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**THE COMPARATIVE GEOGRAPHIES OF SERVITUDE: SERVITUDE,  
SLAVERY, AND IDEOLOGY IN THE 17<sup>TH</sup>-AND 18<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY  
ANGLO-AMERICAN ATLANTIC**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

LITERATURE

by

**Laura E. Martin**

September 2012

The Dissertation of Laura E. Martin is  
approved:

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Professor Carla Freccero

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Tyrus Miller  
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

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## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	v
Acknowledgements .....	vii
Introduction .....	1
Chapter One	
“Servants Have the Worser Lives”: The Poetics and Rhetorics of Servitude and Slavery in <i>Inkle and Yarico</i> ’s Barbados .....	31
Part One: The Invention of Inkle and Yarico and the Servant Problem Paradigm	
I. Ligon’s “Yarico,” Servant Mistreatment, and the Colonial Transition to Capitalism .....	35
II. Steele’s “Inkle,” the Abstraction of Paternalism, and the Disavowal of Colonial Servitude .....	50
Part Two: Servitude Mediation in <i>Inkle and Yarico</i> ’s Long Century of Adaptation	
I. <i>Inkle and Yarico</i> ’s Heroic Epistle Phase I: Servitude Mediation and the Poetics of Debt and Indenture .....	61
II. <i>Inkle and Yarico</i> ’s Heroic Epistle Phase II: Disciplining Mercantilism and the Peculiar Transformations of Class in the English Civil War .....	84
III. The Reemergence of Colonial Servants: Paternalism as Cultural Dictate and <i>Inkle and Yarico</i> in Drama and Prose .....	96
IV. Slave Pastoralism, Chapman’s <i>Barbadoes</i> , and Paternalism as Class Divide: Re-collectivizing Servant and Slave Imaginaries .....	138
Chapter Two	
The Myth of Convict America in <i>Oroonoko</i> ’s Surinam: The Contradictions of Colonial Servitude and Slavery in Behn’s “Other World” .....	159
I. “ <i>Slaves for Four Years</i> ”: The Interchange of Servitude and Slavery, Colonial Servitude Debasement, and the Contradictions of Labor and the Crowd in Behn’s Surinam .....	164

a. Servant Degradation and the Dialectics of the Servant/Slave Relation in Oroonoko’s Recruitment Scene .....	166
b. The Corrupt Antagonism of Colonial Servitude, Behn’s Popular Unconscious, and the Contradictions of Political Order in Oroonoko’s Rebellion .....	172
c. Convict Governance, Colonial Scapegoating, and the Contradictions of the Crowd in Oroonoko’s Execution Scene .....	179
II. Behn’s “Other World”: Colonial Labor, Amerindian Contradiction, and Anglo-Dutch Relations in <i>Oroonoko</i> ’s Surinam .....	196
Chapter Three	
The Myth of the Servant-Planter: The Economics of Colonial Servitude in <i>Colonel Jack</i> and Defoe’s Chesapeake .....	224
I. On Transportation: The Competing Discourses of Colonial Servitude and the Trope of Illusory Advantage .....	229
II. On the Servitude Pattern: The Persistence of Colonial Servitude and the Servant/Slave Relation .....	254
a. The London Thieving Years: Domestic Servitude as Disguise .....	255
b. The Plantation Management Phase: Grateful Subordination and The Dialectics of Servitude and Slavery .....	261
c. The Jacobite Era and the Reprise of Transportation: European Military Adventuring, Colonial Political Asylum, and Spanish Caribbean Exploits .....	279
Bibliography .....	288

## Abstract

The Comparative Geographies of Servitude: Servitude, Slavery, and Ideology in  
the 17<sup>th</sup>-and 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Anglo-American Atlantic

by

Laura E. Martin

In this dissertation, I examine the ideological formation and geographical coalescence of colonial servitude in the literature of the 17<sup>th</sup>-and 18<sup>th</sup>-century Anglo-American Atlantic. The figure of the colonial servant, typically consigned to a marginal literary position, embodies a fundamental dialectic illustrating the precarity of labor in the English Atlantic. Its formulation is exemplified in Francis Bacon's 1606 address to James I on the planting of Ireland. In this discourse, Bacon articulates colonial transportation as "a double commodity," a twin advantage and dual solution to the labor surpluses of England and Scotland and the characteristic labor shortages of the colonial plantations — a simple but cutting design that links the "avoidance of people here" with the "making use of them there." Rendered economic, social, and political liabilities at home, English and Scottish laborers are refigured as potential assets of colonial elsewhere. It is a logic that will outlive the overpopulation crises of Elizabethan and Jacobean England and obtain as the basic model for transatlantic colonial servitude — the condition assumed by over half of all migrants to the English colonies in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and one comprising indentured servants, convict transports, political prisoners, redemptioners, maids-for-wives, as well as spirited, or

kidnapped, transports. Presenting the colonial laborer as an object of use and exchange, Bacon's characterization of transportation as a twofold benefit highlights the commodity status of the colonial laborer and underscores the fundamental economic character of colonial servitude. My principal effort is to demonstrate that this fundamental economism of colonial servitude is continued, if also ideologically refracted, in the literature of the Anglo-American Atlantic, as evident in each of this study's literary geographies — *Inkle and Yarico's* Barbados, *Oroonoko's* Surinam, and Defoe's Chesapeake. Whether taking up the extensive, adaptive network of the *Inkle and Yarico* myth (1657-1833), Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688), or Daniel Defoe's *Colonel Jack* (1722), my central claim is that the literary colonial servant is a figure of human commodification that serves an important mediating function in the transition to colonial capitalism and the emergence of racial slavery in the Anglo-American Atlantic.

## Acknowledgements

This dissertation is a testament, above all, to the dedication, insight, and patience of my tremendous committee members and mentors at Santa Cruz — Carla Freccero, Susan Gillman, and Jody Greene. Carla has provided a model of scholarship and pedagogical commitment that will remain my ideal for years and years to come, and she has offered invaluable comments on this work. Susan Gillman, with her open door and constant enthusiasm, has, in our countless discussions, guided this project from its inception. From the moment that I expressed an interest in colonial servitude, Jody Greene has been my biggest supporter. It would be much less of a project without her involvement — from her endless reading of drafts to her general encouragement of my work. Her input has helped me to refine the dissertation and imagine its afterlife.

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To my parents and siblings, who, though perhaps puzzled by my early interest in all things literary, have continued to offer their support wherever my interests have taken me. To my new family (Tom, Diane, and Matt) who has welcomed me in as one of their own. To all of my friends old and new in and

beyond Santa Cruz who make my life worth living — you know who you are — I thank you all. In the final instance, this is for David, who has read every word.

## Introduction: On Colonial Servitude

Distinct from the other major Atlantic world colonial powers — Portugal, Spain, Holland, and France — England employed its own subjects as principal laborers of New World colonization.<sup>1</sup> Colonial servitude, the form this labor would generally take in the Anglo-American Atlantic, is, thus, uniquely inextricable from the English colonial project, playing a fundamental role in the discourse and history of English colonial expansion in the Atlantic. From the earliest appeals for permanent colonial settlement in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, colonization is articulated as an opportunity for developing a New World commodity trade and for alleviating the pressing problems of domestic unemployment, poverty, and crime — collectively derided as the broad scourge of “idleness” in the English realm. The English colonies, according to the projections of early colonial promoters, would serve as a remedy for the mischiefs and misfortunes of the domestic surplus population by providing new market outlets, or “vents,” for the unemployed poor at home and by “venting,” or expelling, the idle poor from England to the colonies where they would labor in hypothetically discovered mines and imaginary sugar plantations, among countless other proposed skilled and unskilled occupations.<sup>2</sup> From its discursive inception, colonial servitude embodies

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<sup>1</sup> For a comparative analysis of the role of European labor in the colonization efforts of the chief European imperial players, see Theodore Allen who, in *The Invention of the White Race, Vol. 2* (1997), calls England’s use of colonial servants “a special case” (3-13). See also Henry A. Gemery, “Markets for Migrants” (1986).

<sup>2</sup> For discussions of colonial “venting,” see Mary Fuller, *Voyages in Print* (1995), and Mark Netzloff, “Venting Trinculos” in *England’s Internal Colonies* (2003).

a rhetorical doubleness of commodification, evident in this language of “venting” that renders the poor at once producers of commodities and commodities themselves — a strategy that transfigures the unproductive, idle masses into a productive collective force by discharging them from England and putting them to work in the colonies. In this promotional stage, colonial servitude is formulated as an economic theory of market development and commodity production and an ideological mode of social correction and criminal deterrence aimed at England’s surplus population. More to the point, it is a design to banish and commodify England’s presumptively idle, ineffectual populace and the attendant social irritants of unemployment, poverty, and crime.

In *A Discourse of the Commodity of the Taking of the Strait of Magellanus* (1579-80), a pamphlet encouraging the English colonization of the Straits of Magellan, Richard Hakluyt the Younger proposes that, in addition to Amerindian allies, the colony would be settled by “condemned Englishe men and women, in whom there may be founde hope of amendment” (Taylor 143). In Hakluyt’s plan to encroach on Spanish holdings in South America, he outlines one of the earliest schemes of colonial servitude, advising that the gateway to the Pacific could be secured by the enlistment of both Francis Drake’s Amerindian confederates and English convict transports (142-3). In this tract, Hakluyt suggests colonial servitude as a political means of challenging Spanish power at home and abroad as well as an ideological means of the potential “amendment,” or social redemption, of English criminals. The writings promoting Humphrey Gilbert’s final colonial exploit in

Newfoundland in the early 1580s continue this endorsement of colonial servitude as a form of social correction and improvement, while also broadening the ranks of potential colonial laborers to the general population of England's poor. In a 1582 grant detailing Gilbert's "Rights in America," the English poor are to be transported as colonial tenants of Gilbert's proposed colony in North America (Quinn 271, 273). Fellow military and mercantile adventurer Christopher Carleill's 1583 brief on Gilbert's Newfoundland voyage similarly contends that colonization would provide an outlet for, in his words, "our poore sorte of people, which are very many amongst us, living altogether unprofitable, and often times to the great disquiet of the better sort" (Quinn 361). Such venting of the English poor would not only employ the idle but also prevent them from "falling into ... vile deedes" and disturbing the "good sort of people" in England (Quinn 361).

Gilbert's Catholic associate, George Peckham, clarifies the financial advantage of recruiting the poor to the colonies in his 1583 *True Reporte of the Late Discoveries*, promoting colonial servitude as a means to plant colonies "without the aide of the Princes power and purse" (Quinn 469). "There is at this day great numbers," he explains, "which live in such penurie and want, as they could be contented to hazarde their lives, and to serve one yeere for meate, drinke, and apparel, onely without wages, in hope thereby to amend theyr estates: which is a matter in such lyke journeis, of no small charge to the Prince" (469). With such apprenticeship schemes "her Majesties dominions [would] be enlarged" and "all odious ydlenes from this our Realme utterly banished" (476). Colonial settlement, moreover,

would alleviate idleness at home, simultaneously creating new markets in cloth that would employ the domestic poor and restore their “decayed Townes” (462, 476).

The Hakluyt cousins, England’s principal colonial advocates, along with Francis Bacon, emphasize the double advantage colonial servitude offers for the continued problem of overpopulation in England — a demographic crisis that persisted from the first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century until the Restoration.<sup>3</sup> In *Discourses of Western Planting* (1584), the younger Richard Hakluyt contends that, despite the laws devised against the “idle and lazye,” England still “cannot deliver our common wealthe from multitudes of loyteres and idle vagabondes” (Taylor 234). Due to “longe peace and seldome sicknes,” the population has swelled with “idle persons” who, lacking employment, have turned “mutinous,” “burdinous,” and criminal, as they “often fall to pilfering and thevinge and other lewdness” (234). To relieve the prisons, which “are stuffed full of them,” and avoid excessive hangings, Hakluyt proposes that “these pety theves might be condemned for certen yeres in the westerne parts” and put to an infinite number of colonial tasks (234-5). Criminalizing the poor and portraying colonial labor as a term of punishment, Hakluyt anticipates the state-sponsored convict system that would emerge in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and, moreover, clarifies that the problem facing England is not overpopulation itself but the lack of sufficient “worke” (238). Western planting would not only provide this much-needed employment for domestic and colonial

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<sup>3</sup> On England’s population growth in this period, see J.D. Chambers, *Population, Economy, and Society in Pre-Industrial England* (1972), and E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871* (1981).

laborers alike but also serve as a general panacea for the symptoms and effects of overpopulation — idleness, labor unrest, poverty, and crime (235-6, 238). The elder Richard Hakluyt's "Reasons for Colonization" (1585) echoes much of his younger cousin's discourse, figuring colonial servitude as a means of at once occupying "idle people" and removing them from England, while also highlighting the lucrative appeal of promoting the relocation of England's poor to the colonies, "victual and labour being so cheap there" (Wright 30, 33, 34).

Finally, Francis Bacon, in his 1606 address to James I on the planting of Ireland, "Certain Considerations Touching the Plantations in Ireland," renders most explicitly the dual benefit of colonial transportation to the metropolitan scene:

An effect of peace in fruitful kingdoms ... must in the end be a surcharge or overflow of people more than the territories can well maintain ... Now what an excellent diversion of this inconvenience is ministred [*sic*] ... to your majesty in this plantation of Ireland ... wherein so many families may receive sustentations and fortunes; and the discharge of them also out of England and Scotland may prevent many seeds of future perturbations: so that it is, as if a man were troubled for the avoidance of water from the place where he hath built his house, and afterwards should advise with himself to cast those waters, and to turn them into fair pools or streams, for pleasure, provision, or use. So shall your majesty in this work have a double commodity, in the avoidance of people here, and in making use of them there. (658)

Bacon formulates colonial transportation as "a double commodity," a twin advantage and dual solution to the labor surpluses of England and Scotland and the characteristic labor shortages and economic potential of the colonial plantations — a simple but cutting design that links the "avoidance of people here" with the "making use of them there." Rendered economic, social, and political liabilities at

home, English and Scottish laborers are refigured as potential assets of colonial elsewhere. It is a logic that will outlive the overpopulation crises of Elizabethan and Jacobean England and obtain as the basic model for transatlantic colonial servitude — the condition assumed by over half of all migrants to the English colonies in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and one comprising indentured servants, convict transports, political prisoners, redemptioners, maids-for-wives, as well as spirited, or kidnapped, transports (Smith 3-4, Gemery 33).<sup>4</sup> Presenting the colonial laborer as an object of use and exchange, Bacon’s characterization of transportation as a twofold benefit, along with the previous colonial proposals, highlights the commodity status of the colonial laborer and underscores the fundamental economic character of colonial servitude. The principal effort of “The Comparative Geographies of Servitude” is to demonstrate that this fundamental economism of colonial servitude is continued, if also ideologically refracted, in the literature of the Anglo-American Atlantic, as evident in each of this study’s literary geographies — *Inkle and Yarico*’s Barbados, *Oroonoko*’s Surinam, and Defoe’s Chesapeake.<sup>5</sup> Whether taking up the extensive, adaptive network of the *Inkle and Yarico* myth (1657-1833), Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* (1688), or Daniel Defoe’s *Colonel*

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<sup>4</sup> Historian Henry Gemery estimates that servants constituted 50-60 percent of the colonial labor migration stream from 1630-1780, and historian Marcus Jernegan estimates that this migration totaled more than a quarter of a million servants in the colonial period (Gemery 33, Jernegan 45).

<sup>5</sup> Literary geography, a place-bound study of literature that takes geography as an active determinant of the literary field, is a hermeneutic and theoretical paradigm adapted from and most notably linked to Franco Moretti’s cartographic analyses of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century novel and Peter Hulme’s extensive “American Tropics” project at the University of Essex. See Moretti’s *Atlas of the European Novel* (1998) and Hulme’s *Cuba’s Wild East: A Literary Geography of Oriente* (2011).

*Jack* (1722), my central claim is that the literary colonial servant is a figure of human commodification, or as David Galenson puts it, “human capital,” that serves an important mediating function in the transition to colonial capitalism and the emergence of racial slavery in the Anglo-American Atlantic (97).

The essential question driving this claim of servant mediation is the basic discrepancy between the centrality of colonial servitude in the English colonial project and the relative marginality of colonial servitude in the transatlantic literature of the colonial period. While the 17<sup>th</sup> century roughly can be periodized as the era of indentured servitude in the Anglo-American Atlantic and the 18<sup>th</sup> century the era of convict servitude, the Anglo-American literary archive generally disavows rather than affirms the indentured servants and convict transports of the historical record. Instead of occupying a dominant position in the colonial literary imaginary, they dot the peripheries, often only half-lit figures flickering in and out of view. In transatlantic literature, they take the shape of Xury, the disappeared indentured servant of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), or Sycorax, the offstage transported felon of *The Tempest* (1611), most commonly known as Caliban’s witch-mother. They fade in and out of the textual imaginary, as with the *Inkle and Yarico* myth; evanescently occupy the spotlight, as with Shakespeare’s indentured servant sprite, Ariel; and compose a sardonic, faceless backdrop to colonial tragedy, as in Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* (1688). Even when colonial transports are seemingly put center stage, such as with Daniel Defoe’s transatlantic rogue novels, *Moll Flanders* (1722) and *Colonel Jack* (1722), their accounts more properly feature the circumvention of

colonial servitude, a move that has analogous marginalizing effects; if not beginning at the margins of the literary text, then colonial servants are diegetically banished to the dramatic backgrounds, poetic edges, and narrative sidelines.

The precarity of literary servants is by no means a recent revelation. In his novelistic study of 19<sup>th</sup>-century domestic servants, *The Servant's Hand* (1986), Bruce Robbins focuses his analysis around the conditional and pervasive “pressure” of servants’ exclusion in literary representation, what he calls “the secret pressure of the working hand” (1). For him, the elusive, marginal presence of the literary servant marks the absence of common people from literary history, an insight he develops from Erich Auerbach’s *Mimesis* (1946): “This is one of the richest motifs in *Mimesis*: the long exile from Western literature of what it calls, without quotation marks, the people, an exile marked by the slender, subordinate existence of the literary servant” (26). If domestic servants in England occupy a tenuous, subaltern position at the fringes of Western literature, then England’s colonial servants dwell in a murky space of double exile, at home in the literature of neither the metropole nor its peripheries. If they can be said to mark a similar absence of the popular, then they are bearers of a double negation, signifying an expulsion to the margins of the margins, a banishment to the edges of a far-flung, enigmatic literary imaginary. While certainly performing such populist symbolic functions as Robbins suggests in the case of domestic servants — a phenomenon we will see play out in Behn’s *Oroonoko* — colonial servants’ double marginalization and literary homelessness also represents an insight into the historical position and

ideological status of colonial servitude itself. The literary marginalization of colonial servitude is a symbol of representational elitism in Western literature; however, it is also a symptomatic sign of their historical status — at once diasporic, disposable, and transitional — and an indication of their ideologically mystifying, yet mediating, function in the Anglo-American Atlantic world. Colonial servants, while fundamental to the history of colonial labor and development, are increasingly marginalized, arbitrating figures in the escalation of colonial capitalism and racial slavery in the New World.

Colonial servitude, as Eric Williams argues, is “the historic base” and “precedent” of African slavery in the New World (*Capitalism 19, From Columbus* 103). In *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), Williams explains the overlapping infrastructure of the servant and slave systems:

The experience with white servitude had been invaluable. Kidnapping in Africa encountered no such difficulties as were encountered in England. Captains and ships had the experience of the one trade to guide them in the other. Bristol, the center of the servant trade, became one of the centers of the slave trade. Capital accumulated from the one financed the other ... The felon-drivers in the plantations became without effort slave-drivers. (19)

In nearly every English Atlantic colony where slavery comes to dominate, servitude is the first predominant form of colonial labor; the Anglo-American colonial system, in turn, is distinctively marked by a waning of servant migration and the transition from colonial servitude to colonial slavery— a shift that temporally varies from colony to colony but typically is catalyzed by the incapacity

of the servant market to meet the intensified labor demands of the transformation from a diversified to a monocultural plantation complex. The three literary geographies presented in this study — *Inkle and Yarico's* Barbados, *Oroonoko's* Surinam, and Defoe's Chesapeake — each feature this transitional moment from servitude to slavery, depicting together, although with certain important differences, what Sidney Mintz in *Sweetness and Power* (1985) explains as the “mixed” labor pattern of the early Caribbean plantations comprised of “European smallholders, indentured laborers, and African and Indian slaves” (53). In Barbados, the shift from servitude to slavery occurs during the earliest stage of the *Inkle and Yarico* myth, from 1640 to 1660, in conjunction with the island's sugar boom, and in the Chesapeake, where colonial servants have a more extensive historical presence, the transition occurs later, from 1680 to 1720, a period reflected in the colonial episodes of *Colonel Jack* (Menard 3-4, Dunn 67, K. Morgan 36). The English-occupied Surinam of Behn's *Oroonoko*, while depicting African slavery as the dominant form of plantation labor, generally reflects Mintz's hybrid labor pattern in which indentured servants, African slaves, and European skilled laborers comprise a composite plantation workforce; an English colony for only sixteen years, it is more difficult to speak of a transition from servitude to slavery in Surinam, at least in the context of English imperial control, although it follows the general course of Barbadian labor transformations during its brief tenure as an English colony (Williamson 150-84). In contextualizing this colonial labor pattern in *Inkle and Yarico*, *Oroonoko*, and *Colonel Jack*, I demonstrate and analyze three key,

interlocking features of this transitional imaginary from servitude to slavery: the stubborn and varied persistence of colonial servitude in the shift, the economic character of the transition, and the emergence of a servant/slave dialectic of identity and difference out of this central historical change in the Anglo-American Atlantic.

The catalyst for this colonial labor transformation, as Williams attests, is “an economic, not racial” incentive: “it had to do not with the color of the laborer, but the cheapness of the labor” (*Capitalism* 19).<sup>6</sup> It is a point that reveals at once the shared commodity status of servants and slaves in the colonial world, the determining influence of changes in servitude ideology on slavery, and the complicated emergence of the racialization of colonial labor in the Anglo-American Atlantic. Featuring a utilitarian, diasporic conception of subordinated labor, a mode appearing as early as Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1515),<sup>7</sup> this economic motive of the servant/slave transition in the colonies also marks, and perhaps fulfills, a transformation in the ideology of servitude — the shift from an older, feudalistic mode of servile labor as a protective relation of paternalistic mutuality to an economically determined and alienated mode of servitude as primitive accumulation, Karl Marx’s term for the *prior* amassing of capital necessary for the

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<sup>6</sup> See Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery* (1998), and Russell Menard, *Migrants, Servants, and Slaves* (2001).

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of labor in More’s *Utopia* as it applies to colonial servitude and slavery, see Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery* (58-60).

transition to capitalism.<sup>8</sup> Servants and slaves fulfill such a role because they are commodified products of what Marx identifies as the central “historical process” of primitive accumulation, namely the “process of divorcing the producer from the means of production” (*Capital* 875). In this transition to economic servitude, colonial servants become human commodities bought and sold on the Atlantic servant market, a transformation that Galenson describes as a financialization of servile labor of direct benefit to the merchant and planter classes of the Anglo-American Atlantic (8). Hilary Beckles and Deborah Valenze explain that this notion of propertied, commoditized persons in the colonial scene is rooted specifically in the transformation from paternalistic to economic servitude — another point at which colonial servitude serves as a touchstone for New World slavery (Beckles, “The Concept of ‘White Slavery,’” 572-84; Valenze, 228, 234-5). Valenze describes the formative role of convict transports in this transition, an evolution in the understanding of the relations of dependency which, as she notes, occurred over the course of the 17th and 18th centuries and, indeed, typified the period (258):

Subordinated labor was usually understood in the context of older paternalistic discourses, but the appearance of contractors who handled involuntary migrants as part of larger commercial ventures added a new dimension of monetized identity to the subjectivity of servants. In these cases, money rendered laborers fungible, at one moment, translating them into abstract units, at another, likening them to transferable possessions. (228)

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<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 26 of *Capital, Volume I*, “The Secret of Primitive Accumulation” (873-6).

As this portrait of servants' "monetized identity," economic fungibility, and propertied abstraction likewise obtains for slaves, we can grasp their joint commodity status in Anglo-American colonial expansion. Throughout "The Comparative Geographies of Servitude," I explore the uneven development of this transformation of servitude ideology in the literature of the Anglo-American Atlantic, particularly as it applies to the relationship between servants and slaves in the featured colonial geographies of Barbados, Surinam, and the Chesapeake. In each of the chapters that follow, I demonstrate how this utilitarian change reveals a fundamental point of connection and identity between colonial servitude and slavery, a similarity that is often overlooked in the Anglo-American Atlantic, and indicates a partially veiled history and ideology of a servant/slave dialectic in transatlantic literature — an argument for a relationship of a simultaneous identity and difference among colonial servants and slaves. This claim for the dialectical relationship of servitude and slavery is, moreover, an effort to show the co-constitutive character of colonial servitude and slavery, while arguing that their concurrent differentiation is foundational in the solidification of modernity's ideological paradigms, especially in the case of what Theodore Allen calls "the invention of the white race" (1994, 1997), and what Robin Blackburn, in *The Making of New World Slavery* (1997), explains as the joint commercialization and racialization of New World slavery.

The servant/slave dialectic is most succinctly exemplified in the descriptive interchangeability of servants and slaves in the literature and colonial discourse of

the Anglo-American Atlantic. Defoe often conflates servants and slaves in the colonial settings of his novels. In *Robinson Crusoe*, Crusoe refers to Friday as both a servant and a slave, and in *Moll Flanders*, Moll's mother pointedly explains that the colonial Virginian indentured servants of the novel are "more properly call'd Slaves" (133) — a tendency, as we will see, that Defoe continues in the Maryland plantation episodes of *Colonel Jack*. Such servant/slave conflation is likewise reflected in the few extant 17<sup>th</sup>-century accounts of servitude in the colonial Chesapeake that, along with many subsequent reports of Atlantic indentured servitude, describe the experience of indenture as slavery — Richard Frethorne's 1623 "Letter From Virginia," James Revel's mid-17<sup>th</sup>-century poem "The Poor Unhappy Transported Felon's Sorrowful Account," and the anonymous 17<sup>th</sup>-century ballad "The Trapann'd Maiden."<sup>9</sup> Both colonial administrative texts and the promotional literature of Anglo-American settlement echo this literary conflation of servants and slaves, while also, at times, noting the emergence of the temporal distinction of servitude and slavery. The Royal African Company referred to chattel slaves as "perpetual servants," as did 17<sup>th</sup>-century administrative documents from colonial Virginia to Providence Island (Van Cleeve 608, "1662 VA statute," Jordan 67). A late 1650s report of the Council of Foreign Plantations describes "servants" as "either Blacks or whites" but likewise designates the former as "per[pet]uall servants" (Eltis 61). Governor, Francis, Lord Willoughby's colonial prospectus for the mid-17<sup>th</sup>-century settlement of Surinam simply conflates

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<sup>9</sup> In addition, see *England's Slavery or Barbados Merchandize* (1659).

English and African laborers under the sign of colonial servitude, pledging to subsidize the transportation of “cattell & servants, English or Negroes” to the colony (Willoughby 176-7). Historians and political theorists have at times replicated this descriptive transposition of servitude and slavery. C.A. Herrick in *White Servitude in Pennsylvania* (1926) describes indentured servants as “temporarily chattels” in an effort to describe servitude and slavery as, at bottom, a shared condition of colonial exploitation: “no matter how kindly they may have been treated in particular cases, or how voluntarily they may have entered into the relation, as a class and when once bound, indentured servants were temporarily chattels” (3). In a passage on industrial capitalism’s dialectical expansion of unproductive labor in *Capital, Volume I* (1867), Marx strikingly conflates 19<sup>th</sup>-century domestic servitude in England with slavery, referring to the servant class as “modern domestic slaves” and noting that “the young servant girls in the houses of the London lower middle class are in common parlance called ‘little slaveys’” (574-5; 574, n. 47).<sup>10</sup>

Aphra Behn’s expression for indentured servants in *Oroonoko* — “*Slaves for Four Years*” — notably clarifies the servant/slave relation, demonstrating that it is not a matter of the haphazard coalescence and separation of servitude and slavery but a particular instance of simultaneous similarity and distinction. Congealing the dialectical figuration of servitude and slavery, Behn’s transpositional term suggests,

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<sup>10</sup> To clarify, Marx is evoking ancient, not modern Atlantic world, slavery in his reading of the status of unproductive labor in industrial capitalism, but the transpositional move and conflation of servitude and slavery is nonetheless comparable.

on the one hand, an equivalence concerning the conditions of servitude and slavery and, on the other, a clear temporal differentiation in the terms of their colonial service. Thus, her phrase reinforces the shared etymology of servitude and slavery evident in the Latin verb, “*servīre*,” in which “to serve” denotes “to be a servant or slave,” and its nominal correlate, *servus*, which signifies both “slave” and “servant” (*OED*). At the same time, it points to *the* principal distinction between servitude and slavery in the colonial Atlantic — temporal incongruence, as colonial servitude is distinguished by a temporary, non-hereditary term and slavery is, as Oroonoko and several of the above descriptions put it, “perpetual,” both open-ended and inheritable. As Williams clarifies in *Capitalism and Slavery*: “Defoe bluntly stated that the white servant was a slave. He was not. The servant’s loss of liberty was of limited duration, the Negro was a slave for life (19).<sup>11</sup> This formulation of the servant/slave condition as at once similar and dissimilar has remarkable discursive reach, extending to a range of political writings — from Aristotle’s political discourses of ancient Greece in which a servant is categorized within the master/slave relation to Hobbes and Locke’s 17<sup>th</sup>-century English political treatises in which slavery is conceived as a “peculiar” type of servitude. Servant/slave

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<sup>11</sup> For more historical commentary on the servant/slave relation, see also James Curtis Ballagh, *History of Slavery in Virginia*, 28; Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, 228, 240; and Barbara Jeanne Fields, “Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States of America,” 101-116. Sociologist Orlando Patterson reformulates this debate in his introduction of the concepts of “natal alienation” and “social death,” but he similarly, although in a more systematic way, navigates the servant/slavery distinction by shoring up its status as dialectically linked and separate; see *Slavery and Social Death*, 7-10, 27-8, 86, 124-6; see also my discussion of Patterson’s dialectical understanding of servitude, debt, and slavery in the following chapter.

interchange is likewise a feature of modern historical and sociological attempts to sift through the elusive origins of servitude and slavery in the Anglo-American Atlantic and beyond, evident in such texts as Winthrop Jordan's *White Over Black* (1968) and Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death* (1982).<sup>12</sup>

The interchangeability of servants and slaves in 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century Atlantic discourse is a symptom of the historical unevenness in the transition from servitude to slavery and an indication of the extended continuum of unfreedom that characterized social relations within and across the Anglo-American colonies. More specifically, it denotes the economic equivalence of servants and slaves in the colonial scene, underscoring their shared position in the “extended primitive accumulation” of the Anglo-American transatlantic — Blackburn’s phrase for the “forms of production based on unfree labour” that drive the emergence of capitalism (554, 572). Thus, the economic identity of servants and slaves is a characteristic that evokes the contested question of the role of colonialism in the transition to capitalism. In *Capital, Volume I*, Marx, at several points, notes the influence of Anglo-American colonization on the development of capitalism. Colonialism is, for him, a principal historical event of the primitive accumulation of capital; as he explains:

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<sup>12</sup> See Aristotle, Book 1, *Politics* (~335–323 BCE); Hobbes, “The Power of Masters” in *The Elements of Law* (1640), “Of the Rights of Lords over Their Servants” in *De Cive* (1642), and “Of Dominion Paternal and Despotical” and “Of Demonology” in *Leviathan* (1651); Locke, “Of Slavery” and “Of Political or Civil Society” in *The Second Treatise of Government* (1689).

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of blackskins, are all things which characterize the dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation. (915)

Moving to the specific scene of the late-17<sup>th</sup>-century Anglo-American colonies, he argues that the “brute force” of this system can be understood as “an economic power” that, along with other innovations of state power, “hasten[s], as in a hothouse, the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode” and, indeed, “shorten[s] the transition” (915-16). At another point, Marx asserts slavery’s conditional relation to wage labor, explaining that “the veiled slavery of the wage-labourers in Europe needed the unqualified slavery of the New World as its pedestal” (925). Much of the debate surrounding the relationship between capitalism, colonialism, and slavery, though, centers not around these general claims but on Williams’s famous argument that the profits of the slave trade and colonial markets, in his words, “provided one of the main streams of the accumulation of capital in England which financed the Industrial Revolution” (*Capitalism and Slavery*, 52).<sup>13</sup> While Williams’s economic focus on the instrumental profits of the colonial system is outside of the scope of this study, the

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<sup>13</sup> For the extensive debate that “the Williams thesis” has generated since the 1960’s, see Blackburn’s final chapter in *The Making of New World Slavery*, “New World Slavery, Primitive Accumulation and British Industrialization” (509-80), and “Slavery and Industrialization” from his *The American Crucible* (2011). See also Barbara Solow and Stanley Engerman, *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery* (1987) and Colin Palmer, *Eric Williams* (2007).

political register of his claims concerning servitude and slavery and the general linkages between colonialism and capitalism, along with Marx's insights, serve as a frame for my analysis of the cultural expressions of the economic and dialectical relation of servitude and slavery.

The relationship between colonialism and capitalism, moreover, is just one of the many comparisons featured and theorized in my dissertation. As indicated in the title, this study is, most broadly, a comparison of the key geographies of colonial servitude in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries — an analysis which includes Barbados, Surinam, and the Chesapeake, but also alludes to and could have included other geographical touchstones of colonial servitude, most notably Jamaica, the Bermudas, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina. Specifically organized around an extended series of interrelated, overlapping comparisons — England and its New World colonies, servitude and slavery, literature and history, colonialism and capitalism, paternalistic servitude and economic servitude, ideology and history, and labor and race — my dissertation adopts comparison as a theoretical, organizational strategy to understand colonial servitude in its fullest complexity. As Rebecca Scott contends in her comparative study of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century slave systems of Louisiana and Cuba, *Degrees of Freedom* (2005), comparison encourages an analysis rooted in space and time and attentive to internal conflicts, strains, and pressures:

Detailed comparative study permits an exploration of structures and choices as they became manifest in actual space and time. Such comparison helps us to spot countercurrents as well as the dominant themes, and to

avoid romanticizing or demonizing on the basis of individual events or features ... Examining the points of similarity and variation between two systems enables us to see the tensions within each, while investigating the sources of their variance from each other. (7)

In other words, comparativism is, at bottom, a kind of structural, historical thinking, and a frame for ideological critique. A model that takes into account the messiness of history and its concepts, comparison is also the condition of possibility for the various contradictions I explore in my dissertation, from the persistent contradictions of colonial labor in the Anglo-American literary archive to the contradictions of literature and history in the Anglo-American colonial imaginary.

Comparison is, moreover, a general feature of such oceanic studies that take crossings, transitions, relocations, and transmissions as their shifting ground, and it is a mode that highlights self-contradiction and non-self identity as a kind of inherent comparativism. We can see the comparative foundations of internal contradiction at work in the double claim for Behn's *Oroonoko* as both the first American novel and the first English novel.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, but less widely known, *Colonel Jack* also has been the disputed object of both American and English literary claims. While Defoe's novel is a clearly canonical, though unpopular, text of the British literary tradition, it was not always so firmly consigned; Edward Everett Hale, the novel's self-proclaimed first American editor, argues in the preface to his

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<sup>14</sup> See William Spengemann, "The Earliest American Novel: Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*" (1984), where he claims as much, and Firdous Azim, *The Colonial Rise of the Novel* (1993), where she argues for Behn's *Oroonoko* as the first English novel (34-60). For a discussion of this debate, see Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, "The Original American Novel, or, The American Origin of the Novel" (2005).

1891 American edition that *Colonel Jack* is an unqualified “American story” (ii). In staking his national claim, Hale, following the “modern editors of *Robinson Crusoe*” who regularly “omit the third volume, which contains his religious experiences,” likewise “omit[s] or abridge[s] the unimportant European episodes” of *Colonel Jack* (ii). Hale anticipates a tendency among contemporary Defoe scholars, most notably Maximillian Novak, who explain away several of *Colonel Jack*’s American episodes as superfluous detail, especially Jack’s final adventures in the Spanish Caribbean. Hale, by contrast, grasps the novel’s American scenes as its authentic content, characterizing the novel’s European episodes as extraneous:

The story as De Foe wrote it was evidently ‘padded,’ as publishers say now, to make it long enough for sale, and while the real novel is thoroughly American, and its important movement is all in this country, the long episodes in the original break the flow of the story, and entirely, as I think, destroy its interest as a single novel. They make it two or three novels awkwardly patched together. (i)

What we could grasp as Defoe’s comparativism, his juxtaposition of the European theater of Jack’s adventures with his American and Caribbean exploits, becomes a conflict, or contradiction, in the frame of national literatures.

*Inkle and Yarico* has received similar treatment. To take just one example, the most recent editor and collector of the myth’s copious adaptations, Frank Felsenstein, divides his edition, *English Trader, Indian Maid* (1999), into three unequal sections — a lengthy collection of English versions and translations and two very short final sections on American and Caribbean versions, a move that, above all, suggests that these latter two groups of adaptations comprise not only a

distinct but a less robust literary history than their English counterparts. Taking these tales, instead, as part of a network of adaptations and a field of comparisons in a broadly comparative frame allows us to problematize and collapse such proleptic nationalist distinctions and, indeed, recollectivize the various literary traditions, geographical sites, and texts of *Inkle and Yarico* — along with the multiple locations and contradictory concerns of Behn's *Oroonoko* and Defoe's *Colonel Jack* — under the sign of Atlantic comparativism.

A project to likewise recollectivize the status of servitude and slavery in this period, my dissertation seeks to reanimate the unique significance of colonial servitude in this comparative Anglo-American Atlantic world — a singularity that can be traced to the agrarian origins of capitalism in England and the consequent expropriation of England's traditional agrarian laborers from the land and their transformation into the category of surplus labor.<sup>15</sup> Put most simply, when we take colonial servitude into account and theorize its varying absence, presence, marginality, and mediation in the particular servant geographies of transatlantic literature, the colonial world looks quite different, a field at once more complicated, conflicting, and contingent. In the first chapter on the literary origins and adaptations of the *Inkle and Yarico* myth, my general aim is to depict how the marginalized condition of colonial servitude at once mediates, persists in, and maintains the master/slave imaginary of the tale. Beginning with its inaugural

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<sup>15</sup> On the agrarian origins of capitalism, see Robert Brenner, *The Brenner Debate* (1985). For its relation to English New World colonization and colonial servitude, see Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery* (1998).

moment in Richard Ligon's 1657 *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* and its popularization in Richard Steele's version in an early issue of *The Spectator* (March 13, 1711), I follow the tale's proliferation in the extended heroic epistle phase and the intermittent dramatic and prose renderings that follow throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century — an extended trajectory that finally ends in a discussion of the myth in Matthew James Chapman's 1833 epic poem, *Barbadoes*. In this chapter, "‘Servants Have the Worser Lives’: The Poetics and Rhetorics of Servitude and Slavery in *Inkle and Yarico*'s Barbados," I collapse Felsenstein's regional distinctions, situating the Barbadian servants of the tale within a broader context of servant mediation and intra-Caribbean and transatlantic servant migration in the extended Caribbean; it is a mediating legacy evident, for example, in the history of early Caribbean linguistic exchanges and the development of Caribbean creole languages.<sup>16</sup> As David Wallace notes in *Premodern Places* (2006), Sranan, the widely spoken creole of Surinam, emerges as a fusion of 17<sup>th</sup>-century English (specifically Aphra Behn's English) and West African idioms, a result not of the interchange of masters and slaves but of colonial servants and slaves: "English indentured and ex-indentured labor," he explains, "was of crucial importance in these earliest

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<sup>16</sup> The "extended Caribbean" is the geographical frame proposed by Immanuel Wallerstein in *The Modern World System II* (1980) to describe the colonial area reaching from Southern North America to Brazil (103). Peter Hulme adopts Wallerstein's term as his organizing principle for *Colonial Encounters*, describing it as "a coastal and insular region that stretched from what is now southern Virginia in the USA to the most eastern part of Brazil" (4). It is the rough geographical frame adopted here to trace the comparative literary geography of servitude — an area that extends from Colonel Jack's Maryland tobacco plantations to Robinson Crusoe's Bahia sugar estates.

linguistic exchanges” (241). The development of Sranan, Wallace argues, was also closely tied to intra-Caribbean servant migration patterns, an effect of the “predominance of former indentured servants from Barbados which, following the 1650s sugar boom, was over-populated with whites” (286, n. 12). An analogous process of creolization followed in Jamaica, an island taken by Cromwell in 1655 and also a destination for Barbadian servants, where the principal linguistic contact occurred between African slaves and indentured servants from Ireland and Western England (286, n. 12). Colonial servitude’s mediatory function is perhaps more commonly understood as an ingredient in what Theodore Allen calls the “social control system” of the Anglo-American colonies — a strategy that initially attempted to erect servitude, or more properly ex-servants, as an “intermediate stratum” between the European plantation bourgeoisie and African bond-labor but that was eventually supplanted by the racial ideology of “whiteness” that emerged in the wake of its failure (223). Ex-servants throughout the Anglo-American Atlantic colonies, for instance, were recruited for colonial militias to defend against both encroaching colonial powers and bond-labor uprisings. Beginning in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, moreover, “deficiency laws” were erected, principally in the English sugar islands, that fined planters who neglected to maintain the required quota of Europeans, either free or indentured, for a variable number of African slaves on their estates (Allen 223-9; Williams, *From Columbus*, 106-7; Williams, *Capitalism*, 24-5).

Introducing one of the comparisons of my study — the relationship between colonial servants and slaves — this first chapter, in addition to presenting the thematic of servant mediation, takes up the trope of servant mistreatment in the *Inkle and Yarico* myth. Addressing Ligon and Steele’s respective invention of “Yarico” and “Inkle,” I argue that Ligon’s idiomatic statement of servant mistreatment, that “servants have the worser lives” than slaves in colonial Barbados, can be understood as both a symptom of the tension between a paternalistic and economic understanding of servitude and a site of disavowed intimacy between servants and slaves. What will later be termed “the servant problem” in 19<sup>th</sup>-century England and variously described as a conflation of love and money, affect and contract, and dependency and autonomy, such an antinomy proves to be a recurrent, structural feature of the tale and a consistent cultural sign of capitalist transition in the Anglo-American colonial imaginary.<sup>17</sup> Although Steele largely disavows colonial servitude in his popular prose retelling, he keeps the terms of the servant problem intact, abstracting, for instance, servitude’s paternalistic relation as a universalized, hegemonic mode of literary sentiment. In the remaining versions, I locate the reentry points of colonial servitude in this tale of enslavement, theorizing its continued mediatory status, especially its persistent continuation of the master/slave relation in the myth. I argue that servitude, through a poetics of debt and indenture and the thematic of the servant problem,

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<sup>17</sup> For an extended discussion of the servant problem, see Kristina Straub’s introduction to *Domestic Affairs* (2009).

continues to bind itself to slavery and maintain a site of intimacy and economic identity between colonial servants and slaves in the literary imaginary of Barbados.

In the next two chapters, I consider two related, but distinctly opposed, myths of colonial servitude that predominate in the Anglo-American Atlantic imaginary: the myth of colonial servitude's inherent criminality and the myth of colonial servitude's inevitable facilitation of class advancement. In the second chapter, "The Myth of Convict America in *Oroonoko's* Surinam: The Contradictions of Colonial Servitude and Slavery in Behn's 'Other World,'" I theorize Aphra Behn's depiction of colonial Surinam as a degraded settlement of convict servants in *Oroonoko* (1688), an ideological phenomenon I designate Behn's "myth of convict America." Similar to the early literature of colonial promotion, *Oroonoko* collapses criminality and colonial servitude. Unlike this promotional literature, though, the novel does not entertain colonial servitude as a possible ideological mode of social correction or amendment; instead, it sardonically presents a ruling body of sovereign servant-convicts who signify the impossibility of servant redemption and mobility in the colonial scene. *Oroonoko* figures ex-convict servants as a sign of colonial political corruption, satirizing the attempt at a more popular form of social and political organization and setting this wrong-headed endeavor against Oroonoko's natural nobility and the aristocratic episode of Coramantien, his West African princely dominion. The theme of a servant-based criminalized illegitimacy, moreover, establishes a pattern of servitude in the novel that extends to the characterization of the general colonial populace and

prompts the suspension of the kind of servant paternalism found in tension with economic servitude in the *Inkle and Yarico* myth. Taken together, this debased ruling order and colonial populace are scapegoated as the general cause of Oroonoko's tragic execution and the ineffectiveness of his noble status to safeguard him from colonial enslavement.

Contradictions, though, abound in the novel, as Behn universalizes convict servitude at a time of its historical infrequency in the Anglo-American Atlantic. Moreover, *Oroonoko* features significant exceptions to the general rule of servant criminalization and presents an incongruous portrait of colonial servitude as well as the relationship between colonial servitude and slavery. Servants and slaves, for instance, are portrayed at once as plantation associates and antagonists — a principle of contradiction that extends to the depiction of both the general colonial populace and Surinam as a whole, in particular to the account of the region's Amerindians and the representation of Anglo-Dutch geopolitics in this contested zone of colonial influence. The criminal depiction of servitude is, then, at once undercut, refracted, and replicated. In the context of these contradictions, Behn's ideology of colonial servitude — a satirically fixed and incriminating class position that delinks the very idea of socio-political order from the colonial setting — reveals colonial servants as scapegoated mediators of a fractured colonial scene of slave revolt, Anglo-Dutch imperial rivalries, and a republican-provoked crisis of absolutism.

The third and final chapter, “The Myth of the Servant-Planter: The Economics of Colonial Servitude in *Colonel Jack* and Defoe’s Chesapeake,” moves to perhaps the most well-known geography of colonial servitude, the Chesapeake region of colonial Virginia and Maryland, to discuss servant class mobility and convict servitude in Defoe’s transatlantic rogue novel *Colonel Jack*. Sanctioning what I call the myth of the servant-planter, Defoe’s novel, a direct mythical contrary to Behn’s *Oroonoko*, imagines colonial servitude as a means of criminal atonement centered around a single colonial servant, Colonel Jack, who overcomes his impoverished, orphaned origins and subsequent thieving, lawless adventures to achieve legitimate ruling status in the colony. Defoe’s novel imaginatively fulfills and surpasses the early colonial promoters’ projections of servitude’s double advantage, as colonial servitude in *Colonel Jack* not only offers socio-economic benefits to metropolitan and colonial societies but also bestows socio-economic gains on the servant himself. In Defoe’s Maryland, colonial servitude, then, functions not only as a means of criminal redemption but also as a model of successful plantation management and a path to plantation wealth and mastery. At the same time, the featured transformation from convict servant to plantation master is an exceptional one in the novel, and, as mentioned, functions as an account of the successful economic avoidance, or financial buyout, of a colonial servitude term rather than the fulfillment of a servitude sentence that leads to straightforward class mobility and advantage. Like Behn’s scene of convict America, Jack’s upward mobility in the 1680s Chesapeake, moreover, is

historically incongruous, as it occurs during the very period when servant mobility is becoming an ever-increasing rarity, especially in the case of convict servants.

Thus, *Colonel Jack*, on the one hand, promotes convict transportation as an auspicious mode of social correction and mobility and, on the other, undermines it, advocating, instead, for the advantages of its circumvention and presenting servant mobility as a scene of literary-historical contradiction.

It is a colonial ambivalence that continues throughout the novel, as the specific features of Colonel Jack's transportation to the Chesapeake and his subsequent colonial rise coalesce into a servitude pattern that persists until the novel's end. A paradigm of colonial service that renders his quest for mastery perpetually incomplete and highlights the mythical character of the servant/planter transition, it is characterized by capture or near capture; social alienation and exile; disguise and the concealment of origins; and the deployment of illusory advantage, a stock, thematic paradox of the novel that features Jack's capitalization on unlikely scenarios, such as his profitable avoidance of his servitude term. In the representation of *Colonel Jack's* servitude pattern, the novel reveals the fundamental economic character and social alienation of convict servitude — a form of servitude which contemporary colonial promoters touted, instead, as a mode of criminal redemption and rehabilitation. Such an economic revelation of convict servitude's alienation likewise features the depiction of a transposable, dialectical relationship between colonial servants and slaves. Like *Inkle and Yarico* and *Oroonoko*, Defoe's *Colonel Jack*, in its presentation and reiterations of colonial servitude, highlights the

economic interchangeability of servants and slaves and the co-constitutiveness of the servant and slave systems. Thus, Defoe's novel, even in its portrayal of the exceptional figure of the servant-planter who successfully transitions from human capital to plantation capitalist, similarly depicts the main thread of this literary study of the Anglo-American colonial imaginary — the continued commodity status of colonial servants and the indelible character of the colonial servant condition. In insisting on the fundamental economic character of colonial servitude — whether in *Inkle and Yarico's* Barbados, *Oroonoko's* Surinam, or *Colonel Jack's* Chesapeake — I am posing an argument that emphasizes the structural, historical determination of colonial servitude in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In this approach, one of the principal internal distinctions of colonial servitude — voluntary forms of bond labor, such as indentured servitude, as opposed to involuntary forms, such as convict servitude — becomes unsustainable as a differentiating sign in the colonial imaginary of the Anglo-American Atlantic. Focusing on the basic economic equivalence between voluntary and involuntary colonial servants, my study underscores the involuntary character of voluntary servitude and, indeed, highlights the compulsory character of all Atlantic world labor, a point that collectivizes colonial servants and slaves under a common economic sign and emphasizes their overlapping historical imaginaries in 17<sup>th</sup>-and 18<sup>th</sup>-century transatlantic literature.

## Chapter One

### “Servants Have the Worse Lives”: The Poetics and Rhetorics of Servitude and Slavery in *Inkle and Yarico*’s Barbados

*“For slaves as well as for servants Barbados was thus not a bountiful mine of white gold but a ‘place of torment.’ For them, its true character was symbolized less by the wealth of the greater planters than by the story of Yarico, an Indian woman from the mainland.*

-Jack Greene, “Changing Identity in the British Caribbean: Barbados as a Case Study” (1987)

Literary critics have had much to say about the ideological dynamism of the *Inkle and Yarico* myth, the extent to which the myth’s extensive network of adaptations brings into complex play the emergent ideologies of gender, race, and sexuality in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Typically, these discussions convene around the discursive role of slavery in the tale, a focus that has tended to marginalize the status of servitude and the matrices of colonial labor that simultaneously inform *Inkle and Yarico*.<sup>18</sup> Taking up this question of colonial labor, my aim in this chapter is to demonstrate that colonial servitude mediates the master/slave imaginary of the tale throughout its long historical unfolding. As Jack Greene attests, the myth of *Inkle and Yarico* can be considered an emblem of diversified colonial labor, a myth of servitude as well as slavery. Considering that *Inkle and Yarico*’s many versions were largely adapted by Europeans for a

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<sup>18</sup> See, for instance, Frank Felsenstein’s introduction to his anthology of *Inkle and Yarico* tales, *English Trader, Indian Maid* (1999). See also, Martin Wechselblatt, “Gender and Race in Yarico’s Epistles to Inkle” (1989); Felicity Nussbaum, “The Politics of Difference” (1990); Moira Ferguson, *Subject to Others* (1992), and Joan Hamilton, “*Inkle and Yarico* and the Discourse of Slavery” (1994).

metropolitan audience, it may be erroneous to claim, as he does, that “the story of Yarico” symbolized “for slaves as well as for servants” the exploitative character of colonial Barbados (emphasis mine). That said, Greene’s brief mention of Yarico in an essay on the transformations of Barbadian identity, an anecdotal gesture toward *Inkle and Yarico* repeated by many critics from Edward Said to Mary Louise Pratt,<sup>19</sup> is telling to the extent it foregrounds the role of both servitude and slavery in the myth and jointly links them to the symbolic centrality of Barbados as a “place of torment” — a metonym not for colonial wealth, the proverbial “crown jewel” of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century English Caribbean, but for colonial labor exploitation.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the *Inkle and Yarico* myth participates in the metonymic legacy of Barbados in which the island stands as an idiomatic sign of social exile and servant disposability, a conception popularized in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century when “to Barbados” became a verb synonymous with kidnapping, banishment, and political transportation.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said cites *Inkle and Yarico* as a New World “fable” that, along with other mythical retellings — the Latin American and Caribbean adaptations of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, the stories of Columbus’s “discovery,” the multiple adventures of Robinson Crusoe, and the many versions of John Smith and Pocahontas’s colonial encounter — “stand guard over the imagination of the New World” (212). Pratt, in *Imperial Eyes* (1992), mentions *Inkle and Yarico* as a counterpart to the colonial romance of Stedman and Joanna in John Stedman’s 1796 *Narrative of a Five Years’ Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam* (100). Stedman’s narrative self-consciously incorporates *Inkle and Yarico* as a model for colonial sexual exchange; see Stedman, 43, 98.

<sup>20</sup> The reference is from a 1659 petition to Parliament by two political transports sentenced to servitude in Barbados after their alleged participation in the 1654 Salisbury Uprising. See *England’s Slavery, or Barbados Merchandize* (7).

<sup>21</sup> On “barbadosing” and the servant trade, see Russell Menard, *Sweet Negotiations* (43-4). On “barbadosing” as a Cromwellian political strategy see Hilary Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados* (1989), and Thomas Carlyle’s

Richard Ligon's *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* (1657), the text that introduces the *Inkle and Yarico* myth to England, links up with this history in its depiction of the trope of servant mistreatment, specifically his claim that "servants have the worser lives" than slaves in colonial Barbados. Ligon's *History* reveals this question of treatment as a symptom of the tension between a paternalistic and economic understanding of servitude, an opposition that proves to be a structural feature of the myth and one that recurs in Steele's version, the heroic epistle phase, and in the many prose, dramatic, and epic adaptations that follow in the long 18th century. Drawing on various historical and theoretical frameworks in this chapter, such as those proposed by Karl Marx, E.P. Thompson, Perry Anderson, and Orlando Patterson, among others, I look closely at *Inkle and Yarico*'s series of adaptations to historicize and theorize the contradiction of paternalism and economism inherent in this problem of servant mistreatment. An early, colonial expression of what will become known in 19<sup>th</sup>-century England as "the servant problem," the persistence of this formulation in *Inkle and Yarico* is the source of a fundamental dialectic of servitude and slavery in the tale, revealing a relationship of simultaneous similarity and difference between servants and slaves (Straub 5-24). Thus, the continued iteration of the terms of the servant problem can be understood as a site of intimacy, or identity, between colonial servants and slaves. Such intimacy, at its basic level a bracketing of servants and slaves as common colonial laborers, is a founding element of the servant/slave relation, a

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commentary in Oliver Cromwell, *Letters and Speeches* (1902) (Beckles 53; Cromwell, Vol. 3, 200).

condition of possibility for servant mediation in the tale, and a sign of the economic equivalence between servants and slaves in the Anglo-American Atlantic. While this association of servants and slaves shifts from being a common, avowed practice in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Atlantic to a largely disavowed one in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, traces of this basic link between servants and slaves persist throughout the adaptations of *Inkle and Yarico*'s extensive literary archive. At the same time, colonial servants and slaves are distinguished and differentiated in the persistence of the servant problem in the myth, as its literary formulation increasingly evokes a complex interchange of identity and difference among servants and slaves in the transitional period from colonial servitude to slavery in Barbados and in the emergence of colonial capitalism throughout the extended Caribbean. As colonial servants fall in and out of the myth's adaptations, which increasingly center on the master/slave relation, the persistence of the servant problem, along with the thematics of debt and indenture, maintain colonial servitude as a crucial mediating term in the larger frame of Atlantic mastery and slavery in the tale. Moreover, this interplay of the recognition and elision of the servant/slave relation in the literary imaginary affirms, while also complicating, Eric Williams's claim of "white servitude" as "the historic base" and "precedent" of African slavery — a central assumption and political springboard that initiates and informs my reading of the poetics of servitude and slavery in *Inkle and Yarico*'s Barbados (*Capitalism 19, From Columbus 103-4*).

