Crusonia
Daniel Defoe and the Atlantic Imagination

by

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Abstract

From the middle of the sixteenth century, the English economy expanded into the Atlantic, across the ocean to America and along the Atlantic coast of Africa. At the end of this period of expansion, England was the centre of what Fernand Braudel has described as a world-economy: English settlements on the Western side of the Atlantic produced marketable commodities on colonized land by means of what was a predominantly unfree labour force. *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) is a textual index of this historical hemispheric phenomenon.

Braudel has argued, adapting Edmund O'Gorman's influential idea, that America was not discovered by Europeans but invented by them to fulfil its needs, economic and otherwise. In *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe invents, or, as I prefer, imagines the English Atlantic world through the story of his protagonist on Crusonia, the island colony he established in the Caribbean in the middle of the seventeenth century. "Crusonia" is an attempt to situate Defoe's novel in the historical context of the English Atlantic world and to examine the ways that the novel becomes part of subsequent Atlantic history: it examines the history in and of *Robinson Crusoe*.

The Introduction of my dissertation maps Defoe's novel geographically, critically, historically, and theoretically. The subject of the first chapter is the English Atlantic archive: the way that colonial histories, travel narratives, colonial promotional books and pamphlets, the writings of merchants, planters and political economists order the Atlantic world through the imagination. I read texts from the English Atlantic archive in order to discover the motives and preoccupations of literary Atlanticists. Chapter 2 considers Defoe's contributions to the English Atlantic archive. The unifying theme in Defoe's Atlantic dossier is the project.
Defoe was an important economic journalist, and one with a special interest in the English Atlantic world. Defoe's colonial ideas are teased out of the body of his economic writings and investigated, leading, finally, to a reading of literary texts, like *Captain Singleton*, *Colonel Jack*, and *Moll Flanders*, that belong to the Atlantic portion of his oeuvre.

The next and most important chapter is devoted to an extended reading of *Robinson Crusoe*.

In this chapter I investigate the organization of the plantation complex on Crusoe's island.

What kind of property relations are being represented in *Robinson Crusoe*? Defoe's imaginary island is compared to other forms of colonial property such as the Carolina colony, the constitution of which was written by John Locke, theorist of private property. In this chapter I also undertake an analysis of labour relations on Crusoe's island, comparing the representation of Friday's status to the forms of colonial labour that obtained on English plantation colonies: bond servants and slaves. The examination of Crusonian political economy is the basis for a rereading of the relationship between Crusoe and Friday, the most important fictional element of the novel. Chapter 4 analyzes Crusonia from below.

Beginning with a brief reception history of *Robinson Crusoe* as an Atlantic text, I go on to look at the way that Defoe's novel inspired reactions to the world that it represents. In this chapter, I place Thomas Spence's radical re-reading of Defoe's novel in the context of widespread resistance (both literary and otherwise) to the kind of colonial regime that Crusonia represents. Spence's work and activism inspired such black anti-slavery activists and writers as Robert Wedderburn, and provides a way into an examination of an alternative, other Atlantic imagination.
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In his discussion of the economics of imperialism in *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith singled out one kind of colony for special praise: "[t]he colony of a civilized nation that takes possession either of a waste country, or of one so thinly inhabited, that the natives easily give place to the new settlers, advances more rapidly in wealth and greatness than any other human society."¹ At the end of *A Plan of the English Commerce*, among the projects designed to foster economic improvement, Daniel Defoe imagines a colony similar to the kind praised by Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*:

suppose, I say, a Spot of Ground, where a Body of English People being planted, the Country, by its own native Production of Corn and Cattle, would immediately subsist them; and the being placed in a Situation to live and trade, they would want no other Support from hence, but their first carrying over, and the Subsistence of the first year, till a Harvest supply'd them: Suppose them what Number you please, from one Thousand to an Hundred Thousand, or suppose them encreased from the one Number to the other: Grant me but that they wear Cloths, build, furnish Houses as they encrease, and that they gain enough to provide necessary Things for themselves; Is not the Supply of these, all Gain to us? Is not all they take an Encrease of the Consumption of our Manufactures and Produce? Is not every Ship employ'd between us and them, so far an Encrease in Navigation? and so of the rest: an Encrease of Colonies encreases People, People increase the consumption of Manufactures, Manufactures Trade, Trade Navigation, Navigation Seamen, and altogether increase the Wealth, Strength, and Prosperity of England.

A colony like this will prosper and prove beneficial to the English economy in general and is therefore to be recommended. The question that Defoe leaves with the reader is "where in the World should we plant?"²


Defoe provided one possible answer to his question in 1719 in his narrative of the island colony established by Robinson Crusoe. This dissertation interprets Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* as a fictional history of the English Atlantic world. It seeks to understand the imperial, economic content of Defoe's novel and the ways in which that content is organized. In order to accomplish that task, I have identified an appropriate context through which to read *Robinson Crusoe*. I argue that *Robinson Crusoe* is an important example of the English Atlantic imagination, a way of understanding and representing the imperial economy of England (and later Britain) in the early modern period. The argument of the dissertation moves through four stages. First, I try to isolate the predominant features of the English Atlantic imagination by interpreting its textual index, the massive body of writing produced by English Atlanticists about commerce, colonization, and slavery in the world constructed between England, Africa, and the Americas. I call that collection of texts the English Atlantic archive. Second, I focus on the texts that Defoe contributed to this archive, looking at the specific representational strategies he employs while addressing the same topoi as other Atlantic writers. The first two chapters of the dissertation enable the third and most important chapter in which I look closely at *Robinson Crusoe* as Defoe's most significant text, and, perhaps, one of the most interesting texts in the English Atlantic archive. Finally, I invert the perspective of the first three chapters, looking at the English Atlantic world from the point of view of Friday, exploring what the other, subaltern Atlantic imagination might be like. Before moving through these four stages, *Robinson Crusoe* must be located historically, geographically, and theoretically. This is the necessary task of the rest of the introduction.

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3 Throughout this dissertation I will refer to the three parts of the Robinson Crusoe story as *Robinson Crusoe* and to the individual parts as the *Adventures*, *Farther Adventures*, and *Reflections* respectively.
Although the colony described in Crusoe's *Adventures* is founded by chance, in most respects, Crusoe's island meets the requirements to qualify as one of Adam Smith's ideal colonies. According to Crusoe's imperial gaze the island in the gulf of the Orinoco River is uninhabited and uncultivated; it is "waste," as Adam Smith calls it. By the time Crusoe ends the narrative of his island in the *Farther Adventures* it is on the way to becoming the sort of colony that Defoe and Smith would identify as the most economically successful. The island passes through most of the stages of development outlined by Defoe in *A Plan of the English Commerce*, from subsistence to commercial agriculture, albeit at an unusual pace.

For most of his time on the island, Crusoe was alone, but at his departure in the *Farther Adventures* the population of his colony had expanded with the addition of new immigrants to the community that Crusoe had established at the end of the *Adventures*. At the conclusion of Crusoe's account, his island was peopled by a diverse assortment of European planters, their families, and their slaves. Having provided his colonists with ground to plant on, Crusoe's final act is to provide them with the one thing needed to guarantee economic success in their part of the Atlantic world: sugar cane. After leaving the island in the *Farther Adventures*, Crusoe sails to his old plantation in Brazil where he dispatches a group of settlers to his colony, complemented by livestock, tools, supplies, and yet more slaves. He also sends his colonists "some materials for planting sugar-canes, with some plants of canes."

The cultivation of sugar, which Crusoe learned during his Brazilian experience, can cause the population and economy of an Atlantic colony to grow almost at the extraordinary rate imagined by Defoe in *A Plan of the English Commerce*.

Although Crusoe's colonial history is an imagined one, the geographical and historical

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location of his island is quite precise. Crusoe tells his readers a number of times that his small island is located in the gulf of the Orinoco River, between mainland Guiana and Trinidad (Fig. 1.1). The geographical situation of Crusoe's island is important: it is located in what Defoe believed was a liminal space between Spanish America and Brazil. The discovery and possession of a purportedly uninhabited island located in this area would be legitimate according to the rules recognized by Europeans for the colonization of America; in fact, the discovery and colonization of such an island would be ideal.⁵ Both in 1719-1720, when Robinson Crusoe was published, and in the mid-seventeenth-century, when the novel's action is set, the Caribbean was perhaps the most lucrative location for American colonial adventures, the result, in large part, of the cultivation of sugar cane. Like Crusoe himself, this valuable commodity arrived in the English Caribbean colonies by way of Brazil in the middle of the seventeenth-century. Sugar cane transformed the nature of the West Indies and of the entire English Atlantic world, accelerating and intensifying the colonizing process and the trade in African slaves.⁶ Sugar, like tobacco, rice, and cotton, proved to be the real wealth of America. The English El Dorado was found in a plantation and not a mine; the real American treasure was agricultural and not mineral. For these reasons, the situation of Crusoe's colony at the mouth of the Orinoco River, the legendary route to Manoa, the city of gold, is especially significant. The geographical and historical location Defoe chose for his imaginary colony links the potent myth of utopian wealth with the actual history of American plunder, an apt combination for one of the first English novels.

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⁵For an invaluable, concise discussion of these complex issues see Anthony Pagden, Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France, c.1500 - c.1800 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) 63-102. I return to this subject in the chapters that follow, and in significantly greater detail in chapter 3.

⁶The best account of this transformation is Sidney Mintz, Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History (New York: Viking, 1985).
Fig. 1.1 Map of Guiana and the Orinoco River by P du Val d'Abeuille (1654)
If Crusoe is precise about the location of his island, he is rather imprecise about its name. In the Adventures, Crusoe refers to his possession as the "Island of Despair," a name that, while reflecting something of his mood, does not seem to be adopted. For most of the Adventures and Farther Adventures the island remains unnamed. In a discussion of the naming of America, Tzvetan Todorov has argued that the name of the New World properly belongs to Amerigo Vespucci even though he was not the first European to arrive there; the name America is appropriate because Amerigo was the first to write about it. "Far from wanting to rename America," Todorov concludes, "I would propose to call Southern Asia, Sinbadia, and the Mediterranean, Odyssea." It is the imagination, Todorov suggests, that ought to provide names for geographical and historical places. Following Todorov's reasoning, it seems appropriate to name the Caribbean island Robinson Crusoe writes about in his Adventures and Farther Adventures Crusonia.

This naming conceit is not mine. In one of the many parodies, condensations, adaptations, and continuations inspired by Robinson Crusoe, the radical writer Thomas Spence called Crusoe's island colony Crusonia. In Spence's 1782 chapbook continuation of Defoe's novel, Crusonia was named by Crusoe's island descendants -- his cultural legatees -- in memory of the island's first explorer, the founder, proprietor, and first governor of their colony. Spence's continuation of the Robinson Crusoe story attacks the ideological order of the island world, an order instituted by Crusoe, and turns it upside

7 Daniel Defoe, The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, ed. Angus Ross (1719; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965) 87. Subsequent references will be incorporated into the text.


9 Thomas Spence, A Supplement to the History of Robinson Crusoe, Being the History of Crusonia, or Robinson Crusoe's Island (Newcastle, 1782).
down. His imagined history of Crusonia addresses the effects of the history of colonization and attacks the principles that made colonization seem legitimate. Spence's history imagines, among other things, an island called Fridinea named in memory of the contribution of the other, subaltern character in Defoe's story of colonization. Spence's act of naming is quite complicated: it is a tribute to his source and a critique of it. In this dissertation I have followed Spence's example in calling the island Crusonia, as a tribute to the power of the Robinson Crusoe story and as a tribute to the spirit of Spence's critique.

