensus that the story is one of Melville's most evident commentaries on slavery and the slave trade. Since C.L.R. James first wrote in 1953 that *Benito Cereno*, though a masterpiece, is little more than a "propaganda story" and a sign of "Melville's decline into the shallowness of modern literature" (119), a more contemporary critical turn has argued for the threads of a sophisticated antislavery literature that run through it. James' assessment has arguably been eclipsed as scholars have

furiously mined the multiple significations that can be extracted from a story that easily allows

for a wide range of critical interpretations. As such, a reader visiting *Benito Cereno* in the

twenty-first century will suddenly find an abundant amount of critique dedicated to unravelling

the subtle ways Melville threads an antislavery message into his dense mystery narrative—a

scholarly landscape that did not exist for the reader even a few decades before. As with

Frankenstein then, the interpretative task now requires navigating not just the text itself but the

extensive reception that accompanies it. Ivy Wilson in *Specters of Democracy* (2011)

characterizes this critical response as either "decidedly […] historiographical" or focused on the

"metaliterary" aspects of the story (127). Sensing a gap, Wilson positions his own reading of

Benito Cereno as addressing the *San Dominick* in its physicality, following Paul Gilroy's

reminder that slave ships were not merely "abstract embodiments of the triangular trade" but

concrete cultural and political artifacts (17). Indeed, when we address the *San Dominick* as a

physical object we can more readily recognize it as the forefront of technology, a product of

methodical attention and refinement in techniques of brutality, torture, and terrorism, which

nonetheless failed to prevent revolt but succeeded in stranding the insurrectionists anyways,

whose lack of skill in sailing meant they remained dependent on their oppressors. In that regard,

the ship did as it was designed: render the slaves stateless and helpless. On the other hand, we

can also recognize the ship as a tangible unit that could serve as a powerful source of solidarity

in absence of shared ethnic, class, or linguistic backgrounds. The crux of the story is after all the

physical migration of Black persons de-personified as cargo and commodified as objects of

commerce whose authority to move transnationally and intra-nationally have been vacated and

appropriated by white powerbrokers. That Babo and his compatriots commandeered the

technology for their own movement may partly explain why Delano decides to side with the

Spanish in their recapture, and why Melville chose to rewrite this historical episode as a novella. The United States was a few years away from splintering over issues of Black migration that in part teetered on federal authority over regulating commerce between states when Melville wrote the story.

Given the extensive number of symbolic resonances that scholars have read into *Benito Cereno*, Wilson's study of the objects that constitute the ship and its gothic atmosphere shows how, firstly, an abundance of the critical response has focused on historical analogy, and secondly, that despite nearly a century of renewed critical scrutiny since the Melville Revival of the 1920s there is still much to be gleamed from re-readings. My own analysis, like much of the critical response to Melville's story, is fundamentally historiographic, but I also wish to complicate historiographic readings of *Benito Cereno* by addressing how Melville and the fictionalized Delano and Babo occupy two distinct political climates with regards to the Fugitive Slave Act, one of the key historical events that commentators have considered in arguing for the story's antislavery credentials. While my analysis still relies on the symbolic resonances that have already been identified by others in *Benito Cereno*, I wish to reposition them into the context of an emergent American citizenship regime buttressed by increased federal power that tracks with trends in nineteenth-century statecraft, specifically the erasure or obfuscation of local or municipal knowledge practices in favour of ever more expansive networks of measurement and political identity. In the context of *Benito Cereno*, the shift from the local to the national is evident in the attempt by slave-holding states to essentially abandon the existing constitutional order on fugitive slaves in favour of a robust exercise of federal power that would protect slavery as constitutionally guaranteed, which indirectly dislodged the previous supremacy of municipal and state actors in determining the extent of citizen-status. These developments in turn set the

U.S. on a path to civil war, where the citizenship question for Black Americans would take centre stage. Alongside this analysis, I will consider how Babo prefigures (but fails to realize) a post-citizenship bloc founded on African repatriation, which ultimately threatens white American dependence on slavery as a form of social and racial adjustment.

Section A
Plot Overview

In Melville's *Benito Cereno*, Amasa Delano, an American captain of an armed merchant vessel, *The Bachelor's Delight*, is berthed in the harbour of the island of St. Maria in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Chile. Delano is far from his home of Duxbury, Massachusetts, a place significant for its proximity to Plymouth, the landing point of the *Mayflower* in 1620 and first colony of English Puritans. The pilgrim's journey was intimately tied to visions of the New World as a religious promised land, which by the nineteenth century was being cemented in American folklore as symbols of American exceptionalism. The inclusion of Duxbury as a detail identifies several key characteristics of Delano: he is a participant in an extensive transoceanic economic network that has led him to the far corners of the Americas; he is a New Englander whose proximity to America's origins are both symbolic and geographic; and just as crucially he is a Northerner and therefore potentially an antislavery Republican. While Delano may occupy a geopolitical topography far removed from the symbolic resonances of English Puritans seeking self-rule, visions of Manifest Destiny remain palpable and extend beyond the confines of the North American continent to found an emergent U.S. imperialism that encompass the entire hemisphere, hence his voluntary supplantation to an island in the Pacific Ocean rather than the familiar, homely harbours of New England.

While berthed in the harbour of St. Maria, Delano and his crew notice a mysterious ship showing "no colours" heading towards the island, which he assesses as foolhardy given the "lawlessness and loneliness of the spot" (49)—an observation that will gain added significance in the context of court documents that follow *Benito Cereno*'s climax. Little information about "the stranger" can be gathered from a distance, apart from the vessel taking a dangerous trajectory towards a sunken reef. Despite indications that the ship is stateless, Delano elects to board under the assumption the crew are in distress, which his own crew advises against. Upon closer inspection, the "true character of the vessel was plain—a Spanish merchantman" called *San Dominick* "carrying negro slaves, amongst other valuable freight, from one colonial port to another" (51). This claim that Delano had at a distance managed to decipher the "true character of the vessel" will turn out to be not just wrong but foretelling the American captain's perceptive handicap. Having assumed he understands the nature of the ship and its distress at a distance, he will be either incapable or unwilling to grasp that the crew he thinks are in charge are actually captive to the slaves. Regardless, the ship is in "sad disrepair," being "[b]attered and mouldy" (52) and exhibiting evident signs of decay—potential metaphors for the Spanish empire itself, as Americans perceived it. Upon boarding, Delano is "made the mark of all eager tongues" (52) and surveys the conditions, an experience likened to entering a "strange home with strange inmates in a strange land" (52). Ship and home are compared as familiar yet uncanny structures of enclosure, although they diverge in terms of the "enchantment" surrounding the former as a result of its mobility across the "blank ocean." The metaphor of the ship and the home take on more profound resonance when fed into the symbolic registers identified by some scholars. If the *San Dominick* is the symbolic compression of New World Slavery into the confines of a single object, then Delano's sense of the strange upon viewing the ship is an embarrassing admission or

a willful ignorance of his unfamiliarity with the world around him and of slavery in particular, despite his worldly travels as a merchant. If the *San Dominick* is analogous to the United States itself, then Delano is likewise offering an embarrassing admission of his unfamiliarity with his own country, despite being a Northerner with an evident sense of moral superiority.

In either case, instead of acknowledging that the peculiarities he detects are signs of profound alteration in the power balance aboard the ship, Delano will continuously try and subsume them into his preconceived notions of normality. Strangeness is not so much acknowledged as it is repressed. The narrator signals the way Delano's perception could be hampered: the ship "seems unreal" and occupied by strange costumes, gestures, and faces," a "shadowy tableau" (53), all of which also intimate that a sustained act of mimicry or masquerade is transpiring aboard the ship. Hardly the conditions for a clear, unfettered vision of the circumstances.

In the moment, however, the ship was for Delano "in the condition of a transatlantic emigrant ship, among whose multitude of living freight are some individuals, doubtless, as little trouble as crates and bales" (58). Intimations of both emigration and slavery acknowledge the two sources of America's genesis, although for Delano the observation reflects that regardless of what resemblance slaves have, whether to refugees or cargo, they are little more than "living freight." These racialized preconceptions constitute another way in which Delano's vision is impeded and will cause him to fundamentally misread who is in charge of the ship—a preconception which has "no room for a recognition of black agency or intelligence" (Valkeakari 234). Delano's near unwavering belief in Black docility is here evident in identifying the slaves with unfeeling cargo rather than persons with a clear claim to violent upheaval—a possibility he, as a seasoned merchant, should be well aware of. If Delano believes that slaves are "as little

trouble as crates and bales" than he will surely be blind to their capacity to rebel. For example,

when he first boards the *San Dominick*, Delano encounters several oakum-pickers and hatchet-

makers but immediately dismisses them as either "unsophisticated Africans" or preoccupied by

their servitude (54)—in either case, they could not be in charge and he continues his search for

the captain. He soon identifies a "Spaniard" flanked by a "black of small stature, in whose rude

face, as occasionally, like a shepherd's dog, he mutely turned it up into the Spaniard's" (ibid). In

addition to comparing them to cargo ("living freight"; "crates and bales"), he likens them also to

obedient dogs—familiar rhetoric that situates slaves along a spectrum of both animality and

object. In Chapter Three, I explored how these spectrums infiltrated legal thinking regarding the

slave's confused form of agency, which came to a head in *Gregson v. Gilbert* (1783) in Britain

and *Boyce v. Anderson* (1829) in the United States. In both cases, the question of whether slaves

were insurable cargo caused legal consternation over what form of agency or personhood slaves

possessed without evacuating all criminal responsibility. Apparently lacking any sensitivity to

these moral and legal contests, Delano conflates two distinct ontological categories by assessing

slaves as "living freight"—both animalistic and cargo. This conflation is not merely an analogy,

but an informative prefiguration for both Delano's incapacity or unwillingness to see the altered

power balance aboard the *San Dominick* and his later actions in rescuing the Spanish instead of

the slaves. Just as significantly, Delano's conflation of slaves with cargo and dogs will not deter

his attempt to convey Babo and his crew into custody, even though cargo and dogs are typically

not considered as criminally culpable. As such, when Babo's masquerade does fail and Delano

finally realizes a revolt had taken place aboard the *San Dominick*, this revelation is not

perfunctory but an acute collapse of Delano's worldview that had hitherto depended on a vision

of Black agency that was faultlessly obedient to white masters. Weiner argues that Delano's

enduring imperceptiveness while aboard the slaving vessel was in part sustained out of deference to his self-image and identity as an American. By essentially denying himself the realization that Babo and his fellow slaves considered him an enemy in virtue of his complicity in the slave trade, Delano could "imagine himself as fundamentally different from the aristocratic Benito Cereno, holder of slaves and representative of a despotic and dying regime," which in turn allowed him to "dissociate himself from the negative qualities that would destroy his identity as an American" (Weiner 8). Cereno's aristocratic proclivities are evident in his style of dress which places the captain in a "culture of decadence" (Wilson 131) rendered absurd, surreal, and clownish by the disorderly conditions of his slaving vessel. Of course, given that Cereno's well-groomed aesthetics are worn while he is essentially captive to Babo, his costume becomes even more absurd, more of a caricature, and more of a performative dressing that does not match with the role he must play for Delano. Regardless, and more to the point, Weiner's reading of Delano suggests that his imperceptiveness is strategic rather than senseless, contra other critiques that read Delano as hopelessly naïve.

In hindsight, Delano makes a fundamental misreading of character when he first boards the ship that ignites the course of events: failing to identify that it is in fact the "black of small stature" who is in charge, those aboard attempt to sustain a masquerade that will preserve the master-slave dynamic that Delano is anticipating. Later in the story, Delano will not express any sense of reflection about how this profound error nearly cost him and Cereno their lives. Not for nothing, Delano does acknowledge peculiarities, such as the unusual distribution of "whites and blacks" with the "latter outnumbering the former more than could have been expected" (53). Furthermore, he finds it strange that none of the apparent slaves are chained or show remnants of their bondage, being as they are "freely permitted to range within given bounds at their pleasure"

(61).[51] The Spaniard in question who Delano takes to be in charge is the eponymous Benito

Cereno, who is a "gentlemanly, reserved-looking, and rather young man to a stranger's eye,

dressed with singular richness, but bearing plain traces of recent sleepless cares and

disquietudes" (54). Cereno is flanked by a man named Babo (i.e.: the "black of small stature").

Delano offers them his assistance, but the gesture only invites "grave and ceremonious

acknowledgements" from Cereno, whose "national formality" (55) is obscured by the effects of

ill health—the first of many indications that Delano also holds poor opinions of the Spanish in

addition to Black persons. Delano initially infers Cereno's "cloudy languor," "unfriendly

indifference," and "gloomy disdain" as the "harassing effects of sickness, since, in former

instances, he had noted that there are peculiar natures on whom prolonged physical suffering

seems to cancel every social instinct of kindness" (56).[52] Even though Delano acknowledges that

the horrid conditions that can accrue on a lengthy ocean voyage can inhibit civility, he still

remains offended at first by the captain's impersonality, in part because Cereno shows icy

reserve to all except Babo, "his faithful personal attendant." Tellingly, Delano's overall

charitable attitude towards Cereno is shaken by the thought that Cereno's apparent slave is

shown more kindness and deference than the American. If Cereno is the sort of benevolently

paternalistic master that Delano's vision of slavery relies upon, then by extension Cereno should

be as kind to his equals and social betters as his slaves. If Cereno is impolite, then perhaps

Cereno is not a benevolent master, and the suffering and disquietude aboard the *San Dominick*

results from the captain's cruelty, ineptitude, or mismanagement. As such, shortly after reasoning

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[51] Slaving vessels typically had higher crew ratios relative to tonnage than regular merchant ships. As such, even though slaving crews were grossly outnumbered by their human cargo, a large enough discrepancy would be highly suspicious. Delano's acknowledgment of this discrepancy is significant: it means he's aware of what a "normal" slaving vessel should look like.

[52] This line can probably be read as both darkly humorous and insightful of Delano's character. After all, Delano's expectation of civility in the face of "prolonged physical suffering" is laughably absurd.

that perhaps Cereno's impersonality is a result of his health woes, Delano assesses the Spaniard as a "half-lunatic" (56) who seemed "the involuntary victim of mental disorder" (57) and who delegated orders only through Babo—to have "beheld this undemonstrative invalid gliding about, apathetic and mute, no landsman could have dreamed that in him was lodged a dictatorship beyond which, while at sea, there was no earthly appeal" (ibid). It's important to note that by diagnosing Cereno as "half-lunatic," Delano is excusing any violence Cereno perpetuated on the slaves as a result of his psychological condition, rather than as an indictment of the slave trade itself. In turn, Delano still attempts to ascribe familiar racialized hierarchies onto the social structure of the *San Dominick*, surmising (wrongly) that certain groups of Spanish crew constituted "the police department of a populous ship" (58) and whose slave counterparts were the "old oakum pickers" who "appeared at times to act the part of monitorial constables to their countrymen" (ibid). The glaring absence of high-ranking Spanish officers does not alert Delano to the fact that the chain of command aboard the ship has been upended. Delano nonetheless remains suspicious for no other reason that Cereno somewhat upsets the strict hierarchy usually apparent aboard a slaving vessel by, firstly, having the slaves roam freely above deck and by elevating Babo above his racial station to something more akin to a friend— "'I envy you such a friend; slave I cannot call him'" Delano remarks to Cereno (61)—which contradicts Delano's racialized ontology. While Delano does believe geniality should be shown to Black persons as part of the myth of benevolent paternalism, the operative analogy for this level of geniality is between a man and his dog, not person to person.

While Delano does have suspicions that something is being consciously disguised by the ship's occupants, he either misjudges the nature of the masquerade or willfully refuses to see it any other way. Perhaps assuming others are as self-centred and arrogant as himself, Delano

271

interprets Cereno's uncivil attitude as an attempt to disguise far shallower concerns, namely Cereno's "appearance of slumbering dominion might have been but an attempted disguise to conscious imbecility—not deep policy, but shallow device" (58). Delano wavers constantly in his opinion regarding Cereno, surmising that the "man was an imposter," a "low-born adventurer, masquerading as an oceanic grandee" (69) before eventually prostrating himself for doubting Cereno's commitment to genuine friendship. Later, Delano's interest will be peaked by the apparent inconsistencies in Cereno's narrative of events, wondering if he could be "any way in complicity with the blacks" before concluding, "who ever heard of a white so far a renegade as to apostatize from his very species almost, by leaguing in against it with negroes?" (81). Delano here expresses a form of betrayal that is entirely racial and, just as crucially, it distracts him from recognizing the true state of affairs. Even though multiple nationalities are interacting in Delano's visit to the ship, in the absence of clear sovereign boundaries the American captain takes race as a fundamental form of affiliation to which persons can rebel. Up to this point, Delano had been skeptical as to whether things really were as they appeared. He was suspicious of the freedom the slaves ostensibly enjoyed, as well as the relationship between Cereno and Babo, owing to how dependent the former appeared on the latter—for Delano this constituted a role reversal in which the white master depends "on his inferior's support, as if incapable of functioning without the physical, mental and emotional support of his slave" (Heide 40). However, as with every other suspicion he has, Delano does not hit upon the true extent to which Babo and Cereno are in the opposite relation of power than how it appears.

In each above quoted passage, Delano's immediate conclusion is breathtakingly wrong: he discounts that Cereno has a "deep policy" in disguise and instead reasons that the captain is narcissistically trying to hide his incompetence as an oceangoing sailor. While Delano also

discounts that Cereno is "in complicity with the blacks," the rare occasion his suspicions are somewhat correct, he reaches this conclusion in part because "whites, too, by nature were the shrewder race" (81)—a wholly ironic statement given that Delano, a white person, is apparently not shrewd enough to discern the mutiny that had taken place aboard the *San Dominick*. Delano does eventually surmise that a slave revolt had occurred during which a sizable portion of the Spanish crew were killed and the survivors were instructed to sail the ship back to Senegal— hence the unusual discrepancy in the crew to slave ratio—although the moment of Delano's realization is inopportune. He disembarks from the ship onto a whaleboat and Cereno promptly jumps off after him, followed by Babo with a knife. Only upon realizing Babo is trying to kill Cereno and not him does Delano grasp the situation. Babo, the leader of the revolt, had taken Cereno captive and attempted to use the captain to rob Delano's ship of supplies. These designs ultimately failed as Delano and his crew successfully liberate Cereno and the surviving Spanish crew, while the leaders of the revolt face trial and execution—although the implication of Delano's liberatory endeavours includes the continuation of the slave trade and the execution of persons attempting to escape captivity. In keeping with his arrogance and imperceptiveness, Delano expresses no qualms or awareness of what his actions imply. In fact, as Gesa Mackenthun suggests, Delano is "blind towards the system of colonial exploitation in which he is himself at least parasitically implicated" (539), which would be, on the one hand, unsurprising given how blind Delano appears in general during his stay aboard the *San Dominick*. However, on the other hand, his self-regard is politically inflected by an antislavery liberalism that believes itself unconnected to the system of colonial exploitation that the slave trade is built upon. Delano cannot or refuses to identify how his complicity contributes to the conditions that led Babo and the other slaves to revolt aboard the *San Dominick*.

There is an argument to be made that had Delano not been so culturally and politically illiterate—he assesses Cereno's impolite attitude through the prism of prevailing stereotypes of the Spanish—he might have surmised earlier that the evident peculiarities of the ship were signs of an extensive masquerade. Tuire Valkeakari suggests that the "narrative discloses that [Delano's] notorious blindness to an altered power balance on a slave ship stems from his acquired worldview and politics, rather than representing any culturally or politically 'neutral' perception" (231). Delano's "cultural and political conditioning," informed by his prejudices towards the Spanish and Black persons, mediates his interpretation of Cereno's behaviour and the peculiar atmosphere aboard the ship. In fact, up until Delano realizes that Cereno wanted to flee the *San Dominick*, he had continuously entertained the idea that Cereno wanted to see him dead and had colluded with his slaves to achieve such an end—as before, Delano thinks mainly of himself.[53] Delano's incapacity or unwillingness to interpret the unusual amount of freedom and deference afforded to the slaves as a sign of an altered power balance results from a racialized ontology that assumes Black persons are naturally docile and obedient. Valkeakari thus assess Delano as possessing "sight without insight" (233) and by Werner Sollors as "amazingly uncomprehending" (409). In turn, scholars like Yothers and Eric Sundquist will seize on Delano's character as Melville's indictment of the cultural and political deficiency of his time, and indeed the narrator holds an evidently dim assessment of Delano in a sign that Melville and the protagonist do not share similar views. This is perhaps best expressed in the lengthy metaphor of the knotted rope. Still unaware that a revolt had occurred, Delano comes across a sailor working a piece of rope into a Gordian knot and "stood in silence surveying the knot; his

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[53] There is an argument to be made that Delano's resolve to board the *San Dominick* despite his own crews hesitation emerges from a desire to see himself as the centre of attention. His intention to help the ship is not sourced from concerns humanitarian but, per myths of American exceptionalism, an attempt to insert himself into the story.

mind, by a not uncongenial transition, passing from its own entanglements to those of the hemp" (82). Delano asks the sailor, an old man who "looked like an Egyptian priest," why he is knotting the rope, to which the sailor replies "For some one else to undo." He subsequently tosses Delano the knot and in broken English says to "Undo it, cut it, quick." Delano, however, is befuddled: "For a moment, knot in hand, and knot in head, Captain Delano stood mute" (ibid). The sailor's clear signal to Delano to unravel the circumstances aboard the ship go unappreciated—the metaphor resolves as the knot stands in for Delano's cluttered mind. Frustratingly, Delano appears no closer to enlightenment when, a moment later, a slave attempts to explain away the sailor's peculiar actions and tosses the knotted rope overboard. The subtly of the sailor's actions are seemingly too subtextual for Delano to comprehend.[54]

Unconcerned about the seemingly absurd event that had just passed, Delano instead becomes distracted by the advancing whaleboat bringing supplies from his own ship to the *San Dominick*, which buoys him somewhat. Talking to himself, he descends into nostalgia, thinking that "I, little Jack of the Beach, that used to go berrying with cousin Nat and the rest; I to be murdered here at the ends of the earth, on board a haunted pirate-ship by a horrible Spaniard?" to which he answers himself, "Too nonsensical to think of! Who would murder Amasa Delano? His conscience is clean" (83). Delano contextualizes his current strange predicament onboard the *San Dominick* within a former childhood innocence that he seems to think protects him from the worst possible outcome. Delano exhibits throughout the story intermittent moments of self-flattery, if not outright pomposity, that appear to contribute to his failure to detect the signs of revolt. While still waiting for his whaleboat, Delano speculates further on some "lesser

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[54] If we take a metaliterary view of this scene, Melville is perhaps signalling to the reader what sort of reading practice is required to appreciate *Benito Cereno*, namely one that is attentive to how analogy is being extensively used to gesture to a larger historiographical situation.

peculiarities" that he cannot fully contextualize. Instead of linking these peculiarities with the altered power balance aboard the ship, he becomes distracted by his ideological priors about the Spanish:

> Coupling these points, they seemed somewhat contradictory. But what then, thought Captain Delano, glancing towards his now nearing boat,--what then? Why, Don Benito is a very capricious commander. But he is not the first of the sort I have seen though it's true he rather exceeds any other. But as a nation—continued in in his reveries—these Spaniards are all an odd set: the very word Spaniard has a curious, conspirator, Guy-Fawkish twang to it. And yet, I dare say, Spaniards in the main are as good folks as any in Duxbury, Massachusetts. Ah good! At last "Rover" has come. (85).