## Part One: The Invention of Inkle and Yarico and the Servant Problem Paradigm

### I. Ligon's "Yarico," Servant Mistreatment, and The Colonial Transition to Capitalism

Richard Ligon's *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* is most known for its introduction of the story of Yarico to England. An anecdotal series of details in a colonial narrative with the chief aim of promoting sugar planting in Barbados, the account of Yarico's Barbadian enslavement is a counterpart to another, lesser-known inaugural feature of Ligon's text — his depiction of the exploitative conditions of colonial servitude in Barbados. Designated "the first comprehensive account of the 'treatment' of indentured servants," Ligon's *History* initiates an extended narrative tropology of servant mistreatment in English colonial discourse (Beckles 89).<sup>22</sup> Prior complaints about servant conditions exist in the literature of servitude, such as Richard Frethorne's 1623 "Letter to his Father and Mother from Virginia," but Ligon's *History*, unlike Frethorne's personal account, depicts the issue within the complicated context of master, servant, and slave relations in Barbados. As mentioned, the *History*, furthermore, suggests the trope as a symptom of what will later be termed "the servant problem" in 19<sup>th</sup>-century England — the tension between a paternalistic and economic understanding of bond labor that has been variously described as a conflation of love and money, an

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<sup>22</sup> See Hayden White's discussion of tropology and discourse in his introduction to *Tropics of Discourse* (1978). I am using the term, "trope," as he explains it, as a "turn" or "figure" of discourse (2). See also Srinivas Aravamudan's introduction to *Tropicopolitans* (1999) for an inventive use of the concept (1-25).

affiliation of affect and contract, and an intermingling of dependency and autonomy.<sup>23</sup> The servant problem, thus, generally exemplifies the opposition between two types of dependency: a personal, or personalizing, mode of dependency and mutual obligation governed by the sign of the father and patriarchal order, on the one hand, and an alienated, financialized mode of dependency, on the other, which maintains these personal, patriarchal bonds but increasingly subordinates them to economic logic and determinations.<sup>24</sup>

Spanning his three-year stay from 1647 to 1650, Ligon's *History* is a snapshot of a colony in transition. Between 1640 and 1660, Barbados was rapidly converting from the "tobacco age," a diversified economy of tobacco, cotton, and indigo, to the sugar and slavery period, a monocultural, plantation economy dominated by the production of sugar and the importation of African slaves (Dunn 49, 59; Sheridan 124-47). This twenty-year period of the sugar boom, what Ligon calls "the Sweet Negotiation of Sugar," is notable not only for the intensification of labor demand and the subsequent increase in the population of both European servants and African slaves on the island but also for the eventual transformation of the colonial labor force from one largely dependent upon European indentured servitude to one chiefly reliant on African slavery (Dunn 67, Ligon 96, Menard 3-

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<sup>23</sup> For an extended discussion of "the servant problem" in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and beyond, see Kristina Straub's introduction to *Domestic Affairs*.

<sup>24</sup> In *Premodern Places* (2006), David Wallace explains paternalism's "most distinctive trait" as its "understanding of mutuality" and mutual obligation. See his description of how such paternalism is "reimagined" as, in his terms, "an integral part of plantation slave management" (252). See also Eugene Genovese's opening chapter of *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (1976), "On Paternalism," where he similarly evokes paternalism as a mechanism of plantation discipline (3-7).

4). The significance of this transformation rests in the consequent status of Barbados as the prototype of English colonization in the New World; variously described as the first “successful” English colony, the “little England” of the Caribbean, and “the empire’s core,” Barbados obtained as the model for all future English colonial projects (Dunn 18, Sheridan 124, Menard 1-2). During the period of Ligon’s narrative, this shift was still quite incomplete, and, thus, the dominant character of labor in Ligon’s *History* is its composite flexibility, a characteristic of the “mixed” labor pattern typical of the early sugar islands (Mintz 53); it is this mixed quality that Ligon negotiates by presenting a distinctive taxonomy of the island’s population.<sup>25</sup>

“The Island,” Ligon explains, “is divided into three sorts of men, *viz.* Masters, Servants, and Slaves,” the final group consisting of both “Negroes” and “Indians” (43, 46, 54). Almost immediately, Ligon sets up a comparison between the two principal groups of colonial laborers, declaring servitude to be a more severe condition than slavery: “The slaves and their posterity, being subject to their masters forever, are kept and preserv’d with greater care than the servants, who are theirs but for five years, according to the law of the Island. So that for

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<sup>25</sup> Mintz earlier characterizes this “mixed” labor pattern as a feature originating in the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Canary Islands sugar industry. Spanish historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto, he recounts, “tells us that the striking feature of the Canarian industry was its use of both free and enslaved labor, a combination that resembled more the pioneering mixed-labor systems of a later era: the seventeenth-century British and French Caribbean plantations, on which enslaved and indentured laborers would work alongside one another (32). See Fernández-Armesto’s *The Canary Islands after the Conquest* (85).

that time, the servants have the worser lives, for they are put to very hard labour, ill lodging, and their dyet very sleight” (43).

While contrary to most contemporary historical and sociological understandings that designate slavery the more extreme condition *because* of its permanence, such a depiction of servitude is not an uncommon tendency of the period.<sup>26</sup> Particularly familiar is the move to locate servitude’s instability in the principal quality that distinguishes it from slavery, its non-hereditary impermanence, while continuing to uphold its temporal distinction from slavery. In *A History of Barbados* (1969), Vincent Harlow summarizes the position of Ligon and his contemporaries: “A slave was a permanent possession. It was therefore to the advantage of the master to preserve him for as long as possible. On the other hand, a white labourer was only available for a restricted period, during which his master worked him to the utmost” (302-3). In a 1656 letter to Cromwell, William Brayne, the Governor of a newly conquered Jamaica, appealed to the Protector to send African slaves to the island rather than indentured servants: “because, as the planters would have to pay for them, they would have an interest in preserving their lives, which was wanting in the case of bond servants” (quoted in Harlow, 303). While Ligon discloses, in the comparative structure of his declaration, a

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<sup>26</sup> Josiah Child’s 1693 *A New Discourse of Trade*, for instance, similarly depicts servants as less valuable than slaves to the colonial plantation. For contemporary discussions of the issue see Williams, *Capitalism & Slavery* (3-29), Jordan, *White Over Black* (44-98), and Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (1-14). Robin Blackburn in *The Making of New World Slavery* (1998) bluntly asserts that slaves suffered harsher treatment: “White European indentured servants could be treated fairly badly, especially if of another confession, but black African captives were treated worse” (585).

foundational identity between servants and slaves, the stress of his claim clearly works to differentiate the two laboring groups. The force of the issue, as Brayne and Ligon imply, is that paternalistic “care” is granted not to the traditional subjects of English domestic rule, European servants, but to those in whom masters have garnered more “interest” and invested more long-term capital — African slaves. Indeed, during the period of the sugar boom in Barbados, planters invested over £1 million sterling in slaves, while they spent half this sum on the other major plantation expenditures, which included “servants, processing equipment, land, and livestock” (Menard 49).

The status of servant mistreatment in Ligon’s *History* is, however, contradictory and ideological rather than a narrative coherency. In later passages, Ligon contradicts his general assertion of servants’ “worsen lives,” revealing that servants systematically received larger clothing and food allowances than slaves. In his plantation ledger at the end of the *History*, for instance, Ligon reckons that the “yearly charge” of fifty male slaves, at fifteen pounds total, is less than the maintenance of four male servants, at just over sixteen pounds total (15). This contradiction demonstrates, on the one hand, that the economic determinants of early colonization have disrupted the traditional coordinates of paternalistic order and rule, and, on the other, that paternalism has been redoubled to redress this disruption. Ligon’s conception of servant mistreatment signifies, in one gesture, the absence of a structuring paternalism and its reintroduction as an abstract explanatory lens, or alienated concept. Furthermore, it functions as a figurative

social control mechanism that at once connects and divides servants from slaves, in the last instance rendering antagonistic what is arguably a shared condition of colonial exploitation.<sup>27</sup> While the assumption that servants generally deserve better treatment than slaves underlies the trope of servant mistreatment, Ligon specifically avoids depicting the issue in the racialized terms that we have come to expect of later periods; racial ideology, in other words, has not yet emerged as an explanation for either the differential treatment of servants and slaves or the justification of slavery in the Anglo-American Atlantic. Ligon's motivations are certainly prejudicial, but he presents these biases as surface tensions, giving neither "depth" nor "hidden" causes to the issue of servant and slave mistreatment.<sup>28</sup>

Instead, this is a scene in which older, paternalistic conceptions of labor and dependency encounter new, intensified forms of labor and social relations that are

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<sup>27</sup> This is Eugene Genovese's argument for one of the main functions of paternalism, to "undermine solidarity" of potential class allies (5). For an extended study of the problem of social control and its relationship to the development of racial ideology in the English transatlantic, see Allen's *The Invention of the White Race*. See also Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker's *The Many-Headed Hydra* for a broad historical reconstruction of the 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century Atlantic World as a common scene of exploitation and proletarianized class struggle.

<sup>28</sup> My reading of the surface character of Ligon's text is largely informed by Myra Jehlen's essay on Ligon's *History*, "History Beside the Fact" (1997) in which she argues that Ligon's understanding of slavery is a non-ontological one. Ligon, in her view, does not link colonization to crises of ontology; rather, he presumes colonization and slavery as common circumstances of being-in-the-world, "another of life's vicissitudes" (137). Thus, Ligon does not employ "deep" concepts to explain differences between servitude and slavery. This claim is also influenced by Roxann Wheeler's analysis of complexion and skin color in the period, a phenotype that becomes a principal determinant of biological racisms in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but is a surface, rather than a "deep," concept in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (27). See her introduction to *The Complexion of Race* (2000) for an extended discussion of the issue.

arising from the realities and demands of the hybrid labor pattern of the early sugar plantations.

The tension between an economic and paternalistic configuration of servitude is a structural feature of Ligon's *History*; it is another dual measure that, along with their double commodity status, suggests colonial servitude as a site of mediation. Ligon, for instance, describes servants at once as chattel property and laborers entitled to love, care, and protection. Often explained by Ligon as one of the items with which Barbadian plantations are "furnish'd, and stockt," servants, along with slaves, are just one of the many colonial "commodities" that Ligon records in a long list of transatlantic merchandise brought yearly to the island for sale in the plantations:

The Commodities these Ships bring to this Island, are, *servants* and *slaves*, both men and women; *Horses*, *Cattle*, *Assinigoes*, *Camels*, *Utensils* for boyling Sugar as, *Coppers*, *Taches*, *Goudges*, and *Socketts*; all manner of working tooles for Tradesmen, as, *Carpenters*, *Joyners*, *Smiths*, *Masons*, *Mill-wrights*, *Wheel-wrights*, *Tinkers*, *Coopers*, etc. *Iron*, *Steel*, *Lead*, *Brass*, *Pewter*, *Cloth* of all kinds, both *Linnen* and *Woollen*; *Stuffs*, *Hats*, *Hose*, *Shooes*, *Gloves*, *Swords*, *Knives*, *Locks*, *Keys*, etc. *Victuals* of all kinds, that will endure the Sea, in so long a voyage. *Olives*, *Capers*, *Anchovies*, *Salteð Flesh* and *Fish*, *pickleð Macquerels* and *Herrings*, *Wine* of all sorts, and the boon Beer, *d'Angleterre*. (22, 40; emphasis in original)<sup>29</sup>

While Ligon inventories servants as common, annual commodities, thus figuring servitude as a generally alienated condition, he also draws attention to and

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<sup>29</sup> In the many passages quoted from Ligon's *History*, I retain the varying emphases and irregular modes of spelling and capitalization original to his text. The same follows for the subsequent versions of *Inkle and Yarico*.

condemns their ill treatment and abuse, praising planters who show concern for their well being:

I have seen an Overseer beat a Servant with a cane about the head, till the blood has followed, for a fault that is not worth the speaking of ... I have seen such cruelty there done to Servants, as I did not think one Christian could have done to another. But, as discreeter and better natur'd men have come to rule there, the servants lives have been much bettered ... Collonel *Walronð* seeing his servants when they came home, toyled with their labour, and wet through with their sweating, thought that shifting of their linen not sufficient refreshing, nor warmth for their bodies ... therefore resolved to send into *England* for rug Gowns ... that so when they had shifted themselves, they might put on those Gowns, and lye down and rest them in their Hamocks ... But this care and charity of Collonel *Walronð*'s, lost him nothing in the conclusion; for, he got such love of his servants, as they thought all too little they could do for him; and the love of the servants there, is of much concernment to the Masters. (44-5)

In this scene of plantation abuse and paternalistic reparation, Ligon reveals the limit, however tenuous, to his previous depictions of servants as human cargo, presenting paternalism as an antidote to servant mistreatment. Unlike Cromwell's Jamaican Governor, who prefers to circumvent the problem of servant abuse by replacing servants with African slaves, Ligon proposes the old paternalism of pre-industrial England as a way out of the problem — in this instance refiguring Walronð's plantation debit of one extra rug gown as a mutually reinforcing paternalistic gesture of love between himself and his servile dependents. Navigating the colonial matrix of master/servant relations with paternalistic rhetorics and interpretations, Ligon reveals the abstracted character of such paternalistic moves and depicts paternalism as something applied, or put to use, rather than a lived relation. Thus, Ligon demonstrates the extent to which

paternalism is overdetermined by colonial economism, his depiction of colonial servitude functioning as the site of their anxious negotiation.

In these two contradictory scenes in Ligon's *History*, colonial servitude itself emerges as a form of bond labor fundamentally marked by the contradiction of paternalism and economism, an antinomy that, according to E.P. Thompson in "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture" (1974), typifies the status of labor in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. For Thompson, paternalism is a condition of the simultaneity of political, economic, and social relations, one in which "rulers ... obtain, directly or indirectly, a control over *the whole life* of the laborer, as opposed to the purchase, *seriatim*, of his labor power" (382, emphasis in original). Thompson's framework is analogous to Karl Marx's understanding of an integrated feudalism in *The German Ideology* (1845) and *Capital, Vol. 1* (1867), specifically his explanation of the transparency and universality of dependency that marks the feudal mode of production (*The German Ideology* 178-80, *Capital* 170); it is also comparable to both Orlando Patterson's conception of the "personalistic idiom of power" in *Slavery and Social Death* (1982) and Peter Laslett's description of "life cycle service" in *The World We Have Lost* (1984) — the "subsumption" of servitude within the household structure and its near universality as a condition of everyday life in pre-industrial England (Patterson 17-34, Laslett 15-16, 19-20). In the uneven transition to capitalism, these direct, obvious, and integrated social relations become increasingly abstracted and mediated, as the "relation of ruler to ruled," according to Thompson, becomes "not face-to-face but indirect" (388). A

dominant feature of this shift is the relative unmooring of economism from paternalism, the fact that, as Thompson puts it, “economic rationalization nibbled (and had long been nibbling) through the bonds of paternalism” (385). On this basis, Thompson proclaims that paternalism in the 18th century is “at a point of crisis,” a claim he later tempers by explaining that, far from disappearing, paternalism is transformed throughout the century from an ideology of economic and military power to a fundamental determinant of cultural hegemony (387). In this way, colonial servitude in Ligon’s *History* registers a fundamental contradiction in the transition to capitalism, highlighting colonial servants as crucial mediators in what Marx explains as the catalyzing influence of colonial brutality in the transition to capitalism, that element of “brute force” which, in his words, acts as “the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with a new one” (*Capital* 915-16). The contradictory conditions of servitude and slavery in Ligon’s Barbados not only foreshadow the domestic “crisis” of paternalism to come in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but, as embodiments of “force,” they symbolically mark the acceleration of the capitalist transition that drives the economic erosion of paternalism.

Such catalyzing effects of colonial coercion are evident in Ligon’s continued depiction of colonial servitude as an alienated mode of dependency shorn from the customary dictates of mutual obligation and care. Unlike Laslett’s description of domestic servants and apprentices in England, the Barbadian labor system does not regard servants as part of the household or family; rather, they are fundamentally, to paraphrase Ligon, plantation stock external to the household

plantation structure. In a description of the crafty exploitation of water in the plantation defense systems on the island, Ligon reveals not only that colonial servants, along with African slaves, are alienated from the plantation household, but also that they are active antagonists in direct opposition to it:

Water they [the planters] save likewise from their houses, by gutters at the eaves, which carry it down to cisterns. And the water which is kept there, being within the limits of their houses, many of which are built in manner of Fortifications, and have Lines, Bulwarks, and Bastions to defend themselves, in case there should [be] any uproar or commotion in the Island, either by the Christian servants, or *Negro* slaves; serves them for drink whilst they are besieged; as also, to throw down upon the naked bodies of the *Negroes*, scalding hot; which is as good a defence against their underminings, as any other weapons. (29)

The constant threat of servant and slave revolt prohibits, Ligon suggests, an alignment of servants and slaves with the plantation household. Unlike the contradictory scenes of servant mistreatment, though, which Ligon attempts to paternalistically navigate and rationalize, this portrait depicts a fiercely pragmatic defense of plantation interests. These houses are fortified against the possibility of “any uproar or commotion in the Island, either by the Christian servants, or *Negro* slaves,” and, thus, they architecturally reveal the anxiety of servant and slave rebellion, especially the collaboration of servants and slaves, to be a real limit to the paternalistic rendering of colonial bond labor. Ligon makes no paternalistic apologies for such “Fortifications”; rather, he valorizes the dual character of the planters’ elaborate water collection and defense scheme, which “serves them for

drink whilst they are besieged; as also, to throw upon the naked bodies of the *Negroes*, scalding hot.”

In a similar scene, harsh in its equanimity, Ligon discloses another limit to protective paternalism in the chattelization of servitude on the island. In a section entitled “Hogs,” he relates an anecdotal story of island bartering in which a female indentured servant, *Honor*, is offered in return for a pig; he recounts the details of the proposed exchange between a “Planter in the Island” who was in “great want of a woman servant” and his neighbor who needed “provisions”:

The scales were set up, and the Planter had a Maid that was extream fat, lassie, and good for nothing, her name was *Honor*; The man brought a great fat sow, and put it in one scale, and *Honor* was put in the other; but when he saw how much the Maid outweighed his Sow, he broke off the bargain, and would not go on: though such a case as this, may seldom happen, yet ‘tis an ordinary thing there, to sell their servants to one another for the time they have to serve; and in exchange, receive any commodities that are in the Island; I have said as much already of the largeness weight and goodness of these hogs as is needful, and therefore I shall need no more. (59)

Admittedly an anomalous “case” that “may seldom happen,” such a “bargain,” Ligon relates, is nonetheless “an ordinary thing there.” Unlike in the the scene of servant abuse, Ligon abandons his tendency for paternalistic interventions and qualifications, interceding only to reinforce the transaction of servants and island commodities as common economic pragmatism. Ligon underscores, rather than paternalistically negotiates, the economic logic of this failed exchange, the trade aborted not because of naturalized, paternalistic asymmetries between “*Honor*” and “the Sow” but because of their literal imbalance. That “the Maid ... outweighed

[the] Sow” renders their trade uneconomical but in no way irreconcilable to the customary intra-island servant trade; most plantation barter of servants and island commodities, Ligon suggests, goes off without a hitch. A scene of economic abjection, this anecdote renders *Honor* unredeemable in the marketized imaginary of the colony, as she exceeds the limits of exchange and is uneasily enclosed by Ligon’s narrative description of hogs, a detail evident in the awkward transition from Ligon’s comments on the servant-commodity trade to his abrupt resolution for ending his brief exposition on Barbadian swine. The disjunctive grammar of Ligon’s final transition provokes an aggressive and startling containment in which *Honor* is sealed off from even a faint gesture of paternalism’s residual “care.”

Paternalism’s cultural energies, despite Ligon’s professed concern for servant mistreatment, are not directed at common colonial servants in the *History* but at exceptional colonial slaves. The story of *Honor* and the sow acts as a formal opposition to Ligon’s anecdotal introduction of Yarico, the episode for which *The True and Exact History* is most known. Unlike the story of *Honor*, sardonic in both the designation of its female servant and its incorporation into a discourse on Barbadian animals, the story of *Yarico* is recounted in a section on the character of Amerindian slave labor and is marked not by Ligon’s abrupt reticence and verbal economy but by his desiring volubility. Ligon depicts Yarico’s present condition in Barbados as “a slave in the house” who was “of excellent shape and colour” and “would not be woo’d ... to wear Cloths,” describing her breasts in ethnographically

sexualized detail — “small ... with the nipples of a porphyrie colour” (54).<sup>30</sup> Ligon continues to describe Yarico’s current condition on the island, that “she chanc’d to be with Child, by a Christian servant” and lived “in the *Indian* house amongst other women of her own Country, where the Christian servants, both men and women came” (54). Underscoring Yarico’s former status as an “*Indian Maid*,” Ligon, at the same time, leaps seamlessly back in time to relate her encounter with the unnamed English trader that irreparably alters her position. After at once rescuing the English trader from her violent kinsmen and falling “in love with him,” she guides him safely back to his anchored “*English* ship” that is on route to Barbados, a favor the trader returns by selling Yarico upon their arrival to the island: “But the youth, when he came ashoar in the *Barbadoes*, forgot the kindness of the poor maid, that had ventured her life for his safety, and sold her for a slave, who was as free born as he: And so poor *Yarico* for her love, lost her liberty” (55). A foil to the “extreme fat, lassie, and good for nothing” servant, *Honor*, a subject disregarded by both the anonymous planter and Ligon, Yarico is a favored and exceptional domestic slave whom Ligon valorizes as a “free born” noble savage. She is not an object of regular commodity exchange on the island, such as *Honor*, but a paternalistically idealized “*Indian Maid*” whose unfreedom, in contrast to the majority of servants and slaves in the *History*, is not taken for granted. Instead, her enslavement is a consequence of forgotten “kindness” and corrupted hospitality, as she “has lost her liberty” not

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<sup>30</sup> See Jennifer Morgan, “Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder” (1997), for the ideological signification of colonial breasts in Ligon’s *History* as well as other colonial travel narratives.

for her naturalized servility, as assumed with *Honor*, but “for her love.” Yarico embodies the exoticized stereotypes of indigenous female slaves, but she also resembles a sexualized domestic English servant, signaling the contradiction of the servant problem in that her enslavement is a consequence of the conflation of love and money. Similar to other servants in Ligon’s *History*, she is also a site of both paternalistic projection and colonial expediency. In a later passage on the treatment of his “chegoe” infections, Ligon cuts Yarico’s idealistic portrayal with a comment on her domestic utility: “The *Indian* women have the very best skill to take them out, which they do by putting in a small pointed pin or needle ... I have had ten taken out of my feet in a morning, by the unfortunate *Yarico*, and *Indian* woman” (65). Although Yarico is still a marker of paternalistic sentiment — “the unfortunate *Yarico*” — this in no way trumps her usefulness as a domestic servant to Ligon, who implies that such services are customary and recurrent colonial duties.

An Amerindian slave, Yarico is at once disassociated from and linked to indentured servitude in Ligon’s *History*. As a sentimentalized and exoticized antithesis to the undesirable *Honor*, she is at a remove from indentured servants, seemingly transcending the ordinary commercialism that marks their colonial status. Yet, in the depiction of her sexual and affective relationships, she is intimately linked to indentured servants, in both an individualized and collective way. Ligon notes, for instance, that “she chanc’d to be with Child, by a Christian servant,” a particular narrative detail often downplayed in the *Inkle and Yarico*

criticism. At the same time, she is part of a colonial labor scene in which everyday social interchanges between indentured servants and Amerindian slaves is a common occurrence, a feature evident in Ligon's description of Yarico's accommodation "in the *Indian* house ... where the Christian servants, both men and women came." Although Ligon seems to urge us to read Yarico's pregnancy and relationship with the unnamed Christian servant as an aleatory and exceptional incident, his grammar once again betrays him as the subsequent clause elaborating the details of her living arrangements undermines rather than confirms the fortuitous nature of sociality between indentured servants and Amerindian slaves. Thus, Ligon's anecdotal portrait of Yarico, along with the figure of servant mistreatment, reveals an intimacy between servants and slaves that unwittingly destabilizes his attempt to separate them into the discrete taxonomies that originate his discussion of colonial bond labor in Barbados.

## **II. Steele's "Inkle," the Abstraction of Paternalism, and the Disavowal of Colonial Servitude**

Arguably the most influential *Inkle and Yarico* adaptation, Richard Steele's 1711 *Spectator* version comes over fifty years after the publication of Ligon's *History*, and it cites yet significantly alters Ligon's account. Yarico's direct interchange and intimacy with Barbadian indentured servants in Ligon's *History* largely disappears in the next phase of the myth, as Steele's version as well as the heroic epistles that follow evacuate servants from the tale and transform the story into an isolated

colonial encounter between an anti-heroic trader and a noble slave. As we will see, though, servitude remains as a trace in the continuation of the servant problem in Steele's story and in the logic of debt and indenture that structures Yarico's many appeals to the errant Inkle of the heroic epistles. Importing Yarico's story into the English drawing room, Steele removes her anecdotal tale from the scene of colonial bond labor in Barbados and relocates it to the context of continental gender disputes, where it acts as a sign of female steadfastness in a salon debate over the preponderance of male or female inconstancy. Through his recontextualization of the story as well as his invention of Inkle, Steele picks up on Ligon's prior abstraction of paternalism, reconfiguring it both as a literary character trait and as an aesthetic category of literary sentimentalism. Moreover, while the applied paternalism of Ligon's *History* provokes the division of servants and slaves, Steele's further abstraction of paternalism has the effect of casting off colonial servants from the scene altogether, demonstrating a correlation, if not a causal link, between the disavowal of colonial servitude and the abstraction of paternalism.

Steele introduces the story of *Inkle and Yarico* by means of his invented middle-aged and disinterested *salonnière*, Arietta, who evokes Ligon's version as a counter to Petronius's "The Ephesian Matron," a story one of her guests, "a common place talker," has just "repeated and murdered" as evidence for the predominance of female inconstancy:<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> For an analysis of Steele's "Inkle and Yarico" as a feminist commentary on the classics, in particular Petronius, see Nicole Horejsi, "A Counterpart to the Ephesian Matron" (2006).

But when we consider this question between the sexes ... let us take facts from plain people, and from such as have not either ambition or capacity to embellish their narrations with any beauties of imagination. I was the other day amusing myself with *Ligon's* account of *Barbadoes*; and, in answer to your well-wrought tale, I will give you (as it dwells upon my memory) out of that honest traveler, in his fifty-fifth page, the history of *Inkle* and *Yarico*.

Mr. *Thomas Inkle* of *London*, aged 20 years, embarked in the *Downs* on the good ship called the *Achilles*, bound for the *West-Indies*, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of *June* 1647, in order to improve his fortune by trade and merchandize. Our adventurer was the third son of an eminent citizen, who had taken particular care to instill into his mind an early love of gain, by making him a perfect master of numbers, and consequently giving him a quick view of loss and advantage, and preventing the natural impulses of his passions, by prepossession towards his interests. (48-9)

Substituting Ligon's counterpart to the story of Yarico — *Honor* and the sow's grotesque anecdote of economic servitude — with Petronius's "The Ephesian Matron," Steele shifts the generic field of signification from an unsteady historicism to an unmistakably literary terrain, altering the terms of the debate from the contradictions of colonial labor to the double standard of "constancy in love" (48). In the process, the tension of paternalistic and economic servitude is displaced onto the classically paternalistic *querelle des femmes*, a conflict anchored by the always elusive legibility, or the epistemological crisis, of female constancy. Arietta's classical displacement of Ligon and his *History* sets up the introduction of Steele's Inkle, a pastiche, as many critics have noted, of both Ligon's "youth" and Ligon himself, as Steele incorporates autobiographical elements of Ligon's *History* into his invented biography of Inkle. Ligon, for instance, is, like Steele's Inkle, a younger son of a relatively "eminent citizen," and he describes the details of his journey to Barbados in almost exactly the same terms as Steele depicts Inkle's departure:

“and so upon the sixteenth day of *June* 1647 we embarked in the *Downs*, on the good Ship called the *Achilles*” (1).<sup>32</sup> Along with his biography, Steele converts Ligon’s incongruous perspective of paternalistic and economic servitude into a contradiction of economic interest and sentimental paternalism, concentrated in the typology of Inkle’s character. In this shift, Steele implies an economic critique of Inkle both in the invention of his name — “inkle,” “a kind of linen tape,” or inferior commodity (*OED*) — and the depiction of Inkle as a petty *homo economicus*. Steele transforms Ligon’s “youth” from a minor rogue into a transatlantic anti-hero, refocusing his principal fault, previously a contravention of hospitality codes, into a singular drive for economic gain.<sup>33</sup> He presents Inkle as the kind of suspect colonial figure Francis Bacon cautions against in “Of Plantations”: “Let not the government of the plantation depend upon too many counselors and undertakers in the country that planteth ... and let those be rather noblemen and gentlemen, than merchants; for they look ever to the present gain” (162-3). While the error of Ligon’s “young man” is clearly figured as a paternalistic failing, “forg[etting] the kindness of the poor maid, that had ventured her life for his safety,” Inkle’s flaw, as Arietta reveals in the above portrait, is a naturalized tendency for privileging such

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<sup>32</sup> See P.F. Campbell, *Some Early Barbadian History* (1993), for a brief biographical study of Ligon (128-9). There are some inconsistencies in the comparison of Ligon and Inkle, as Ligon was the fourth rather than the third son; was older than Inkle, probably in his late fifties, when traveling to Barbados; and supposedly set out on his transatlantic adventure neither to “improve his fortune” nor to slake his “early love of gain” but, according to Ligon, for bare necessity — “having lost (by a Barbarous Riot) all that I had gotten by the painful travels and cares of my youth” (Ligon 1).

<sup>33</sup> See Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters* (1986), for a brief discussion on hospitality in *Inkle and Yarico* (249-55).

present “gain” over paternalistic care (55). Inkle’s upbringing is marked by the abstraction, or removal, of “the natural impulses of his passions” and by the incorporation, or naturalization, of economic “interest” and the “love of gain.” Becoming a “perfect master of numbers,” he has garnered a “quick view of loss and advantage” that precludes natural sentiment. Steele’s Inkle is not simply a *homo economicus* but an economic man faced with the externalities of paternalistic sentimentality and the abstraction of the natural world. He is presented as the classic “eighteenth-century individual” criticized by Marx in the *Grundrisse* (1857): an isolated “individual ... free from the bonds of nature,” abstracted from human society, and an emblem of the “society of free competition” (380). What was immanent to Ligon’s perspective, the contradiction of economism and paternalism, is respectively internalized and externalized in Steele’s account of Inkle, Ligon’s economism transforming into what a later anonymous 1734 *London Magazine* poem will call Inkle’s “trading soul” and his paternalistic sympathy taking the form of Inkle’s isolated and short-lived encounter with Yarico (157).

As in Ligon’s version, Yarico intercedes to rescue Inkle from her murderous compatriots, immediately taking him to her “cave” for shelter and nourishment and, in the process of caring for him, ignoring “her other lovers” (51). Their encounter is characterized by a spontaneous, captivating mutuality during which they develop a personalized creole and Inkle promises to take Yarico back to England. The arrival of an English ship “bound for *Barbadoes*” similarly marks the disruption of their idyllic bond, a disturbance that hardens into a permanent betrayal as they

approach the Barbadian shore, a littoral site Steele describes as “an immediate market of the *Indians* and other slaves as with us of horses and oxen” (52). As in Ligon’s *History*, the sight of the Barbadian market unsettles Inkle’s paternalistic pledges and provokes him to economically “reflect” on his time with Yarico:

*Inkle* ... began seriously to reflect upon his loss of time, and to weigh with himself how many days interest of his money he had lost during his stay with *Yarico*. This thought made the young man very pensive, and careful what account he should be able to give his friends of his voyage. Upon which considerations, the prudent and frugal young man sold *Yarico* to a *Barbadian* merchant; notwithstanding that the poor girl, to incline him to commiserate her condition, told him that she was with child by him: But he only made use of that information, to rise in his demands upon the purchaser. (52)

Conspicuous in Steele’s adaptation is the disappearance of Ligon’s “Christian servant,” with whom Yarico “chanc’d to be with Child,” and the elision of colonial servitude in Barbados. Following Ligon, Steele depicts Barbados as an “immediate market” in plantation commodities, a site of labor exploitation and intensive capital investment in bond labor, but gone is the association of labor market demand with indentured servitude or “cruelty ... to servants” and dissolved is the tangle of bond labor relations that characterized Ligon’s Barbados (Ligon 44). Whereas Ligon clearly situates servants in the space of the Barbadian market — “Upon the arrival of any ship, that brings servants to the Island, the Planters go aboard; and having bought such of them as they like, send them with a guid [*sic*] to his Plantation” — Steele elides them in both his depiction of the Barbadian market as one limited to “*Indians* and other slaves” and his identification of the Barbadian slave market with

the English trade in animals: “there is an immediate market ... as with us of horses and oxen” (Ligon 44, Steele 52). Steele makes the Barbadian slave market intelligible to his European audience not by linking it with England’s own history and ideology of servant marketization, but by disavowing this connection and, instead, naturalizing the association between plantation slaves and animality. While he affirms English control of the Barbadian market, describing Inkle’s approach to Barbados as his “coming into *English* territories,” he obscures the role of English labor in this market.

Certainly, by 1711 when Steele’s version appeared in *The Spectator*, the colonial servant trade in Barbados had waned and transportation ideology had long shifted to regard colonial emigration as a generally unfavorable policy for England’s poor and dispossessed, at least in regards to voluntary indentured servitude. Even so, as late as the mid-1680s, Barbadian authorities appealed to the Lords of Trade and Plantations to address the colony’s unmet demand for colonial servants, revealing the persistence of the link between colonial productivity and servant labor, a point made most clearly several decades prior in the 1651 Charter of Barbados: that the “wealth of the inhabitants of the island consisteth chiefly in the labour of their servants” (Beckles, *White Servitude*, 38).<sup>34</sup> While plantation

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<sup>34</sup> While the focus of servant labor shifted from plantation labor to militia conscription and slave management, the fundamental role of servants in colonial wealth is a point that would persist. Along with the 1651 charter, it was the focus of the 1661 Master and Servant Act, most often referred to as the first Barbadian Slave Code: “Whereas much of the interest and substance of this Island, consists in the Servants brought to, and disposed of in the same, and in their labour during the time they have to serve, wherein notwithstanding provision hath been made by

investment in labor had shifted from European indentured servants to African slaves, as had largely ensued throughout the Anglo-American Atlantic by the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, the servant trade, according to Hilary Beckles in *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados* (1989), remained “of immense historical significance” (39). As indentured servants constituted “nearly half of the total English immigration to the West Indian colonies during the seventeenth century,” the servant trade represented, in his words, “an unprecedented step in British labor history” in which the state played a “critical role” in designing “the necessary legal and administrative structure for its expansion” (39). Despite myths and corroborative histories of servant depopulation on the island, indentured servants and European laborers continued to make up a sizable portion of the island’s populace at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century; European out-migration in this period, according to Richard Dunn in *Sugar and Slaves* (1972), has been exaggerated. In 1680, he notes that “Barbados still had about 20,000 white inhabitants ... more than any English colony in America except Virginia and Massachusetts” (88). While ex-servant emigration from the island certainly increased and servant migration to the island notably decreased from the 1680s on, the servant population was by no means obsolete by the time of Steele’s “Inkle and Yarico.” Steele’s elision of servants, thus, signifies a

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many good laws, yet great and often damages hath happened to the people of this place, through the unruliness, obstinacy, and refractoriness of the servants” (*Acts* 35). To contextualize these statements of Barbadian wealth, Barbados was the most affluent colony in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Anglo-American Atlantic. Richard Dunn claims, for instance, that “unquestionably the Barbados sugar planters were the wealthiest men in English America in 1680” (85). Barbados comprised the most “developed” planter class in this period, having a greater concentration of wealth than the other English sugar islands as well as the mainland English colonies.

suspicious disavowal of colonial labor in an emergent scene of literary sentiment, especially considering Steele's relatively recent inheritance of a Barbadian sugar plantation, which included, among other "stock," "white servants ... as chattels as well as two hundred negro slaves" (Blanchard 282-3).<sup>35</sup>

In this way, Steele reconfigures the trope of servant mistreatment and the complications of colonial bond labor in Ligon's *History* into an opposition between European mastery and African/Amerindian slavery. Eliminating the third term in Ligon's triad of "Masters, Servants, and Slaves," Steele displaces Ligon's unwitting portrayal of servant/slave intimacy and identity. At the same time, Steele's incorporation of the terms of the servant problem confers a similar tension between paternalistic and economic ideologies of service onto this scene of mastery and slavery — a configuration that manifests colonial servitude as a disavowed trace. While Steele's Yarico follows the transition from paternalistic mutuality with Inkle to an economic commodity at Inkle's disposal, Inkle himself is at once condemned for his inconstancy to Yarico and admired for his classical geniality, a "person every way agreeable, a ruddy vigour in his countenance, strength in his limbs, with ringlets of fair hair loosely flowing down his shoulders" (50). The scene of Yarico's enslavement, moreover, is not a spectacle of Inkle's foolish impulsivity but a scene of careful, mercantile consideration in which he is affirmed as "the prudent and frugal young man [who] sold *Yarico* to a *Barbadian* merchant" (52). Inkle's propensity for economic over paternalistic obligations prompts an ambivalent

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<sup>35</sup> For a brief description of Steele's acquisition of this Barbadian plantation, see Rae Blanchard, "Richard Steele's West Indian Plantation" (1942).

censure in Steele's account. Accordingly, Yarico's enslavement elicits responses of both rational understanding and tearful sentimentality, the latter evident in Mr. Spectator's final comment at the conclusion of the story: "I was so touch'd with this story, (which I think should be always a counterpart to the *Ephesian Matron*) that I left the room with tears in my eyes; which a woman of *Arietta's* good sense did, I am sure, take for greater applause, than any compliments I could make her" (52).

Such a correspondence between an ascendant mercantile economism and a sentimentally mourned romantic mutuality in Steele's account provides the ambivalent ground for Inkle and Yarico's admission into the circuits of literary adaptation which, as we will see, are soon supplementing Steele's account with reimaginings of the inequitable relations of colonial mastery and slavery in the tale. Solidifying Inkle's name as a literary sign for the simultaneously trivial and consequential triumph of economic exploitation, Steele also posits Inkle and Yarico's idyllic household, in which Yarico is chief interior decorator and caregiver, as an untenable, yet culturally meaningful, social arrangement. Likewise, he depicts Inkle's promise to Yarico of an imminent European domesticity in which she would be dressed in "silks as his waistcoat was made of" as a pragmatic impossibility, unsustainable under the twin weight of mercantilist accumulation and the marketization of Amerindian labor (52). Yet, Steele's classical retelling of *Inkle and Yarico*, especially apparent in Mr. Spectator's recommendation that the story "should always be a counterpart to the *Ephesian*

matron,” registers the cultural currency of classical frameworks in recuperating such dreams of exotic colonial affinities and sexual intimacies in the Anglo-American Atlantic. It is through these classical literary modes that Steele depicts Arietta and Mr. Spectator’s sentimental resignation to the dominance of mercantilist economism, thus intensifying the abstraction of the economic sphere from Thompson’s integrated paternalistic world. Depicting the irreducibility of mercantilist economic concerns in *Inkle and Yarico*’s Barbados, Steele presents paternalism as an abstracted feature of the literary sphere and a dominant mode of “feeling” rather than a wholly encompassing ideology of mutual obligation and dependency. In this tense display of acquiescence, Steele reconfigures the terms of Ligon’s servant problem, keeping a trace of colonial servitude alive in *Inkle and Yarico* and setting the stage for the continuation of the tale’s classical negotiation within the tradition of the heroic epistle, a form that authorizes a more direct protest against the Yarico’s enslavement and mistreatment.

## Part Two: Servitude Mediation in *Inkle and Yarico*'s Long Century of Adaptation

### I. *Inkle and Yarico*'s Heroic Epistle Phase I: Servitude Mediation and the Poetics of Debt and Indenture

The emergence of the double movement of economic determination and paternalistic cultural hegemony is a tendency that will intensify in the next, and most prolific, period of *Inkle and Yarico* adaptations — the heroic epistle, or Ovidian, phase of the myth. The heroic epistles of the *Inkle and Yarico* legend, most explicitly adapted from Steele's *Spectator* version, mournfully rehearse his scene of the triumph of economic exploitation over paternalistic care, maintaining his evacuation of colonial servants from the scene of Barbadian labor and figuring servitude as a trace element in both the formal structure of the genre and in the content of Yarico's poetic discourse. Ligon's unnamed Christian servant to whom Yarico is intimately linked in the *History* does not, in other words, make a grand reentry. Instead, these versions, over a dozen in all, continue Steele's consolidation of the master/slave relation as the dominant frame of economic power and sentimentality in the tale, and they preserve the unsustainable status of the transcultural, paternalistic household. While these poems, like Steele's account, maintain the presence of colonial servitude in their preservation of the contradictory terms of the servant problem, they also sustain the trace of servitude in their figurative and rhetorical thematization of the role of debt in the master/slave relation of the tale, indebtedness being the fundamental ideology that

binds the indentured servant, who cannot pay for his transatlantic journey or sustain a living upon his arrival, to his colonial master and the plantation system. Moreover, Barbados, expressly named in a third of the poems, arguably remains the tragic endpoint of the tale and a key historical touchstone of *Inkle and Yarico*, suggesting the continued currency of the island as a metonym for colonial labor exploitation and servant mistreatment (Beckles 57-8).<sup>36</sup>

*The poetics and rhetorics of debt and indenture are not only a particular feature of the Inkle and Yarico poems, but they are also fundamental to the formal logics of the heroic epistle. In general, the heroic epistle is a form that attempts to figure its absent addressee in an indebted relation to the speaker, typically a female character who, through her persistent loyalty to an absent and often disloyal lover, sustains an affective bond, despite the male lover's desertion. Yarico's epistles wager as much; even though Yarico is enslaved, Inkle, the poems attempt to assert, still "owes" her something — sometimes an explanation, always a return, and, in a few instances, her freedom. The gap between the will to compel the absent lover's indebtedness, though, and his actual indenture, or the enforcement of his debt repayment, is a*

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<sup>36</sup> Barbados is specifically identified as the site of Yarico's enslavement in four of the heroic epistles — Frances Seymour's "The Story of Inkle and Yarico" (1725), Anon's "The Story of Inkle and Yarico" (1734), Anon's "Yarico to Inkle: An Epistle" (1736), and Anna Maria Porter's "Epistle from Yarico to Inkle" (1811) — and it is strongly implied in one of them, Seymour's "An Epistle from Yarico to Inkle" (1725). The location of Yarico's sale and betrayal is unnamed in eight of the poems, although their often explicit identification with the *Spectator* version and their overwhelming tendency to mention their geographical endpoints as islands not unconvincingly suggests allusions to Barbados; these include: William Pattison's "Yarico to Inkle: An Epistle" (1728), John Winstanley's "Yarico's Epistle to Inkle" (1751), Edward Jerningham's "Yarico to Inkle: An Epistle" (1766), Anon's "Epistle from Yarico to Inkle" (1782), "Amicus's" "Yarico to Inkle" (1792), [Peter Pindar's] "Yarico to Inkle" (1793), Charles James Fox's "Yarico to Inkle" (1802), and Rufus Dawes's "Yarico's Lament" (1839).

risk that must necessarily remain unconfirmed in the poetic genre. Likewise a thematic inherent in the self-referential, imitative character of the genre, debt obtains as a basic element in the transparent display of the genre's ties to its literary precursors, for *Inkle and Yarico* a list that includes, among others, Ovid's *Heroides* (25-16? BCE); Donne's "Sapho to Philaenis" (1633), Dryden's collaborative translation of Ovid's *Heroides*, Ovid's *Epistles, Translated by Several Hands* (1680); and Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard* (1717). In her essay on the status of the heroic epistle in 18th-century England, "'Perfectly Ovidian?'" (2008), Susan Wiseman reveals the obvious character of *Inkle and Yarico*'s literary indebtedness in her claim that the story is virtually ready-made for the genre of heroic epistle (429). A tale of male abandonment and woman's subsequent "downward shift in status," it is a plot most closely prefigured by Ovid's *Oenone to Paris*, and one in which the deserted woman's loyalty and devotion, both past and present, belie the fragility of her position vis-à-vis her male lover (428).<sup>37</sup> Steele's sentimentalized projection of Ligon's trope of servant mistreatment — its tangle of paternalistic and economic servitude — onto the antagonism of an abusing male lover and an exploited female slave lays the classical groundwork for *Yarico*'s 18th-century, transatlantic initiation into the ancient, pathetic sisterhood of Oenone, Hero, Dido, Phaedra, Sappho, and Medea; her story is, as Wiseman claims, "the *Heroides* relocated in the Americas and remade as a key story in the discourse of slavery" (431).

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<sup>37</sup> See also Gillian Beer, "'Our unnatural No-voice'" (1982) and Martin Wechselblatt, "Gender and Race in *Yarico*'s Epistles to Inkle" (1989) for similar comments on the form of the genre. For a history of the genre in England, see Carolyn Kates's dissertation, "Chronicling the Heroic Epistle in England" (1991).

In the first heroic epistle of the *Inkle and Yarico* tradition — Frances Seymour, Countess of Hertford’s 1725 “An Epistle from Yarico to Inkle, after He Had Sold Her for a Slave” — Yarico adopts the traditional role of the form’s marginalized and abandoned lover, as she impossibly pleads for Inkle to remember and “hear” the “sorrow” of her enslaved voice (3). The epistle is set up by a companion poem, “The Story of Inkle and Yarico, Taken out of the Eleventh *Spectator*,” that introduces a backstory in heroic couplets that, as its title claims, closely follows Steele’s narrative, while also initiating the general mode of servant mediation in the heroic epistle phase.<sup>38</sup> Hertford begins this verse introduction of the myth by introducing Inkle, after Steele, as “a youth ... possess’d with every charm,” but she revises the motivation for Steele’s version of his transatlantic adventure (1); Hertford’s Inkle is “compell’d / To distant climes” not, as Steele’s Inkle, by “an early love of gain,” but, after Ligon’s own impetus, “Lean poverty” (9, 8). In this way, she repeats Steele’s innovation of incorporating Ligon’s biography into the characterization of Inkle, presenting the poem’s English trader as an amalgam of Ligon’s biography and Steele’s Inkle; Hertford, in other words, continues Steele’s method but modifies his account. Likewise, she maintains

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<sup>38</sup> There is some uncertainty concerning the circulation dates of these poems. Published anonymously as *A New Miscellany; Being a Collection of Pieces of Poetry, From Bath, Tunbridge, Oxford, Epsom, and other Places in the Year 1725*, the volume may not have reached print until 1726, but it did, according to both Felsenstein and the volume’s preface, circulate previously in manuscript form (Hughes 419, Felsenstein 89). Seymour’s two *Inkle and Yarico* poems were also reprinted in 1738, again anonymously, as the works of “The Right Hon. the Countess of \*\*\*\*.” Helen Sard Hughes revealed Seymour’s authorship of the poems much later in her 1940 biography, *The Gentle Hertford: Her Life and Letters* (Felsenstein, 89; Hughes 418-20).

Steele's tendency to concentrate the contradiction of paternalism and economism in the portrait of Inkle, presenting the tension between these overlapping modes through Inkle's anti-pastoral reflection on "the time he'd passed" in "the *Indian* virgin's bowers" (73, 46):

Deep melancholy all his thoughts o'er cast:  
"Was it for this," (said he) "I cross'd the main,  
Only a doting virgin's heart to gain?  
Was this the treasure which I hop'd to find,  
When first I dar'd the seas and faithless wind?  
I needed not for such a prize to roam,  
There are a thousand doting maids at home."  
While thus his disappointed soul was toss'd,  
The ship arriv'd on the *Barbadian* coast;  
Immediately the planters from the town  
To trade for goods and negroe slaves came down;  
And now his mind, by sordid interest sway'd,  
Resolv'd to sell his faithful *Indian* maid; (74-86)

Although Inkle's "toss'd" and "disappointed soul" suggests a conflict between his dual obligations to mercantilist profit and Yarico, eventually his "sordid interest" compels him to "sell his faithful *Indian* maid." Unlike Steele's account, Hertford's "Story" clearly condemns Inkle's bargain, refiguring Steele's measured resignation to Inkle's economic choice as a "sordid," contemptible betrayal. In this way, an abstracted notion of care and mutual obligation is projected back onto the couple's prior idyllic encounter and outward onto the pathetic portrayal of Yarico as a sentimental slave and poetic heroine. The intensity of bond labor demand remains a motivating impulse for the retreat of paternalism, as the "planters from the town" arrive "immediately" upon the trading ship's arrival in the Barbadian port. And

despite her protestations and pleas for Inkle to “listen to [her] just despair” and remember their “former love,” Yarico cannot reverse the anti-heroic triumph of economic exploitation over sentimental commitment:

Not all she said cou'd his compliance move,  
Forgetful of his vows, and promis'd love,  
The weeping damsel from his knees he spurn'd,  
And with her price glad to the ships return'd. (103-6)

Hertford's Inkle, unlike Steele's, remains proudly unyielding in his commitment to mercantilist profit and, “forgetful of his vows,” closely resembles Ligon's English trader. Yarico, by contrast, becomes an excessively yielding “weeping damsel,” frozen in a tragic, sentimental portrait authored by an unfeeling colonial mercantilism.<sup>39</sup>

In Hertford's epistle, Yarico continues the interplay of paternalism and economism, although her plea is singularly framed by rhetorics of sentimentality.

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<sup>39</sup> This does not mean, though, that the poem's sentimentality resolves the contradictions of the servant problem. Sentimentality does not, as Norman Simms suggests in his short, problematic essay on the poem, inhibit critique, “allow[ing] Inkle's supposed lack of compassion to emerge without explicit judgment”; rather, sentimentalism ideologically frames the tension of the poem, indeed giving it certain boundaries, but not wholly smoothing out its conflicts (100). The link between sentimentality and the economy is an insight of 18th-century critics working in the field of New Economic Criticism. Gillian Skinner in *Sensibility and Economics in the Novel* (1999), for instance, points to the inextricable relationship between economics and sentimentalism: “Eighteenth-century sensibility is linked inescapably to the economic. The classic sentimental tableau ... in which the spectator weeps at another's distress, is based not simply on feeling, but on feeling and *money*: money which the spectator generally has, and which the object of his or her gaze does not. The centrality of feeling in fiction labeled ‘sentimental’ has long been a commonplace of criticism, but the link with the economic has been largely neglected” (1). See also James Thompson, *Models of Value* (1996), Martha Woodmansee and Mark Osteen, *The New Economic Criticism* (1999).

She neither directly laments the economic cause of her enslavement as in the introductory poem nor upbraids the institution of slavery; rather, she explicitly mediates her petitions to Inkle through the discourse of sentimentality:

'Tis thy injustice, thy destructive scorn,  
And not the chain I drag, for which I mourn:  
That to my limbs (alone) does pain impart,  
But thy ingratitude torments my heart. (5-8)

Mourning Inkle's "injustice" and "ingratitude" rather than her encumbering "chain" and stressing emotional "torment" over physical "pain," Yarico displaces colonial bond labor and, instead, locates the root of her unfreedom in the abdication of Inkle's affection and promises of European domesticity. His "injustice" at the onset of the poem is not primarily economic but sentimental. Thus, Yarico represents a classic pathetic heroine who is left speechless, powerless, and alone as she watches Inkle "leave the fatal coast": "how did I my neglected bosom tear, / With all the fury of a wild despair! / Then on the sand a stupid corpse ... lay, / 'Til (by my master's order) dragg'd away" (32, 33-6). While Yarico's "sufferings" lead to her "wretched infant's death," her plight is to maintain the position of the forlorn lover, to "sustain" her "hated life" and "linger on ... anxious hours in pain" (37, 39-40). Yarico's Barbadian enslavement in Hertford's epistle is not figured according to Orlando Patterson's comprehensive definition for the slave experience in *Slavery and Social Death* (1982) — "*the permanent, violent domination of natally alienated and generally dishonored persons*" (15, emphasis in original). Her bondage is not expressed as a generalized loss of social ties and

natal alienation, but as a permanent separation from Inkle, a specific, sentimentalized configuration of loss and a paternalistic sublimation of colonial labor exploitation. Hertford's heroic Yarico, thus, problematizes Patterson's sociological explanation of slavery, figuring as a sentimental limit to, rather than a clear representation of, his universal conception of slavery.

Just prior to this poetic scene, though, Yarico reveals the economic underpinnings of her sentimental enslavement, explaining her condition as an effect of Inkle's mercantilist drive for profit: "Yet by a sordid love of gain subdu'd, / You doom'd me to an endless servitude" (23-4). Routing Inkle's economic exploitation through a discourse of corrupted "love" and casting her "endless servitude" as an indirect effect of his submission to a "love of gain," Yarico both points to the conflict of paternalism and economism in the poem and demonstrates the overdetermined status of economic "gain" in this tangle of relations. Yarico casts her enslavement as a condition determined by a two-headed, but asymmetrical, cause, presenting Inkle's sentimental paternalism as a thing "subdu'd" by his economic drive for profit. Her thinly veiled threat of Inkle's fiery damnation at the close of the poem, though, seems to redirect this conflict, specifically precluding a more straightforward economic depiction of bond labor, as she employs her newly discovered eschatological Christian rhetoric to portend Inkle's future. After meeting a "hoary Christian priest" who instructs her in Christian cosmology, Yarico recounts the details of her new understanding of heaven and hell only to "remind" Inkle of the eternal consequences of his treachery:

He told me too (but oh! Avert it, love,  
And thou, great over-ruling power above)  
That perjur'd men, wou'd to those pits be driven,  
And ne'er must enter thro' the gate of heaven.  
Think, if this sad conjecture shou'd be true,  
Dear faithless youth (oh think!) what wilt thou do? (59-64)

Although shifting the register of Yarico's entreaty to the discourse of Christian sentimentalism, Hertford places clear limits on the moral value of colonial mercantilism and, following Bacon's warnings in "Of Plantations," suggests that such an economic enterprise could have interminably adverse effects. While bond labor is circumscribed and servitude virtually absent in her poem, there remains a clear economic remainder in the representation of an infinitely and spiritually corruptible colonial labor market. Furthermore, as a poetic figure indebted to Oenone, who Wiseman claims "offers a model for the fate of Yarico," Hertford's Yarico marks a tragic transatlantic escalation of Ovid's *Oenone to Paris*, as Yarico devolves into slavery rather than remaining, as Oenone, a pastoral laborer (429). In pairing this decline in status with the consistency of Yarico's protest, these poems produce a tension that retains the trace of what Wiseman characterizes as the singular focus of this Ovidian epistle — "questions of status" (431). The trouble with Yarico's slave status is the inability of Hertford's adapted Ovidian pastoralism, to fully encapsulate the movement of her devolution. Although partially veiled by a sentimentalized Christian rhetoric, economic and class remainders persist — a residue that suggests the fragmentation of a totalizing, paternalistic worldview in the colonial context.