Naming colonial possessions and naming colonial subjects is an act of domination and appropriation, an attempt to subdue and transform, and to make the strange familiar to the colonizing mind. The name of Sir Walter Raleigh, which was so important to Defoe, was impressed upon two sites in the New World. The first is in the North America, where a city in North Carolina still bears his name. Raleigh's first colonial adventures were directed to this temperate region of the North American coast where he established experimental colonies in the Roanoke Islands. Although those colonies proved to be tragically temporary, his name remains as a sign of the region's specific historical provenance; the colony and the colonists were lost, but their patron's name survives. Despite Raleigh's pioneering efforts to establish a colony on the North American coast, he was excluded from the enterprise that, in 1607, would result in the establishment of Jamestown, the first successful permanent settlement of Englishmen in America, named for its sponsor and licensee rather than for its leader.11

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11 Raleigh's North American colonial activities are recounted in David B. Quinn, Raleigh and the British Empire (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947).
Walter Raleigh's name was also temporarily planted along the northern coast of South America, the region the English called Guiana, in the area where Crusonia is located. Guiana held a powerful attraction for Raleigh: it was the centre of his imagined empire, and the cause of his downfall. Raleigh undertook two voyages to this region that would eventually cost him his life. In February, 1595, he sailed from England with 300 men in four ships. They landed first on the island of Trinidad and then proceeded up the Orinoco River, sailing through the gulf where Crusonia is located, in search of American precious metals and their imperial corollary, international strategic advantage and wealth. Colonization in America, from the North to South Atlantic, was argued to be necessary for English trade: the command of the Newfoundland fisheries and the protection of English merchants trading in Africa and the West Indies. Colonization in the equatorial Atlantic would, it was argued, partially fulfil these goals and, importantly, would aim to secure an American supply of gold and silver for England. Such a discovery would balance the outward flow of money and fortify the monarch against her Spanish enemies, powerful economic and political incentives to the mercantilist mind. The Orinoco River was the inland water route to Raleigh's destination, "that great and Golden City, which the Spanyards call El Dorado, and the naturals Manoa."\(^{12}\)

The Orinoco River was the legendary route to an enormous source of gold, one which the Spanish themselves had failed to find. It was for this reason, perhaps, that it would

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be the locus of so much of the energy of the English Atlantic imagination. Efforts to intercept Spanish bullion between America and the Iberian peninsula were occasionally lucrative but had proven to be an ineffective and dangerous economic strategy. A more reliable English source for gold, and hence an American empire, was believed to be necessary. Raleigh's text on the subject, *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana*, ends with an exhortation to the Queen, urging her to plant a Southern American colony: "[f]or whatsoever Prince shall possesse it, shall bee greatest."13

One of the ships' captains on Raleigh's 1595 voyage was Lawrence Keymis, a geographer and mathematician who had abandoned his Oxford fellowship for the pursuit of an Atlantic career. In 1596, Raleigh sent Keymis back to Guiana; he reported his experiences to Raleigh in *A Relation of the second voyage to Guiana*, published in 1596. Whereas Raleigh had sailed directly to Trinidad and then into the Orinoco River, Keymis travelled the entire coast of Guiana, from the Amazon River in the Southeast to the Orinoco River in the West. His narrative of this longer journey provides the first English account of the geography of the region. Keymis perpetuates the myth of Manoan gold, and supports Raleigh's imperial objectives. In an act of homage to his employer, amplified by the rhetoric of the ineffable, Keymis and his crew renamed the Orinoco River Raleana. "Of the woorthynesse of this river, because I cannot say ynoough, I will speak nothing. Wee have presumed to call it by the name of Raleana, because your selfe was the first of our nation that ever entered the Same."14

Although it was ostensibly precious metals that drew Raleigh and others to Guiana, gold, silver, and indeed Manoa itself, would forever elude them. This search for mineral

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wealth, however, did not prevent these Englishmen from observing other possible colonial projects. At the end of *The Discoverie of Guiana*, Raleigh enumerates the commodities available for trade or for development into commodities for future trade:

> All places yield abundance of Cotten, of sylke, of Balsamum, and of those kindes most excellent, and never known in Europe: of all sortes of gummies, of Indian pepper: and what else the countries may afforde within the land wee knowe not, neither had we time to abide the triall and search. The soile besides is so excellent and so full of rivers, as it will carry sugar, ginger, [and] all those other commodities, which the west Indies hath.\(^{15}\)

As much as Raleigh desired gold, he was not unaware of other, important economic benefits of American empire. His colonial projects were backed by City merchants interested in new commercial opportunities in America, both markets and resources, and Raleigh, in turn, defended merchants' interests in print and in parliament.\(^{16}\)

Keymis' text reveals a suspicion of colonial projects that were narrowly focussed on the search for precious metals to the exclusion of other economic activities. "Subjects," he writes, "may through her Maiesties gracious sufferance, ioyning their strength together, invade, spoile, and overrunne [Guiana], returning with gold and great riches. But what good of perpetuitie can followe thereof?"\(^{17}\) As an alternative, Keymis urges the Queen to establish an agricultural colony on the coast of Guiana, exploiting some of the commodities Raleigh had catalogued.

In the years following the voyages of Raleigh and Keymis, several attempts were made to establish permanent settlements on the Guiana littoral.\(^{18}\) The extent of this area is

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\(^{15}\)Raleigh, *The Discoverie of Guiana*, sig.N4v.


\(^{17}\)Keymis, *A Relation of the second voyage to Guiana*, sig.F3r.

\(^{18}\)The most thorough treatment of these colonial projects is James A. Williamson, *English Colonies in Guiana and on the Amazon 1604-1668* (Oxford: Clarendon Press,
defined by its first English historian, Major John Scott, in his "Description of Guiana":

The River Amazones Bounds this Province on ye south east, whose north Cape hath onely 38 minutes of north Latitude and 335 degrees of Longitude, coming from St. Michaels one of the Azoras Islands. Oranoque bounds it on the north-west, whose Southern Cape hath Eight degrees and 40 minutes of Latitude and 322 degrees of Longitude between these two Rivers Guiana Fronts 230 Leagues on the Atlantick ocean.  

The territory, Scott writes, is a rich one, containing "gold, Silver, Annetta (a Dye), Rich Gumms, Balsoms, Honey, wax, Specklewood Fustick, many Phisickall Druggs, Sugar, Cotton, & Rice."  

It was Robert Harcourt who eventually won the first letters patent for the development of Guiana from King James in 1613 "for the planting and inhabiting of all that part of Guiana, or the continent of America, lying betweene the river Amazones and the river of Desseaguebe." Most of the Guiana colonies failed as a consequence of dearth, or lack of nerve, or because they were wiped out by disease or Amerindians. James' political prevaricating also discouraged the investment of merchant capital, an essential ingredient for a successful colony. Harcourt's 1628 colony was sacrificed to a company schism, and was moved from Wiapoco to the Amazon. According to Richard Thornton, a clergyman at the colony, the move caused by this dispute was costly: "wee lose their labours

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20 [Scott], "A Description of Guiana," 135.

heretofore spent in plantinge, in making sugar workes, in fortifications, & the like."

The Earl of Berkshire incorporated a new company for settling Guiana in 1631, and distributed *A Publication of Guiana's Plantation* in 1632 to promote his enterprise. The colony he eventually planted disappeared mysteriously. It was not until the founding of the colony at Surinam in 1651 by Francis Willoughby with emigrants from Barbados that a permanent English settlement would succeed in Guiana. Eventually Surinam, like its predecessors, was also lost. In 1665 it was attacked and taken in the Second Dutch War and traded for New Amsterdam in the Treaty of Breda. It had become, by 1667, a thriving sugar producer, and its loss to the English, and especially to those who had nurtured it, was a severe blow. Perhaps because of this record of failure, this region would remain a source of interest for England's Atlanticists, a spur to their imaginations.

Captain John Smith, in his brief history of colonizing voyages to Guiana, credits "that most industrious and honourable Knight Sir Walter Rauleigh" with initiating interest in the region. As well as offering an account of exploration and colonizing efforts in Guiana, Smith's narrative includes a summary of the interesting story of Francis Sparrey. Sparrey was Raleigh's servant on his first voyage to Guiana in 1595. When he left the Orinoco, Raleigh left Sparrey and a boy, Hugh Goodwin, behind in an exchange for the son of Chief Topiawari, who was taken back to England. The exchange was made to guarantee Raleigh's promise to return to Guiana, and Keymis' voyage of 1596 was intended to fulfil that promise, and to rescue Goodwin and Sparrey. Goodwin, however, disappeared and vanished.

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22 Richard Thornton, "A Happie Shipwrack or the losse of a late Intended Voyage by See Recovered by a Briefe of this Experience" (1629), in *Colonising Expeditions to the West Indies and Guiana, 1623-1667*, 152.

was likely killed, and Sparrey was captured by the Spanish. However, in 1602 Sparrey managed to return to England where he composed a narrative of his adventures, published by Samuel Purchas in his collection of travel narratives.

Sparrey's story provides a detailed survey of the human and physical geography of the Orinoco region, some of it accurate, some of it invented. Sparrey alone, it seems, was able to discover El Dorado where others had failed: "The gold in this place, I say in Manoa, or Guiana, runneth between the stones like veines." Sparrey's spurious discovery of gold, however, is less significant, perhaps, than his more prosaic geographical discoveries.

With the aid of Indian pilots, Sparrey explored the area to the north of the Orinoco and discovered, amongst other things, a small island called Athul:

I came to the most sweete, pleasant, and temperate Iland which is called Athul. If I had had companie to my liking, I could have found in mine heart to have stayed there and spent my life. Athul is not rich in mettals: but some stones I found in the fresh-water Rivers; and no want neither of Fish, Tortoyses (which the Indians named Catsepames) Foules, nor other good things. It hath Wood great store, Fruites all the yeere in abundance, many good places to make a Towne if you will, Cotton, and Balsamum, Brasill, Lignum vitae, Cypresses, and many other sweete trees. The earth of this Iland doth promise to the eye to be good, it is very sad, and much like to Oare, which I found in divers places. I cannot report of the goodnesse of the stones, because my knowledge in them is nothing. Athul is not inhabited by any. The Iland is small, and for feare of the Caribes there is no body.25

24"The description of the Ile of Trinidad, the rich Countrie of Guiana, and the mightie River of Orenoco, written by Francis Sparrey left there by Sir Walter Raleigh, 1595. and in the end taken by the Spaniards and sent prisoner into Spaine, and after long captivitie got into England by great sute," in Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and others*, 20 vols (1622; Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1906) XVI, 306. For Sparrey's story see Quinn, *Raleigh and the British Empire*, 195, 241.