Intriguingly, Delano somewhat deflates his earlier stereotypes of the Spanish by distinguishing between Cereno and his dandified appearance and more common Spaniards who "in the main" are like Delano's Duxbury compatriots. This thought, however, doesn't last long. The narration follows Delano's contemplations as they are interrupted by the arrival of his boat. At the moment in which Delano was potentially on the cusp of detecting the problem with his impoverished view of the Spanish, he is distracted by the prospect of supplies. After Delano commands the small boat to return to his ship for more, Babo informs Cereno that he needs a shave to which the American acknowledges the "uncommon punctuality" (89) of being shaved in the middle of the day. Nonetheless, Delano's thoughts quickly shift to how Black persons are "natural valets and hair-dressers" with a "docility arising from the unaspiring contentment of limited mind" and a "susceptibility of blind attachment" as a result of their "indisputable" inferiority (90), another expression of his general attitude to Black persons as rooted in a geniality "just as other men to Newfoundland dogs" (91). These thoughts are emerging at a time when Babo wields a sharp blade next to Cereno's throat, a scene that Delano merely reads as another example of Black subservience. Unable or unwilling to acknowledge the mortal danger Cereno is in or that Babo is revealing the true power dynamic underwriting the *San Dominick*, Delano instead decides to talk about an inconsistency in Cereno's earlier story about the weather—a crucial moment that could

unravel Babo's plot at a time when he could swiftly kill Cereno. As a way of cautioning Cereno, Babo draws a small amount of blood with the razor, which of course causes Cereno extreme consternation: "No sword drawn before James the First of England, no assassination in that timid King's presence, could have produced a more terrified aspect than was no presented by Don Benito" (93). Delano remains oblivious and instead assesses Cereno's shock as unmanliness: "Poor fellow, thought Captain Delano, so nervous he can't even bear the sight of barber's blood; and this unstrung, sick man, is it credible that I should have imagined he meant to spill all my blood, who can't endure the sight of one little drop of his own?" (ibid). Delano can only think of himself in a moment when the signs of mutiny are more and more evident. Indeed, during this same scene, Babo desecrates the Spanish flag by using it as a cloth but Delano simply smiles and teases Cereno, remarking "It's well it's only I, and not the King, that sees this" (92).

Eventually, Delano realizes a revolt had taken place but only after departing the *San Dominick* and only after Cereno has himself jumped from his ship into Delano's boat, followed by Babo and his attempt to kill Cereno. Initially, Delano was still none the wiser, grabbing Cereno by the throat first and remarking that "this plotting pirate means murder!" (106). Only the shouted advice of an oarsman to "give heed to what the Spaniard was saying" signaled the beginning of realization; only then did a "flash of revelation" sweep "across the long-benighted mind of Captain Delano" (107). Upon having the "scales dropped from his eyes," Delano then saw Babo and his compatriots "not in misrule, not in tumult, not as if frantically concerned for Don Benito, but with mask torn away, flourishing hatchets and knives, in ferocious piratical revolt" (108). Importantly, Delano does not assess the slave revolt as general misrule or a justifiable response to Benito's mismanagement, but as "piratical," mutinous, and therefore requiring armed response, but Cereno

entreated the American not to give chase, either with ship or boat; for the negroes had already proved themselves such desperadoes, that, in case of a present assault, nothing but a total massacre of the white could be looked for. But, regarding this warning as coming from one whose spirit had been crushed by misery the American did not give up his design. (109)

Cereno's call to withdraw from pursuing the ship are echoed by Delano's own crewmembers who "for reasons connected with their interests and those of the voyage, and a duty owning to the owners, strongly objected against their commander's going" (ibid). Thinking Cereno's objections are borne more from cynicism than reasoned advice, and having also convinced his crew that there are riches to be salvaged from the *San Dominick*, Delano brashly commits to recapturing the ship. It's important to note that Babo at this point had already been captured and would receive the same fate regardless of what Delano did next. Yet Delano decides nonetheless to pursue the remaining rebels in an operation that will be largely pyrrhic. More of Cereno's crew will die along with other key figures in the revolt, including Atufal, Babo's second-in-command. *Benito Cereno*'s penultimate section includes a selection of "official Spanish documents" of "partial translation" containing court dispositions from Cereno that helped convince the vice-regal courts to deliver a capital sentence for Babo. Charitably, these documents attest to the fact that "some attempts were made by the sailors […] to convey hints to [Delano] of the true state of affairs; but that that these attempts were ineffectual, owing to fear of incurring death, and furthermore, owing to the devices which offered contradictions to the true state of affairs, as well as owing to the generosity and piety of Amaso Delano incapable of sounding such wickedness" (123). This is a polite way of explaining Delano's manifest stupidity. These documents also convey an ambition of order and resolution following a narrative form constantly undercutting any sense of stability.

As Weiner suggests, however, Delano's and the law's forceful imposition towards restoring order is disrupted by Melville himself, who disorders the chronological sequence of the

narrative after the revolt had been suppressed by Delano and his crew. The final section of the

novella involves visiting a brief episode between Delano and Cereno prior to their arrival back to

the mainland. In this moment the two captains discuss the significance of their experience, but

Cereno is justifiably brimmed with an anxiety that will lead him to an early grave. In a telling

exchange, Delano advises Cereno that the "past is passed; why moralize upon it," suggesting that

the "bright sun has forgotten it all, and the blue sea, and the blue sky; these have turned over new

leaves" (127), to which Cereno dryly replies that these are things without memories. The final

passages of the story thus jump forwards and backwards in time seemingly without rhyme or

reason. Delano's hope for the restoration of order is subverted by the very narrative that depicts

him, perhaps gesturing to the illusory quality of order under slavery. In turn, the legally-

mandated execution of Babo—execution being a "ritual of closure" (Weiner 11)—imbues no

such finality to the story's conclusion because the narrative interrupts the order of events to show

Cereno admitting to being haunted by "the negro" (Melville 127) despite knowing his ordeal has

concluded.

Questions remain as to why Delano sides with the Spanish instead of the slaves after the

San Dominick has been recaptured and the rebellion quelled. Critical responses to this question

have offered various explanations for Delano's behaviour that fall on his evident racism,

historical positionality, and earlier psychological handicap that, when read together, paint a

portrait of a man who is generally quite stupid—a lucky idiot who escapes death not from

cunning but from other peoples' dependence on his authority. Indeed, some scholars have

suggested a symbiotic relationship between Delano's perceptive handicap and deficient racial

politics, although Delano's narrow perspective of events may not necessarily be the product of a

general stupidity. In elaborating the plot of *Benito Cereno*, I referenced various interpretations of

Delano's evident blindness—a blindness that even the narrator dryly mocks. I didn't, however, distinguish between Delano's seeming incapacity to detect Babo's masquerade and his incapacity or unwillingness to address the evident suffering of Black persons under slavery. There are reasons to think both of these perceptive handicaps are intertwined, but I want to suggest not only are they distinguishable but also differentially sourced and that Delano consciously configures his thinking around slavery to avoid moral culpability.

To see this, we need to start by thinking back to Melville's insertion of legalistic documents into the plot of *Benito Cereno*. Insofar as the law implies a type of perception, it is arguably just as precarious as Delano's as he struggles to literally see and understand the *San Dominick* at the beginning of the story. Delano in turn appropriates a legalistic vision in his conveyance of the slaves to the courts, despite having no obligation to do so. How can we assess Delano as merely incompetent without thereby freeing him of the moral work he fails to accomplish? Can we not assess him as willfully ignorant and stubbornly committed to a racial ideology that makes him complicit and therefore morally blameworthy? After all, Delano can and does identify suffering aboard the ship, but it does not provoke a radical course of action: he does not liberate the colonized, but instead provides supplies under the expectation that the crew will use them to finish their journey and sell the slaves. Delano's actions service the system of racialized exploitation over and above the exploited. When Delano had first boarded the *San Dominick* the reader was given a glimpse of Delano's capacity for empathy. He encountered "a common tale of suffering" that constituted "one language" (53)—a *lingua franca* rooted in non-verbal depictions of distress, misery, or tumult that apparently transcended all cultural and racial difference; in other words, a language of gesture, appearance, posture, and sentiment. Delano arguably comprehended this seemingly universal language of suffering shared among the crew,

which he understands alongside his fluency in English and Spanish. Delano's bilingualism seems at most an artifact of American contact with her Spanish rivals and a corollary of transnational trade, if not a feature of his unjustified self-regard, yet it does at minimum occasion a sort of sympathetic movement between him and Cereno, although not with the Spanish-speaking slaves, like Babo. In the initial, unknowing moments where he is suspicious that Cereno is merely a disagreeable idiot, the mix of languages and dialects force the participants of this strange encounter to search for means of communication that transcend cultural and linguistic difference, hence Delano's obsessive attention to gesture and posture. The *San Dominick* is a microcosm of different interacting linguistic communities forced together through transnational and transoceanic trade. Yet despite this, Delano's liberational motive serves the dominate colonial power in the region rather than the enslaved Africans whose suffering led them to revolt. Tellingly, the expression of growing American dominance in foreign affairs results from a grotesque show of force rather than a commitment to democratic ideals or the relief of human suffering, which should have motivated Delano to identify the slaves as the ones who merited liberation. The implication: Delano may identify a universal language of suffering that ostensibly positions all human beings into a similar community of feeling but this does not motivate Delano to take the side of the slaves. Rather, implicitly, Delano assesses the slaves as committing an affective disobedience—their evident rage and resistance to being held captive is understood by the American as insubordination of their station or status. As such, even though Delano expresses antislavery views, he nonetheless acts as if Black persons are only owed sympathy in virtue of their obedience and not when they are rebellious.

Is this a sign of the limits of sympathy or sentimentality to move a person towards morally good actions or a reflection of Delano alone, whose imperceptiveness defines him as a

character? If Delano is, as Markus Heide has suggested, "the novella's most important representative of the United States" (52), then this deepens the implication of the answer to this question from being potentially only about Delano to an indictment of American national feeling towards its Black population, whose evident suffering in the institution of slavery did not motivate enough political or legal action for non-violent abolition. James Kraehenbuehl notes the role of the U.S. Constitution in "channeling" (1467) the debate around slavery towards issues of state enforcement during the Antebellum period and away from the evident emotive and sentimentalist reactions to the violence that underwrote the institution. The purpose of channeling was to configure otherwise broad questions of legal, political, and cultural significance into a narrow set of questions and precepts to which the relationship between state and federal authority was tested—Kraehenbuehl points out that this channeling likewise obscured evident humanitarian concerns over slavery. This channeling had the consequence of narrowing the number of available tools for abolitionists to bring an end to slavery to a few indirect actions that lacked the forceful renunciation of slavery as a brutal and inhumane system of exploitation. Fugitive slaves and the admission of new states naturally became proxies for pro-slavers and abolitionists in the dispute over slavery.

Delano appears to exhibit similar channeling characteristics that mirrors the configurative role of the U.S. Constitution: issues of suffering are addressed but quickly transformed into issues of management, and evident anxieties regarding the slave's justified desire for liberation (an anxiety arguably felt by Cereno) are channeled into issues of enforcement. In turn, upon recognizing a revolt has taken place, Delano takes it upon himself to essentially operate as a marine police force in the absence of any clear laws or jurisdictions. He perceives the rebels narrowly as fugitive slaves instead of human beings justifiably rebelling against their oppression.

Delano in this sense is comprehensive of what's at stake in the revolt but consciously excludes grander questions of personal liberty in a manner reminiscent of the channeling characteristics of U.S. legal thinking during the Antebellum period. Weiner suggests, for example, that Delano is a handy vehicle for examining the moral and political deficiencies of legal reasoning, arguing that by "hiding behind the cloak of legalism in suppressing slaves, the legal authority in the United States could detach itself from any likeness to tyranny" (8), while on a more intimate scale, by "maintaining the primacy of legal reasoning, Delano was able to preserve his image of himself as benevolent" (7). In turn, the channeling characteristics are noticeable by historical resemblances between Delano and state enforcement as well as Melville's rhetoric, which evokes the recapture of fugitive slaves during the Antebellum period:

> The fire was mostly directed towards the stern, since there, chiefly, the negroes, at present, were clustering. But to kill or main the negroes was not the object. To take them, with the ship, was the object. To do it, the ship must be boarded; which could not be done by boats while she was sailing so fast. (110)

Delano's ambition for suppressing the revolt clearly intimates an attempt at recapturing property, with the *San Dominick* analogous to an under-enforced free state that must be either reclaimed or raided.

Section B
Contemporary Critiques of *Benito Cereno,* Babo and the Legitimacy of Violence

Despite being set in 1799, Melville's choice to re-write the true story of Amasa Delano for the distinct societal crisis of the 1850s United States certainly seems to portend a work implicated in both the increasingly precarious political climate of early nineteenth century America and deeper questions of liberal commitments to both antislavery and emancipation of the oppressed in general—a story which therefore disavows its own protagonists claim that "the

past is passed" and to forget about it (126). If Sundquist is correct that the story constitutes a direct response to the Compromise of 1850 (188), then the political precarity of Melville's time is arguably compartmentalized in *Benito Cereno* in the form of the masquerade that Babo and the others attempt to perform, which constantly threatens to violently collapse the longer Delano spends on the ship. Delano in turn constitutes a darkly satirical construction on Melville's part as the American captain's naïve optimism leads to death, destruction, and depression for essentially everyone except himself, whose stalwart commitment to forgetting the past frees him of any psychological turmoil while leading his new friend, Cereno, to strict religious observance and an early grave. In this and the next section, I explore some popular historiographical readings of *Benito Cereno.*

Melville's use of extended metaphors certainly invites interpretations that position the *San Dominick* as a space analogical to the U.S. struggle with slavery. If so, then a story set thousands of miles from the continental interior can be read as a depiction of domestic crisis over admission of an oppressed racial minority into the prevailing citizenship regime (itself racialized as white and male). Sundquist, for example, suggests Melville "continually drove right to the heart of America's crisis" over slavery, assessing *Benito Cereno* as "that most brilliant of all critiques" of both Northern naivete and Southern beliefs in benevolent paternalism "as the only system under which African Americans could survive and prosper" (187). In this sense, Sundquist argues, Melville's "imaginary transformation of Delano's true story undermined the fantasy of African docility" integral to some wings of the antislavery movement, most paradigmatically novelized in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (189). Despite being a Northerner with the occasional antislavery remark, Delano continually admits of racist beliefs in Black docility that concedes to Southern myths of the benevolent master that were used during

the Antebellum period in arguments against full and immediate abolition. Delano himself evinces absurd levels of goodwill that turn out to be morally worthless and dependent on overlooking the implicit and explicit brutality conducted during the trade—potentially a commentary by Melville on the empty moralisms of some proponents of abolition. Sundquist, for example, suggests that Melville was "attuned to the extravagance and ineffectiveness of much antislavery rhetoric" and sought to caricature the "northern romantic view […] that masters were dissipated aristocrats and their slaves docile, imitative (but brutalized) creatures" (187). Melville would therefore be mocking the sort of morbid duplicity that must be entertained if one is to be, like Delano, both antislavery and willing to ignore the inherent, unavoidable violence of the master-slave relationship. In fact, Sundquist sees nothing less than the entire history of New World slavery recounted in *Benito Cereno* through an "intricate web of allusions and historical references" (188) evident in Melville's change to the name of Cereno's ship from the historical *Tryal* to the more evocative *San Dominick*, an illusion to either the Haitian Revolution or the landing of Christopher Columbous or both. As Markus Heidi observes, the name "San Dominick" can reference, firstly, the former French colony of Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti), which gained independence in 1804 from the slave rebellion initially spearheaded by Toussaint L'Ouverture. Melville's contemporaries would have been intimately familiar with the name Saint-Domingue as connotative of slave revolt broadly, which renders Melville's choice in naming the ship both an ominous foreshadowing within the narrative itself and also a reflection of predominating anxieties surrounding slavery in the United States at a time when the issue was splintering the country.

Secondly, the name can reference Santo Domingo, the first city founded by the Spanish in the Americas and in this way serve as a "symbolic linking of the late eighteenth-century

285

setting with the history of the 'discovery' and first encounters between Europeans and the Caribbean's indigenous people" (Heidi 48). The name of the ship is, in other words, a call back to the origins of the New World as a hemispheric unity with its own history, historical trajectory, and identity that implies the existence of an Old World to which it is no longer a part. It likewise positions Spain and Spanish presence in the New World as an inimical presence and the main rival to U.S. hegemony in the Americas. Moreover, if the ship *San Dominick* is meant to be a metaphorical stand-in for the U.S., then the slave revolt that occurs aboard the former constitutes a grim prophecy on Melville's part, who by analogy suggests similar rebellion may be in the cards. The political atmosphere aboard the *San Dominick* is thus unmistakably "postrevolutionary," but the revolutions in question also signal the "toppling of old orders and the founding of republics" (Sollors 411), which casts a grim shadow over U.S. claims to either being new or a republic. Indeed, *Benito Cereno* portrays U.S. presence in the Western hemisphere as far from innocent or civilizing—Delano restores the status quo and the racialized hierarchy underwriting the slave trade that will guarantee future revolt and violence. He does this despite holding evident disregard for both the Spanish, for whom he views as "weak and treacherous" (Heide 51) and slavery, which he appears to abhor ("Ah, this slavery breeds ugly passions in man—Poor fellow!" Delano remarks at one point [95], although only after attempting to buy Babo).

Delano's grievances about the lack of civility among the ship's crew will thus appear as particularly tactless in comparison to the evident violence that sourced their unlikely meeting and the grander forces at work. While Delano attempts to exhibit a firm sense of ethical principle, in truth it is impoliteness rather than brash immorality that occupy his attention, hence why he occasionally expresses awareness of slavery as evil but does nothing to disrupt the slave trade.

He isn't so much incapable of identifying the evident masquerade that plays out before him as he is unwilling to acknowledge that slavery, as bad as it is, justifies violent rebellion. He remains smug regardless, which Sandra Zagarell identifies as "characteristic of the prevailing American political and cultural climate of the 1850's"—a climate that emphasized U.S. exceptionality and which glorified the "revolutionary fathers, who were viewed as having freed America from a decadent Europe" (57). If Delano is, as Heide suggests, a representative of the United States, then his groundless self-regard constitutes a commentary on U.S. posturing on the eve of their civil war and frames the country as the "unwitting perpetuator of forms of commercialism, colonialism, and slavery" (Zagarell 58). Worse than this in fact, Delano "lays bare the elaborate ideology by means of which Americans denied the historical implications" of their own practices (ibid). Far from being just ignorant, Delano is *willfully* ignorant, displaying, as Zagarell puts, an "epistemological fancy footwork" that he "must perform in order *not* to understand what is amiss on the *San Dominick*" (59).

Scholars like Heide have latched more readily to the ways Melville's work is "distinctly characterized by a transnational historical vision" (43), of which *Benito Cereno* is paradigmatic. The nature of this transnationalism, Heide argues, is hemispheric and derivative of pan-American sensibilities that drove a wedge between the Old and New Worlds, although any perceived split between them is continuously undermined, firstly, by Delano's implicit reinforcement of the slave trade, and secondly, by Benito Cereno himself who (despite being referred to by Delano as a "Spaniard") is Chilean with Spanish ancestry and thus spoils any clean distinction between Old and New Worlds. While Cereno is of both worlds by ethnicity, Delano is of both by his participation in an institution of slavery that was began in one and continued by another. As such, Melville's novella depicts the various ways the two worlds are implicated in one another—

historically, culturally, politically, linguistically, etc.—which emerge throughout the story and contradict Delano's pan-American sensibilities, most evidently depicted in his assessment of the *San Dominick*'s physical decay as a symbol of Spain's decaying empire. The content of this sensibility appears to involve a particularly potent historical amnesia which renders Delano "incongruously hopeful" (Sollors 409) in comparison to Cereno, hence also why Delano ignores Cereno's advice not to pursue the rebel-controlled *San Dominick.*

Part of Melville's transnationalism is apparent in the fact that the story involves the voluntary and involuntary displacement of three distinct peoples from three continents and transposes them into the same confined architecture of a cargo vessel on the periphery of the New World. The *San Dominick* comes to host several overlapping relationships among Americans, Europeans, and Africans, all of whom are participants in a system of transatlantic and transoceanic economic exchange built off competing networks of violence. These transnational figurations create new and unlikely communities and coalitions forged in the "temporally and spatially delimited moment" (Wilson 140) of the slave ship. This reading acknowledges, per Gilroy, the effect the physicality of the ship has on forging new types of political communities. Wilson notes how the slaves of the *San Dominick* aspire to return to Senegal as an "imaginary homeland for all the racialized subjects aboard" but that "their insurrection instantiated blackness as a kind of transnational politics" (141). Black solidarity as a means for a new kind of pan-Africanism threatens Delano's sense of racial politics enough for him to forge his own transnational coalition with the Spanish—who under any other circumstances would be enemies—in order to disrupt and destroy the slave's emergent unity. In truth of course, Delano's "coalition" quite fundamentally lacks true solidarity, as Delano disregards Cereno's opposition to recapturing the *San Dominick* and still clearly considers

himself and the U.S. superior to the decaying empire of the Old World. The transnational politics of the slaves of the *San Dominick*—rooted in a Black solidarity that unites ethnic and tribal differences into a new racial coalition—involves dislodging the brutal regularity of the slave trade and fostering new avenues for peaceful coexistence among various African and American Indigenous groups. Delano's transnational politics, on the other hand, are rooted in racial hierarchy and the forceful positioning of the United States as a New World empire religiously and morally destined for domination. Even though Delano is from an ostensible free state, he is implicated in and arguably benefits from slavery as a form of social adjustment where citizenship is fundamentally exclusionary to the benefit of white male property owners. Babo and the other slaves envision something of a post-citizenship bloc that recognizes the need for a new form of coalition and relationality borne of Black insurrection and liberation. Their coerced and forced secondary status within a traditional Western national framework would be exploded in favour of a coordinated and premeditated solidarity not in the guise of a Western nation or empire. Part of this vision is already achieved in the collapsed and deconstructed hierarchy of the slaving vessel, which Delano tellingly confuses as disorderly—the different spaces of the ship were politically, socially, and culturally flattened by the revolt, producing a more equitable space that Delano thinks are signs of mismanagement. Delano in turn half-heartily attempts to reinscribe hierarchy onto the *San Dominick*: when supplies were brought on board, for example, Delano "would have given the whites alone" (87), if not for Cereno's objections. Babo and the others must perform these hierarchies as best as possible and it is arguably only due to Delano's imperceptiveness that they so successfully masquerade as docile.