The anonymous 1734 *London Magazine* poem, “The Story of Inkle and Yarico,” continues this contradictory emphasis on Yarico’s status, initiating a full display of her interruptive economic rhetoric only hinted at in Hertford’s poems. The 1734 poem not only maintains the antinomic interplay of paternalism and economism found in Hertford’s poems, but it intensifies it, as the poem is generally cast in more antagonistic terms. Unlike Hertford’s more hesitant Inkle, Anon’s Inkle begins as an unambivalent “deceiver” and “stranger to virtue” whose sentimental bond with Yarico is violently displaced by the sudden recollection of his economic aspirations at the arrival of the obligatory English trading ship (9). Their embarkation on this vessel is, as customary, the catalyst that jars his economic memory:

With lovely *Yarico*, [he] puts off to sea;  
 With equal joy they plough the watry way.  
     When the fair youth, despairing, calls to mind  
 All hopes eluded of his wealth design’d;  
 Riches the seat of his affection seize  
 And faithful *Yarico* no more can please. (108-13)

Along with the aggressive portrait of Inkle’s “affection seize[d]” by “Riches,” the hostile character of the littoral scene upon their arrival in Barbados is also amplified, as the eager planters descend as a voracious swarm to procure potential bond laborers — “the planters thick’ning on the key ... / to purchase negro slaves, if any there” (124). Thus, the intensity of Barbadian labor demand seems even more severely cast than in Hertford’s poems, a point augmented by the continued absence of colonial servants from the market scene.

Initially responding to Inkle's economic deception from the sentimental position of "a helpless maid," Yarico soon deploys economic language and logic in an attempt to sway him to the cause of her heroic plea. Yarico's stance in the 1734 poem is one that posits the contradiction of paternalistic care and economic interest in a more complex, dialectical relation than in Hertford's poems, but it is one that similarly falters under the twin, symbolic weight of Inkle's patriarchal and economic domination. Reminding Inkle of her self-imposed version of Patterson's natal alienation, her decision to leave "father, mother, country ... for you," Yarico articulates his move to enslave her as a wrongful capitalization of a patriarchal transfer: "Transfer'd from them, to you my love I gave; / Unjust return! to sell me for a slave" (141, 144-5). Inkle is at once deceitful lover and unscrupulous investor. In her final appeal, Yarico characteristically pleads her belly, raising the specter of paternal responsibility in the attempt to delay her impending sale: "Yet let the infant in my womb I bear, / The blessing taste of your paternal care" (150-1). Her entreaty, though, leads only to an escalation of the logics of primitive accumulation and the evacuation of paternalism, as Inkle, "for her condition rais'd his first demand," cruelly compelling her conversion from indigenous lover to transatlantic slave (153). In the face of Inkle's "trading soul," the poem's concluding depiction of Inkle's internalization of the dictates of mercantile capital, paternalism has no economic currency, but is, with the gesture of his "remorseless hand," tragically cast off and abstracted from the system of colonial profit, transatlantic trade, and human property. Thus, this version of *Inkle and Yarico*

stands as a pathetic, sentimental statement for paternalism's separation from economic determinants and obtains as a sign of paternalism's cultural turn. While economic rationalization, as Thompson notes, has "been nibbling ... through the bonds of paternalism," paternalism is emerging as its abstracted cultural counterpart (385).

Exemplifying Yarico's poetics of debt, the anonymous 1736 *Yarico to Inkle: An Epistle* continues Inkle's depiction as an unprincipled investor, revealing the extent to which Inkle and Yarico's affair, from the outset, has been conditioned by an anxiety of insolvency. Despite its pastoral separation and sentimental optic, Inkle and Yarico's romantic New World idyll, according to this poem, has never been outside of the logics of the transatlantic economy. The 1736 *Epistle*, more overtly than any other, links Inkle and Yarico's idealized colonial encounter with transatlantic slavery; the invocation, for instance, situates the heroic epistle within the discourse of abolition, configuring Yarico as the poem's muse who defends "the Negro's cause" (17). The poem also explicitly represents Inkle and Yarico's relationship according to a logic of indenture — a move that maintains colonial servitude as a trace element in this phase of the myth. Demonstrating the continued role of debt in slavery, the poem, moreover, obliquely suggests a connection between servitude and slavery in its representation of debt and, likewise, indirectly maintains the specter of Ligon's diversified scene of colonial labor. Reminding Inkle of what he "once said" after she rescued him from her cannibalistic, "cruel friends," Yarico notes that Inkle, in a confounded expression

of appreciation, initially figured their idealized relation according to an indebted logic; she recounts: “My *Yarico*, my love, my life, / you cry’d, / ‘My dear preserver, and my choice’s pride! / Thou kindest, softest cure of all my woe, / How shall I pay the gratitude I owe?’” (147-50). Inkle not only depicts their relationship as one conditioned by debt, but also suggests the confounding limitlessness of his obligation to her. Upon arriving in Barbados, though, Inkle converts this same line into a tragic talisman to lure a credulous *Yarico* off of the English ship and onto the shore: “Welcome ... my *Yarico* to Land! / Thou kindest, dearest, tenderest, loveliest maid / Now shall my promis’d gratitude be paid!” (278-90). In a deceptive turn, he gestures toward an expectant planter, a “wretch,” to “Take her,” declaring: “my right I here resign, / Her life and labours are by purchase thine!” (293, 291-2). What *Yarico* had previously described as their perfect mutuality — “so mutual was our flame, / Our hopes, and fears, and wishes were the same” — is at the moment of her enslavement disclosed as a classic patriarchal relation in which *Yarico* is already Inkle’s property, her rights abdicated to him in their pseudo-marital relation (135-6); in this way, her sale is not unlike the previous poem’s revelation of their romantic bond as a patriarchal transfer, and it depicts transatlantic slavery as the tragic fulfillment of the domestic marital property relation.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, Inkle’s professed debt to *Yarico* is here tragically and

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<sup>40</sup> The link between transatlantic slavery and European marriage is a theme taken up by many women writers of the period, notably Mary Astell, Lady Mary Chudleigh, Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea, and Sarah Fyge Field Egerton; see Moira Ferguson, *Subject to Others* (1992), for a discussion of these writers in respect to the *Inkle and Yarico* heroic epistle tradition (24-5, 75-6).

grotesquely inverted as self-administered profit. Evoking Orlando Patterson's explanation of indebtedness as a "cause" of slavery, the 1736 poem portrays the sentimentalized debt relation as a precursor to slavery, but for the creditor (Yarico, to whom "gratitude" is owed) rather than the debtor (Inkle) (124-5).

Yarico declares this exchange, as in the previous poem, an unethical commercial transaction: "O what returns for such a waste of love!," similarly suggesting their affair as an unprincipled, or unwise, investment (143). And although she declares her willingness to remain a "faithful slave" if made *his* slave in an earlier verse of the poem (37-40), she nonetheless proceeds to turn Inkle's debt logic against him, depicting him as a fraudulent investor and attempting to undo his corruption of the servitude/slavery distinction by refiguring their relation according to a bond of indenture:

Among the vices men abhor the most,  
Ingratitude is sure of all accurst;  
Can the just gods with pleasure look upon,  
Or love the temper, so unlike their own?  
Kind offices a kind requital claim,  
He pays but half, who but returns the same;  
He who gives first, a generous kindness shows,  
The other, only pays a debt he owes.  
But you, relentless to my cries and pray'rs,  
Smile at my wrongs, and mock my falling tears.  
Not one return of all the mighty debt,  
But cruel rage, and persecuting hate;  
This, this is all your nature can bestow,  
And thus you *pay the gratitude you owe*. (163-76, emphasis in original)

Inkle's "gratitude" appears in Yarico's reconstructed debt logic as an unpaid, compounded balance; he is in arrears, she argues, for issuing "not one return of all

the mighty debt.” His deficit is made even more extreme in that Yarico was the first to invest in his protection, a detail that only increases the value of his balance and redoubles his liability in the continuation of her enslavement. Moreover, this debt configuration binds Inkle to Yarico, despite his abandonment and errant freedom, and reveals the co-constitutive, if somewhat inverted and displaced, link between debt logics and slavery.<sup>41</sup> It is also a point that maintains the servant problem’s contradictions, with Yarico depicting the cultural hegemony of classical hospitality codes and employing the rhetoric of sentimental paternalism in an attempt to incorporate and contain Inkle’s determining economic logic. It is not going to work, Yarico insists, for Inkle to relinquish their sentimental bond in an economic exchange, stamping his “gratitude” paid in a colonial economic sleight-of-hand; the sentimental logic of paternalism, in this instance, is itself determined by economic logic which folds back on itself, rendering Inkle, in both economic and paternalistic terms, insolvent.

Stephen Duck’s *Inkle and Yarico* poem, *Avaro and Amanda: A Poem in Four Canto’s* [*sic*], Taken from “*The Spectator*,” Vol. I, No. XI, published in the same year as the 1736 epistle, likewise takes up the question of debt, articulating its

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<sup>41</sup> In *Slavery and Social Death*, Patterson claims a constitutive link between servitude and slavery in his explanation of debt servitude and its close relative, criminal punishment; together, they are two of the eight principal means of becoming a slave. While insisting on the importance of the distinction between servitude and slavery, he explains that the possibility of debt servitude leading to slavery was an ever-present threat. Debt, for Patterson, is a direct and indirect “cause of slavery” in a range of social systems, in both commercially advanced societies such as those in ancient Mesopotamia and less commercially developed societies such as the Ashanti of West Africa (124-5).

complications through both the conflict of paternalism in Inkle and Yarico's colonial encounter and the tension of the servitude/slavery relation. While Duck's poem is not technically an heroic epistle and alters the names of the myth's protagonists, it is arguably a product of the heroic epistle genre; it includes direct discourse reminiscent of the heroic epistle address, is written in heroic couplets, and is in direct homage to Hertford — one of Duck's many patrons whose *Inkle and Yarico* poems, in several instances, he quotes almost verbatim.<sup>42</sup> The relationship between Avaro and Amanda, Duck's *Inkle and Yarico*, clarifies some anxieties of paternalism in the colonial encounter at which the previous poems have only hinted — the general vulnerability and relative absence of paternalism in the initial colonial encounter and its subsequent melancholic projection back onto the scene of the couple's lost idyllic past. In his long poem, Duck focuses less on depicting Avaro and Amanda's mutuality, a fiction perhaps required by the classical roots of the heroic epistle form, and more on revealing the contradictory asymmetry of their relations on Amanda's native island.<sup>43</sup> Avaro, for instance, is both Amanda's "lovely Captive" and the figure "on whom [her] Life and Love depend[s]" (II.54, III.7). Amanda, in a similar mode, is Avaro's domestic servant as well as his sole

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<sup>42</sup> Felsenstein, to my knowledge, is the first to formally anthologize Duck's poem as part of the *Inkle and Yarico* canon. He situates Steele's version as his closest antecedent, a point clearly indicated, he reminds us, in the subtitle (125). Often referred to as "the thresher poet," Duck is most commonly known for his poem, *The Thresher's Labour*, published along with *Avaro and Amanda* in his 1736 volume, *Poems on Several Occasions*.

<sup>43</sup> Duck shifts the setting of Avaro/Inkle's shipwreck, and thus Amanda/Yarico's indigenous home, from an unspecified "American" geography to an "Indian Isle" (I.88).

provider and protector. She “guard[s]” Avaro’s “sacred Life secure” (II.152), protecting him from “the crafty Natives” of her island (I.93), while serving him an array of provisions in a natural world seemingly impatient to bend to her will. In this way, she appears as Ligon’s chigger-extracting Yarico with the distinction of a naturally sanctioned indigenous autonomy:

Then from the Branches, with officious Haste,  
She plucks the Fruits, which yield a sweet Repast:  
That done, she, with her Bow, explores the Wood;  
Pierc’d with her Shaft, the Fowl resigns his Blood.  
Then back she hastens to her cool Retreat,  
And for Avaro dress’d the grateful Meat:  
To slake his Thirst, she next directs his Way,  
Where crystal Streams in wild Meanders stray:  
Nor lets him there, expos’d to Foes, remain;  
But to the Cave conducts him safe again. (II.55-64)

The problematic crux of their idyllic scene resides in Amanda’s simultaneous submission and control in their relationship, the extent to which she figures her protection of Avaro as submission to him yet simultaneously occupies virtually all of the standard gender roles. Such a relationship may obtain on her island, but, as the poem nears its familiar tragic climax, it becomes clear that it is not fungible to English society. Duck’s poem implies, rather, that Yarico’s submissive control is a primitive, dubious relation that will be civilized and made clearly patriarchal in their transatlantic crossing. Upon the prospect of their relocation to England, for instance, Amanda promises to maintain their current arrangement, continuing to offer native protection along with domestic service: “With joyful Servitude, I’ll still attend / On you, my nuptial Lord, and dearest Friend / ... To guard your Life, all

Hazards will I run / And for your Safety, sacrifice my own" (III.125-6, 137-8). As Amanda pledges to maintain the robust character of their simultaneously horizontal and vertical relations, Avaro, both "nuptial Lord" and "Friend," responds to her by underscoring her ignorance of civilization and reasserting his imminent role as urbane patriarch:

... No Hazards shall you run;  
Nor, for my Safety, sacrifice your own;  
Nor yet at Ev'ning fondly deck my Bed  
With sweetest Flow'rets, gather'd from the Mead;  
Nor shall Amanda tasteful Herbs explore;  
Nor shall Avaro chase the savage Boar:  
A softer Bed, than Flow'rs, shall give you Rest'  
A choicer Meat, than Fruits, indulge your Taste.  
Ten thousand Things my grateful Soul shall find,  
To charm your Fancy, and delight your Mind;  
I'll vary Love a hundred diff'rent Ways,  
And institute new Arts to make it please:  
So shall our future Race of Children see  
A constant Proverb made of you and me:  
When *British* Youths shall court the doubting Dame,  
And want Expressions equal to their Flame;  
Then, strongly to attest it, shall be said,  
"*True, as Avaro to the Indian Maid.*" (III.139-56)

As Amanda becomes the civilized English wife, their more ambiguous relations of submission and dependency, according to Avaro, will become normalized according to paternalistic household dictates; the import of the pair's "constant Proverb" will not be its mutuality but Avaro's emblematic steadfastness, in which he is the agential, constant lover and she the reified love object.

Although Avaro soon professes his perpetual debt to Amanda — "If I forget the Debt I owe to *Thee*, / May all the Gods forget their Care of *Me!*" — he, like all

of his predecessors, subsequently “repa[ys]” her “Indulgent Love with Slavery,” setting the “doating *Negro’s* Heart” against the lure of “Gold” and exclaiming in a now classic pose: “Let am’rous Fools their tiresome Joys renew, / And doat on *Love*, while *Int’rest* I pursue” (IV.29-30, 6, 77, 79, 82-3). A result of Avaro’s reawakening to the world of colonial commerce, Amanda’s slavery is cast as both “the sad Reward of all [her] Care” and Avaro’s absolute scorn for “all paternal Cares” (IV.94, 126). “Care,” both Amanda’s submissive indigenous variety and Avaro’s absent paternal variety, is clearly revealed by Duck to be in trouble, as is its relation to debt and slavery. The issue is not just that Avaro sets paternal care against an overdetermining economic interest in the move to provoke and rationalize Amanda’s enslavement, but also that her own submissive care and Avaro’s indebtedness to it is not enough to prevent her enslavement. What seems to be happening under the auspices of Avaro and Amanda’s sentimental colonial encounter is a clear remapping of the coordinates in the servitude/slavery relationship; Amanda’s “joyful Servitude,” for instance, does not obtain as an example of what Patterson calls a “countervailing power” to slavery in the personalistic mode, but it is a condition that arguably leads to her enslavement (28).

In *Slavery and Social Death*, Patterson explains voluntary servitude as the mark of inclusion in personalistic slave societies, such as the Ashanti of West Africa, as well as the direct means of avoiding slavery. The goal of servitude in this personalistic idiom, roughly analogous to Thompson’s paternalistic mode, is to

establish a web of protective relations that work as a “countervailing power” to slavery; slavery, thus, is characterized by a failure, or inability, to construct these broad relations of dependency and is described as the exclusive dependence on a single source of protection (28). Freedom from dependency, according to Patterson, was neither the aspiration of this mode nor the way to avoid slavery: “people did not seek to be ‘free’ (in the modern Western ‘bourgeois’ sense of isolation from the influence of others) in such systems because, ironically, this was the surest path to slavery. Rather they sought to become embedded in a network of protective power” (28). In the personalistic mode, the opposite of slavery is not freedom, but a counterbalancing configuration of power, submission, and dependence — an arrangement not too far from Yarico’s aspirations in her relationship with Inkle in the Ovidian phase of the myth.

In the materialistic idiom of power, the counterpart to the personalistic mode, social dependency is disguised by the commodity relation. Summarizing Marx on commodity fetishism, Patterson explains commodities as “autonomous entities” detached from both the scene of labor and the asymmetrical relations of capital and labor; in this form, “the power relationship is no longer viewed as power over persons but as power over commodities” (19). Social relations, to put it another way, appear as relations between things and are congealed in the commodity form. The shift from the personalistic to the materialistic idiom occurs, for him, through an inversion of the relationship between “persons” and “things.” Quoting Marshall Sahlins’s *Stone Age Economics* (1974), he claims that this inversion

is constituted by “the transition from a system of property in which ‘a right to things [is] realized through a hold on persons’ to one in which ‘a hold on persons [is] realized through a right to things’” (28). As Patterson emphasizes, these two polar idioms of power, personalistic and materialistic, appear on a continuum in which these extremes are not mutually exclusive but interpenetrate, each emerging as traces in the dominant mode of the other (19). Somewhere along this continuum is where we find Duck’s *Avaro and Amanda*, a poem that demonstrates the mediatory role of servitude and slavery in this transition to a materialistic, capitalism form of organization. The assertion of Avaro’s power through Amanda’s marketization and colonial exchange emerges from a clear conflict between these idioms of power, and his duplicity results from his ability to operate in both modes at once. At first, Avaro seems to play by the rules of the old paternalism, within the limits of Patterson’s personalistic idiom in which both Avaro and Amanda would be protected from slavery by their relations of mutuality and dependence. What becomes increasingly apparent, though, is that Avaro functions as the predetermined, external sign of paternalistic crisis.

As suggested by many of the heroic epistles, the failure of Amanda’s “joyful Servitude” to preclude her enslavement in Duck’s poem could be seen as a miscalculation on her part, an excessive investment in her love relationship with Avaro at the expense of maintaining a web of social relations. Instead of using the “presents” of “trophies,” “painted Fowls,” and “skins and feathers” she receives from rival “*Lovers of her native Isle*” as collateral in her relation to the European

trader, she donates “all” of her gifts “to her lov’d Avaro,” devaluing the potential political capital of these gifts by using them as decorative accessories for their idyllic cave: “the spotted Panther here she hung; and there, / With Paws extended, frown’d the shaggy Bear; / Here gaudy Plumes appear, in Lustre bright; / There Shells and Pears diffuse a sparkling Light” (II.75-8). In swiftly leaving her “Father, Mother, Friends” for a transatlantic adventure with Avaro, Amanda, it could be argued, disconnects herself from an indigenous network of protective power and opens herself up to the inevitable consequence of an overinvestment in a single source of protection. Amanda’s enslavement, then, can be seen as a tragic consequence of her own evasion of traditional relations of power and the unfortunate outcome of her encounter with an eventually hostile and dominant outsider.

The poetic scene of Amanda’s enslavement, as mentioned, can more convincingly be read as a fragmentation of Patterson’s personalistic idiom, these previous examples figuring as traces in an emergent materialistic idiom of power. The absolute character of Amanda’s powerlessness and the pathos of her subjection, coupled with the condemnation of her slavery as an effect of Avaro’s misogyny, preclude holding Amanda solely responsible for her Barbadian enslavement. In the poem, “interest” and economic imperative, that is to say non-personalistic determinants, enter to disrupt the transformation of Amanda’s protective relations. Her indigenous personalistic idiom is not robust enough to counteract the rise of non-personalistic, commodity rule. Instead, she is subjugated

by an emergent materialism that appears through the capitalization and commoditization of existing social relations, a process evident in Amanda's shift from a voluntary, sentimental servant of colonial encounter to an involuntary plantation slave. Voluntary servitude, here, is not a safeguard against slavery, but a condition of possibility for slavery. That Amanda's attempt to maintain paternalistic, submissive relations, even if spread too thinly, results not in a successful transatlantic journey but Caribbean slavery suggests that such "protective relations" no longer obtain as the opposite of slavery. Similarly, that Avaro's debt to Amanda leads not to his enslavement or increased dependency, debt being one of Patterson's historical grounds for slavery, but to his freedom to enslave suggests a realignment in the relationship between servitude and slavery as well as slavery and freedom in the transition to colonial capitalism. Avaro's countervailing freedom to enslave, though, is fleeting and tragically cast. Soon after Avaro sells Amanda in Barbados, he is separated from his shipmates in another storm and marooned on a menacing and deserted Atlantic island. Repentant and tortured by his "Sin" and desiring death yet unable to commit suicide, he is attacked by a "howling" and "Hunger prest" wolf that, Duck relates, "seiz'd him by the Breast" and "Tore out his Heart" (IV.187-9). Presaged in Avaro's gruesome end, Duck's poem points not only to the 18<sup>th</sup>-century crisis of paternalism, but reveals the hostile form of its emergence and the naturalistic, violent means through which it is being cast as a cultural imperative (Thompson 387). Symbolizing, at the same time, the increased impossibility of the evasion of

economic dictates in the colonial scene, Duck's poem maintains the contradictions of the servant problem and, thus, the vestiges of its original site in the myth — the colonial servants of Ligon's Barbados. Along with its heroic epistle precursors, Duck's poem, moreover, figures the rhetoric of debt as the poetic feature that at once mediates and constitutes the master/servant relation, likewise preserving a faint specter of indentured servitude. Such a centrality of debt within the poetic figuration of slavery demonstrates that a fundamental feature of colonial servitude — debt — likewise holds for slavery — a symbolic display that continues to bind servitude to slavery, even as servants themselves are written out of the heroic epistle period. Finally, that these series of poems collectively register and dispute Yarico's mistreatment within the contradictory terms of the servant problem demonstrates that the adaptive circuits of the myth remain within the scope of Ligon's initial scene of protest, the mistreatment of colonial servants in relation to Barbadian slaves.

## **II. *Inkle and Yarico's* Heroic Epistle Phase II: Disciplining Mercantilism and the Peculiar Transformations of Class in the English Civil War**

As the Ovidian phase of the myth continues throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century and into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the persistence of the servant problem in the myth takes on a more apparent historical character. Paternalist abstraction not only continues to operate as a cultural dictate disconnecting servants from slaves but it also, along with the recurrent condemnation of mercantilism in the form of Inkle's unambivalent,

economic censure, is revealed as a mode of class discipline — the symbolic subordination of the mercantilist class to the ruling order of England, a “success” stemming from the earlier 17<sup>th</sup>-century civil war period. Such mercantilist denunciation further alienates paternalism from economism and compartmentalizes the blame for England’s continual dependence on, participation in, and exploitation of the system of Atlantic world slavery. Moreover, particular innovations in these poems of the second phase, particularly the possibility of Yarico’s manumission, give historical and theoretical weight to the continuation of debt and indenture in the myth, as the system of colonial servitude and contract labor returns to sustain the sugar plantations of the Caribbean after England’s 1833 abolition of colonial slavery. Many of the thematics already mentioned as dominant tropes of this particular phase of the myth will also persist — the sign of Yarico’s link to Ovid’s Oenone, the evacuation of colonial servants from the tale, and the revelation of slavery’s debt relation. Some themes will be more fully developed — the connection between slavery and empire; the growing emphasis on Yarico’s noble savagery; and the emergence of slavery as a condition depicted according to Orlando Patterson’s conception of “social death,” a condition of natal alienation from both the slave’s society of origin and society of enslavement. John Winstanley’s “Yarico’s Epistle to Inkle” (1751), for instance, depicts the influence of a prelapsarian specter of indigenous “*Liberty*” on Yarico who subsequently scorns “the gaudy pomp of *empire*” and refuses to “condescend so low as to a *crown*” (108, 111, 113). Here, Winstanley clearly figures Yarico as a literary descendent

of Behn's Oenone — the Ovidian heroine who refuses to “Change Crooks for Scepters! Garlands for a Crown!” — and more obviously links Yarico's unfreedom to the expansion of empire (107). Unlike previous epistles, Winstanley concentrates the pathos of Yarico's enslavement not solely in the implausibility of Inkle's return but in her participation in plantation gang labor and social death. Realizing the “vain” nature of her sentimental “cries” and “tears” at the close of the poem, Yarico, for instance, maintains her “*innocence*” and rebukes “that monstrous creature, *man*” but pledges to “boldly venture with th'insulting crew, / And bid the world, with all its joys, *adieu*” (154, 155, 157, 158, 161-2; emphasis in original). In *Yarico to Inkle: An Epistle* (1766), Edward Jerningham, in contrast, transforms Yarico into an African princess, a “Nubian dame,” who, in an inversion of Behn's *Oenone to Paris*, longs to “retrieve the fame” of her “delightful home” and “ascend the throne” she “forsook” for Inkle (17, 14, 18). In this verse epistle, she is depicted as a noble slave who melancholically relates her vanished dream of a privileged English domesticity — “I hop'd, alas! to breathe thy native air, / And vie in splendor with the British fair: / Ascend the speedy car enchas'd with gold, / With robes of silk this pearl-deck'd form infold” (82-5); in a similar move, she laments the adulterating effect of slavery on her noble, ancestral line: “With blood illustrious circling thro' these veins, / Which ne'er was chequer'd with plebeian stains / ... Must I the shafts of infamy sustain? / ... From hands unscepter'd take the scornful blow?” (159-60, 163, 167). Instead of generally scorning empire, as Winstanley's poem does, Jerningham's epistle laments both the corruption of

indigenous nobility and its incompatibility with a classically imagined British aristocracy.

Continuing the terms of the servant problem, Whig abolitionist Charles James Fox's "Yarico to Inkle" (1802) harkens back to Hertford's depiction of Inkle as a colonial trader in whom, as he describes, "sordid Interest reigns supreme" (7). As in Hertford and Steele's version, Inkle's fault is an alienation of feeling, the obstinacy of his "heart of stone," and his inability to "inward feel" — a failing of mutual care overcome by economic interest. Yarico's plight, in turn, is clearly situated as an overthrow of their idyllic household: "By thee to fierce barbarians vilely sold — / Oh! Impious Man, to barter love for gold! / Was it for this I strew'd thy leafy bed? / Was it for this with various fruits I fed?" (52-5). In her "Epistle from Yarico to Inkle" (1811), Anna Maria Porter similarly depicts Inkle's "sordid interest" in contradiction to paternalistic care. Aspiring to be, above all, Inkle's paternalistic love object, Porter's Yarico, a figure who "hop'd to spend [her] blissful life" as Inkle's "docile pupil, and exulting wife," is thwarted by Inkle's corrupted "interest" (156-57, 213). In "Amicus's" heroic epistle version, "Yarico to Inkle" (1792), this pseudonymous poet picks up on Fox and Porter's portrayal of Yarico's devotion as an example of "love's excess" (225), casting her as "too fond a maid" and describing her affection as a limit case of moderation. Inkle is not only, as in Steele, alienated from the natural world and economically opposed to sentiment, but he is a "rebel to truth, to nature, and to love" and "hard, unfeeling, as the ore [he] gain'd" (106-7). His interest in colonial profit and trade is sharply

opposed to Yarico's memory of his paternalistic kindness, although Yarico still impossibly pleads for Inkle's lost sympathy, begging him to send a "ransom": "Yet, yet, I hope, that bosom may relent / And for the slave a ransom may be sent; / The generous boon for once in pity send, / I ask not of the lover, but the friend" (135-8). Seeking a redemption payment from Inkle, Yarico not only establishes an indebted relation between them, but she also highlights the economic character of this debt. Detouring Inkle's fundamental economism, she pleads for an economic deliverance, describing the possibility of her freedom not as a sentimental right but an economic gift, a "generous boon."

Thus, Amicus's Yarico points to a major issue that reinforces debt logic as a mediating condition of possibility for slavery — the event of manumission, a liberation that does not invalidate the relations of slavery but, rather, maintains them under the guise of an indebted freedom. Seeking a ransom from Inkle, Yarico underscores Inkle's continued debt to her within the terms of her enslavement. At the same time, the poem suggests that such a ransom would also indebt Yarico to Inkle. Thus, the master/slave relation of the poem emerges as a debt relation; to undo this bond between master and slave would necessitate a debt exchange. In characterizing her ransom as an economic favor, Yarico attempts to exploit this debt relation of slavery to financially bind Inkle to herself, minimizing, if ineffectually so, the possibility of the evasion of his obligation and emphasizing that the condition of debt servitude underwrites her portrayal of colonial slavery. Her rhetorical deployment of debt in the anticipated scene of her emancipation,

moreover, speaks to Patterson's claim in *Slavery and Social Death* that manumission is not an experience of unmediated freedom but a scene structured by the gift of freedom — a point evoked by Amicus's Yarico in her description of Inkle's ransom as a "generous boon" (137). According to Patterson, manumission follows the asymmetrical logic of gift exchange in which the slave's freedom is designated a "gift" from the master, which, instead of releasing the slave from the master/slave relation, either reinforces this existing relation and/or displaces it with a new unequal relation of dependence. While this asymmetrical exchange can be either formal or informal and can result in extremely various outcomes for both master and slave, the debt compulsion of manumission, or the general condition of indebtedness initiated by the event of manumission, is a universal consequence of what Patterson terms the ideological dialectic of slavery. What this manumission event reveals is that debt has been a crucial component of the internal dialectic of slavery all along: in exchanging certain death for life under slavery (the original wager of slavery), the slave is permanently indebted to the master and, in consequence, loses his social life. This social loss is not part of the debt payment to the master but, rather, constitutes one of the terms of the original "transaction." Upon manumission, the master makes another gift to the slave of social life, which is considered a "repayment for faithful service" and initiates a "new dialectic of domination and dependence" (294). This gift of emancipation embedded in the unending relation of debt is what Amicus's Yarico conjures in her concluding plea.

In the scene of New World slavery, as Ira Berlin, Saidiya Hartman, and Eric Williams among others have shown, the nature of this new dependency is largely characterized by what Berlin calls a “vicious cycle of debt and de facto servitude” (quoted in Patterson, 246).<sup>44</sup> As mentioned, colonial servitude persists in the English colonies after slave emancipation, when manumission led not to immediate freedom but to contractual forms of servitude — as evident in both the involuntary apprenticeship system of the post-emancipation U.S. South and the Caribbean and the later voluntary indenture schemes that restricted the mobility of ex-slaves and colonial laborers. Such involuntary and voluntary servitude designs were implemented as provisional protections against the economic collapse of the monocultural plantation sector, always a mode dependent upon a ready pool of intensive, hyper-exploitable labor. As Williams explains in *From Columbus to Castro* (1984), “slavery was abolished, but the plantation and the plantocracy remained” (329). The persistence of plantation rule and its incumbent labor demands not only led to the indenture of ex-slaves, “what the British euphemistically called ‘apprenticeship,’” but also to the recruitment of indentured labor from India, China, Madeira, and Java — a new stream of colonial migrants, that from 1838 to 1924, were enlisted to replace plantation slave laborers in the Caribbean (329, 320,347-60). While insisting that “the Asian labourer was not a slave,” Williams

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<sup>44</sup> For a study of the post-emancipation terms of involuntary apprenticeship in the U.S. South that ensured the continuation of slavery in post-bellum life, see Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection* (1997). See also Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters* (1976), and Eric Williams, *From Columbus to Castro* (1984), (Berlin 149-51, 224; Williams 328-46).

claims that such recruitment schemes were, in actuality, “modified slavery” (329-30, 351, 356-7).

In Barbados, the apprenticeship system, as in other English sugar islands, was enforced until 1838; for the five years following emancipation, this system, as Thomas Keagy claims, “legally held the ex-slaves on the estates” (29). In “The Poor Whites of Barbados” (1972), he notes other labor control laws that sought to check the “internal mobility” of ex-slaves and laborers on the island, one being a pass system that required “a license to use boats or highways” and, another, the Contract Act of 1880, which he describes as a “modified indenture agreement, whereby the laborer would guarantee the planter exclusive rights to his labor in exchange for a plot of land and a small wage” (29-30). Similar examples of the implementation of post-emancipation schemes of apprenticeship and indenture abound throughout the extended Caribbean, all of which demonstrate that, in broad historical terms, servitude and slavery work together to maintain colonial relations of dependence. Perhaps this dialectic of servitude and slavery is what subtends the indeterminacy of Yarico’s final plea for “ransom” in the “Amicus” epistle. In this way, the poem’s open-ended conclusion is not only a formal necessity of the heroic epistle genre but also a consequence of its content — the dialectical relation of colonial servitude and slavery. Closing with Yarico’s pledge to both return to her “native shore” and halt the dissemination of her “sad story” upon Inkle’s manumission payment, the Amicus poem necessarily excludes any hint of the fulfillment of Yarico’s entreaties. In this way, the possibility of Yarico’s

unmediated return to a state of indigenous freedom is rendered, along with Inkle's reply, an impossibility of both poetic content and form.

The question remains, though, as to the motivating force of this seemingly continuous dialectic of paternalism and economism in *Inkle and Yarico* that binds servitude and slavery in the tale. To comprehend this development and its unfolding in an increasingly oppositional colonial encounter, which sets Inkle, the anti-heroic merchant, against Yarico, the noble slave, it is necessary to make a brief detour to consider the principal historical event that marks the gap between the time of Ligon's 1657 *History* and Steele's revival of the myth in 1711 — namely the English Civil War and its reformulation of the political and economic coordinates of English society, both at home and in the colonial abroad. In his opening chapter of *English Questions* (1992) "Origins of the Present Crisis," Perry Anderson describes the English Civil War as "the most mediated and least pure bourgeois revolution of any major European country," explaining its first decade (1640-49) as "the most obscure and controversial of all the great upheavals which led to the creation of a modern capitalist Europe" (17). Anderson proceeds to debunk a leading myth of the revolutionary 1640s that casts the period as a simple conflict between an emergent bourgeoisie and a declining aristocracy; instead, he argues, the struggle should be grasped as an "internecine" one between two different groups of the rural landed class (20, 17). On one side, was the investment-driven landowning class that tended to side with Parliament and, on the other, the rentier landowning class that tended to side with the King — a highly mediated fault line

that becomes more clear when considering their most extreme supporters, the London merchant class the allies of the former and the Northern Scottish clan society the allies of the latter. The relevance of Anderson's schema to *Inkle and Yarico* lies in his articulation of the role of mercantile capital in the shakeout of the conflict, a group he calls "the only true bourgeois kernel of the revolution" (18). Mercantile capital, Anderson explains, was the most direct "beneficiary" of civil strife in England, as the Commonwealth's economic policies overwhelmingly aided the expansion of mercantilist influence over all other sectors. That this mercantile economic boom was catalyzed by an intra-class conflict meant that the "juridical and constitutional obstacles" to economic development could be shattered but not the social impediments. In other words, the revolution was not characterized by the reconstitution of the ruling class in England. It marked a shift in, as he puts it, the "roles" but not the "personnel of the ruling class," as the "landed aristocrats, large and small, continued to rule England" (19). The result was the simultaneous economic triumph and socio-political defeat of mercantilism. The revolution's "heir," mercantile capital emerged out of the conflict in a subordinate position in the ruling class order, more properly considered an "interest" than a "class" (19). At the same time, the landed class participated in mercantilist colonial and trading schemes, registering what Anderson calls a "permanent partial interpenetration of the 'moneyed' and 'landed' interests," although it is a link that also "maintained the political and social subordination of merchant capital" (19).<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> For a history of merchants' role in the political and commercial developments

While mercantile interests could not transform the property structure of England to enforce a “true” bourgeois revolution, it could do so, and was encouraged to do so, in the colonial peripheries. Economic rationalization was cast as a colonial principle through which mercantile capital could reach its bourgeois fulfillment; however, as evident in *Inkle and Yarico*, such precepts met a limit in the cultural imaginary of the English colonies. The economic primacy of the mercantilist code was still required to submit to the paternalist tenets of the landed aristocracy; the merchant and the gentleman, despite the interpenetration of their real interests, did not culturally or symbolically cohere. In this context, the anti-mercantilist ideology ambivalently initiated by Steele’s *Spectator* version and intensified by its copious adaptations in the heroic epistle phase constitutes a disciplining of the mercantilist bourgeoisie, an attempt to establish and maintain their ancillary role in the emergent capitalist order. In this way, the status of *Yarico*’s noble slavery should not be seen only as a fetish that does the work of undermining and destabilizing the nobility — Hayden White’s claim about the role of the noble savage fetish in European discourse (192); rather, it should be understood as the mode through which the mercantile class is symbolically subjugated to the nobility. That the valorization of noble slavery occurs through the continual elaboration of the contradiction of paternalism and economism signifies a symbolic, if partially concealed, acknowledgment of the interpenetration

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leading up to the English Civil War, see Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution* (2003).

of aristocratic and mercantilist interests. Moreover, that economic determination is expressed through the rhetorics of paternalism, resulting in the former being both acknowledged and disavowed in the myth, marks an ideological collaboration with the idiosyncratic result of the English revolution, a changing of, in Anderson's terms, the "structure but not the superstructure of English society" (29). A myth mediating support of the emergent capitalist class, a landed aristocracy bolstered by mercantilist interest, *Inkle and Yarico* partially collaborates in another feature of the revolutionary shakeout — the banishment of the English peasantry from history (29). The exclusion of colonial servitude in Steele marks an analogous exile of the expropriated, transported peasantry from the myth, a move that both suppresses any sign of a popular transatlantic agency in the tale and effectively obscures the intimacy and identity of servitude and slavery in the myth's colonial imaginary. While the interplay of paternalism and economism in *Inkle and Yarico*'s subsequent encounters continue as well as undermine this pattern of servant disavowal, servitude's status as the linchpin of paternalist ideology, most evident in the debt negotiation of slavery, maintains a rhetorical trace of the servant/slave relation in *Inkle and Yarico* and preserves the historical moment of the myth's making — the diversified labor scene of early Barbados, that "place of torment," that island of "the sweet negotiation of sugar" (*England's Slavery* 7; Ligon 96).

### III. The Reemergence of Colonial Servants: Paternalism as Cultural Dictate and *Inkle and Yarico* in Drama and Prose

In several of the remaining versions of the myth interspersed throughout the heroic epistle phase, servitude reemerges in a more straightforward, but no less complicated, mode. It returns as a punishment for European slave traders in the tale's first dramatic adaptation, "Weddell's" 1742 *Inkle and Yarico*, and as a sentence for Inkle's treachery in Salomon Gessner's 1756 prose adaptation, *Inkle and Yarico*. In Gessner's version as well as in Matthew James Chapman's 1833 pastoral epic *Barbadoes*, servitude is clearly repositioned as a fundamental form of colonial labor; these versions come closest to refiguring Ligon's scene of Barbadian colonial labor as they reinsert his third term, indentured servitude, back into the *Inkle and Yarico* story. Servitude appears in a non-plantation form in both John Thelwall's 1787 farcical play, *Inkle and Yarico*, and George Colman's 1787 comic drama, *Inkle and Yarico: An Opera*, as they supplement the tale's transatlantic entourages with traveling domestic servants; in an attempt to register Yarico's nobility, these plays, along with Weddell's tragedy, also present Yarico with domestic servants. These versions continue to stage Inkle and Yarico's bond as an indebted relation and sustain the link between servitude and slavery in their display of debt as a fundamental, if only partially visible, component of New World slavery. Likewise, the servant problem persists in these adaptations, as Inkle's economic drive will continue to erode notions of an integrated paternalism and servitude will reemerge as the explicit site of its contradiction. As the heroic epistle phase largely marked

the abstraction of paternalism from economism, these texts demonstrate the extent to which this abstracted paternalism has congealed into a form of cultural hegemony, a process that involves the redoubling of paternalism and its application as a cultural dictate.

The first dramatic version of the tale, *Incle and Yarico: A Tragedy, of Three Acts* (1742), by disputed author, “Mrs. Weddell,” is the first adaptation set in Africa and the first to clearly portray Yarico as an indigenous African noble.<sup>46</sup> The play reintroduces servitude as both a form of punishment for Inkle’s slave trading companions and a sign of Yarico’s nobility, as Yarico is tended to by a doting entourage of female attendants. Captured by agents of the King, also Yarico’s father, Inkle’s slave trading crew is initially sentenced to death but, upon Yarico’s urging that they fall outside of the just war logic of slavery, her father commutes their sentences from death to penal servitude: “Let not their Sentence / Extend to Death. — Be Labour all their Punishment” (1.4.89-90). Configuring penal servitude as utilitarian punishment and transforming slave-trading merchants into colonial servants, this fantastic scene of colonial labor facilitates the antagonistic configuration of mastery and slavery, suggesting a constitutive link between servitude and slavery and imagining Atlantic bond labor as a continuum of fungible positions. Such leniency is not shown to Yarico’s female servants, who are later

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<sup>46</sup> Rejected by the censors, Weddell’s drama was never performed, as indicated in its complete title — *Incle and Yarico A Tragedy, of Three Acts. As it was intended to have been Performed at the Theatre-Royal, in Covent-Garden*. For conjectures on the reason for its censorship, see Felicity Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human* (2003), and Weddell’s preface (Nussbaum 246-7, Weddell A2-3).

collectively sentenced to death for aiding and abetting Yarico's concealment of Inkle from her father and her suitor, the Prince Satamamo. "Entrusted" with protecting Yarico's virtue and honor, these women become scapegoats for Yarico's flight and subsequent enslavement; their sacrifice marks the unsustainability of paternalistic servitude and the dissolution of an indigenous system of mutual obligation. Declaring their failure to safeguard Yarico a "crime" and proof that "Mercy has Limits," the King orders their death sentence: "Guards, bear them hence, / To Execution. — Let their Deaths be speedy, / And mild as possible. — For *Yarico* they bleed. / Deluded Innocent!" (2.5.110, 111, 124-7).

Yarico's delusion here, though, is at once legal trick and "deluded" naïveté. Her abandonment of her noble birthright is a clear consequence of Inkle's now characteristic economic rejection of mutual obligation, although here Inkle's paternalism is not wholly abdicated but redoubled as counsel for Yarico's newfound slave status. For instance, the paternalistic pledge Inkle makes to Yarico upon their departure from Africa — "the Tenderness / Which guides a Father's Actions, thou shalt find / In me" — is abandoned for a different kind of paternalistic advice when Inkle directs the enslaved Yarico, now a "Child," that she is "oblig'd to all / Who kindly will instruct [her] to endure / The State [she's] destin'd to" (2.4.59-61, 3.1.182-4). Paternalism, thus, is now incorporated as a cultural dictate governing Yarico's treatment and condition as a slave. Inkle, forsaking his role as paternal substitute, becomes a paternalistic master "instruct[ing]" Yarico to assimilate to her new servile status. The impossibility of

Inkle and Yarico's marriage and companionship is, in this adaptation, not solely a consequence of Inkle's treachery but a prospect precluded by both "Nature" and "Religion." Inkle explains the impracticality of their sustained conjugality:

"Nature has parted us / Wide by Creation, by Religion more, / — I must not marry you, — they both forbid it" (3.1.188-90). The preponderance of Inkle's economic "interest" over paternalistic care is now naturalized as religious dictate. Likewise, it is sanctioned by legal injunction, as a Jamaican<sup>47</sup> merchant explains to Yarico that the island's slave code precludes any grounds for "redress," as she lacks any legal agency, or personhood, outside of her master in the island society (3.3.48):

Were you of our Community, you then  
Might better hope Redress; but as you're not,  
Our Laws regard you not, as in their Care,  
But leave you in the Pow'r of him who brought  
You first amongst us; he alone's your Judge  
In ev'ry Action, 'till, by his Consent,  
You're purchas'd by another. (3.1.268-74)<sup>48</sup>

Weddell's version of Inkle and Yarico's doomed Atlantic adventure, then, is not simply an instance of Inkle's economic betrayal, but also a scene of Inkle's legal

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<sup>47</sup> Weddell's drama shifts the Caribbean destination of the tale from Barbados to Jamaica, a move imitated by George Eliot in her 1864 short story "Brother Jacob." Weddell's substitution of Jamaica reflects this island's relatively recent supersession of Barbados as "England's premier Caribbean colony," while it also evokes the similarity of the two island's colonial development, as Jamaica, like many of the sugar islands, follows the Barbadian sugar and slavery model (Dunn 165, 151).

<sup>48</sup> A similar law was ratified in 1636 in Barbados when Governor Hawley issued a proclamation declaring all Amerindians and Africans on the island, both presently and in the future, permanent bond laborers, but it has never been raised as a justification for Yarico's Barbadian enslavement in the tale (Beckles, *A History*, 21). It was also initially delinked from naturalizing ideology.

trick. Despite an initial hesitation on Inkle's part upon his arrival in Jamaica — that “this purpos'd Sale bears heavy on my Heart,” he had planned to sell Yarico all along and actively concealed the immediate negation of her “noble” status outside of her African kingdom (3.1.115-16); bound up in Inkle's treachery is now a legal non-admission — the fact that colonial legal codes both mandate Yarico's a priori servility in the island and enforce a system of clearly racialized slavery based on miscegenation taboos and religious proscription.

While the legal and religious dictates of Weddell's drama delimit the terms of mastery and freedom, on the one hand, and slavery and unfreedom, on the other, they do not completely negate Inkle and Yarico's debt relation. Despite Inkle's legal right to sell Yarico on the colonial Jamaican slave market, he still harbors the familiar debt of “Gratitude” toward her that “Demands some Mark of Favour” (3.1.130-1). Inkle remains, as one Jamaican merchant puts it, “indebted to her,” and, with the merchant's urging, Inkle acquiesces to “cloath her” and “make a Deduction” in order to “pay all Obligation” (3.1.146, 132-4). From Yarico's perspective, such an arrangement only qualifies as “Ingratitude” and a repayment “with Chains” rather than love and care in kind, but it underscores the principle of debt mediation in slavery and its expression within the terms of a classical gratitude reminiscent of the myth's heroic epistles (3.1.242, 223). Yarico's refusal ensures Inkle's indebtedness, a condition that Weddell, like Duck, figures as Inkle's sentimental ineptitude and affective intransigence. Amyntor, the son of Yarico's Jamaican plantation master who has developed an immediate affection for Yarico,

sentimentally upbraids Inkle for so unfeelingly selling Yarico, testing the limits of his colonial economism and provoking the manifestation of his paternalistic opposition: “If you could stand unmov’d, you’d be the first / Refus’d a Tear to Sympathize her Woe” (3.3.36-7). Inkle immediately confronts Amyntor’s charge, standing firm against his sentimental provocation, replying, “all / the Softness you express for *Yarico*, / Had better be conceal’d; for I am not / By Tears, or Threats, to be prevail’d upon/ To act against my Interest” (3.3.44-8). Despite Inkle’s rejection of sentimental feeling, the sentimentalized debt relations remain, appearing as the mediating site at which the contradictions of mastery and slavery are temporarily resolved.

Inkle’s obdurate defense of his slave profiteering, though, ends in high sentimental tragedy — as Inkle is subjected to a quick advance of paternalistic plot turns meant to check the unfeeling slave trader. His abandonment of Yarico is not, we finally are told, his first romantic betrayal, and he finds himself in a “perpetual Tempest” because he can neither remain in Jamaica nor return to England without hearing the names of his jilted former lovers, Yarico and Violetta (3.5.4). Not yet knowing that he has already caused Violetta’s death in England and that Yarico will also soon die, “murder’d by Despair” and her natural disinclination to “rude Labours,” Inkle concludes that both cases are too difficult to remedy: “‘Tis easier, far, / T’ offend against the Ties of Gratitude, / Than vindicate the Act” (3.5.102, 33, 19-21). Upon learning of Yarico’s death, he condemns his “Thirst of Gold” for bringing him “only Bitterness, Remorse, and dark / Confusion,” but similarly

declares his “Error ... past retrieving” (3.5.122-4, 138). Inkle’s economism is tragically irreducible and his paternalistic failings are beyond exoneration. When seeing the lifeless Yarico in the Jamaican plantation field, though, Inkle is overcome “with sudden Frenzy” and instantaneously stricken with madness (3.6.18); he is soon inadvertently killed after wildly attacking Honorius, who is, for Inkle, only a random bystander but, for the audience, is Violetta’s rival suitor who has recently arrived in Jamaica to seek out Inkle and vindicate her honor. Only later does Honorius discover that he has accidentally killed the very man whom he had come to Jamaica to confront: “’twas matchless Goodness, thus / To let me ‘venge *two* Murders by *one* Wound” (3.6.43-4). Paternalism’s triumph in Weddell’s drama is a consequence not of direct confrontation, as Amyntor’s sentimental challenge is easily deflected, but of unwitting revenge, as Honorius comes from beyond the main action of the play to unconsciously rectify Inkle’s overweening economic will. An absurd turn of events, this retaliatory paternalism is also problematic in that it lacks the most basic condition for revenge — consciousness in the act; as a result, it does not resolve the contradiction of paternalism and economism in the drama, but merely stops its movement. While Weddell’s earlier portrait of paternalism presented the ideology as a congealed cultural dictate, this final tragic scene depicts a paternalism pathetically distant from the economic heart of the tale and symbolic of a bizarre form of sentimental chance.

Salomon Gessner’s 1756 prose adaptation, *Inkle and Yarico*, continues this ideological consolidation of paternalism. But it does so through staging

paternalism as a social dictate incorporated by way of colonial servitude; as with Weddell's drama, the alienated status of paternalism is evident in the move to reintegrate it back into the myth by means of a pedagogical ideology of labor.<sup>49</sup> In general, colonial labor, both servitude and slavery, assumes a precarious position in Gessner's version of the myth. At Inkle and Yarico's first encounter, Gessner's marooned Inkle immediately casts the shipwreck scene according to a sentimentalized Lockean model of slavery and just war. He pleads for a life of slavery over death, imploring Yarico to "give [him] life by the sweetness of [her] voice and the still sweeter import of [her] words," entreating her to enslave him — "let me," he begs, "be thy slave" (228).<sup>50</sup> Although Yarico imagines him as a typical European colonizer, "one of that cruel race of men ... who ... have brought with them murder and devastation" to her native American shore,<sup>51</sup> she takes up his offer, but, as expected, she becomes his lover rather than his slave master. Later, when Inkle's "dormant," "mercenary spirit" is reawakened and he subsequently sells Yarico into Barbadian slavery, this opening scene is inverted. As in the anonymous 1736 heroic epistle, Yarico initially protests against Inkle's betrayal,

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<sup>49</sup> Gessner's story was first published in German in 1756, and its first English translation was not published until 1771; See Felsenstein on its translation and publication history (148). Gessner's *Inkle and Yarico* is an extension of another Swiss German author's version, Johann Jakob Bodmer's narrative poem based on Steele's version of the tale, *Inkel und Yariko*; both were published together in 1756.

<sup>50</sup> See Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (1698), in particular Chapter 4 of *The Second Treatise*, "Of Slavery" (283-5).

<sup>51</sup> We are now back in the Americas and Yarico is once again an Amerindian heroine and a quite vibrant one at that; Gessner variously describes her as an "orange-red maiden" and "a yellow-red maiden" in the 1805 translation (228-9, 233, 236).

definitively assigning him to the “wicked race” of European slave traders; eventually, though, she begs to be *his* slave if she *must* be a slave: “If I must be the slave of any one, let me be thine: give me not to another, with pleasure I will accompany thee as thy slave. Cheerfully will I submit to the hardest labors, so I may still live near thee, still enjoy the sight of thee. Take me as thy slave, and with me the unhappy fruit of thy embraces” (231). Although Inkle remains “unmoved,” Yarico’s paternalistic submission to bond labor, namely her pledge to “cheerfully ... submit to the hardest labors,” prefigures both her exceptional ideological relation with her master, a Barbadian planter and the Governor of the island who “treated her as his daughter,” and Inkle’s ultimate internalization of paternalistic dictates and sentimental feeling through his own eager and “happy” submission to colonial bond labor.

As in Steele’s *Inkle and Yarico*, it is the narration of the tale, itself always an interpellative repetition, that incites the mobilization of protective sentimentalism against Inkle’s hardened economic position. When Yarico’s new plantation master learns of her story, he is, like Ligon and Mr. Spectator, immediately moved; unlike them, he is not compelled to fetishize the tale as Ligon or sentimentalize it as Mr. Spectator (although Gessner does both through other means), rather he is determined to punish Inkle under the auspices of his colonial office: “No sooner was he made acquainted with her melancholy history, and the perfidy of Inkle, than he sent the overseers of the slaves to seek him. ‘The wretch,’ said he, ‘shall serve five years in slavery, as the just punishment of his crime’” (233). The

overseers find an already dispirited Inkle, who quickly dons “the habit of his new condition” and tearfully embraces his punishment, exclaiming that he is “happy in being punished” (234). Inkle’s willful submission to his penal servitude drives both his conversion from slave trader to sentimental servant/slave<sup>52</sup> and from unfeeling mercantilist to proper paternalist. It is in the plantation field, under the sign of his mediating bond labor, that he is able to, or rather is compelled to, retell his story and initiate himself into the world of sensibility. While “cultivating the ground, low bending over his work,” Inkle alternatively offers sentimental exclamations to Yarico — “O Yarico! My beloved! Ah!” — and huddles his fellow bond laborers around him to recount his treachery and masochistically marvel at his own inhumanity. Gessner recounts the scene: “the slaves who were at work near him paused from their labor, and leaned in silent attention on their hoes. ‘Friends,’ he cried to the slaves around him — ‘but no; I am not worthy to be called the friend of man. Despise, abhor me; I am a disgrace to human nature: nothing is human of me but the form of which I am unworthy ... Listen, and let horror fill your souls! On a distant shore, a beautiful maiden saved my life ...’” (235). Unlike in Weddell’s dramatic adaptation, Gessner’s Inkle is given undue opportunities to vindicate his cruel “deed,” a process Gessner directly links up with the routinization of colonial labor.