25"The description of the Ile of Trinidad, the rich Countrie of Guiana, and the mightie River Orenoco," 305.
The island that Sparrey describes is temperate, fertile, apparently uninhabited, and hospitable to colonial development. If he were able, he claims, Sparrey himself would have undertaken a colonial project on the island. In addition to a supply of food and fuel, it already contains commodities for harvesting, and its soil is suitable for agriculture. The geography of the island would support population growth and even some urban development. Athul is exactly the kind of island praised by Adam Smith and Defoe, the kind of island that Robinson Crusoe would accidentally discover, develop and populate: an "un-inhabited Island on the Coast of AMERICA, near the Mouth of the Great River OROONOQUE"; the island that would become the colony of Crusonia.\(^\text{26}\)

The historical and geographical setting in which I have located Crusonia supports Peter Hulme's argument in *Colonial Encounters* that *Robinson Crusoe* must be read as a specifically Caribbean text.\(^\text{27}\) Hulme's book is an invaluable resource for understanding the encounter of European colonists with the Amerindian cultures of the Caribbean, which he perceives as the most important aspect of Defoe's novel. The Caribbean certainly provides the specific setting for the island section of *Robinson Crusoe*, and Friday is without question represented as a Kalinago (Carib) Indian, although, as Hulme has observed, Crusoe's ethnography is somewhat muddled. While I agree with Hulme's insistence on returning *Robinson Crusoe* to its historical and geographical setting, it is my contention that the Robinson Crusoe story is more accurately located in the somewhat

\[^\text{26}\]The quotation is from the title page of the first edition of the *Adventures*. In his survey of all the probable and possible sources for the Robinson Crusoe story, Arthur Secord makes note of Sparrey's story. See A.W. Secord, *Studies in the Narrative Method of Defoe* (Urbana, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1924) 58n.

broader setting of the English Atlantic world.

I argue in this dissertation that Robinson Crusoe is an English Atlantic fictional history. The English Atlantic world is the hemispheric zone in which English (later, British) merchants and planters conducted lucrative trades, colonized Amerindian land, and exploited slaves. The construction of this world began after Cabot's first voyage to Newfoundland in 1497 and it ended gradually with the American Revolution and the abolition of slavery in the West Indies. From Newfoundland in the North to Guiana in the South, English Atlantic projects to exploit the economic opportunities of the New World were imagined and executed. Although the specific motives and experiences of English merchants and planters in these various locations were very different, they did share certain basic elements. I argue that Robinson Crusoe incorporates a great number of those elements. Crusonia, in this sense, is most accurately mapped as an Atlantic island located specifically in the Caribbean. Crusonia is a textual space in which some of the basic features of the English Atlantic world -- commerce, colonization, and slavery -- are represented in the fictional narrative history of a West Indian island.

The economist and economic historian Michael Barratt Brown has neatly located the setting to which Robinson Crusoe belongs, and he has summarized the economic narrative of Defoe's novel:

"Written at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Robinson Crusoe provides the clearest picture we could have of the roots of capitalism in colonialism, not the merchant capitalism of the old colonialism in which goods were bought and sold at a profit, but the new colonialism in which slaves were set to work with the tools and weapons of a new technology as wider and wider areas of the world were incorporated into capitalist economic relations."

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28 For the genesis of the concept of an Atlantic history see Bernard Bailyn, "The Idea of Atlantic History," Itinerario 20.1 (1996): 19-44. An Atlantic literary history would be an important complement to Bailyn's program.

29 Michael Barratt Brown, The Economics of Imperialism (Harmondsworth: Penguin,
For Barratt Brown, Robinson Crusoe represents the colonial contribution to the rise of capitalism in England. Wealth was created or extracted from America by way of colonization and slavery and returned to England, providing some of the resources and some of the impetus for the industrial revolution of the late eighteenth-century.  

Gordon Lewis, a colonial historian based in the Caribbean, has interpreted Robinson Crusoe along similar lines. Concentrating on the social aspects of the narrative, Lewis has classified Defoe's Atlantic protagonist as homo faber europaeus. Lewis writes that in "its portraiture of Crusoe, incessantly working each day to build up his little empire against the threat of dark and unknown enemies, [Robinson Crusoe] describes the European settler struggling to maintain his supremacy in the colonial world."  

While these historians have observed in Robinson Crusoe the kinds of Atlantic topoi that I am concerned with in this dissertation, they do not address the form of Defoe's book. They have identified the history that Defoe's text narrates, but not the way that it is narrated. While Robinson Crusoe is read today as a novel (indeed it is often interpreted as the first English novel) its textual status in 1719 was not unproblematic. The incredulous response of Charles Gildon to Defoe's book, his challenge to the plausibility

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30 For a controversial and influential argument of this kind advanced from a West Indian perspective see Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery (1944; London: Andre Deutsch, 1964).


of Crusoe's Atlantic autobiography, was in many respects not as naive as it has appeared, for it does seem as though Robinson Crusoe was intended to be read as history. The prefaces to the three parts of Robinson Crusoe also ask readers to consider the texts as historical forms of writing. The preface to the Adventures, for example, states that Crusoe's editor believed that the text was "a just history of fact; neither is there any appearance of fiction in it" (21). While it is not my contention that Robinson Crusoe is a true story with a specific and identifiable historical source, I do argue that it is nonetheless in some sense a historical document and I interpret it on that basis.

In a recent discussion of the relationship of Defoe's novels to early modern historical writing, Robert Mayer has argued that Robinson Crusoe was not simply literature masquerading as history, but could have been read by its first readers as a variety of historical writing. That the narrative in Defoe's book is fictional does not, Mayer argues, disqualify Robinson Crusoe from being interpreted as a historical text. Mayer argues that "Defoe made fiction historical by working as a historian who used fiction within historical discourse, not as a poet who gave his texts the trappings of history." The task I have set for my interpretation of Robinson Crusoe is to determine what history Defoe's fictional narrative represents and how it is represented.

There is an interesting reading of the novel by Christopher Hill that has attempted the

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33 Charles Gildon, The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Mr. D... DeF... of London, Hosier (1719).


kind of interpretation of Robinson Crusoe that I am proposing. Hill, I believe, is almost uniquely qualified for this kind of interpretation. As a social historian of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, he is unrivalled in his nuanced interpretations of primary textual material. Hill is also a fine literary historian who has published monographs and essays on the drama, poetry and fiction of this period, and, recently, he has turned his attention more directly to colonial and imperial questions, using both fictional and nonfictional texts to address what has traditionally been a weakness of the historiographical tradition with which he is associated. Hill's interpretation of texts addresses their historicity in a singularly effective manner. His interpretation of Robinson Crusoe, for example, attends to both the form of the literary text and the historical content represented in it, while remaining alert to the forces external to the text that have shaped, motivated, and informed the author and his audience. "Hill's entire oeuvre," comments Aijaz Ahmad, "is really an engagement ... with that particular point of confluence at which culture becomes history."

In Hill's writing, the "point of confluence at which culture becomes history" is, I

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believe, the imagination. The value of his close reading of texts is that he concentrates on understanding the mental and social universes in which historical figures (fictional and otherwise) exist. Hill identifies the ideas and the social conditions that together enable and animate both actions and textual representations, and he also examines the effects of these texts both on other texts and on society generally. A book such as Robinson Crusoe, therefore, is understood as belonging to, emerging from, and affecting a specific social and textual context. The imagination, in Hill's writing, is the point of confluence between a text and its social contexts, the point of mediation. The imagination thus conceptualized is not something abstract and autonomous from the social world, but a force that acts on it and in it. The imagination is not the private domain of an individual, but a social phenomenon, originating among, belonging to, and employed by large sections of a society.

Michel Vovelle calls this kind of social imagination a mentality, and he has given a good account of the problems involved in treating mentalities as the object of analysis:

"[m]oving from social structures to collective attitudes and representations raised the whole problem of the complex mediations between the real life of men and the images, or even the fantastic representations, which people construct." How, he asks, does the imagination mediate between the social world and representations of it? Mediation occurs, Vovelle contends, through ideology. Stuart Hall has helpfully defined ideology as

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39 For an account of mediation see Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) 75-100.


"the mental frameworks -- the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation -- which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works."\(^{42}\)

Terry Eagleton has added to Hall's clear definition of ideology the important ideas of intention and effect. He has defined ideology succinctly as "practical relations to the real."\(^{43}\) Eagleton has argued that the interpretation of a narrative like \textit{Robinson Crusoe} must attend not only to the social contexts from which it originates and which it represents but also its "contextual intentionality," its "possible effectivity."\(^{43}\) Following Eagleton's argument, the texts of the English Atlantic world, including \textit{Robinson Crusoe}, are not simply reflections, they shape and form experience and they also effect future actions, experiences, and representations.

This conception of the social imagination becomes clearer when a specific English Atlantic example is considered. The activities and connections of the Winthrop family indicate some of the dynamics in the construction and representation of the English Atlantic world.\(^ {44}\) \textit{Robinson Crusoe} would have been quite at home in the company of this family on their errands into the American wilderness. The Winthrops, like Crusoe, were economically ambitious. They were not confined to a single, isolated colonial adventure, but had connections throughout the American colonies. Members of the family were among the first colonists in Barbados, and wrote about the experience of West Indian colonization in letters home to Massachusetts, describing the establishment


\(^{44}\)These texts are collected as \textit{The Winthrop Papers, 1498-1649}, ed. Allyn b. Forbes, 5 vols. (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1929-1947). I return to the Winthrops in chapters 1 and 3.
of plantations and the use of plantation slaves. The Winthrops were also members of a puritan commercial company that established a colony in the Western Caribbean on Providence Island. This aptly named colony was settled in 1630, and in its eleven-year history experimented with mines and plantations as a means of generating commercial wealth. In both these Caribbean endeavours, slaves performed the labour while the puritan colonists supervised. In fact, Providence Island helped to pioneer the extensive use of slave labour in the English Atlantic world. In New England, the economic activities of the Winthrops brought them into conflict with the Amerindian population as they sought to expand their territorial acquisitions. In response to this conflict, John Winthrop formulated an extremely important argument to justify the acquisition of colonial land from the Amerindians, an argument used and developed by later writers. The conflict with Amerindians also raised the question of slavery. One of John Winthrop's correspondents, Emanuel Downing, suggested using the conflict with the Amerindians as an opportunity to seize prisoners, enslave them and sell them to other colonists, in Massachusetts and elsewhere in the English Atlantic world where the Winthrop family had personal and commercial connections. The writings of the Winthrops do not simply document their experiences. At work in their writing is an imagination that gives the English Atlantic world form and meaning, for themselves and for others. While the circumstances of the Winthrops are unique, the imagination at work in their writings is not, although it is adopted to their unique circumstances.

The English Atlantic world of the Winthrops was both a social phenomenon and a textual one. Colonists like the Winthrops produced an enormous amount of writing that accounted for and explained their world, contributing to the English Atlantic archive, the source of the materials for the dissertation and the specific subject of the next chapter. After Cabot's voyage to Newfoundland in 1497, published and unpublished materials alike described, historicized, debated, promoted, explained, justified, and analyzed the
English Atlantic world This archive, I argue, is the textual index of the English Atlantic imagination. The first three chapters of this dissertation explore that imagination. *Robinson Crusoe* belongs to the English Atlantic archive, as does a great deal of Defoe's other writing, including most of his other novels. Although the texts found in this archive vary widely in their genres, forms, and themes, and in the interests of the specific writers, a few significant preoccupations can be identified. In the period under consideration, during the establishment of the first British empire in America, economic considerations were paramount. In the next chapter I trace the kinds of texts and arguments that were employed in the representation of commercial trade, colonization, and slavery in the English Atlantic world. Rather like Raleigh and others writing about the exploration and colonization of Guiana, English Atlantic writers reveal expectations for the wealth of the New World that are markedly utopian, and for this reason I have called the first chapter "Utopianism and plunder."