Benito Cereno can thus be read as containing both an interior and outer vision of the U.S., involving the brutal suppression of an internal movement for racial liberation within the country

and an emergent imperialism predicted on continuing systems of exploitation. The readings by Heide, Zagarell, and Sundquist—part of the historiographical trend of Melville criticism that Wilson noted—lean heavily on various objects, personas, or relationships operating as analogous to some historical counterpart. Even though Delano is geographically located far from the American interior, where new forms of order can potentially be exercised, his confrontation with the racialized power dynamics of the slaving vessel re-enact the U.S. institution of slavery and its colonial and imperial origins in the far reaches of the American continents. Melville accomplishes this transposition through several lengthy and sustained analogies that work to frame the circumstances surrounding Delano and the *San Dominick* as allegories for U.S. pan-American expansionism or U.S. domestic worries over slavery. In other words, the encounter between Delano and the *San Dominick* can be read, firstly, as a microcosm of the hemispheric confrontation between the U.S. and its imperial predecessors, specifically the Spanish. In this reading, the United States' self-assessment as morally superior in comparison to her Old World counterparts in Europe is undermined by Delano's willingness to ignore longstanding American rivalries with the Spanish. A second reading understands *San Dominick* as a metaphor of the United States itself, or at least its domestic struggle with slavery. In this reading, Melville foreshadows the threat of slave rebellion and civil war that plagues the U.S. as a result of slavery—a reading which is somewhat overdetermined by the slave rebellion aboard the *San Dominick*. Delano restores order through violence but does not solve the overriding conflict that led to the circumstances in the first place. Rather, societal crisis endures and the possibility of future rebellion remains somewhat inevitable, and no amount of legal intervention is effective. A third reading may understand Delano's favouring the Spanish cause over that of the slaves as an embarrassing capitulation for the former imperial power, who must rely on the still infant U.S.

nation for rescue. In this reading, Delano's liberation of the Spanish from the clutches of slave revolt is the symbolic passing of the torch from one imperial power to the next, with the U.S. securing its superior role in the Americas.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

In Chapter Two, I addressed Olaudah Equiano's engagement with questions of violent resistance to slavery and considered how his coded threat of insurrection was pacified by, firstly, his suggestion that white masters take on a more benevolent attitude towards their slaves, and secondly, by his developing religious identity that favoured "honest and honourable" means to both his own manumission and the manumission of his enslaved countrymen. I return to this issue of violent resistance and how it comes to configure the inclusion of racialized non-citizens into a prevailing citizenship regime but under a significantly more charged and domestic political atmosphere.

In a speech in 1853 to the American Anti-Slavery Society and the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, Frederick Douglass spoke on the status of free Black persons in the United States, remarking that "we are esteemed less than strangers and sojourners—aliens are we in our native land. The fundamental principles of the republic, to which the humblest white man, whether born here or elsewhere, may appeal with confidence in the hope of awakening a favourable response, are held to be inapplicable to us" (2018, 97). By this point in his life, Douglass's pacificism—influenced by abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison and evident in his autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Frederik Douglass* published in 1845—had weakened and his reference in the same speech to being met with "imprecations and curses" (98) whenever a demand for equitable rights was made hinted at his growing frustration with both nonaggression and legal remedy as a response to the explicitly racist denial of citizenship's privileges. In *My*

Bondage and My Freedom, published in the same year as *Benito Cereno*, Douglass re-articulates

an experience from his time as a slave that put added emphasis on the effectiveness of violent

resistance to slavery. Douglass writes that he was "resolved to fight" after being provoked by a

white master and that a man "without force, is without the dignity of humanity" (2014, 194;

197). The profundity of this sentiment for Douglass cannot be understated: he declares himself

not just a changed man but a "FREEMAN" upon deciding to fight, making note also on how

solidarity with a fellow female slave, who the white master had attempted to assist in his

confrontation with Douglass, helped the latter achieve his dignity (2014, 197). Instead of

achieving this freeman status from legal recognition, it was first acquired through the practical

act of physical resistance. If we read these two passages side-by-side, we perhaps see how

Douglass (upon conceding the failure of the law to recognize Black persons as full citizens)

might have re-evaluated the source of emancipation.

   The heightened political crisis of the 1850s United States as a result of increased tensions

between so-called free and slaving-holding states had put violent resistance front and centre,

namely with questions on how to avoid it. Part of the problem, as Thomas Morris characterizes

it, was the American constitutional system itself, which did not allow for any "direct federal

legislative attack" on slavery in an identical manner to the British Parliament's abolition of

slavery in 1833 (ix). To make matters worse, the U.S. Supreme Court, helmed at the time by

proslavery justice Roger B. Taney, had handed down a recurring series of proslavery verdicts

even before the infamous *Dred Scott v. Sandford* in 1857, such that by the 1850s "abolitionists

and others began to suspect that the Supreme Court might force slavery into the free states,"

which two decades previous "would have been dismissed as a lurid fantasy of paranoid

imaginations" (Wiecek 55). In 1852, abolitionist James G. Birney, reacting to a proslavery

decision in *Strader v. Graham,* wrote that the verdict essentially empowered states to enslave or re-enslave any free Black person within its jurisdiction, in turn legalizing kidnapping when paired with the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Birney therefore recommended that Black Americans migrate to Liberia (Wiecek 54).

The political situation thus seemed at a tipping point where not only would abolition be impossible, but slavery would go national and become mandatory in states where it had hitherto been illegal. Save for wholesale revolution, indirect action was the only option for those seeking to dismantle slavery or stop its spread, naturally shifting the battle over abolition to warring state statues and customs. The result was an American citizenship landscape constituted by conflicting and contradictory legal orders, lacking the supremacy of a national standard or procedure by which a citizen could secure their status. Douglass's increased fervor for uncompromising abolition and the hostile aggression such a position may have required was therefore a response to an obstinate American constitutional system and the conciliatory gestures that white Northern liberal politicians had made to Southern states in the preceding years, most notably with the Compromise of 1850 and the new Fugitive Slave Act, although resistance and revolts had arguably been on America's mind since Nat Turner's 1831 rebellion resulted in the death of sixty whites and even more Blacks killed in response (Sundquist 145). Earlier than Turner, however, was the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), the only successful slave revolt, as C.L.R. James puts it (1989, ix). The defeat of an otherwise mighty French empire at the hands of former slaves casted a particularly long shadow on an American nation with an ever-increasing slave population. Part of white paranoia surrounding the possibility of slave revolt, particularly in the southern United States, derived not just from the violence it portended but whether such revolts would change the political climate around abolitionism. Sundquist, for example, writing about Nat Turner's

Rebellion of 1831, notes the "strategic necessity" surrounding how revolts were represented to the general public and whether they constituted "isolated act[s] of fanaticism" or "legitimate if futile quest[s] for freedom" (145). Pro-slavers found it politically expedient to control the narrative around a revolt like Turner's so as to stave off or weaken the inevitable calls for emancipation that would follow. If the future possibility of slave uprisings was owing to episodes of extremism among a few misbehaving slaves rather than a sign of the growing untenableness of slavery as an institution, then the only political response necessary was increased security for white slaveholders and the cooperation of mostly Northern free states in the capture and conveyance of fugitive slaves back to the South. Otherwise, the ideology of paternalism that underwrote a portion of the justification for slavery (even among some abolitionists unwilling to upset the relationship between state and federal power) could be exposed as bunk, insofar as no amount of supposed benevolence among whites could postpone the slow degradation of slavery in the United States.

Douglass's account of violently resisting his white master was therefore more than just an innocent revisit of his experience. His account recognizes the effectiveness of violence as a response to slavery while also depicting this violence as justifiably aggravated and sourced from a premeditated and rational refusal to be treated inhumanly, rather than from some temporary bout of extremism or lust. As radical abolitionist Stephen S. Foster declared in 1861, pre-Civil War Americans could only choose between "slaveholding and revolution" (Morris ix). Nonetheless, Douglass's 1853 speech on the alienation of specifically *free* Blacks recognized how even with a successful abolitionism, the emancipation of millions of slaves portended a new battle over white resistance to the inclusion of a racial minority into the prevailing citizenship regime that broke down the supposed divide between North and South or between free and

294

slaveholding states: it instead tested the very political and cultural operation of the United States, which had hitherto presumed, particularly in the South, that all Black persons were slaves unless otherwise proven. Such a presumption was not simply a social custom but in some cases a standard procedure in law. Wilson suggests that Douglass's "disheartening recognition" clarified how race and slavery had come to inform how citizenship itself was "conceptualized and practiced" not just in slave-holding states but in ostensibly free states as well. In turn the "two most important definitions of citizenship—citizenship by birthright and citizenship by consent—were put into crisis" with the onset of Black Americans demanding the same rights and privileges as whites (6).

Allusions to historical slave rebellion position the *San Dominick* itself as the stage for which two-hundred years of New World Slavery and the U.S. domestic struggle with the institution are condensed and re-enacted. Metaphors of theatre and performativity are apt given the masquerade that Babo and the other slaves consciously enact, with Delano initially being the unwitting audience for which this performance is directed. Cereno's physical act of jumping from the *San Dominick*—his metaphorical exit from the stage—shatters the internal cohesion of Babo's creative endeavour, unmasking the other actors involved in the plot, although tellingly this unmasking goes unrecognized by Delano at first, still unaware that a performance had even taken place. While Delano is the privileged object of narrative attention (the figure that conveys us both onto and off the *San Dominick*), it is Babo who stages and stage-manages the proceedings, and whose figure metaphorically casts an enduring shadow on the mind of Cereno. Any reading that wishes to position Cereno's slaving vessel as analogical to the United States or New World slavery more broadly must contend with the fact that the *San Dominick* only by appearance adheres to anticipated hierarchies of racial difference. The ship is in fact a space

engineered by the precarious command of Babo and his fellow insurrectionists, whose revolt

partially succeeds in upending the brutal regularity of the transatlantic slave trade—or as Wilson

puts it, the revolt "disrupted not only the charted itinerary of the *San Dominick* but also the ship's

relation to a global economic circuit" (131). The performative conditions of political agency are

somewhat scrambled as Babo pretends servitude as a means of obscuring the actual authority he

wields. He correctly anticipates that Black autonomy would alert suspicions, and indeed the

masquerade appears close to collapsing only because Delano enquires why none of the apparent

slaves are below deck or in fetters. Babo is therefore the creative force within the story.[55] Of

course, metaphors of theatricality can only go so far because the ending of the performance is the

literal death of some of its actors.

The inclusion of legal documents near the end of the story that are in "partial translation"

acknowledges an original source that the reader is not entirely privy too—which is accurate

insofar as Melville did derive the story of *Benito Cereno* from the historical Amasa Delano,

directly lifting some of the legal text and inserting it into his own version. The inclusion of these

legal documents in the story's final passages works to bifurcate *Benito Cereno* into essentially

two narratives: a third-person narration that favours the perspective of Delano and an "official"

legal account corroborating or clarifying the events. This duplicity in perspective still fails to

accommodate any testimony from Babo, the revolt's ringleader, who refused to speak from the

moment he was apprehended by Delano. Instead, it was on the "testimony of the sailors alone

[that] rested the legal identity of Babo" (127). The disruption to narrative form through the

insertion of abbreviated legal documents (combined with the implicit acts of translation

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[55] This would contradict some popular racial theories at the time of the story's setting. Thomas Jefferson, for example, writes in *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785) that Black persons are "in reason much inferior" to whites and that "in imagination they are dull, tasteless and anomalous" (Query XIV, 150-1).

conducted by the narrator) reveals what Wilson calls the "fault lines of representation in the text" (140)—fault lines that put into stark relief the degree to which *Benito Cereno* is a reconstruction, be it Melville's creative reconstruction of the historical Delano or the attempt by the legal system within the text to reconstruct Babo's subjectivity from the scraps of testimony supplied by Cereno and the other crew. Like Delano's own supposedly faulty perception, the result is an incoherent portrait.

Babo's ambiguous identity and the subsequent attempt by the vice-regal courts to construct a persona by which to criminally charge him in absence of his own testimony finds clear historical correlates with figures like Nat Turner and Toussaint L'Ouverture. These figures muddle myths of Black docility, casting off remnants of Afro-pessimism in favour of heroic and affirming personas that show the potential of pan-Africanism as a successful coalitional politics. Babo, as previously explored, demonstrates how the slave ship itself can be commandeered as a physical instrument for fostering a coalitional politics not just in opposition to white mastery but the creation of an entirely new political regime that would involve reversing the transatlantic slave trade routes for the purposes of African repatriation. Black solidarity clearly worried slaveholders, and arguably also some antislavery whites. Denmark Vesey's conspiracy to revolt in 1822, though a failure, led South Carolina to pass an act that required "any free black seaman debarking from a vessel in any port of the state […] to be jailed until his ship cleared, with the ship's master liable for the costs of the incarceration"; any "black seaman not redeemed by his captain could be sold into slavery" (Wiecek 39). Even though the U.S. Supreme Court found the act unconstitutional, South Carolina defied the verdict and continued enforcing the act—an act that expressly did what Douglass had identified as disheartening about American political and social life for free Blacks: the presumption that Black persons were naturally slaves rather than

free. Nat Turner's rebellion struck an even deeper chord, particularly in the South, even though causalities were minor in comparison to uprisings like the Haitian Revolution (the revolution that Sundquist identifies as central to Melville's writing of *Benito Cereno*). Turner's enduring presence in white memories of slavery was perhaps owing less to the magnitude of the rebellion itself and more to do with, firstly, its continuity with the Haitian Revolution and, secondly, the publicity surrounding Turner's trial and purported *Confessions* (1831) recorded by attorney Thomas Gray. In his confessions, Turner remarks of a lengthy religious experience that began with providential visions of his own greatness and eventually led to his conclusion that he was "ordained for some great purpose in the hands of the Almighty" (9). Turner decides early on that he was not destined to remain a slave, and his self-confidence leads him to have an influential presence on the minds of his "fellow servants," easily generating solidarity with others to await the commands of God. Turner does finally receive an apparent sign that he should "arise and prepare [himself], and slay [his] enemies with their own weapons" (11), precipitating the rebellion. Sundquist notes, however, that this supposed confession was conveyed via the not impartial Thomas Gray, and as such Sunquist characterizes the confessions as "half autobiographical narrative and half court document" that "ambiguously participates in the suppression of ideas of rebellion and freedom" (145). Instead of a natural yearning for emancipation, Gray's account of Turner's confession emphasizes his derangement. As Sunquist explains:

> By staging Turner as a "gloomy fanatic" lost "in the recesses of his own dark, bewildered, and overwrought mind" as he plotted and carried out his revolt in methodical, cold-blooded fashion, Gray attempted to reduce Turner's revolt to a unique example of deviation from the normally goodwilled, safe relationship of master and slave. But because the *Confessions* embodied the central paradox of southern representations of slaveholding—that the institution was one of affectionate paternalism but that bloody insurrection could break forth at the least relaxation of vigilance—they served both to sound an alarm and to suppress the justness of Turner's plot. (145-6)

Rebellions in themselves could not unmask the evident brutality and violence that underwrote the institution of slavery so long as the battle over its publicity and representation could be commandeered by people like Gray, whose vision of slavery managed to infect and takeover accounts that were ostensibly recorded directly from rebellious slaves. Even though Turner's religious vision fit broader intellectual trends of his age that "absorbed biblical typology into national history" (Sunquist 3), to consider slave rebellion as a continuation of the American Revolution or Manifest Destiny risked justifying abolition. Tellingly, Gray's account borrows the impression of objectivity attached to legalistic documents by framing the *Confessions* as not strictly a creative endeavour in the manner of other slave narratives, like Equiano's, but a conclusive account of a particular event tried in court. Like the court documents Melville interposes into the otherwise literary narrative of *Benito Cereno*, Turner's *Confessions* (unsuccessfully) marks itself as the final word on an event that will resonate in ways Gray perhaps had not anticipated. Babo's voiceless presence in the legal archive does not stop his revolt and execution from weighing on the mind of Cereno, whose newfound religiosity and early death no doubt derive from his encounter with the revolt's leader. Indeed, the very absence of Babo's testimony in the court documents leaves open the question of what he would have said, and because of that absence the court unwittingly marks out the incompleteness of its own judgement.

Through the very act of speaking, Nat Turner essentially provides fodder for his pro-slavery opposition. By establishing some level of rhetorical agency, Turner allows for his identity to be moulded into whichever figure fits the ideological purposes of both pro-slavers and abolitionists. Babo, on the other hand, refuses to speak from the moment he was apprehended, and he would retain his voicelessness all the way to his execution, a situation reminiscent of

legal attempts in the U.S. to bar fugitive slaves from testifying in their own trials. Within the narrative of *Benito Cereno*, Babo's refusal to speak dampens the pretense of objectivity that the legal documents at the story's conclusion attempt to convey. Without his testimony, he of course cannot defend his actions but it also means no portion of his own authentic voice can be appropriated after his death. Babo is, in a sense, tried and convicted *in absentia*, as the "legal identity" that the vice-regal court constructs in order to convict him quite clearly fails to capture the extent of him and his actions. In fact, no motivations are ascribed to Babo or the other slaves—the one line the reader receives from the court documents simply states, "the negroes revolted suddenly" (114). This glaring repudiation of the act of narrative storytelling itself—a refusal to exchange in either investigation or speculation, which had hitherto defined Delano as a character—could hardly be true in the context of what was known to have occurred aboard slaving vessels, especially for Americans who viewed the Spanish as exponentially more barbarous than themselves. If the Spanish were really more barbarous than Americans, than the motivation for Babo and the others to revolt would be perfectly understandable as a response to the violence that occasioned their captivity.

While Melville clearly sourced the plot, characters, and events for *Benito Cereno* from the historical Delano, an even more famous case of slave uprising aboard a Spanish-flagged slaving vessel had occurred in the time since the real Delano had published his *Voyages* in 1817—an event which would involve multi-modal representations of the slave leaders, a former U.S. president, broad publicity in the American press, and a surprisingly decisive win for abolitionists. In 1839, the ironically named *La Amistad* was a schooner sailing Spanish colours transporting fifty-three slaves, mostly of the Mende tribe, from Havana to Camaguey province in Cuba (Wiecek 40; Rediker 26). At some point during the voyage, which crucially lacked enough

water (Rediker 17), the slaves rebelled under the leadership of Grabeau, Kimbo, Faquorna, and

Cinqué and took control of the ship, killing the captain and the cook, a slave-sailor named

Celestino who did not share a common language with the other slaves (Rediker 20). They

instructed the surviving crew to steer them back to Africa but ended up near Long Island, New

York where they were captured by the *USS Washington,* operating at the time as a survey rig,

and towed to Connecticut—both free states. Upon arriving to the U.S., a "series of complicated

legal maneuvers began" (Wiecek 40), initially with charges of piracy[56] and murder against the

Mende by the U.S. attorney for Connecticut in circuit court. The British had abolished the slave

trade in the Caribbean a few years earlier and as Wiecek explains,

> There was an irony in charging the Africans, rather than the slavers, with piracy, because the
> captives were *prima facie* free men, illegally enslaved, who had acted in self-defense. They had
> been brought to Cuba in violation not only of Spanish law but of joint conventions delegitimating
> the international slave trade. They had been in Cuba only a few days, too short a time to acquire
> slave status under Cuban law, and were being carried from one port to another in Cuba illegally
> under falsified papers that tried to conceal the facts of their illegal capture. (41)

Alongside these criminal charges, the commander of the *USS Washington* that had captured *La*

Amistad and towed it to port began admiralty proceedings in an attempt to claim ownership of

the ship and the slaves as salvage—which, of course, upset the original Cuban slaveholders who

in response claimed indemnity on their "lost slaves" (Kaplan 291). In an attempt to appeal to the

South, U.S. President Martin Van Buren activated the federal government in support of the

Cubans and the re-enslavement of the Mende, going so far as to have a ship ready to transport

them back to Cuba. Van Buren's hopes for a speedy resolution did not come to pass. The charges

of piracy and murder were dropped because "the jurisdiction of American courts did not reach

offenses committed on alien-flag vessels on the high seas or in foreign waters," which shifted the

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[56] In *Benito Cereno*, after the masquerade has been revealed, Delano saw the slaves as "in ferocious piratical
revolt" (108), although even before then piracy had haunted his thinking. After Babo and Cereno jumped into his
boat, Delano seizes Cereno by the throat and remarks that "this plotting pirate means murder" (106); and before that
he had mused over whether he was to be murdered on board a "haunted pirate-ship" (83).