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<sup>52</sup> Gessner continually refers to Inkle as a “slave” and, although he is clearly figured according to tropes of sentimental slavery, his condition is that of penal servitude; he is a European bond laborer among African slaves but serving only a limited sentence.

As Yarico is released by the Governor and returned, “loaded with presents,” to her “native shore,” Inkle is left to labor, memorialize his crime, and repent:

Inkle meanwhile labored among the slaves. The recollection of his crime impressed constant wrinkles on his brow; keen remorse, and the remembrance of the tenderness and benevolence of the orange-red maiden had revived and strengthened his former affection. “Where art thou, Yarico?” he exclaimed. “Alas! lost to me for ever, thou and thy child and mine: never will it call me father, unless when thou relatest to it my cruelty, and it repeats my name and shudders. Ah! how wretched am I! The recollection of me must fill with keenest anguish the soul of her whom I love above all things; and when she mournfully repeats my name, horror must pervade the surrounding country.” (235, 236-7)

Alternatively amplifying and repenting the failure of his paternal obligation, Inkle spends “a whole year ... tormented with these painful reflections,” a sentence that, along with Yarico’s ransom payment, renders his sentimental education complete and his period of atonement a “sincere repentance” (237). By means of Yarico’s debt payment, Inkle is expunged of his “mercenary spirit,” a move that also underscores the continuation of the servant problem contradiction in the tale. Inkle’s novel paternalistic spirit and his initiation into sensibility cannot be fulfilled without an economic intrusion. And while his protestations at the Barbadian Governor’s early offer of manumission heightens the sentimental authenticity of Inkle’s transformation, they are not enough to provoke an easy resolution of the contradiction at the end of the story; once again, the resolution is in the staging of the antinomy itself, a point apparent in the story’s sentimental fade out. At the story’s conclusion, Yarico, “arrayed in a bridal dress, and adorned with variegated feathers,” emerges with their child, begging Inkle to “refuse not thy freedom” and

urging him to “no longer deprive thy child of the paternal kiss” (238). It is when his freedom is cast as paternalist injunction that Inkle relents. In this way, his subservient status is absolved and his penal servitude suspended by a staging of the antinomy at hand, by means of Yarico’s economic payment and Inkle’s own paternalistic assimilation. Inkle’s liberty, though, remains both an indebted condition and an open question.

Penal servitude, while an implicit counterpart to slavery in Gessner’s scene of plantation labor, is depicted as an exceptional condition of redemption seemingly distinct from the general character of colonial slavery. It is also an ironic absurdity, as penal servitude is cast as the punishment for an unsentimental merchant — the same historical figure responsible for transporting at least fifty thousand convict servants to the colonies throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a quarter of all British migrants in the period (Ekirch 27). More common after the 1718 Transportation Act, which simplified the process of transportation and officially legalized transportation as a form of punishment, convict servitude was the sole, profitable territory of English merchants; Inkle’s penal servitude in Gessner’s story obtains as a crafty deployment of a well-known source of mercantilist revenue under the disciplining sign of an imposed paternalism. This exceptional form of convict servitude mediates the full initiation of Gessner’s Inkle into the figure of the sentimentally redeemed transatlantic merchant. Analogous to the myth’s introduction of Yarico as the ideal, sentimentalized female slave, this figure, likewise, marks an impossible resolution of social contradictions, appearing at a

moment when, as is the case with indigenous Americans in the prior century, transatlantic mercantilism is far from a real threat. As suggested by Perry Anderson's account of the English Civil War, it has long been subordinated in the ruling order of England and is also beginning to wane as a dominant mode of colonial administration and influence.<sup>53</sup> At the very moment of its relative historical decline, the redeemed colonial merchant becomes a common, intelligible trope for ventriloquizing the cultural hegemony of paternalism.

This particular dialectical *mise en scène* of paternalism and economism, along with its imaginary resolution in the figure of the redeemed merchant, is reinforced and amplified in the satirical dramatizations of John Thelwall and George Colman. Both written in 1787, the year of "real decision" in the history of British abolition,<sup>54</sup> these comic adaptations feature versions of Gessner's rehabilitated merchant, but elevate this figure as well as the play of the colonial servant problem's contradictions to a self-conscious, second order. In the process, the contradiction develops an aura of lightness and predetermination; now the stuff of comedy, paternalism and economism not only appear as ideological abstractions but also as a paired, farcical abstraction of an abstraction. That paternalism is

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<sup>53</sup> See Daniel O'Quinn, "Mercantile Deformities" (2002), for a reading of the decline of colonial mercantilism in the context of Colman's *Inkle and Yarico*.

<sup>54</sup> The phrase is historian Roger Anstey's summary account of the major abolitionist events that transpired over the course of the year — Granville Sharp's establishment of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, William Pitt and William Wilberforce's parliamentary push for a sanctioned debate on slavery, and the publication of Thomas Clarkson's *A Summary View of the Slave Trade and the Possible Consequences of its Abolition* (Felsenstein, 21); see Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760-1810* (1975) (251).

economically conditioned and economism paternalistically conditioned *is* the joke. Servitude, as with Gessner, still plays an intermediary role in the contradiction, lubricating the dialectical turns of the comedy, but it also emerges in distinct forms to fulfill its farcical mediation. Both adaptations, for example, feature the addition of parallel servant love plots and working-class characters that both gesture back to Ligon's Yarico, specifically her affair with the Christian servant and her close affiliation with Barbadian servants, and forward to the development of proletarian class identities and the emergence of English domestic servants outside of the immediate context of the tale. The category of the English working class is fully legible in these plays, perhaps for the first time in the adaptive history of the myth. In their many comedic allusions and absurdist backstories, Thelwall and Colman's plays also depict links between domestic and colonial servitude, returning to the servant problem connection initiated by Ligon's *History* and pointing towards their prefiguring link to the formations of New World class identities.

These similarities between Thelwall and Colman's dramas belie a confluence of professional controversy, divergent politics, and virtually opposite performance histories. Thelwall's farce, his first known literary work, was never performed; the manuscript was only rediscovered in 1969, and it was published for the first time in Frank Felsenstein's 2006 edition (21). Colman's play, in contrast, was, after Richard Sheridan's *The School For Scandal* (1777), the most popular play on the London stage in the last quarter of the eighteenth century (Hamilton 19, Felsenstein 167, Troost 3). Also a widely performed touring play up until the

Victorian era, Colman's *Inkle and Yarico* traveled throughout the British Isles as well as to Jamaica (1788), New York (1789-1844), Philadelphia (1790), Calcutta (1791), and Boston (1794) (Felsenstein 168; Hamilton 30, n. 3; Troost 2-3). According to Thelwall, the popularity of Colman's play had roots in the rejection of his own play. Felsenstein recounts in his introduction to the play that a young Thelwall sent his manuscript to Colman's father, then manager of the Haymarket Theater, for consideration. His play was denied, and Thelwall recalls in his memoirs that "Mr. Colman" had responded to him with "a moral expostulation against the design, and a declaration that he had no room in his company for any new adventurer"; Colman the Younger's play, which included notable similarities, appeared on the Haymarket stage just two months later (27-8). While Thelwall alleged plagiarism against Colman the Younger, nothing formally litigious ever came of the controversy, although Felsenstein notes that the aspiring young dramatist "no doubt ... felt both anger and distaste at the widespread acclaim that Colman the Younger's *Inkle and Yarico* achieved" (30). Despite their resemblances, Thelwall and Colman's plays reflect different political commitments that would become more explicit in their dramatists' subsequently divergent career paths, Colman remaining in the theater and Thelwall transitioning from literary hopeful to radical Jacobin thinker and orator.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> For more on John Thelwall's political career and writings, see Michael Scrivener, *Seditious Allegories: John Thelwall and Jacobin Writing* (2001).

Thelwall's play, *Inkle and Yarico; or Ingratitude Rewarded* (1787), was most likely intended as a theatrical afterpiece, a short, often comic drama commonly performed after a principal five-act play in 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>- century theater; it was a production more likely to draw a larger working-class audience due to the reduction of ticket prices midway through the main act (Thelwall 31). Felsenstein speculates that Thelwall would have been aware of the subsequent shift in audience class dynamics, and his play sets up a series of class confrontations in both its comic dramatization of middle class anxieties and its radicalization of English liberty. Even in its more radical orientation, Thelwall's farce maintains the fundamental contradiction of the myth, its paternalistic and economic antinomy, and continues the naturalizing sentimentality of the tale. Liberty, for instance, while radicalized, is also naturalized as an innate condition that the English, in their privileged historical relationship to common law freedom, are poised to restore to the unfree peoples of the New World — largely those from whom the English have previously, of course, denied such liberty. Set in the Orinoco river basin on the South American coast, the play begins over two years after Inkle and Yarico's initial encounter and opens with a scene of Inkle longing for his "native soil" (1.1.1). Yarico immediately casts Inkle's sentimentalized homesickness and desire to abandon their American idyll as a betrayal of sexual neglect, accusing him of pining "for de white woman of / you own country" (1.1.26-7).<sup>56</sup> Inkle protests,

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<sup>56</sup> In a new turn in the myth's characteristic hybridization of difference, Thelwall's farce gives the Amerindian Yarico a stereotypical "negro dialect," a feature that

but he continues to plot the possibility of an escape, silently debating whether he should persuade Yarico to go with him or simply leave her behind. His desire to return to England is soon met by the chance arrival of his entire family and their transatlantic entourage to the South American Caribbean coast; on an uncharacteristic group slave-trading mission, the crew of family, servants, and sailors has been driven ashore by “contrary winds” and is now lost in the coastal forest (2.1.45).

As alienated from this “wild,” natural world as the play’s European namesake, this group of Londoners introduces a parodic, cosmopolitan display into the colonial space of Inkle and Yarico’s encounter, as they hyperbolically mourn the loss of their middle-class urban pleasures and petty metropolitan commodities (1.1.10). Inkle’s uncle, Turtle, for instance, laments that he will never attend another “Lord mayor’s feast” or resolve “the affairs of the nation at the city Coffee-house,” and Inkle’s slave-trading father, the aptly named Traffic, worries he will never again see his “dear, dear money bags” or “receive the dividends from [his] consols, four per cents, bank annuities, east-India stocks, three per cents and so forth,” fatalistically assuming that he is now doomed to die “poor and unnotic’d, nor ever once [to] be mention’d in a news paper” (1.2.22-3, 16-19). Metropolitan class differences are evoked in the stratified cultural tastes of this group, as Timothy, Traffic’s servant, chimes in that he, too, is afraid he will never “hear Molly cook singing ‘Pretty Peggy of Derby Oh!’ while she scow’rs the saucepans”

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Colman will pick up on and use in his depiction of Yarico’s servant, Wowski, in his comic opera.

(1.2.25-6). In an obvious linking of middle-class and working-class commodity culture with New World slavery, Inkle's mother, incidentally named only "Mrs. Incle," blames "all these misfortunes," including Inkle's still unknown whereabouts, on Traffic's singular focus on "marchandizing," his refusal to "retir[e] from business, and tak[e] a fine house, about Grosvenor Square, and cut a dash among the quality folks" (1.2.35, 32-4). In the performance of her parvenu ambition, she also reveals the reason that she has accompanied him on this adventure, "to save expences [*vic*] of house-keeping and servants in England" (1.2.37-8). A former domestic servant whom Traffic marries after she inherits a substantial sum from her master,<sup>57</sup> Mrs. Incle underscores the comic overdetermination of economism in this failed slave trading venture, revealing a paternalism utterly subsumed by Traffic's dictating, economic will and literalizing transatlantic slavery's status as an economic supplement for their arriviste, patriarchal household in London.

The farce becomes more apparent in the first meeting of Inkle and his extended family when Inkle, after embracing his parents, turns to reassure his uncle that he has not forgotten him but has merely paid his first respects to the first due, his mother and father: "Oh no, sir, but my joy is so great I cannot express it

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<sup>57</sup> Traffic reveals her former status as a domestic servant and mistress when, later attempting to convince Inkle to sell Yarico and her servant, Yahamona, he tells him the story of how he left a former betrothed for his mother without any plague of "conscience" (2.2.74). Marriage, he attempts to impart to Inkle, is just another economic transaction and affords no place for moral reckoning: "But as I was going to say, Tom, just when I was going to marry [another woman], your mother's master died (for she was only a single gentleman's housekeeper) and, for what reason I neither know nor care, left her two thousand pounds. Do you think now I talked of conscience? I left my conscience and my old sweetheart together, and married my now wife" (2.2.71-6).

all at once. I have therefore paid the first dividend of my affection where I owed the first, and now I assign myself over to you" (2.1.35-7). Inkle's financialized sentiment reaches a sentimental limit, however, when his father presses him to "make the best of a bad bargain" — to face the problem of his lost profits, sell Yarico and her servant, Yahamona, in Hispaniola,<sup>58</sup> and jumpstart his accumulation of capital (2.2.11). In protest, Inkle, rather than Yarico as in all previous versions, raises both the question of his "gratitude" and the issue of Yarico's pregnancy in an attempt to counter his father's enslavement scheme (2.2.19). Inkle's former betrayals of Yarico and the localization of his treachery in his economic training and paternal inheritance are now projected onto his father in a literalization of Inkle's economic patrimony. It is Traffic, not Inkle, who compels the necessity of economic obligation over paternal care, as he, rather than Inkle, is now the one who spins Yarico's pregnancy as an opportunity to "fetch the greater price" (2.2.27). It is only when Traffic threatens Inkle with disinheritance that he relents: "So now mind what I say, Tom. Turn conscience out of doors and sell the woman; or, when we get to England, I'll turn you out of doors and give my money to somebody else" (2.2.88-90). Although comically conflicted, Inkle decides to sell Yarico, ultimately refusing to be "disinherited for the sake of an ignorant silly Indian" (2.2.97). As in Gessner's story, Inkle's absence of paternal care is his patrimony; his paternal inheritance is an overdetermining mercantilist will to petty profit-taking. Such a characterization, then, pushes against the tendency of

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<sup>58</sup> Hispaniola has replaced Barbados as the tale's slave market destination, although the drama never actually takes us there.

previous versions to render Inkle's unsentimental economism a clear exception to proper English masculinity and mercantilist ideology; instead, it emerges as a sign of what Jean Marsden, in "Performing the West Indies" (2008), identifies as the unsettling "specter of an Inkle-ized England," a growing discomfort in late eighteenth-century England of its "image as a mercantile, imperialist nation" (83, 76).

In the end, such an unchecked and unsettling transfer of economic dictates is foiled by a mutinous plot led by Williams, a radical sailor in Traffic's crew, who aims to free not only the recently seized Yarico and Yahamona but all of the Amerindian captives Traffic's party has, up until now, detained in their shipwrecked South American stopover. Entering with a radical group of transatlantic subalterns — Yarico's father, an Amerindian cazique; the recently released prisoners; and "a great rout of savages from different parts," Williams and his group, in turn, capture Traffic's slave trading party and free Yarico and Yahamono (67). Through a joint rebellion of Atlantic sailors and Amerindian natives, the ruling colonial economism is subdued and replaced by an indigenous paternalism in which Yarico and her father are reunified and his native authority restored, although these events transpire in the form of a semi-intelligible, primitivist "dumb show" (67). Williams announces the motivation of this indigenous restoration: "As I am a Briton, I like other folks to be as free as myself; and, love my eyes, if I can see what right we have to make slaves of these here people, tho' they be of a different colour from ourselves. I suppose God made

them” (2.2.140-3). Williams’s declaration echoes a previous soliloquy and song in which he anticipates his emancipatory rebellion and establishes himself as a political radical opposed to the group’s slave-trading mission:

Rend my mainmast, if I’ll have any thing to do in this enslaving, trepanning, piece of business. I remember when I was at school reading in the history book how the English have died by thousands for the sake of liberty, and how at what do you call um there? Runney mead they made King John give um freedom. What then did we only fight for our own freedom that we might rob others of theirs? (2.1.104-9)

Pivoting on a revolutionary recuperation of the Magna Carta, Williams’s anti-slavery rationale both universalizes and naturalizes liberty. As indicative in the song that follows, it also casts Britain as a paternalistic hegemon that risks losing its own privileged position to liberty in its colonial drive to keep liberty from “helpless nations”:

Would Britons still their freedom keep,  
Let justice ever be their guide;  
Let them not make poor Indians weep  
For loss of that which is their pride:  
Cast Britannia, Britannia cast away,  
Thy shame and nature’s voice obey!

For think not heav’n will bless the land  
That dares on others deal a curse.  
Can we by heav’n expect to stand  
When helpless nations fall by us?  
Cast Britannia, Britannia cast away,  
Thy shame and nature’s voice obey! (2.1.110-21)

In his radical revision of James Thomson's patriotic ode, "Rule, Britannia!" (1740), Williams replaces Britain's naturalized imperative to "rule the waves" with a naturalized plea for Britain to expel, to "cast away," its imperial endorsement of an economy of liberty. The current status of English liberty, in which freedom is measured by the unfreedom of others, is at best, for Williams, a tenuous one. While arguing for this naturalized, full sense of liberty, though, Williams invariably casts Britain as the patron of freedom, now endowed with the mission to return what it had previously taken away and currently withholds from its colonial territories.

Williams's paternalistic ode, "Cast Britannia," serves as the moral center and ethical imperative of the play. Faced with the threat of slavery, of perpetually cultivating "de maze" for Yarico and her Amerindian tribe, Inkle incorporates Williams's radical paternalistic moral, entreating his family to abandon their bourgeois desire to return to the commercial metropole and to embrace their new status as moral and literary exemplars (2.2.146): "Peace, good mother, let us bear with patience the calamities due to our crimes. And, should some accident discover the miserable catastrophe [*sic*] of this instructive tale, let the moralist publish it to the world with this observation: 'That they are unworthy to enjoy the blessings of Liberty, who would infamously dare to take it from others'" (2.2.176-81). It is when Inkle duly reenacts Williams's moral that his appeal to Yarico and her father for the commutation of his family's sentence is accepted. Yarico, then, exclaims that she has "at last prevail[ed]" with her father, convincing him to stay his verdict

of perpetual labor in exchange for their permanent exile in the Orinoco (2.2.182). She explains her father's reasoning: "Dat you not be any of you condemn to be de slave, but dat you live 'mong us; for if we let you go you, perhaps, do you wicked designs some oder time. Derefore, you not go back you country" (2.2.182-4). Unlike in Gessner's version, colonial labor is not the talisman for paternalistic reeducation; rather, exile and permanent alienation from the commercial metropole ensures that indigenous paternalistic rule can hold against the joint economic imperatives of colonial mercantilism and metropolitan market demand, if only in this particular instance. The incorporation of Williams's "Cast Britannia" as the maxim of the play sets up Inkle and his family as enduring scapegoats of Britain's imperial mercantilist order, a move that tenuously guarantees the sentimental purification of English liberty as long as their story is, as Inkle relates in his final address, "spread ... till astonish'd Europe hears, and blushing learns humanity from savages" (2.2.189-90). As long as Inkle and his immediate family are permanently and ritualistically cast outside of England, the radical dream of English liberty can be saved from the contamination of transatlantic slavery and native paternalism can be kept from the gnawing jaws of economism. Such a solution, therefore, depends on both the maintenance of this discrete, imaginary form of romantic, indigenous paternalism and the continual reification of Inkle and his family as aesthetic, sentimental commodities in the mythic economy of transatlantic cultural exchange. For now, the specter of an Inkle-ized England can be held off by the twin gesture of the radicalization of English liberty and the

aestheticization of Inkle and his manifold contradictions, although such moves only seem to reinforce the antinomic knot of paternalism and economism in the tale's reenactment. Colonial economism may be checked by a native paternalism within the logic of Thelwall's dramatic denouement, but the success of the arrangement depends upon the tale's circulation in the very economic circuits that it is trying to interrupt in the name of abolition and universalized freedom.

George Colman's comic opera, *Inkle and Yarico: An Opera, in Three Acts* (1787) likewise reproduces the servant problem's colonial contradictions, although it counters Inkle's economic drive not with nostalgic indigenous paternalism but with a paternalist colonial bureaucracy centered around Sir Christopher Curry — the Governor of Barbados and the father of Inkle's betrothed, Narcissa. The play opens with a prologue that points to the open question of Inkle's new status as a reformed transatlantic merchant, raising the issue as to whether or not his sentimental conversion will take: "In Inkle's heart was wrought a reformation. / But how shou'd he, all guilt, for pardon plead? / How prove his penitence sincere indeed? (13-15). The play essentially questions the efficacy of the incorporated paternalism of Gessner and Thelwall's versions, putting pressure on the ability of an abstracted and reincorporated paternalism to redeem the dominant economic drive of mercantile capitalism. It draws immediate attention to the precariousness of such a "reformation," pausing over the possibility of either Inkle's unfinished economic purgation or his incomplete paternalistic incorporation. While the prologue poses this question in a semi-serious register, the drama launches the

dilemma into full comedic play. Indeed, it presents a temporal and conceptual tangle that underscores the impossibility of an integrated paternalism in an increasingly rationalized economic world. The drama opens on a scene in which Inkle and his closest transatlantic companions — his Uncle, Medium, and his Cockney servant, Trudge — are wandering in an unnamed “American Forest” for what seems to be a planned, resupplying stopover on their way to Barbados (174). Medium immediately blames Inkle’s overzealous economic “interest” for unnecessarily prolonging the break in their journey from England and drifting too far from the anchored ship, connecting his straying to the contemporaneous settlement schemes of British convict servants in Australia:

This is to have to do with a schemer! A fellow who risks his life, for a chance of advancing his interest. — Always advantage in view! Trying, here, to make discoveries, that may promote his profit in England. Another Botany Bay scheme, mayhap. Nothing else could induce him to quit our foraging party, from the ship; when he knows every inhabitant here is not only as black as a pepper-corn, but as hot into the bargain — and *I*, like a fool, to follow him! And then to let him loiter behind. — Why, nephew! — Why, Inkle. — [*Calling.*] (1.1.20-7)

Instead of seeking out necessary provisions, Inkle, Medium speculates, is “trying, here, to make discoveries” for “profit.” As in previous versions, Medium also figures Inkle’s tendency to seek out economic “advantage” as part of his paternal inheritance, a point he reveals in his subsequent exclamation upon finding Inkle: “What a happy trader is your father, to have so prudent a son for a partner! Why, you are the carefullest Co. in the whole city. Never losing sight of the main chance; and that’s the reason, perhaps, you lost sight of us, here, on the main of America”

(1.1.60-4). Medium's characterization of Inkle's economic paternity, the first tangle of paternalism and economism in the play, comes prematurely, before we even hear from Inkle himself and, thus, marks Inkle's economic drive as both comically overdetermined and elaborately pre-staged. Moreover, the dramatic significance of Inkle's brief ramble is heightened by Medium and Trudge's hysterical anxiety concerning the cannibalistic "natives" in these "wilds of America" who will soon pursue them, while its importance proves absurdly incommensurate with Medium's comparison of Inkle's momentary wandering to Britain's current colonial designs in Australia — as the initial fleet, comprising over a thousand convict servants and marines, was in route to Botany Bay when Colman's drama was first performed (1.1.10,6; Felsenstein 175, n. 5).

Medium's untimely indictments of Inkle's profit motive are also coupled with Trudge's mournful reflections on his now irrecoverable "factotum" status in Inkle's London trading company, a rumination that reveals a second knot of paternalism and economism prior to Inkle's entrance in the drama. Responding to Medium's charge concerning the laboriousness of his servitude status, that "factotum to a young merchant is no sinecure," Trudge comically challenges his claim on the basis of the relative "honour" of his position (1.1.38):

But then the honour of it. Think of that, sir; to be clerk as well as *own man*. Only consider. You find very few city clerks made out of a man, now-a-days. To be king of the counting-house, as well as lord of the bed-chamber. Ah! if I had him but now in the little dressing-room behind the office; tying his hair, with a bit of red tape, as usual. (1.1.39-43)

Emphasizing the broad scope of his servitude, from “counting-house” to “bed-chamber,” Trudge also humorously reveals the contradictory character of his status, that he is both subordinate to Inkle and his “*own man*,” at once independent and, as he reveals in the following scene, Inkle’s “property” (1.2.72). Trudge hyperbolizes the extent to which his status denotes a confused sign of paternalistic and economic servitude, figuring his business obligations, namely assisting Inkle in bureaucratic “red tape,” according to the formal duties of an aristocratic valet de chambre. He is a business clerk with comic, feudal trappings — a “king of the counting-house” and “lord of the bed-chamber” who habitually ties his master’s hair with “red tape.” Trudge appears as a comic 18<sup>th</sup>-century prototype of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century servant problem, that confluence of contract and affect, money and love, which characterizes domestic servitude in England.<sup>59</sup> Despite the undifferentiated and comprehensive character of Trudge’s labor, a point implied by his factotum status, Inkle does not exercise complete control over Trudge’s life. He is not a paternalistic master, staking a claim over his “*whole life*” and supporting a system of integrated social and economic relations (Thompson 382, 384); rather, he is representative of an emergent social order that unfolds over the course of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century in which labor itself — although always in an asymmetrical relation to the sign of power — shifts from an “unfree” status (laborer-as-servant) to a “free” status (laborer-as-employee, or wage earner), from a position E.P. Thompson

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<sup>59</sup> In addition to Straub (1-18), see also Bruce Robbins, *The Servant’s Hand* (1993) and E.S. Turner, *What the Butler Saw: Two Hundred and Fifty Years of the Servant Problem* (1963).

terms “subordination” to one of “negotiation” (“Patrician Society” 384). While this transition is in no way complete, Trudge’s account sanctions a mediatory understanding of the master/servant relation in which a servant, while not yet considered a completely “free” laborer, can be thought independently of his master, and, to some extent, vice versa. In this way, Colman’s play presents servitude itself as a condition that provokes, and here comically negotiates, the separation of economic and paternalistic ideologies, a bond labor status that Trudge reveals is unraveling from, but not wholly separated from, the older, integrated conceptions of society.

Paired with Trudge’s account of servitude, Medium’s initial, overdetermined economic characterization of Inkle’s status is, more properly, a sign of the antinomy of paternalism and economism itself. It is a contradictory position Medium soon draws out, as he seeks to both elicit Inkle’s self-conception as a petty *homo economicus* and remind him of the largely paternalistic purpose of their current voyage. Inkle confirms Medium’s economic characterization, likening himself to a “man of business” who travels abroad not “merely for motion” and not “like a lord” who “scamper[s] extravagantly here and there and every where, then return[s] home and ha[s] nothing to tell, but that he has *been* here and there and every where” (1.1.71, 70, 72-5; emphasis in original). Instead, he explains that travel, for a trader such as himself, should always be subordinated to “advantage,” “profit,” and “gain,” describing his woodland wandering as an expedition for land

surveying and slave speculation and continuing his mockery of the aristocratic, grand tour ideology of travel:

Travelling, uncle, was always intended for improvement; and improvement is an advantage; and advantage is profit, and profit is gain. Which in the travelling translation of a trader, means, that you should gain every advantage of improving your profit. I have been comparing the land, here, with that of our own country ... and calculating how much it might be made to produce by the acre ... I was proceeding algebraically upon the subject ... And just about extracting the square root ... I was thinking, too, if so many natives could be caught, how much they might fetch at the West Indian markets. (1.1.76-80, 83, 85, 87, 89-90)

Inkle's state of exaggerated economic reflection is soon interrupted by Medium's probing reminder that trade is supposed to be a secondary objective in their journey, its principal aim being to escort Narcissa back to Barbados where her father, Governor Curry, has conceded to her marriage with Inkle: "Ar'n't we bound for Barbadoes; partly to trade, but chiefly to carry home the daughter of the governor, Sir Christopher Curry, who has till now been under your father's care, in Threadneedle-street for polite English education? ... And isn't it determined, between the old folks, that you are to marry Narcissa, as soon as we get there?" (1.1.94-7, 99-100). Inkle's eye for profit, Medium implies, has led to his momentary blindness to the paternalistic orchestration and objective of their voyage; at the same time, Medium's prompt reveals and imitates the comic extent to which this paternalistic endeavor is tangled with colonial economism. In his intervention, Medium discloses that Narcissa has been under the paternal care of Inkle's father, a London merchant, who has given her a "polite English education"

in “Threadneedle-street,” the heart of the contemporary financial district and site of the Bank of England and the Stock Exchange. Narcissa’s instruction in “polite” learning has comprised a financial edification in the metropole, an economic characterization followed up by Inkle’s more traditional and predictable explanation of their arranged marriage as a business deal — “a table of interest from beginning to end” — and his exclamation, upon his ship’s departure and his characteristic desertion on the American coast, that his “property,” which ostensibly includes Narcissa as well as his belongings, has be “carried off in the vessel” (1.1.108-9, 1.2.72). Economic interest intrudes at every turn, whether in the “wilds of America” or in metropolitan society. Despite Medium’s charge that Inkle’s “arithmetic” is to blame for the assault of the “native” cannibals and their subsequent maroonage on the American coast, the chief temporal cause of their attack and abandonment rests upon Medium himself. His orchestration of the bantering play of paternalism and economism arguably delays their return to the ship and works as the catalyst for the anticipated colonial encounter between the now familiar couple, Inkle and Yarico.

Inkle’s comic enactment of colonial reckoning continues as he and Trudge flee from the pursuant cannibals and duck into Yarico and Wowski’s cave for safety. Observing Yarico’s now characteristic cave decorations, the “skins of wild beasts, feathers, etc,” Inkle immediately incorporates them into the logic of transatlantic commodity circuits, as observation, in this context, is equivalent to an appraisal for metropolitan economic value: “Ha! no bad specimen of savage

elegance. These ornaments would be worth something in England. — We have little to fear here, I hope: this cave rather bears the pleasing face of a profitable adventure” (1.3.1-4). Similar to his previous evaluation of New World land and natives, Inkle’s estimation of New World objects and ornaments is an operation that equates looking with instantaneous commoditization, a mode that will reach its limit in his chance, but now well expected, meeting with Yarico. Unlike his previous encounters with land, indiscriminate natives, and fetish objects, Inkle’s first glimpse of the Amerindian Yarico is not solely an incorporation of difference but a recognition and negotiation of identity as well as difference. She is both physical and metaphysical, civilized and primitive — at once “a woman” (“true flesh and blood”) and “beautiful as an angel” (1.3.22, 48, 26). A “charming heathen” that speaks “our language,” Yarico is a fetish that haltingly enchants Inkle’s economic drive (1.3.48, 44): “How wild and beautiful! sure there is magic in her shape, and she has rivetted [*vic*] me to the place. But where shall I look for safety? Let me fly and avoid my death” (1.3.60-3). Yarico at once intervenes to “preserve” and “conceal” Inkle and Trudge from her cannibalistic “countrymen,” establishing an immediate, and now familiar, debt relation (1.3.63, 67). She introduces herself as the sole creditor and protector — “’tis I alone can save you; your death is certain, without my assistance,” while Inkle guarantees the bond in exclaiming Yarico’s generosity and offering his own indebted pledge: “Generous maid! Then, to you will I owe my life; and whilst it lasts, nothing shall part us” (1.3.64-5, 71-2). For Yarico’s protection, Inkle offers the accustomed benefit of

romantic reciprocity and a “return” to England; at the same time, he registers the potential instability and asymmetry of their spontaneous bargain, foreshadowing Yarico’s enslavement in his interrogation of the potential “risk” she wagers in their partnership: “I follow you—Yet, can you run some risk in following me?” (1.3.87).

The economic subtleties of Inkle and Yarico’s romantic arrangement, obvious in the language of debt and risk but overshadowed by the sentimentalized performance of their impulsive romance,<sup>60</sup> are drawn out by the obvious economic characterization of their servants’ parallel romance. During Inkle and Yarico’s initial exchanges, Trudge “takes Wowski apart,” declaring that “it’s time ... to begin making interest with the chamber maid” (1.3.58-9). Taking Inkle’s sentimental cue, Trudge overshoots the mark in his characterization of Wowski — Yarico’s comically lascivious, Africanized servant whom Trudge describes as “an angel of rather a darker sort” (1.3.28). He brings attention back to the entanglement of the servant problem’s contradictions in his exaggerated display of colonial commoditization and paternalistic edification. Like Inkle, he vows to make Wowski “part of our traveling equipage” but, while Inkle designs to Anglicize Yarico, “deck[ing] her in silks” and giving her “a house drawn with horses” for transportation once in England, Trudge intends to set Wowski up as a servant-mistress in a scene of comic colonial inversion (1.3.158-9, 78-9): “I’ll give

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<sup>60</sup> After confirming their romantic deal, Inkle and Yarico, for instance, break out into a duet of “O Say, Bonny Lass,” a new Scottish song which ends with a joint expression of their exceptional constancy in a volatile transoceanic world: “*O say then my true love, we never will sunder, / Nor shrink from the tempest, nor dread the big thunder: / Whilst constant, we’ll laugh at all changes of weather, / And journey all over the world both together*” (1.3.100-3).

you a couple of snug rooms, on a first floor, and visit you every evening, as soon as I come from the counting-house ... I'll get [you] a *white* boy to bring up the tea-kettle. Then I'll teach you to write and dress hair" (1.3.159-61, 163-5, emphasis in original). Although reversing the fashionable spectacle of tea service in England in which young black boys were the servants of choice for wealthy Europeans, Trudge nonetheless figures Wowski as a colonial commodity in his jab at the racism and colonial fantasy informing this metropolitan trend.<sup>61</sup> Upon the group's eventual arrival in Barbados, he continues to play out a comedy of misguided paternalism in his attempt to initiate Wowski into the world of "polite society":

*Trudge:* Let's see now — What are you to do, when I introduce you to the nobility, gentry, and others — of my acquaintance?

*Wowski:* Make believe sit down; then get up.

*Trudge:* Let me see you do it. [*She makes a low courtesy (sic).*] Very well! and how are you to recommend yourself, when you have nothing to say, amongst all our great friends?

*Wowski:* Grin — show my teeth.

*Trudge:* Right! they'll think you've lived with people of fashion. But suppose you meet an old shabby friend in misfortune, that you don't wish to be seen speak to — what would you do?

*Wowski:* Look blind — not see him.

*Trudge:* Why would you do that?

*Wowski:* 'Cause I can't see good friend in distress. (2.1.206-18)

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<sup>61</sup> Felsenstein discusses the 18<sup>th</sup>-century vogue for black servants, referring to both William Hogarth's illustrations in *A Harlot's Progress* (1732) and David Dabydeen's work on Africans in 18<sup>th</sup>-century art in *Hogarth's Blacks* (1987) (Felsenstein 190, note 34; Hogarth, *A Harlot's Progress*, plate 2; Dabydeen 114).

Such training is more specifically a comic initiation into the disingenuous scene of English social custom. At the same time, Trudge and Wowski's rehearsal constitutes a dig at both Trudge's supposed familiarity with the elite classes and his presumption of Barbadian society as a "little England," as if what Wowski was about to encounter was a hierarchized social world of "nobility, gentry, and others" analogous to England.

Barbadian society in Colman's play is, more properly, a confederacy of plantation slave masters, a point introduced at the opening of the second act by a group of conversant planters who are discussing a recently arrived ship, later revealed to be the vessel that has brought Inkle, Yarico, Trudge, and Wowski to the island:

*1<sup>st</sup> Planter:* I saw her this morning, gentlemen, you may depend on't ...

*2<sup>nd</sup> Planter:* Ods, my life! rare news! We have not had a vessel arrive in our harbour these six weeks.

*3<sup>rd</sup> Planter:* And the last brought only Madam Narcissa, our Governor's daughter, from England; with a parcel of lazy, idle, white folks about her. Such cargoes will never do for our trade, neighbour.

*2<sup>nd</sup> Planter:* No, no; we want slaves. A terrible dearth of 'em in Barbadoes, lately! But your dingy passengers for my money. Give me a vessel like a collier, where all the lading tumbles out as black as my hat ...  
(2.1.1, 5-12)

The diversified labor of Ligon's Barbados no longer obtains, as these planters indicate an exaggerated preference for African slaves over European servants. An

ideology of colonial labor demand that sets slaves against servants, it is also one that renders European servants a useless underclass (“a parcel of lazy, idle, white folks”), while also marking their notable presence in the island and their continued migration. This portrait of servant inutility is immediately juxtaposed with and contradicted by the entrance of Patty, Narcissa’s garrulous domestic servant, who serves as a classic servant-accessory in the comic opera, mediating the various love plots and at once complicating and facilitating the action of the drama.<sup>62</sup> Patty’s meddling interference, for instance, is the means through which Narcissa’s secret love for Captain Campley, a fellow passenger on their transatlantic journey, is revealed and her impending marriage to Inkle undermined; Patty presses Narcissa to acknowledge her feelings for Campley: “But if our voyage from England was so pleasant, it wasn’t owing to Mr. Inkle, I’m certain. He didn’t play the fiddle in our cabin, and dance on the deck, and come languishing with a glass of warm water in his hand, when we were sea-sick ... that water warm’d your heart, I’m confident” (2.1.51-5). Following Patty’s exit and her performance of an ironic song on the value of servants’ silence, a tenet to which she of course never adheres,<sup>63</sup> Narcissa confesses her affection for Campley and outlines her present conundrum, distinguishing Campley’s affective “interest” of the “heart” from Inkle’s “mere”

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<sup>62</sup> See Bruce Robbins, *The Servant’s Hand*, especially the preface and the introduction, for a discussion of the various mediating roles played by literary servants.

<sup>63</sup> The first verse gives an adequate sample of her comic inconsistency: “This maxim let ev’ry one hear,/ Proclaim’d from the north to the south,/ Whatever comes in at your ear,/ Should never run out at your mouth. / We servants, like servants of state,/ Should listen to all, and be dumb;/ Let others harangue and debate,/ We look wise — shake our heads — and are mum” (2.1.63-70).

economic “interest”: “How awkward is my present situation! Promised to one, who, perhaps, may never again be heard of; and who, I am sure, if he ever appears to claim me, will do it merely on the score of interest—pressed too by another, who has already, I fear, too much interest in my heart” (2.1.79-82). While Patty soon informs Narcissa that Inkle is, in fact, alive and has just arrived on the island, Campley enters to confirm her reading of the “present situation”: “the case stands exactly thus—your intended spouse is all for money; I am all for love. He is a rich rogue; I am rather a poor honest fellow” (2.1.90-2). In effect, Patty picks up where Medium and Trudge leave off, facilitating the repetition of the servant problem’s contradictions, articulated as the tension between companionate and economic marriage, and mediating the terms of Inkle and Yarico’s re-entry.

Like many of the previous versions, Inkle’s recently disembarked crew is immediately confronted by an aggressive contingent of Barbadian planters at the island docks. While Trudge adamantly refuses to sell Wowski, his “poor, dear, dingy wife,” to the planters, Inkle equivocates when approached about Yarico’s sale, playing out the familiar conflict between his “love for her” and his “love of trade” (2.1.257-8, 2.1.286, 288). The planter in discussion with Inkle attempts to resolve his struggle in pointing out the commonality of his dilemma (“we have a hundred such cases just after a voyage”) and arguing that her Barbadian enslavement would constitute a paternalistic gesture: “taking her from a wild, savage people, and providing for her, here, with reputable hard work, in a genteel, polished, tender Christian country” (2.1.291, 313-16). Inkle stays the planter’s

rehearsed, ironic paternalism with a pledge to meet him later in the day with a final decision, but, upon his exit, he augments his confusion by meditating on the demands of his “interest, honour, engagements to Narcissa” and his “father’s precepts” of “prudence,” both economically driven dictates interlarded with paternalistic promises and obligations (2.1.337-8, 341). Still, Inkle declares that he “cannot quit” his “poor Yarico,” if not for love, for her sentimentalized noble savagery — her “mere simplicity” and “innocence” that “disarms” him and renders him, as he explains, “blind to my interest” (3.2.3-5, 27). Describing the previous constancy of his commitment to economic advantage, he recounts how he would ridicule the London “younkers” who wasted their time and money in romantic affairs, marveling at “how men could trifle time on women; or, indeed, think of any women without fortunes” (3.2.59, 62-3). Exasperated, Inkle declares the “monstrous folly” of himself, of all people, turning “romantic puppy” and giving up Narcissa’s dowry of “thirty thousand pounds” (3.2.64-5). Ultimately, these romantic paroxysms and sentimental confessions are not enough to offset Inkle’s fundamental commitment to “common prudence,” as he at last reasons that economic pragmatism demands that he sell Yarico and marry Narcissa (3.2.116).

Unlike in the heroic epistles, the finality of Inkle’s economic choice is not entirely in his control. While Inkle has been playing out his characteristic struggle between romantic obligation and colonial profiteering, the principal servant-mediators in the play, namely Patty and Trudge, along with the help of various happy accidents, have been working to undermine the overdetermined status of

Inkle's colonial economism. For instance, as the Governor mistakes Campley for Inkle and inadvertently pledges to marry Narcissa off to him the following day, Patty is enlisted to keep the newly arrived Inkle at bay so the marriage trick can come to fruition. Patty visits Inkle and Trudge at their lodgings to delay their visit to the Governor's palace by a day, insisting that "the place isn't in order" and that "the servants have not had proper notice of the arrival" (3.1.34-5). Claiming the postponement as an issue of servant preparation, she draws attention to domestic servants' mediating role both in disrupting the typical path of Inkle's economic logic and reinforcing the cultural dictates of paternalism, a point confirmed when Trudge discloses to Patty the story of Inkle and Yarico's encounter and their arrival in Barbados. Although Trudge entreats Patty to keep "mum" about these revelations, their class-consciousness and comedic self-possession as servant performers suggests that Trudge's plea for secrecy is more an acknowledged wink and nudge of her assured revelation to Narcissa, which she at once promises in an aside, than an actual appeal to keep the story of Inkle and Yarico under wraps (3.1.108). At this point, the story itself, its circulation dependent upon servant interaction and negotiation, becomes a paternalistic counterweight to the inevitability of Yarico's enslavement and the overdetermination of Inkle's economic will.

This tangle of emplotted accidents, servant machinations, and narrative transmissions constitutes the dramatic buildup to the tragic event of the tale — Yarico's Barbadian enslavement. As Inkle has decided to proceed with her sale, he

goes down to the docks before the appointed hour and, as prefigured by his untimeliness, mistakes a lingering Sir Christopher for a planter in the market for slaves. Their encounter will not only instigate the unfolding of Inkle's identity, so far kept from the Governor, but will also mark the purification of Inkle's economism from a confused, muddled paternalism. While driven by economic imperative, Inkle's initiation of Yarico's sale with Sir Christopher and their subsequent discourse on slavery represents a paternalistic exchange; more specifically, it registers the attempt to subsume the economic logic of slavery to sentimental paternalism. Inkle opens the dialogue by disclosing his desire to sell Yarico, but tempers his intention with familiar qualifications: "I have a female, whom I wish to part with ... If you could satisfy me you would use her mildly, and treat her with more kindness than is usual—for I can tell you she's of no common stamp—perhaps we might agree" (3.3.11, 13-15). Accepting Inkle's deployment of the trope of exceptional slavery, musing that his "daughter may want an attendant or two extraordinary," Sir Christopher meets Inkle's paternalistic offer with a sentimental indictment of slavery: "I shall treat her a good deal better than you would, I fancy; for though I witness this custom every day, I can't help thinking the only excuse for buying our fellow creatures is to rescue them from the hands of those who are unfeeling enough to bring them to market" (3.3.16-17, 21-5). A witness to the regular slave trade on the island, Sir Christopher positions himself as a paternalistic intercessor, a position that Inkle sanctions in his attempt to convince Yarico that her enslavement, as in Weddell's play, is conditioned by paternalistic

injunctions: “My interest, here, is nothing ... I must give way to men more powerful, who will not have me with you. But see, my Yarico, ever anxious for your welfare, I’ve found a kind, good person who will protect you” (3.3.124, 126-28). As Yarico pleads for his protection over the Governor’s (“Ah! Why not you protect me!”), reminding him of his debt to her and resurrecting the romantic specter of their American idyll, Sir Christopher intensifies his condemnation of Inkle’s “ingratitude” (3.3.129, 137). To this, Inkle draws attention to the economic impulse that underpins the paternalistic ideology of slavery: “We Christians, girl, hunt money; a thing unknown to you—But here, ‘tis money which brings us ease, plenty, command, power, every thing; and, of course, happiness. You are the bar to my attaining this ... if you are seen with me I shall lose all” (3.3.148-51, 154). While Inkle reveals the asymmetry of economism and paternalism, he simultaneously underscores the comic weakness of his own economic position, as the dramatic irony of the scene dictates that Inkle has, of course, already “los[t] all,” as Narcissa is already betrothed to Campley and her former promise of economic advantage collapsed into an ideology of companionate love.

What has proven to be the inexorable security of Inkle’s economic gain from Yarico’s enslavement in many of the previous versions of the myth is in Colman’s play transformed into the certainty of economic loss. Instead of Inkle’s profit depending solely upon finding quick access to a Caribbean slave market, his economic benefit here depends upon a series of comic turns already out of his control, a realization that comes to him when Sir Christopher finally discloses his

identity as the Governor and Medium enters the scene to unmask Inkle. As the various loose ends of the drama are quickly collected and resolved, Sir Christopher amplifies his paternalistic condemnation of Inkle's "avarice" and lack of "humanity" in his attempted economic tradeoff (3.3.233). Setting his exaggerated sentimental paternalism against Inkle's now defenseless economism, Sir Christopher highlights the fulfillment of paternalism's abstraction, a point also signified in Inkle's final defense of his economic "conduct" as his paternal inheritance. Characterizing economic advantage as "the grand prop round which" his father "twined my pliant green affections," a tenet that he also at once disowns, Inkle reveals that paternalism is, at some level, now detachable from the grounding support of economism (3.3.266-7). Inkle's will to interest and profit has become, as in Thelwall's version, his comically sacrificed patrimony. As he repudiates "entirely" his father's "ill-founded precept" and embraces "the feelings of sensibility," essentially unraveling his "pliant ... affections" from the non-integral "prop" of economism, he sentimentally grasps Yarico to his "penetrated ... heart" that now "bleeds" for her and imagines a world of naturalized sentimentality entirely shorn of economic "habit" and determination (3.3.282, 284-5). Taking the final credit for "reforming an Inkle" and "reward[ing] the innocence of a Yarico," Sir Christopher, though, points to the continued instability of Inkle's reformation, which above all depends on his ability to distinguish his newly incorporated sensibility from his economic patrimony (3.3.311-12). In his characterization, Sir Christopher figures Inkle and Yarico as universal cultural abstractions ("an Inkle"

and “a Yarico”), and he contradicts his own sentimental upbraiding of slavery by entreating Trudge to transfer from Inkle’s service to his own — to, in effect, become his colonial servant. Sir Christopher offers freedom to Yarico with one hand and secures Trudge’s unfreedom with the other. While tempering the overdetermination of mercantile economism and shifting the control of bond labor to the system of colonial bureaucracy, the play also actively universalizes both the economic drive of mercantilist slavers and the exploitation of African slaves. Moreover, the drama confirms colonial servitude as an ineffable remainder in the economy of the myth; like previous versions, it at once avows and disavows the link between colonial European servitude and African slavery. The play’s failure to resolve the servant problem’s contradictions is reiterated in Inkle’s final self-portrait at the drama’s finale, a collective song and dance to “La Belle Catharine”: “Love’s convert here behold, / Banish’d now my thirst of gold” (3.3.259-60). Instead of answering the open question of Inkle’s repentance and dismantling the “prop” of economism, Colman’s drama comically replays the fundamental terms of the problem, closing with a reiteration of the fundamental antinomy of the myth that sets Inkle’s “love” against his “thirst of gold.” With the opposition intact, the play demonstrates that the primary shift of the contradiction is the clear emergence of paternalism as a culturally sanctioned, abstract imperative. The purported origin story of the comic opera’s happy ending further reinforces the extent to which an abstracted paternalism has become an English cultural dictate. The play’s lead actor set to play Inkle, Jack Bannister, disturbed by having to play such

a cruel, unsympathetic character, supposedly improvised Inkle's repentance in various rehearsals and discussed his anxiety about the part with Colman. What has been described as the comic actor's paternalistic sensibility, his discomfort with playing a part that was, as Felsenstein explains, "destined to climax with an exhibition of callous indifference in the act of selling Yarico into slavery," ultimately provoked Colman to permanently alter the traditional, tragic ending of the play that valorized both Yarico's enslavement and Inkle's mercantile economism (24). A paternalism that arguably has been alienated and eroded by the influence of the colonial mercantilist demands has now returned as a cultural abstraction to check the symbolic display of such a vigorous, determining economism.

#### **IV. Slave Pastoralism, Chapman's *Barbadoes*, and Paternalism as Class Divide: Re-collectivizing Servant and Slave Imaginaries**

The fullest evidence for paternalism's cultural hegemony is not its role in consolidating anti-slavery sentiment but its mobilization against the abolition of New World slavery — the ideological frame of Matthew James Chapman's 1833 epic poem, *Barbadoes*. Through a poetics of slave pastoralism, Chapman's poem not only continues to develop paternalism as a cultural dictate, but also poses it as an historical reality of the island. In extending the project of paternalism to the historical imaginary of Barbados, his poem clarifies its role in the emergence of racialized class formations and, by extension, its part in the ideological division of

the exploited laboring populations of colonial Barbados. His epic points the political necessity of a project to re-collectivize these disparate groups of bonded laborers in the *Inkle and Yarico* myth, bringing together the historical and literary imaginaries of colonial servants and slaves. A Barbadian Creole largely raised in England, Chapman, in his preface to *Barbadoes*, depicts his long poem as an effort, on the one hand, to relate a poetic history of Barbados that clings “to the literal truth,” and, on the other, to “do justice to his country” by situating this history in opposition to the impending emancipation of Britain’s colonial slaves (vii). He explains his antagonistic stance as a “protest,” rather than a real barrier, against the certainty of imminent emancipation: “to stop the current of frantic innovation, that threatens with almost instant ruin both colonies and empire, is (by human means) perhaps impracticable; but to protest against it, is not unbecoming the patriot or the poet” (vii-viii). A slave pastoral, Chapman’s long poem situates the story of Yarico as a founding myth representative of the violent, economic origins of slavery on the island. Although locating Yarico’s indigenous home as “the Colombian shore” and eliding her relationship with Ligon’s Christian servant, Chapman’s version is a direct citation of Ligon’s depiction of the tale, reframed as both a disrupted pastoral scene and an integral chapter of Barbados’s “ancient” history (1.511, 529).

Described as both “a bright-limbed Hebe of the ancient wood” and “a brighter Venus of a darker hue,” Yarico is presented as a classically-inflected Amerindian heroine who characteristically rescues an unnamed “white man” and

becomes his “bride” (1.529, 533, 541, 552). Believing this “man was gentle, kind, and good,” she innocently leaves “her kindred” to accompany him “to this fair island,” Barbados, where she discovers his disloyal character — that his “honour was an empty sound” and his “plighted faith a scornful lie” (1.560, 563, 575-7). As in Ligon’s version, Yarico’s enslavement is cast as a contravention of hospitality codes in which her “fond devotion” and care is “repaid” by the unnamed trader’s “deceit ... broken vows, and chains” (1.581). The trader’s duplicity is also a circumvention of paternalistic obligation, as Yarico reveals in an exclamation to her infant son: “Thy faithless father brought me o’er the wave,/ And sold his fond preserver as a slave” (1.503-4). In a direct quotation of Ligon’s *History*, Yarico’s unfreedom is figured as a consequence of her “love,” as it was “for her love she lost her liberty” (1.584). Chapman, unlike Ligon, situates the story of Yarico as a springboard from which to lambaste “accursed slavery” and causally link it to a “dire thirst of gold” (1.585). From the particular story of Yarico, Chapman’s speaker generalizes slavery as an economically determined system that undermines paternalistic sympathy and “tender” feeling — it is not slavery as such but the “curst avarice” compelling slavery that “mocks distress” and “makes the tender heart obdure and cold” (1.586, 593). Slavery’s “origin” is not just economically determined, but also marked by violent scenes of displacement; it is, at its beginning, a system “at whose fierce bidding comes the armed band,/ And tears the peasant from his native land” (1.589-90).

If the slavery of Yarico's mythico-historical past is fundamentally a violent condition driven by economic gain and set against classic sentimental principles, then such a system, according to Chapman, no longer obtains in Barbados. "Now," his speaker exclaims, "brute force and cruelty are gone"; "slavery's blotch," along with "the brand, the torture, and the chain," "are seen and heard no more" (1.665, 667, 672, 669). Slavery, implies Chapman, has been purified by the adoption of an island-wide paternalism and, as a result, the island teems with surprising scenes of slave pastoralism:

From their embowered huts come forth in throngs  
The sable race, and wake their joyful songs:  
They come to labour, but they come with joy,  
While themes of happiness their minds employ ...  
Taught how to live, instructed how to die,  
They count their blessings, while the seasons fly. (1.175-8, 187-8)

Under the directive of paternalism, in which slaves are principally "guide[d]" by "the planter's ruling care," the plantation not only has become a place of joyful labor and grateful slaves, but also has been transformed into a pastoral garden in which cultivated and wild nature lie in balance: "All to their different tasks with speed repair,/ Where guides their steps the planter's ruling care./ Each trim plantation like a garden shines—/ Here waves the cane, there creep the nurturing vines" (1.189-92). Even plantation gang labor has yielded to the happy rule of paternalism:

Lo! Where the gang assembled wields the hoe,  
And each begins his own appointed row;

Song and the jocund laugh are heard around—  
Quirk upon quirk, and ready jokes abound.  
The task allotted they with ease can do;  
No shapes of dread affright their steps pursue:  
They fear no lash, nor, worse! The dungeon's gloom,  
Nor nurse the sorrows of a hopeless doom.  
The gay troop laughs and revels in the sun,  
With mirth unwearied—till their work is done. (1.253-62)

Under the ridiculous cadence imposed by Chapman's doggerel rhymes, "th'insulting crew" of Winstanley's epistle that Yarico involuntarily joins has become "the gay troop" of Chapman's poetic imaginary (161). The demands of labor are individuated, "each begins his own appointed row," and the "task allotted" never exceeds the capability of the labor force that "laughs and revels in the sun/ ... till their work is done." In a paternalistic vision of the sugar harvest and processing season, characteristically the most toilsome period of plantation labor in which slaves worked continuously due to the susceptibility of the cane to "rot, desiccation, inversion or fermentation" upon harvesting, Chapman's speaker not only aestheticizes plantation slave labor as in the previous pastoral visions but also renders it ecstatically transcendent: "The different seasons different cares demand,/ To reap the crop, or till the willing land;/ But happiest is the negro when the canes/ yield their rich juice, and bless the planter's pains" (Mintz 21, 47-50; Chapman 2.209-12). The "planter's pains," sanctified in cane juice, are the conditions of possibility for the fullness of both paternalistic slave pleasure and of paternalistic slavery as such. Chapman's speaker earlier explains the "happy" freedom Barbados's grateful slaves find in their master's absolute care:

Ah, happy is his lot, from ill secure!  
He oft is wealthy, while his lord is poor:  
Law and opinion guard his home from want;  
Nor horrid debts his tranquil pallet haunt.  
Him, well-disposed, no voice of anger chides;  
For every need his master's care provides. (1.945-50)

Paternalistic slavery, in a sentimental sleight of hand, has rendered the slave “wealthy” and the “lord ... poor”; fully subsumed under the sign of his “master’s care,” the Barbadian pastoral slave has escaped not only the mercantilist system of “horrid debts” that faces the West Indian planter but, by extension, the debt relation of slavery itself, a bond Patterson insists is a universal condition of slavery. In this way, Chapman’s *Barbadoes* resolves Ligon’s antinomy of paternalism and economism by proposing paternalism as a poetic antidote to the original disruption of economism, the consequence of which is the poetic evocation of paternalism as a ruling cultural ideology.