One of the most significant contributions to the English Atlantic archive was made by Defoe; the nature of his contribution to the English Atlantic archive is the subject of chapter 2. In quantity alone, Defoe's Atlantic dossier is substantial. However, what is most important about Defoe's writing on the English Atlantic world is the variety of his texts. He produced an enormous range of Atlantic writing published in a range of venues, genres, and forms. Defoe wrote histories of Atlantic exploration and settlement, complemented by surveys of the current state and direction of the Atlantic economy. His Atlantic writing was published as monographs, pamphlets, and in periodicals. Defoe

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45 In recognition of the ongoing and unsettled debate over the size of the Defoe canon, I have used a rather conservative selection principle: in choosing works by Defoe to examine I rely with one exception on those texts that have not been challenged by Furbank and Owens' *Defoe De-Attributions: A Critique of J.R. Moore's Checklist* (London: Hambledon, 1994). The exception is Defoe's study of Walter Raleigh, a text about which Furbank and Owens are ambivalent, describing it as "probably by Defoe."
also wrote about the Atlantic world in fiction. Four of his novels concern the English Atlantic world directly, and he also published a fictional travel narrative, *A New Voyage Round the World*, which incorporates an important Atlantic section. The last of these texts in many ways best discloses the nature of Defoe's Atlantic writing. At the heart of *A New Voyage Round the World* is a proposal for colonization in South America, a subject to which he turned his pen in a number of Atlantic texts. The nature of *A New Voyage Round the World* has led Maximilian Novak to describe Defoe as a colonial propagandist.\(^{46}\)

Defoe's imperial writing shares the preoccupations of other texts in the English Atlantic archive with utopianism and plunder. Defoe represents those common concerns in fiction as well as nonfiction. In many ways, fiction was ideally suited to Defoe's own, peculiar Atlantic representational strategy: the project, a "scheme for exploiting material things" through the imagination.\(^{47}\) From Defoe's first Atlantic text, *An Essay Upon Projects*, to his last, the project provided a means for representing the history and possibilities of the English Atlantic world through the imagination. *Robinson Crusoe*, I argue, is Defoe's most accomplished Atlantic projection.

A fictional history like *Robinson Crusoe* is different from Defoe's other Atlantic histories in a number of ways, the most important of which is perspective. In such characters as Crusoe, Captain Singleton, Colonel Jack, Moll Flanders, and even the narrator of *A New Voyage Round the World*, Defoe provides fictional histories of the experiences of Atlantic protagonists narrated from their own perspectives. Characters like Crusoe do not merely observe and analyze at a distance the English Atlantic world of


trade, colonization, and slavery, as Defoe does in other works, they represent the experience of participating in those activities. Of all Defoe's Atlantic fictions, *Robinson Crusoe* is the most significant. Not only is it almost entirely concerned with the English Atlantic world, but its narrator is the most accomplished of Defoe's invented Atlanticists, establishing both a successful plantation in Brazil and founding and governing a small colony in the Caribbean. Crusoe's narrative, of course, is not a documentary reflection of the experiences of adventure and colonization in the Atlantic. *Robinson Crusoe* is the rhetorical performance of an Atlantic figure deeply concerned with the way that his experience is represented. The fact that Crusoe's narrative takes the form of a journal or diary compiled retrospectively and edited for publication suggests the character's keen interest in the form as well as the content of his Atlantic history. Consequently, it must be read with more than usual circumspection. For the same reason, however, it provides invaluable access to the English Atlantic imagination.

In chapter 3 I argue that as a narrator, Crusoe actively shapes his text in order to justify his experience of constructing a Caribbean plantation complex and also, more ambitiously, to provide a justification for the English Atlantic world in general. Although it does not represent the entire range of possible experiences, Crusonia is nonetheless representative of the English Atlantic world. Crusoe's ideological task requires him to legitimate the terms under which he discovered and took possession of Crusonia and to legitimate the terms under which he enslaved Friday. On foundations such as those established by Crusoe, a colony in the West Indies, or indeed anywhere in the English Atlantic world, could be legitimately constructed and expected to expand and thrive in the manner imagined by Defoe in *A Plan of the English Commerce* and by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*.

In the island portion of Defoe's novel, Crusoe presents himself as both "lord and lawgiver," employing both the language of property and the language of governance (241).
In the English Atlantic world, the founder of a colony such as Crusonia held a special kind of authority: mastery over both land and people. In colonies established in the English Atlantic world, such as South Carolina and the West Indies, the founders were granted patents naming them as proprietors and bestowing powers upon them that saw them become, in the words of John Locke, "little Kings." Crusoe, too, becomes a colonial proprietor of this kind. The island section of *Robinson Crusoe*, I argue, is a narrative redaction of both the experience of colonization and the arguments developed to explain and give meaning to that experience, to justify it. First, Crusoe discovers, settles, possesses, and defends his territory, establishing a legitimate claim to his colony according to the practices recognized by Europeans in America. Second, Crusoe as a colonial master acquires legitimate governance over his subjects, governance that includes, and indeed is distinguished by the institution of slavery. It is in this way that Crusoe becomes "lord and lawgiver" on his island. On the basis of legitimate colonial foundations, Crusonia is able to expand and thrive. The influx of further colonists and slaves and the introduction of sugar indicates the island's possible future success.

The history of Crusonia after this point is, of course, unknown. Defoe ended his history of the island just as it was about to be transformed by the sugar revolution. Although the island was likely to develop along predictable lines, any suggestion about its actual course of development is purely speculative. Readers of Defoe's novel were, perhaps inevitably, compelled to engage in just that kind of speculation. In chapter 4 I survey the reception of *Robinson Crusoe* in the century or so after its publication, examining the ways that writers and illustrators interpreted the history of Crusonia. In particular, I concentrate on Thomas Spence's radical continuation of that history, one in which the ideological order of Defoe's Crusonia is turned upside down. Spence's history

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of Crusonia provides an opportunity to look at the English Atlantic world from a different perspective. While the first three chapters of my dissertation are concerned with the imagination of people like the Winthrops, Crusoe, and others who followed them, chapter 4 is concerned with the other, subaltern English Atlantic imagination, that of Friday and his cultural descendants: the Amerindians and African slaves who bore the most severe costs of commerce, colonization, and slavery. Unlike most of those who responded in print to Robinson Crusoe, Spence places the experiences of Friday and his "grandchildren" at the centre of his Atlantic writing. He was also able to influence and inspire subaltern Atlanticists like Robert Wedderburn, a Jamaican writer who encouraged other Africans in Jamaica to invert the social world of their island colony, to turn their Crusonia upside down. The English Atlantic archive often silences these other voices and experiences, and in chapter 4 I try to articulate some of them. The figure of Friday is at the centre of this effort.

Although this dissertation is concerned with interpreting the world of Robinson Crusoe from his perspective through other texts in the English Atlantic archive, it is Friday's experience that motivates it. In the conclusion I explicitly address my present location in relation to Crusonia. Interpreting Robinson Crusoe as a fictional history of the English Atlantic world is, of course, not an unproblematic hermeneutic act. Any exploration of the topoi at the centre of Defoe's novel and of the English Atlantic imagination -- commerce, colonization, and slavery -- will inevitably be, as Mary Louise Pratt has aptly put it, both a study of texts and a critique of ideology.\(^\text{49}\) In this respect, Robinson Crusoe

\(^{49}\text{Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation (London:}\)
Crusoe is, as Pierre Machery has put it, "an instrument of an inquiry."^{50}
Chapter 1
Utopianism and plunder

The first published text in English promoting Americar, colonization -- one of the foundational documents in the English Atlantic archive -- is a satirical interlude by John Rastell, *The Nature of the Four Elements* (c.1519). Although inspired by continental European representations of America, Rastell's literary work was constructed on the basis of his own Atlantic project. Rastell, a lawyer by training and a printer by trade, was married to the sister of Thomas More, and like his more famous brother-in-law had been engrossed by the imagined possibilities of the New World.\(^1\) Rastell knew John Cabot and was familiar with his exploration of Newfoundland in 1497. He likely heard first-hand oral accounts of the North Atlantic experiences of the fishing communities of Bristol and the West Country, and he read a substantial number of the printed geographical treatises from continental Europe describing voyages to the New World.\(^2\) Motivated by these diverse sources of information, Rastell initiated his own Atlantic project.

In 1517, with the assistance of two London merchants, Rastell secured a loan and obtained commendatory letters from the king, planning to sail to America. At least four ships were commissioned for this voyage, laden with the equipment, supplies and labour power imagined necessary for the establishment of a colony in Newfoundland or Labrador, "the New Lands" on the Western side of the Atlantic. Although a record of the project's stated objectives does not survive, the extant documentary evidence suggests


that the intent of the 1517 voyage was a North American fishing colony. In addition to fishermen, the ships' crews included masons and carpenters, the tradesmen necessary for constructing a permanent American settlement. Rastell, however, was an unsuccessful Atlantic projector. His sceptical crew mutinied and refused to sail beyond the familiar waters around the Irish coast, advocating the piracy of Portuguese ships as less dangerous and more immediately lucrative than the novelty and uncertainty of American colonization. Rastell was deserted by his crew and stranded in Cork, and at least two of the original ships, the Barbara and the Mary Barking, returned to England. The colonizing enterprise was abandoned and the money of the creditors was lost.

It was likely during his extended stay in Ireland that Rastell composed The Nature of the Four Elements, published after his return to London. In the wake of his failure, America remained in Rastell's imagination a realm of unrealized, utopian economic opportunity. The interlude he wrote is the textual index of his English Atlantic imagination. In the American section of Rastell's drama, Experyence is presented with a "fygure" -- a map of the world -- by an interlocutor, Studyous Desire. Experyence offers Studyous Desire, and the audience, a tour of the known world. Experyence begins his geographical excursus by situating England and the other British nations on the map, indicates the other European countries, and ends his cartographic survey of the Old World in Iceland.

"Westwarde," Experyence explains, "be founde new landes/That we never harde tell of before this/By wrytunge nor other meanys." Claiming to describe North America for the


first time in English, Rastell succeeds in claiming and colonizing the New World for England textually through the literary product of his imagination.

Experyence's long geographical oration includes a narrative of the 1517 voyage, representing Rastell's ordeal and his disappointment. Experyence bitterly regrets the abandonment of the enterprise that would have established the first colony on the North American mainland:

O what a thynge had be than
  yf that they that be englishe men
Myght have been the furst of all
That there shulde have taken possession
And made furst buldynge & habitacion
a memory perpetuall...

Experyence's monologue, expressing his American ambitions, discloses the fundamental elements of colonization and empire: locating, conquering, possessing and commercially exploiting foreign territory. It is not exploration, or even mere occupation of American soil that motivates Experyence's agenda. The lure of the New World was economic development -- "improvement" in the discourse of the early modern economy.5

Experyence knows that in the Grand Banks around Newfoundland there are "great plente" of fish. He also suggests that the American mainland conceals rich reserves of mineral and resource treasures awaiting English extraction. His monologue lists copper, iron, timber, pitch, tar and potash -- valuable commodities for a maritime, island nation. Experyence contends that as a consequence of the failure of the first English colonial project in America, the true economic potential of the New World remains unknown. The

actual magnitude of America's hidden wealth is left to the calculus of the imagination:
"But what comodytes be within/No man can tell nor well Imagin."

Rastell's interlude proleptically charts the vectors of what would become the English Atlantic world, a hemispheric empire that would grow during the next three centuries to incorporate Britain and Ireland, and, formally or informally, substantial portions of the Americas and parts of Africa. The four corners of this geographic zone were organized by economic forces into what Fernand Braudel has defined as a world-economy: "the economy of ... one portion of our planet, to the degree that it forms an economic whole."

The English Atlantic world became such a unified economic space in the early modern period. Organized by economic forces, the English Atlantic world was also constructed through the activity of the imagination, thereby given form and meaning. Rastell's interlude maps out the spatial and the ideological directions of the future development of the English Atlantic world.