"main theater of legal action" (Wiecek 41-42) to the admiralty proceedings. Abolitionist lawyers concentrated their efforts on these proceedings and successfully procured the services of former U.S. president John Quincy Adams, who happened to have negotiated the treaty under which the Cubans were now claiming the ship and slaves as rightfully theirs. The District Court ruled in the Mende's favour, arguing they had acted as free men under the laws of Spain when they rebelled and that there could be no salvage claim in them because Connecticut did not recognize the status of slavery (Wiecek 42). From there the case made it to the Supreme Court where former President Adams argued in defense of the Mende. Adams compellingly argued that the Mende acted as free men when they rebelled, having originally been enslaved illegally by the Spanish well prior to their arrival in Cuba. Their subsequent transportation between Cuban ports and slave markets—the journey upon which the revolt took place—did not change their status as free men. As such, the federal government would essentially be *enslaving* the Mende at a time when the U.S. recognized the slave trade as illegal. Part of the force of Adams' argument relied on the fact that the Cubans had forged documentation in attempting to circumvent the prohibition on the slave trade, and intriguingly Adams characterized this fraud as "null and insufficient as passports for persons, and still more invalid to convey or prove a title to property" (Yothers 141). Justice Joseph Story, opining for the majority verdict, ruled in the Mende's favour, remarking on the evident fraud the Cubans had committed in attempting to smuggle them into the Americas.

The Mende, like fugitive slaves before them, had sought the protection of friendly jurisdictions in their claim to have acted as free men. Just as crucially, they had, like Babo, used the slave ship as a technology for a new coalitional politics that would see them repatriate Africa. Of course, Babo's fictionalized version was unsuccessful, in part because Delano, unlike the abolitionists who rushed to the Mende's cause, couldn't or refused to recognize their claims to

302

emancipation, instead concluding an act of piracy had taken place—or in other words, Delano narrowly read the circumstances as a dispute over property. Babo and the rebels claimed ownership of themselves and Delano sought to contest this claim. Indeed, tellingly, Delano convinces his hesitant crew to recapture the rebel-held *San Dominick* because she contains gold and silver open to salvage. This narrow reading by Delano harkens to how slavery was likewise narrowly read as an issue of property in the Antebellum period, which requires a new section.

Section C
The Fugitive Slave Clause

The first Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 implemented the fugitive slave clause to the U.S. Constitution by "providing procedures for returning slaves to their owners," which allowed them to "seize an alleged slave without prior judicial or law enforcement approval; it required the owner only to present the alleged slave before a judge in order to receive a certification of removal" (Kraehenbuehl 1473). At the same time, the fugitive slave clause "prevented bound servants and slaves from gaining legal sanctuary in states sympathetic to their plight" (Baker 1137) without detailing precisely *who* was meant to enforce the clause. The lack of procedural protections for free Black persons in the clause concerned Northern states enough for them to pass laws in attempt to frustrate the enforcement of the Act within their state borders, known as personal liberty laws.[57] A consequence of these laws was, quite naturally, expanded protection for fugitive slaves who had escaped into Northern states, as slaveholders seeking to recapture

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[57] As Thomas Morris explains, "personal liberty laws"—so called because they recognized the right of personal liberty in slaves—were a collection of statutes passed by states opposed to slavery prior to the Civil War. The idea that underwrote these laws was the presumption that "all men are free until proven otherwise by orderly procedures" (ix), thus serving as "alternative to the slave codes of the South" (x) that presumed race was a likely determinative of status.

them faced local jurisdictions hostile to their claims and no clear federal authority to seek

redress. This began a contest between free and slaveholding states on the issue of fugitive slaves

that would define the early nineteenth century citizenship landscape in the United States.

The issue of fugitive slaves can serve as a historical counterpart for reading Melville's

novella, and for understanding both the failure of Babo's rebellion and Delano's motivations in

recapturing the *San Dominick* (Delano does after all explicitly call the rebel-held ship a

"fugitive"). It's important to note here that the very possibility of a "fugitive" slave was rooted in

the act of transit. It was by attempting to claim a different jurisdiction, one that specifically

outlawed slavery, that the slave was suddenly a criminal—or, put another way, a slave who

sought to live under an American constitutional order where slavery was not a guaranteed

protection was defined as a criminal act. At the heart of the fugitive slave status was thus also the

uneasy (and overly simplistic) bifurcation of the American legal realm into two distinct

citizenship regimes attempting to coexist under the same national banner.

Why look to fugitive slaves as the central figure through which to read *Benito Cereno*? In

part because it helps transform the novella from a historically situated commentary to a forward-

looking story relevant to contemporary debates about citizenship and immigration. In the period

leading up to 1850s, U.S. states created their own jurisdictions of enforcement depending on

their policy preferences around slavery—a political and judicial situation that finds some key

correlations with contemporary immigration in the United States. As James Kraehenbuehl (2011)

points out, both the Antebellum period and the post-Soviet period in the U.S. have configured the

debate around slavery and immigration through issues of state enforcement. Both historical

periods demonstrate a concern over the relationship between municipal or state and federal

power, specifically the ability of local governments to circumvent (overly) stringent federal laws

on slavery or immigration. The result: generally liberal states seek to undermine federal authority while generally conservative states seek to strengthen what they view as weak federal laws (Kraehenbuehl 1465). These areas of under- and over-enforcement create sanctuary sites where immigrants in the post-Soviet period and slaves in the Antebellum could find legal and political refuge. As with slave states attempting to activate the federal government against areas of underenforcement, conservative states in the post-Soviet period have sought to use federal power to eliminate sanctuary sites. Similarly, while slave states legally and customarily presumed all Black persons were slaves until otherwise proven, attempts at stringent immigration laws in the contemporary period have directed law enforcement officers to check the immigration status of "suspected illegal aliens during any lawful stop or in any other circumstance in which probable cause exists that an individual is an illegal alien" (Kraehenbuehl 1470)—suspicions and probable cause can rely on racial profiling, the presumption that certain visible minorities are illegal or nonbelonging. In both cases, law enforcement operates under the spurious premise that fugitivity and foreignness are written on the body in the form of racial or ethnic markers.

Benito Cereno can be dislodged from its bespoke political circumstances and read as a forward-looking story of migration, citizenship, and fugitivity when we identify the ways contemporary immigration debates are continuous with those of slavery during the Antebellum period. Just as *The Wanderer* and *Frankenstein* rhetorically transition the figure of the fugitive slave into the figure of the racialized refugee, Melville's novella similarly marks the legal and social process that keeps the non-citizen perennially on the periphery of inclusion—regardless of whether this non-citizen is the contemporary undocumented immigrant or the fugitive slave whose violent oppression defines the contours of U.S. citizenship. In other words, when both historical and contemporary registers are read into *Benito Cereno*, the novella helps portray in

stark relief how U.S. citizenship—or indeed, all citizenship regimes—depend on holding

particular disenfranchised figures on the periphery of inclusion rather than expelling them, along

with the various rhetorical strategies involved in this process. Delano dramatizes this somewhat

explicitly by becoming intensely obsessed with recapturing the *San Dominick* even though he

already has the revolt's ringleader in his custody (Babo is the first to be recaptured).

Given that the story is set in 1799, Delano's actions are even more significant since it is

through them that he is defining the future configurations of American identity. After all,

Delano's encounter with the *San Dominick* happens to be concurrent with a fugitive slave clause

wherein, firstly, the relationship between free and slaving-holding states had not yet crystallized

to the point that it would unravel the union and, secondly, U.S. citizenship "guaranteed scant

rights"; the status that afforded rights and privileges was instead the determination of individual

states (Baker 1141-2). As H. Robert Baker writes:

> In a world where a woman's civil rights (.e.g., her liberty to contract or right to appear in court)
> were determined by whether she was single or married, and where a man's political rights (e.g.,
> his exercise of the suffrage and ability to hold office) were determined by property qualifications
> and skin color, status was paramount, and that paramount authority for determining what
> privileges, protections, and restrictions belonged to each person was the sovereign state. (1142)

As such, a powerful strain of federalism in U.S. politics understood legal status as a matter of

local membership—to the extent that even some Northern lawmakers believed that "intruding

upon state power might be a greater evil" than slavery (Baker 1141). Even though fugitive slaves

were a particularly potent moral test, some politicians who were ostensibly antislavery were not

willing to undermine state legislatures or enlarge national power in order to further the

emancipatory cause of Black Americans. In their view, such a move would disrupt the delicate

citizenship regime the United States had so far built around a somewhat unintrusive federal

government, where it concerned enfranchised white males at least. The Indigenous peoples of

Turtle Island and the enslaved Black population certainly did not experience an "unintrusive" U.S. federal power.

Delano's actions also happen to disrupt a strategy of Black expatriation endorsed by Thomas Jefferson in *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785)[58] that was meant to both solve the slavery question and avoid a providential reckoning. Jefferson advocated explicitly for emancipated slaves to colonize African land and form their own country (Query XIV, 149), a striking endorsement for a racially pure citizenship regime in the United States bereft of both slavery and Black Americans. As Peter Onuf explains, Jefferson viewed African American slaves as a "distinct nation" and that the "crimes against slaves therefore had to be understood first in national terms" (3). Even though the rhetoric of nationhood was inconsistent and unformed in the eighteenth-century, there was enough of a conceptual framework to make cogent both an American nation resisting monarchical authority and a smaller, distinct nation within it constituted by racial slaves (with both sharing British despotism as a common enemy). As such, "Virginia slaves were people without a country, a captive nation, forcibly restrained from vindicating their rights against their white oppressors" (Onuf 4). If slaves were freed and allowed to reside in the state, Jefferson wrote, then "[d]eep-rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten-thousand recollections by the blacks of the injuries they have sustained," and "the real distinctions which Nature has made" would "divide us into parties, and produce convulsions, which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race" (149). In other words, racial and political distinctions would accentuate and plunge the country into war. For slaves especially, "loosening the chains of bondage would revive collective memories of

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[58] Expatriation was similarly taken up by James Monroe, fifth president of the U.S., and the American Colonization Society, which advocated for freed slaves to occupy a new settlement in Africa that would eventually form Libera.

captivity and displacement" (Onuf 5) and forge a national consciousness constituted by revenge

against former white masters and the appropriation of the United States as their own country.

While Jefferson readily identified slavery as an "unhappy influence on the manners of our

people" (173), an "unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the

other" (174), he also paired these abolitionist attitudes with racist beliefs in Black inferiority,

remarking in his *Notes* that "their existence appears to participate more of sensation than

reflection" (150) and that in general they are "inferior to the whites in the endowments both of

body and mind" (155). At the same time, his fervent belief in emancipation paired with

colonization was tinted with a deeply apocalyptic vision of America's destiny if slavery was not

eventually abolished. As Jefferson wrote:

> And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their own firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever; that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation is among possible events; that it may become probably by supernatural interference. The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest. (174-5)

This passage constitutes a searing indictment of his state's moral standing—a standing which is

so precarious that Jefferson remarks on the nation's evident condemnation if God were to

intervene. At the same time, however, part of the moral work Jefferson thinks Virginia in

particular must do to avoid this fate does not end with emancipation but with expatriation of

former slaves. Moral redemption for white Virginians would not come until then, although such

delay was not for nothing in Jefferson's mind: slavery enabled the means for self-preservation

and recognition of property rights (Onuf 4)—priorities which C.L.R. James identifies as

underwriting the "calculated brutality and terrorism" of slavery and the slave trade, and the

reason for the "unusual spectacle of property owners apparently careless of preserving their

property: they had first to ensure their own safety" (*The Black Jacobins*, 12). James here is thus

also revealing the contradiction inherent to the idea of benevolent masters that slaveholders used to justify slavery (a notion that Melville arguably mocks in *Benito Cereno*): there can be no benevolent paternalism for slavery if the master prizes his self-preservation. Hence, while slavery was evil "it did at least postpone the day of reckoning" (Onuf 4)—so long as whites kept Black slaves as property, then the latter would thereby be denied the opportunity to establish their own nation elsewhere.

Delano's actions manage to contravene Jefferson's vision of America's destiny on both religious and political grounds. Delano's decision to bring Babo and his compatriots to justice is gratuitous—he need not have intervened and the result would have been a potentially successful example of expatriation. Instead, he works to restore the brutal regularity of the slave trade that continues to worsen the religious and moral situation in the United States. In doing so, Delano is helping to further postpone America's day of reckoning.

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The line between slaveholding and kidnapping in the early American republic rested on the legal status of the person accused of being a fugitive, and in an "age in which citizenship was largely defined by the states and rights were parceled out according to complex local rules, the question of status was paramount" (Baker 1140). Without a distinction in status, there was no material or practical difference between slaveholding and kidnapping—the victims in both cases were being held against their will. The contest between state and federal laws involved various legislative and judicial attempts to resolve issues that naturally arose from the very possibility of fugitive slaves. Could a fugitive slave in a free state be extradited back to a slaving-holding state? Was a certificate of removal issued in a slave-holding state operative in another? Were there sufficient anti-kidnapping laws to protect free Blacks? Were the children of fugitive slaves

born in free states the property of the slaveholder and could they therefore be recaptured? On an even more basic level: how to distinguish between a slave and free person? Slavery was both the conversion of human beings into property and a "system of racial adjustment and social order" (Phillips 152) that struck at the heart of Anglo-American law and citizenship. Such "racial adjustment" was apparent in the explicit attempt to make Black persons and slaves legally indistinguishable (an attempt that had begun well before the American Revolution). Laws in the South buttressed the claim of slaveholders by guiding courts to accept the presumption that all Black persons were slaves until proven otherwise, which had the consequence of shifting the burden onto them to demonstrate their free status—although because many slaveholding states also restricted the rights of Black persons to testify during cases, they couldn't vouch for their freedom in any case (Morris 2).

Slave uprisings struck at the precarious balance between free and slaving-holding states, which had avoided both federal intervention and open conflict for decades through judicial and legislative footwork—Northern states occasionally conceded fugitive slaves back to Southern states and Southern states passed anti-kidnapping laws that prosecuted Southerners who had abducted free Blacks residing in the North. The balance, however, was not sustainable. Southern states continually bristled at the legal work of abolitionists who effectively deployed writ of *habeas corpus* and jury trials, for example, as means of freeing fugitive slaves from bondage. In sum, some slaveholders believed it was the duty of every instrument of federal and state power, as well as every citizen, to allow for the recapture of slaves regardless of their moral or political position on slavery. Since "northern states had erected 'obstructions and impediments,'" as Henry Clay remarked, it was therefore "up to congress to enforce the Constitution" (Foner

310

120)—an explicit endorsement of federal power over state power and a tacit admission that federalism had failed where it concerned the protection of slavery.

However, while it was violent rebellion that signalled the collapse of the existing constitutional order on fugitive slaves, it was the Supreme Court of the United States, ruling in favour of national supremacy and a "constitutional nationalism" (Baker 1154), that further eroded any illusion of peaceable co-existence between warring legal jurisdictions, hence the significance of Melville inserting legal documents to attest to the official account of events—a clear ironic gesture on his part. Certainly the infamous *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857) and the majority opinion of Chief Justice Roger B. Taney receives a justifiable amount of attention for helping instigate the Civil War, but well before that case was *Prigg v. Pennsylvania* in 1842, also presided over by Taney. The close proximity between *Prigg* and the *Amistad* case, decided a year earlier, perhaps took abolitionists off guard, their energy "thrown so totally into the Amistad effort" that they missed the significance of a Supreme Court case that "raised tangled questions about the validity of the 1793 Fugitive Slave Act and state personal liberty laws" (Wiecek 43). As Baker (1156) elaborates, the case concerned fugitive slave Margaret Morgan, who had escaped in 1837 from her slaveholder Margaret Ashmore of Maryland and settled in Pennsylvania, where she resided long enough to give birth to a child. Morgan and her children were eventually captured by Edward Prigg, an agent of Ashmore, and brought before the justice of the peace who had initially granted a warrant for their arrest. However, the justice refused to grant Prigg permission to then bring Morgan and her children back to Maryland and to the custody of Ashmore. Prigg defied the justice and brought them back to Maryland anyways, which naturally caught the attention of both states. After attempting and failing to get Prigg extradited to Pennsylvania, the state agreed with Maryland to expedite legal proceedings as a

way of testing the constitutionality of the personal liberty law by which Pennsylvania would eventually find Prigg guilty (Kraehenbuehl 1476). The case made it to the U.S. Supreme Court, which overturned Prigg's conviction and rendered Pennsylvania's personal liberty law unconstitutional. Pennsylvania's perhaps crude argument that the precarious relationship between state and federal authorities in the United States over slavery constituted "one consistent, harmonious, beautiful system of government" (*Prigg v. Pennsylvania*, 41 U.S. 539, 593) failed to convince the justices to enforce the existing constitutional order to which free states like Pennsylvania had relied on to protect fugitive slaves.

In the process, however, Justice Joseph Story, the same justice who ruled in favour of the Mende in the *Amistad* case and who was assigned to write the court's majority opinion by Taney, made *Prigg* a "legal attack on state sovereignty for the benefit of slaveholders" while also leaving slaveholders "without adequate law enforcement apparatus to reclaim their fugitives" (Baker 1161), passing that authority onto Congress to enforce by proclaiming the matter an issue of federal power. As Kraehenbuehl summarizes, the court's decision was twofold: on the one hand, it prohibited states from "passing laws that frustrated the purposes of the federal law with additional procedures," while on the other hand allowing states to "refuse to aid in enforcement [of the Act] if they so desired" (1477). Nonetheless, as Paul Finkelman argues, "Story's primary goal in *Prigg* was to enhance the power in the national government" which, in the 1840s, meant "strengthening southern slaveholders and their proslavery northern doughface allies" (249). Story's opinion was, according to Finkelman, "intellectually dishonest, based on inaccurate historical analysis, judicially extreme when it need not have been, and inhumane in its immediate results and in its long-term consequences" (ibid). Baker, with a little less directness, assesses Story's opinion as "sketching a historical narrative that feigned continuity" (1157). Story himself

was an "exuberant opponent of the international slave trade, and, in a more muted way, of Missouri's admission as a slave state" (Wicecek 36), although if Story was avowedly antislavery this did not shine through in his written opinion. Instead, the court's verdict in *Prigg* followed the methodical breakdown of state power to restrict or abolish slavery that had been ongoing since Northern states first began their efforts at frustrating the fugitive slave clause. Though state officials could not be compelled to assist federal marshals in carrying out the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act, they likewise could not interfere in protecting fugitive slaves from recapture, a circumstance that correlated with broader trends in nineteenth century statecraft that saw crucial realms of responsibility concerning issues of citizenship shift from local or municipal to the purview of federal or national agencies. Story apparently saw the court's verdict as somewhat resolving this tension by recognizing the "locality of slavery, as the creature of municipal law" and thus an incorporation of the doctrine of *Somerset v. Stewart*, explored in Chapter Three, although Wiecek suggests that Story only contextualized this point well after the verdict had been rendered and in response to abolitionist criticism (46). Abolitionists (rightfully) perceived Story's verdict for what it was: a recognition of the supremacy of the federal government over state government on the issue of slavery at a time when most federal branches of government were controlled by slaveholders or proslavery politicians.

This migration of authority over slavery from strictly a state issue to one where states could not interfere in slavery's continuation had the effect of flipping Lord Mansfield's landmark *Somerset* ruling in the eyes of pro-slavers, the case from which abolitionists had stemmed the phrase "Freedom national, slavery sectional." Pro-slavers had developed a "mirror image of this doctrine" (Wiecek 56) that emphasized abolition as local or municipal and slavery as national. In short, Mansfield's decision was widely received by both abolitionists and pro-slavers alike as

meaning that slavery was not natural but could only be introduced and maintained by an act of positive law. As explored in Chapter Three, abolitionists had seized this decision as a victory by suggesting that slaves became free once they contacted a free jurisdiction. Pro-slavers, however, had likewise taken the verdict as, at minimum, a modest win by reading it as legal justification for slavery where it had already been introduced by law in certain American states. Taney's opinion in *Dred Scott*, which declared that Black persons had no rights that white persons ought to recognize, appeared to flip *Somerset* on its head by suggesting that slavery or servitude was essentially the presumptive condition of Black persons, whose citizenship was otherwise unrecognized in the U.S. constitution. The burden, in other words, was not on slave states to justify slavery but on free states to justify abolition, or on free states to justify that Black persons had rights they ought to recognize. In 1863, John H. Van Evrie, for example, a "New York racist" (Wiecek 56) wrote that *Dred Scott* implied a "universal recognition of 'slavery' as the natural relation of the races [as] the basis of the common law" and that therefore freedom and racial equality were "creature[s] of the lex loci or municipal law" (iv). While this reading could not be justifiably rendered from Taney's decision, *Dred Scott* did portend that the "direction in the thinking of the high court majority was evolving" such that such doctrines might have found wider acceptance in the Supreme Court "had the war not intervened," and indeed a New York judge later warned that the Supreme Court had altered the constitution to "nationalize slavery, and turn this nation into a great slaveholding republic" (Wiecek 56; 57).

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850—meant to resolve both the ambiguity of the previous fugitive slave act of 1793 and the dispute between free and slaving-holding states—made slave rendition a wholly federal matter, positioning state officials as subordinate to the federal process, penalizing private citizens who interfered in the process of recapture, and rendering federal

marshals liable if they failed to convey fugitive slaves to custody (Baker 1163). In other words, the act constitutionalized *Prigg vs Pennsylvania*. Even though the Act was meant as a Union-saving compromise—and judges regularly ruled against challenges to the Act for precisely that reason—popular opposition in Northern states soon after the Act's passage rendered it unenforceable in some jurisdictions. Juries refused to convict rescuers, federal marshals tasked with recapture were charged with kidnapping in state courts, and the Underground Railroad "operated with increasing impunity" (Baker 1169).

Even though Delano is aboard a foreign merchant ship well outside U.S. jurisdiction, his behaviour mirrors that of an agent of federal power attempting to assist in the recapture of slaves. This likeness is not precisely one-to-one, for while Delano does ultimately serve the legal system in upholding slavery and prosecuting fugitives, his actions directly lead to the death and execution of the slaves rather than their safe conveyance back to their masters. In practical terms, Delano's actions constitute an imperialistic affirmation of U.S. authority in regions well outside their borders, exercising a muscular foreign influence that sees the Spanish reliant on U.S. intervention in order to rescue what's left of their weakened empire. However, analogically Delano's actions mirror that of a pre-Civil War federal or state officer recapturing fugitive or rebellious slaves and conveying them to custody (i.e.: re-enslavement)—actions which, in an American context, imply an acceptance that slavery is constitutionally protected. Such an implication would, if Delano were in Massachusetts and not the southern Pacific, be something of a betrayal to the antislavery ideals of his northern compatriots, if not a circumvention of state laws prohibiting citizens from assisting federal officers in the recapture of fugitive slaves. Even though he is from New England, and even though the northern states sought to exercise state power towards the gradual abolition of slavery in the U.S., Delano in the manner of a

doughface[59] does not protect the fugitive slaves from rendition but instead works actively to restore them to the custody of their (Spanish) masters, even though there is no legal or jurisdictional reason to do so. Indeed, the area around the island is characterized by "lawlessness and loneliness" (49) and thus no legal hegemony exists that requires Delano to act in the manner of a police force. He nonetheless ignores both legal and moral qualms in order to act the role of a nationalistic power, implying several things about how he views himself as an arbiter of a distinctly American authority and how he views that authority within the broader institution of slavery and the slave trade.