Chapman’s ideology of compensatory paternalism, though, is not a totalizing one, as it renders colonial servants remainders external to the current pastoral order of Barbados. Following Ligon’s *History*, Chapman juxtaposes the sentimental tragedy of Yarico’s enslavement with the anti-sentimental depiction of indentured servants on the island:

Who are those wretches of the lead-like hue,  
That seem some plague-ship’s horror-haunted crew —  
Those nerveless children, wo-begone, and pale,  
Whose limbs seem wire-hung, and whose sinews fail?  
Our England claims those wretches for her own —  
Her boast is waste of life in towns o’ergrown;

The happier negro claims her fostering care,  
While her own children vent their loud despair;  
And misery haunts the cities of the plain,  
And saints and sinners urge the toil of gain. (1.607-16)

In his portrait of diseased, undernourished, and overworked English laborers, Chapman reinforces both Bacon's conception of colonial servants as double commodities and Ligon's trope of servant mistreatment. "Wretches" that "England claims ... for her own" but renders a "waste of life in towns o'ergrown," these servants are depicted as useless, domestic surplus laborers "vented" to a colonial scene where, unlike slaves, they find only "despair." These servants have fulfilled the designs of the early colonial promoters, namely Bacon's "avoidance of people" in England coupled with the "making use of them" in the colonies, but in the process, their condition has become emblematic of mistreatment and neglect. Employing Ligon's trope of servant mistreatment, Chapman's speaker calibrates servant abuse by claiming, like Ligon, that servants have "worsen lives" than slaves: "The happier negro claims her [England's] fostering care,/ While her own children vent their loud despair." In contrast Barbadian slaves, the abject state of European servants in Barbados is depicted as a withdrawal of paternalistic "care."

Part of Chapman's explanation for this asymmetry of treatment between colonial servants and slaves rests in his general contention that European servants, along with Amerindians, constituted the island's joint, originary bond labor force. It is a portrait that diverges from both Ligon's non-prioritizing account of colonial labor on the early sugar plantations and the historical record, which demonstrates

that, while indentured servants comprised the majority of the early Barbadian workforce, both Amerindians and Africans were present as bond laborers from the beginning of the island's history (Beckles, *A History*, 18-22). Chapman's speaker nonetheless depicts the following scene of Amerindian and European bond labor:

The English serf, allured by hope of gain,  
Here toiled and found his golden hopes were vain;  
Then, dying, homeward turned his failing eye,  
And murmured "England!" with his latest sigh.  
Unused to slavery, and unapt for toil,  
The Indian savage tilled the virgin soil;  
But in his fetters still for freedom sighed,  
And lived unwilling, and rejoicing died.  
Long since the Indian slave and English serf  
Slept their last sleep beneath the verdant turf;  
Then Libya's sons supplied their vacant place,  
Bound by the curse entailed upon their race. (1.633-44)

Rewriting the early history of bond labor on the island and naturalizing African slavery as a racialized "curse," Chapman also depicts both "English serf" and "Indian savage" as unfit for tropical colonial labor, a "cliché" that Williams claims is a cover for a diminished labor supply (*From Columbus* 109);<sup>64</sup> while trafficking in sentimentalized justifications for the decline of these colonial labor demographics, Chapman does restore, through their proximal representation, a "lost" historical intimacy between servants and slaves on the island. Similar to Ligon's

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<sup>64</sup> Williams is specifically referring to 18<sup>th</sup>-century indentured servants, but the same point can be and was extended to Amerindian labor across the New World in the first stages of European colonization, as evident in Chapman's characterization. While Chapman here specifically refers to Amerindians as "unapt for toil," the European laborers' "vain" drudgery and unrealized "hope of gain" can similarly be interpreted as a naturalized depiction of their ineptitude for colonial labor in the tropics.

juxtaposition of Yarico and Honor, Chapman's depiction also reveals paternalistic asymmetries between these two groups, as Amerindians, especially via the Yarico myth, are figured as recuperable within the order of sentimental paternalism and colonial servants, both of the historical past and of the poetic present, are not. Revealing this asymmetry, Chapman clarifies his citation of Ligon's trope of servant mistreatment in his note on the passage:

"Christian servants," as Ligon calls them, were in the first instance employed as well as Indians, in the tillage of the soil. They were sometimes sent across the seas for misdemeanours; sometimes they went voluntarily, in the expectation of high wages; and sometimes they were kidnapped. Their condition was much worse than that of the slaves, as it was the interest of the planters to take especial care of the latter, and they lost but little by the death of the others. The descendants of these whites had, after the general introduction of Africans into the island, certain allotments of ground assigned to them, on condition of their performing military service, whenever called upon. Their posterity, a race held in contempt by the negroes, and deeming themselves inferior to no sons of Adam, go by the name of 'the yellow-legged buckras,' from their contempt for hose and shoe-leather. They are idle and insolent, to a proverb. A negro could scarcely be found who would exchange lot or complexion with the best of them. They raise a few roots, and fish a little, and beg not a little. They think it foul scorn to burn pure oil; but have no shame in begging for filthy tallow. They are as distinct from the other inhabitants as the sons of Ishmael from all the world beside. (96-7)

Rehearsing the argument for servant mistreatment dominant among Ligon and his contemporaries, Chapman, nearly two hundred years later, not only claims that Barbadian servants of the past failed to garner paternalistic protections allegedly granted to slaves but also demonstrates that such anti-paternalist sentiment has rippled down to their "descendants" and "posterity." Leaving aside for a moment the ideological motivation for the differentiation between servant and slave

treatment, it is striking that the generally contradictory position of servants in Ligon's *History*, as arbiters of the servant problem and a site of paternalistic and economic tension, has, in Chapman's epic, transmuted into a status of overlapping economic and paternalistic abjection: the descendants of Barbadian servants are, in both economic and paternalistic terms, non-entities.

As Williams explains in *From Columbus to Castro*, "where sugar was king, the white man survived only as owner or overseer. Otherwise, he was superfluous" (110). Not only was the servant supply, according to Williams, "too inadequate to serve the needs of sugar" and colonial servants, thus, "too expensive," but, contrary to Chapman's assertion of "certain allotments of ground" for ex-servants, Williams argues that "the sugar latifundia left no scope for the servant at the end of his term" (107). Mercantilist policy barred any kind of colonial manufactures until 1781 in Barbados, and Barbadian ex-servants, according to Williams, "could not get land" (107). Hilary Beckles confirms Williams's claims, suggesting that "freedom dues" in Barbados were largely "propaganda designed to attract ... laborers," not a vehicle for servants to acquire land as was the custom, and occasionally the reality in the early colonial days, for servants in Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas (*White Servitude* 141).<sup>65</sup> As a result, ex-servants who could not emigrate from the island, often "skilled freemen," were forced into less desirable, "backlands" parishes where, as Beckles details, "stretches of poor quality land were available": "In these

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<sup>65</sup> For an incisive portrait of the gap between the expectation and actuality of servant "freedom dues" in Virginia, see Barbara Jeanne Fields, "Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States of America" (1990).

regions, they formed semi-peasant communities and were ridiculed by the planter elite and slaves alike as ‘poor white earthscratching scum’ (158). Also referred to as “redlegs,” “red shanks” and “white trash,” Chapman’s “yellow-legged buckras” emerged as one of the earliest white underclasses in colonial America (158).<sup>66</sup> The various epithets for the ex-servant class, a group that by the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century drew in other “victims of downward socioeconomic mobility” as well — “disbanded militia tenants, unfortunate members of the maritime sector, and the rejected Irish Catholic poor” — stand as testaments to their collective state of poverty and disease, as the references to their “red legs” and “red shanks” signal climatic overexposure and clothing insufficiencies and Chapman’s allusion to their “yellow leg[s]” perhaps indicates a state of chronic, jaundice-related illness (Beckles, *White Servitude*, 174). Chapman’s description of their proverbial idleness and insolence, common in contemporary West Indian travelogues<sup>67</sup> as well as in metropolitan and colonial governmental discourse throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, is symptomatic of their eventual historical obsolescence in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century sugar and slavery plantation complex. As Williams explains, such a naturalization of poor white laziness and indolence “was only to be expected in a society where discipline and coercion were the decisive characteristics of labour” (*From Columbus* 110). The

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<sup>66</sup> “Buckra,” translating to “master” in various Caribbean Creoles, more generally is a disparaging term for a “white man,” often poor, in the Caribbean (*OED*). For an extended discussion of the history of the term, “redlegs,” and the emergence of this subordinate class, see Jill Sheppard, *The “Redlegs” of Barbados* (1977). See also Thomas Keagy, “The Poor Whites of Barbados.”

<sup>67</sup> See, for instance, Henry Nelson Coleridge, *Six Months in the West Indies* (1825) and James Thome and J. Horace Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies* (1838).

initial site of paternalistic and economic tension in the *Inkle and Yarico* myth, colonial servants exit as historical, poetic, and ideological remainders. Their formation into a distinct underclass signifies a break from the dialectical unfolding of paternalism and economism, a break that has the immediate effect of separating New World poor whites and their 17<sup>th</sup>-century servant-ancestors from both African and Amerindian slaves and their domestic European servant-counterparts. Their emergence as a discrete group both exiled from and resistant to the sugar plantation system of *Inkle and Yarico*, moreover, reveals the poor white underclass as a product of its mythico-historical imaginary of sugar and slavery.

While the mediating position of colonial servants has been superseded by the solidification of their intransigent, subaltern class position in Chapman's epic, the status of indenture and debt still binds servitude and slavery, as evidenced in Chapman's revelation that the crisis of paternalism is not limited to Barbadian servitude. Instead, the entire Barbadian ruling order of sentimental paternalism is in peril, as the critical, anti-slavery discourse of those he terms "pseudo-philanthropists" threatens to undo its stability (93):

Our island-slaves once loved their father-friend,  
Content with his their happiness to blend;  
And still would love him; — but from England goes  
A moving narrative of negro-woes;  
Of brands and tortures, only known by name —  
Of lawless power and slavery's damning shame.  
The senseless zealot arms the negro's hand,  
And bids him whirl the torch and bear the brand;  
Leave all the peaceful joys he knows behind;  
Cast love and mercy to the babbling wind;  
Baptise himself in fire, and through a sea

Of blood and battle wade to liberty!  
Hence comes the plot, the agony of strife,  
The toil of treason, and the waste of life;  
The sound of battle, rushing through the trees;  
The hurried tramp of frantic savages!  
The slave, infuriate, pants for Freedom's smiles,  
And Hayti's fate attends our Eden-isles. (1.971-988)

The English abolitionist call for immediate emancipation, the pleas of “the senseless zealot” who “arms the negro’s hand,” can only lead a happy, paternalistic slave society such as Chapman’s Barbados to “Hayti’s fate,” to a slave revolution and a complete overthrow of his pastoralized, Edenic plantation system. Suggesting such humanitarian “philanthropy” as “treason” in his gloss on the lines, Chapman also insists in an earlier annotation that these calls for immediate emancipation stem from a long history of English metropolitan ignorance of the Caribbean colonies, as he likens the current abolitionist’s pretended knowledge of the harsh conditions of slave life on the island to Walter Raleigh’s mischaracterizations in *The Discovery of Guiana* (1595) of Demerara, a mainland region of the Guianas, as an island and Guiana as a land peopled by a “race” of headless monsters (100, 92-3).

Instead of immediate emancipation, Chapman proposes a poeticized policy of paternalistic gradualism: “Pause, free-born English! by gradations slow,/ Freedom, like nations, must have time to grow./ The cry of Africa has reached the skies;/ A load of guilt on England’s bosom lies” (1.683-6). Chapman’s speaker accepts the “load of guilt” for African slavery, but uses this culpable stance as a platform to justify controlling the method and speed of redressing the source of England’s blame. Similar in some ways to Thelwall’s conception of liberty, Atlantic

world freedom in Chapman's poem is England's to consign and maintain, although "by gradations slow." Depicting Barbadian slaves as fledglings to their masters' "parent bird," Chapman continues to plead for the English public to have forbearance when considering emancipation, to wait "till all their plumes are grown, their pinions strung" (1.695-6). Insisting in his note to the passage that his "objection is not to ultimate, but to immediate emancipation," Chapman claims that Barbadian slaves need to be slowly "instruct[ed] ... how to fly" so as to achieve a "mature" freedom (98): "So let your slaves, step after step, grow free, / That they mature may keep their liberty (1.701-2). Chapman's paternalistic avian analogy does not obtain, though, when imagining the prospect of immediate emancipation; the slave-birds of his gradualist poetics do not translate to the scene of immediate freedom. Here, Barbadian slaves do not simply fail to "fly," as would follow from a simple extension of his analogy, but, instead, they become fierce, insurrectionary rebels that threaten both colonial integrity and "woman's sanctity" (1.692). Instantaneous freedom can only mean a violent interruption of slave pastoralism and the anarchy of slave rebellion:

Blood-stained Rebellion shews her frightful head;  
On pour the insurgents, by fierce passions led;  
Baptised in blood and fire, they urge their way,  
Spread their wild flames, and curse the lingering day.  
Hope bids them rule their rulers, and embrace  
The blooming daughters of a fairer race.  
Scarce does the wind outstrip their maddened speed;  
Lust their incentive, Liberty their meed. (2.853-60)

The fateful, certain result of immediate emancipation, “blood-stained Rebellion” is governed by a dialectics of “Lust” and “Liberty” in which the former, specifically the miscegenated “lust” for European women, motivates rebellion and the latter, a chaotic, revolutionary “liberty,” acts as its dynamic reward. Chapman remains imperious concerning this former point, insisting in his annotation that “it is well known that one of the chief motives of the negroes to rebellion is a desire to appropriate the white women. Their idea of liberty is to take possession of the property of their masters, and to get slaves to work for them” (107). Not only are European women, of course, “property” in Chapman’s nightmare scene of immediate emancipation, but they also constitute the site through which class insurrection is sublimated into violent sexual desire. Their sexual subordination, along with the supposed re-enslavement of white masters, is naturalized as the inevitable outcome of slave rebellion.

The paternalistic protection of European women is raised as the primary stanchion against immediate emancipation of the slaves, and, upon this premise, Chapman lays out the fateful progression of colonial ruin that will follow if his poetic calls for gradualism go unheeded — a destruction of the “happy” pastoral slave condition; anarchic, revolutionary slave rule; and an eventual loss of the colony (2.980). Depicting Barbados as a metropolitan appendage, as “limbs” to England, Chapman’s speaker ultimately projects immediate emancipation, and its double defilement of both European woman and colony, as a negligent sacrifice on the part of England (2.955). He apostrophizes King William IV, “Great William,”

who had in his early years made naval tours in the Caribbean and spent time in Barbados, inquiring of him whether or not he will heed the ruling class call to spare the colony (2.973): “shall we call on thee in vain?/ To thee, unheard and unredressed, complain?/ ... When come, still welcome, has thy heart forgot,/ Thy favourite island, and the seaman’s cot?” (2.973-4, 981-2). In terms of the monopolistic protections of the West Indian interest, Barbados was, indeed, in the process of being forgotten. Chapman’s paternalistic program launched against this new economic reality is evidence for both paternalism’s hegemonic cultural position and its waning role in the burgeoning ideology of Atlantic world “free trade” (Williams, *Capitalism*, 133-53). An ideology resting on “protection” and closed, reciprocal systems of order, paternalism was a fitting cultural counterpart to mercantilism, itself a system of closed economic protectionism, but it could not maintain such cultural dominance in a Caribbean system in which economic “freedom,” equal market access, and ultimately wage labor were ascendant; wherever slavery and monopolistic protection remained, though, such as the U.S. South, such paternalistic cultural expression would persist. Despite the passage of the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act in the same year as the publication of Chapman’s poem, such gradualist projects were not completely nullified by the abolition of slavery. Chapman’s epic plea, regardless of his intimations to the contrary, was not completely inessential. While Chapman’s gradualism, at some level, constitutes an ideological throwback to a prior abolitionist moment when the abolitionism of Wilberforce was distinctly separate from the project of emancipation (the idea was

to establish colonial “breeding” programs instead of purchasing slaves from West Africa), it also marks a real tension of the 1833 moment (Williams, *From Columbus*, 296-7). When abolitionists openly began to adopt the policy of emancipation in 1823, it was initially a gradualist policy, but as Williams explains, such gradualism would prove both a “failure” and a “success” a decade later: “the abolitionist policy of gradual emancipation was a failure” in that “slavery was abolished in the British colonies in 1833”; however, “it was still gradual emancipation” in that “a system of apprenticeship was instituted, to last until 1840,” although it was “eventually abolished in 1838” (299). As previously mentioned, indentured servitude systems and gradualist economic policies were employed to prolong and extend the sugar and slavery system well into 19<sup>th</sup>-century Barbados, as ex-slaves essentially became apprenticed laborers at emancipation and contract laborers, principally from India and China, were recruited by planters in state- sanctioned schemes to take their place in the sugar plantations.<sup>68</sup> Such schemes of indenture and debt that we have seen at work throughout the *Inkle and Yarico* myth, in other words, continued to mediate the master/slave relation, maintain the sugar plantation complex, and condition what Hilary Beckles calls a “freedom without liberties” in the historical trajectory of Barbados (*A History* 138-58).

In this extended historical context, recuperating the shadowy figure of the colonial servant in the *Inkle and Yarico* myth, and insisting on this figure’s

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<sup>68</sup> See Lisa Lowe, “The Intimacies of Four Continents” (2006), for a reading of the role of Asian indentured labor, especially Chinese indentured labor, in the global development of modernity.

continuation in the persistence of the formal and thematic complex of indenture and debt, is an effort to re-collectivize the historical and literary imaginary of servants and slaves — a move that I am arguing is necessitated by the internal dynamics of the myth itself. Arguing for and tracing the fundamental contradiction of paternalism and economism in the myth is, likewise, part of this project of recollectivization. Following the twists and turns of this antinomy in the long century of *Inkle and Yarico*, particularly its solidification in the trope of servant mistreatment, is an attempt to demonstrate that servitude and slavery emerge from a shared structural contradiction, and to begin to grasp the joint, mediating role of these plantation labor systems and the role of colonial labor in the transition to capitalism and the emergence of Atlantic modernity. The continual emphasis on the cultural abstraction of paternalism and the emerging overdetermination of economism in the unfolding of the myth is an endeavor to get at the particular way in which this structural contradiction is rationalized and atomized in the transition to capitalism, in particular paternalism's alienated management of a rationalizing economism, and to reiterate further the mediating position of servants and slaves in this rationalizing political economic shift.<sup>69</sup> This complex of shifting, contradictory terms and mediating bond labor is what we can think of as the enduring content of the manifold narrative conventions, genres, and forms of the *Inkle and Yarico* myth.

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<sup>69</sup> See Blackburn's "Epilogue" to *The Making of New World Slavery* for his argument concerning the role of slave plantations as "an important intermediary form of economic rationality" in the development of capitalism (588). My effort here is to highlight the status of servitude in Blackburn's rationalizing, mediatory slave plantations.

The double-movement of paternalism and economism in this schema demonstrates the fundamental economic character of plantation bond labor, and it provides the basis for insisting on the economic and political identity that underwrites the servant and slave distinction, even as this point of economic and political identity is being obscured by the simultaneous appearance of ideologies of difference — in particular the congealment of racial ideology and the emergence of racialized class formations, such as the Barbadian “redlegs.”

While the question of race has been a subject not directly taken up in this chapter, it has been a significant motivating force in its apparent absence. Yarico’s well-known racial syncretism — her depiction as simultaneously African and Amerindian in single texts, her various transformations from an Amerindian to African figure and back again, and the subsequent readings of this syncretism by literary scholars as a recurring case of “racial imprecision” — has, for instance, been hovering at the margins of my reading of colonial labor in the myth.<sup>70</sup> I raise

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<sup>70</sup> The term “racial imprecision” is Felsenstein’s critical assessment of Yarico’s shifting “racial” markers in his introduction to *English Trader, Indian Maid*. He claims that such “racial imprecision” is a consequence of British ignorance of racial difference and an unenlightened geographical consciousness (19, 15). For discussions of the typicality of such “racial” confusion in the period, see Felicity Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human* (151-2); Moira Ferguson, *Subject to Others* (69-90); and Wylie Sypher, *Guinea’s Captive Kings* (105-6, 122). See also Lawrence Marsden Price’s *Inkle and Yarico Album*, the first anthology of *Inkle and Yarico* tales, in which he calls Yarico’s “racial” shifts a “mistake” (86). My argument is that such syncretism is a consequence of the unconsolidated character of “race” in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. To evaluate Yarico’s “racial syncretism” as “confusion,” “imprecision,” or a “mistake” is to misunderstand 18th-century notions of difference, to misinterpret the emergent character of racial ideology in the period, and to offer accounts that project later 19th- and 20th-century biological notions of race onto the tale. For a corrective to this proleptic tendency and an historical

the issue now at the conclusion not as an afterthought but as a demonstration that such “racial” questions of New World slavery must be thought through the complicated matrix of colonial labor relations. In other words, the “racial imprecision” characteristic of *Inkle and Yarico* can best be explained, along with the joint exploitation of European servants, as a symptom of the ironically non-prejudicial character of the Caribbean plantation system. As Mintz explains in *Caribbean Transformations* (1989), Caribbean planters “were willing to employ any kind of labor, and under any institutional arrangements, as long as the labor force was politically defenseless enough for the work to be done cheaply and under discipline” (150-1). He concludes: “Hence it is a serious error of interpretation to posit any necessary relationship between slavery and race, ignoring all of those instances where non-Africans were enslaved, or otherwise coerced, by the plantation system ... the key to the processes by which plantations and peasantries arose or declined is fundamentally economic and political, not racial” (151). This is not to say that the project of studying race and racial formation is not also “key” to understanding the making of New World slavery — after all, racialized slavery itself is the principal novelty of this system — but it is to argue that racialized slavery, and its counterpart, the “invention of the white race,” must necessarily be thought together and understood as an effect of the “fundamentally economic and political” determinations of the plantation complex (Blackburn 1-25, Allen 1:239-

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account of racialization in 18<sup>th</sup> century literature, see Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race*.

59). The claim of this long chapter, in conclusion, is that the *Inkle and Yarico* myth itself, in its poetics of servitude and slavery and its repetition of the trope of servant mistreatment, adumbrates just such an imaginative portrait of the Caribbean plantation system — the essential character of economic and political determinations and the non-essential, emergent character of “race” in the labor intensive project of plantation sugar production in Barbados. As depicted in the long century of *Inkle and Yarico*, paternalism plays a crucial role in congealing the racialized class divisions that form out of this complex of plantation bond labor, destabilizing, as Eugene Genovese suggests in “On Paternalism” (1976), the “solidarity among the oppressed by linking them as individuals to their oppressors” but also, as the myth shows, by separating this politically and economically determined group by other ideological means, separating servants from slaves and working to naturalize the disjuncture (5).

## Chapter Two

### The Myth of Convict America in *Oroonoko's* Surinam: The Contradictions of Colonial Servitude and Slavery in Behn's "Other World"

*"Sir, they are a race of convicts, and ought to be thankful for anything we allow them short of hanging."*

-Samuel Johnson, *Boswell's Life*

Over a quarter of a century before Samuel Johnson famously derided colonial North American society as a "race of convicts," Aphra Behn depicted the English colony of Surinam as a degraded population of convict servants (Boswell ii, 357).<sup>71</sup> A colonial group, as we will see in the next chapter, that does not constitute a major Atlantic migrant stream until well into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, convict servants are an historical exception during the period of Behn's Surinam travels.<sup>72</sup> Despite their historical scarcity, convict servants and ex-transported felons abound in Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688), a colonial setting in which criminality and servitude are almost one in the same. Not restricted to Surinam's servants, criminality is a

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<sup>71</sup> Johnson's comment is a second-hand remark related to Boswell by historian John Campbell in 1769; it is just one example of Johnson's abiding anti-American sentiment, a position that, along with his stances against American slavery, was a point of conflict between Boswell and Johnson. See Boswell's entries from March 21, 1775 (ii, 355-60), September 23, 1777 (iii, 228-34), April 15, 1778 (iii, 329), and April 18, 1778 (iii, 358-9). See also, Johnson, *Taxation no Tyranny* (1775), and Boswell's 1777 transcription of "A Brief to Free a Slave" (iii, 229-31).

<sup>72</sup> In *The Secret Life of Aphra Behn* (2000), Janet Todd dates *Oroonoko's* action to the early 1660s, surmising that Behn travelled to the colony during this period and confirming that all of the novel's historical figures are also in Surinam at this time, from Lt. Gov. Byam and his cruel Irish proxy, James Banister, to the more sympathetic characters — the Governor's Cornish overseer, John Trefry, and the benevolent plantation owner, Col. George Martin (35, 38). Angeline Goreau, in her social biography of Behn, *Reconstructing Aphra* (1980), claims that Behn would have been in Surinam during the fall of 1663 (49).

condition that extends to the general colonial populace, defines its governing body, and satirically characterizes the corrupt, unchecked status of order in the colony. Ruled by an ironic band of sovereign, ex-convict servants, *Oroonoko's* Surinam signals a suspension of the type of servant paternalism we have seen in *Inkle and Yarico*. The novel's ex-servant authorities, along with common colonial servants, garner little sympathy, and Behn depicts them as inadequate, and indeed contemptible, substitutes for traditional absolutist order — the sanctioned, if melancholically absent, form of political organization in *Oroonoko*. Behn's degraded depiction of England's short-lived, South American colony is part of an emergent trend in the literary imaginary of the New World, what Howard Mumford Jones calls "the anti-image" of America (35). A counterpart to the image of America as an Edenic, "Earthly Paradise," this oppositional literary mode, which becomes the predominant one in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, marks the culmination of a shift from the colonial boosterism of the late 16<sup>th</sup>-and early 17<sup>th</sup>-century promotional literature, which, as we have seen, advocates colonial transportation as a remedy for England's overpopulation crisis and its attendant problems of poverty, unemployment, and crime (5).<sup>73</sup> After the Restoration, as the anxiety of overpopulation transforms into a concern over depopulation, the colonial scene, as evident in Behn's *Oroonoko*, becomes a contested space in which images of depravity, misery, and delinquency are transferred from the domestic to the

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<sup>73</sup> For an extended discussion of the relationship between these oppositional typologies in Anglo-American colonial discourse, see Jones, *O Strange New World* (1964), 1-70.

colonial sphere, overwhelming, but not entirely eradicating, earlier visions of opportunity and prosperity that dominated Anglo-American colonial discourse.<sup>74</sup>

What Behn's *Oroonoko* highlights is the chief mediating role that colonial servants play in this emergent anti-image of the Anglo-American Atlantic, an ideological coalescence I am calling the "myth of convict America." Marginalized, criminalized servants obtain as the central figures of degradation in Behn's oppositional imaginary. They also appear as the fundamental feature of Behn's anti-populism in *Oroonoko*, as the novel exploits the tropology of the American anti-image to denounce republican political sympathies and valorize traditional principles of political absolutism. At the same time that *Oroonoko* hinges on servant criminalization to present its absolutist platform, it features significant exceptions to the general rule of servant criminalization — a move that, aside from revealing a problematic tension in absolutism itself, presents an incongruous portrait of colonial servitude, an inconsistency particularly evident in its relationship to colonial slavery. Servants and slaves are portrayed at once as plantation associates and antagonists — a principle of contradiction that extends to the depiction of both the general colonial populace and Surinam as a whole, especially to Behn's account of the region's Amerindians and her representation of Anglo-Dutch geopolitics in this contested zone of colonial influence. In these contradictory depictions of

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<sup>74</sup> For a brief overview of the literary "anti-image" of America and its historical context, see Matthew Mason and Nicholas Mason's introduction to Edward Kimber's *The History of the Life and Adventures of Mr. Anderson* (2009), 18-26. See also Joyce Oldham Appleby, "The Poor as Productive Resource" (139-67), in *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (1978).

Surinam and its various native and colonial inhabitants, Behn's corrupt anti-image of America comes under some pressure, as utopian, Edenic counter-images of Surinam emerge, if in a largely melancholic register, to reveal the mythical character of Behn's criminalized New World imaginary. In this incongruous unfolding of the novel's setting, servant criminalization serves as a scapegoated backdrop to the central colonial tragedy of Oroonoko's failed rebellion, enslavement, and execution, and it establishes a pattern of contradiction echoed in the novel's intermittent scenes of Amerindian encounter and Anglo-Dutch exchange in the region.

The mythical portrayal of convict America in *Oroonoko* stems, in part, from convict servants' mediating position in the novel's competing modes of production, an overlay of paternalistic and economic tensions analogous to, but also distinct from, those we have seen in *Inkle and Yarico*. As Laura Brown demonstrates in *Ends of Empire* (1993), the incorporation of Old World heroic romance with New World narratives of mercantile imperialism in *Oroonoko* marks the co-presence of conflicting "aristocratic and bourgeois systems," which constitute "the ideological contradiction that dominates the novella" (48). While Brown argues that the "superimposition" of these romantic and imperialist paradigms, what she also calls the novel's "modes of mystification," is mediated by female figuration, I am suggesting that *Oroonoko*'s colonial servants perform a similar function (62-3, 48).<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Many critics similarly conceptualize *Oroonoko* as a novel that either represents a major ideological transition or incorporates competing literary modes and historical worldviews; see, for instance, Angeline Goreau, *Reconstructing Aphra* (1980);

Parallel to *Inkle and Yarico*, *Oroonoko*'s colonial servants act as signs of this transition — the emergence of mercantilist economism and a vanishing of romantic paternalism in the Atlantic imaginary. In contrast to *Inkle and Yarico*, the colonial servants of Behn's *Oroonoko* are incriminated for their symptomatic role in this shift. Specifically, they are scapegoated as the criminal representatives, and occasional dupes, of a colonial mercantilist order that is in consistent, antagonistic tension with the absolutist principles of both the novel's embattled noble slave hero, Oroonoko, and its female Tory narrator, Aphra Behn's "Eye-Witness" and authorial double (8). A debased class position, colonial servitude is figured as a criminal cause of Oroonoko's tragic execution and the corrupt pretext for the deficiency of political absolutism and natural nobility in the colony. At the same time, in the novel's major episodes of servant censure — Oroonoko's recruitment scene, the colonial militia's deployment at Oroonoko's revolt, and the colonial council's endorsement of Oroonoko's execution — Behn, perhaps unwittingly, simultaneously reveals a more complicated and nuanced image of colonial servitude and the labor system as a whole. In the two sections that follow, I will examine the specific contours of these labor complications in *Oroonoko*, turning first to the depiction of the servant/slave relation and, then, to the portrait of Anglo-Amerindian and Anglo-Dutch colonial relations in an effort to demonstrate that the

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William Spengemann, "The Earliest American Novel" (1984); Beverle Houston, "Usurpation and Dismemberment" (1986); McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel* (1987); Moira Ferguson, "*Oroonoko*: Birth of a Paradigm," *Subject to Others* (1992); Anita Pacheco, "Royalism and Honor in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*" (1994); Gary Gautier, "Slavery and the Fashioning of Race" (2001); Oddvar Holmesland, "Aphra Behn's '*Oroonoko*'" (2001); Laura Doyle, *Freedom's Empire* (2008).

contradictions of colonial labor in the novel determine the tense portrayal of Behn's Surinam as a literary anti-image and underscore the mythical status of convict servitude's ubiquity in the colony.

### **I. "Slaves for Four Years": The Interchange of Servitude and Slavery, Colonial Servitude Debasement, and the Contradictions of Labor and the Crowd in Behn's Surinam**

Prior to the introduction of the novel's tragic hero and the Coramantien romance episode, Behn's narrator, at the novel's opening, offers a brief description of colonial Surinam and its world of colonial labor. "Before I give you the Story of this *Gallant Slave*," she begins, "tis fit I tell you the manner of bringing them to these new *Colonies*; for those they make use of there, are not *Natives* of the place" (8). From the outset, the narrator characterizes colonial laborers as utilitarian migrants detached from any of the paternalistic traces we find mediating the representation of servants and slaves in *Inkle and Yarico*. Instead, what is evident are vestiges of an economically-determined colonial servitude embedded in her expression of colonial slavery, as she presents slave transportation according to the latter part of Francis Bacon's "double commodity" rhetoric of colonial servitude — an "avoidance of people here" and a "making use of them there" (658). Dropping the "avoidance" clause fundamental to colonial servitude, Behn underscores a simultaneous similarity and difference in the commodity status of servants and slaves. Describing African slaves as simply "those they make use of there," Behn formulates colonial slavery in this "other World" of Surinam as a matter of both

pragmatic exploitation, a point of commonality with Bacon's formulation of colonial servitude, and straightforward, single commodification — a point of distinction from England's colonial servants who must also be internally displaced from the English realm (7). In a subsequent early passage of the novel, Behn's narrator repeats this language of applied use in a description on the fundamental role of slave labor in Surinam's sugar plantations, expounding on the methods of acquiring, transporting, and distributing colonial slaves from West Africa to Surinam: "Those then whom we make use of to work in our Plantations of Sugar, are *Negro's*, *Black-Slaves* altogether; which are transported thither in this manner" (11). Describing that Africans are sold in lots, a practice she later explains as a differentiating social control mechanism to prevent slaves from "contriving some great Action, to the Ruin of the Colony," she designates the colony's slaves as war captives from Oroonoko's "*Coramantien, a Country of Blacks*" (34, 11). In this initial portrait of the plantation workforce, Behn lays the rationalizing groundwork not only for separating the common slaves from the royal Oroonoko, the novel's exceptional slave, but also for distinguishing them from colonial servants, a group she initially excludes but later reveals as a key, but scapegoated, element in the plantation labor force and the political administration of the colony. Surinam's slaves are distinct from their noble countryman, Oroonoko, in their plebian class position and dishonor in military defeat, and they are different from Surinam's servants in their status as commodified "war captives" as opposed to transported criminals, as we will soon see. In adopting this utilitarian language of Bacon and

the early Anglo-American colonial promoters to describe slavery, Behn's narrator alludes to the figure of the colonial servant, thus, at the same time, suggesting a veiled rhetorical and ideological commonality between servants and slaves in *Oroonoko's* Surinam, as both are brought to the colonies under a shared banner of commercial "use" and exploitation. Such a rhetorical and ideological cohesion between the colonial servitude and slavery will be reinforced in her later designation of the indentured servants of Surinam as "*Slaves* for Four Years" and challenged in her depictions of the general hostility among colonial servants, ex-servants and slaves in the colony. As we will see in the following scenes of servant censure, this incongruous portrayal of servants and slaves can be generally grasped as an indication of the co-constitutive character of their laboring positions and a sign of the dialectic of identity and difference that conditions their ideological making.

**a. Servant Degradation and the Dialectics of the Servant/Slave Relation in Oroonoko's Recruitment Scene**

The principal factors in Oroonoko's transformation from a "gallant," exceptional slave to a rebel slave leader, one who joins with "his Fellow-sufferers" to resist a shared state of "perpetual slavery," is the degradation of colonial servants and their separation from colonial slaves in Surinam (37, 52, 54). As Behn's narrator explains, Oroonoko's strategy for raising initial support for his rebellion is

dependent upon assembling the “whole Gang” of male slaves when colonial servants are at a distance and preoccupied in their weekly “Debauch”:

taking his Opportunity one *Sunday*, when all the Whites were overtaken in Drink, as there were abundance of several Trades, and *Slaves* for Four Years, that Inhabited among the *Negro* Houses; and *Sunday* was their Day of Debauch, (otherwise they were a sort of Spys upon *Caesar*); he went pretending out of Goodness to ‘em, to Feast amongst ‘em; and sent all his Musick, and order’d a great Treat for the whole Gang, about Three Hundred *Negroes*. (51-2)

Depicted as a habitually corrupted and debased group, colonial servants, in an ironic display of faithful religiosity, consistently take the Sabbath as their “Day of Debauch.” Regular buffers between Oroonoko and the plantation slaves, they are characterized by a predictable depravity, which serves as an opportunity for the tragic hero’s unmediated, undetected access to “the whole Gang” of Surinam’s African laborers. While serving as a divisive expedient that conditions the possibility of Oroonoko’s cross-class identification with slaves, this unscrupulous absence of colonial servants also paradoxically reveals a complicated and anxious identity between servants and slaves. Similar to Ligon’s description of the intimate living arrangements of Amerindians and European indentured servants in mid-17<sup>th</sup>-century Barbados, Behn evokes a plantation setting in which both European tradesmen and indentured servants, “Trades, and *Slaves* for Four Years,” live “among the *Negro* Houses” in colonial Surinam over a decade later. Following Ligon’s subsumption of colonial bond labor under a shared commodity sign, Behn’s description figures servants and slaves as common plantation property — a point in

line with the founding Governor, Francis, Lord Willoughby's original prospectus for the mid-17<sup>th</sup>-century settlement of Surinam in which he offers to "furnish" settlers "with provision ... tooles & other necessaryes" as well as "cattell & servants, English or Negroes" (Ligon 40, Willoughby 176-7).

The relationship between servants and slaves in Behn's Surinam, unlike Ligon's *History*, is managed not by a simplifying system of classification but by a knotty dialectic of collaboration and conflict. While disclosing a level of servant and slave intimacy, Behn's narrator also parenthetically notes that European skilled workers and servants "were a sort of Spys upon *Caesar*," suggesting their social connection as both a base and cover for servants' furtive supervision of Oroonoko and, by extension, the common plantation slaves. Such an antagonistic, shifty relation to Oroonoko in his recruitment scene augments and continues the general degradation of the novel's colonial servants, while, at the same time, it establishes a foundational relationship of interchange and identity among Surinam's colonial bond laborers, part of a complex web of servant/slave identity and difference in the novel. In this tense description, Behn reveals that their laboring identities function as the condition of possibility for their ideological instrumentalization and separation in Oroonoko's rebellion scheme. At the same time, she demonstrates that colonial servants and skilled plantation workers perform an intermediary social control function in labor system, a role that mandates the subordination of this acknowledged fundamental identity *to* difference. Through the depiction of the general debasement of colonial servants,

what emerges from this scene is an intelligible, but complicated formulation of the servant/slave relation as a contradictory one marked by the simultaneity of identity and difference and shot through with the ideological demands of colonial social control.

This dialectical relationship between servitude and slavery is strikingly congealed in Behn's term for indentured servants in Surinam — "*Slaves for Four Years.*" Following her description of the concurrent familiarity and alienation of servants and slaves, this transpositional expression suggests, on the one hand, a conflation of the conditions of servitude and slavery and, on the other, a clear temporal differentiation between the two systems, as servitude is defined by a temporary, non-hereditary term of labor and slavery by a perpetual, open-ended, and inheritable term. Such descriptive interchangeability of servitude and slavery is a measure of the socio-economic equivalence between servants and slaves, and a shared state of degraded servility in the colonial setting. As mentioned in my introductory remarks, such servant/slave interchange is exemplary of a pattern common to a range of interlocking discourses in the period and beyond: Anglo-American discourses of colonial promotion and management; 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century transatlantic literature; the political philosophy of Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, and Marx; and contemporary historical and sociological accounts of servitude and slavery, such as Winthrop Jordan's *White Over Black* (1968) and Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death* (1982). Serving manifold ideological functions, the literary conflation of servitude and slavery in Behn's *Oroonoko* acts as a mode of

generalized debasement that figures colonial servants as a collective foil to Oroonoko's exceptional slavery and natural nobility, whereas, in *Inkle and Yarico*, it serves as a means for registering a general protest against mistreatment. In both cases, the issue of servant degradation, whether a consequence or cause of servant/slave conflation, is linked to the revelation of the fundamental laboring, economic identity of colonial servants and slaves.

Descriptive interchanges of servants and slaves, such as Behn's "*Slaves for Four Years*," likewise function as historical traces that maintain the undifferentiated, overlapping origins of the servant and slave systems in the Anglo-American Atlantic, even as they register the continued status of their historical and ideological difference. In *White Over Black*, Winthrop Jordan, perhaps the most prominent historian of slavery to take on the subject of the servant/slave relation, demonstrates that the history of servitude and slavery follows the pattern of Behn's expression. As he explains, "the terms *servant* and *slave*," while used interchangeably "in England and in seventeenth-century America," simultaneously registered distinct conditions of colonial subordination (53). Similar to Behn, he figures the relation of servitude and slavery as both interconnected and discrete. On the one hand, he asserts that "indentured servitude was linked to the development of chattel slavery in America" — an historical connection that turns on understanding the "time" of a servant's term as "negotiable property" (47). This conception of temporal property, then, rendered a servant an alienable commodity who, as with a slave, "might be sold or conveyed from one master to another at any

time up to the expiration of his indenture” (47-8). Jordan, on the other hand, insists that servants and slaves, despite such terminological conflation, were differentiated by distinct laboring realities, in particular by their respective limited and perpetual terms of service: “Servitude, no matter how long, brutal, and involuntary, was not the same thing as perpetual slavery ... no matter how miserably treated, [servants never] served for life in the colonies, though of course many died before their term ended. Hereditary lifetime service was restricted to Indians and Negroes” (62-3).<sup>76</sup> Despite this insistence on servants’ absolute distinction from slaves, Jordan notes that, at the scene of the elusive origins of the colonial labor system, uncertainty conditions the inverse question as to whether or not slaves may have, in fact, been treated more like servants:

There is simply not enough evidence to indicate with any certainty whether Negroes were treated like white servants or not. At least we can be confident, therefore, that the two most common assertions about the first Negroes—that they were slaves and that they were servants—are *unfounded*, though not necessarily incorrect ... it seems probable that the Negro’s status was not ever the same as that accorded the white servant. But we do not know for sure.<sup>77</sup> (73-4, emphasis in original)

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<sup>76</sup> For more historical commentary on the servant/slave relation, see James Curtis Ballagh, *History of Slavery in Virginia* (1902), 28; Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery* (1997), 228, 240; Barbara Jeanne Fields, “Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States of America” (1990), 101-116; and Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (1982), 7-10, 27-8, 86, 124-6.

<sup>77</sup> Jordan takes such originary aporias as evidence that the emergence of racial slavery in the New World was, as he famously terms, an “unthinking decision” (44-98). Calling Jordan a bond-labor “apologist,” Theodore Allen critiques Jordan’s conclusion, arguing instead that racial oppression was a conscious and deliberate, albeit later, determination of New World slavery; Allen’s work is, as he attests, a “rejection of Jordan’s ‘unthinking decision’ thesis” (2:100-2, 239-42, 272-4). See also Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Vol. I* (1994), where he offers an extended critique of Jordan’s “psycho-cultural” approach to the origins of slavery (1-24).

What we do know with more certainty is that, as Jordan attests, “*difference* ... was the indispensable key to the degradation of Negroes in English America,” a point that Behn’s *Oroonoko*, in its concurrent conflation and differentiation of servitude and slavery, reveals and links to the scene of servant degradation (91). In this way, Behn’s expression, “*Slaves for Four Years*,” as well as her description of Oroonoko’s recruitment scene, preserves this conflationary disjuncture of the servant/slave relation and the undifferentiated, indeterminate scene of its origins, as it unwittingly documents the joint material history of servant and slave degradation in the imaginative display of Anglo-America as a New World anti-image.

**b. The Corrupt Antagonism of Colonial Servitude, Behn’s Popular Unconscious, and the Contradictions of Political Order in Oroonoko’s Rebellion**

What occurs after Oroonoko’s initial enlistment of the plantation slaves is neither a mimetic continuation nor a dialectical unfolding of the logic and historical realities embedded in Behn’s “*Slaves for Four Years*.” Instead, what transpires is an aggressive repression of the previous flashes of servant and slave identity, on the one hand, and an antagonistic exploitation of servant and slave difference, on the other. The apparent identity of the servant/slave relation is immediately undermined by the ideological demands of maintaining Oroonoko’s status as a noble slave exception and the principal role of colonial servants in suppressing Oroonoko’s rebellion. After Oroonoko’s successful recruitment of the slave-rebels

and the subsequent discovery of their escape by the plantation overseers, Behn's narrator depicts the quick broadcast of the revolt throughout the colony and the hasty deployment of the colonial militia: "You may imagine this News was not only suddenly spread all over the *Plantation*, but soon reach'd the Neighbouring ones; and we had by Noon about Six hundred Men, they call the *Militia* of the Country, that came to assist us in the pursuit of the fugitives" (54). Its rank-and-file typically consisting of servants and ex-servants with planters and freeholders serving as officers, the colonial militia was, as Jill Sheppard notes, the "one sphere" dominated by the servant class (57-8).<sup>78</sup> Charged with defending the colony from both internal uprisings and external invasions, typically encroachments by the French and Dutch in this period, the militia is a colonial body Behn portrays as a degraded "comical" band shorn of its landed-class, officer element and set against the propertied group's clear resistance to pursuing Oroonoko and the rebels:

But never did one see so comical an Army march forth to War. The Men, of any fashion, wou'd not concern themselves, though it were almost the common Cause; for such Revoltings are very ill Examples, and have very fatal Consequences oftentimes in many Colonies. But they had a Respect for *Caesar*, and all hands were against the *Parhamites*, as they call'd those of *Parham Plantation*; because they did not, in the first place, love the Lord Governor; and secondly, they wou'd have it, that *Caesar* was Ill us'd, and Baffl'd with; and 'tis not impossible but some of the best in the Country was

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<sup>78</sup> Sheppard is speaking specifically of the Barbadian militia, but we can assume that Surinam's colonial forces would be similarly organized, as both colonial militias were headed by Governor Willoughby and, as we will see, Surinam was settled by Barbadians who replicated the island's colonial model. For more on the history of the Barbadian militia, see Sheppard, *The "Redlegs" of Barbados* (1977), 34, 38, 42, 57-8; and Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados*, 10, 38, 113, 120, 124, 166-7.

of his Council in this Flight, and depriving us of all the *Slaves*; so that they of the better sort wou'd not meddle in the matter. (54)

Behn's narrator doubly signifies the colonial militia as low-born and laughable, presenting the group as a comic, misdirected opposition to Oroonoko's revolt. Contrary to the typical reciprocity and cooperation that would be expected among the colonial militiamen and the landed class in a time of revolt, the narrator depicts the militia as a body avoided rather than sanctioned by "the Men, of any fashion," or social standing, in the colony. It is not just Oroonoko's revolt but also the colonial militia with whom these "Men," once the rebellion had been launched, "wou'd not concern themselves." Deviating from the mandates of colonial order, Behn opposes the colonial militia to the landed class, eschewing the latter's leading role in maintaining, and thus subjugating, the armed group as an intermediate, social control stratum buffering the planter class from the potential and occasional reality of insurrectionary plantation slaves. The portrayal of the colonial militia's misdirection, then, is literalized in their lack of traditional, directive leadership.

An illustration of what Brown terms *Oroonoko's* "contradictory aristocratic and bourgeois paradigms," the suppression of Oroonoko's rebellion is a scene in which absolutist ideology clearly trumps the ideological system of colonial capitalist order (63). Oroonoko's natural nobility, Behn implies, prevents the landed class from upholding their obligation to preserve colonial stability, a concern in which they would be chiefly invested as the colony's plantation capitalists. Such a conflict of traditional absolutist and colonial capitalist concerns is a tension Behn at once

recognizes and mitigates in her description of Oroonoko's rebellion as "*almost* the common Cause" and a "very ill Examp[le]" that "*oftentimes*," but not always, leads to "very fatal Consequences" (emphasis mine). Colonial class position, then, emerges as the general determinant for the support or suppression of Oroonoko's noble cause. Behn underscores "the better sort" as more likely to "not meddle in the matter" of the revolt, even tentatively pointing to "the best in the Country" as possible co-conspirators in Oroonoko's rebellion. With these gestures, she consolidates a vaguely adumbrated upper-and middle-class alliance unified around what she catalogues as their "respect for *Caesar*," opposition to "the *Parhamites*," and general disapproval of Oroonoko's mistreatment. Thus, the ideological demands of Behn's support for royal absolutism and natural nobility generally renders servants a corrupt class and the chief antagonism to Oroonoko and the rebel slaves, as her narrator depicts any member of the landed class who fails to support Oroonoko as either a servant interloper within the ruling order (as with the colonial council and Banister) or a degraded exception (as with Deputy Governor Byam).

Colonial Surinam, in many ways, is a strange setting for Behn's ideological display of royal absolutism, as her support of the naturalized tenets of absolutist order necessitates her neglect of many pragmatic standards of colonial order. In her absolutist drive to unify the "better sort" with Oroonoko's cause under the sign of a natural class alliance, she inadvertently proletarianizes the colonial bond labor class, reinforcing the very commonality of servants and slaves that her depiction of

the colonial militia is attempting to undermine and that colonial mercantilist ideology deems necessary to suppress for the sake of colonial social control. Behn, for instance, emphasizes that landed-class support is mobilized not by the immediate danger and potential loss of the common slaves absconding with Oroonoko but by their naturalized sympathy toward the noble slave leading the rebellion. The same kind of class polarization can be grasped in the previous episode of Oroonoko's recruitment, as a shared sense of servant/slave degradation emerges out of the narrative of their separation. In the cracks of these competing ideologies of aristocratic and mercantile imperialism, we can glimpse the faint irruption of a popular unconscious into Behn's text, a moment of comic servant debasement that marks a return of the repressed in her characteristic anti-populist agenda. Calling Behn "a snobbish high Tory," Janet Todd describes the unwavering nature of Behn's anti-populism: "for the people, slaves or the London rabble, and for democracy of any sort she expressed nothing but contempt" (5). Considering Behn's depiction of colonial servants, thus far, and her ensuing extension of this scorn, as we will see, to the governing council and the general colonial populace, Behn's narrator inhabits an analogous position. In *Oroonoko's* anti-populist positioning, though, shadows of the popular appear as outlines by which we can grasp a negated, counterposed colonial populace in alignment with, or at least parallel to, the common slaves of Surinam. Arising from the contradictions of naturalized nobility and mercantilist economism in the novel, it is a proletarian trace that marks the violation of one of the principal tenets of colonial

social control — the insurrectionary confederacy of servants, ex-servants, and slaves, an alliance that Hilary Beckles claims is “what planters feared most of all” (*White Servitude* 111).<sup>79</sup>

*Oroonoko*, as I have been reading it after Brown’s insights concerning the novel’s competing modes of production, then, can be grasped according to what Fredric Jameson in *The Political Unconscious* (1981) terms the “ideology of form,” the “final transformation” of an interpretive approach that grasps the text as a “symbolic enactment of the social within the formal and aesthetic” and comprises “the symbolic messages transmitted to us by the coexistence of various sign systems which are themselves traces or anticipations of modes of production” (76-7). What this interpretive method assumes, in its grasp of narrative as a symbolic totality, is what Jameson famously calls “the political unconscious” of a text. As he explains in one of many passages on the subject, “interpretation proper ... always presupposes, if not a conception of the unconscious itself, then at least some mechanism of mystification or repression in terms of which it would make sense to seek a latent meaning behind a manifest one” (60). The corrupted, mediating figure of the colonial servant, poised to serve Behn’s anti-populist agenda, also latently serves its opposite — a nascent colonial populism. Thus, the repressed, amorphous servant class manifests as a window into the novel’s signification of a populist, political unconscious, which is present in its very repressed and mystified

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<sup>79</sup> For further discussion of the anxiety of servant-slave rebellion, see Beckles, *White Servitude*, 98-114. Such anxiety is also a major tension in Ligon’s *History*, as we saw in his description of Barbados’s “defensive” and fortified plantation architecture designed to guard against servant-slave rebellion (29).

expression in Behn's *Oroonoko*. Put simply, the colonial servant, in its depravity, symbolizes a popular form of political unconscious in consistent antagonism with the manifest absolutism of the novel's imaginary.

At the same time, it is through this collective figure of corrupt colonial servants and ex-servants that *Oroonoko* attempts to resolve the conflicts of Oroonoko's noble slave status and the ideological demands of colonial order. Satirizing Oroonoko's opponents as a degraded class, the novel parodies the very possibility of order in the colonies, a strategy echoed in Behn's posthumous drama, *The Widow Ranter* (1689). But, as in the case of its harsh polarization of class relations, the narrative is constrained by its own contradictions of content and form, as its substantive support of absolutism and natural nobility is expressed through the popular, hybridizing form of the emergent, early novel. The novel, as Mikhail Bakhtin argues in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1982), is a genre, as he puts it, "historically shaped by the current of decentralizing, centrifugal forces" and characterized by heteroglossic dialogism, or a many-voiced negotiation of utterances, languages, and speech forms (273, 263). A narrative totality juxtaposing Old World romance with New World travel narrative, as William Spengemann schematizes in "The Earliest American Novel" (1984), *Oroonoko* is formally antagonistic to the kind of centralizing, consolidating movement of political absolutism that ideologically determines its novelistic matter.<sup>80</sup> This opposition of absolutism and the popular is not only limited to *Oroonoko*'s novelistic

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<sup>80</sup> On political absolutism and the history of the absolutist state formation, see Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, 15-59.

form but also obtains in the tradition of which *Oroonoko* is an emblematic part — “antipopulist Stuart apologetics,” what Elliott Visconsi describes in “A Degenerate Race” (2002) as “a tradition which argues that the deconsecration of absolute sovereignty, the denaturalization of aristocratic privilege, and the elevation of international trade all lead inevitably to barbarism and faction” (682). The irony of such a project chiefly shouldered by Behn and Dryden during this period is that it is an attempt to popularize and publicize an anti-populist political ideology. This necessity for the simultaneous interpellation and nullification of the popular that stems from this tradition conditions Behn’s *Oroonoko*, and it is this paradox that principally renders unresolvable the difficulty the novel faces as an apology for Stuart absolutism — the need for the people, or at least some of the common political body, to sanction, or acquiesce to, the retreat of republican political developments in the name of a return to a naturalized royal absolutism that, by definition, invalidates the very possibility of such common political agency.