English imperialism in the Atlantic during in this period, although different in important ways from French, Dutch, and Iberian variants, was, like its rivals, a fundamentally economic phenomenon. In the cogent formulation of Richard Pares, "[c]olonization and empire-building are above all economic acts, undertaken for economic reasons and seldom for any other." Atlantic imperialism was based on marketing commodities produced

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7My ideas about the English Atlantic have been enriched by Michel de Certeau's discussion of space in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) 113-130.

from resources extracted from colonized land by way of a typically unfree labour force. "By means of mines and plantations," writes Richard Sheridan, "land and forced labour were linked to European capital and management to produce precious metals, foodstuffs and raw materials to supply the expanding markets of Europe and North America."9 Jack Greene argues that in this regard English Atlantic colonialism was unexceptional: "from the beginning the dominant impulse was material."10

Ordered by economic acts and motivated by material impulses, the English Atlantic world is legible through the textual index of an English Atlantic imagination that gave propulsive form and meaning to these imperatives, narrating, describing and activating. Mary Louise Pratt has identified the desire to make the world readable for Europeans as one of the manifest features of the imperial imagination, a task accomplished primarily through writing, mapping and other textual exercises.11 As Richard Helgerson has observed, imperialism and colonialism have genres and these genres imply certain representational and interpretive conventions.12 It is the task of this chapter to identify

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those genres, to examine a variety of these textual representations in order to produce a reading of the English Atlantic imagination of the early modern period.

A recognizably economic discourse emerged in England in the period in which the English Atlantic world was constructed. It was a discourse, according to Joyce Oldham Appleby, that made the representation of incipient capitalism possible, producing what she calls "interpretive models" for understanding new forms of economic activity and experience. "Englishmen," she argues, "used their imagination to explain the new market forces in their lives."13 The historical relationship between this economic discourse and the early modern economy is a complex one.14 Exactly what constitutes a uniquely and specifically economic writing in this period is difficult to define. In what manner were economic phenomena, such as colonialism, represented textually? "In precisely what form," Keith Tribe has asked, "does 'the economy' irrupt into economic discourse?"15 Were there, in other words, distinctly autonomous economic genres or is there, instead, an economic rhetoric or poetics that obtains in a range of textual genres, for example travel writing and colonial literature? One historian of economic thought concludes that writers concerned with economic matters did not restrict themselves to particular genres, they "used a common vocabulary of concepts and discussed a specific set of questions and


issues.\textsuperscript{15} The archive of the English Atlantic world incorporates documents written in a variety of genres, documents that use a common economic vocabulary and rhetoric even while the authors of these documents disputed the particular details of the Atlantic world. A rhetoric or poetics of the English Atlantic world, the mentality of exploration, conquest, settlement and development of the English Atlantic world, can be isolated by examining documents harbourd in the vast imperial archive.\textsuperscript{16} This chapter will examine travel narratives, geographical treatises and atlases, government documents, the letters and journals of merchants, planters and seamen, newspapers, colonial histories, promotional pamphlets, as well as explicitly economic treatises.\textsuperscript{17} These were the documents produced by and for English Atlanticists to represent the world they inhabited.

The Atlantic was described by mariners and merchants in journals, letters, and travel narratives, beginning in the early sixteenth-century. Geographies and atlases provided complements to these narratives. Newly established colonies were promoted to prospective investors and emigrants directly in pamphlet form and indirectly through colonial histories and travel narratives that described and exaggerated the natural qualities and economic potential of American islands and mainland territories. Early colonial


\textsuperscript{16}The imperial archive is the subject of Thomas Richards, \textit{The Imperial Archive} (London: Verso, 1993). That study is concerned, however, only with the nineteenth-century British empire. David Spurr, \textit{The Rhetoric of Empire: colonial discourse in journalism, travel writing and imperial administration} (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993) attempts to mine a similar archive from the twentieth-century to construct an imperial rhetoric. Both of these books have aided my work conceptually.

\textsuperscript{17}The vast size of the Atlantic archive can be gauged through the ongoing bibliographic project at the John Carter Brown Library: \textit{European Americana: a chronological guide to works printed in Europe relating to the Americas, 1493-1776}, ed. John Alden, 6 vols. (New York: Readex Books, 1980-1988).
settlers related their experiences in the new world as they developed land and resources, and merchants wrote about their commercial dealings with the American colonies. Later, when the Atlantic world was a stable feature of English social and economic life, political arithmeticians debated the theory of empire and colonisation and quantified colonial economic activity.¹⁹

Documents in the English Atlantic archive vary in subject, genre, style, and intended audience, but they share an economic preoccupation and they configure that economic preoccupation in similar fashion, through a common economic rhetoric. John Rastell's interlude, a foundational literary document in the English Atlantic archive, and one that anticipates much of what will later be added to it, is characterized by what the Cuban literary critic Roberto Retamar described as the conjunction of utopianism with "the shameless ideology of plunder."²⁰ Beginning with the accidental arrival of Europeans in America, the New World was a site of utopian expectations and material desires. It was, to borrow Edmundo O'Gorman's influential idea, "invented" in that fashion.²¹ The Atlantic world, made increasingly familiar to Europeans through the experience and


reporting of exploration and settlement, represented the possibility of a foreshortened utopian future. The content of that utopia was, from the beginning, material: the Atlantic was an economic utopia, a source of limitless wealth, or plunder.

The subsequent realization of the invented Atlantic, the establishment and growth of the English Atlantic world, was not simply a process of despoiling utopia, as an influential portion of the literature on the subject of New World conquest has traditionally suggested. Howard Mumford Jones, for example, claims that because of the "coarse and brutal...response of European greed to the prospect of boundless wealth," utopian America's "radiant image became crossed with streaks of night." The response of Europeans to the utopian wealth of the New World was not the tragic anomaly that Jones suggests. As Braudel has written, "America was Europe's 'doing', the achievement by which Europe most truly revealed her own nature." The Atlantic's utopianism consisted of its very capacity to yield plunder to Europeans, of its promise of an imagined economic prospect of immense wealth achieved at any cost. Unlike other

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22Henri Baudet has defined the utopianism of this period as future-oriented, and distinguished it sharply from a related, historically oriented mode of thought, primitivism, in Paradise on Earth: Some Thoughts on European Images of Non-European Man, trans. Elizabeth Weinholt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965) 32-34.


26In the first chapter of his important study, The Problem of Slavery in Western
utopias, the English Atlantic world did fulfil its promise, yielding plunder from its mines, oceans, forests, and plantations through the displacement or destruction of America's original inhabitants and through dependence on unfree labour historically unrivalled in scale.

The author of a descriptive report on the condition of Virginia, written three years after the establishment of England's first permanent Atlantic colony, directly addresses question of realizing utopia: "If any man shall accuse these reports of partiall falsehood, supposing them to be but Utopian, and legendarie fables...let him now read with judgement, but let him not judge before he hath read." The report that followed is a rather conventional example of colonial propaganda, a promotional pamphlet written to urge immigration and investment in Virginia. The Virginia colony in 1610, in a precarious moment in its history, was indeed utopian, but not unrealized: Jamestown was the first of many speculative and theoretical American colonies to survive, to have been converted from a textual project to an actually existing colony. Not long after this report was written, the imagined utopian plenty of America was plundered in Virginia. Eight years after this plea for the colony was written, Virginia's first tobacco boom began; a year later the first African slaves arrived in Virginia and in 1622 relations with the Amerindians, always uneasy, turned violent as the colonists expanded their enterprise into new


27 Anon., _A True Declaration of the estate of the Colonie in Virginia_ (1610), in _Tracts and Other Papers, Relating Principally to the Origin, Settlement, and Progress of the Colonies in North America, From the Discovery of the Country to the Year 1776_, ed. Peter Force, 4 vols. (1850; New York: Peter Smith, 1947) III, 1. Subsequent references to this collection will be to _Tracts_. Each document in the collection is paginated individually.
Atlantic utopianism had been realized. In the wake of the Jamestown success, the utopia of plunder seemed realizable on other New World sites.

In 1585, having been granted a royal patent for American colonization, Walter Raleigh sponsored an expedition to the New World to establish England's first permanent American settlement in the Roanoke Islands, a project that eventually faltered. In 1587, Richard Hakluyt, a pioneering and energetic promoter of England's Atlanticism, published a translation of Réné de Laudonniere's historical account of Florida and dedicated it to Raleigh. Hakluyt's epistle dedicatory was published in the year that Raleigh was organizing a second attempt to plant his colony in North America, and is related to that Atlantic project.

In the dedication to Raleigh, reprinted in his major work, the Principal Navigations, Hakluyt discloses his understanding of the economic nature of colonialism. "[B]efore it

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28 On this important period in Virginia's history see the important interpretation of Edmund S. Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia (New York: Norton, 1975).


bee long," Hakluyt writes, the American colony will be profitable and gaineful as well to those of our nation there remaining, as to the marchants of England that shall trade hereafter thither, partly by certaine secrete comodities already discovered by your servants, & partly by breeding of divers sorts of beasts in those large and ample regions, & planting of such things in that warme climat as will best prosper there, & our realme standeth most in need of.  

Hakluyt's letter, equal parts encomium and exhortation, assures Raleigh that his colonial venture would prove to be an economic success. In Hakluyt's imagination the planters and merchants in Raleigh's America will benefit from a diverse program of colonial economic undertakings, from agriculture to the mining of precious metals: new commodities will be discovered or cultivated in America for export to England or re-export to foreign markets. In addition, the New World will provide the commodities and resources that England's economy currently consumes but is compelled to import at considerable cost from foreign merchants. To strengthen his argument about the economic potential of colonialism, Hakluyt assumes as a rhetorical paradigm the American operations of England's Iberian rivals. Spain and Portugal, Hakluyt reminds his readers, had installed settlements in the sixteenth-century throughout the New World -- in South America, on the American isthmus, and in the West Indies -- and were profitably mining silver and gold for their national coffers and producing tobacco and sugar for domestic consumption and export to other European markets, including England. Hakluyt argued that England could discover and produce enormous wealth in the New World by following the examples of Spain and Portugal. "And if our men will follow their steps," Hakluyt assures Raleigh, "by your wise direction I doubt not but in

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due time they shall reape no lesse commoditie and benefit."\textsuperscript{33}

Hakluyt's praise was not without cause and his exhortation not without consequence. Raleigh's imagination, piloting his expeditions to the North and South American mainlands and to the Caribbean islands, effectively plotted the direction of English colonial expansion in the Atlantic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The "secrete commodities" that Hakluyt hints at in his dedication to Raleigh -- silver and gold -- were never as important or profitable for the English as they were for the Atlantic empires of Spain and Portugal. Agriculture, however, was a remarkable success. The production of marketable staple crops generated great wealth for England during her first imperial centuries: the tobacco, rice, cotton, and sugar cultivated in the West Indies and on the North American mainland substantially engrossed the wealth of England and Englishmen in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{34}

England's economic turn to the Atlantic is discernible well before Hakluyt and Raleigh, as early as the fifteenth-century in the beginnings of English trading voyages to the Portuguese islands off the coast of North Africa. The organized commercial endeavours of the English in the West Atlantic, beginning with John Cabot in the late fifteenth-century, initially focussed on the North, on the Grand Banks fisheries and on the search for new trade routes to trading partners in the East. In the sixteenth century, English merchants and adventurers followed Portuguese traders South along the African coast to Guinea and eventually West across the Atlantic to Brazil.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{33}Hakluyt, "Epistle Dedicatory to Sir Walter Raleigh," 374.

\textsuperscript{34}Throughout this chapter I rely on two superb studies of Atlantic economic history: Ralph Davis, \textit{The Rise of the Atlantic Economies} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973) and K.G. Davies, \textit{The North Atlantic World in the Seventeenth Century} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974).