Melville, however, wrote *Benito Cereno* in a political climate quite fundamentally unlike Delano's. Melville wrote at a time in which authority over fugitive slaves had crucially migrated from a largely municipal or state matter to one controlled by the U.S. Congress, an issue concurrent with the more pertinent concern over slavery in the territories that led to the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. Melville and Delano in a sense occupy different instantiations of the American republic insofar as they live under different constitutional settlements concerning fugitive slaves and thus slightly different citizenship regimes. Understandably, Melville wouldn't necessarily have been cognizant of the legal minutiae that had so substantially changed the citizenship landscape in the United States between 1799 and 1855,[60] but nor was it necessary to understand the legal wrangling that led up to the political crisis of the 1850s to know something had changed. Growing tensions between free and slaving-holding states had led the latter to demand federal power be exercised in the protection of slavery as a constitutional guarantee

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[59] A term for a Northern Democrat with Southern sympathies.

[60] Although Melville might have been aware of *Prigg* because his father-in-law, Lemuel Shaw, was Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court between 1830-1860. Shaw in fact ruled on the very first constitutional challenge to *Prigg* in 1851, in which he ruled in favour of the law by refusing to grant a writ of *habeaus corpus* for a fugitive slave, Thomas Sims, who was trying to avoid rendition. This decision came only a few years before Melville wrote *Benito Cereno*.

(which in the context of all the hollering over "states' rights" in revisionist histories of the causes of Civil War, meant disempowering free states from passing their own laws against slave rendition[61]). Melville lives in an America rocked by disdain among the antislavery movement at the Compromise of 1850, which included the more stringent Fugitive Slave Act, and pro-slavery anger at northern resistance to the Act that basically rendered it unenforceable. Slavery by Melville's time had broached the traditional political and legal channels that had sought to contain it. Delano evidently knows of no such breach as evidenced by his willingness to convey the rebellious slaves to the court system.

Nonetheless, Melville must have had reasons to think Delano and the slave revolt aboard the *San Dominick* possessed relevance for his own political enmeshments and was therefore a story worth re-articulating for his audience, and indeed both exist under a divided U.S. citizenship regime differentiated more by the intensity of the political climate, which defined Melville's nation as one far closer to civil war. Delano is still by any measure the embodiment of political and moral failure as he compromises on whatever principles he may have on slavery in order to buttress any number of prevailing systems of oppression: white European rule over Black persons, growing U.S. muscularity in the Americas, the hypocrisy of Manifest Destiny, the continuation of economic subjection inherited from the Old World. Regardless of his motivation, Delano acts on the side of power to protect the status quo rather than on the side of the dominated and exploited. Like some of his northern counterparts, while slavery was accepted as evil, it's abolition was not worth it if it meant tearing down existing racial hierarchies or exercises of political power. Persons like Delano are thus in a sense blameworthy for the national fraying in the decades to come.

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[61] This isn't nearly as ironic as it may seem if we consider that slave-holding states were only on the side of federalism until it contradicted their explicit policy of protecting slavery.

CHAPTER SIX – Conclusion: The Enduring Pursuit of Legibility

In Chapter Four, I briefly mentioned James C. Scott's notion of "legibility" within the context of the passport and cross-border movement. I explored how the achievement of legibility by state governments in part distinguishes modern from premodern statecraft. In my concluding chapter, I focus more exclusively on legibility both as a historical phenomenon adjacent to the operation of the state and as a concept that further binds literature to citizenship. Scott frames the "perennial" struggle for control between citizens and the state as a "state's attempt to make society legible" (2), which intimates the act of reading that is inherent to the operation of citizenship as a category with both legal and social significance. The notion of "reading" here is not merely analogical; in a very literal sense, the writing and reading of law and policy (and the recognition of this law's legitimacy) enacts the legal fiction that is personhood and the associated rights that elevate personhood to the status of citizen. Reading is an act of recognizing those imposed categories that render a person legible. For the state, the reading of citizenship involves a type of legal fiction that allows for it to provision social benefits and domestic or foreign policy goals, while for the individual, citizenship appears as an archetype for belonging. Regardless of how citizenship is read, emphasis falls on maintaining legibility across time and space that proceeding generations of potential citizens can comprehend and re-enact. Both the state and the populace are, in a sense, dependent on legibility for community cohesion, legitimacy, and the integrity of a shared national identity, especially in the contemporary period when global and intra-national governing bodies may diffuse or disrupt previous methods of civic participation or state functioning.

On the one hand, the threat of *illegibility* is therefore the threat of a return to premodern statecraft, when states were functionally blind to their subjects, and on the other hand, an existential threat to sentimentalities and patriotisms for the nation, or for the capacity to speak in a particular language of belonging. Modern illegibility may be found in the figure of the refugee, but as a result of efforts by states to institute ever stricter and more robust, bureaucratically efficient citizenship regimes, multiple other figures of illegibility emerge as more opportunities and spaces for estrangement open up. My analysis over the preceding chapters has focused overwhelmingly on nuanced figures of illegibility of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, namely women, refugees, and chattel slaves—persons whose precarious, unstable, or confused relationship with the state often sourced concerns over political and social stability. Their presence either in the supposedly sacred interior space of a nation or on the periphery alerted increasingly powerful state apparatuses to mobilize their material resources in an effort to control (though not necessarily expel) exilic and diasporic figures. This effort likewise required the mobilization of various rhetorics—legal, cultural, political, etc.—that could effectively and legitimately distinguish between enfranchised citizens and foreigners, both internal and external. The task of delineating who fell into which category, and which language was most effective in conveying what were otherwise heterogeneous concepts, was not the singular purview of the state but negotiated through various modes, including literature.

All of the literary texts I have so far focused on use the novelistic form to shape, contest, negotiate, or reinforce a rhetoric for citizenship at a time when issues of managing the long-term relationships between citizens and foreigners, or between citizens and other forms of Indigeneity, had risen to the forefront of popular and political concern. Yet archetypes for citizenship appear largely meaningless without figures whose presence on the threshold of belonging provoke

attachment to the nation or community. My focus has largely been on literature produced by exilic and diasporic figures who code petitions for inclusion into the narrative density of the novelistic form and who in the process demonstrate a level of discursive and rhetorical adeptness typically ascribed to upper class members of the polity. I have so far suggested that these petitions should not just be understood as directed to the amorphous social and cultural relations of a national community, but attentive to emergent issues of governmentality at a time when authority over citizenship and cross-border movement were becoming increasingly monopolized by the state. I suggested, for example, that Equiano in part portrays himself and his fellow countrymen as figures whose alterity could be managed by various measures continuous with British imperial practices. I argued that the creature in *Frankenstein* resonates as a figure of refugeehood whose seamless cross-border movements contributes to his frightening presence—a figure beyond the reach of even the most robust and powerful state governments. I argued that Amasa Delano in *Benito Cereno* appropriates the ideological proclivities of a U.S. government agent that cannot distinguish the petitions of the oppressed and instead functions to assert state power over racialized persons, in turn depicting that function as the *raison d'etre* of the modern Western state. I also considered how Babo's refusal to speak makes him a unique authorial figure among the handful I have addressed, which have included obvious candidates like Equiano but also Lord Mansfield. I suggested Babo's reasons for not speaking force the official narrative of the episode with the *San Dominick* to remain incomplete, denying the implied American and Spanish imperial authors license to editorialize his testimony for their own purposes. In this circumstance, the very act of speaking would only serve to discredit the legitimacy of his rebellion—in contradistinction to Equiano's abundance of speech, which demonstrates his rhetorical agency and which serves as a means of inserting himself into the British polity.

Citizenship depends on a pernicious simplification that reduces every individual into an easily documented, known, and embraced politico-legal status that can be fed through the machinery of state infrastructure—a process that Scott calls "uniformity." The methodology of this simplification remains a key condition of modernity and a primary export of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Indeed, the manner in which this time period casts an indelible shadow on the contemporary period can at minimum be seen in the early establishment of a managerial infrastructure and associative class regime that were integral to "the state" both as a functioning institution and as a concept. In turn, the distance is quite short between contemporary citizenship regimes and the second wave of European imperialism that obscured or outright eliminated the local complexity and knowledge practices of South American, African, and Asian cultures in favour of "knowing" non-Europeans through reductionists binaries—such a process would be familiar for European states since, in essence, they had already practiced and conducted this process on its own people, such as through census, surveys, and mapmaking (an imperialism turned inwards, so to speak). This process had been rehearsed in Europe, and especially Napoleonic France, with the purging of local customs and feudal lords in favour of a centralized bureaucracy headquartered in major metropolitan locations.

While conditions for citizenship in our contemporary period may have become bureaucratically convoluted, citizenship retains its conceptual flavour as a form of reductionism in which individual complexity is erased in favour of clarifying a person's relationship to the state. Citizenship remains a universal organizing rubric by which states can administer services and control populations. This logic is not unique to the overarching *oeuvre* of a state resolved to distinguish between foreigners, internal rebels, and patriotic nationals but a mode of intelligibility that finds correlates in the production and reading of literature. The reductionist

methodology that turns complex social networks and multifaceted individuals into the simplified

legal category of citizen or non-citizen was discussed previously in the context of the trope of

personification in British sentimentalist literature. Sympathy or sympathetic movement was an

epistemology for European writers, insofar as sentimentalism was (at its most basic instantiation)

a manner and method of knowing other people. Regardless of how sympathy operated—either as

a rationally informed assessment or an emotionally driven reaction or some combination of the

two—the result was still a persona imposed upon non-white, non-European persons as a means

of simplifying an otherwise chaotic colonial encounter. I explored how Frances Burney in *The

Wanderer* attempted to disrupt the sentimental movement between reader and the protagonist as

a way to confront how readers learned to interpret fiction, and I explored the implications of this

disruption in the context of citizenship, racial identity, and refugeehood.

In focusing on Brian Friel's 1981 play *Translations* for my final chapter*,* I wish to

conclude by offering an analysis that is forward looking to contemporary citizenship cultures.

Kevin Whelan summarizes *Translations* as probing the "psychodynamic effects of colonialism

as they play out in the linguistic realm, where the private and the public spheres meet" (8). F. C.

McGrath similarly assesses *Translations* as a play that "subordinates the cultural and political

materials to the large concern with language" (33). The play is set against the backdrop of the

early nineteenth century process of legibility enacted by the British in Ireland through the

Ordnance Survey of Ireland, which lasted from 1824 to 1847. At the time, European survey

practices depended on projecting geometric shapes onto the landscape, known as triangulations

(Hewitt 2011, 158), which resulted in more accurate representations but also the illusion that

maps were mimetic, at least among laymen. Triangulation seemed to hold the "potential

perfection of the map's relationship with the territory mapped," producing what Matthew Edney

calls the "cartographic ideal" (21). Triangulation was a technological fix for the problem of how to represent and know territory, and the increased precision offered by triangulation helped to erase the distinction between map and world because it made it possible to conceive of maps at the same size and scale of the territory it purported to depict. Regardless of terrain or complex geographical features—regardless of assessments of beauty or wonder—all landscapes could be simplified into a printable and legible geometric representation, and from there filled in with whichever details were prioritized (place names, property, etc.), offering what by appearances seemed the product of impeccable order. This projection was not simply the niche workings of the ordnance or civil organization, but a defining feature of the Enlightenment spirit that underwrote the graphical culture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, which in turn offered new ways of visualizing the familiar and intimate spaces of one's locality or nation, or the exotic faraway territories on the periphery of empire.

The pretension of objectivity and accuracy was an essential part of the cultural purchase of cartography. Maps had not always enjoyed such an association (Hewitt 2011), but triangulation helped imbue maps with an impression of precision and exactitude, while obscuring the extent to which maps were creative and meticulously constructed views of the world—and prior to satellite and computer technology, expensive, chaos-ridden endeavours. Maps were and still are imagined representations that rely on imaginary lines (longitude and latitude) for their structure and coherence, not exclusively the calculated outcome of raw data or statistics. Despite this, the early maps produced from triangulations conveyed nations as unified geographical entities knowable through a combination of observation and precise mathematical equation. These maps could then be printed in legible formats, archived in the built environment of the museum or library, and then easily reassembled and arranged according to preferred methods of

knowledge presentation and distribution. Triangulation was significant for another reason related to my continuing attention on the emergence of a modern statecraft: extensive, nation-wide triangulations "could only be undertaken by governments" (Edney 27). Those states which "lacked a large and entrenched military-fiscal infrastructure could not muster the long-term resources necessary to support extensive triangulations" (ibid), which took decades and in some cases outlived their own practitioners. No other entity besides a well-funded, bureaucratic, quasi-militaristic state had either the financing or authority to conduct triangulations on the scales to which they made monetary and strategic sense. As such, the very capacity and willingness to conduct large-scale surveys, like that of Ireland, was a projection of state power. There are thus direct correlations between the capacity and ambition to conduct these surveys and the sort of robust state apparatus necessary to forge an extensive and effective citizenship regime.

The British cartographic mission in Ireland in particular imposed more than just a series of new maps. The Irish were initially illegible to a foreign government seeking to transform a former client state into a full-fledged colonial possession, which involved a process of Anglicization that made the survey more than just mathematical or civic. This process, connected to a larger ideology of colonialism, "presented the acquisition of English as a liberation, the golden bridge that carried the native beyond localism into the world at large" (Whelan 8). Yet despite the promise embedded in the acquisition of English, the pretension to precision and objectivity that characterized triangulation as a survey practice was impossible when it came to conducting translation. As Edney (28) points out, what distinguished the Ordnance Survey of Ireland from similar triangulations in India was the successful attempt at producing maps that helped in the exercise of administrative control that extended far deeper than military conquest and into the messy intimacies of social and cultural realms.

The maps produced from these trigonometric surveys should arguably not be seen as competitors to literature or literary imagination, or to literary modes like Romanticism that depicted distinct visions of the landscape and its history. Rather, in considering particular maps and literary texts as borne from the same graphical culture, we can identify how a lexicon of geometry, numeracy, and geographical representation was shared between them as a means of national self-definition, which in Ireland's case involved bringing the country into the imperial fold of Great Britain. My reading of Friel situates *Translations* and its historical setting within the context of citizenship by focusing on how the process of cartography and Anglicization that Friel depicts is prototypical of the push for uniformity so integral to modern citizenship as both legal status and mark of belonging—in this case, the survey helped simplify and clarify the relationship the English and the British state had with the Irish, a process that had formally begun with the Act of Union of 1800. Indeed, I argue that *Translations* should be read as a text that, firstly, counters imperialistic historiographies that portray the survey as innocent knowledge gathering, and secondly, resists legibility through the portrayal of the distinct Irish culture of rurality that underwrites Baile Beag, the play's setting.

John Harwood Andrews (1980) and Rachel Hewitt (2010) both offer examinations dedicated to the decades long British survey that encompassed Scotland, Wales, and eventually Ireland. Andrews, however, expresses seeming contempt for the Irish in general, writing that in "any nation with a more compliant attitude to authority than the Irish, the government might well expect the orthograph published on its official maps to become generally accepted" (89). Andrews in turn defends the British survey of Ireland as a well-intentioned project of knowledge gathering despite the overtures of imperialism that plague it. On the topic of Thomas Larcom, for example, the orthographer in charge of Anglicization during the survey, Andrews argues that

"Larcom introduced a new system which, although rational and well-intentioned, has been bitterly criticized (and completely misunderstood by a number of later Irish writers)" (ibid) and that overall, "the period 1833-46 was marked by a closer and more constructive interest by both Parliament and executive in Ireland's social and economic problems" despite this period ending with the Great Famine (90).[62] Andrews fails to fully acknowledge how British willingness to overlook the destructive effect of the orthographic project on Irish rural culture prefigures Britain's failure to alleviate the effects of the Great Famine. It is arguably the case that British callousness towards the Irish as evidenced in the survey informed a later unwillingness to prevent or counteract mass starvation.

Moreover, regardless of how "well-intentioned" the British might have been, the survey was an imposed military operation that only consulted with local Irish residents out of necessity and not out of principle, and certainly not from a sensitivity towards rural Irish identity. When it became clear that English soldiers could not live up to the task, the Irish were employed to rescue the project from failure, often relying on the same farm labourers whose land and ways of life were being threatened. Both Hewitt and Andrews offer vague apologias of British imperialism in Ireland and romanticized visions of the British landscape as a site of good feeling rooted in the arduous work of well-intentioned surveyors, which can therefore make examining Friel a difficult task. Hewitt accuses Friel of committing "his own wilful mistranslations of history" in his play, remarking that "we have seen how the Irish Ordnance Survey's character was much more complicated than the purely imperialist endeavour that Friel describes" (2010,

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[62] Friel openly mocks this idea of the well-intentioned in Act 2 of *Translations* (56):
 Manus: [in Gaelic] I've been offered a job.
 Owen: Where? (now aware of *Yolland*) Come on, man – speak in English.
 Manus: For the benefit of the colonist?
 Owen: He's a decent man.
 Manus: Aren't they all at some level?

281). Friel is not a historian and has said that *Translations* is, as Hewitt cites, an "inaccurate history" (ibid), but Hewitt's critique conflates different senses of the word "history" and misses how Friel operates with a notion of history different from an official or confirmed narrative of events. The play does not portend a history of the survey in the popular sense and should not be read as such, or read narrowly as an account of the Ordnance as strictly an "imperialist endeavour." Rather, as McGrath points out, Friel's notion of history is partially indebted to George Steiner's *After Babel* where "history" constitutes messy acts of translation between past and present (33). Moreover, Richard Russell notes that the character of Hugh admits near the end of the play that "some sort of accommodation must be made with modernity" (157), represented by abandoning an isolationist Ireland in favour of one linguistically and culturally integrated with the larger world, represented by the British. As such, Hewitt's criticism that Friel presents the survey as monolithically imperialist is mistaken. Friel textures his play with characters who contradict their expected roles in the survey or who embody interculturality, including Yolland, Owen, and Maire, each one arguably representing the cultural and environmental intricacies behind contact between the Irish and English, or the degree to which imperialism was never as coherent or efficient as politicians or bureaucrats would have liked it to be.

Additionally, Hewitt's criticism misses the nuance of Friel's play as an attempt to appropriate the telling of Irish history from two different, opposed sources: firstly, that of a British institutional history authored by imperial practitioners, and secondly, a stringent Irish nationalism seeking to establish an authoritative genealogy of Ireland. As Scott Boltwood (2002) explains:

> Like any genealogy, nationalism tolerates only a single line of descent through each generation in a legitimating myth of ideological paternity, and this process seeks to occlude the polymorphous narratives of diverse, if not unaligned, movements with an official history of an immutable bequest from one generation to the next. Such a reductive chronicle draws a direct line from the

1798 Uprising to Independence through Daniel O'Connell, Young Ireland, James Stephens, and Charles Stewart Parnell. (309)

Friel throughout *Translations* subverts these legitimating and ideological myths of Irishness. As I'll explore later in this chapter, the character of Hugh identifies the 1798 Irish Rebellion as a type of origin point for Irish resistance politics but he neither fosters a heroic mythology nor evinces a Gaelic or Irish purity that twentieth-century Irish nationalists would find appealing. Hugh's multilingualism and veneration of Latin and Greek classic literature fosters an Irish social space that is intimately local in terms of its bespoke rurality and worldly in terms of its outward vision of cultural and linguistic education. Additionally, Hugh's students derive from a generation without direct memories of 1798 and therefore fundamentally lack the same sort of attentiveness to uprising that Hugh has, and this difference is reflected in their personalities: Maire celebrates English presence in Ireland and brags of leaving the country, Owen directly assists the British cartographic project, Manus's disability makes him an ineffectual warrior, and Doalty, who does commit an act of resistance, is completely ignorant of the political ramifications of his actions. In fact, the most direct, most violent act of resistance against the English is both offstage and committed by characters who never actually appear (the Donnelly Twins). Friel has crucially located audience perspective on a space where the content of any imperial or nationalist violence is strictly rhetorical or linguistic, instead of the venerated battlefields of Irish uprising.

The generational shift between Hugh and his students, or between those born before 1798 and those born after, is mirrored for the British in the character of Lieutenant Yolland, who explains to Owen how his father saw 1789 and the French Revolution as "Year One." Just as the British served as a convenient figure against which to define Irishness, in the eighteenth century "Britain developed many of its modern symbols of nationhood in conscious contradistinction to

328

French styles of nation-making" (Billig 81). The presence of 1798 as a generational marker between Hugh and his students likewise gestures to the 1916 Uprising that weighs on Friel's sense of Irishness. For the "children born after the 1916 revolution," which includes Friel, there is a sense of "cultural dislocation that results when a nationalist ideology loses England as its defining opposite and contrastive enemy" (Boltwood 304). As such, there are multiple concurrent crisis points in *Translations* that cleave history into past and present and inform particular ideas of indigeneity and foreignness, thus requiring complex acts of non-linguistic translation between then and now.