**c. Convict Governance, Colonial Scapegoating, and the Contradictions of the Crowd in *Oroonoko*’s Execution Scene**

Evacuating the role of the planter class in preserving colonial order and opening up the problematic of the popular unconscious, Behn, in a compensatory move, renders servants and slaves absolute antagonists in an ironic reassertion of a classic tenet of colonial social control — the transformation of plantation labor allies and intimates into unconditional colonial adversaries. In a reflection of the text’s

absolutist balancing act, Behn, after separating servants from slaves, consolidates the trace of a popular, servant class antagonism in the sovereign figure of Deputy Governor Byam and his sadistic proxy, Banister, a move that vests power not in the collective servant body but its violent, corrupt leaders. At the same time, Behn extends the corruption of the servant class to the figure of an antagonistic colonial crowd, a group that remains a shadowy, scapegoated multitude in the novel. Byam comes on the scene to “lead his Army forth to meet *Caesar*, or rather to pursue him” (54); his militia is described as a tragi-comic troupe, armed with “cruel Whips they call *Cat with Nine Tayles*” as well as “rusty useless Guns for show” and “old Basket-hilts, whose Blades had never seen the Light in this Age” (55). Although a contingent of Byam’s army will be denounced as responsible for Oroonoko’s initial capture and torture, Byam, the narrator relates, “was now the only violent Man against him,” a stance she excoriates for its duplicity, as Byam formerly “pretended the most Friendship to *Caesar*” (54). As Oroonoko’s principal adversary, Byam, the narrator suggests, is an exception to the ruling class dynamic: “the most Fawning fair-tongu’d Fellow in the World ... whose Character is not fit to be mention’d with the worst of the *Slaves*” (54). The focus on Byam’s corrupt singularity effectively suppresses the flashes of the popular political unconscious in the novel, as he is depicted as solely responsible for turning the colonial administration and populace against Oroonoko and his slave rebels in a series of subsequent scenes that brutally contravene the landed class’s initial refusal to persecute Oroonoko.

The first of these occurs after Byam, recovering from Imoinda's "poyson'd" arrow wound, calls his council together to pronounce Oroonoko's executionary punishment (55):

The *Governor* was no sooner recover'd, and had heard of the menaces of *Caesar*, but he call'd his Council; who (not to disgrace them, or Burlesque the Government there) consisted of such notorious Villains as *Newgate* never transported; and possibly originally were such, who understood neither the Laws of *God* or *Man*; and had no sort of Principles to make 'em worthy the Name of Men: But, at the very Council Table, wou'd Contradict and Fight with one another; and Swear so bloodily that 'twas terrible to hear, and see 'em. (Some of 'em were afterwards Hang'd, when the *Dutch* took possession of the place; others sent off in Chains.) But calling these special Rulers of the Nation together, and requiring their Counsel in this weighty Affair, they all concluded, that (Damn 'em) it might be their own Cases; and that *Caesar* ought to be made an Example to all the *Negroes*, to fright 'em from daring to threaten their Betters, their Lords and Masters; and, at this rate, no Man was safe from his own *Slaves*; and concluded, *nemine contradicente*, that *Caesar* shou'd be Hang'd. (59)

In contrast to the colonial militia's "comical" designation, Byam's colonial council is a disorderly assembly of appointed criminals. Sardonicly termed Byam's "wise council," they comprise a group of former transported convicts, "such notorious Villains as *Newgate* never transported; and possibly originally were such," who fail to transcend their felonious past. Instead, they have risen to prominent planter status in the colony, a requirement for appointment to the council, and, unlike the convict transports of Defoe's servitude novels, *Moll Flanders* and *Colonel Jack*, they delegitimize the political order by maintaining their criminal status rather than repenting their illicit past and reforming into respectable planter-authorities, as we will see in the next chapter with *Colonel Jack*. Moreover, as the narrator

parenthetically attests, some of these councilmembers will, upon the Dutch takeover of Surinam, return to full-fledged criminal status, either “sent off in Chains” or “Hang’d,” the latter group meeting a fate initially avoided in England when they traded colonial transportation and plantation servitude for capital punishment. While Behn’s narrator depicts the council as a group of inveterate servant criminals, she also satirically portrays them as unequipped to consider the type of judgment “requiring their Counsel in this weighty Affair.” They are, she suggests, innately unable to apprehend “the Laws of *God* or *Man*” and even lacking, in her words, the “sort of Principles to make ‘em worthy the Name of Men.” External to the tenants of civil and ecclesiastical law and outcasts at the margins of human society, the council appears as a tragi-comical scapegoat of Byam’s assault on Oroonoko and a political pawn of Byam’s corrupt colonial authority. This representation of the colonial council marks a major ideological difference between Behn and Defoe’s representations of colonial servitude in that Defoe, as we will see, depicts convict transportation to the Anglo-American colonies as a mode of class advancement and politico-spiritual refashioning, whereas Behn satirically portrays it as an inescapably demeaning and perpetually incriminating class position that invalidates the possibility of political order in the colonial scene. Convict transportation is censured rather than endorsed in Behn’s Anglo-American anti-image — a point of continued servant criminality instead of a means of redemption and social mobility.

For Behn, the Anglo-American colonies are not simply corrupted replicas of English civil society but inverted absurdities of political order. It is an outlook she reprises in *The Widow Ranter* (1689) where she mockingly paints the Virginia council during Bacon's Rebellion (1676) as a group of inveterately drunk and disputatious former convict servants. As one of the colony's comic planters explains, "we are ruled by a council, some of which have been perhaps transported criminals, who having acquired great estates are now become Your Honour, and Right Worshipful, and possess all places of authority" (256). The criminalized, degraded colonial council is the emblem of Behn's anti-image of colonial America, whether portraying 17<sup>th</sup>-century Surinam or Virginia. This claim is in direct contrast to Elliott Visconsi's reading of *Oroonoko* and *The Widow Ranter*, as he argues that the debased colonial council and populace symbolize refractions of metropolitan disorder — "merely a way of describing the impending tyranny of the vulgar multitude in England," of marking the anxieties of an unexpurgated gothic, "English barbarism" (690-1, 679). Instead, I am suggesting that Behn's council, and by extension the colonial crowd, are distinct colonial figures marked by a situated geopolitical imaginary. The depiction of the colonial population as a boorish, shiftless, and criminal crowd is a feature of Anglo-American colonial discourse in the period. In his 1664 "Letter sent from Syrranam," Henry Adis, a Baptist dissenter and royalist emigrant to Surinam, writes to Governor Willoughby of his favorable welcome in the colony but castigates his new "Country-men" as a "rude rabble" afflicted by "drunkenness" and "debauched Atheistical Actions" (3-

5). As a colonist who has come to Surinam with his family for “the freedom of our Liberties” and to escape novel legal injunctions against religious dissenters in England, Adis seems to find a surfeit of liberty in the colony (Davies 2). To Adis’s call for immediate religious reform, Willoughby responds that such moves to civilize the colonial populace will happen “in time” (7). Willoughby’s subsequent universalized portrait of the colonial masses demonstrates that such typecasting of the colonial demographic as a coarse, vulgar, and corrupt population is a mark of asymmetrical class relations:

All new Colonies you know of what sort of People generally they are made up of; so that, what we in probability can expect from them, must be from length of time, and the good example of those who have been more civilly bred, and God hath wrought upon, and better principled, which I do with great expectation hope in time may produce good effects in the poor and sad Colony of Syrranam. (7)

The designation of the colonial populous as a barbaric, “rude rabble,” in other words, is a sign of the subordinate, inferior class status of the majority of colonial migrants, not solely a reflection, as Visconsi argues, of the anxieties of an insufficiently hegemonized English domestic multitude. Willoughby’s response, moreover, appears as a touching counterpart — “the poor and sad Colony of Syrranam” — to Behn’s criminalized and corrupt portrait of the colony’s servant and ex-servant populations, pointing to an alternative, exemplary path of uplift for Surinam’s poor inhabitants that stands in stark contrast to her narrator’s presentation of the manipulation and degradation of the colony’s most vulnerable by those, like herself, “who have been more civilly bred.”

Behn's descriptive exploitation of the servant class is evident in the juxtaposition of the narrator's sardonic introduction of the ex-servant colonial council, "not to disgrace them, or Burlesque the Government there," with their subsequent depiction as manipulated antagonists to Oroonoko's noble cause. Behn's narrator immediately enacts just what her apologetic gesture claims to avoid — a "disgrace" and "Burlesque" of the "Government" — as she sets Byam and his "wise council" against Trefry, Governor Willoughby's benevolent overseer and chief Oroonoko ally. Claiming Willoughby's Surinamese proprietorship as royal prerogative, Trefry proceeds to throw Byam and the council "out of Doors," declaring the Governor's plantation "exempt from the Law as *White-hall*" and fortifying Willoughby's plantation grounds as a "Sanctuary" for Oroonoko's protection (59). To defend Oroonoko's asylum, Trefry enlists Willoughby's servants and plantation staff to privately guard him from the public enactment of his criminal execution led by Byam and approved by the council. In so doing, Trefry exploits the instability of the distinction between the public and private spheres in the colony and uses the legal subordination of the colony to the metropole to protect rather than to prosecute Oroonoko.<sup>81</sup> The conflict between Byam and Trefry enlists *Oroonoko's* servants in opposing causes and highlights their vulnerable mediating position in the colony's political struggles. As a consequence,

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<sup>81</sup> The public sphere, in other words, is not yet established in *Oroonoko's* Surinam. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), where he locates the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere in early 18<sup>th</sup>-century England. See also, Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity* (2005), for a revisionary treatment of Habermas (48, 75-6, 110).

Behn's narrator depicts Trefy and his servant bloc as an exception to the absolute criminality and corruption of the servant class in *Oroonoko's* Surinam — a portrait that underscores at once the contradictory status of servants in the novel and the mythical character of Behn's convict America. Despite the tensions that emerge from these incongruous representations of servitude, colonial servants, as chief mediators of Behn's Anglo-American anti-image, are unable to escape the ideological stamp of criminality; regardless of the support or opposition they give to Oroonoko and his noble cause, they continue to appear as marginalized and exploited figures in the novel. With little detectable colonial agency, servants lack a recognizable socio-political status in Surinam, only surfacing in the narrative frame to signify the contradictions of political order and mediate the conflicts and central tragedy of the novel.

Such representational pliability constitutes the scapegoating of the servant and ex-servant classes in *Oroonoko*. It is an incriminated position that colonial servants share with common slaves, as revealed upon Oroonoko's capture, a scene of aborted rebellion in which "by degrees the Slaves abandon'd *Caesar*" (54). In response to Byam's entreaty for Oroonoko's surrender and his duplicitous promise to return him to Coramantien, Oroonoko resists a truce agreement with Byam, countering his offer by scapegoating his former recruits. As Behn's narrator recounts:

As for the rashness and inconsiderateness of his Action he wou'd confess the Governor is in the right; and that he was asham'd of what he had done, in endeavoring to make those Free, who were by Nature *Slaves*, poor

wretched Rogues, fit to be us'd as *Christians* Tools; Dogs, treacherous and cowardly, fit for such Masters; and they wanted only but to be whipt into the knowledge of the *Christian Gods* to be the vilest of all creeping things.  
(56)

In this move to blame the naturalized servility of Surinam's slaves for the failure of his revolt, Oroonoko compels his former recruits to rejoin the degraded class of colonial servants from which they were initially distinguished. This joint scapegoating of colonial servants and slaves upon the failure of Oroonoko's rebellion establishes a pattern of manipulation that extends to the oppositional characterization of the broad colonial populace. As the desertion of the slave rebels and Trefry's defense of Oroonoko trigger both Byam's violent counteroffensive and Oroonoko's murder/suicide, the unfolding of the novel's post-rebellion events leads, on the one hand, to an incongruous generalization of public opposition to Oroonoko and, on the other, to an intensification of Byam's individualized support for Oroonoko's capital punishment. This double, incongruous mobilization of hostility to Oroonoko is revealed in his explanation of his sacrificial murder-suicide plot, "his Design first of Killing [Imoinda], and then his Enemies, and next himself," as he attempts to evade his own execution and, above all, the enslavement of his wife and unborn child (60). Reflecting on the certainty of Byam's "Revenge" and his ability to arouse and direct the "fury of the English *Mobile*, who perhaps wou'd have been glad of the occasion to have kill'd him," Oroonoko cannot, the narrator relates, leave "his lovely *Imoinda* a Prey, or at best a *Slave* to the inrag'd Multitude" (60). Unveiling the logic of his determination, Oroonoko reveals the

extent to which these figures of “the English *Mobile*” and “the inrag’d Multitude” are consequences of Byam’s individuated retaliation rather than collective sites of self-induced opposition. As with the colonial council, the militia, Trefry’s servant cadre, and the defeated slave rebels, they are manipulated, popular antagonists, who are always under Byam’s potential sway. Like these figures of exploitable servants, ex-servants, and slaves, the colonial crowd is an ideological scapegoat of the tragic scene of Oroonoko’s enslavement, rebellion, and impending execution. Figuring the volatile mob as an effect of Byam’s retribution, these evocations of the malleable crowd work to extend Behn’s degradation of the criminal and pliable ex-servant council to the general population and mark the transfiguration of a previously unified, if shadowy, popular unconscious into an easily manipulated servile class that acts as a universalized, if disorderly and self-divided, threat to Oroonoko’s life.

This evocation of the generalized danger of the “*Mobile*” soon dissipates, as its conjured threat is consolidated in the villainous character of Banister and its invoked capability for active menace is attenuated into a posture of generally passive compliance with Banister’s brutal execution of Oroonoko. Banister, Behn’s narrator relates, is “a wild *Irish* Man, and one of the Council; a Fellow of absolute Barbarity, and fit to execute any Villainy, but was Rich” (64). Despite having curiously left Oroonoko to visit “Colonel *Martin’s* [plantation], about three Days Journy down the River [*sic*],” the narrator recounts in close detail the swift

entrance of Banister onto the scene and his quick assumption of the role of Oroonoko's executioner:

He came up to *Parham*, and forcibly took *Caesar*, and had him carried to the same Post where he was Whip'd; and causing him to be ty'd to it, and a great Fire made before him, he told him, he shou'd Dye like a Dog, as he was. *Caesar* replied, this was the first piece of Bravery that ever *Banister* did; and he never spoke Sense till he pronounc'd that Word; and, if he wou'd keep it, he wou'd declare, in the other World, that he was the only Man, of all the Whites, that ever he heard speak Truth. (64)

Banister arrives to Parham House as Byam's proxy, as Byam has sent Trefry "about some pretended earnest Business, a Days Journy up the River," and "communicated his Design to one Banister" (64). His seizure of Oroonoko, then, takes place in Trefry's designed absence, leaving Banister to fend off, one assumes, only Willoughby's "servants ... and the Chirurgeons" who have been left "to take what possible care they cou'd of the Life of *Caesar*" (64). The figure of the colonial servant, while dimly evoked in this offstage scene of Oroonoko's capture, is tacitly suppressed in the incongruous characterization of his chief tormenter, Bannister. A peculiar surrogate, Bannister's designation as "a wild *Irish*" suggests not a typical agent of colonial order but the extended Caribbean's leading "internal enemy," a representative of its most feared, insubordinate servant class whose threat, as Beckles explains, was based on "long-standing tensions and hostilities in English-Irish relations" ("A 'Riotous'" 504). As Joanna Lipking notes, Behn generally associates Banister "with the unruly population of Irish servants and transports in the West Indies, including many political prisoners shipped over by Cromwell"

who “were considered disreputable and even dangerous, sometimes joining the blacks in rebellion” (Behn 64, n. 2). While generally evoking the Irish servant class in her portrayal of Banister, Behn’s narrator, more specifically, figures the “wild *Irish*” councilman, on the one hand, as an exception to the general rule of Irish servant class debasement and, on the other, as a paradoxical continuation of the stereotypical unruliness and intractability of Irish servants in the Anglo-American Atlantic. Banister, in contrast to the fate of most Irish servants, has risen to a prominent position in the Surinamese plantocracy, and, unlike the archetypal Irishman in the West Indies, he is not invested in provoking civil disruption, joining neither African slaves in internal revolts nor Catholic French military encroachments into English colonial territories. Instead, his chief aim is to reestablish, if brutally, the colonial socio-political order. Paradoxically, Banister’s characterization follows the conventional logic of Irish servants in the Caribbean in which they serve as scapegoats for what Beckles considers the universal threat posed by all colonial servants: “Though the behavior of most servants and freemen was typically restless and insubordinate, sparked by their awareness that West Indian indentureship offered extremely limited opportunities for social or material advancement, it was the Irish who were perceived by English masters as a principal internal enemy — at times more dangerous and feared than blacks. Planters wrote of their Irish servants as constituting a special problem” (“A ‘Riotous’” 504).

This “special problem” of the Irish in the Anglo-American Atlantic was a complicated nexus that joined a long history of English colonization, Irish colonial resistance, and European politico-religious conflict to the novel labor conditions and social control strategies of the Atlantic plantation complex. Arguably the first English colonials, the Irish were transported to the New World under a Catholic dissident banner of suspicion. Seen as “a dangerous political element” and “stereotyped as lazy, drunken, noisy, and opposed to the Protestant colonial interest,” the Irish were, as Beckles argues, “marked at the outset for the lowest socioeconomic status within the West Indian Anglican-dominated community” (*White Servitude* 8, “A ‘Riotous’” 506). That they were the most populous servant group in the Caribbean plantations partially explains their general debasement, but their a priori colonial status and adherence to Catholicism were the principal factors mobilized to justify the discriminatory measures leveled against them both during and after their indentures (Beckles, “A ‘Riotous,’” 506). Such religiously-inflected bias is on display in a succession of anxious letters that Governor Willoughby, in 1667, sends from Barbados in which he reports unease at the fact that more than half of the island’s four-thousand militiamen are Irish servants and ex-servants, a situation that leads him to plead for the encouragement of Scottish over Irish servant transportation to the island: “We have more than a good many Irish amongst us, therefore I am for the down right Scott, who I am certain will fight without a crucifix about his neck” (Beckles, “A ‘Riotous,’” 508; Jordan 87). Such discouragements of the Irish servant trade and occasional outright refusals of

Irish servants were common in the Anglo-American colonies until the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, when, as Theodore Allen notes, the Anglo-Irish conflict at home abated, or at least reached conciliatory levels between the British administration and the Catholic bourgeois classes in Ireland (Beckles, "A 'Riotous,'" 521; Allen, 2:230-1). Until then, Irish servants encountered discrimination both before and after their indentureships in the Caribbean. Facing extensions of their customary indenture terms in Virginia during the Cromwellian conquests, they were also subject to "discriminatory dut[ies]" in the Chesapeake (Allen 2:179; Jordan 86-7). They often sold at prices below other European servants, as in early 18<sup>th</sup>-century Jamaica where they were valued at £15 and English, Welsh, and Scottish servants at £18 (Beckles, "A 'Riotous,'" 521). In 1657, a Barbadian code established an obligatory pass system for Irish servants, legislated vagabond laws against Irish free persons, and rendered illegal the selling of arms to "any Irish person" (Beckles, "A 'Riotous,'" 516). After the expiration of their terms, Irish servants, more than other European ex-servants, faced obstacles in acquiring land and selling their labor on the colonial market. In Barbados, they were kept out of the freeholder and artisan class as a way to prevent the acquisition of political rights that would come with potential land ownership (Beckles, *White Servitude*, 113). They were also excluded from the upper ranks of the militia, as the Barbadian planter class feared their collaboration with Catholic imperial powers, mostly the French, as occurred in the 1660s and 1680s in St. Kitts and the Leeward Islands (Beckles, "A 'Riotous,'" 518-19). The exclusion of the Irish was intensified by shifting market

determinations. After the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, Barbadian planters faced no crisis in slave labor supply and did not need the Irish to step into positions of “the skilled and supervisory labor elite”; consequently, they were further marginalized, as these roles were filled by the more preferred groups of European servants and freemen – the English, Scottish, and Welsh (Beckles, “A ‘Riotous,’” 512).

As a result, the Irish were relegated to “either field work with slaves or unemployment” (Beckles, *White Servitude*, 113). Their vulnerability is symptomatic of their liminal position in the social control system of the colonies. In the colonial servant hierarchy, the Irish inhabited the most subordinate position, a degraded status that, in its association and consequent “interchangeability” with African slavery, threatened to undermine the entire system (Beckles, “A ‘Riotous,’” 512; Allen, 2:230-1). While cultural differences were exploited to divide the slave population, as we see in *Oroonoko* when Behn’s narrator explains that slaves are sold in “Lots” to prevent their rebellious collaboration, so were ethnic and religious differences used to fragment the servant class, a move considered necessary to individuate and contain resistance (Behn 34; Beckles, *White Servitude*, 98). As the base of this stratified servant system, Irish servant degradation, as Allen explains, “created the greatest breach” in the ideology of “white” domination (2:230). The Irish were at once the first poor white subalterns of the New World and the “black Irish,” a designation Felicity Nussbaum in *The Limits of the Human* (2003) relates to their “Celtish origins” but just as likely could be explained by their collaboration, both real and perceived, with African colonial slaves in the New World (151).

Such Irish-African alliances in bond labor revolts are emblematic of the general anxiety of servant and slave combination Behn manages in her initial representation of the Surinamese militia. Pitting the “wild, *Irish*” Banister against the slave rebel Oroonoko undoes the collaborative anxieties provoked in the realignment of servants and slaves under a general sign of colonial degradation. At the same time, this opposition creates a series of new ethnic divisions within the servant class, specifically between Trefry and Banister — as Trefry, the sympathetic “*Cornish* Gentleman” and member of an incorporated Celtic clan, is opposed to Banister, the hostile and historically unassimilated Celtic ex-servant (34).

Reestablishing the general corruption of the colonial order, Behn recombines the segmentation of the servant class implied by the Banister/Trefry opposition into the figure of “the Rabble” at Oroonoko’s execution, which concludes the novel. The unruly crowd is chiefly evoked as an alibi for the narrator’s “Mother and Sister” who, unlike the narrator, were present at Oroonoko’s execution and were, she continues:

by him all the while, but not suffer’d to save him; so rude and wild were the Rabble, and so inhumane were the Justices, who stood by to see the Execution, who after paid dearly enough for their Insolence. They cut *Caesar* in Quarters, and sent them to several of the chief *Plantations* ... (64)

While the narrator’s family, along with “the Rabble” and “the Justices,” are depicted as passively complicit in Oroonoko’s fate, the former are absolved of their inability to prevent Oroonoko’s execution by the potential threat and general

volatility of the latter; it is a menace fulfilled in the ambiguous agency granted to them in the gruesome conclusion of Oroonoko's death in which "they," either the immediate antecedent, "the Rabble" and "the Justices," or the more distant referent, Banister's executionary assistants, "cut *Caesar* in Quarters, and sent them to several of the chief *Plantations*" (64). A symptom of what critics have termed the narrator's aristocratic self-fashioning, the narrative's anti-populism impossibly demands both a differentiated and undifferentiated colonial crowd to properly indemnify Oroonoko's "Glorious Name" against the "frightful Spectacles" that left him the brutalized and tragic "mangl'd King" (65). Thus, the narrator must render her mother and sister exceptions to the populist "rabble" and degraded colonial administrators, while, in the narrativized mode of an envoi, she paradoxically interpellates a worthier, but no less undifferentiated, crowd, who is called upon by her apostrophized "Pen" to immortalize both Imoinda and Oroonoko, to "make his Glorious Name to survive to all Ages, with that of the Brave, the Beautiful, and the Constant *Imoinda*" (65). *Oroonoko* is, in its final moments, an anti-populist narrative in which the people not only have but also determine the last word. This passive indictment of the colonial crowd, along with the contradictory evocations of the popular, mark the final moments of tension in Behn's convict America, a literary anti-image that appears even more unstable when we consider *Oroonoko*'s parallel depictions of Anglo-Amerindian encounter and Anglo-Dutch exchange.

## II. Behn's "Other World": Colonial Labor, Amerindian Contradiction, and Anglo-Dutch Relations in *Oroonoko's* Surinam

Similar to the incongruous depiction of colonial servants and slaves, the Wild Coast Amerindians in *Oroonoko's* Surinam are figured as both innocent allies and fierce adversaries of the European settlers. In contrast to Ligon's Barbados and the *Inkle and Yarico* myth, which both turn on the fact that Amerindians are commonly enslaved on the island and, by necessity, alienated from their native birthplaces, Behn's narrator initially excludes the "Natives of the place" from bonded labor in Surinam: "for those we live with in perfect Amity, without daring to command 'em; but on the contrary, caress 'em with all the brotherly and friendly Affection in the World; trading with 'em for their Fish, Venison, Buffilo's, Skins, and little Rarities" (10). Surinam's Amerindians are friends rather than servants or slaves, but theirs is a friendship at once conflated with trade and evoked as political necessity. Introducing them within the context of the commoditized superfluity of the region's fauna, Behn's narrator emphasizes the innocence and "Native Justice" of Surinam's non-laboring Amerindians, cast here as prelapsarian noble savages (10). "Unadorn'd so like our first Parents before the Fall," the natives are the source of a trade in colonial marvels, a commerce in which they exchange "little *Parakeetoes*, great Parrots, *Muckaws*, and a thousand other Birds and Beasts of wonderful and surprising Forms, Shapes, and Colours" for the English colonials' linen, "Beads of all Colours, Knives, Axes, Pins, and Needles" (8-10). Likening Surinam's indigenous population to Adam and Eve, while also detailing Anglo-

Amerindian trade, Behn's narrator evokes an Edenic image of Anglo-America at odds with the dominant, criminalized anti-image of the region, yet also consistent with it, as both colonial imaginaries are similarly characterized by economic and political expediency.

Behn's narrator continues to catalogue other indigenous trade goods, such as native feather headdresses, "Skins of prodigious Snakes" and "rare Flies" (8-9). She is not only "Eye-Witness" to Oroonoko's colonial tragedy but also ethnographic curator and natural historian, as she claims to have donated, upon her return to England, the headdresses to the London stage for performances of Howard and Dryden's *Indian Queen* (1664) and the procured snakeskins and flies to the new Royal Society museum (9). From her first entrance, she presents herself as a self-conscious interlocutor in what Brown terms the "widespread discourse of imperialist accumulation," an acquisitive mode prevailing during the Restoration and early 18<sup>th</sup> century in which the inventory of native goods functions "as a synecdoche for imperialist exploitation" (43). Such native commodities have also been described as fetishistic symbols of New World alterity, or what Joseph Roach calls "exotic tokens of otherness" that, in their ironic weightlessness, carry a substantial "burden of signification" (125).<sup>82</sup> It is a heaviness that is also symbolic of both the unequal power relations governing Anglo-Amerindian friendship-

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<sup>82</sup> See Roach's chapter "Feathered Peoples" in *Cities of the Dead* (1996) for an analysis of Amerindian representation and performance in 18<sup>th</sup>-century English literature, particularly his comments on the appearance of *Oroonoko's* feathers in Howard and Dryden's play (125, 130) and his reading of Behn and Southerne's *Oroonoko* (152-61).

exchange and the anxiety of such friendly relations turning into their opposite, as will subsequently unfold in the novel. Such an asymmetrical trade of trivial goods for exotic New World commodities is an expression of the late 17<sup>th</sup>-century “Baubles theory,” an economic scheme openly advocated by Defoe and one that, as Ramesh Mallipeddi explains, “contended that English merchants could trade in trinkets and trash for ivory, gold, and slaves on the Guinea coast” (494, n. 19; 479).<sup>85</sup>

The “perfect Amity” characterizing the relationship between colonial settlers and natives in this opening scene, then, can be understood as a clear commodity relation — a different scheme for “making use of” a colonial demographic than we glimpsed with colonial servants and slaves in Surinam, but a significant, corresponding mode of capitalization central to the colonial project. This underlying “use” character of Amerindian friendship is presented as a necessary and typical New World social relation, as the narrator reveals that the “perfect Tranquility, and good Understanding” between natives and settlers is indispensable for European survival, the indigenous “knowing all the places where to seek the best Food of the Country, and the Means of getting it; and for very small and unvaluable Trifles, supply us with what ‘tis impossible for us to get” (10). Not only are the native Guianans “very useful to us,” she continues, but “their Numbers are so far surpassing ours in that *Continent*” that “we find it absolutely necessary to caress ‘em as Friends, and not to treat ‘em as Slaves” (11).

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<sup>85</sup> Also see Mallipeddi for his discussion of *Oronoko*’s Anglo-Amerindian encounters, especially 478-81.

Amerindian friendship, in other words, is not simply a condition for an exotic, minor commodity trade but a shrewd, compulsory, and, as Brown terms it, “pragmatic” colonial strategy (49). Behn’s Edenic evocations of Surinam’s Amerindians, then, can be read as a cover not only for their commoditization but also for their necessity to the colony’s survival.

At once imperialist tactic and literary trope, Behn’s portrait of Anglo-Amerindian relations follows the model of Walter Raleigh’s 1596 *The Discovery of Guiana* in which Raleigh devises native alliance as the cornerstone of his anti-Spanish model of colonial conquest in the region. In one exemplary interchange, Raleigh relates his native-centric method of political negotiation in Guiana — a vast, somewhat fluid area of Northern coastal South America between the Orinoco and Amazon rivers, which includes the future territory of Behn’s colonial Surinam (Williamson 19):

And by my Indian interpreter, which I carried out of *England*, I made them understand that I was the servant of a queen who was the great *cacique* of the north, and a virgin, and had more *cacique* under her than there were trees in their island; that she was an enemy to the *Castellani* in respect of their tyranny and oppression, and that she delivered all such nations about her, as were by them oppressed; and having freed all the coast of the northern world from their servitude, had sent me to free them also, and withal to defend the country of *Guiana* from their invasion and conquest. (49-50)

Figuring native enslavement as a hallmark of Spanish imperial policy, Raleigh situates his foray into this vulnerable region of Spanish America, widely considered “the key to undoing Spain’s empire,” as a defensive quest to liberate the Guianan

Amerindians from Spanish oppression (Schmidt in Raleigh 23). England's characteristic belatedness to the New World imperium is cast as a necessary and virtuous counter to Spanish tyranny, an angle Benjamin Schmidt deems Raleigh's counter-model of "courteous conquest" and a strategy that works as a touchstone for Behn's chivalric colonial maneuvering in *Oroonoko* (Schmidt in Raleigh 15). The instability of Raleigh's position, though, is apparent in his dependence on his mediating "Indian interpreter ... carried out of *England*." A figure whose subordination is necessary for the implementation of Raleigh's Amerindian liberation scheme, Raleigh's interpreter simultaneously undermines the project's legitimacy, as he would have likely been either a prior captive of English adventurers or a previous subject of Euro-Amerindian servant exchange, a practice Raleigh himself administers before leaving the region.<sup>84</sup> Raleigh's evocation of the Black Legend not only obtains as a reference to Spanish colonial violence in the New World but also connects Spanish aggression to the European domestic

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<sup>84</sup> Raleigh, for instance, documents the exchange of an Amerindian leader's only son for two of his expedition's servants, "*Francis Sparrow*, a servant of Captain *Gifford* (who was desirous to tarry and could describe a country with his pen), and a boy of mine called *Hugh Goodwin*, [enlisted] to learn the language" (99). While Raleigh articulates the servant exchange as a "pledge" of Anglo-Amerindian collaboration, he reveals the mediatory, disposable role Amerindian and English servants play in congealing such a strategy and points to the unequal nature of the pact, as the exchange also entails a transfer of Amerindian allegiance to Elizabeth I: "to become servants to her Majesty, and to resist the Spaniards if they made any attempt in our absence" (100). See Williamson, *English Colonies in Guiana and on the Amazon* (1923), pp. 23-4, on the fate of Raleigh's two servants, one of which survived to write an account of his subsequent Spanish captivity and experience in the region, later published by Samuel Purchas in *Hakluytus Posthumus* (1625).

scene.<sup>85</sup> Raleigh, for instance, likens the cause of Guiana's Amerindians to "all such nations" of Europe similarly "oppressed" by the Spanish, such as, we can assume, England's current protestant allies in the Netherlands who had begun their revolt against the Spanish Habsburgs in the late 1560s and to whom England had pledged military support in the 1585 Treaty of Nonsuch (Schmidt 167).<sup>86</sup> While an exaggerated claim for England's role in the Dutch rebellion against Spain, such an allusion points to the Black Legend as a discursive site of Anglo-Dutch collaboration against Spanish imperial hegemony, a point that will become an important thread in our analysis of Behn's Atlantic imaginary and *Oroonoko's* Surinam.<sup>87</sup> A transatlantic strategy that interlocks European and New World historical imaginaries, Raleigh's pursuit of native diplomacy in exchange for anti-

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<sup>85</sup> Coined in 1912 by Spanish journalist Julián Juderías, "the Black Legend" generally refers to Spanish colonial cruelty in the Americas, especially Spain's mistreatment of American indigenous populations. First appearing in Bartolomé de Las Casas's popular *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*, it is a trope Juderías evokes in protest to what he articulates as a scapegoated, historical vilification of Spain in comparison to Europe's other imperial powers (Greer 1). See Margaret Greer, Maureen Quilligan, and Walter Mignolo's introduction *Rereading the Black Legend* (2008) and Judería's *La leyenda negra y la verdad histórica* (1914). See also Maria DeGuzman, *Spain's Long Shadow* (2005), Charles Gibson, *The Black Legend* (1971), and William S. Maltby, *The Black Legend in England* (1971).

<sup>86</sup> Also known as the Eighty Years War, this conflict between the Spanish Habsburgs and the Protestant Low Countries is, indeed, generally supported by England, but it is still ongoing at the time of Raleigh's narrative and continues many decades after his death, not officially ending until 1648. Despite his claim, England, in other words, has not single-handedly "freed all the coast of the northern world from [Spanish] servitude" at the time of his narrative.

<sup>87</sup> Such an instance reveals what Roberto Retamar identifies as the Black Legend's characteristic mobilization as a "handy ideological weapon in the interimperial struggle that accompanied the rise of capitalism," a strategy largely adopted by "Holland, France, and England" (60). See Retamar, "Against the Black Legend," in *Caliban and Other Essays* (1998), 56-73; and Greer, 6.

Spanish allegiance and local knowledge remains a tireless thematic of his Elizabethan discovery narrative. It is replicated as a colonial strategy in subsequent English incursions in the region, such as Robert Harcourt's settlement venture from 1609 to 1613, and it likewise persists as a narrative trope, although lacking Raleigh's overt anti-Hispanism, in Behn's novelistic account of Surinam almost a century later (Williamson 43). Native alliance, even if shorn from its original anti-Spanish antagonism, can be grasped as a Black Legend trace and an elemental trope of Guianan literary geography that endures from the early modern period to the late 17th and 18th centuries, as evident, although in a more complicated context of maroonage and slave rebellion, in John Gabriel Stedman's *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam* (1796).

That Behn's portrait of native alliance is so firmly linked to native innocence, an association not as clearly manifest in Raleigh's *Discovery*, marks its overlap with the Edenic imaginary of Anglo-America of an earlier period, but also with a particular Dutch configuration of the Atlantic. As Schmidt argues, the Dutch singularly evoked the Atlantic as a space of Spanish brutality that, in turn, catalyzed a Dutch-Amerindian coalition of innocence. The Dutch, he explains, called up "the specter of 'Spanish tyranny' in the Atlantic" to both "galvanize opposition to the Habsburg regime in the Netherlands" in the late 16th century and mark out an autonomous Dutch scheme for Atlantic colonial expansion in the early part of the 17th century (168-70). Evoking the New World indigenous as "natural allies" in a shared experience of Spanish colonial oppression, the Dutch — in

contrast to the English and the French who, with the Dutch, would soon vie for position in a post-Iberian Atlantic — figured themselves “not as colonizers in the Atlantic but as the colonized”; they were equally innocent “victims of imperial hostility” — a connection implicitly drawn by Raleigh in his claim to “having freed all the coast of the northern world from [Spanish] servitude” (Schmidt 170, Raleigh 50). While Raleigh in part mobilizes this Dutch vision of the Atlantic as a space of Spanish cruelty and victimized Dutch-Amerindian alliance, his *Discovery*, Schmidt contends, should be distinguished from the Dutch model, arguing that the Atlantic anti-Spanish discourse in England was minimal compared to the level of Spanish invective in the Netherlands and that Raleigh, moreover, “aspired to *outdo* — not *undo* — Cortés as a conquistador,” a point evident in his propagation of the El Dorado myth and his aforementioned practice of Anglo-Amerindian servant exchange (184, n 10). Even so, we could still argue that Raleigh shares elements of this largely Dutch vision in his effort to mark out a “virtuous” space for English colonials in an Iberian Atlantic context. Reinforcing the Dutch and indigenous Guianans as common victims of Spanish imperialism, Raleigh reinforces a major feature of the emergent Dutch Atlantic imaginary, while he also transforms it by positioning the English as their joint, honorable liberators. In this way, we can begin to grasp the adulterated and cosmopolitan character of these nationalized Atlantic world paradigms, as we also note the divergent, prevailing tendencies that may distinguish the various colonial strategies of competing European powers in the region. While Behn’s *Oroonoko* avoids any critical reference to the Spanish

colonial presence in the Anglo-American Atlantic, perhaps unnecessary in the face of Spain's imperial decline in the late 17th century, the novel clearly takes up other threads of the Dutch Atlantic — particularly native alliance and innocence — in its move to signify English colonial virtue by means of an honorable association with and treatment of Guiana's Amerindians (Williams, *From Columbus*, 85-6).<sup>88</sup>

Intersecting with both Raleigh's *Discovery* and Dutch conceptions of the Atlantic, *Oroonoko's* colonial Atlantic imaginary can generally be grasped as a syncretic Anglo-Dutch colonial affair. The novel's embedded Anglo-Dutch imaginary, moreover, seems even more plausible when considering Behn's own alleged royalist espionage in both the Low Countries and Surinam, a position which had her shuttling between English and Dutch territories and one echoed in her narrator's dual position as Oroonoko's friend and spy.<sup>89</sup>

Registering as our first glimpse of Anglo-Dutch collaboration in Behn's *Oroonoko*, such a layered, pan-colonial projection of the Atlantic is just one aspect of what I aim to explain as an Anglo-Dutch dialectic of collaboration and conflict interlacing Behn's text. Such occasions of alliance are punctuated by depictions of conflict between the English and Dutch in *Oroonoko's* Surinam. This commonality

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<sup>88</sup> Behn's earlier play *The Rover* (1677), set in a Spanish-controlled Naples where English royalists arrive as liberators, overtly critiques Spanish territorial occupation. The play overtly mobilizes the Black Legend as justification for English political intervention, as it also reveals new tensions in the legend's legibility as a marker of Anglo-Dutch Alliance in a period of increased Anglo-Dutch conflict. See Brian Lockey, "A Language All Nations Understand" (2009), for a reading of Anglo-Spanish relations in *The Rover* and a discussion of Behn's cosmopolitanism.

<sup>89</sup> On Behn's role as a royalist spy in the Netherlands and colonial Surinam, see Janet Todd, *The Secret Life of Aphra Behn* (2000) (5, 31-2, 41-2 and *passim*).

is a recovered point of collaboration between the two imperial powers, a noiseless and somewhat distorted incorporation rather than an acknowledged association — a feature comparable to the veiled alliances of colonial servants and slaves in the novel. Although just a fragment of the Anglo-Dutch story, such points of buried connection are especially significant in the context of colonial Surinam, a space historically overdetermined by conflict, but one that, as we will see, bears many past and continuing traces of colonial interchange and overlap. A colony settled by the English in 1651, Surinam was occupied by the Dutch in February 1667 during the Second Anglo-Dutch War and permanently ceded to them in July 1667 at the Peace of Breda in exchange for the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam, which was under English occupation. In an ironic expression of metropole/periphery disconnect, the colony was retaken by the English in October, but soon returned when the news of the treaty belatedly reached the Caribbean (Williamson 153, 180, 183). While the frame for Anglo-Dutch relations in *Oroonoko*, this contestation and exchange of Surinam also marks a tension in the terms of Schmidt's conception of the Dutch Atlantic, as Behn's narrator evokes the Dutch not as the basis for strategizing Amerindian alliance, as is the case with Raleigh's narrative, but as a scapegoated cause of Amerindian mistreatment and discord in the new Dutch-controlled Surinam. Analogous to the novel's condemnation of colonial servants in the face of Oroonoko's rebellion and abuse, the Dutch are also depicted as a contradictory figure of censure, at times exacerbating conflict in the colony and at others mitigating it. In this way, Dutch degradation, along with servant censure,

emerges as a contradictory feature of Behn's anti-image of Surinam, a portrait that intersects with the emergent incongruities of Anglo-Amerindian relations.

In a section on the colonial "Sports" devised by the surveillant narrator and her attendant circle to divert an increasingly anxious Oroonoko, the narrator reveals, contrary to her previous pledge of "perfect amity," that a "feud" between natives and colonial settlers had begun during her stay:

About this time we were in many mortal Fears, about some Disputes the *English* had with the *Indians*; so that we cou'd scarce trust our selves, without great Numbers, to go to any *Indian* Towns, or Place, where they abode; for fear they shou'd fall upon us, as they did immediately after my coming away; and that it was in the possession of the *Dutch*, who us'd 'em not so civilly as the *English*; so that they cut in pieces all they cou'd take, getting into Houses, and hanging up the Mother, and all her Children about her; and cut a Footman, I left behind me, all in Joynts, and nail'd him to Trees. (47)

In her characteristic penchant for just missing key moments of colonial violence, Behn's narrator recounts a story of Euro-Amerindian antagonism in which she blames Dutch incivility for intensifying an already existing tension between English settlers and Amerindian natives. Despite both turning the trope of Spanish cruelty onto the Dutch and insisting on the greater harshness of Dutch colonial occupation, the narrator's account highlights the Anglo-Dutch complicity undergirding the present state of Amerindian insurgency. Dutch abuse, therefore, is a scapegoated continuation of an Anglo-Amerindian dispute that produces this scene of brutal mutilation. The incongruity of this portrait with Behn's previous depiction of perfect friendship with the region's Amerindians, as Brown suggests,

points to the violence of *Oroonoko*'s contradictions (50-1). At the same time, it underscores the essential marginality of the figures that mediate these contradictions — here, the dismembered colonial mother, her children, and the English narrator's servant-footman, a subordinate figure only mentioned in the context of his brutal death. An Atlantic world practice and narrative event we just saw reflected in Raleigh's *Discovery*, the narrator's strategically abandoned servant, along with the unnamed mother and children, subsist as violently expendable figures carrying the mediative burden of representing the incongruity of such colonial antagonisms.

The simultaneous depiction of Anglo-Amerindian trading friendships and Amerindian attacks on English settlements is also a feature of George Warren's 1667 *An Impartial Description of Surinam*, a brief colonial account many critics cite as a likely source for Behn's *Oroonoko*.<sup>90</sup> While Behn adopts the general model of Euro-Amerindian collaboration and conflict present in his text, especially the

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<sup>90</sup> Ernest Bernbaum's 1913 *PMLA* essay, "Mrs. Behn's Biography," for example, argues that *all* of Behn's *Oroonoko* was taken from Warren's *Description*, a claim that sparked a debate over whether or not Behn had ever travelled to Surinam. Initially refuted by Harrison Gray Platt's 1934 *PMLA* essay "Astrea and Celadon," Bernbaum's position has, on many fronts, been generally dismissed. Regardless of their position on Behn's historical presence in the colony, most critics either note or treat Warren's *Description* as a possible source-text; at the very least, they point to it as a well-known text with which Behn and her contemporaries would have been familiar. See, for example, Bernard Dhuicq, "Further Evidence" (1979), 525-6; Angeline Goreau, *Reconstructing Aphra* (1980), 43-4; Derek Hughes, "New World Ethnography" (2005), 261-2; Katharine Rogers, "Fact and Fiction" (1988), 2; William Spengemann, "The Earliest American Novel" (1984), 406; and Janet Todd, *The Secret Life* (2000), 38. For accounts that argue in favor of Behn's stay in Surinam, see Dhuicq ("New Evidence," 40), Goreau (41-69), Ramsaran (142-5), and J. Todd (35-66).

relatively distanced and anonymous character of Amerindian raids, she also negotiates his contradiction by introducing a staged colonial encounter in a visit Oroonoko, her narrator, and their small entourage make to a Guianan “*Indian Town*” (Warren 3, Behn 47).<sup>91</sup> Despite the general anxiety of Amerindian discord, the group recruits a translator, “a Fisherman” and “Indian Trade[r]” living among the natives, to guide them to the Amerindians. Once there, they perform a colonial spectacle of first contact — a “white” trick in which the Europeans diffidently reveal themselves as light-skinned marvels to a group of isolated Amerindians, while the dark-skinned Oroonoko and translator, who had “become a perfect *Indian in Colour*,” hide to augment the “Wonder and Amazement” of the tableau (48-9). After the initial set-up in which the civilized, cultured interlopers characteristically charm the innocent and unsuspecting Amerindian primitives, the scene transforms into an ethnographic exchange of cultural discovery in which the two groups eat, play music together, and take unequal measure of one another’s difference. The encounter expounds on the novel’s opening depiction of noble savagery by deepening Amerindian primitiveness, as the narrator records the natives’ “Superstitious” nature, “extream ignorance,” and “simplicity” (49). At the same time, it reveals the highly mediated and theoretical nature of the previous scene of friendship in disclosing the novelty of actual Euro-Amerindian contact (49). Explaining the negotiatory status of their translator, the narrator notes that “’tis by these Fishermen, call’d *Indian Traders*, we hold a Commerce with ‘em [the

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<sup>91</sup> For Warren’s inconsistent representation of Amerindians, see “Chap. I: Of the River” (3) and “Chap. X: Of the Indians” (23-7).

natives]; for they love not to go far from home, and we never go to them” (49). Euro-Amerindian friendship, in other words, rests solely on the figure of the arbitrating translator-trader; it is, then, not only a commercialized alliance but also a mediated abstraction within the text, as the narrator’s previous protestations of living in “perfect Tranquility” with the region’s indigenous are, in actuality, marks of facilitated disconnection rather than a sign of an existing social relation (10).

Despite her claim to the contrary, the narrator’s estimation of this staged colonial encounter amplifies the instability of Anglo-Amerindian relations in *Oroonoko*: “In this Voyage *Caesar* begot so good an understanding between the *Indians* and the *English*, that there were no more Fears, or Heartburnings during our stay; but we had a perfect, open, and free Trade with ‘em” (50). As the nature of their “free Trade” has already been disclosed as a mediated fiction, the restoration of an amicable, harmonious routine of Anglo-Amerindian contact is a tenuous claim at best. Declaring Oroonoko the chief mediator of Surinam’s native and colonial inhabitants, the narrator further problematizes her protestations of cooperation and “perfect, open” understanding with the region’s indigenous, as she concentrates the entirety of Anglo-Amerindian diplomacy on Oroonoko’s already undermined political capacities during a single visit to an indigenous village. Moreover, in the group’s subsequent journey back to the English settlements, another major contradiction unfolds concerning the status of Amerindian freedom in the colony when the narrator alludes to the extant conditions of Amerindian enslavement and captivity. A conflicting move that further destabilizes the

narrator's double assertion for the reestablishment of Anglo-Amerindian friendship and the diminished anxiety of Amerindian conflict in the novel, the revelation appears in the form of fortuitous detail in a highly allusive, Raleighian scene of the travellers' chance meeting with a "strange" group of Amazonian natives laden with traces of the region's fabled gold. As Behn's narrator describes:

As we were coming up again, we met with some *Indians* of strange Aspects; that is, of a larger Size, and other sort of Features, than those of our Country: Our *Indian Slaves* that Row'd us, ask'd 'em some Questions, but they cou'd not understand us; but shew'd us a long Cotton String, with several Knots on it; and told us, they had been coming from the Mountains so many Moons as there were Knots; they were habited in Skins of a strange Beast, and brought along with 'em Bags of Gold Dust; which, as well as they cou'd give us to understand, came streaming in little small Channels [*sic*] down the high Mountains, when the Rains fell; and offer'd to be the Convoy to any Body, or Persons, that wou'd go to the Mountains. We carry'd these Men up to *Parbam*, where they were kept till the Lord Governour came: And because all the Country was mad to be going on this Golden Adventure, the Governour, by his Letters, commanded (for they sent some of the Gold to him) that a Guard shou'd be set at the Mouth of the River of *Amazons*, (a River so call'd, almost as broad as the River of *Thames*) and prohibited all People from going up that River, it conducting to those Mountains of Gold. But we going off for *England* before the Project was further prosecuted, and the Governour being drown'd in a Hurricane, either the Design dy'd, or the *Dutch* have the Advantage of it: And 'tis to be bemoan'd what his Majesty lost by losing that part of *America*. (51)

Evoking Raleigh's myth of El Dorado and the *Discovery's* fetishistic figure of "Gold Dust," Behn's narrator underscores *Oroonoko's* intertextuality as a mode of colonial sublation, a method of incorporating and transcending the older model of Iberian colonial conquest dominated by the accumulation of specie. The passage depicts England's self-conscious colonial imitation of the Spanish discovery model and its

transformation into a mode of plantation settlement centered on the exploitation of colonial labor.<sup>92</sup> The contradictions of colonial labor that abound in *Oroonoko* can be grasped as signs of this general transition from discovery to settlement, a shift that necessitates a flexibility of labor in the colonial setting. Such an elasticity of colonial labor is evident in this particular scene at the moment when the narrator discloses that her group of colonial adventures have all along been “Row’d” by “*Indian Slaves*” on their Amerindian expedition and, likewise, have taken the Incan-like Amerindians captive on their return voyage, “carry[ing] these Men up to *Parbam*, where they were kept till the Lord Governour came.” As the Governor never arrives in Surinam, having, as we are told, “drown’d in a Hurricane,” these Amerindian captives disappear under the weight of the loss of Surinam to the Dutch and the continued perpetuation of England’s failed mythic quest for South American gold. What does persist, though, are the Raleighan outlines of a colonial imaginary haunted by the Dutch takeover of Surinam and the spirit of commercialized Amerindian labor. Catherine Gallagher, in her argument for blackness as the abstract mark of commodification in *Oroonoko*, claims that Behn uses the term “Indian slaves” in this passage as “a synonym for ‘lowly servant’” and “never describes the commodification of Indians” in the novel (76, n48).

Gallagher’s claim that Behn’s slave designation actually signifies Amerindian servitude is unverifiable in this moment, and, if true, would suggest a broadening rather than a restriction of the possible modes of Amerindian conscription to the

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<sup>92</sup> See Trevor Burnard, “The British Atlantic” (2009), for the English tendency to replicate the Spanish model of discovery (124-5).

mercantilist colonial project (76, n 48). Servitude, in other words, is not external to the commodifying impulse of *Oroonoko*'s scene of colonial labor, even if flexible, temporary, or paternalistically inflected (what I take to be Gallagher's point). The various contradictory turns in Behn's depictions of both *Oroonoko*'s Amerindians and Anglo-Amerindian friendship-exchange illustrates, on the contrary, that commodification, either its sublimated realization in Anglo-Amerindian trade or its direct expression as a form of Amerindian bond labor, is the principal feature motivating the dialectic of Amerindian social relations in *Oroonoko*. Whether or not the native population is in friendly collaboration or antagonistic struggle with the English settlers is the consequence of England's singular focus on the economic exploitation of colonial Surinam.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> The division of Caribbean natives into "friendly" and "unfriendly" populations is also a classic trope of colonial discourse in the Caribbean. See Peter Hulme's chapter, "Caribs and Arawaks," in *Colonial Encounters* (1986) for his explanation of the ethnicization of the phenomenon into a Carib and Arawak opposition (45-87). On how this alternately productive and reductive process unfolds in Surinam, see Neil Whitehead's explanation of "ethnogenesis and ethnocide" in *History, Power, and Identity* (1996), 20-35. Whitehead's essay also helps us to grasp how Behn's representation of Amerindian enslavement exclusions and the selective commodification of Amerindians in *Oroonoko* reflect political developments in Surinam at the time of her writing. As he explains, the late seventeenth century was a period in which various exclusive peace treaties were forged with particular groups of Surinam's Amerindian population: "those who participated in the Carib and Arawak identities" were exempt from slavery and those who did not "became the target of Arawak or Carib slavers supplying the burgeoning sugar plantations" (27). Thus, the contradiction of Anglo-Amerindian relations in *Oroonoko* can also be understood as a general adumbration of a classic colonial social control tactic of division and containment, in which internal enslavement plays a principle role in managing and dividing the indigenous population as well as maintaining European hegemony in the colony.

As glimpsed in several of the above scenes, Behn's narrator counterpoints her description of Surinam and Anglo-Amerindian relations with commentary on the Dutch takeover that occurs soon after her departure. She generally depicts the event as a melancholic loss, a position evident in the final, emblematic moment of the previous El Dorado passage when she speculates on the fate of the "Golden Adventure" scheme instigated by her travelling party's discovery: "either the Design dy'd, or the *Dutch* have the Advantage of it: And 'tis to be bemoan'd what his Majesty lost by losing that part of *America*" (51). As in Raleigh's *Discovery*, colonial forfeiture is figured as a fabled loss of treasure, but it is also more than this, as Behn's narrator, in her characteristically elusive fashioning of referents, suggests the unfathomable character of the Surinam-New Amsterdam exchange and sediments the melancholic underpinnings of her colonial position. "What his Majesty lost by losing that part of *America*" is not specified, but it is nonetheless to "be bemoan'd." In her other remarks on the Dutch annexation of Surinam, Behn's narrator continues this melancholic stance, while presenting contradictory scenes of Dutch scapegoating in an effort to manage the colonial loss. For instance, as mentioned in the prior discussion on the Amerindian raids that occur under Dutch rule, Behn's narrator posits the typicality of Dutch mistreatment of the indigenous as the cause of Amerindian violence. "The *Dutch*," she notes, "us'd" the Amerindians "not so civilly as the *English*; so that they cut in pieces all they cou'd take" (47). We have already noted the extent to which this characterization also implicated the English and marked a shift in the standard Black Legend ascription

of Amerindian cruelty to the Spanish, but it is also a point at which Behn's narrator figures Dutch brutality as a clear injustice.<sup>94</sup> In contrast, the narrator suggests that Dutch cruelty is put to good use when it comes to the violent treatment of the former Council of English-controlled Surinam — the governing body of ex-convict servants that issues Oroonoko's death sentence, "such notorious Villains as *Newgate* never transported" (59). The narrator sanctions Dutch brutality when she parenthetically reports that "(Some of' em were afterwards Hang'd, when the *Dutch* took possession of the place; others sent off in Chains)" (59). Contrary to the more pacific historical accounts of the transition to Dutch-controlled Surinam,<sup>95</sup> such a scene in which the newly occupying Dutch capture and execute Oroonoko's chief antagonists and Surinam's criminal, colonial upstarts appears as a moment of clear, offstage retaliation for Oroonoko's torture, the abrogation of royal absolutism, and the misallocation of colonial power to the transported lower classes.

This double-vision of Dutch blame and approbation in the annexation of Surinam both confirms and undermines Behn's myth of convict America. That such brutal violence continues in the colony after the Dutch takeover reinforces

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<sup>94</sup> The critique of Dutch mistreatment as the cause of colonial violence is a contention John Gabriel Stedman frequently makes in his many depictions of slave rebellion in his *Narrative*; it obtains as one of his principal arguments and marks a thread of continuity from Behn to Stedman's Surinam.

<sup>95</sup> See, for instance, Williamson's discussion of the diplomatic character of the transition (177-84). Major John Scott, in his 1668/9 *Description of Guyana*, describes a more contentious scene of the English reconquest of Surinam in the lead up to the final transition, but it is far from the scene of arrest and summary execution depicted in Behn's *Oroonoko* (146-7). Behn's principal villain in Oroonoko's death, James Banister, for instance, is noted by many historians for successfully negotiating terms of the transition; see Todd for a brief comment on Behn's knowledge of Banister's role in Surinam (*Secret Life* 117).