\textsuperscript{35}The Westward, transatlantic movement of the European economy in this period is treated provocatively by Philip D. Curtin, \textit{The rise and fall of the plantation complex}:
The early South Atlantic excursions of the English were exploratory adventures but they were resolutely economic in design. In 1536, William Hawkins advertised his voyages as "feats of merchandise." Hakluyt narrates Hawkins' transatlantic trading missions in the 1530s in the *Principal Navigations*, describing commerce through the language of adventure:

Olde M. William Haukins of Plimouth, a man for his wisdome, valure, experience, and skill in sea causes much esteemed, and beloved of K. Henry the 8, and being one of the principall Sea-captaines in the West parts of England in his time, not contented with the short voyages commonly then made onely to the knowne coasts of Europe, armed out a tall and goodly shippe of his owne of the burthen of 250 tunnes, called the Paule of Plimouth, whereupon he made three long and famous voyages unto the coast of Brasil, a thing in those dayes very rare, especially to our nation. In the course of which voyages he touched at the River Sestos upon the coast of Guinea, where he traffiqued with the negros, and tooke of them elephants' teeth, and other commodities which that place yeeldeth: and so arriving on the coast of Brasil, he used there such discretion, and behaved himself so wisely with those savage people, that he grew into great familiarity and friendship with them.36

Port records indicate that Hawkins' ship, the *Paul*, set out from Plymouth laden with cloth, metals and weapons and returned from his Atlantic voyage with a cargo of ivory and over ninety tonnes of brazilwood.37 Hawkins traded with Africans and native Brazilians on his first New World excursion the purpose of which was to explore the

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commercial potential of these unfamiliar regions and expand England's economic frontier.

 Later transatlantic voyages were similarly commercial. The 1540 Brazil venture of Southampton merchants Robert Reniger and Thomas Borey is described by Hakluyt as "commodious and gainefull." In 1542, a fort was established in Bahia by a skilled Southampton mariner named Pudsey, indicating the desire or expectation of regular trade, or possibly even colonization of this section of Brazil.\(^{38}\) English merchants later encroached on the established trades in sugar, fur and slaves. In 1564, John Hawkins left Plymouth on a "prosperous winde" for a trading voyage to Africa and the Spanish Caribbean. Captain William King and company aboard the Salomon and the Jane Bonaventure intercepted an impressive number of ships in the Caribbean Sea in 1592. One Spanish ship captured by King was "laden with two hundred and seventy Negros," subsequently sold by the English pirates to Spanish colonists in Puerto Rico. Another Spanish ship, captured near Hispaniola was carrying sugar and sugar by-products. The last ship to be captured by these privateers was transporting a rich cargo of animal hides, indigo, wood products, and gold.\(^{39}\)

 English ships explored the North Atlantic and traded lucratively in the Spanish and Portuguese controlled South Atlantic during the sixteenth-century -- legally and illegally -- but as a strategy for imperial development this activity had limited potential. Colonies were essential to an expanded Atlantic economy.\(^{40}\) Continental Europe had traditionally

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\(^{38}\)Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, VIII, 15. These narratives of early transatlantic commerce were amongst Hakluyt's few original contributions to his collection. For England's early commercial voyages to Brazil see Andrews, *Trade, plunder and settlement*, 57-62.

\(^{39}\)Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, VII, 8, 154-156. The years between 1589 and 1592 were the most lucrative for privateering; sugar captures alone in these years netted £100,000. C.G.A. Clay, *Economic expansion and social change: England 1500-1700*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) II, 135.

\(^{40}\)Andrews, *Trade, plunder and settlement*, 280; J.H. Parry, *The Age of
furnished the primary trading partners for English merchants -- particularly for the textile trade, the foundation of England's commercial economy -- and they continued to be the principal markets for venting English commodities throughout the period of Atlantic imperialism, both for domestic products and colonial re-exports. Colonies in the Western Atlantic, it was originally hoped, would lead to the creation of new markets and new trades, with both native Americans and European settlers. America, it was also imagined, would provide alternative sources of imports, and supplies of raw materials for the English textile industry and, it was optimistically hoped, lead to the discovery of gold and silver.

It was the lure of precious metals that captured the imagination of many trans-Atlantic adventurers, encouraged by powerful myths such as El Dorado, the city of gold hidden in South America. Adventurers who sought only mineral wealth in America were

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possessed "by golden hopes and expectations," according to Robert Harcourt, an early seventeenth-century colonist in Guiana, the alleged location of El Dorado. Although hoping to discover mineral wealth in the New World, and encouraged by the treasure extracted by others, England's colonial successes were mercantile and agricultural. England's American colonies, according to Charles Andrews, passed through three phases of economic development: "Gold, trade, tillage represent the three stages in the history of colonization, and the greatest of these, because fundamentally essential to permanence, is tillage." Before the end of the sixteenth-century, English colonists had chosen agriculture in preference to precious metals, a choice that paid extraordinary long-term dividends. "In that New World," writes one economic historian, the English "found no silver but the soil itself."

The English initiated their New World colonizing strategy in Newfoundland in 1583, and finally succeeded in 1607 in Jamestown, almost thirty years after the first royal colonial patent was granted to Humphrey Gilbert and ninety years after Rastell's pioneering colonial project. Simultaneous endeavours along the Wild Coast of Northeastern South America also proved fruitless, although there were over a dozen attempts to plant tropical English colonies between the Orinoco and the Amazon Rivers. Following the success in Virginia, the English accumulated colonies rapidly.


48For outlines of English colonizing activities see Davies, North Atlantic World, 35-62;
In the course of the seventeenth-century, England claimed almost thirty colonies in the Atlantic, and firmly controlled seventeen by the century's end. In the next century the number of English colonies increased by almost a dozen. In this period of rapid expansion, Caribbean islands, unclaimed by other European states, were annexed to the West Indian empire, the colonial frontier in mainland America expanded, and French, Dutch and Spanish colonies were conquered or ceded to the English as a consequence of war. As these plantation settlements grew in number and significance the English presence in West Africa was extended in the drive to procure an adequate supply of slaves to feed the insatiable American appetite for labour.

The English Atlantic world developed into a single, complex economic unit, "a common economic civilization," linked together by a massive volume of maritime traffic in bodies, commodities, and capital. The English Atlantic world would grow and prosper until the end of the eighteenth-century. According to the analysis of one late eighteenth-century commentator, the

possessions and interests in the Atlantic and in America lye under various forms, in plantations of sugar, tobacco, rice, and indigo, in farms of tillage and pasture, in fisheries, Indian hunts, forests, naval stores, and mines; each different site produced some special matter of supply necessary to one part of ... the world.... The spirit of commerce...has wrought up these plantations to become objects of trade...and...extended the British Dominions through every part of the Atlantic


Ocean actually forming a *Grand Marine Empire*.$^{51}$

In this dynamic period of imperial projects and economic development, Britain expanded beyond national boundaries and "became the center of an Atlantic economy."$^{52}$ Plantations, mines, fisheries, hunts and industries from the colonies fed the metropolitan centre of this "Grand Marine Empire," providing an important portion of the wealth that would, in the eighteenth-century, contribute to the first industrial revolution.$^{53}$

English expansion in the Atlantic in the early modern period was conceived and conducted with the aid of a colonial discourse that deployed economic arguments to promote American settlements.$^{54}$ Richard Hakluyt the elder, uncle of the prolific Atlantic publicist, collected some "Notes on Colonisation" in 1578 intended to serve as a practical manual for American settlers outlining the factors that he imagined were involved in establishing a successful colony.$^{55}$ After arriving in America, the first consideration for

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$^{55}$ It is believed that Hakluyt's notes were composed for the third Frobisher expedition
colonists is geographical, choosing where to situate their settlement. Occupying a coastal location is essential, providing easy traffic for the supply of provisions, in the early years of settlement, and for commercial communications after the colony has prospered. A site that naturally provides building materials is preferable: the ready acquisition of stone, slate, lime, timber and reeds facilitates the construction of permanent dwellings. Most importantly, the colony will need natural resources to develop into vendible commodities:

because trafficke is a thing so materiall, I wish that great observation be taken what every soyle yeeldeth naturally, in what commoditie soever, and what it may be made to yeeld by endeavour, and to send us notice home, that thereupon we may devise what meanes may be thought of to rayse trades.\textsuperscript{56}

Climate and soil conditions will determine the crops that can be planted and cultivated, the livestock that can be raised, and the forest products available to be harvested by the colonists.

Francis Bacon incorporated a similar conception of colonization into the second edition of his \textit{Essays}. His observations were derived from knowledge of the experience of the New World settlements, particularly Virginia. Bacon invested widely in Atlantic enterprises, had an interest in the Virginia Company, the Newfoundland Company, and the North West Passage Company.\textsuperscript{57} He was very well situated to examine the question of colonization. In his essay "Of Plantations," Bacon advises selecting land adequate for the immediate sustenance of the colonists and, more importantly, the future development

\textsuperscript{56}Hakluyt, "Notes on Colonisation," 184.

\textsuperscript{57}For Bacon's commercial investments in the Atlantic economy see Rabb, \textit{Enterprise \\& Empire}, 238.
of commercial exports. Accordingly, after securing a supply of food, settlers should search out the marketable commodities:

Wood commonly aboundeth but too much; And therefore, Timber is fit to be one. If there be Iron Ure, and Streames whereupon to set the Milles; Iron is a brave Commoditie where Wood aboundeth. Making of Bay Salt, if the Climate be proper for it, would be put in Experience. Growing Silk, likewise, if any be, is a likely Commoditie. Pitch and Tarre, where store of Firres and Pines are, will not faile. So Drugs, and Sweet Woods, where they are, cannot but yeeld great Profit. Soape Ashes likewise, and other Things, that may be thought of.

In "Of Plantations" Bacon outlines a complete program for colonial economic development. He advises colonists to abandon the futile and wasteful search for gold and silver: "moile not too much under Ground: For the Hope of Mines is very Uncertaine". He advocates agricultural production, forestry, and other non-mineral forms of resource extraction as the best strategy for colonial economic improvement, albeit one that requires patience. "Planting of Countries," he writes, is like "Planting of Woods; For you must make account, to leese almost Twenty yeeres Profit".58

American colonization was fundamentally a process of population migration, either voluntary or forced, into annexed territory for the purposes of commercial activity.59 Therefore, there are two basic components to colonization: land and labour. In American


59For a rare attempt to define colonies, see the excellent article by M.I. Finley, "Colonies-- An Attempt at a Typology," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 4th ser. 26 (1976): 167-188.
colonization, the answer to the land question was a factor of geography. In Newfoundland, for instance, controlling large tracts of land was unimportant, since the main purpose of a Newfoundland colony was fishing, an activity which required the possession of very little of the island's territory. In Virginia or in the Caribbean, where agriculture was the main economic activity, the acquisition and security of land was essential. However, in all cases, colonization meant dispossessing and displacing Amerindians or, if necessary extirpation.

The disposition of the first English colonists in America to the Amerindians in the early years of colonization alternated between extremes. The English, like other Europeans in America, perceived the Amerindian at times as hostile and savage and at other times as tractable and amenable to their colonial ambitions. When the first colonization projects were conceived, it was imagined that Amerindians would be necessary sources of information about the unfamiliar American environment. Their knowledge of plants, animals, climate and topography would facilitate both survival and, eventually, commercial development. It was also hoped that Amerindians would become trading partners, purchasing English manufactures and selling food. The Amerindians encountered by Arthur Barlowe on the Roanoke Islands are represented according to these expectations: "we were entertained with all love, and kindness... We found the

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people most gentle, loving, and faithfull, void of all guile, and treason". It was also anticipated that the Amerindians would be hostile to the English presence in America, resisting the colonization of their land. In the English Atlantic imagination, the prevailing view of the Amerindian depended on the economic needs of the colonists. As the land requirements of the English in the mainland colonies expanded, their attitude to the reluctant and resisting Amerindian grew hostile, a change reflected in the representation of Amerindians in colonial texts. In the Caribbean during the seventeenth-century, the English view of Taino and Kalinago was transformed by long years of bloody warfare.