It is here that an attentiveness to where and when Friel is writing from (Derry, Northern Ireland in the 1970s) helps explain the significance of the historical setting of *Translations*, namely that it is not merely an attempt at historical revisionism in service of nationalism. Boltwood pointedly suggests that "only the most naïve readers would consider Friel a loyal nationalist in the [Éamon] de Valera mode" (303).[63] Rather than the English constituting a hegemonic figure against which to define Irishness, Friel writes from a post-independent Ireland in which both citizenship and foreignness are fractious and varied, particularly within the sectarianism of the North. Friel "recognizes that Ireland's continuing territorial crisis with the Northern enclave forced the island's citizens to parse identity with a specificity unknown to the earlier era," in turn motivating an ideological evolution away from a pre-independence binarism of colonizer and colonized or hegemonic versus subaltern towards, at least in Friel's case, a postcolonialism wherein definitions for Irishness, native, and foreign are left unclear, resulting in a "contentious semantic fray" (Boltwood 304, 305). The heterogeneity of citizenship and foreignness sits uneasily alongside a rhetoric of nationalism within postcolonial Ireland

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[63] Éamon de Valera was a prominent militant Irish republican during the 1916 Easter Rising and enduring Irish political figure in the Republic of Ireland who founded the political party Fianna Fáil.

interwoven by increasingly specific forms of affiliation, or as Boltwood writes, the very terms 'native' and 'foreign' "no longer refer to the Irish and some non-Irish Other, be they specifically English or generically British, but to the Catholic peasant of Gaelicist nationalism and all internal, disenfranchised Irish Others: Anglo-Irish and suspected 'West Britons,' Protestants of all shades, middle-class businessmen, feminists, homosexuals, Dubliners, pagans" (305).

Yet this diversity is not exclusive to twentieth-century Ireland. Friel's *Translations* locates the mixed nature of belonging and foreignness in the early decades of the country's union with Great Britain, and in so doing counteracts post-independent nationalist ideologies that seek to extricate popular movements of resistance "out of history" (Lloyd 24) and into an official, legitimating mythology of Irishness. Citizenship figures in this discussion at the point in which the state contacts this nationalist ideology of post-independent Ireland. Boltwood, for example, reads Friel's *Living Quarters* (1977) as a play that allows him to "assess state ideological apparatuses fifty years after independence in a manner that reveals his own personal struggle with the monologic discourse of the state" (310). With *Translations,* performed three years later, we find a similar engagement with the "monologic discourse of the state" through Friel's dislodging of both imperial and nationalist histories of early nineteenth century Ireland embodied in and provoked by the survey.

Despite Friel's admission that *Translations* constitutes an "inaccurate history," he does accurately capture the broader force of legibility on two fronts: firstly, in the context of the nineteenth-century survey that Britain used to fold Ireland into its empire, and secondly, in the context of a post-independence state-sponsored Irish nationalism emanating from the Republic that sought to foster an ideal of Irish or Gaelic purity. While the survey was an important historical moment for British self-definition at the cusp of its emergence as a proto-superpower,

330

the impetus for surveys of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland were steeped in legacies of English intrusion in the affairs of its neighbouring states. Though the British survey of Ireland was ostensibly about land taxes, the project's purview expanded to include a host of other, non-quantitative dimensions of life not originally proposed when the survey began and which saw the British military reach beyond its ostensible domain. British cartographers and orthographers explicitly saw their task and the survey as an opportunity to "improve" Ireland, which from their perspective meant expunging local knowledge and particularity.

Ironically, as Russell notes, *Translations* imagines how the region's "slow cultural death might have been *accelerated* by both the British Ordnance Survey and some members of the local, agrarian community [my emphasis]" (155), hence also why Friel should not be read as nostalgic for a lost Irish or Gaelic purity. Indeed, Russell, in his attempt to steer critique towards the role of the environment in the play, argues that Friel implies that both Irish nationalism and English imperialism have been "complicit in ushering in pernicious aspects of modernism that have, in their turn, slowly killed rural Irish farming communities and the antimodern, communal worldview these villages espouse" (158-9). This fits in with Edney's assessment that the survey, "like all instruments of state power […] were exercises in negotiation, mediation, and contestation between the surveyors and their native contacts, so that the knowledge which they generated was a representation more of the power relations between the conquerors and the conquered than of some topographical reality" (25). Writing from a place of twentieth-century Northern Ireland, Friel uses *Translations* to acknowledge and affirm the mixed nature of Irish identity via the complex relationship between British surveyors and rural farmers.

Section A
A Late August Afternoon in 1833

Friel's *Translations* opens on a late August afternoon in 1833 at the hedge-school of Hugh O'Donnell in the fictional townland[64] of Baile Beag or Ballybeag, Ireland. His son Manus is trying to teach Sarah to say her name but her "speech defect is so bad that all her life she [had] been considered locally to be dumb" (11). Manus's attempts to work through Sarah's anxiety and speech disability are contrasted by Jimmy Jack, a former "Infant Prodigy," who in the background of their lesson recites Homer's *Odyssey* in Greek and provides astute literary and etymological interpretation while doing so. Sarah is eventually successful in saying her name, and this leads into Manus's curiosity regarding the whereabouts of his father, who is at a christening. That Hugh is absent attending a ritual of naming is more than just apropos. Together with Sarah's attempts to name herself, these events stage the central preoccupation of the play. Maire soon arrives and attempts to join in on the language game, giving a few words of Latin and revealing the only English she knows: "In Norfolk we besport ourselves around the maypoll"—quicky corrected by Manus as maypole (15). Maire than reveals the larger political reality of their moment: "The English soldiers below in the tents, them sapper fellas, they're coming up to give us a hand. I don't know a word they're saying, nor they me; but sure doesn't matter, does it?" (17). A foreign military presence does not apparently concern Maire, and her rhetorical question regarding the perceived harmlessness of the English constitutes a painful

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[64] Townlands were "local divisions smaller than parishes" of around 300 acres which "formed the basis of the county cess tax valuations" (Hewitt 2010, 237), although the imposition of a specific acreage here is deceptive. Friel's fictionalized Baile Beag resembles more "a formless cluster of farm houses" (Evans 60) than a clearly defined village, and indeed it seemingly lacks all the sorts of establishments (such as a public house) that would be germane to a village. Nonetheless, the cess tax was essential for funding everything from jails to the salaries of local officials but had overtime become unfair. The boundaries of the townlands in the context of the cess tax became a chief concern to the British when they began the survey of Ireland around the time Friel's play is set in.

dramatic irony for the twentieth-century audience reading or watching *Translations* who are aware of the violence that will follow. Just as significantly, Maire describes a mutual unintelligibility between the English and the Irish that is paradigmatic of the colonial encounter, but which is also, for now, lacking the chaos and violence that did accompany contact between the English and their imperial subjects. Maire is seemingly underappreciating the unfortunate circumstances that did arise as a result of linguistic difference and an imperial force unrespecting of linguistic pluralism. Part of the tragic and prophetic undercurrents of *Translations* can also be reached by reading the hedge-school's emphasis on multilingualism in light of the Biblical tale of the Tower of Babel, in which language pluralism—or, more specifically, a mutual unintelligibility as a result of multiple co-existent languages—is a punishment handed down by God for man's hubristic attempt to engineer a structure to reach heaven. In acquiring knowledge of multiple languages, Hugh and his students are thereby circumventing God's punishment.

The reason for the British presence becomes clear with the arrival of Doalty and Bridget, two more students of Hugh's hedge-school, with the former carrying a "surveyor's pole," an instrument used by the British military in the survey of Ireland. Without realizing how right she is, Maire appropriately labels the pole a "weapon" (11) and asks Doalty where he got it, to which he relates that "every time [the British] stick one of these polls into the ground and move across the bog, I'd creep up and shift it twenty or thirty paces to the side" (ibid). This is not an insignificant act of petty mischief. Andrews notes, for example, that for the British surveyors the "main problem was persuading the local people not to remove the trigonometrical poles before they had been observed" (82). The nature of this problem was not unique to Ireland. Hewitt relates how cartographic surveyors across Europe faced considerable suspicion and sometimes violence as they dotted between villages. Surveyors were caught between competing perceptions

of foreignness. Some reactions were the result of a simple paranoia of strangers, but by the 1790s, the first decade of the Ordnance Survey as an organization, "negative associations were augmented by a fear that map-makers might be spies, working for revolutionary France or for the newly vigilant and intrusive British government" (Hewitt 2010, 156), and understandably so. Surveying was identical in appearance to the activity of state spies or foreign agents looking to gleam weak points in Britain's territorial defense (it did not help that the uniform of British military engineers shared the same colour as that of French soldiers). But it was not just the resemblance between surveying and spying that concerned local residents:

> Whether map-makers were suspected as state spies or foreign agents, both were unpopular. Many British citizens with left-leaning political tendencies despised [British Prime Minister] Pitt's surveillance mechanisms as hallmarks of a state that had overstepped the mark. One commentator complained, exaggeratedly, that the Alien Office was a 'system of TERROR almost as hideous in its features, almost as gigantic in its stature, and infinitely more pernicious in tendency that France ever knew'. (Hewitt 2010, 157-8)

Surveyors were arbiters of a new level of knowledge gathering that portended either encroachments on individual liberties or foreign invasion, neither of which were appealing prospects for private citizens (the commentator's use of "terror" in the above passage is an invocation of Robespierre's Reign of Terror). Map-making was not some neutral pursuit of national self-knowledge and legibility but an epistemological practice that subtended a new political reality in Britain and Europe post-1789, namely that the French Revolution was a replicable event. Republican ideals could spread to other realms.

As such, the perception that surveyors were either part of an emergent, oppressive surveillance apparatus or agents of republicanism was neither naïve nor conspiratorial. The "Alien Office," a department of the Home Office (itself only a decade old at the time), had just been established in 1793 in direct consequence of the passage of the Alien Act and the Westminster Police Bill, the combination of which led to a "complete system of surveillance for

suspects, whether British or foreign, almost a mirror image of the much despised French system of secret police" (Sparrow 362). The influx of French migrants as a result of revolutionary activities had led to paranoia that some of the newly landed were Jacobin agents in disguise sent over to incite revolution. Coincidently, all political stripes in Britain also agreed that the judicial system was corrupt and in need of reform. These two pertinent issues lead to a surveillance apparatus that involved some significant assumptions regarding the behaviour of patriotic citizens and, conversely, those who were perceived as dangerous foreigners conspiring to upend the country. As Elizabeth Sparrows explains:

> Much play was made in the common debate [on the Westminster Police Bill] of the need to clean up the system and bring footpads and highwaymen to book, but the intention of the new magistrates' functions was intended to go far beyond the apprehension of common criminals. They were quite simply to prevent the possibility of revolution. There was therefore a clause of the act which gave any one magistrate the discretionary power to apprehend people, examine them on their character and intentions, and commit them to prison without further trial, for revolutionary intentions were considered so heinous as not to require the ordinary process of justice through the courts. (363)

What began with a relatively bipartisan appreciation of the need for judicial reform instead turned into deeper existential concerns regarding the make-up and arrangement of the British nation itself—who constituted its loyal members, who didn't, which political views were expressions of personal liberty and which were dangerous subversions of established order. The answer to these questions was quite evident as the prevention of common crime became "inextricably mixed" with "preventing the expression of republican views" (Sparrow 364), what became known as Pitt's Terror, a "conservative counterpart to Robespierre's Terror" (Hewitt 2010, 155). It was within this atmosphere of suspicion fostered by the British government itself and in turn redirected at perceived agents of the state that surveyors had the unenviable task of scouring the country and people's property while hauling strange-looking instruments.

Distinguishing between the state-run Ordnance Survey and state ambitions of domestic

knowledge gathering was therefore far from easy.

In Ireland of course, perceptions of surveyors as foreign agents was very much an

accurate assessment. Doalty's shifting and eventual theft of the surveyor's pole constitutes an act

of political resistance to the British efforts at mapping Ireland, although like Maire he is

somewhat unaware of these implications. Only Manus seems to recognize the import of Doalty's

actions at first, remarking that it indicates Irish "presence" (12). Just as importantly, Doalty

relates that the British in response to the confusion over the shifting surveyor's pole subsequently

"took the bloody machine apart" (18). The machine in question was a theodolite, an optical

instrument used to measure angles along a horizontal and vertical axis—a technology still used

today for land surveying (although vastly more sophisticated than the ones used in the nineteenth

century). Jimmy quickly jumps to the apparent etymology of theodolite—*theo* as in God, or

perhaps *thea* as in goddess (17), surmising a supernatural or other-worldly function and origin,

but also implying an elevated perspective capable of consuming an entire of view of the land.

While Doalty, Maire, and Bridget are ignorant of the theodolite—a technology they only

recognize as the "machine"—Manus knows both its purpose and political implications. The

theodolite represents a foreign technological practice that threatens to erase not only the local

surveys that had resulted in county-specific map-making, but to erase the familiarity and locality

of Ireland for the Irish by replotting boundaries and Anglicizing place names (an adjacent motive

of the British). Just as crucially, the presence of the theodolite contrasts sharply with the

presence of the non-mechanical farm instruments that facilitate the manual labour of the harvest,

outline the identity of Balie beag, and underwrite rural Irish culture more broadly. While the

theodolite is the product of a British imperialism intent on knowing the extent of its empire, the

Irish farm instruments are intensely local, facilitating a harvest not for exportation but the

sufficiency of the townland. Doalty, unknown to himself, had temporally disrupted the ongoing

erasure of local Irish custom by confusing the British into deconstructing their own technology,

(perhaps a gesture on Friel's part to how the British are just as unprepared for modernity as the

rural Irish they claim to be improving). Additionally, the theodolite's birthplace in England "was

important to British surveyors" to the extent that "many thought of it as their national

instrument" (Hewitt 2010, 21)—hence the technology was inextricably a matter of national

pride. Indeed, the improvement of the theodolite in the late eighteenth century constituted a

major technological advancement for British cartography, initiating the beginning of the

trigonometric survey of Great Britain and Ireland in 1791 and lasting until 1853. These surveys

were not for purely scientific or civic purposes but justified by state authorities as an economic,

cultural, and military necessity. Other triangulations had already been made in France (the *Carte*

de Cassini) and other European rivals, but also parts of India and North America[65] at a time

when they were colonial possessions of Britain. Britain's apparent scientific lapse was

significant enough for Sir Joseph Banks in 1791 at a speech to the Royal Society to lament the

country's loss of standing if "underdeveloped" countries like India had managed cartographic

survey before her colonial ruler:

> Would I could say that England proud as she is of being esteemed by surrounding nations the
> Queen of Scientific improvement, could boast of a general Map as well executed as the Majors
> delineation of Bengal and Baher, a tract of Country considerably larger in extent than the whole
> of Great Britain and Ireland; … the accuracy of his particular surveys stands unrivaled by the
> most Laboured County Maps this nation has hitherto been able to produce. (Harley 1).

Banks explicitly conflates map-making with national pride, invoking British advancements in

science as a suggestion that the country had up to that point no excuse for falling behind Europe

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[65] George Washington was a surveyor prior to his military career, and Thomas Jefferson's father, Peter Jefferson,
was a cartographer.

and India.[66] Banks' sentiment that scientific practice and British self-definition were commensurable (if not inseparable) aims would have been received as evident. As Edney explains, part of British commitment to science, of which land surveying was an important field, was born from a commitment to reinforcing a Newtonian worldview (301):

> By reasoning from mechanical principles, the geodesists reduced the world to mathematical equations, to numerical and geometrical abstractions adhering to the Enlightenment's *esprit geometrique*. The act of measuring an arc of meridian was, in and of itself, a statement by members of the elite of their place within a system of universal order and socially constructed space. In this respect, the surveys constitute the Enlightenment's equivalent of cosmological mapping. (ibid)

Science was a "class-bound activity" (302), as Edney puts it, reserved for noble and intellectual circles. As such, scientific practice was enveloped in prevailing social ideologies regarding the make-up and order of the nation, not just in terms of being a state-sponsored enterprise but as a way of distinguishing upper-class gentlemen from lesser subjects who had neither the time nor the education to dote on seemingly irrelevant and abstract endeavours.

Nationalistic overtures were therefore not out of place for a project that seemed otherwise bureaucratic and empirical. A few years prior to Banks' speech in 1791, a joint survey by the British and French to triangulate the Greenwich and Paris observatories had found both parties "treading on nationalist eggshells" and "repeatedly coming up against xenophobia and jingoism," leading Banks to optimistically propose that hatred between the two nations armies should be of no concern to scientists (Hewitt 2010, 83). The plea would go nowhere, as the chief surveyor for the British, William Roy, had a "patriotic attachment to the theodolite and went to 'some pains to investigate the degree of accuracy of the French trigonometrical operations' as he felt 'they certainly were not executed with the best Instruments'" (ibid). Three decades earlier, Roy had

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[66] Ironically, for all of Banks crowing about Britain as the "Queen of Scientific improvement," the French had developed an instrument called the "repeating circle" that was arguably better than the theodolite, and had done so nearly a decade before the Board of Ordnance began the principle survey of Great Britain (Hewitt 2010, 96).

been a primary assistant in the surveying of England's south coast that had been "intended to help the Army prepare for a feared French invasion amid the turmoil of the Seven Years War" (Hewitt 2010, 44), and as such had "developed a habit of conjuring in his mind's eye a picture of southern England's abundant orchards, fertile pastures and tranquil hedgerows overrun by marauding French invaders"—imaginings he would again conjure up for Britain's survey of Ireland (ibid).

The significance of Doalty's unintentional resistance is thus not just symbolic but a material disruption to an ongoing Enlightenment-era endeavour to cast off locally produced measurements in favour of blanket knowledge practices that, on the one hand, had international recognition, and on the other hand, furthered British attempts at national self-definition. For Doalty and the people of Baile Beag, however, the most evident scope of their resistance was exceedingly local: the protection of old boundary drawings. In this context, we can locate the survey within a history of Anglo-Irish relations in which Britain took full license to impose their will on the country. Even though the survey was predicated on fixing the Irish tax system and providing the British military with updated cartography and hydrography, new borders were being drafted by a combination of foreign actors and Dublin-based Irishman and printed in a language that some local residents could not read. The survey in this sense mirrors the relationship between the metropolis and rurality that defined both the domestic space of England and, as Raymond Williams has pointed out in *The Country and the City* (1973), the British empire's relationship with its colonial possessions. This relationship is not merely the reduction of the metropolitan as worldly and the rural as either pastoral or uncultured but, as Williams remarks in the context of urban and rural England, "an ideological separation between the processes of rural exploitation, which have been, in effect, dissolved into landscape, and the

register of that exploitation, in the law courts, the money markets, the political power and the conspicuous expenditure of the city" (46). The survey can easily be intellectualized as a politically neutral mathematical endeavour, or as a good-intentioned attempt at cartography, but it also constitutes an extensive attempt by metropolitan centres to redraw rurality into more legible (for the English) plots of land for the purpose of determining both its taxable value and its use value for agriculture and industry.

Still in Act One of *Translations*, Hugh O'Donnell eventually arrives back to the hedge-school from the baptismal celebration and quickly moves to quizzing his students on Latin and Greek derivations. While doing so, he relates his experience with a man named Captain Lancey of the Royal Engineers and his subordinate Lieutenant Yolland. Lancey, a cartographer, and Yolland, an orthographer with the toponymic department, are conducting the survey in the region around Baile Beag despite neither being familiar with Irish Gaelic. Lancey and Yolland would like to address the students regarding apparent acts of sabotage to their survey. However, Hugh relates that the offer for Lancey to address the school about the matter is hindered by Lancey and Yolland not knowing Irish or Latin or Greek. The two are in turn surprised that most of the students do not know English (a patent admission of British ignorance of Ireland), although English is spoken, as Hugh remarks, "on occasion—outside the parish of course—and then usually for the purposes of commerce" (23). English is, in other words, for economic transaction. Owing to the limited familiarity with English among the Irish, Lancey is hesitant to address the school and Hugh in turn remarks that English "couldn't really express us" (23). In telling his students that English "couldn't really express us," Hugh articulates a concern about legibility, namely whether they—himself, his students, the Irish in general—are legible in the English language. Friel's play broadly concerns the legibility of Ireland for the English and the loss of

legibility of Ireland for the Irish. What's at stake in the acts of translation fundamental to British

presence in Ireland is well understood by Hugh. He is by no means opposed to the introduction

of new languages. He regularly teaches his students the etymology of Latin and Greek words and

their contemporary derivatives and even suggests at one point that "our own culture and the

classical tongues made a happier conjugation" (23)—a position that seems a compromise

between Irish nationalism and English imperialism at the heart of the survey, and more narrowly

the opposition between his two sons, Manus and Owen, who more or less represent the broader

political and ideological battle underlying the campaign for Anglicization. Hugh's remark

nonetheless intimates that English is inadequate for expressing the intimately local, and is

therefore portending the forthcoming conflict between locality and globality that will define the

imperial era of the nineteenth century and globalization of the twentieth. Intimations of English

as a conglomerating presence is foregrounded by the unorganized response of the play's Irish

characters in comparison to the British leveraging their military preparedness to conduct

Anglicization, which overdetermines the close relationship between a cultural or linguistic

imperialism and a militarized one. English is also foregrounded as an emerging *lingua franca* of

the global economy, as it is usually spoken in Ireland by a few and usually "for the purposes of

commerce." Outside these specific and limited spheres, where English can coexist with Irish, the

language threatens encroachment. While Hugh expresses a pluralistic approach to linguistic

diversity, the British threaten not only the erasure of pluralism but of the Irish language itself via

the forced Anglicization, which does not involve multiple languages in harmonious co-existence

in Ireland.

The British Army's campaign for rendering Ireland legible to the English through

cartography and translation will have the cruel effect of estranging Ireland to the Irish, many of

whom still cannot speak English and who therefore would not be able to recognize (or read) their own country—even affiliation to Ireland will be fundamentally disrupted by the Anglicization. Near the end of Act Three, after learning someone other than himself will get a teaching position in the new national school, Hugh remarks "*Barbarus hic ego sum quia non intelligor ulli,*" which Jimmy translates as a line from Ovid, "I am a barbarian in this place because I am not understood by anyone" (85). Here Hugh and Jimmy are referring to the etymological origins of "barbarian" as a non-native speaker, rather than a violent invader. In their context, Hugh and Jimmy are acknowledging their forced estrangement in their native country—in fact, more than this, they may recognize the complete evacuation of any meaning to the rhetoric of indigeneity. Indeed, Russell suggests that *Translations* interrogates the fluidity of "native" and "foreign" (157), and it is not hard to see how. Both Hugh and Yolland embody this fluidity through their unsecure positionality in categories of native and foreign, with Yolland voluntarily shedding the markers of his Englishness in favour of an emergent fascination with Ireland. Hugh on the other hand, in citing Ovid, appears unable to express his own displacement in his native tongue and thus quotes Latin literature instead, in turn acknowledging that his sense of an internal foreignness is in fact not unique to Ireland but transhistorical, potentially falsifying the notion of linguistic and cultural purity itself. The very condition of foreignness and native vacillate between each other, with no foundation in history to suggest an ontological fixity. By implication, the language of foreign and native appears inadequate for expressing the degree to which both are highly negotiable and unstable.