Behn's anti-image of the region, while her professed motivation for the depiction of the Dutch takeover challenges such corrupt, chaotic visions of the colony. Her impetus for scapegoating Dutch cruelty, despite its occasional ideological advantage, is consistently driven by the characterization of Surinam as an inexplicable colonial loss — a melancholic logic that counters her criminalized anti-image of Surinam with a negated Edenic image, as her narrator posits the colony as an illusory territory that would have been beneficial to retain. In an earlier passage, Behn's narrator cites Charles II's surrender of the colony as a consequence of his lack of first-hand knowledge of Surinam, noting that, if he had "but seen and known what a vast and charming World he had been Master of in that Continent, he would never have parted so Easily with it to the *Dutch*" (43). The epistemological stability of Surinam as a colonial object, though, is just what Behn's lamenting description calls into question. Following Columbus, Vespucci, and Raleigh's idyllic descriptions of the region, the narrator evokes the characteristic colonial rhetoric of Guiana as a "byword of Paradise," describing the area as an Edenic land of "Eternal Spring" where "the Shades are perpetual" and "Flowers [are] eternally Blowing" (Schmidt in Raleigh 21; Behn 43-4).<sup>96</sup> Her

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<sup>96</sup> In the account of his third voyage (1498), Columbus repeatedly refers to Guiana as the "Earthly Paradise," a tendency that Vespucci in *Letters from a New World* (1505-6) secularizes and popularizes, presenting Guiana as a sign of utopia (Schmidt in Raleigh 21; Columbus, "Narrative of the Third Voyage," 206-226). Raleigh similarly exploits the Edenic symbology of Guiana, employing a rhetoric of singularity in his description of the natural world ("I never saw a more beautiful country ..." (90) and, in the most infamous passage of *The Discovery*, equating its unspoiled potential and defensible colonial position to a faultless and expectant female virgin: "*Guiana* is a country that hath yet her maidenhead, never sacked,

portrait of Surinam is one that the English resolutely fail to possess and maintain not only because of the Dutch invasion but also because of the evanescent character of its discursive, culturally-mediated status as a colonial ideal. Derek Hughes, for example, notes that Behn's descriptions of Surinam are shot through with signs of "culture impos[ing] itself on nature": "Even when Behn directly describes the perpetually blooming trees of Surinam, their flowers appear 'all like Nosegays' ... the eternal blooms are imagined with reference to *cut* and artificially arranged flowers" (emphasis in original, 272). The Dutch, therefore, are blamed for the forfeiture of an ungraspable colonial territory in a simultaneous scene of a utopic literary-geographical poesis, a portrait that is in direct antagonism to the degraded, corrupt condition of the colony when under English control.

As with other moments of Anglo-Dutch exchange in *Oroonoko*, the account of the conflict over Surinam involves the incorporation of elements that can be linked to a Dutch Atlantic imaginary. Behn's Surinam, if ideal, is a distinctly pan-colonial ideal. Upon first glance, for example, Behn's utopic account of the inexplicably extensive scale of the region seems simply part of the fantastical, propagandistic legacy of Columbus's voyages: "'Tis a Continent whose vast Extent was never yet known, and may contain more Noble Earth than all the Universe besides; for, they say, it reaches from East to West; one Way as far as *China*, and another to *Peru*" (43). At some level a typical colonial idealization, such a projection of colonial Surinam also reflects a novel, global conception of the

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turned, nor wrought; the face of the earth hath not been torn, nor the virtue and salt of the soil spent by manurance" (109; see also 89-90 and 108).

Atlantic and a fluid understanding of Atlantic space inaugurated by the Dutch in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Schmidt explains that, as the Low Countries' status shifts mid-century from a contending Atlantic imperial power in its own right to the chief commercial facilitator for other Atlantic colonial powers, the Dutch image of the Atlantic concurrently transforms from a localized vision of the Dutch *in* the Atlantic to a universalized, cosmopolitan Atlantic world of European production and consumption in which the Dutch themselves, as he attests, "shrink into the background" (178-9). Reflected in widely read Dutch geographies, natural histories, and ethnographies of the Atlantic as well as the Dutch's extensive publication of "the Atlantic worlds of others," this transformation also marks their incorporation of former antagonists, first Spain and then England, into a collaborative system of Atlantic trade networks (167, 178-9). This altered Dutch Atlantic, which Schmidt ironically notes "made the Dutch Atlantic at once less Dutch and less Atlantic," had two profound effects on the conception of the Atlantic world. First, it incorporated the Atlantic into a broader world of global exotica, and, second, it reconfigured Atlantic space as a flexible and shifting concept, "more open in terms of economic exchange and less particularistic in terms of geographic focus" (181); under the sign of mercantilist colonialism, the new Dutch Atlantic initiated a trans-oceanic model of Atlantic spatial ideology which linked, rather than divided, the Atlantic with other colonial sea routes, specifically the Pacific and Indian Oceans. In this frame, Behn's account of a Surinam that "they say ... reaches from East to West; one Way as far as *China*, and

another to *Peru*” signifies an adopted commercialized imaginary of the Atlantic that congeals the mercantilist linkages of the East Indies with the West Indies and joins the Atlantic with the North and South Pacific. In this mode, her vision is less a moment of idealized fantasy or geographical illiteracy than an articulation of an emergent “hyperimperial” and “pancolonial” geopolitics (Schmidt 182).<sup>97</sup>

Following the negated portrayal of Surinam as a colonial advantage, this Dutch contribution to *Oroonoko*'s pan-Atlanticism appears in the text as a negation generally participating in the discourse Simon Schama in *The Embarrassment of Riches* (1987) terms “Hollandophobia” (257-88). It is an ideology Rebecca Wolsk links to the entirety of Behn's oeuvre, as anti-Dutch sentiment also appears in Behn's *The Dutch Lover* (1673), *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister* (1684), *The Fair Jilt* (1688), *The History of the Nun* (1688), and the untitled epistolary narrative of Vander Albert and Van Bruin in Behn's posthumous memoirs (1699) (2-3, 8). Propagated in pamphlets, poems, and satirical cartoons, this stock English antagonism toward the Dutch, a position particularly strong in the 1660's during Behn's alleged trip to Surinam, is a complicated phenomenon reflective of both English mercantilist envy of the Dutch and the transatlantic, maritime conflict between the two powers, evident in the three Anglo-Dutch wars from the 1650s to the 1670s (Wolsk 4, Schama 259). Hollandophobia, according to Schama, is the

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<sup>97</sup> “From China to Peru” is also a phrase in Samuel Johnson's opening heroic couplet in *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749): “Let Observation with extensive View/ Survey Mankind from China to Peru” (1-2). Johnson evokes the phrase in a markedly different register than Behn, as an intelligible, spatialized unit of human history rather than a globalized conception of colonial space. See Nalini Jain, “Samuel Johnson's ‘China to Peru’” (2008) for a brief note on their comparison.

ideological mode through which the English negatively articulated their own commercial aspirations and capitalist preoccupations — economic desires that they projected onto the Dutch as “an exercise in collective guilt displacement” and scapegoated as externalized vices through their censure and ridicule of the Dutch (259). Associated with Toryism, Hollandophobia challenged the stability of Dutch political sovereignty and republicanism by deriding the unsteady foundation of the Low Countries’ “amphibious geography,” articulating the Dutch commercial threat as a “liquid terror” that could spread to the English nation in infinite, undetectable ways (262, 267). Andrew Marvell, who would later disassociate himself from Hollandophobic ideology in the early 1670s, expresses this characteristic form of anti-Dutch sentiment in his often-referenced 1651 poem, “The Character of Holland,” in which he conjoins Dutch political illegitimacy to their practice of land reclamation: “Holland, that scarce deserves the name of land, / As but th’off-scouring of the British sand ... / This indigested vomit of the sea / Fell to the Dutch by just propriety” (1-2, 7-8).<sup>98</sup> The threat of Dutch political power was, of course a very real one at the time of *Oroonoko*’s publication, as the Glorious Revolution of 1688 loomed on the horizon. In the face of this impending political upheaval,

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<sup>98</sup> Todd claims that Marvell was most likely “in Dutch pay” for much of his life, suggesting another example of the dialectical character of Anglo-Dutch antagonism (*Secret Life*, 77). She also notes that Behn included a similar Dutch invective in her *Miscellany* by a “Mr. Nevell” (425, n25). For other examples of Hollandophobic tracts, see *Observations concerning the present Affayres of Holland and the United Provinces* (1622); *The Dutch-mens Pedigree as a Relation, Showing how They Were First Bred and Descended from a Horse-Turd which Was Enclosed in a Butter-Box* (1653); Owen Felltham, *A Brief Character of the Low-Countries Under the States* (1659); *Dutch Boare Dissected; or, a Description of Hogg-Land* (1664); *The English and Dutch Affairs Displayed to the Life* (1664); and *The Dutch Deputies* (16\_\_).

*Oroonoko* remobilizes an earlier imaginary of anti-Dutch tropology in which the colonial loss of Surinam also doubles as a historical specter registering the anxieties of the forfeiture of the English monarchy to the Dutch — the imminent Dutch seizure of the English crown by William III of Orange and Mary and the two-year occupation of London and its environs by Dutch forces (Jardine 1-26). As many critics have noted, *Oroonoko* is a text that registers the contemporary apprehensions leading up to James II's abdication to William and Mary, as it is interwoven with Anglo-Dutch colonial and domestic antagonisms alike.<sup>99</sup>

Such anxieties of Dutch political authority emerge in *Oroonoko*'s depiction of the Dutch occupation of Surinam, for example, when Behn's narrator figures the dubious character of Dutch political order as the basis for both Oroonoko's likely literary obscurity and her female apology:

his Misfortune was, to fall in an obscure World, that afforded only a Female Pen to celebrate his fame; though I doubt not but it had liv'd from others Endeavours, if the *Dutch*, who, immediately after his Time, took that Country, had not kill'd, banish'd and dispers'd all those that were capable of giving the World this great Man's Life, much better than I have done. (36)

Whereas the Dutch political dismantling of Surinam proves advantageous in its elimination of Behn's convict-plagued America, it is detrimental to Oroonoko's literary memorialization, as "only a Female Pen" remains "to celebrate his fame." Depicting the indiscriminate, violent nature of Dutch republican leveling, this

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<sup>99</sup> See, for example, Janet Todd, *Secret Life*, 417; Rebecca Wolsk, "Muddy Allegiance and Shiny Booty" (2004), 26-7; and George Guffey, "Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*" (1975), 33-5.

passage points to the contradictory effects of Dutch political maneuverings in the colonial takeover of *Oroonoko's* Surinam. Here the Dutch extend, rather than end and unwittingly avenge, the English mistreatment of Oroonoko, as they fail to protect those distinguished male authorities who, though notably absent from her own account, would have either more effectively publicized Oroonoko's story themselves or more directly legitimated Behn's "Female Pen." The Dutch annexation of Surinam, in this instance, operates as a contextual cover for the extended conceit of Behn's female authorship, acting as a scapegoated impetus that compels Behn's gendered impropriety and necessitates her foray into the public sphere of letters.

The condition of possibility for this allegorization and scapegoating of Anglo-Dutch conflict in the novel, though, is the long history of Anglo-Dutch cooperation in the establishment of *Oroonoko's* central colonial topos — the Anglo-American sugar plantation. Undergirding Behn's general depiction of Anglo-Dutch conflict is an extensive network of English and Dutch merchants, planters, and laborers collaborating in the development of the sugar and slavery system, a mode that, as we have seen with *Inkle and Yarico*, first emerged on the island of Barbados in the 1640s and was transferred to Surinam, a "peripheral econom[y] of Barbados," at its 1651 settlement (Beckles, *White Servitude*, 163). In the early history of the Caribbean, the Dutch, famously designated the "great encouragers of Plantations" by one 17<sup>th</sup>-century commentator, are generally presented as the principal facilitators of Barbadian plantation development, catalyzing both the

establishment of the diversified plantations of the 1630s and the transition to the monocultural sugar and slavery system in the subsequent decades (Bridenbaugh 83). Responsible for the early recruitment and transportation of English and Irish servants and slaves to St. Christopher and Barbados in the 1620s, the Dutch were, up until the Restoration, the principal dealers in Barbadian tobacco, especially the “oronoko” variety, and Barbadian sugar, most of which was refined in Holland and sold in the Dutch market (Bridenbaugh 64-5, Dunn 65-6, 201). The Dutch offered English planters easy credit, frequent slave shipments, necessary plantation equipment, generous prices, and lucrative transport of colonial commodities to Europe (Dunn 65-6).<sup>100</sup> While historians have argued that the Dutch role in the development of the Barbadian sugar plantation has been exaggerated, especially in regards to the Dutch financing of the sugar boom, they nonetheless concur that the Dutch were significant facilitators of English planting and settlement in Barbados as well as throughout the Anglo-American Atlantic (Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, 51, 60; Emmer 98).

As the Dutch promoted the development of the English sugar plantation at the center of Behn’s *Oroonoko*, so they also decisively encouraged the harsh plantation labor regime that dominates the novel’s colonial setting and defines its central colonial tragedy — the invalidation of Oroonoko’s noble status upon his tragic enslavement and violent death. According to Blackburn, Dutch planters in

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<sup>100</sup> See Susan Iwanisziw, “Behn’s Novel Investment in *Oroonoko*,” (1998) for a reading of the intersections of Behn’s *Oroonoko* and the colonial history of the tobacco market, particularly her analysis of the conjunction of Oroonoko’s name with “oronoko” tobacco, a major New World commodity.

Brazil, “because of perennial labour shortages ... and because Indians were more effectively protected from enslavement there ... developed methodical styles of work and tighter invigilation” in their Brazilian sugar plantations, a series of colonial “techniques,” he continues, that “were to be imitated and improved upon in Barbados” (*The Making* 230). Transferred to Surinam, such an exacting system of colonial labor, understood as an Anglo-Dutch development, marks the backdrop for Behn’s scapegoating of both the Dutch and the colonial servants and slaves that inhabit *Oroonoko*’s Surinam, while it also provides the context for her contradictory depiction of the region’s Amerindians as an exploited colonial group exempted from the system of bonded labor. Despite its shadowy status in Behn’s *Oroonoko*, the English control of Surinam’s sugar plantations, chiefly grasped as an Anglo-Dutch innovation, is the principal site of loss, of forfeited profits and foregone colonial investments, in the Dutch takeover of Surinam. In a move to disavow the imperial economic advantage at stake in the exchange of Surinam, it is a loss imputed to the colonial servants and slaves bound by this system, and, despite its scapegoated concealment in the text, it is a distinctly material forfeiture that underwrites *Oroonoko*’s competing visions of Surinam as at once a criminal, corrupt anti-image of America and its Edenic double.

### Chapter Three

#### The Myth of the Servant-Planter: The Economics of Colonial Servitude in *Colonel Jack* and Defoe's Chesapeake

The colonial Chesapeake of Daniel Defoe's *Colonel Jack* (1722) is the mythical anti-type of Aphra Behn's colonial Surinam. While *Oroonoko*'s Surinam is a servant-led, dystopian nightmare of misrule, *Colonel Jack*'s Maryland, if not exactly a utopian ideal, is a relatively stable, ordered colony of servant opportunity and upward mobility. Although both eponymous protagonists are victims of colonial spiriting, kidnapped and sold to planters in their respective colonial markets, Colonel Jack finds an eventual haven in Defoe's Maryland whereas Oroonoko, as we have seen, finds in Behn's Surinam only perpetual confinement, dishonor, and a violent death. The ideological expressions of servitude in the novels are similarly opposed. As *Oroonoko* advances the ironic myth of the sovereign servant-convict, a portrait that figures colonial servitude as both an indelible mark of criminality and an irreducible feature of the general colonial populace, *Colonel Jack* fosters the myth of the servant-planter, a depiction that imagines colonial servitude as a means of criminal atonement and features an exceptional colonial servant who overcomes his lawless past to achieve legitimate ruling status in the colony. In Defoe's Maryland, colonial servitude functions as an ostensible path to redemption, edification, good governance, and colonial mastery — an inversion of Behn's Surinam where colonial servitude is satirized as an absolute impediment to any possibility of legitimacy or auspicious end. Working as

ideological counterparts, these respective myths of servitude as opportunity and obstacle act in distinct, though mutually reinforcing, registers; while Behn's felonious servitude imaginary envelops *all* servants into a collectivized figure of marginalization and misgovernment, Defoe's servant-planter imaginary sifts the exceptional few from the unexceptional servant masses in a move that both bolsters the universalization of servant debasement at the heart of *Oroonoko* and solidifies the general principle of servant marginalization we find there as well as in the *Inkle and Yarico* tale.

While both novelistic worlds produce similar ideological effects, Defoe's depiction of colonial servitude in *Colonel Jack* is at once more comprehensive and sympathetic than Behn's sardonic account. A first-person narrative of Colonel Jack's rise from an orphaned vagrant and young London thief to a successful plantation owner and wealthy Atlantic trader, Defoe's novel not only portrays colonial servants as victims of uncontrollable historical forces but also grants them a historical agency previously denied to them in *Oroonoko* and *Inkle and Yarico*.<sup>101</sup> Jack, for instance, highlights colonial servitude as a specific colonial subjectivity and a crucial expedient to his social advancement and Atlantic world mobility. For the first time in this study, we have a literary colonial servant who speaks about his experience of indenture in a sustained, complex way. As many critics have noted,

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<sup>101</sup> See Katherine Armstrong, "I was a kind of an Historian': The Productions of History in Defoe's *Colonel Jack*" (1996), for a discussion of the competing historical modes that arise from Defoe's dual representation of Colonel Jack as victim and agent of history. For a discussion of the disjunctive relationship between history and experience in the novel, see Ruth Mack, "'Seeing something that was doing in the World': The Form of History in *Colonel Jack*" (2001/12).

though, Jack is a master of evasion.<sup>102</sup> His discourse is often a means of misdirection and his narrative habitually conceals and circumvents as much as it reveals about the details and motivations of his adventurous, upstart life; we must always be suspicious, in other words, of Jack's rhetoric, taking equal notice of what it discloses, eludes, and represses. This principle of evasion is central to grasping the mythical status of colonial servitude in the novel as well as Defoe's general ideology of colonialism. As we will see, Jack's transformation from colonial servant to plantation master is more specifically a story about the successful avoidance of colonial servitude rather than the effective completion of a servitude term that grants him customary benefit and advantage — a pattern that Jack shares with his female Defoean counterpart, Moll Flanders. *Colonel Jack*, then, on the one hand, endorses colonial servitude as a mode of social promotion, and, on the other, undermines it by revealing Jack's short-circuited version of servitude, among other factors, as a condition of his colonial advantage.

Thus, Defoe's account of the restorative potential of colonial servitude is, more to the point, an ambivalent portrait of opportunity and uplift. The New World is not an unequivocal refuge in Defoe's novels; rather, as critic Tara Ghoshal Wallace maintains in *Imperial Characters* (2010), it "proves to be a highly problematized haven" (80). Casting colonial transportation as an experimental institution in a novel that is at once criminal biography, *Bildungsroman* and *roman à*

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<sup>102</sup> See, for instance, David Roberts's introduction to the Oxford edition of the novel (xiii-xviii).

*thèse*,<sup>103</sup> Defoe sanctions colonial servitude as a central tenet of his broader project of colonial promotion — a campaign that extended to Defoe’s non-fictional and journalistic writing and one that he energetically championed throughout his life.<sup>104</sup>

While set prior to its ratification, *Colonel Jack* can certainly be read as an endorsement of the 1718 Transportation Act, a major piece of criminal legislation that, above all, standardized the system of convict servitude — pardoning capital offenders in exchange for a fourteen-year period of exile and, for the first time,

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<sup>103</sup> The question of *Colonel Jack*’s generic status is an often-disputed issue — at times directed toward unproductive ends, especially when the novel’s formal hybridity is sacrificed for a generically simplified legibility. In addition to those listed above, *Colonel Jack* has been variously described, qualified, and contested as a sentimental novel, picaresque tale, travel narrative, historical novel, and conduct manual; critics have also noted the overlap with other non-novelistic Defoean texts, such as *A New Voyage Round the World* (1724) and the posthumously published *The Compleat English Gentleman* (1890), among others. The novel’s notorious critical neglect and disparagement, especially in comparison to its fictional complement — *Moll Flanders*, can, in part, be traced to its generic flexibility and hybridity, which critics from Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Maximillian Novak have read, instead, as novelistic incoherence. For a genealogy of the novel’s critical devaluation and a discussion of the debate over *Colonel Jack*’s formal intelligibility and the issue of coherence, see Gabriel Cervantes, “Episodic or Novelistic?: Law in the Atlantic and the Form of Daniel Defoe’s *Colonel Jack*” (2011/12), especially 257-62.

<sup>104</sup> An investor in the Royal African Company, Defoe defended its monopoly in his *Review*, and he personally invested in the transportation of a group of servants to Maryland in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (Aravamudan, “Defoe,” 48, 56; Backscheider 484). He wrote in support of the South Sea venture and the colonization of South America in letters, *An Essay on the South-Sea Trade* (1711), the *Weekly Journal* (1719) and *A New Voyage Round the World* (1724) (Aravamudan, “Defoe,” 53; Novak, *Daniel Defoe*, 400-3, 546, 637-40). Defoe mentions California and Canada as possibilities for colonial settlement in his South-Sea Trade discourse, promotes the colonization of Africa in *A Plan of English Commerce* (1728), and he generally promotes colonial expansion in *The Complete English Tradesman* (1987) and the *Review*, among others (McInelly 215; Novak, *Daniel Defoe*, 401; Novak, *Economics*, 141, 144). Aside from *Colonel Jack* and *Moll Flanders* (1722), Defoe also offers enthusiastic and optimistic, although not unambivalent, colonial portraits in his novels *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Captain Singleton* (1720).

allowing the courts to directly sentence non-capital offenders to a fixed, seven-year term of transportation.<sup>105</sup> Defoe adopts the rhetoric of merciful punishment, pardon, and reform contained in the act and espoused by its supporters, but he also reveals — through *Colonel Jack*'s competing discourses of servitude and the persistence of the novel's servitude paradigm — two key insights about convict transportation: one, that its principal function is not redemptive, but economic, and, two, that its chief goal is not rehabilitation, but social alienation. "As for prospects for human redemption," writes Roger Ekirch in *Bound for America* (1987), "reclaiming lost souls was at most a secondary goal of penal policy ... what needs to be stressed instead is that ... transportation did not return criminals to the social mainstream. Its most compelling advantage ... lay in expelling from British shores significant quantities of threatening offenders" (19). The aim of convict transportation was, in his terms, "banishing vice" (11). *Colonel Jack* not only demonstrates the ancillary status of moral reformation when compared to the motives of social alienation and profit, as moral concerns are, for one, always an afterthought in Jack's account of his life, but also shows that such social alienation is an effect of the economic primacy of transportation — a logic that also extends to the colonial bond labor system in general. The transposable relationship between

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<sup>105</sup> Prior to this act, upon a 1615 commission established by James I, capital and non-capital offenders could only receive a pardon, but not a direct punishment, of transportation (Smith 89-109, Ekirch 1-6). For extended discussions of the 1718 Transportation Act, see J.M. Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England* (1986), 450-519; Roger Ekirch, *Bound for America* (1987), 11-45; Bruce Kercher, "Perish or Prosper" (2003), 529-41; and Abbott Emerson Smith, *Colonists in Bondage* (1971), 110-35.

servants and slaves and the interlocking character of their respective institutions that we have been tracking in *Oroonoko* and *Inkle and Yarico*, for instance, similarly appears in Defoe's novel, emerging as both a consequence of their interchangeable economic function in the plantation economy and a symptom of their shared social alienation in the colonies. Moreover, this association of economic fundamentalism and social alienation obtains as the dominant thematic of Colonel Jack's quest for Atlantic world mastery, a link rooted in his inability to either shake the pattern established in his colonial service or shed the self-undermining tendencies of his subordinate past. In *Colonel Jack*, Defoe sets a transatlantic scene for the circulation of colonial labor that spotlights the alienated, commodity status of servants — from the commercial bustle of British port cities to the mercantilist outposts of the Chesapeake and Caribbean basin — and, in the process, underscores the stubborn persistence of the servant condition.

### **I. On Transportation: The Competing Discourses of Colonial Servitude and the Trope of Illusory Advantage**

Colonel Jack's involuntary, spirited voyage to the Chesapeake, as he recounts it, is a process of pragmatic acquiescence to his new position as an indentured servant; after failed attempts at securing a ransom for himself and Captain Jack during their passage, he declares that he "was grown indifferent" (116). Yet, for him, acceptance of this new fateful turn means not blind resignation but expedient consent. Upon his arrival to the colonies, he immediately understands his servitude

as an extrication from his life as a thief and military deserter and a prospective path to a future in colonial planting:

I considered all the way on the Voyage, that as I was bred a Vagabond, had been a Pick-pocket, and a Soldier, and was run from my Colours, and that I had no settled Abode in the World, nor any Employ to get any thing by, except that wicked one I was bred to, which had the Gallows at the Heels of it; I did not see, but that this Service might be as well to me as other Business; and this I was particularly satisfied with when they told me, that after I had Served out the five Years Servitude, I should have the Courtisie of the Country, *as they call'd it*' that is a certain Quantity of Land to Cultivate and Plant for myself; so that now I was like to be brought up to something, by which I might live without that wretched thing, call'd stealing; which my very Soul abhorr'd, and which I had given over. (116-17)

While seen as an outgrowth and possible deliverance from his dubious past and meager prospects in Britain, transportation, for Jack, is a means of redemption initially figured in economic terms. It is a conditional mode of upward mobility, a process by which Jack “might live without ... stealing” and “be brought up to something,” and an occupation with clear commercial implications: “this Service,” he considers, “might be as well to me as other *Business*” (emphasis mine). If an ironic formulation that seeks to retrieve a trace of economic agency from the financially subordinate position of colonial servitude, then Jack’s expression also clarifies colonial servitude as a financial instrument and lays bare the essential links between servitude, profit, and trade.<sup>106</sup> Jack’s reconstitution of servitude as

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<sup>106</sup> For discussions of colonial servitude as a system of commercial exchange and human capitalization, see David Galenson, *White Servitude in Colonial America* (1981), 97-113, and Deborah Valenze, *The Social Life of Money in the English Past* (2006), 239-5.

economic opportunity, though, hinges on an idealistic understanding of the status of property outlays in post-indenture freedom dues, what Jack calls “the Courtisie of the Country.” Although such freedom dues in Maryland had excluded the allocation of land since 1683, a decade prior to Jack’s arrival to the colony in the 1690s, historians and colonial promoters alike have noted the optional, contingent character of customary acreage allotments to Maryland’s ex-servants since such property provisions were first established in 1640 (Hammond 289, Main 117; Menard, “From Servant to Freeholder,” 49; Smith 240). In *Leah and Rachel, or, The Two Fruitful Sisters Virginia and Maryland* (1656), for instance, colonial advocate John Hammond at mid-century already calls customary land allowances for ex-servants “an old delusion” (289). Historian Gloria Main qualifies this “delusion” as a misconception that required the very capital outlays that newly freed servants lacked; “The right to land,” she explains, became in practice only a ‘warrant’ to the land that enabled the would-be owner to obtain a deed to his fifty acres only after he had first located vacant, undeeded land and then had it professionally surveyed and officially recorded by the county clerk, all of which cost time, effort, and money” (117). Jack’s overheard expectation of “a certain Quantity of Land to Cultivate and Plant for myself,” then, is surely, as Paula Backscheider suggests, a Defoean exaggeration of transportation’s advantages (488).<sup>107</sup> More specifically, though, Jack’s fixation on such long-elapsed, misconceived property customs

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<sup>107</sup> See Paula Backscheider’s biography of Defoe, *Daniel Defoe: His Life* (1989), for a brief discussion of this scene as an example of Defoe’s exaggerated promotion of transportation (488).

marks the deployment of one of *Colonel Jack's* characteristic tropes — the illusory advantage. Related to Jack's fantasy of noble birth and incongruous quest for gentility, this immediate concentration on an unattainable benefit of transportation is a stock paradox of the novel in which Jack capitalizes on unlikely scenarios by shifting the terms of the original scene, while securing the original, impossible advantage. A central device in Jack's mythical transformation from servant to planter, it is at once a symptom of his internalized economic drive, an effect of what James Thompson in *Models of Value* (1996) terms his ongoing "financial education," and the seed, as we will see, of his exceptional avoidance of servitude and its customary outlays altogether (100).

What prompts the mobilization of this trope of illusory advantage in colonial Maryland is Jack's discovery that he must work. Upon being "brought to the Plantation, and put in among about 50 Servants, as well *Negroes*, as others ... the Mannager [*sic*] of the Plantation ... took care to let us know," he recounts, "that we must expect to Work, and very hard too; for it was for that Purpose his Master bought Servants, and for no other" (118). The fundamental "Business" of servitude, then, is not the redemptive enterprise of economic gain first imagined by Jack but an intense regime of manual labor. This labor theory of servitude, a system that, as detailed above, analogizes European and African bond laborers, renders such compensatory conceptions of servitude which promise colonial servants eventual benefit secondary to the present demand of labor that secures immediate economic gains for their plantation masters. As John O'Brien has

remarked in “Union Jack: Amnesia and the Law in Daniel Defoe’s *Colonel Jack*” (1998), it is an arrangement to which Jack has an “almost phobic” reaction, leading him to immediately appeal to his new overseer for clemency and a measured assimilation to the plantation labor regime — that “we might be show’d our Business, and be allowed to learn it gradually, since he might be sure we had not been us’d to Labour” (O’Brien 74, Defoe 118). Speaking for his group of trepanned, runaway British soldiers, he evokes at once the traditional line of the freeborn Englishman’s natural estrangement from labor and the stereotypically inveterate figure of the English idle poor who, as a class, prove stubbornly resistant to routinized labor regimes.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, Jack’s discovery of the group’s labor obligation prompts a contradictory response in which he underscores both their innocence as spirited transports — “betrayed into such a Condition” — and their guilt, as he configures his own current condition, and by extension those of his compatriots, as a penalty for his criminal past: “During this Scene of Life, I had time to reflect on my past Hours ... particularly that I was brought into this miserable Condition of a Slave by some strange directing Power, as a Punishment for the Wickedness of my younger Years” (119). It is a self-assessment that he will reconfirm at several points in the novel; upon his initial entrance in the planter class, for instance, he reflectively expresses gratitude for his servitude term, figuring it as a rewarding, yet arduous, release from his former lawless life: “it

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<sup>108</sup> For an extended discussion on the figure of the idle poor in economic discourse and the problem of labor and unemployment in 17<sup>th</sup>-century England, see Joyce Oldham Appleby’s chapter “The Poor as Productive Resource” in *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (1978), 139-67.

yielded me a greater Pleasure, that I was Ransom'd from being a Vagabond, a Thief, and a Criminal, as I had been from a Child, than that I was deliver'd from Slavery, and the wretched State of a *Virginia* Sold Servant ... a State of Labour and Servitude, Hardship and Suffering" (156). Jack, thus, self-fashions as a grateful convict transport sentenced to the colonies for his criminal transgressions. While he highlights the laborious character of his servitude, especially in his correlation of servitude and slavery, he claims that it functions, above all, as a mediating institution that both grants him legitimate socio-economic status and stands as a clear moral improvement over the "Odious and Frightful" memory of his criminal past (156). Before this servant-planter transition, though, Jack's moral reckoning of his colonial convict position can be grasped as an outlook adopted and incorporated from his master, a position Jack first encounters when witnessing his ideological initiation of a new consignment of transported felons to the plantation.<sup>109</sup>

In a scene of propagandistic gravity that contrasts his overseer's earlier insistence on the singular laboring "Purpose" of colonial servitude, Jack's master, Smith, downplays the essential work requirements of transportation on his plantation, establishing the official ideological line of convict servitude as a mode of pardon, deliverance, and rebirth. Echoing the general sentiment of "Royal Mercy" found in the 1718 Transportation Act, Smith, Jack recounts, impressed upon each

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<sup>109</sup> Critics have offered various readings of Jack's colonial status. Brett McInelly similarly sees Jack's spiriting as a self-appointed criminal punishment (211), while Dennis Todd argues, unconvincingly I think, that Jack is "an innocent victim" whose criminal life is absolutely disconnected from his colonial servitude (83).

transport “how much Favour they had receiv’d in being sav’d from the Gallows, which the Law had appointed for their Crimes,” clarifying “that they were not Sentenced to be Transported, but to be hang’d, and that Transportation was granted them upon their own Request and humble Petition”; “they,” he continues, “ought to look upon the Life they were just a going to enter upon, as just beginning the World again” (*An Act* 183, Defoe 120). Smith’s opening discourse on convict servitude raises many questions about the status of historical disjuncture and exceptionalism in the novel, in particular bringing the anomalous status of *Colonel Jack*’s representation of the servitude system into full relief. For one, Smith’s advocacy of convict transportation is uncharacteristic for the late 17<sup>th</sup>-century Chesapeake. As J.M. Beattie in *Crime and the Courts in England* (1986) and A.E. Smith in *Colonists in Bondage* (1947) relate, both Virginia and Maryland had banned the importation of criminal servants in the 1670s and together admitted not one English prisoner between 1670 and 1718, until forced to do so by the Transportation Act (Beattie 479-80; Smith 104, 361 n. 37). This prohibition marked both a colonial resistance to criminal migrants, what Smith explains as a hostility to the perceived “factiousness of transported felons,” and a shifting ideology of overpopulation in Restoration England as economic writers, in 1660, began consistently espousing the productive potential of England’s surplus population and, consequently, discouraging emigration to the colonies (Smith 104, Beattie 480, Appleby 145-6). Thus, Smith’s basic welcoming gesture is an historically incongruous one which signifies Defoe’s proleptic extension of a post-

Transportation Act world, characterized by the official sanction of convict servitude, back to the 1690s. This act of temporal folding signals Defoe's revisionary depiction of the Chesapeake as a region of consistent colonial enthusiasm for convict transportation schemes, and it marks his effort to naturalize transportation's advantages in the post-Transportation Act era by overstating its colonial endorsement in the Chesapeake, the New World locale that would become, by far, the most common destination for convicts in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Ekirch 114-16, Smith 117-19).<sup>110</sup>

The message of pardon and reformation Smith imparts to his criminal recruits is similarly marked by historical disjunction. Explaining the group's transportation not as a direct sentence but as a general reprieve from the gallows "granted them upon their own Request," Smith ambiguously positions his understanding of convict servitude on both sides of the 1718 dividing line. On the one hand, he seems to evoke the older, pre-1718 understanding of convict servitude which prohibited punishments of exile and required the "legal device" of petitioning for a pardon of transportation, and, on the other, he seems to exclusively refer to capital felons of a post-1718 world which permitted sentences of transportation for non-capital criminals but continued to stipulate that capital offenders must lobby for "the Benefit of a Pardon" (Smith 91, "An Act" 184, Smith 89-109, Ekirch 1-6). If suggesting the former, then, as we have seen, we have the

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<sup>110</sup> Along with Pennsylvania, which received the least number of convicts, Virginia and Maryland, according to Ekirch, "admitted well over 90 percent of all transports" in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century English Atlantic colonies (114).

attendant problem of the absolute lack of criminals admitted to the Chesapeake from the 1670s to 1718, and, if calling up the latter, then we have a different incongruity in that Jack has previously noted the mixed, non-standardized character of this group's criminal sentences — “some burnt in the Hand [the mark of old offenders], others not; eight of whom my Master bought for the time specified in the Warrant for their Transportation, respectively, some for a longer, some a shorter term of Years” (119); this description, in other words, suggests that the group consists of capital and non-capital offenders alike. Such a knotty, syncretic status of historical context and literary reference in Smith's presentation of convict transportation, though, also highlights the extent to which 18<sup>th</sup>-century discourse of transportation reproduces what O'Brien terms the “legal fiction” of 17<sup>th</sup>-century conditional pardons (72). While the 1718 Transportation Act retained the rhetoric of conditional pardon in reference to capital crimes, the legislation itself, as Alan Atkinson remarks in ““The Free-Born Englishman Transported” (1994), contained no stipulations for an actual system of pardons: “There was no provision in the Act for convicts transported under the new system having any choice in the matter” (94).<sup>111</sup> The persistence of the language of conditional pardon, then, marks an effort to retain, in Atkinson's words, “the element of consent” consistent with the customary belief in English liberty and “the ancient virtues of the constitution” — an endeavor he dubs “a deeply engrained collective wishful thinking” (94). In this way, Smith's speech marks Defoe's participation in

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<sup>111</sup> See O'Brien's similar comments on Atkinson's essay and study of convict servitude (72-3).

the Act's idealistic attempt to retrieve a trace of individual liberty in the face of a novel state imposition of unfreedom — the punishment of exile and social alienation. As O'Brien notes, "Defoe, like many of his contemporaries, recast the state's enhancement of its own power as a reaffirmation of the freedom of its subjects" (73). This moment of historical dislocation in Smith's position on convict servitude, then, can be grasped as an instance of ideological coherence. It signifies an emergent tension around the subject of transportation between individual agency and freedom, on the one hand, and market dictates, state power, and unfreedom, on the other. Moreover, it is a conflict apparent in *Colonel Jack's* presentation of competing discourses of servitude, at once an economic and moral institution, and evident in its protagonist's contradictory conception of his own servitude, as Jack understands himself as both an unsanctioned spirited transport and self-sanctioned convict servant.

The promise of colonial assimilation Smith subsequently makes to his gathered transported felons continues this conflict, specifically echoing the historical impossibility of Jack's original notion of beneficent servitude. At this point, *Colonel Jack* sanctions the thematic of illusory advantage from above and reinforces the novel's emerging ideological tendency to recuperate freedom from a situation of apparent unfreedom. Smith, Jack reports, proposes convict servitude as a general means of upward mobility and an unfree, laborious path to eventual freedom:

Then he laid before them . . . that if they thought fit to be diligent, and sober, they would after the time they were order'd to Serve was expir'd, be encourag'd by the Constitution of the Country, to Settle and Plant for themselves, and that even he himself would be so kind to them, that if he liv'd to see any of them serve their Time faithfully out, it was his custom to assist his Servants, in order to their Settling in that Country, according as their Behaviour might Merit from him, and they would see and know several Planters round about them, who now were in very good Circumstances, and who formerly were only his Servants, in the same Condition with them, and came from the same Place; that is to say, *Newgate*, and some of them had the Mark of it in their Hands, but were now very honest Men, and liv'd in very good Repute. (120)

Rehearsing the rationalization of convict servitude as an opportunity for moral reformation and economic improvement, Smith demonstrates the exceptional character of such a seemingly universalized propitious conception of transportation. His assurance of servant class mobility, for instance, rests on a series of conditions: individual industriousness, survival of servant terms, and his own selective benevolence and survival. The transformation from servant to planter under his watch is, therefore, an exceptional achievement, as is evident in the few verifiable examples he points to in the surrounding area — the “several Planters round about them, who now were in very good Circumstances, and who formerly were only his Servants, in the same Condition with them.” Smith’s proposed myth of the servant-planter, like Jack’s, generalizes the possibility of upward mobility in colonial Maryland, but, unlike his, it ironically reveals the limited nature of such opportunity; it is a disclosure that echoes, rather than contests, the historical realities of post-Restoration era Maryland. As Russell Menard argues in “From Servant to Freeholder” (1973), “opportunities declined

sharply after 1660” in the colony, specifying that “the chances that a former servant would attain an office of power in Maryland,” a sign of the achievement of planter status, “diminished sharply as the century progressed” (57). He continues to clarify the increasingly static class character of colonial servitude: “some men were always able to use servitude as an avenue of mobility,” though, “more and more found that providing labor for larger planters, first as servants and later as tenants, was their permanent fate” (64). According to Ekirch, mobility was even more challenging for convict freedmen than ex-indentured servants in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Chesapeake: “As an exploitable source of labor, convicts were appealing to colonists, but as free labourers, unbound by the constraints of servitude, they became much less employable (183).<sup>112</sup> Thus, what Smith posits as the universal potential of the socio-economic transition from convict servant to independent planter in the Chesapeake rests on the shared historical necessity and literary thematic of exceptionalism.

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<sup>112</sup> For more on servant opportunity and the question of class mobility in the period, see Sharon Salinger’s review essay, “Labor, Markets, and Opportunity: Indentured Servitude in Early America” (1997), Lorena S. Walsh’s study on servants in the Chesapeake, “Servitude and Opportunity in Charles County, Maryland, 1658-1705” (1977), Lois Green Carr and Russell Menard’s essay on Maryland’s freedmen, “Immigration and Opportunity: The Freedman in Early Colonial Maryland” (1979), and Russell Menard’s article, “From Servants to Slaves: the Transformation of the Chesapeake Labor System” (1977). On ex-convict servant mobility in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Chesapeake, see Ekirch, *Bound for America* (177-85). In *American Slavery, American Freedom* (1975), Edmund Morgan argues that an analogous decline in servant opportunity occurred at the same time in colonial Virginia; see especially 215-34, the chapter in which he terms servants and ex-servants “the losers” of post-1660, colonial Virginian society.

It is a discourse with which Jack immediately identifies. His subtle incorporation and quick comprehension of Smith's dictates of servitude marks Jack, himself, as an exceptional servant. The catalyst for Jack's willing assimilation to Smith's servitude paradigm occurs upon Smith's identification of an exemplary convict, "an incorrigible Pick-pocket," whom he singles out from the group in a move that defines Jack's conformity to the standards of the quintessential colonial convict résumé:

He came to a young Fellow not above 17 or 18 years of Age ... he had been several times Condemn'd, but had been Respited or Pardon'd, but still he continued an incorrigible Pick-pocket; that the Crime for which he was now Transported was for Picking a Merchant's Pocket-Book ... in which was Bills of *Exchange* for a very great Sum of Money; that he had afterward receiv'd the Money upon some of the Bills; but that going to a Goldsmith in *Lombard street* with another Bill, and having demanded the Money, he was stopp'd, Notice having been given of the Loss of them; that he was condemn'd to Die for the Felony, and being so well known for an old Offender, had certainly died, but the Merchant upon his earnest Application, had obtain'd that he should be Transported, on Condition that he restor'd all the rest of the Bills, which he had done accordingly. (120-1)

"Condemn'd to Die" for habitual economic interloping, this unnamed convict has been transported to Maryland for property crimes, the most common criminal cause for convict transportation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and often, as evidenced here as well as with Colonel Jack, the domain of repeat offenders (Ekirch 4, 55). A counterpart to Jack's constant concern over the security of his acquisitions as a London thief, this servant's banishment can be understood as a general criminalized symptom of emerging anxieties around a transformation in the dominant form of property in England — the shift from landed, immovable wealth

to movable capital, what Deidre Shauna Lynch calls “the central drama of early modern economic history” and J.G.A. Pocock terms the new “mobility of property” (Lynch 95; Pocock, “The Mobility of Property,” 109). According to Pocock, the 18<sup>th</sup>-century understanding of commercial society increasingly came to rest “upon the exchange of forms of mobile property and upon modes of consciousness suited to a world of moving objects” (“The Mobility of Property,” 109). Denoting the volatility of such a world, this convict has been sentenced at the “Application” of his merchant-victim for stealing mercantile bills of exchange and disrupting the symbolic interchanges of the credit system. His exemplary status in this plantation induction scene in colonial Maryland draws attention not only to the insecurity of mobile property but also to the mercantile financial interest in stabilizing it through convict transportation sentencing itself. Moreover, this episode points to the link between the convict servitude system and England’s Financial Revolution of the mid-1690s which, as Pocock explains, chiefly comprised the formation of the Bank of England and the foundation of a public credit system that allowed, in his words, both “individuals and companies” to “invest money in the stability of government and expect a return varying in proportion to the success of the government’s operations” (“The Mobility of Property” 108). The convict transportation system initiated by the Transportation Act was just such an “operation” made possible, J.M. Beattie suggests, by the transformation in state finance that “over the previous twenty years had greatly expanded [the state’s] capacities to tap the wealth of the nation” (504). With the

advantage of public investment, the government subsidized a private convict trade that gave lucrative contracts to a series of Atlantic merchants throughout the century who received a sizable stipend for each felon they transported to the English Atlantic colonies: “free to sell the services of the prisoners to the highest bidder ... it is clear,” Beattie emphasizes, that this arrangement “brought substantial returns” (505).

In essence, then, convict servitude represents a kind of Dantean *contrapasso* in which the punishment fits the crime — those subjects who commit property transgressions are transformed into human property themselves. More specifically, though, as this example intimates, convicts are converted into credit instruments; here, a subject who intercepts and illicitly capitalizes on bills of exchange is forced not only to restore the bills to his merchant-victim but also to consent to his own capitalization at the benefit of the merchant class as a whole, as this class was the direct beneficiary and administrator of the post-1718 escalation of the convict trade. Calling up David Galenson’s work on the economics of indentured servitude, we can see how Defoe’s representation of the financialized background of convict servitude, along with Jack’s subsequent economic maneuverability within the colonial credit system, suggests that colonial servitude, in general, can be grasped in these terms as well, specifically as a credit system of direct benefit to the merchant classes. As Galenson explains, “indenture ... was a credit mechanism by which the servant, unable to borrow elsewhere the money necessary for the passage fare, borrowed against the future returns from his labor. The indenture

was thus a promise to repay the loan, and the security on the loan was the servant himself" (8).<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, he contends that this "credit system under which human labor was leased" was a "highly competitive" market in which colonial merchants already engaged in transatlantic trade made significant, and often easy, profits (98-9). Adhering to a crucial point historian Deborah Valenze makes in *The Social Life of Money in the English Past* (2006) about indentured service, it is important to stress that what Defoe, writing in the 1720s, demonstrates about colonial servitude is not just that it is a system "rendering people as objects," as the *Inkle and Yarico* myth and *Oroonoko* make especially clear in their representation of the transactional character of servitude and slavery, but one that "transformed them into financial abstractions, a limbo of personal identity peculiar to the age" (245). If colonial servitude is a credit system in which the collateral for the loan is the servant himself, then the colonial servant obtains as an embodied financial instrument, a personification of the financialization of credit. As financial abstractions that turn on a speculative future return, colonial servants not only signify a cruel sign of the new mobility of property but also suggest Pocock's other main point about the shifting conceptions of property in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, namely that property under the Financial Revolution's development of public credit and the national debt "ceased to be real," becoming "not merely mobile but imaginary" (112). The speculative promise of a future return for the benefit of the colonial servant, the core logic of the myth of the servant-planter, must be understood,

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<sup>115</sup> See Valenze on the significance of Galenson's work to the economic understanding of indentured service (245).

then, as a particular, and perhaps as Valenze suggests, a “peculiar” case, in the general emergence of property as a mobile, imaginary concept.<sup>114</sup> The colonial servant, as human financialized property, is an embodiment of both the new mobility and illusory qualities of 18<sup>th</sup>-century property. And, increasingly, he is a figure that comes to represent the human loss inherent in such credit innovations, as most fail to realize any economic return on the investment of their person. In most cases, the return goes to his purchaser rather than to the colonial servant himself, marking his term of indenture a financial, as well as social and political, loss.

Despite this flash of insight into the economic instrumentality of convict servitude, Smith, in a move that symptomatically registers the instability of the economic benefit of convict servitude, reconfigures colonial service as a spiritual deliverance from the temptations of Pocock’s world of mobile, illusory property. He explains to our convict exemplar, for instance, that “God had not only spar’d him from the Gallows, but had now mercifully deliver’d him from the Opportunity

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<sup>114</sup> It is not surprising that Defoe would present such an opportunity for understanding colonial servitude as a financialized system of credit. As a merchant and “chronic debtor,” to quote Mary Poovey’s incisive assessment, Defoe was a critical advocate of the credit system, along with other financial innovations, and wrote extensively about the subject throughout his life (94); see for instance, “The Villainy of Stock-Jobbers Detected” (1701), “The Freeholder’s Plea against Stock-Jobbing Elections of Parliament Men” (1701), *Essay on Public Credit* (1710), *The Anatomy of Exchange Alley* (1719), and *The Complete English Tradesman* (1727). For discussions of Defoe on credit, see Mary Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy* (2008), 93-124; James Thompson, *Models of Value* (1996), 87-131, especially 128-31; and Dennis Todd, *Defoe’s America* (2010), where he considers the status of credit in *Colonel Jack* (111-14). See also Pocock’s *The Machiavellian Moment* (1975) where he situates Defoe’s economic thought within Augustan debates over land, trade, and credit (423-61).

of committing the same Sin again” (121). Smith, then, highlights the economic cause of convict servitude, while minimizing the general economic character of the system through positing a spiritualized, moral discourse of servitude. At the same time, though, in showing that this spiritually redemptive portrait of servitude rests on the speculation of future improvement — there is no guarantee, for instance, that the servant will not “Sin again,” Smith subtly maintains the basic economic structure of the credit system of servitude in which benefit for the servant is always delayed and uncertain. This tension between the moral and economic understanding of servitude’s redemptive character is one that will continually overlap and persist in the novel. In the next moment, for instance, although Smith indirectly acknowledges the economic subordination of colonial servitude when he underscores that “some part of this Life now might be laborious,” he refocuses both the unnamed servant’s banishment from the economic world and the loss of his illicit economic agency as a merciful liberation which he should grasp as an apprenticeship with conditional, economic advantage — as “being put out Apprentice to an honest Trade” after which “he might be able to Set up for himself, and live honestly” (121). Here, moral and economic discourses of servitude intertwine to project plantation bondage as a means of potential moral and economic freedom.

It is the persistence of the economic condition of servitude, though, which is ironically clarified both in Jack’s sentimental identification with the newly arrived convict and in the subsequent quasi-enchanted scene of his rise from servant to

planter. All told, Jack's economic extrication from his own servitude term almost immediately after this convict initiation reinforces both the fundamental economism of colonial servitude on Smith's Chesapeake plantation and the economic exceptionalism of the servant-planter transition in the novel.

"Exceedingly mov'd at this Discourse," Jack at once stresses and suppresses his identification with the convict's story and the possibility of such a multi-layered, both moral and economic, redemption (121). He notes, for instance, that, because of his likeness to this transported, inveterate pickpocket, he takes himself as the object of Smith's speech and worries over his Master's seeming omniscience:

"when it was directed to such a young Rogue, born a Thief, and bred up a Pick-pocket like my self ... I thought all my Master said was spoken to me, and sometimes it came into my Head, that sure my Master was some extraordinary Man, and that he knew all things that ever I had done in my Life" (121). While Jack's empathetic reaction leads to his first personal encounter with his Master, Smith claiming to "call" on Jack because he "saw Tears come from [his] Eyes" upon his lecture to the "young Rogue," it is an affinity which Jack quickly finesses in his response to Smith's questioning as to the extent of his sympathy: "Indeed Sir, I have been a wicked idle Boy, and was left Desolate in the World; but that Boy is a Thief, and condemn'd to be hang'd, I never was before a Court of Justice in my Life" (124).

Instead of recounting an analogous tale of his larcenous youth and continual evasions of the law, Jack represses his criminal past and tells Smith a victimized

story of “being perswaded to Desert at *Dunbar*,” his “unjust” spiriting at the hands of the Captain, and, most importantly, the ineffectiveness of his “Bill” in his failed ransom negotiations with the Captain on route to the Chesapeake (123). While Smith voices “abhorrence” at his kidnapping, he is most interested in learning about Jack’s bill of exchange, the financialized sign of the amassed profits from his thieving years: “You speak of a Bill of 94*l.* of which you would have given the Captain, 40*l.* for your Liberty, Have you that Bill in your keeping still?” (124). Jack, in response, flashes his bill of exchange that he has kept continually “pin’d to [his] Wastband” in his year-long servitude stint, attempting to capitalize at once on what Smith perceives as his sentimental identification and legitimate sign of financial credit (124). Upon verifying Jack’s minimal financial literacy and the likely validity of the bill, Smith presents Jack with a buyout offer: “if the Money can be paid, and you can get it safe over, I might put you in a way how to be a better Man than your Master, if you will be honest and diligent” (125). Jack’s bill of exchange works as a magical talisman, or what Deidre Lynch more pragmatically terms “a letter of reference,” which thrusts him onto the exceptional path from servant to planter, for Jack is almost immediately made an overseer of one of Smith’s plantations and set on a course to become, in just two years, an independent planter (Lynch 95, Defoe 148).<sup>115</sup> Jack’s transition from servant to

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<sup>115</sup> In addition to Deidre Lynch, many critics have noted the necessity of Jack’s bill of exchange in his servant-planter rise. For various readings of the specific meaning of the bill in his transition, see Novak, *Economics and the Fiction of Daniel Defoe* (150); Thompson, *Models of Value* (109-10); Todd, *Defoe’s America* (112-14); and Wallace, *Imperial Characters* (74).

planter in *Colonel Jack*, then, is a financial exchange, not a scene of moral redemption and laborious uplift. Such a transaction is made possible because Colonel Jack's economic value is not only literalized in his servitude, but also exceeds himself; it is this alienable value as well as his basic facility as an agent, not just a common colonial object, of the credit system that enables him, like Moll Flanders, to purchase his freedom. Although a delayed version, Jack's economic circumvention of servitude follows an historical pattern established by many wealthy convict transports who either, like Moll, purchased shipboard accommodations and secured their freedom upon arrival to the colonies, or, as with Jack, shortened their servitude terms by paying off some portion of their stipulated service (Ekirch 102, 119-20; Smith 125; Kercher 533). What such purchasing power within the convict servitude system demonstrates is that, for wealthy convicts, as Bruce Kercher points out in "Perish or Prosper" (2003), "transportation was simply compulsory exile for a period" (533); however, it also speaks to both Ekirch's larger point in *Bound for America* and my principal argument concerning Defoe's representation of convict servitude in *Colonel Jack* — that the main objective and consequence of transportation is not moral redemption and rehabilitation but banishment and social alienation (19-20, 232-3).