Hakluyt the Elder seemed to have both poles of English perception of America's aboriginal peoples in mind when he collected his "Notes on Colonisation" in 1578. Hakluyt distinguished between the colonists and Amerindians according to where they made their settlements. He recommended that, where possible, the colonists settle and build fortifications on islands in the mouths of rivers. These positions were primarily strategic, allowing for defence against rival European claimants and for traffic of all kinds with Amerindians, whom he refers to as "Inland people," distinguishing them from the colonists clinging to the shores of America. In dealing with Amerindians, Hakluyt

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64 The changing English perception of the Kalinago and the Taino Indians of the circumcaribbean region can be traced in Peter Hulme, Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797 (London: Methuen, 1986) 46-87.
encourages the English colonists to exploit their knowledge and understand where they might be vulnerable to trade: "Nothing is more to be indevoured with the Inland people then familiaritie. For so may you best discover al the natural commodities of their countrey, and also all their wants, all their strengths and all their weaknesse". However, he also anticipates that Amerindians might not accept colonial encroachment on their territory, and might not permit any more than a small encampment. His terminology shifts and the Amerindians become "savages": "we might not be suffered by the savages to enjoy any whole countrey or any more than the scope of a Citie." If the Amerindians resist, the English colonists must be prepared to defend their settlement.65

It was increasingly difficult for colonists to avoid confronting the fact that any kind of permanent, expanding English presence in America would inevitably displace and dispossess the original Americans. At the beginnings of English colonization in America, the settlement of territory unclaimed by other European nations had to be legally and politically defended. Seizing North American land, Queen Elizabeth argued that territorial claims to the New World must be legitimized by occupation and habitation. "Possession not prescription" is the famous Elizabethan colonial formula. Granting colonial patents to Gilbert and Raleigh, Elizabeth authorized them to seize and occupy territory uninhabited by a Christian (that is, a European) nation. Raleigh's patent licensed him to "discover search fynde out and view" these lands, and to "have, hold, occupie and enjoy" them.66 These patents were justified, in part, by Cabot's claim to have "discovered" Newfoundland. Discovery justified occupation, and occupation justified colonial


The validity of this argument depended on the land being unoccupied by Europeans. The same argument was used to justify dispossessing the Amerindians that did occupy America. The displacement of native Americans created a legal and moral dilemma for the English colonists different from the one that governed international relations among European states. Preaching a sermon to bless the Virginia colony in 1609, Robert Gray asked "by what right or warrant we can enter into the land of these Savages, take away their rightful inheritance from them, and plant ourselves in their places, being unwronged and unprovoked by them?" Gray provided an answer: Amerindians were no better than animals, and their occupation of the land is therefore insignificant and illegitimate:

the greater part of it [is] possessed and wrongfully usurped by wild beasts, and unreasonable creatures, or by brutish savages, which by reason of their godless ignorance, and blasphemous idolatrie, are worse then those beasts which are of wild and savage nature.

Gray's answer not only justified the Jamestown settlement, but defended its future, violent expansion.

Three years later, William Strachey attempted to provide a more complete answer to the question posed by Gray. Christian nations, he argued, were entitled by international law to trade throughout the world, and to be welcomed peacefully into alien ports.

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Colonization was an extension of this privilege. For in trading with Amerindians in Virginia, the English would also be trafficking in civilization and this, Strachey asserted, is always justified. In order to facilitate traffic and their civilizing mission, the English must build some sort of fortification, constructed on land bartered for English merchandise, and then, having done so, are justified in defending it, if necessary. Thus engaged in violence, the expansion of the colony beyond the frontiers of the settlement is justified. Strachey incorporates, then, both poles of English attitudes towards Amerindians: trade and civilization, if possible, violence if necessary.\(^\text{70}\)

Strachey also employs a more important colonial argument. The land the English had begun to occupy in America was largely vacant, he argued, and where inhabited, uncultivated. Strachey describes the land as "wast and vast, unhabited groundes". It was rich soil, the wealth of which is unexploited, "barren, and unprofitable, because unknowne" by the primitive economy of Amerindians.\(^\text{71}\) The English had an obligation and a right to develop this wealth, to improve the land. One New England colonist claimed that the land "is spacious and void" and that Amerindians graze on it in the manner of animals; they "do but run over the grass, as do also the foxes and wild beasts."\(^\text{72}\) John Winthrop made perhaps the most explicit argument of this kind: "This savage people ruleth over many lands without title or property; for they inclose no ground, neither have they cattel to maintayne it, but remove their dwellings as they have occasion."\(^\text{73}\) So long as the English colonists were productively using the land they


\(^{73}\)John Winthrop, "General Considerations for the Plantation in New England," in *The
occupied, then, they had the right to dispossess the native Americans. These arguments were based on intentionally mistaken evidence and unshared premises, what Francis Jennings has called the "cant of conquest", and they justified for the English not only the initial claim and possession of the land, but also the later expansion of the colonial frontier.

A colony, in the succinct definition of John White of New England is "a societie of men drawne out of one state or people, and transplanted into another Countrey." The composition of the people transplanted was a matter of some consideration in colonial discourse. After securing the appropriate land, labour was an essential element for the development of the colony's economy. In his essay "Of Plantations," Bacon is concerned with recruiting an appropriate labour force to meet colonial economic objectives: "The People wherewith you Plant, ought be Gardeners, Plough-men, Labourers, Smiths, Carpenters, Joyners, Fisher-men, Fowlers, with some few Apothecaries, Surgeons, Cookes and Bakers." Skilled and unskilled labour is required by the settlement to construct dwellings and support the colony, initially, and eventually in the production of colonial commodities.

Richard Eburne's *Plain Pathway to Plantations* appeared in 1624, and is one of the few published texts from this period to examine colonization generally, producing a theory or, as Eburne called it, a "doctrine" of colonization. One of the fundamental doctrines was the need for labour. Eburne includes a remarkably comprehensive catalogue of the kinds

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*74*Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 3-14, 43-84.


*76*Francis Bacon, "Of Plantations," 108.
of labourers that are required by new colonies, a catalogue that includes over sixty-five
different tradesmen, from armourers to wheelwrights. When establishing a colonial
economy, Eburne writes,

special regard ought to be had to draw thither...men of special and present
employment, that is, men of such trades, faculties, science, handicrafts,
occupations, and employments as are most necessary for a present and uprising
commonwealth, such as without whom there can be no commodious or good
dwelling or living...

However, it is not just tradesmen and skilled labourers that are needed for the colonial
labour force; servants are also required, to work in households, farms, mines and in other
colonial industries. These industrious labourers would all benefit from American wealth,
fLOURishing in the New World where they might otherwise struggle at home in England:
"Consider the great riches, wealth, and good estate which such who here live, and cannot
but live, parce & duriter, poor and hardly, might by transportation within a while rise
unto".77

Richard Hakluyt's exhaustive colonial treatise, the Discourse of Western Planting
(1584), suggests using the Americas as a way to solve the problems of poverty,
unemployment, and crime:

many thousands of idle persons are within this Realme, which havinge no way to
be sett on worke be either mutinous and seeke alteration in the state, or at leaste
very burdensome to the commonwealthe, and often fall to pilferinge and thievinge
and other lewdness, whereby all the prisons of the lande are daily pestred and
stuffed full of them...

These thieves, and the criminalized poor, Hakluyt argues, could be transported from
prisons and poverty to the New World as a colonial labour force. In Newfoundland they

77Richard Eburne, A Plain Pathway to Plantations, ed. Louis B. Wright (1624; Ithaca:
could harvest naval stores from the forests: timber for masts, pitch and tar from fir trees and rope from hemp. In "the more sowtherne partes," they could "worke in mynes of golde, silver, copper, leade and yron" and "in plantinge of sugar canes." All these activities, moreover, will also create work for the domestic unemployed labourers in shipping, as sailors and in the docks of England's port cities. The idle poor that are found to be too infirm to be transported could be set to work refining the natural resources imported from America: "by this voyadge [they] shalbe made profitable members by employinge them in England in makinge of a thousande triflinge thinges, which will be very good marchandize for those Countries where wee shall have most ample vente thereof." The established textile industries would also experience a boom in demand: clothing would be needed for trade with Native Americans and, increasingly, for the growing colonial population. "In somme," Hakluyt concludes, "this enterprise will mynister matter for all sortes and states of men to worke upon."\(^{78}\)

The provision of employment for the labouring and destitute classes of England was promoted as a social benefit of colonization, but the inducement for investment or other forms of mercantile participation in colonial projects was profit. Resorting to the hyperbole customary to colonial discourse, Richard Eburne boasts of colonial plantations, that "[t]he benefit that might...accrue unto marchants and all kinds of adventurers...is infinite. For traffic and merchandise cannot but by means thereof wonderfully be bettered and increased." Merchants would find, in the New World, "rich and much-desired commodities," and would discover, in addition, new markets for domestically produced wares.\(^{79}\)

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\(^{79}\) Eburne, *A Plain Pathway to Plantations*, 34.
In his *Discourse of Western Planting*, Hakluyt charts the coast of the unclaimed North American mainland from North to South according to the commercial opportunities that this geography presents to English merchants, linking climate, landscape, and vegetation in an economic configuration. Hakluyt's program of economic projects for American colonies is immensely ambitious: grain, vegetables, tropical fruits, wine grapes, olives and other oil plants will be cultivated in New World settlements, complementing domestically produced supplies and replacing costly imports. Hakluyt's *Discourse* appeared during a commercial slump, when English merchants found themselves excluded from lucrative overseas trades by economic or political circumstances. American colonies will address this crisis and will produce "all the commodities of all our olde decayed and daungerous trades in all Europe, Africa and Asia". Mercantilists writing in the early seventeenth-century expected the Atlantic colonies to bolster the faltering domestic economy and to rectify England's trade imbalance with Europe. The plantations in New England, Newfoundland, Virginia and Bermuda, Thomas Mun argued in *England's Treasure by Forraign Trade*, produce commodities for re-export to European markets. They provide "much wealth and employments to maintain a great number of poor, and to encrease our decaying trade."

In *Lex Mercatoria* (1622), Gerrard Malynes employs these mercantilist arguments for colonization in his discussion of a Newfoundland settlement. Malynes tries to measure the economic consequences of replacing seasonal fishing voyages to the Grand Banks with a permanent fishing community:

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80 Hakluyt, *Discourse of Western Planting*, 233.

But being left in the countrey...the places of these Ships which by them should have been preoccuppied, maybe filled up yearly with good fish, and many beneficiall commodities; and the men so left in the countrey, will not only be free from the perils of the Seas by not returning yearely, but will live there very pleasantly, and (if they be industrious people) gaine twice as much in the absence of the Ships, more than twelve shall be able to benefit their masters that are kept upon Farines, and that yearely; for the fertilitie of the soile is admirable, replenished with severall wholesome fruits, herbs, flowers, and corne, yeelding greate increase; the store of deere, of Land-fowle and Water-fowle is rare and of great consequence; as also many sorts of timber there growing, with great hope of Mines, and making of Yron and Pitch.  