Ironically of course, Hugh's deeply personal revelation of his growing sense of displacement from within Ireland is spoken in a language that an overwhelming majority of Friel's twentieth-century audience will not understand, necessitating Jimmy's translation. In

some sense, Hugh's choice to cite Ovid expresses the fact that his sense of displacement cannot be entirely expressed in *any* language, although the use of a canonical classic text foundational to Western literature at least fosters some shared knowingness. The very act of citation here is therefore just as significant as the text being cited. It suggests, on the one hand, limitations of the vernacular in conveying the conditions of modernity that source Hugh's sense of displacement and, on the other hand, a recurring experience of exile across history. For those who have read Ovid, the citation may clarify the depth of Hugh's feelings of exile insofar as it puts Hugh on a continuum of historical figures suffering an experience of being illegible; for those unfamiliar, the intrusion of Latin potently conveys the sense of not being understood that Hugh is experiencing.

Just as significantly, by depicting linguistic and cultural mixture so early in Britain's official union with Ireland, Friel here subverts an Irish nationalism that may locate an Irish or Gaelic purity in this historical time period after the 1798 Rebellion. At the same time, an imperial historiography is likewise undermined by the irony of Hugh the Irishman assessing the Englishman Lancey's command of English as "suitably verecund" (23). Subverting the British stereotype of Ireland as a backwater, it is Lancey—the administrator of a vaguely "civilizing" mission to a quasi-British colonial possession—who is in fact unsophisticated and slavish in comparison to the Irishman he holds in contempt, having command of only one language. In fact, later in Act Two, Hugh translates Ovid into English for Yolland and remarks that "English succeeds in making it sound…plebeian" (49)—not only is English ill-equipped for the Irish, it is fundamentally an unsophisticated language, even for literature.

Lancey's evident ignorance of the English language's roots in Latin and Greek is subsequently mirrored in his disregard and insensitivity to the history of British presence in

Ireland—an ignorance which will only become more dangerous as Lancey finds his cartographic

mission disrupted by local obstinance. Even though Hugh and his students have considerably

more linguistic reach than Lancey or Yolland, their extended knowledge base does not unseat the

evident power that the English language holds in this situation. Unfortunately for Hugh and some

of his students, English is not merely one among many potential languages in a broader project

of linguistic pluralism but a hegemonic force—or, in other words, the presence of English on the

island of Ireland is not the emergence of linguistic co-existence but of erasure. Indeed, within the

framing of the play characters speak Irish, but to the audience they're speaking English and the

circumstance of them speaking English thus reveals that the British Ordnance Survey of Ireland

was partially successful. This dramatic irony is most evident in Act One when Owen "translates"

for Lancey as he elaborates the ordnance survey to the hedge school (33-34):

> Lancey: His Majesty's government has ordered the first ever comprehensive survey of this entire country – a general triangulation which will embrace detailed hydrographic and topographic information and which will be executed to a scale of six inches to the English mile.
> […]
> *Lancey looks at Owen.*
> Owen: A new map is being made of the whole country.
> *Lancey looks to Owen: Is that all? Owen smiles reassuringly and indicates to proceed.*

McGrath notes that Owen's translation transforms the content of Lancey's speech in two ways:

firstly, by simplifying the message and, secondly, by masking "some of the more sinister

implications of his words" (34). Even the seemingly innocuous revelation that the maps will be

printed to a scale of "six inches to the English mile" means they'll be illegible and unusable to

those in Ireland who operate under the Irish mile (which itself was not always uniform but could

change from county to county).[67] In a similar manner to Napoleon's metric revolution, the

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[67] Not that it might have mattered, maps were prohibitively expensive and "outside military circles it was primarily the upper classes who had been taught to properly 'read' them" (Hewitt 2010, 167). As such, maps were a type of print publication largely reserved for social elites.

British reject local measurement practices in favour of a standardized metric operative across the empire under the auspicious of equality—or in the case of Ireland, for fair taxation—but which is in fact the loss of knowledge practices organic to rural Irish culture.

Crucially, though, none of this information is imparted by Owen (only Hugh and Manus understand what Lancey said), thus establishing another dramatic irony in which the audience understands the extent of the survey before the characters of the play. Hugh does not protest, but Manus confronts Owen on his translation (36):

Manus:	What sort of translation was that, Owen?
Owen:	Did I make a mess of it?
Manus:	You weren't saying what Lancey was saying!
Owen:	'Uncertainty in meaning is incipient poetry' – who said that?
Manus:	There was nothing uncertain about what Lancey said: it's a bloody military operation, Owen! And what's Yolland's function? What's 'incorrect' about the place-names we have here?
Owen:	Nothing at all. They're just going to be standardised.
Manus:	You mean changed into English?
Owen:	Where there's ambiguity, they'll be Anglicised.

Owen's attempt at citation in this passage, mirroring Hugh's constant turn to literature, fails to generate the same sort of teacher-student rapport as his father's. The quote itself is intriguing because rather than deriving from a classic work of Latin or Greek literature, it's from George Steiner's 1975 critical text *After Babel* (see page 234). Of course in 1833 (when *Translations* is set in), Owen could not have been referencing Steiner, so Friel, in consciously referring to him, is breaking the temporal framework of the play. In fact, Owen is not the only character to directly quote from *After Babel* as McGrath has pointed out. Hugh likewise speaks verbatim from Steiner throughout the play, although without signalling his citations in the way Owen does. In either case, this ahistorical lifting of quotes from a text that doesn't yet exist within the framing of the play reflects how *Translations* is not mere historical revisionism but a consciously forward-looking dramatic work that contests the practice of historiography that underwrites

contemporary ideologies of both imperialism and nationalism. Here the intervention of Steiner and his linguistic theory undermines the very point of Owen's pursuit of standardization and correctness, because, as McGrath elaborates, all communication according to Steiner involves translation, including intra-lingually, which Owen does when he interprets Lancey's speech, transforming one articulation of English into another. Every individual "has an idiolect, elements of the language we each speak which are personal and private, that qualify 'the definitions, connotations, semantic moves current in public discourse'" (McGrath 33, Steiner 46). In Lancey's case, this idiolect happens to be the voice of the British empire. Translation functions as an exceptionally robust term in this context, overlapping with interpretation but also signifying the translation of a "Gaelic past into an Anglicized future" (McGrath 35), which Hugh casts suspicion upon with his comment that English "couldn't really express us" (Friel 23). Translations between languages, between cultures, and between past and present are thus also operative in Friel's play, along with inter- and intra-lingual translation.

Owen's sense of correctness and finality to his mission of translation is fundamentally misguided because the process of translation is never-ending. The ambiguity Owen thinks he is dispelling does not originate from the occasional incommensurability between names or languages but inherent to the translation that grounds all communication. Manus more incisively translates Lancey's remarks for what they are: the announcement of a military operation[68], but Owen placates the violence a military operation portends by framing it under seemingly neutral processes of standardisation, which he often conflates with correctness.[69] Notions of correctness,

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[68] Even though the Ordnance Survey employed civilians, when it became apparent that the survey was behind schedule, the Duke of Wellingston's cartographer at the Battle of Waterloo, who "could certainty be expected to see matters in a military light" (Andrews 85), was employed to assess shortcomings in the operation.
[69] Ironically, despite Owen's obsession with "correcting" the apparent confusion in Irish placenames, he is mistakenly called "Roland" by Yolland and Lancey but does not correct them until Act Two.

though, acquiesce to the logic of the Ordnance Survey, which piece-by-piece threw the territory of Ireland into dispute. Owen's intense contemplation over precise translations of Gaelic placenames is a fool's errand, but it's also a failure to recognize that the larger project of the survey was to cast the country as corrupted, hence the need for "improved" names, demarcations, and communal arrangements. In the context of his mistranslation of Lancey, Owen either doesn't consider the forceful redrawing of Ireland under a foreign measurement practice as worthy of translation or doesn't think a translation exists for what Lancey said. This latter possibility shouldn't be discounted. In Act Two, Owen and Yolland discuss an Anglicization of "Bun na hAbhann" to which Yolland remarks that there's "no English equivalent for a sound like that" (39). On the other hand, Owen believes passionately in the survey, including in its adjacent mission to transform Ireland into a full-fledged colonial possession, and thus has an incentive to spare his fellow Irishman from the extent to which the survey is an unabashed act of imperialism. Unintentionally sparking further revolt to the project could jeopardize its successful completion and Owen's role. Indeed, when Lancey remarks dryly that the survey will be conducted by "military authorities" (rather than local Irish residents), Owen *adds* information not present in Lancey's remark or tone, translating instead as "The job is being done by soldiers because they are skilled in this work" (34). Not only is Owen not revealing those aspects of the survey that the Irish would find contestable, he also attempts to justify its operation by intentionally mistranslating Lancey. Lancey seems willing to regurgitate lies in either case. Quoting the white paper for the Ordnance Survey (which Owen badly mistranslates), Lancey reads that "Ireland is privileged. No such survey is being undertaken in England" (34), which is patently misleading. The Irish survey was only conducted because a similar nation-wide survey was being conducted on the island of Britain.

Lancey's subordinate, Lieutenant Yolland, is different, however. Yolland's

transformation from agent of the British Empire to Hibernophile reflects a colonial encounter

absent the strict, mono-directional exchange of cultural and linguistic value. Intriguingly,

Yolland implies this transformation is not just a personal inclination but rooted in a generational

divide between him and his father, who was a "perfect colonial servant" for whom every job

"must be done with excellence" (47). A veteran of the Battle of Waterloo,[70] his father's

subservience to the British colonial cause is attributed by Yolland to the circumstances of his

birth, when prevailing ideologues and world affairs were (in a sense) reset:

> Yolland: Born in 1789 – the very day the Bastille fell. I've often thought maybe that gave his whole life its character. Do you think it could? He inherited a new world the day he was born – the Year One. Ancient time was at an end. The world had cast off its old skin. There were no longer any frontiers to man's potential. Possibilities were endless and exciting. He still believes that. The Apocalypse is just about to happen … I'm afraid I'm a great disappointment to him. I've neither his energy, nor his coherence, nor his belief.

Yolland identifies the beginning of the French Revolution as the temporal rupture between

ancient and contemporary time, with his father essentially being the first generation to inherit a

world rid of its "old skin." Also gone are "any frontiers to man's potential" that apparently infuse

Yolland's father with a renewed energy to accomplish what they wish and with unrivalled

commitment. What Yolland describes (but does not name) appears to be modernity itself—here

incapsulated in the figure of his father, who displays, paradigmatically, the modern spirit.

Yolland by comparison is directionless and dispirited having ended up in Baile Beag accidently

after intending to go to Bombay. The mistake turns out to be a saving grace, at least initially.

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[70] Coincidently, this means that his father was commanded by the British general, Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington, whose brother became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Richard Wellesley, 1st Marquess Wellesley, during the initial years of the survey that Yolland ends up working for. Both Wellesley brothers were Anglo-Irish members of the Protestant Ascendency.

Yolland soon shows strong commitment to learning Gaelic and expresses an evident sense of

belonging to Ireland over England or India (47-48):

> Yolland: […] Do I believe in fate? The day I arrived in Ballybeg, no Baile Beag – the
> moment you brought me in here, I had a curious sensation. It's difficult to
> describe. It was a momentary sense of discovery; no – not quite a sense of
> discovery – a sense of recognition, of confirmation of something I half knew
> instinctively; as if I had stepped…
>
> Owen: Back into ancient time?
>
> Yolland: No, no. It wasn't an awareness of *direction* being changed but of experience
> being of a totally different order. I had moved into a consciousness that wasn't
> striving nor agitated, but at its ease and with its own conviction and assurance.

This key passage constitutes a moment where Owen essentially admits to perceiving Ireland as a

backwater while Yolland voices his almost religious conversion from an obsession over

direction—an extremely apt word given that Yolland is participating in a topographical survey—

to an experience of an entirely "different order," which he cannot fully articulate. He instead

contextualizes this new order as a form of immobility or rootedness, or in other words a sense of

belonging (Hededoft and Hjort's elaboration of the etymology of "belonging" as a mix of both

"being" and "longing" is apropos here). Crucially, Yolland admits to Owen that he cannot

participate effectively in the survey having dispensed with a sense of direction, a key virtue of

mapmaking, although Owen doesn't appear to register this implication, instead continuing to

view (wrongly) that Yolland's admiration of Ireland is mere temporary whimsy. Owen's failure

to appreciate Yolland's sense of rootedness will inadvertently lead to severe consequences later

on for his brother Manus, who is obliged to leave Baile Beag for his presumed involvement in

Yolland's disappearance.

Intriguingly, Yolland and Hugh offer different though interrelated origin points for

modernity. At the end of Act Three, Hugh, preparing for the funeral of the infant whose

christening he had attended just days before, eulogizes the failed Irish Rebellion of 1798 that

sought to overthrow British rule. Hugh offers a chronology for when the "whole enterprise of

consciousness accelerated," remarking that "Everything seemed to find definition that spring [of 1798]" (89)—a chronology that no doubt contrasts with the events present in the minds of the British, as evidenced by Yolland's identification of "Year One" as 1789. Intriguingly, both origin points (1789 and 1798) coincide with the gradual decline of local custom in favour of institutional measurement practices adjacent to broader processes of legibility in pursuit of national self-definition and robust citizenship regimes. In the context of *Translations*, Russell points out that the "local inhabitants' agrarian lifestyle is directly endangered by the English soldier's promised reprisals for Yolland's disappearance, their worldview is more obliquely threatened by the precise quantitative measuring these same soldiers carry out in their surveying of the townland, which accords with a colonialist mindset that valued counting and measurement as part of control over the colonies" (169). An imperial, institutional form of numeracy grounded in the scientific advancements of Britain's intellectual and social elite is employed in restraining an unwieldy client state, which in practical terms involves dislodging the local communitarian lifestyle in favour of a more nationalistic arrangement in which the Catholic Irish are second-class citizens. The proximity between the imposition of measurement practices as a form of legibility and the simplification of local and individual complexity into the politico-legal subjecthood of citizenship is therefore quite short.

Yolland's association of the French Revolution with an origin point of the modern world is not out of place in a play about nineteenth-century Ireland. As W.J. McCormack summarizes, the "French Revolution was undoubtedly the active occasion of all Anglo-Irish discussions from 1790 onwards" (29). There were anxieties that Ireland would be used by Britain's enemies as a stepping-stone for invasion. Significantly, Yolland's and Hugh's sense of both time and politics lacks an overarching continuity or unity because their respective Year One's are disruptive,

cleaving history into the temporal zones of before and after. Both Yolland and Hugh, in virtue of their individual meditations on historical discontinuity, are perhaps more aware than the others that the survey's promise of progress is bunk and hubristic and built upon false promises of an organic unity of the past.[71]

Yolland's presumed death at the hands of the Donnelly twins shows the complicated politics of Friel's play. Yolland is admitting of a personal resistance that threatens to upend state-obsessions with legibility by acquiring the language and location that the British government has ambitions of reimaging or erasing, in turn embodying the intercultural exchange inherent to colonial contact and which discredit notions of cultural purity present in both imperial and nationalist visions of history. He even starts an argument with Owen over their role in the ordnance (52):

> Yolland: [Hugh] knows what's happening.
> Owen: What is happening?
> Yolland: I'm not sure. But I'm concerned about my part in it. It's an eviction of sorts.
> Owen: We're making a six-inch map of the country. Is there something sinister in that?
> Yolland: Not in…
> Owen: And we're taking place-names that are riddled with confusion and…
> Yolland: Who's confused? Are the people confused?

The roles here are seemingly reversed with the Irishman attempting to convince the British soldier that their orthographic project of Ireland is normatively acceptable. Yolland cannot fully comprehend his role in the survey, nor can he explain what the survey portends apart from being an "eviction of sorts" (this will become cruelly prophetic; Lancey threatens literal eviction for all residents of the region if Yolland, who goes missing at the end of Act Two, isn't found; the irony here is doubly tragic because Yolland is expressly opposed to being part of evictions). Owen thinks only of the printed map that is the ostensible product of the survey while willfully

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[71] Manus is opposed to the survey but nonetheless seems to evince an anxiety that Maire is correct in appraising the survey as progress.

ignoring the immense military operation forced upon Ireland that is required to produce a "six-inch map of the country." Owen is not just internalizing the larger message of the British survey—that Ireland is a backwater incapable of its own improvement or self-government—but actively redefining what it means to be indigenously Irish by dislodging all the cultural norms that had led him to abandon Baile Beag in the first place. His return from a wealthy lifestyle in Dublin is predicated on the transformation of Irish rurality into a subordinate region of metropolitan Britain, which requires the elimination of the hedge-schools that employ his father and brother and the imposition of English as a wholesale replacement of Gaelic. In some sense, it is easier for Yolland, the agent of the British empire, to displace his own subjectivity and acquire the perspective of the local resident than Owen, a voluntary partisan of British imperial ambitions. Manus, who attempts to convince Owen of the militarized violence the ordnance portends, happens to become jealous of Yolland, the one British soldier who supports Ireland's cause of self-determination, because of his interest in Maire. As such, Friel neither condemns Ireland to its fate for the implied insubordination of Irishmen like Owen nor valorizes the British soldiers like Yolland who romanticize Irish culture and seeks to protect it. Moreover, the underlying politics of the colonial encounter Friel depicts does not immediately descend into physical violence or chaos. Rather, it is a laborious negotiation involving at times conflicting motivations and translations bookended by violence.

Yolland quite clearly disrupts the imperialistic disposition of the survey while Owen and Maire in turn adopt the *raison d'être* of the British. Maire is explicit about her support for Anglicization from the beginning of the play, even arresting everyone's attention to proclaim her belief that "We should all be learning to speak English," that Daniel O'Connell ("the Liberator") said so himself, that the "old language is a barrier to modern progress," and concluding that she

wants to be able to speak English because she is going to America (24-25). Maire's ambitions of moving to the United States not only portends the large Irish diaspora that will accrue as a result of harsh conditions in Ireland throughout the nineteenth century, but the inherent confusion between foreign and native that Hugh identifies at the crux of Irish identity. Later in Act Two, when she learns that Manus has been offered a job at a hedge-school on Inis Meadhon, one of the Aran Islands, she asks "Where?", apparently ignorant of the geography of her own country.

Section B
Enumerative Strategies, the Rhetoric of Numeracy, and the Spectre of Apocalypse

The act of rendering a population legible—in Ireland's case by the English for the purpose of estranging the Irish from themselves—may be understood as a defining practice of modern statecraft from the eighteenth century onwards. "Legibility," as Scott elaborates, is the drive for knowledge, uniformity, and standardization. States have long had ambitions of knowing their populations in order to administer taxation or other elements of governance well before they had the means to facilitate truly effective methods of legibility. It was arguably not until the twentieth century that state's came to possess the conceptual and practical tools for documenting persons of a particular nationality or state. Well before then, however, Enlightenment values found concrete expression in the codification of populations into citizen and non-citizen as a form for organizing persons, even though such a sweeping form of documentary surveillance was aspirational. State governments (both of monarchical and vaguely democratic persuasions) sought to flatten or simplify their populations for the express purpose of effective administration, or in other words "to possess a unified surface over which the superb eye of power can wander without encountering any inequality which hurts or limits its view," as Benjamin Constant framed it (Scott 30). Uniform laws, measurements, and languages would fulfill Enlightenment

values of rationality, the burgeoning imperial ambitions of European powers, and long-held objectives of domestic administration by state governments.

The move towards standardized measurement in France, for example, beginning with revolution and continuing with Napoleon's successful establishment of a metric system serves as an under-appreciated paradigm of modern statecraft and of the state's effective monopolization of power from rival claimants through the establishment of uniformity and standardization—specifically away from feudal lords, aristocratic elites, and the clergy, who had previously enjoyed nearly unchecked power on imposing local measurements that benefited them to the detriment of the *Tiers État*. It is not surprising, therefore, that a lack of uniform measurement was one of the grievances put forth by the *Tiers État* to the *États-Généraux* before the French Revolution, although this is often overlooked in comparison to the other, more palpable calls for egalitarianism. Ironically, the push by the *Tiers Ètat* for the elimination of local knowledge practices in favour of broad, large-scale systems of measurement that would facilitate commercial exchange and long-distance trade would also result in the investment of enormous centralized power in a state government that would ultimately wield that authority to re-establish monarchial rule and squash democratic initiative.

Scott notes, however, that while this "metrical revolution" was in part owing to popular sentiment, Enlightenment philosophy, and of course Napoleonic state building (30), the "simplification of measures […] depended on that other revolutionary political simplification of the modern era: the concept of a uniform, homogeneous citizenship" (32). Even though this chapter focuses on legibility in the context of a British-run cartographic survey of Ireland, it is still concerned with citizenship insofar as these early moves towards uniformity were important steps towards (and in some cases directly adjacent to) transforming every person into a

documented subject of the state, whose motions in and out of particular cartographies could be extensively tracked and recorded. The "unmarked" citizen—the person essentially invisible to the state—posed a threat to the state's pursuit for simplification and uniformity of laws, measures, and customs, and the elimination of complexity. The passport went some ways towards helping to "mark" citizens, at least in France where, tellingly, a politician remarked that the passport was "Argus of the *patrie* [i.e.: fatherland]"—Argus being a giant with many eyes in Greek mythology. The remark was an unapologetic endorsement of state-sponsored documentary surveillance of domestic subjects that the assembly member happened to coin around the same time that Jeremy Bentham envisioned the Panopticon, another technology of surveillance. The imposition of a national citizenship composed of a single people (such as the French citizenry) was an essential part, if not prerequisite, for a host of seemingly innocuous policy goals related to standardized systems of administration. "In place of a welter of incommensurable small communities, familiar to their inhabitants but mystifying to outsiders," Scott writes, "there would rise a single national society perfectly legible from the center" (32). It is not merely coincidence that a distinctly modern form of citizenship emerged concurrently with the metric revolution in France, which saw local measurement practices erased in favour of a country-wide standard. Measurement as a form of regionalism was casted off by the French in close historical proximity to the rejection of political and economic forms of affiliation that similarly emphasized locality, ostensibly because a "rational unit of measurement would promote a rational citizenry" (ibid), although the migration of authority away from a feudalistic arrangement to a cast of state actors all physically located in a metropolitan centre must have also been an enticing proposition for those who stood to benefit from such a power reorganization. As Scott notes, for "centralizing

elites, the universal meter was to older, particularistic measurement practices as a national

language was to existing welter of dialects" (31).