The principle of social alienation, in particular, is an important part of Jack's securitized release from his servitude term. As mentioned, in his financial negotiation with Smith over the terms of his freedom, Jack conceals both his checkered criminal past and his self-imposed convict status. Such an alienation, or

distancing, from his social origins is an essential condition of his transformation and an integral counterpart to the successful management of his financial credit. While Dennis Todd in *Defoe's America* (2010) characterizes this episode as a scene of misprision in which Smith "misreads" the "signs" of Jack's sentimental tears and mercantile bill, I want to suggest that there is a more compelling story at work here, one that, through Jack's suppression of his origins at the moment of the bill's revelation, we can grasp the historical problem of convict assimilation and, as James Thompson explains, understand a key social feature of the operation of emergent credit instruments (Todd 112-13, Thompson 109-10). In a 1770 letter on the status of servants and slaves in the region, William Eddis, a Maryland customs agent, details the enduring social alienation experienced by convict freedmen and the consequent necessity of concealing their criminal origins when attempting to reenter mainstream colonial society:

Those who survive the term of servitude seldom establish their residence in this country: the stamp of infamy is too strong upon them to be easily erased; they either return to Europe and renew their former practices; or, if they have fortunately imbibed habits of honesty and industry, they remove to a distant situation, where they may hope to remain unknown, and be enabled to pursue with credit every possible method of becoming useful members of society. (36-7)

Not only does Eddis's letter mark the unsuccessful trajectory of transportation as a mode of rehabilitation and pardon for convict servants in Maryland but it also indicates the necessity of continued disguise in the struggle for social reintegration and economic livelihood in the colony. A situation in which acquiring "credit" is

synonymous with maintaining anonymity, it is an historical problematic that Ekirch confirms obtained throughout the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Chesapeake for skilled and unskilled workers alike:

In New England, the sailor John Thomson was careful not to inform anyone that he had once been transported, for “it would have deprived” him of his “livelihood.” Even skilled tradesmen were sometimes unable to earn a living if their origins were known. The watchmaker James Hancock, for instance, travelled to Philadelphia after “not getting any work” in Leedstown, Virginia, where he was first transported. A free man, he found employment within days but was pointed out as a convict by a former acquaintance. As he later recalled, “I was then drove to the necessity [to leave Pennsylvania] ... having no money nor friends.” (183-4)

The crucial point is not just that transportation is, itself, a mode of social alienation but that it compels the perpetuation of social alienation as a condition of release. If Colonel Jack is to have any chance of colonial mobility, then he is under a compulsion to conceal his criminal origins at every turn. His decisive advantage is his possession and cunning deployment of a financial instrument that, as Thompson indicates, hinges on social anonymity, or what he terms “social amnesia,” for its proper terms of exchange (110). That commercial paper such as Jack’s bill “allows traces of origin to be effaced,” he explains, makes it an optimal tool of Defoe’s criminal-protagonists who “aim at eventual respectability” (88). This incident, in total, represents, in his estimation, a “metaphorical laundering of stolen money” in which Jack exploits the inherent social alienation of the credit system to achieve legitimacy and, at the same time, “profit from his crimes” (96, 110). Thus, Jack’s achievement here is not limited to deceiving his master into interpretive mistakes,

as suggested by Todd, but is a result of his awareness of the historical contingencies of convict servitude as well as a consequence of his own financial literacy and skillful manipulation of the structural anonymity of the credit system.

Colonel Jack's financial evasion of servitude, though, while showing the complicated irreducibility of social alienation in both the convict servitude and financial systems, presents a special case. Unlike Moll Flanders or the wealthy convicts of the historical record, Jack never *actually* purchases his liberty.

Although Smith sets the bill's payment and safe passage of its sum as the guarantee for his sponsorship of Jack's servant-planter transition, he, in fact, grants Jack his liberty and extends him credit before assisting him in authorizing his bill of exchange in London and securing his plantation necessities for transport to Maryland. In light of Jack's implementation of a new system of paternalistic slave management as his plantation overseer, his conferral of the bill to Smith's safekeeping, and the principle of "what he had promis'd," Smith bestows his freedom in the form of an old resolution that actually contravenes the conditions of the original agreement — the stipulation that Jack must present money and goods in hand as collateral for his release: "he was resolv'd in the first place to give me my Liberty, so he Pulls out a piece of Paper, and throws it to me, there, *says he*, there's a Certificate of your coming on Shore, and being Sold to me for five Years, of which you have liv'd three with me, and now you are your own Master" (148). Later, when Jack loses his first cargo purchased from the transacted bill, the total profits of his past criminal adventures, it is perhaps no surprise that the wreck

proves not to be a disaster, or in Jack's words — "irreparably Great," but a boon to his upward mobility, as Smith absorbs his loss, exchanges salvaged materials for plantation "Necessaries," and reaffirms his pledge to assist Jack's rise; to Jack's consternation at his intensified level of indebtedness, Smith responds: "you have no creditor ... but me, and now remember, I once told you, I would make a Man of you, and I will not Disappoint you for this Disaster" (155). Smith acts as Jack's buffer from the larger world of Atlantic mercantilist exchange, enabling Jack to express "a kind of Pleasure in the Dissaster [*sic*] ... that those ill gotten Goods were gone, and that I had lost what I had stolen" (157). Thus, Defoe seems to authenticate Jack's New World class ascent with a material break from his criminal past — a purging of illicit capital not granted to Moll Flanders and a narrative turn that adds even more symbolic weight to Jack's bill of exchange, his golden bough of admission into the Maryland planter class. The shipwreck, moreover, confirms that the totality of Colonel Jack's credit rests in the *sign* of his capital, not in the actual money or goods that it potentially signifies, and, according to Thompson, it marks a transition in the bill's status, what Pierre Bourdieu calls a shift from "material capital" to "symbolic capital" (110).<sup>116</sup> More specifically, though, the disaster proves that the bill's worth has hinged all along on its symbolization of capital. It is Jack's understanding of the value of the illusion of property, or his manipulation of the illusory dimension of capital, that secures his position as an worthy initiate of the colonial credit system. His exceptional

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<sup>116</sup> See Bourdieu, "Forms of Capital" (1986), 241-58.

transition from servant to planter, then, is achieved by his deployment of illusory advantage, a move that has characterized his colonial outlook since his arrival to the Chesapeake, and an exploit that marks the degree to which illusory property, itself, has evolved to induce radical shifts in social relations, work as a guarantee of calculated class mobility, and produce real, material effects in the scene of colonial capital accumulation.

## **II. On the Servitude Pattern: The Persistence of Colonial Servitude and the Servant/Slave Relation**

The success of illusory advantage for Jack, though, is a central problem of the novel, as he exchanges the social alienation of convict servitude and domestic criminality for the social alienation of transatlantic capital accumulation. The persistence of Jack's social estrangement is evident in the repetition of the novel's servitude paradigm, itself a continuous measure of alienation in *Colonel Jack*.

Servitude functions as a model of subordination and displacement in various scenes of Colonel Jack's biography — extending back to his early thieving years in London, serving as a successful template for his plantation management schemes as a Maryland overseer, and enduring in both his Jacobite adventures in Europe and his illicit trading schemes in the Spanish Caribbean. In *Colonel Jack*, servitude achieves continuity as a liminal mode of subservience that Jack exploits and mediates to variously position himself as either agential subject or victimized object of his novelistic escapades. At the same time, it is a problematic that demonstrates

the limitations of Jack's class advancement, as the persistence of servility renders his quest for mastery and gentility perpetually incomplete. In the recurrence of this servitude paradigm, we can grasp both continuities and discontinuities, as some issues of Jack's class ambitions are resolved, while others endure. For example, in the episodes of Jack's wayward London youth and Maryland plantation supervision, the iteration of the servant/slave distinction becomes imperative to Jack's upward mobility, and, while Jack fears enslavement at several significant moments in the Jacobite and Spanish Caribbean episodes, the transposable danger of servitude and slavery never materializes for him. While the servitude paradigm is kept in view by these fleeting threats of slavery, it is more firmly reinforced by Jack's compulsive affinity for disguise and his recurrent experience of exile. Disguise and exile, then, emerge and act as mutually reinforcing symbolic traces of colonial servitude. Although the concealment of origins, as mentioned, is necessary for Jack's servant-planter transition, it becomes an almost comic repetition compulsion in the novel, driving the perpetuation of his social alienation and prohibiting the erasure of the stamp of colonial servitude, while, at the same time, it continues to replicate the success of his initial bill of exchange, cementing and legitimating his economic ascent.

**a. The London Thieving Years: Domestic Servitude as Disguise**

Adopting various models of servitude to depict his early criminal life in London, Jack generally characterizes his transition from the "Glass-Bottle House Boy"

gang of impoverished, vagrant orphans to the “Society” of professional pickpockets as “a kind of Trade,” or domestic apprenticeship (7, 17). At once portraying his criminal innocence and diligent industriousness, Jack repeatedly figures himself as a naive subordinate who is guilelessly initiated into thieving by, among others, his master of the craft, Will, “a Thief of Quality, and a Pick-pocket above the ordinary Rank”:

As to the Nature of the thing, I was perfectly a Stranger to it; I knew indeed what at first I did not, for it was a good while before I understood the thing, as an Offence: I look’d on picking Pockets as a kind of Trade, and thought I was to go Apprentice to it; tis true, this was when I was young in the Society ... but even now I understood it to be only a thing, for which if we were catch’d we run the Risque of being Duck’d or Pump’d, which we call’d Soaking, and then all was over; and we made nothing of having our Raggs wetted a little; but I never understood, till a great while after, that the Crime was Capital, and that we might be sent to *Newgate* for it, till a great Fellow, almost a Man, one of our Society was hang’d for it, and then I was terribly frightened. (18-9)

As evidenced here, young Jack is part of what historian Peter Linebaugh terms the “picaresque proletariat” of 18<sup>th</sup>-century London, a self-organized “‘marginal’ or ‘disposable’ population” that, according to him, “lived by an economy of wastes” and “without the discipline of either the patriarchal family or schools and hospitals” (119-22, 149).<sup>117</sup> Specifically, Jack registers the criminalization of the shift from begging to stealing in this fringe, surplus population, a transition from a passive to

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<sup>117</sup> See Backscheider’s brief discussion of the history and popular anxieties surrounding adult gangs in 18<sup>th</sup>-century England, particularly their relation to the charity school movement, referenced by Defoe at several points in *Colonel Jack*, which was proposed as an educative alternative to crime for orphans such as Jack (480-1).

an active role in the attempted tapping of London's commodity circuits. In an effort to disavow his knowledge of such criminalization, Jack employs domestic servitude as a metaphor of legitimation, arguing, instead, that his turning thief was, in fact, an involuntary apprenticeship:

I never took this picking of Pockets to be dishonesty, but as I have said above, I look'd on it as a kind of Trade, that I was to be bred up to, and so I enter'd upon it, till I became harden'd in it beyond the Power of retreating; and thus I was made a Thief involuntarily, and went on a Length that few Boys do, without coming to the common Period of that kind of Life, I mean to the Transport Ship, or the Gallows. (19)

Evoking "this picking of Pockets" as a relatively typical path of his marginal demographic, Jack, at the same time, situates his admission into the thieving gang as an exceptional form of servitude that marks not only his inverted understanding of occupational legitimacy but also his "involuntary" submission and forced habituation to criminal life; he was both "made a Thief involuntarily" and "harden'd ... beyond the power of retreating" by powers avowedly beyond his own control. While signifying Defoe's standard, sympathetic understanding of the origins and motivations of crime — unintentional, non-natural, and, most famously, necessitous<sup>118</sup> — this analogy of Jack's criminal life to a term of involuntary servitude both prefigures his forced transportation to the Chesapeake and

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<sup>118</sup> In the preface to the novel, for instance, Defoe explains that "Circumstances form'd [Jack] by Necessity to be a Thief," a phrase which he often repeats and "utilizes," to quote Maximillian Novak, "in the dual sense of poverty and causation" to rationalize Jack's crimes (74, 65). See his chapter, "The Problem of Necessity in Defoe's Fiction," in *Defoe and the Nature of Man* (1963) for an extended reading of necessity in *Colonel Jack* as well as in *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* (65-88). See also, Lincoln Faller, *Crime and Defoe* (1993).

ironically foreshadows his exceptional avoidance of service, establishing a principle of evasion in the early years of his biography, as Jack continually skirts the standard punishment for the thieving life, going “on a Length that few Boys do, without coming to the Transport Ship, or the Gallows.”

Thus, domestic servitude is a disguise that Jack employs in an effort to proleptically authenticate the illicit origins of his initial accumulation of capital. It is a pattern he repeats when, after learning that Will has been taken to Newgate and “Charg’d with Robbery and Murther” upon being “Impeach’d by one of the Gang,” he visits his financial “Benefactor, the Clerk, at the *Custom-house*” who has unknowingly assisted Jack in securing and investing his stolen funds since the beginning of his “Trade” (74-5). Needing to dispense with his Money, “above Sixty Pounds,” because he fears being both picked up by the authorities and discovered as Will’s accomplice, he visits his clerk after a six-year absence to make a deposit in the disguise of a domestic servant:

At last it came into my Head, that I would go to my Benefactor ... and see if I could get him to take the rest of my Money; the only Business was to make a plausible Story to him, that he might not wonder how I came by so much Money. But my Invention quickly supply’d that want; there was a Suit of Cloths at one of our Houses of Rendezvous, which was left there for any of the Gang to put on upon particular Occasions, as a Disguise: This was a Green Livery, Lac’d with Pink Colour’d Galloon, and lin’d with the same; an Edg’d Hat, a pair of Boots, and a Whip, I went and Dress’d my self up in this Livery, and went to my Gentleman. (75)

When his benefactor inquires about his long absence, Jack’s response encompasses at once the possible suspicion of his hiatus and the source of his capital: “I have

been in the Country, Sir ... at Service" (76). Claiming to have accumulated his funds from both wages and an inheritance upon his master's death, Jack depicts servitude as a common, ready-made cover for money laundering, among a host of other possible obstacles facing criminal life.

In marking an attempt at the legitimation of his origins, domestic servitude, as a strategy of concealment, underscores, at the same time, Jack's alienation from any claim to origins. Signifying Colonel Jack's internal social exile, his alienation from London's social mainstream, these deployments of servitude work to intensify his estrangement and mark the economic character of his separation. Moreover, the double figuration of his criminal induction as an involuntary apprenticeship and domestic servitude as a criminal alibi suggests a tangled web of relations between crime and domestic servitude which, in turn, undermines his effort, as well as the novel's attempt at large, even in a comic mode, to employ servitude as a mode of social and economic validation. As a counterpart to Jack's insistence on the involuntary character of his own servitude in the Chesapeake and the persistent disavowal of his criminal past, this nexus of crime and domestic servitude intersects with colonial servitude at several junctures. For instance, Jack's principal offense, larceny, is a capital crime that, as he emphasizes above, had not only "the Gallows" but also the specter of "the Transport Ship" at its back, a menace that, as we know, he both does and does not escape (19). Jack's criminal activity is haunted by an anxiety of colonial exile, and it evinces a sustained fear of corporal punishment that extends forward to his days as a colonial overseer and can be traced back to an

early scene in which his “brother,” Captain Jack, is imprisoned and whipped at Bridewell for his involvement with “a Gang of Kidnappers” in the spiriting trade (11-12).

The scene links domestic crime to colonial servitude at many levels, as colonial servitude is both the end result and a punishment for Captain Jack’s kidnapping exploits; moreover, it reinforces the *contrapasso* character of convict servitude, as his gang’s participation in colonial spiriting is turned against them as a literalized punishment of their past crimes of abduction. It is also a scene that evokes connections between the English penal system and slavery. A sight that “frighted” Jack “almost to Death” and resulted in a “Back all wheal’d with the Lashes, and in several Places bloody,” Captain Jack’s whipping evokes a terrifying scene of slave “correction” (12). This scene analogizes Jack and his young “Beggar-Boy” crew to the systematic attempts at the management of African slaves in the Chesapeake, a connection Dennis Todd also makes in reference to Defoe’s parallel descriptions of the young vagabonds and *Colonel Jack’s* New World slaves: “For, in the beginning, Jack is like the Africans. Covered with the ash from the Glass House, he is one of the ‘black Crewe,’ one of the ‘black Wretches,’ one of the ‘nak’d black Guard Boys’; kidnapped from his own country and whipped by English authorities, he is made a ‘miserable slave in *Virginia*’” (92). As Katherine Armstrong discusses, this scene of the lash is a violent strategy that, in this case, does not lead to deterrence, as Jack conditionally notes that “it might be very well said we were corrected as well as he” only to follow with tales of the group’s

resumed criminal exploits “within the Year” (Armstrong 100-1). It is a lesson that Colonel Jack will take to the colonies, as he will subsequently mediate and palliate such systems of violent correction in his role as an pioneering, paternalistic plantation overseer in Maryland.<sup>119</sup>

**b. The Plantation Management Phase: Grateful Subordination and The Dialectics of Servitude and Slavery**

Jack, as we have briefly seen, equates and interchanges colonial servants with slaves in the Chesapeake, and he repeatedly refers to himself as both a colonial servant and slave. For instance, immediately after his trepanning captain reveals that he and his fellow military deserters were “put on Board his ship as Servants to be deliver’d at *Maryland*,” Jack objects that they “were not People to be sold for Slaves” (112, 114); not to be taken only as a point of protest, Jack later, in a reflection on his identification with both servants and slaves, depicts his one year of colonial service as a transposable state of joint servitude and slavery: “I was deliver’d from Slavery, and the wretched State of a *Virginia* Sold Servant: I had Notion enough in my Mind, of the Hardship of the Servant, or Slave” (156). At other points, Jack will use the term “servant” to denote African slaves and “slave” to denote European servants, while he will also use both expressions to refer jointly to bound Africans and Europeans alike (118, 119, 123, 132, 159, 251). It is a

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<sup>119</sup> Along with Armstrong and Todd, John Richetti and George Boulukos have also pointed to Jack’s experience with the English penal system as a model for his subsequent ideology of plantation management. See Richetti, *The English Novel in History* (1999), 58-9; and Boulukos, *The Grateful Slave* (2008), 90-1.

tendency echoed by his first cuckolding ex-wife, just one of many, with whom he is reunited after she reappears as a supplicant transported servant on his Maryland plantation: “Forgive me Sir ... I beseech you, and let me be your Slave or Servant ... as long as I live” (255). Suggesting the common laboring status of plantation servants and slaves we have seen depicted in *Inkle and Yarico* and *Oroonoko*, such servant/slave interchange is a comparative propensity that functions as both a sign of the general equivalence of servants and slaves in Defoe’s Chesapeake and a mark of general colonial submission in the novel. As historian Gloria Main summarizes, it is an accurate historical reflection of the region: “the two types of bondsmen had been more or less interchangeable for much of the seventeenth century, playing equally crucial roles in the formation of Chesapeake society” (106). Although a historical phenomenon, Jack’s interchange of servitude and slavery, in critic George Boulukos’s estimation, is not a tendency that we should proleptically read as a racialized comparison: “One must take note that he does not use the distinction between ‘servants’ and ‘slaves’ to imply a distinction between black and white as had become habitual in the early twenty-first century. The terms themselves are simply interchangeable to him” (78-9).

While disconnected from racial signification, the distinction between servitude and slavery, as Boulukos himself notes, increasingly becomes a problem for Jack. It is a development that, consequently, puts pressure on his own appraisal of Jack’s terminological deployment of servitude and slavery as “simply interchangeable” and, furthermore, suggests that difference, as well as identity,

plays a role in the terms' field of relation (77-9). In Jack's transformation from servant to overseer, for instance, he consciously manipulates servant/slave exchangeability in order to strategically exaggerate his subordination; when called before the plantation overseer that will announce his advancement, Jack declares: "When I came to him, I came *to be sure* in the ordinary Habit of a poor half naked Slave" (126, emphasis mine). Made an overseer in the next instant and, thus, "a Slave no longer," Jack seems to perform servant/slave identity only to secure servant/slave difference and, in turn, distinguish himself from both laboring positions (126). Presenting a dialectics of mastery and slavery mediated by servitude, Jack, the spirited/convict servant, appears as a slave to negate his servitude and achieve proto-mastery in his bid for upward mobility. Decades later when the Jacobite rebels with whom he colluded in the 1715 Preston rebellion arrive as convict servants in the Chesapeake, Jack will again knowingly exploit servant/slave identity to avoid contact with his former co-conspirators out of fear of recognition. Explaining that these rebels were sent "to the Plantations ... to be sold after the usual manner of condemn'd criminals, or ... Convicts, to serve a limited Time in the Country, and then be made Freeman again," he anxiously decides "to let none of them be bought into my Work, or to any of my Plantations ... pretending that I would not make Slaves every Day of unfortunate Gentlemen" (266). Here, Jack underscores the Preston rebels' difference from slaves, namely the "limited" term of their colonial service and their gentility, while also collapsing their convict servant status with slavery as a mere pretense of protest. Jack, then,

in both scenes evokes slavery as a mode of illusory advantage; serving as a deceptive cover for class ambition, on the one hand, and treasonous exposure, on the other, slavery is adopted as a disguise analogous to his deployment of servitude in the previous scene of his criminal youth.

Thus, *Colonel Jack* presents not only a display of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century historical transposability of servitude and slavery but also a portrait of the weighted reconfiguration of the servitude/slavery relation in the mounting shift from servitude to slavery as the dominant mode of bond labor in the Chesapeake. An uneven transition occurring during Jack's tenure in the region, roughly from 1680 to 1720, it is characterized by two key moments: one, when Africans first surpassed Europeans as the leading migrant group during the decade of Jack's arrival in the 1690s, and, another, in 1720, around the time of Jack's final return to England, when Africans first comprised 20 percent of the colonial population, the threshold at which some historians mark the transformation from a "society with slaves" to a "slave society" (K. Morgan 36).<sup>120</sup> The central impetus of this shift, as in *Inkle and Yarico's* Barbados, was economic, a change largely driven by fluctuations in the Atlantic servant market. According to Russell Menard, a declining supply of servants to the region compelled Chesapeake planters to look elsewhere, ultimately to African slaves, to fulfill plantation labor demand; as he

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<sup>120</sup> The distinction between "societies with slaves" and "slave societies" is Ira Berlin's terminology for describing the North American transition to slavery in *Many Thousand Gone* (1998). See Philip D. Morgan, "British Encounters with Africans and African-Americans" (1991) for the demographic periodization of the shift from servitude to slavery (163).

puts it, “Chesapeake planters did not abandon indentured servitude; it abandoned them” (“From Servants to Slaves,” 375, 380-1, 389). What is crucial to understand, then, is that the escalation of slavery in the region is a “consequence,” not, as Kenneth Morgan emphasizes, a “cause” of the decline of servitude (37). Jack’s promotion to plantation overseer confirms this non-causal historical relation. First, it demonstrates that servitude functions as a model for slavery in *Colonel Jack’s* Chesapeake, and, second, it shows that features of servitude persist, rather than disappear, with the rise of slavery in the region. For example, the logic of convict transportation — in particular Smith’s moral ideology of transportation as a combination of a master’s gift of mercy, a convict’s entreaty for pardon, and a speculative, mutually produced gratitude — serves as the basis for Jack’s program of paternalistic slave management. In this transition to mastery, Jack, as several critics have maintained, is compelled to differentiate himself from both servants and slaves, and, in the process, articulates both a continuing identity and emergent difference between colonial servants and slaves.<sup>121</sup> Consequently, this episode demonstrates the presence of a servant/slave dialectic in the transitional labor period in the Chesapeake, marking that, as with the *Inkle and Yarico* myth and *Oroonoko*, the interplay of identity and difference is at the heart of Defoe’s poetics of servitude and slavery.

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<sup>121</sup> Chief among them is Boulukos who, in his chapter on Defoe in *The Grateful Slave*, has offered the most sustained reading of this episode and designated Defoe’s *Colonel Jack* “the origin of the grateful slave” (75). See also D. Todd (92-8) and Bartolomeo (464-5), who are both in conversation with Boulukos’s work.

Upon Jack's appointment to overseer, he experiences immediate anxiety concerning his chief plantation occupation — the violent correction of servants and slaves:

When I entered upon my Office, I had a Horse given me, and a long Horse-whip, like what we call in *England* a Hunting-whip ... and the Horse-whip was given me to correct and lash the Slaves and Servants, when they proved Negligent, or Quarrelsome, or in short were guilty of any Offence: This part turn'd the very blood within my Veins, and I could not think of it with any temper; that I, who was but Yesterday a Servant or Slave like them, and under the Authority of the same Lash, should lift up my hand to the Cruel Work, which was my Terror but the Day before: This I say, I cou'd not do; insomuch, that the *Negroes* perceiv'd it, and I had soon so much Contempt upon my Authority, that we were all in Disorder. (127-8)

Arising from his identification with both the servants and slaves under his watch and the spectral return of the menacing Bridewell lash from his youth, Jack's antipathy to the whip, as he notes, undermines his authority, especially with slaves, and prevents him from fulfilling his duties as an enforcer of corporal punishment on Smith's plantation. Moreover, it registers a traumatically compelled break with his subordinate past, a violent point of alienation that, as we will see, he will attempt to mediate by changing the current system. It is only, though, when his "Defect" begins to have negative economic consequences, "to be a Detriment to our Masters Business," that Jack commences to challenge, through a series of logical twists and turns, the ideological necessity of violent correction — a dogma which insists that African slaves are naturally brutal and "cannot be mannag'd by Kindness ... but ... with a Rod of Iron ... or they would Rise and Murther all their Masters" (128). Jack's intervention is to suggest that the problem is not Africans'

innate “Brutallity” but its mismanagement (128). “This Brutal temper, he determines, “was not rightly manag’d ... they did not take the best Course with them, to make them sensible, either of Mercy or Punishment”; consequently, he speculates “that even the worst of those tempers might be brought to a Compliance, without the Lash, or at least without so much of it, as they generally Inflicted” (128-9). Through a series of elaborate set-ups which draws Smith to the plantation grounds to view the pretended, imminent torture of an offending slave, Mouchat, who will become Jack’s grateful slave prototype, Jack stages an experimental scene to test his pioneering theory of paternalistic slave management. In the aftermath, Jack garners Smith’s endorsement by proving the materialization of slave gratitude and by staging his own calculated submission to Smith, that is, by causing him to think that the idea was partly his own and by elevating him as the sovereign patron of mercy and pardon to which he defers as the chief administrator of the benevolent plantation order (129-34, 136-7).

In his discussions with Smith over this paternalistic intervention, Jack reveals the parallels of the new system to the rationale of convict servitude. Upon Smith’s incredulity at the incongruous juxtaposition of Jack’s pacific discourse with his harsh treatment of Mouchat, who remains confined and punished with multiple days of flogging, Jack discloses Mouchat’s cruel usage as a trick:

First, Sir, he remains under the terrible Apprehensions of a Punishment, so Severe, as no *Negro* ever had before; this Fellow, with your leave, I intended to Release to Morrow, without any Whipping at all, after Talking to him in my way about his Offence, and raising in his Mind a Sense of the value of

Pardon; and if this makes him a better Servant than the severest Whipping will do, then I presume you would allow, I have gain'd a Point. (134)

Jack's response reveals the "happy Secret" of his paternalistic system — that it does not constitute a straightforward exchange of a master's kind treatment for slave gratitude but, rather, is based on deploying the fear of punishment to conjure a scene of mercy and pardon that will, then, lead to the inculcation of slave gratitude (134). This convoluted scheme not only exposes the persistence of violence in the new system, that it is merely transmuted into a symbolic form rather than eradicated altogether, but also underscores the influence of convict servitude on his slave management program (134).<sup>122</sup> These "terrible Apprehensions of a Punishment" which are the staged key to slave management, for instance, are analogous to the function of the gallows in the convict servitude system, a peril from which convicts, according to Smith's previous ideological recapitulation, have been "sav'd" by "their own Request and humble Petition" for transportation and, as a result, "mercifully deliver'd" from their criminal pasts (120-1). The fictional transaction of mercy and pardon performed by the English courts and endorsed by the state in the case of convict servitude is here implemented as a similar, yet localized, ideological program of benevolent social control. Replying to Smith's skepticism at the possibility of slave gratitude — "what if it should not be so, for these Fellows have no sense of Gratitude?" — Jack further clarifies the connection between convict servitude and paternalistic slavery:

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<sup>122</sup> See Boulukos on the question of violence in Colonel Jack's grateful slavery program (85-8).

That is, Sir, because they are never Pardon'd, if they Offend they never know what Mercy is, And what then have they to be Grateful for? ... Besides, Sir, if they have at any time been let go, which is very seldom, they are not told what the Case is; they take no pains with them to imprint Principles of Gratitude on their Minds, to tell them what Kindness is shewn them, and what they are Indebted for it, and what they might Gain in the End by it. (134)

In other words, slaves are not granted the benefit of a hearing, such as that offered to convict servants. Thus, they have not been given the chance to ascertain the advantageous principles of this litigious scene of civil society which reasonably explains offences, grants pardons, bestows mercy, and, in the end, establishes an “Indebted” relation which, itself, theoretically produces gratitude and, where necessary, correction by tying the servant to his benefactor. Putting into effect a paternalistic system of slave management means, at its most basic level, applying the ideology of convict transportation to plantation slavery. Jack’s innovation, then, is to adapt his own internalization of Smith’s logic of convict servitude to the problem of slave management.<sup>123</sup>

As Jack implements his paternalistic program, he maintains the identity between servitude and slavery implied by this scene of adaptation, while, at the same time, he advances various distinctions between the two labor systems. While patterned on servitude, Jack’s paternalistic slave correction system is an arrangement through which servants and slaves are at once equated and

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<sup>123</sup> Both Boulukos and D. Todd note that Jack’s system of slave management is linked to servitude, the former pointing out the connection to Jack’s own experience of spiriting (90-2) and the latter remarking on the connection to domestic forms of social hierarchy (92-4).

differentiated. The analogy of the gallows and violent punishment, for instance, continues. Parallel to the gallows in convict transportation, violent correction is a threat that always looms as a possibility, while also becoming an increasingly foregone menace in Smith's plantations, if not throughout the region. In Jack's time as an overseer, whipping, he explains, becomes an exceptional punishment:

We had not one *Negroe* whipp'd, except ... now and then an unlucky Boy, and that only for Triffles; I cannot say, but we had some ill-natured ungovernable *Negroes*; but if at any time such Offended, they were Pardon'd the first Time, in the manner as above; and the second Time were ordered to be turn'd out of the Plantation; and this was remarkable that they would Torment themselves at the Apprehensions of being turn'd away, more by a great deal, than if they had been to be whipp'd, for then they were only Sullen and Heavy; nay, at length we found the fear of being turn'd out of the Plantation, had as much Effect to Reform them, *that is to say*, make them more diligent, than any Torture would have done; and the Reason was Evident, namely, because in our Plantation, they were us'd like Men, in the other like Dogs. (150)

The success of Jack's system in which the lash proves the exception rather than the rule, though, is possible only because of the constant pressure of exile. More to the point, it depends upon the continuation of violent slave correction outside of his immediate plantation network to which slaves can be hastily exiled; in order for his scheme to work, as Boulukos asserts, "Jack needs the other plantations to remain brutal" (87). Although playing out in distinct ways in each system, social exile coupled with the continued threat of violence appears as a point of connection between convict servitude and paternalistic slavery. In both arrangements, social exile is the avowed condition of possibility for the diminishment of violent punishment and death, but it is one that, at the same time, perpetuates them. As

Beattie explains in the context of convict transportation, it was a punishment meant to “prevent crime without raising the incidence of hanging to unacceptable levels” (478). The 1718 Transportation Act, he explains, was passed amidst a background of high crime and “frequent hangings,” suggesting that, similar to Jack’s program, it was implemented as an ameliorating reform alternative to the regularity of violence and severe modes of punishment (503). Moreover, like grateful slave paternalism’s preservation of the need for violent correction both within and without Smith’s plantation complex, the Transportation Act retained capital punishment as the sentence for returning to England before the expiration of servitude terms and, thus, maintained it as a threat: “Transportation,” writes Beattie, thus did not make capital punishment unnecessary: nor was it intended to” (503, 518). While transportation functioned as a substitute for the gallows that, at the same time, ostensibly encouraged deterrence, in actuality, it brought about an increase in non-capital convictions in many areas of England that, according to Beattie, “transformed patterns of punishment”; in the case of Surrey, for example, sixty percent of non-capital offenders, instead of being branded on the thumb or whipped and then discharged as they were prior to the Transportation Act, were, after 1718, sent to the colonies in the same proportion (507). As with Jack’s paternalistic system, what is billed as leniency and a merciful mitigation of punishment, is, at many levels, an amplification of intolerance and a manipulative continuation of the old system of violent correction it purports to supplant. Finally, both schemes can be understood as moral screens for economic gain and financial

exploitation. Reflecting a similar principle of economic fundamentalism inherent to the convict servitude system, Jack's institutionalization of kind treatment is not, first and foremost, concerned with the welfare of its slave subjects. Such a program, Jack reveals, does not simply produce happy slaves but, more precisely, engenders slaves that happily undertake their labor, willingly generate increased plantation profits, and gratefully cease to "so often run away ... or ... Plot mischief against their Master" (149). The paternalistic slave system, in other words, is a better business model, as Jack promises and eventually proves to Smith that, if following it, then "Busines shall be better discharg'd, and your Plantations better order'd, and more Work done by the *Negroes*" (145); under "gentler Methods," he insists, "the *Negroes* would do their Work faithfully, and chearfully" (150).

Demonstrating paternalistic slaves as the economic backbone of Smith's plantation, Jack's program reveals a dialectic of paternalism and economism that corresponds to the pattern we have seen in *Inkle and Yarico* and *Oroonoko*, and it evokes an emergent distinction between servants and slaves in the Chesapeake plantation complex similarly observed in the literary geographies of Barbados and Surinam. Despite the shared thematic of social exile, the difference between servitude and slavery in the novel is stark. While social exile is the experience of convict servants in *Colonel Jack*, it is an alienation from either English society or the colonial mainstream to which they, at least in principle, can eventually return. For slaves in *Colonel Jack*, exile is a threat which, as we have seen, occurs *within* the slave system itself, not at the border between freedom and unfreedom; it functions,

in other words, only as a repetition, or amplification, of exile for the novel's slaves who, already victims of social alienation, are trapped in a system of absolute immiseration and perpetual subordination. Jack's developing distinction between servants and slaves in the novel stems from this chief disparity. He initially establishes servant/slave difference as a terminological subtlety, referring to them separately in the context of his overseeing duties, as "the Servants and *Negroes*" and "the Slaves and Servants" under his watch (127). A distinction that he will also collapse, such as when anticipating the charge that he has "been too gentle with the *Negroes*, as well as with other Servants," Jack offers a clarification of his inconsistent language of reference when propagandizing to future plantation masters that paternalistic treatment would cause slaves to "be the same as their Christian Servants, except that they would be the more Thankful and Humble, and Laborious of the Two" (132, 150). While presenting slaves as more amenable to the paternalistic management system, he also underscores that their distinction from servants is not unhinged from their similarity to them. Maintaining that servants and slaves are both "the same" and different, Jack establishes a dialectics of servitude and slavery, as with *Inkle and Yarico* and *Oroonoko*, based upon the interplay of their identity and difference.

It is a dialectical point that becomes more evident as Jack moves to reapply the successful paradigm of grateful slave paternalism back onto the plantation protocols and novelistic characterization of indentured servants and convict transports. In making his case for paternalistic management to Smith, Jack

intimates that such a program would benefit colonial servants as well as slaves. Speaking on the question of slave gratitude in one entreaty, for example, he conjectures that “if they were used with Compassion, they would Serve with Affection, as well as other Servants: Nature is the same, and Reason Governs in just Proportions in all Creatures” (143). Gratitude, he proposes, is a universalizing principle that equates servants and slaves under the sign of a shared “Nature” and “Reason.” Combined with the threat of exile for intractable slaves, paternalism will, Jack promises, direct slaves as well as servants to an absolute devotion to plantation labor and master alike: “I doubt not, you should have all your Plantation carried on, and your Work done, and not a *Negro* or a Servant upon it, but what would not only Work for you, but even Die for you” (146). After proving the successful feat of slave gratitude, Jack insinuates that Smith not only integrated benevolent treatment as a standard plantation policy but also universally and permanently extended it to all of his subordinates: “My master own’d the Satisfaction, he took in this blessed Change, as he call’s it, as long as he lived, and as he was so engag’d, by seeing the *Negroes* Grateful, he shew’d the same Principle of Gratitude to those that serv’d him, as he look’s for in those that he serv’d; and particularly to me” (150). While Boulukos argues that Smith, in actuality, exempts Jack, “lets him off the hook,” as well as all of “his English servants” from the “obligations of grateful slavery,” the novel, while it later features Jack’s suppression of colonial sympathies, seems to suggest otherwise. In addition to the above hints, Jack insists that his promotion from overseer to independent planter

stems from this self-same “Principle of Gratitude” (89). Moreover, the fungibility of this gratitude principle is displayed in other Defoean texts as well as continued within the parameters of *Colonel Jack*. As Todd notes, Defoe’s narrator in *New Voyage Round the World* (1724) manages a mutiny among his European crew by “using the same strategies Jack uses to govern the black slaves” (93). In this narrative, largely a promotion for the English colonization of South America, Defoe employs a similar paternalistic rhetoric, noting that the narrator’s lenient treatment of insubordination stems from the adage “that men were always secured in their duty by a generous kindness, better than by the absolute dominion and severity” (Aravamudan 54, Defoe 47).

In *Colonel Jack* proper, the grateful slave trope is integrated into Jack’s presentation of transportation as a mode of criminal atonement and the subsequent penitent representation of his principal convict servants — his tutor and first wife. A conceit of criminal biography as well as a point of colonial propaganda, Jack’s tutor exclaims, on the basis of transportation’s encouragement of spiritual redemption, that convict servitude in Virginia is far superior to the London rogue life: “How much is the Life of a Slave in *Virginia*, to be preferr’d to that of the most prosperous Thief in the World!” (162). In describing to Jack the ironic opportunity transportation has extended to him, that servitude’s “miserable, but honest” labor has given him the “Leisure to Repent,” Jack’s tutor casts his repentant scene of transportation as a “delightful Sorrow” (162, 166):

I have never liv'd a happy Day ... till I Landed in this Country, and work'd in your Plantation: Naked and Hungry, Weary and Faint, oppress'd with Cold in one Season, and Heat in the other; then I began to see into my own ways, and see the Difference between the Hardships of the Body, and the Torment of the Mind ... these took up my Thoughts, and made my most weary Hours pleasant to me, my Labour light, and my Heart Chearful; I never lay down on my hard Lodging, but I prais'd God with the greatest Excess of Affection ... that I was deliver'd from the horrid Temptation of Sinning ... and this I bear Witness, is sufficient to Sweeten the bitterest Sorrow, and make any Man be thankful for *Virginia*, or a worse place, if that can be. (166-7)

Not only does the spiritual redemption of transportation transmute his labor into ease and his hardships into pleasure but it also has transformed him into a grateful servant. Echoed in the colonial return of Jack's first wife, who, Jack recounts, "thank'd God, she was now my Servant again," grateful servitude is an ideology that Jack himself incorporates into his didactic rehearsals of the advantages of transportation which he proffers, "may be the happiest Place and Condition" for criminals, and, indeed, perhaps for those "that go voluntarily" as well (257, 167-8, 173-4). Applying features of grateful slavery to criminal transports, from pleasurable labor to happy subordination, Jack marks the identity of servitude and slavery in an analogous move to transfigure economic exploitation as moral repentance, in the case of transportation, and reciprocal obligation, in the case of slavery. The interconnection of servitude and slavery in the grateful slave trope, though, indicates, at the same time, a considerable difference between the two systems. While gratitude designates the exceptionality of both *Colonel Jack's* servants and slaves, it functions as a path of upward mobility, if only in a mythical sense, exclusively for the novel's servants; it is only they who can procure an

economic return for their economic service. While grateful servants and slaves remain mingled in the novel's plantation background, only a few choice servants — principally Jack, his first wife, and his tutor — make the move to the foreground, turn planter, and discourse on the beneficial utility of their gratitude.

Jack's relationship to grateful servitude, though, is complicated. While his tutor and wife claim, or fully enact, the role of grateful servant, Jack suppresses his identification with them, concealing at once his convict servant and criminal past from both and expressing his fundamental alienation from this redemptive mode of colonial service; "intirely ignorant of every thing that was worth the name of Religion in the World," Jack's personal estrangement from the moral ideology of servitude is a consequence of his privation of a religious upbringing (170). Jack's propitious rise to mastery, moreover, has left him in a class conundrum. Although he claims to have successfully buried the "Memory" of the "original Disaster" which brought him to the colonies, no one suspecting that he "was ever a Servant otherwise than Voluntary," Jack is finding it "impossible to conceal the Disorder" that convict stories such as his tutor's provoke in him. A nod to the sentimental function of the rogue novel that hinges on the impossibility of disguising sympathy, this simultaneously successful and unsuccessful repression of his identification with convict servitude marks his inability to claim a position of mastery distinct from his colonial service and, in turn, signifies the stubborn persistence of colonial servitude in the scene of both mastery and slavery in the novel. Jack's incapacity to rationalize his relation to servitude and slavery figures as both the symptomatic

source of his growing claustrophobia in the colonial world and the catalyst for his return to London after his years abroad. Jack, however, explains his colonial discontent in a slightly different manner, as a function of his estrangement from genteel society:

Now, I look'd upon my self as one Buried alive, in a remote Part of the World, where I could see nothing at all, and hear but a little of what was seen, and that little, not till at least half a Year after it was done, and sometimes a Year or more; and in a Word, the old Reproach often came in my way; Namely, that even this was not yet, the Life of a Gentleman. (172)

Jack's failure to solidify his colonial class position, then, is refigured as a failure to achieve inroads in his ever-present, fantastical quest for gentility.<sup>124</sup> An historical symptom of the social illegitimacy of plantation gentry in British society,<sup>125</sup> Jack's projection of this shortcoming onto European measures of refinement and his subsequent colonial departure, though, not only prevents the resolution of his

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<sup>124</sup> Beginning with William McBurney's "Colonel Jacque: Defoe's Definition of the Complete English Gentleman" (1962), the issue of Colonel Jack's gentility has garnered much critical attention. For straightforward readings of his pursuit for gentility, see, for instance, Michael Shinagel, *Defoe and Middle-Class Gentility* (1968); G.A. Starr, *Defoe and Casuistry* (1971); James Walton, "The Romance of Gentility" (1971); Michael Boardman, *Defoe and the Uses of Narrative* (1983); Virginia Birdsall, *Defoe's Perpetual Seekers* (1985); Hal Gladfelder, *Criminality and Narrative* (2001). For ironic interpretations, which, as Boulukos notes, began emerging in the mid-1970s (76, n. 5), see: John Richetti, *Defoe's Narratives* (1975); Everett Zimmerman, *Defoe and the Novel* (1975); David Blewett, *Defoe's Art of Fiction* (1979); John Tinkler, "'A Strange Original Notion' ... of My Being a Gentleman" (1982); Lincoln Faller, *Crime and Defoe* (1993); Katherine Armstrong, "'I was a kind of an Historian'" (1996); Stephen Gregg, *Defoe's Writings and Manliness* (2009); and, lastly, Dennis Todd, *Defoe's America* (2010).

<sup>125</sup> See Michal Rozbicki, "The Curse of Provincialism" (1997), where he explains the colonial gentry's desire for gentility as a paradoxical impossibility in that "the criteria of refinement were prescribed by British arbiters of culture, but these same arbiters refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of colonial gentry" (727).

colonial status but also perpetuates it, as he repeats, instead of overcomes, the fundamental pattern of his colonial service — capture, or near capture; social alienation and exile; disguise and the concealment of origins; and the deployment of illusory advantage.

**c. The Jacobite Era and the Reprise of Transportation: European Military Adventuring, Colonial Political Asylum, and Spanish Caribbean Exploits**

Caught in the crossfire of Anglo-French conflict during the War of the League of Augsburg, or the Nine Years' War (1688-97), on his return voyage, Jack's fortunes immediately begin to adhere to the servitude paradigm.<sup>126</sup> Nearing England, he is captured by the French, with whom he negotiates for release in a replay of his skillful management of his first bill of exchange, and granted passage to London through the Spanish Netherlands (176-83). Settling in London, Jack reveals that he not only "pass'd ... for a Great Merchant," distancing himself from the problems of his planter status, but also "pass'd for a Foreigner, and a *Frenchman*" (185). Thus, Colonel Jack becomes "*Colonel Jacques*," inaugurating his compulsive chain of disguises and misdirected allegiances that will come to dominate the rest of his adventures and comically perpetuate his social alienation.

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<sup>126</sup> As is evident in Jack's return to Europe during the decade when he also is supposed to have arrived in the colonies, the 1690s, chronology is compressed, or non-standardized, in *Colonel Jack*. On the issue of chronology in the novel as well as in Defoe's fiction at large, see Paul Alkon, *Defoe and Fictional Time* (1979), especially the chapter, "Setting and Chronology" (23-80). See also Mack, who discusses the issue of chronology and theorizes Jack's European military adventures as historical "re-enactment" (234-45).

While these features recur in many of the novel's subsequent episodes, by way of a conclusion, I want to briefly turn to two scenes — Jack's involuntary return to the Chesapeake after his Jacobite excursions and his final illicit trading voyages between the Chesapeake and the Spanish Caribbean — to illustrate the significance of the servitude pattern in *Colonel Jack*. One might say that, upon his European return, Jack plays the part of a Frenchman almost too well. He joins the Jacobite cause, fighting, first, with an Irish brigade in the Northern Italian campaign for Louis XIV in the War of Spanish Succession (1701-14).<sup>127</sup> While professing a political ignorance of Jacobitism and disavowing any "particular attachment" to the Chevalier's "Person ... or Cause," he sells his company in the Irish brigades for the "*Chevalier's* Brevet for a Colonel" and proceeds to go back to England to raise recruits for James II's son (222-3). After a move to Paris and a supposed parting from the Chevalier's order, he returns to England, ending up in the northern region of Lancashire, the site of the First Jacobite rising, where he would again pass as French under the name of Monsieur Charnot, a moniker that, when travelling to France, he would anglicize to Mr. Charnock — incidentally the name, Samuel Holt Monk notes, of a Jacobite who was put to death for conspiring against William III (316). Needless to say, Jack, whose name, as many critics note, can be grasped as a slang term for Jacobite and would be recognized as such

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<sup>127</sup> On Jacobitism in the novel, see David Blewett's chapter, "Jacobite and Gentleman" in *Defoe's Art of Fiction* (1979) as well as Zimmerman, Faller, Armstrong, and Gregg.

by contemporary readers,<sup>128</sup> finds himself part of this first Jacobite rebellion, the 1715 Jacobite Scottish invasion of England at The Battle of Preston. Jack, who upon his fourth wife's entreaty, does not serve openly in the encounter, instead predictably disguises himself as a "French Officer" and manages to escape before the rebellion is routed. Nonetheless, the defeat of the Jacobite rebellion, along with the sentences of execution and transportation that soon followed for certain of the rebels, leaves Jack anxious and provokes his return to the Chesapeake after twenty-four years abroad (264-5). As he confesses, "I was not thoroughly easy in my Mind, and secretly wish'd I was in my own Dominions in *Virginia*, to which, in a little time, other Circumstances concurring, I made preparations to remove with my whole Family" (266).

Driven by a fear of execution for his involvement in the rebellion, Jack's flight to the Chesapeake, described by Wallace as "a reprieve rather than a free choice," is a compulsory pursuit for political protection, or a self-imposed banishment from Britain (79). While Jack is forced to seek the haven of the New World, he arrives to find that the very political threat he is attempting to evade, entanglement with the aftermath of the Jacobite rebellion, is on his doorstep, this time in the figure of the transported Preston rebels, which causes an intensification rather than an abatement of his fear of discovery and execution for treason. As he puts it, "the Danger was come Home to me ... and I expected nothing, but to be inform'd against every Day, be taken up, and sent to *England* in Irons, and have all

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<sup>128</sup> See, for instance, Blewett (95), Gregg (132), and Novak (*Daniel Defoe* 607).

my Plantations seiz'd on, as a forfeited Estate to the Crown" (267). While, as we have seen, Jack maneuvers around buying any of these servants for his own plantation, he is, nonetheless, surrounded by them, as "there was scarce a plantation near [him], but had some of them, more or less among them" (267). Instead of escaping the path of the defeated Preston rebels, then, he follows it. This congruence, as Bartolomeo and O'Brien note, puts Jack squarely at the origins of the 1718 Transportation Act (Bartolomeo 469, O'Brien 71). As O'Brien explains:

It was in the aftermath of the 1715 Jacobite rebellion that transportation was raised from ... often haphazard local practice to national policy. The new Hanoverian regime, sufficiently anxious about its own security to experiment with penalties that had never before been deployed at the level of the state, sent captured Jacobite rebels en masse to America, some at their own request. In this way, the interests of both sides were served; the Jacobites avoided the gallows, and the government avoided having to put the rebels on trial for treason, which might have raised public sympathy. The success of the project encouraged the regime to broaden the penalty's range in 1718 to embrace a much greater number and variety of offenders. (71)

Not only does Jack's self-imposed flight at this crucial historical juncture clearly realign him with convict servitude, but it also underscores the general aim of transportation as banishment and social alienation. It was enough for the Hanoverians to be rid of malefactors such as Colonel Jack. Thus, his return can be grasped as a symbolic iteration of political transportation and a second scene of involuntary impressment to the colonies. While, as in his original scene of colonial spiriting, the concealment of his origins and his invested capital free him from the

laborious position of a convict servant, he nonetheless identifies with them and considers his return to the Chesapeake as a reduction in status, not a reclamation of his position as plantation gentry: “for I was now reduced from a great Man, a Magistrate, a Governor, or Master of three great Plantations; and having three or four Hundred Servants at my Command, to be a poor self condemn’d Rebel, and durst not shew my face” (267). Living in constant fear of capture, property seizure, and the gallows, Jack’s original fears of London street life have returned, along with the experience of internal exile, to threaten his social status and his continued economic advancement.

Going into hiding at his own plantation under the pretense of gout, Jack, under his wife’s direction, soon flees to Antigua, pretending to “use the Hot Baths there for [a] Cure” (270). In actuality, he is in self-imposed exile, awaiting a response from George I’s administration to his wife’s appeal for a political pardon. In the mean time, of course, Jack seeks to profit from his disadvantaged position, beginning a trade between the sugar islands and the Chesapeake (275-6). Upon the news of the “general Pardon,” Jack sets off to return home, only to encounter a storm that drives his vessel onto the Cuban shore where, resetting the servitude pattern, Jack and his crew are captured (275, 278). Fearing enslavement, “that they would detain me and keep me as a Prisoner for Life, and perhaps send me to their Mines in *Peru*,” Jack displays political expediency in extricating himself from Spanish bondage, as he uses his Jacobite service to secure advantage with his captors and gain approval for a ransom deal with the Spanish colonial government

that would allow him to return to the Chesapeake (279, 291). Before his release, though, Jack performs his greatest feat of illusory advantage since his original evasion of servitude, as he transforms the hindrance of his capture into an opportunity to establish an illicit and extremely lucrative trade with Spanish merchants in Vera Cruz, a scheme he not only continues but also intensifies upon his return to his North American plantations. In this process, Jack begins to zero in on the fundamental economism of the servitude paradigm: “Now I began to see my way thro’ this unhappy Business, and to find that as Money would bring me out of it; so Money would bring it to turn to a good Account another way” (283). Money, Jack conjectures, not only would end this scene of social exile but also would enable him to transform it to his advantage. Money, he reveals, is the prototypical sign of illusory advantage.

Money, though, as James Thompson has shown, is also the problem (35-7, 93-5). Jack’s pursuit of wealth in the Spanish Caribbean, as evident in his subsequent returns to the region, perpetuate the scene of servitude, extending Jack’s cycle of capture, social alienation, disguise, and exile. As this episode reveals, it is Jack’s financial success and the deployment of illusory advantage, his talent for making a financial opportunity out of a scene of disadvantage, that ensures the continuation of the servitude paradigm. In his second voyage back to the Spanish Caribbean, a trip that he notes he should not have risked but was compelled to take by the lure of prior success and “immense Treasure,” he and his crew are pursued by Spanish ships until they arrive, under distress, at their

destination off the coast of Vera Cruz (297). Leaving Jack under the protection of the Spanish merchants and unloading as much cargo as possible, the crew disembarks in an effort to evade the continued Spanish chase. While his crew runs aground in Florida and attempts to flee across the continent back toward the Chesapeake, Jack is stranded in Mexico in hiding and disguised as a Spanish trader. As with his first experience of servitude, he is quickly offered a line of credit by his Spanish guardian, and he reenacts his now familiar experience of social alienation, confessing that his “greatest Affliction was, that I knew not how to convey News to my Wife, of my present Condition, and how among the many Misfortunes of the Voyage I was yet safe, and in good Hands” (299). Again escaping the fantastical specter of the Spanish “Mines, or which was ten Thousand times worse, the Inquisition,” Jack’s new scene of self-imposed banishment is a palatial retreat at a Mexican sugar plantation where he is given a host of personal servants and eventually comes out of hiding to publically pass as “*Don Ferdinand de Villa Moresa, in Castilia Veja,*” a wealthy merchant from “old Spain” (301).

Although residing in “a most happy, and comfortable Retreat,” Jack admits that, because lacking “a Liberty of going home,” his time there “was a kind of an Exile” (307). It is in this longing and reflective pose that Jack reveals he “wrote these Memoirs” (307). At once admitting and partially disavowing the knowledge of the commodity status of his story — “Perhaps, when I wrote these things down, I did not foresee that the Writings of our own Stories would be so much the Fashion in *England*, or so agreeable to others to read, as I find Custom, and the

Humour of the Times has caus'd it to be" — he again transforms exile into a financial opportunity (309). It is in this extravagant setting, too, that he discovers the "moral and religious" value of his narrative and finally has the "Leisure to Repent" (309). While marking the persistence of grateful servitude ideology to the novel's end, Jack evokes his tutor's ironic rationale of grateful servitude, but unlike him, figures his repentance as an outgrowth of his economic comfort, rather than a contradiction of it. In this way, he demonstrates that economic stability is a prerequisite to the moral fulfillment of transportation. Establishing his status as not just an exceptional servant-planter but a repentant servant-planter, Jack constructs the reader as a similar penitent and culminates his tale with a surprising caution. Speaking of his story, he warns:

I would have all that design to read it, prepare to do so with the Temper of Penitents; and remember with how much Advantage they may make their penitent reflections at Home, under the merciful Dispositions of Providence in Peace, Plenty, and Ease, rather than Abroad under the Discipline of a Transported Criminal as my Wife and my Tutor, or under the Miseries and Distresses of a Shipwreck'd wanderer, as my Skipper or Captain of the Sloop, who as I hear dyed a very great Penitent laboring in the Deserts and Mountains to find his way home to *Virginia*, by the way of *Carolina*, whether the rest of the Crew reached after infinite Dangers and Hardships; or in Exile, however favourably circumstanced as mine, in absence from my Family, and for some time in no probable View of ever seeing them any more. (309)

Despite professing to have fulfilled the moral aim of convict transportation and soon safely returning to England with his "Treasure" and eventually his wife, Jack, in one fell swoop, undercuts the entire ideological scheme of the novel's promotion of transportation. Under the rhetorical sign of penance, he renders the novel an

ambivalent account of both the specific, restorative potential of colonial servitude and the general advantage of the English colonial project as a whole. He takes the novel's principle of evasion to its logical conclusion and notes, in the final instance, that it may be better to stay at home. While explicitly drawing attention to the status of his biography as an adventure story and cataloguing the sensational, rogue heroes of his Atlantic tale — transported criminals, shipwrecked captains, and wayward servant-planters — Jack suggests that the real benefit of transportation may be to remain in the imaginary, perhaps the place it has always been, as the stuff of adventure stories, rogue tales, and Atlantic myth. At the novel's end, Jack's tale of transportation and upward mobility is just that, a tale, and one that is not meant for emulation. A negative moral lesson, *Colonel Jack* is a book, meant to be purchased and read "at Home, under the merciful Dispositions of Providence in Peace, Plenty, and Ease."

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