Scott's analogy between measurement and language is apropos for a discussion of Friel's *Translations*, where the linguistic pluralism of Hugh O'Donnell and his students, and specifically the local Irish language, stood in the way of British comprehension and control of Ireland. The metric revolution in France and the British survey of Ireland are handy micro-historical case studies of how citizenship regimes emergent after the so-called Age of Revolutions in the Western world were in close proximity to an ideology of rationality that did not distinguish between the scientific system of measurements and the political system of documentary surveillance and belonging. They made, in some sense, easy bedfellows.

Friel's *Translations* depicts precisely this imposition towards legibility and uniformity (the defining feature of modern statecraft) through the cartographic mission of the British and the establishment of a national language and associative national schools that can be placed historically among a series of colonial and post-revolutionary state practices that find their origin in the Enlightenment. Standardized rhetoric and language for addressing subjects as citizens, non-citizens, or second-class citizens is an implicit part of these processes of homogenization, which Friel depicts as intimately tied, if not inseparable, from imperialism. The forced elimination of local custom is presented to Hugh and his students as simply a step towards unity of the British empire and elimination of archaic and functionless languages—although *Translations* also depicts Irish participation in the British campaign of Anglicization, transforming the ordnance survey from not just a process of translation but also self-destruction. Hugh is offered the role of master of the new British-established national school in the region, Maire openly welcomes the learning of English as a step towards success in America, and

Hugh's son Owen directly assists the British by working for Lancey and Yolland as a translator ("...My job is to translate the quaint, archaic tongue you people persist in speaking into the King's good English" [29]).

Alongside this linguistic imperialism was likewise an environmental impact, firstly, in terms of the forced redrawing of boundaries that would lead to physical transformations in the landscape, and secondly, in terms of the elimination of local agricultural customs interwoven into the distinct rural Irish culture of townlands, such as the hedge-school itself—although the notion of a "townland" here is partially deceptive, as it may suggest well-defined village boundaries to which Baile Beag lacks. Baile Beag's formlessness and ambiguous borders is an essential condition of its communal cohesion, egalitarianism, and agricultural practices, which did not rely on mechanized labour but people working with simple farming equipment. These characteristics mark a community and its people free from the burden of landlords and economic inequality, which leads Russell to suggest that the community "unquestionably distrust[s] mechanized labor, hierarchy, and linearity" and likewise rejects "the story of hyperindividualism associated with modernity" (167). Belonging to Baile Beag is not a matter of citizenship, or the affirmation of any sort of political identity staked to individual self-ownership, and this condition is not just cultural but environmental, quite literally built into the physical farming practices and fluid partitions of land use.

As a result, the redrawing of Gaelic-majority townlands reflects how the British orthographic project in Ireland cannot be (or should not be) analyzed without sufficient attention paid to the material or environmental changes to rurality wrought by the survey. A rural Irish indigeneity is not just an existential threat to a burgeoning British hegemony but likewise a practical threat to a state's attempt at uniformity—a circumstance that has arguably replicated

itself in other parts of the world. In the case of Owen, his role ends up being far more complex than a seeming motivation to eliminate Irish. Ulf Dantanus (1988) characterizes Owen's return to Baile Beag as a re-engagement with indigeneity for the express purpose of its transformation, perhaps even destruction, a motivation that itself transforms over the course of the play until Owen is left uncertain of his role. Initially unable to convince the Irish population to go along with the survey, people like Owen will instead work towards redefining what it means to be indigenously Irish. For Owen, however, this project loses its appeal once his army superiors demand him to translate into Irish the sort of violent acts that will be committed on the locals if they continue their resistance to British presence. Only Manus, his brother, remains consistently rebellious. Manus understands that the threat of Anglicization and the new national school system is more than marginal: it is the inscription (quite literally) of new ideological apparatuses across the country that will have very real, material consequences for the Irish rurality that constitutes Baile Beag. His father Hugh expresses something similar later in Act Two, despite accepting a role in one of the national schools, remarking that "words are signals, counters. They are not immortal. And it can happen – to use an image you'll understand – it can happen that a civilisation can be imprisoned in a linguistic contour which no longer matches the landscape of…fact" (52). Hugh identifies a connection between the contours of language and the contours of geography, such that the British mission of Anglicization is simultaneously the reforming of the physical landscape alongside the linguistic. Manus's love-interest Maire, however, sees the ordinance survey as a positive ("The old language is a barrier to modern progress"), English being the language of success, commerce, and improvement—a civilizing influence. Maire openly welcomes the looming presence of modernity even if it is the British who are promising its arrival, although ironically the one British person she will foster an intimate connection with

358

is Yolland, one of the practitioners of the survey who expresses the most uncertainty about its impact. It is arguably only because Yolland transforms into a full-fledged Hibernophile that he is willing to try and communicate with Maire, who he does not share a common language with.

This circumstance of the Irish assisting the British in their imperialistic project has overtures to revolutionary and Napoleonic France with the *Tiers État* and its push for a uniform metric system in response to economic exploitation at the hands of the clerical and aristocratic estates during the *ancien régime*, which had the cruel effect of eliminating their local customs and diverting considerable political power into a new centralized bureaucracy ruled from Paris. Far from simply emancipating the *Tiers État* from its historical oppression under the other two estates, they directly facilitated smoother operations of centralized power over a national population. Maire's explicit invitation for the British to essentially eliminate rural Irish culture for the purposes of "progress" will instead see her and her community come in conflict with the unmentioned *oeuvre* of modernity: alienation from local customs that underwrote them as a people. As utilitarian as Napoleon's metric revolution in France or the British survey in Ireland may have been, any romanticized portrayal of these processes as innocent knowledge-gathering betrays what Russell refers to as "instrumental perception" or an "instrumental worldview" that he associates with modernity. He singles out Friel in particular for consistently recognizing that "imperial control depended on numerical mastery" (169). Matthew Edney similarly observes in the context of the British survey of India how maps functioned as "disciplinary mechanism, a technology of vision and control" that was at once a palpable scientific advancement from earlier cartographic practices and "integral to British authority in South Asia" (25). Indeed, as Edney continues, the "space of the map was not bounded and limited but was as extensible and as potentially all-encompassing as British power and knowledge could make it," although unlike

other, more direct forms of control, inhabitants of the land being mapped "were not necessarily aware of their cartographic representation" (ibid).

In his study of British colonialism in India, Arjun Appadurai distinguishes between justificatory and disciplinary purposes of policies of quantification and explores how numeracy became a key component of the imagination of the state. What Appadurai elsewhere calls "colonial numerology" and the "numerical gaze" became an important rhetoric for furthering policies of legibility:

> …although early colonial policies of quantification were utilitarian in design, I would suggest that numbers gradually became more importantly part of the illusion of bureaucratic control and a key to a colonial imaginary in which countable abstractions, of people and resources at every imaginable level and for every conceivable purpose, created the sense of a controllable indigenous reality. […] There is ample evidence that the significance of these numbers was often either nonexistent or self-fulfilling, rather than principally referential to a complex reality external to the activities of the colonial state. (117)

Policies of quantification, or "enumerative strategies," were a response to unwieldy social realms like those populated by the poor or the criminal but also the indigenous realms of India and rural Ireland. The appeal of a mathematical reductionism was evident and finds some analogy with the flattening of complex geographical features into simple cartographic presentations like maps. The cultural, political, and linguistic complexity of Indian and Irish indigeneity was reduced to a manageable rhetoric of numeracy and "countable abstractions" that could likewise pretend of an amoral objectivity.

The ambitions of modern statecraft, however, occasionally outstripped what was possible, and quantification contained a promise of uniformity it couldn't actually fulfill. Totalizing bureaucratic control was an illusion sustained by a belief that quantification could solve various thorns in the side of the state, be it the economically and socially downtrodden or the indigenous presence in various colonial possessions. Although as Appadurai also points out, part of the disciplinary potential of enumerative strategies was not just directed at the unwieldy populations

in need of regulation but also the "disciplining of the vast officialdom of the colonial state" (120). The emergent managerial class itself was in need of regulation if the vast bureaucracy was going to function in line with state ambitions, and their belief in the utilitarian purpose of enumerative strategies like the census or the survey was an important element to that discipline. Appadurai therefore concludes that "by the end of the eighteenth century, number, like landscape, heritage, and the people, had become part of the language of the British political imagination" (117). Certainly the slave trade with its dependence on financial and quantitative record-keeping contributed to the growing supremacy of the number as an adjacent imaginary to Romanticism or sentimentalism, especially given that it demonstrated the cruel viability of reducing human beings into quasi-manageable quantities.

The most evident example of the growing supremacy of numeracy as both political rhetoric and imaginary could be seen in knowledge-gathering processes like the censuses or the trigonometrical surveys of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that reduced every subject and every parcel of land into a quantifiable figure. Even though the numbers regarding taxes, towns, subjects, or distances fed into the bureaucracy were occasionally wrong or irrelevant, their "referential status" was in fact "far less important than their discursive importance in supporting or subverting various classificatory moves and the policy arguments based on them" (Appadurai 120). Numbers in this regard, like names, need not have any clear reference or signification to justify themselves, insofar as their capacity to signify is not the source of their effectiveness. Instead, their importance can weigh far more substantially on their rhetorical purpose. The reductionist methodology behind quantifying a population of a village, for example, made it easier to convey information regarding otherwise imperfect social or political entities, especially entities that undermined nationalistic visions or self-knowledge. Referentially,

these numbers could simply be unmanageable, but rhetorically they could buttress policy initiatives that furthered a colonial or imperial purpose behind the veneer of a disinterested objectivity.

This objectivity was of course far from disinterested. In Asia, for example, the British "made themselves the intellectual masters of the Indian landscape" through survey, and despite well-known flaws, they did so "with all the certainty and correctness granted by the Enlightenment's epistemology" (Edney 16). This veneer of objectivity continues to effect how we understand the history of European practices of surveying and their proximity to or direct contribution to imperialism. Edney, for example, warns that the "cartographic ideal requires that we assume that maps necessarily refer to the physical landscape and that their history is the history of their ever-increasing accuracy and comprehensiveness," which positions the practice of triangulation that underwrote the British surveys of India and Ireland as an "inevitable and necessary development," as the forward march of science and the "final rupture from the older, 'artistic' forms of mapmaking" (23). As a result, surveyors were and still are cast "in the role of heroes-of-science who overcame the stupidity of decision-makers who were too narrow-minded to appreciate the need for new and better technologies; the surveyors therefore contributed significantly to human progress" (Edney 24).

The British Ordnance Survey of Ireland constituted a state government marshalling its intellectual and military resources to clarify the extent of its geographic reach into manageable, printable representations. Cartography "constructs the spaces it reads," threatening more organic, intimate, or spontaneous encounters with the landscape, and those who "issue and control maps create an ordering of affairs out of the sprawling terrain," transforming nature into a "calculable sum" (Broglio 70). Cartography contributed to an identical intellectual mission as that of

literature: self-definition, both nationally and individually. Cartography could "serve the stability and longevity of a nation" and as such provide a "visible cipher for nationalism" (ibid). A perfect image of the world seemed within reach thanks to the twinned endeavours of land surveying and map-making, which became a more agreeable value with the onset of the Napoleonic Wars.

At the same time, however, this promise of cartography and numeracy emerges in Friel's *Translations* alongside coded signals of apocalypse, specifically an apprehension of cultural and linguistic annihilation both from the playwright's perspective in late-twentieth-century Northern Ireland and from within the play itself as the Irish characters fumble to negotiate the British survey of their country. The British in this context embody the threat of obliteration, although many of the characters do not initially register this. Nonetheless, revelatory statements that reach ever so close to apocalyptic recur throughout and can be meaningfully read as either a sort of dramatic irony (only the audience/reader are privy to the acts of erasure that will visit upon the characters) or still ongoing (minority languages or oppressed subjectivities suffer a slower, methodical annihilation rather than an imminent and immediate catastrophe). Early on in *Translations,* intimations of revelation emerge in the form of the hedge-school students discussing a "sweet smell" coming from "just beyond where the soldiers are making the maps" (17), where a bunch of potato crops are being held at port:

> Bridget: They say that's the way it snakes in, don't they? First the smell; and then one morning the stalks are all black and limp.
> Doalty: Are you stupid? It's the rotting stalks makes the sweet smell for God's sake. That's what the smell is – rotting stalks.

Doalty's exuberant rebuff off Bridget is an attempt to extinguish the idea that the sweet smell is coming from a potato crop that has suffered the blight. That a potential catastrophe is here signalled by the smell of something pleasurable is not the concern; the distinction between a minor annoyance (rotting stalks) and serious devastation (total crop failure, loss of staple food

source) is impossible to make on smell alone. Maire gets similarly agitated by Bridget's implied suggestion that the sweet smell signals the blight:

> Maire: Sweet smell! Sweet smell! Every year at this time somebody comes back with stories of the sweet smell. Sweet God, did the potatoes ever fail in Baile Beag? Well, did they ever – ever? Never! There was never blight here. Never. Never. But we're always sniffing about for it, aren't we? – looking for disaster. The rents are going to gup up again – harvest's going to be lost – the herring have gone away for ever – there's going to be evictions. Honest to God, some of you people aren't happy unless you're miserable and you'll not be content until you're dead!

For a twentieth-century audience her comment constitutes a tragic irony in light of the Great Famine that will visit Ireland in the years after the play is set in and which will bring with it both mass death for the hundreds of townlands identical to Baile Beag and waves of emigration from the country. Maire does exhibit an apprehension of what a potato blight would signal for a community not only dependent on agriculture but whose identity and way of life are completely interwoven with rurality. Even though Maire has ambitions of emigrating from Ireland and even commends the British Ordnance Survey as heralding much needed modernization, she still expresses an acute fear that a calamitous harvest could de-root the rural Irish community from which she plans to cast off for America, perhaps in part weary that were her plans to fail she would have nowhere else to call home. The sweet smell could therefore prophesize more than just crop fail: it would also signify the annihilation of the self, or its painful rebirth into an unrecognizable organism untethered from history.

Maire admonishes Bridget's apparent fatalism at suggesting the sweet smell is blight and not simply some rotten crops, which Doalty agrees with, confidently declaring that "St. Colmcille prophesied there'd never be blight here. He said: The spuds will bloom in Baile Beag / Till rabbits grow an extra lug" (18). Doalty's explicit invocation of the past in determining the future and protecting Baile Beag clashes with Maire's commitment to a forward-looking

modernity heralded by the British, although Doatly's supposed quote of St. Colmcille is quite evidently made up even to the hedge-school students. Doalty's comment also clashes with the temporality of the play itself, which is not entirely rooted to history, as evidenced by Owen and Hugh's apocryphal citations to Steiner's *After Babel*. Nonetheless, St. Colmcille's prophesy serves as a revelation of Irish agricultural endurance versus a distinctly rural Irish apocalypse signalled by the sweet smell, without any reference to the British. Even though the British constitute a different sort of calamity, they arguably prefigure identical consequences for Irish rurality as the blight, and yet neither St. Colmcille's prophesy nor the usual ways Baile Beag search for signals of catastrophe are able to detect British encroachment. In fact, Maire and Owen, and to some degree Hugh, are optimistic that the British survey is a necessary, though perhaps painful, corrective to Ireland's problems. Though few in the hedge-school realize it at the time, Owen's arrival in Act One is an attempt to ease Baile Beag's capitulation to the survey while obscuring his ardent commitment to redefining Irish indigeneity. Owen ultimately fails spectacularly to prevent violent resistant to the British—he is the one forced to translate Captain Lancey's threat of violence if Yolland is not recovered—but does arguably succeed at Irish redefinition, although he becomes slightly despondent at this realization after recognizing the extent to which his participation in the process of translation, standardization, and correction is in fact simultaneously a process of annihilation and unrecognizability. Only Manus understands that the underlying militancy of the survey suggests acts of redrawing and Anglicization that will be far from sensitive to local Irish custom, but Manus's warnings go unheard by Owen (not that Owen has any concrete power to reverse the British anyways). Manus's alarm is futile and cannot protect the Irish from the tide of modernity threatening to wash them away. The inevitability of Irish redefinition is confirmed by the play itself by positioning the audience in a

dramatically ironic relationship with its characters, although because British imperialism remains politically lodged within contemporary Northern Ireland, the figurative distance between the audience and the play's characters appears quite short. There isn't just mere affinity between the hedge-school and twentieth-century Ireland but perceptible continuity.

Section C
Conclusion

Translations intervenes in the historical narratives of imperialism and nationalism that Friel saw defining the parameters of citizenship in Northern Ireland, where belonging was and to a degree remains striated not just by prototypical issues of community but also by a violent sectarianism that forces residents to differentiate with extreme specificity. Friel's intervention in these historical narratives attempts to rewrite the mythologies that have provoked the untenable hostility and national crisis present in Ireland, while at the same time conveying the extent to which the accompanying rhetoric around native and foreign are inherently heterogenous and unstable. The performance of this act of rewriting in the border city of Derry, where *Translations* was first performed, converges the localness of citizenship practices and the global issue of national and neo-imperial political movements in the intimate space of the theatre, in turn re-enacting the contest between locality and globality that defined the imposition of the survey in Ireland. The result, rather than a reformed nationalism, is potentially a new relationality. As Friel depicts, part of the problem in forging new forms of relationality are embedded in those acts of translation that occur *within* a shared language or culture and between a historical past and unfolding present, rather than strictly between different but adjacent linguistic and cultural communities. Individual practices of belonging are themselves accompanied by our particular idiolects, which can confound the smooth conveyance of meaning between persons at an intimate

level in addition to reverberating across a community or nation, leading to misinterpretations and mistranslations within a shared linguistic or cultural space.

Casting off the yoke of a rigid rhetoric of belonging that belies the heterogeneity of native and foreign cannot be done singularly through violence or forceful imposition but discursively and performatively. Friel's approach contests this rigidity by identifying, on the one hand, the acts of translation already taking place within the rhetoric of belonging and, on the other, the linguistic and cultural mixture inherent to Irishness obscured in mythologies of national origin. The implication, however, goes well beyond the borders of Ireland towards any national space that pretends linguistic and cultural purity and which subsequently fosters notions of citizenship that are predicated on an unrealizable citizen ideal and a "legitimating myth of ideological paternity" as Boltwood (309) puts it. As such, reading Friel puts into focus how all the works I have so far examined involve particular idiolects of belonging embodied by or conveyed through an authorial subject that confront the rigid contours of citizenship and the larger discursive apparatus of the state that underwrites its legitimacy. Not all of these authorial subjects were necessarily devoted to fostering new forms of citizenship or relationality. In some circumstances, like Equiano, modest reform appeared preferable to wholesale revolution, but the texts were nonetheless united in their focus on translating or interpreting a venerated national past into a present political condition in an attempt to foster inclusion for person's located at the threshold of belonging.

I have attempted to show that literary and critical engagement with the concept of citizenship, especially in its infant stages in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, remains necessary in part because contemporary citizenship practices and nationalist movements continue to traffic in historical narratives of this time period to legitimate exclusionary state

policy or provoke violent and aggressive marginalization of person's who do not fit an imagined

citizen archetype. Citizenship in this context always involves some sort of engagement with

history, including through literary or artistic narratives that convey values or blueprints for action

that inform senses of belonging. The notion of "history" as a thing that justifies contemporary

citizenship and state practices can be transformed rhetorically and discursively, but the sanctity

of historical narratives deemed essential to the integrity of citizen identity, national feeling, or

state legitimacy has been demonstrated in the fervent opposition to new analyses and literary

works that veer from established or doctrinaire readings of the past. For example, the 1619

Project published in *The New York Times* received significant backlash, most vocally from

conservative and reactionary figures who contested the project precisely because of the purported

decentring of a highly mythologized vision of America's founding. Multiple other projects of

varying scopes and sizes have faced coded and explicit opposition because their new or

transformative narratives occasionally dispute the very legitimacy of the state that underwrites

citizenship. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), for example, noted in

its final report on residential schools and cultural genocide of Indigenous persons that the

modern Canadian state government can trace its lineage to a series of negotiated treaties that

"while seemingly honourable and legal" were "often marked by fraud and coercion" (1). Indeed,

not only was the federal government "slow to live up to its Treaty obligations" when they were

first negotiated, some obligations "remain unfulfilled to this day" (56). In the United Kingdom,

Prime Minister Boris Johnson established the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

following the murder of George Floyd by U.S. police officers and chaired by Dr. Tony Sewell,

which released a final report in 2021 that found "'anecdotal evidence' of racism but not proof of

'institutional racism' in the country" (BBC). Historian David Olusoga, in an article for *The*

Guardian, speculates that part of the motivation for the Sewell Report's conclusion was to counteract growing acceptance of Britain's extensive litany of moral sins:

> It is the fact that the histories of slavery and empire are becoming mainstream, and that young people are entirely comfortable with the reality that "profit and suffering" were at the centre of both, that appears to disturb the authors and the government whose agenda they have so faithfully served. Determined to privilege comforting national myths over hard historical truths, they give the impression of being people who would prefer this history to be brushed back under the carpet. (2021)

The Sewell Report constitutes an institutional attempt to undermine claims of systematic racial and ethnic prejudice in Great Britain in service of a nationalist ideology threatened by historical narratives that centre the country's participation in slavery and empire.

These contests over which aspects of a country's history should be retold or whether they should be narrativized in literary or institutional discourses suggests a far deeper crisis over the constitution and practice of citizenship. The fear that motivates opposition to the 1619 Project or the TRC, or that prompts reports like that from Sewell—or indeed motivates an increasingly intensified resistance to the learning and production of humanities scholarship—is fundamentally a fear about the new types of relationalities that these projects portend, demand, or imply. Even the mere acknowledgment of the heterogeneity of citizenship is unpalpable for some because it likewise involves de-hierarchizing categories of belonging, potentially nullifying the notion of a citizen archetype. A rigid and categorical citizenship rhetoric ensures that social and political arrangements continue to bear on how persons relate to one another in a way that elevates their citizen status above all other forms of relationality. Forging new types of political relationalities beyond citizenship in part involve literary and historical narratives that "translate" rhetorics of belonging in fundamentally different ways.

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