For Malynes, a Newfoundland colony would provide a number of related benefits. The fishing trade would be secured and expanded by the presence of a permanent settlement. The shipping industry would also profit; the volume of traffic to Newfoundland would increase to supply the colony with provisions and the space in the ships normally devoted to transporting seasonal fisherman could be devoted to marketable commodities. The settlers in Newfoundland would harvest the all of the natural resources of the island, productive throughout the year at a rate exceeding their normal productivity in England. The fertile American soil would yield fruits and grain and the forest animals would provide food and fur products.

The rhetoric used to promote colonization projects throughout the English Atlantic world, from Newfoundland to Virginia to the Caribbean, was drawn from these arguments about commerce, land, and labour, and adapted to the specific needs of the different

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colonies. In 1626, William Vaughan, an eccentric Welsh clergyman, published a colonial allegory under the pseudonym Orpheus Junior. Vaughan's lengthy and dense treatise, *The Golden Fleece*, employs the myth of Jason's quest to promote the colonization of Newfoundland. Vaughan had been advancing colonial schemes since the beginning of the seventeenth-century in a number of publications, and had invested considerable imaginative energy into his project. He even commissioned a map of Newfoundland, published in several documents including *The Golden Fleece*, in which names from his own mental world, from his family and his home in Wales, were inscribed onto existing sites on the island, remaking the New World to reflect his own expectations and desires. Although it is not clear whether Vaughan ever visited America himself, he did sponsor a ship of settlers transported to Newfoundland in 1617 to occupy land he owned on the Avalon peninsula. The project was not well organized and ultimately faltered: after a year, only six of the original settlers were still on the island, and in 1619 the remainder of Vaughan's Newfoundland colonists, having been abandoned by their leader, returned home.  

In Vaughan's 1626 allegory, the myth of the golden fleece is employed rhetorically as an exemplum to illustrate and motivate a conventional pattern of Atlantic colonialism. Apollo orders Orpheus Junior, the hero, to discover the source of an economic golden fleece: "where the King of greate Britaine might perpetually find Trading...which Trading they stiled the *Golden Fleece*". Orpheus Junior locates this golden fleece in Newfoundland. Vaughan had extravagant ambitions for his colony. A Newfoundland

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84 Jean-Pierre Sánchez has described the way that the myth of the Golden Fleece was incorporated into the Atlantic imagination in "Él Dorado and the Myth of the Golden Fleece," 338-378.
settlement, he argued, would multiply "shipping and Mariners" through the transport and employment of settlers and the supply of provisions, but the real prize, England's 'perpetual trade', would be the fishing industry and the supplementary economic activities undertaken by the settlers. When Vaughan's colonists were not fishing the Grand Banks, he suggested that they could spend the off-season trapping fur -- the author lists seven varieties available on the island-- producing naval stores, or extracting the island's purported mineral wealth. Vaughan's economic aspirations for his colony were enormous: "we should perform miracles, and returne yearly into Great Britain a surer gain than Jason's Golden Fleece from Colochos".

Anthony Packhurst described Newfoundland in a 1578 letter to Richard Hakluyt the elder that anticipated English colonization. Packhurst's voyage to Newfoundland was one of economic exploration. Packhurst's letter describes the bays and harbours of the island in order to discover the best location for a settlement, a foundation from which the English could become "lordes of the whole fishing". The French, Spanish and Portuguese were using Newfoundland as a base for their fishing fleet but they had not attempted to exploit the island's other valuable resources. He compiles an exhaustive catalogue of Newfoundland's resources, noting in particular those that have commercial value:

As touching the kindes of Fish beside cod, there are Herrings, Salmons, Thornebacke, Plase, or rather we should call them Flounders, Dog fish, and another most excellent of taste called of us a Cat, Oisters, and Muskles, in which I have found pearles above 40. in one Muskle, and generally have all some, great or small.

The catalogue is a dominant trope in colonial rhetoric, its transparent quantification exposing and signifying wealth. It was also way of tabulating the value of the New

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World, a variety of economic taxonomy. Fur bearing animals, Packhurst observes, are varied and plentiful, and there are "certain Mines of yron and copper in S. Johns, and in the Island of Yron, which things might turne to our greate benefite, if our men desire to plant thereabout." Hyperbole is deployed for similar rhetorical purposes, to insinuate idyllic abundance: the fish of Newfoundland are so plentiful, Packhurst writes, that they "doe come on shore when I commaund them."87

Humphrey Gilbert claimed Newfoundland himself formally in 1583, but he never managed to install and govern a settlement of his own under the terms of his patent. Gilbert's colony remained a project, an archival artifact.88 George Peckham's A true reporte of the late discoveries (1583) imagines the future history of this textual colony. To legitimate his invention, Peckham evokes the authority of the observer, the autopic authority that is a rhetorical staple in the texts of the English Atlantic archive.89 Peckham catalogues all of the island's natural resources, commodifying Newfoundland's birds, fur-bearing animals, fish, plants and trees. In Peckham's narrative, the marvellous, to borrow

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87Anthony Packhurst, "A letter written to M. Richard Hakluyt of the middle Temple, containing a report of the true state and commodities of Newfoundland" (1578), in Hakluyt, Principal Navigations, V, 345, 348.

88Gilbert's patent is reprinted in The Voyages and Colonising Enterprises of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, I, 188. On Gilbert's colonial career see, Andrews, Trade, plunder and settlement, 182-199.

89The concept of the autopic narrator is discussed in Anthony Pagden, European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 51-87.
Stephen Greenblatt's phraseology, are rendered into mere possessions.\textsuperscript{90}

Peckham lists fruits and spices that, he believes, will thrive in the temperate climate of Newfoundland and he compiles a thorough inventory of the metals and precious stones that remain concealed beneath the surfaces of the earth and sea: gold, silver, pearls and, pragmatically and more prosaically, lead, copper, and tin. The Newfoundland colony, Peckham argues, "is most likely to proove very profitable and beneficiall generallie to the whole Realme." In the first place, both colonial landlords and merchants would profit from Newfoundland's natural resources, the former from owning and renting land and the latter by way of trade. The shipping industry would inevitably grow: ships, masters, and mariners will be in great demand, transporting commodities and colonists. Peckham also imagined that the colony would create employment in England's domestic economy. The European colonists, as well as the Native Americans, would require clothing, spurring demand in the English textile industry which, as a consequence, would require additional labour.

Peckham's analysis of this economic benefit parses the textile industry into its component sections: clothiers, woolmen, carders, spinners, weavers, fullers, shermen, dyers, drapers, and cappers would produce and export more goods and this increased productivity would, in turn, swell the other sectors of the domestic economy. The English are justified in bringing civility and commerce to the native Newfoundlanders; if these missions are rejected, then the English are justified if they decide to "pursue revenge with force, and doo whatever is necessary for the attaning of theyr safety", including answering violence with violence, and extending the size and nature of the English settlement.\textsuperscript{91}


\textsuperscript{91}Sir George Peckham, \textit{A true reporte of the late discoveries} (1583), in \textit{The Voyages
The new and exotic plants, animals, and landforms encountered by the first English voyagers to the North American littoral, redolent of the Edenic, are rhetorically transformed in travel narratives, commodified in Atlantic texts. When the sea captains Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlowe approached the coast of North America in 1584 they were met by the fragrant air of the New World even before land had been sighted: there "was so strong a smell, as if we had bene in the midst of some delicate garden, abounding with all kinds of odiferous flowers, by which we were assured, that the land could not be farre distant." The land, when it was eventually reached, met their expectations. They even claimed, by way of occupatio, that it defied adequate description:

wee viewed the land about us, being whereas we first landed, very sandie, and lowe towards the water side, but so full of grapes, as the very beating, and surge of the Sea overflowed them, of which we founde such plentie, as well there, as in all places else, both on the sande, and on the greene soile on the hils, as in the plaines, as well on every little shrubbe, as also climbing towards the toppes of the high Cedars, that I think in all the worlde the like aboundance is not to be founde: and my selfe having seene those partes of Europe that most abound, finde such difference, as were incredible to be written.

This abundance is identified for its commercial opportunities, its economic meaning. The Roanoke Islands possess "a most pleasant and fertile ground, replenished with goodly Cedars, and diuers other sweete woods, full of Currans, of flaxe, and many other notable commodities". 92

Travelling to the same land a year later to establish a colony, Thomas Hariot rhetorically transforms this utopian plenty, turning the discovered abundance into catalogues of commodities that will provide food and building supplies for American

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92 Amadas and Barlowe, "The Discovery of Raleigh's Virginia," 94-95.
colonists and commodities that he classifies as "merchantable". To these native commodities Hariot adds a catalogue of additional European staples that could be cultivated in America for the benefit of English commerce. Hariot concludes his report to his patrons, Walter Raleigh and the other sponsors of Virginia colonization, writing that "those sortes of commodities which I have spoken of...shall both enrich them selves [ie the colonists] as also others that shall deal with them." Hariot imagines an economic topographia of this future colony, enticing investors and colonists by extolling the wealth of the land and its resources, substituting the language of commerce where one might expect to encounter the language of natural description. Hariot's Virginia, though, is a possible colony, delineated for the economic imagination through this elaborate topothesia.

*Nova Britannia* (1609) is a paradigmatic colonial promotional pamphlet, published to encourage investment and emigration to the new English settlement at Jamestown. The author, Richard Johnson, describes utopian Virginia as an "earthly paradise"; the title of the pamphlet suggests that a new, perfected England will be constructed on American soil. Virginia is an economic Eden, the bounty of which is to be cultivated, mined, refined and exported: "[t]here grows hempe for Cordage, an excellent commoditie, and flaxe for linnen cloth; which being sowen and well manured, in such clymeate and fertile soyle, will make great benefite, and will put downe that of other countries." Grapes, the author observes, can be cultivated to develop an English wine industry which will eliminate the need for England to trade with the continent and which will, in addition, necessarily employ labour for cultivating grapes and making wine as well as coopers to make casks and hoops to transport the wine to market.94

93 Thomas Hariot, *A brieve and true report of the new found land of Virginia* (1588), in *The Roanoke Voyages*, I, 386.

94 R[ichard] J[ohnson], *Nova Britannia: Offering Most Excellent fruites by Planting in
Johnson anticipates cultivating valuable cash crops. "We intend," he writes, "to plant there (god willing) great plentie of Sugar Canes, for which the soyle and clymate is very apt and fit; also Linseed, and Rapeseeds to make Oiles, which because the soyle is strong and cheape, may there be sowed and the oyle made to great benefite." This colonial economy requires "people to make the plantation," and the author looks to the landless poor -- England's "swarmes of idle persons" -- as a source of conscripted labour.

Tradesmen and skilled workers, too, will find employment in Virginia:

all kinde of Artificers we must first imploy, are Carpenters, Ship-wrights, Masons, Sawyers, Brickmakers, Bricklayers, Plowmen, Sowers, Planters, Fishermen, Coopers, Smiths, Mettel-men, Taylors, Turners, and such like, to make and fitte all necessaries, for comfort and use of the Colony, and for such as are of no trades (if they bee industrious) they shall have there imployment enough, for there is a world of means to set many thousands a worke, partly in such things as I mentioned before, and many other profitable workes, for no man must live idle there.

A thriving colony will increase the demand for English exports, cloth in particular: "it will cause a mighty vent of English clothes, a great benefit to our Nation, and raising againe of that auncient trade of clothing, so much decayed in England". 95

Amerindians in Nova Brittania are "wild and savage people" that live like deer in a forest and can easily be dispossessed of their land. Nonetheless, they are also "very loving and gentle, and do entertaine and relieve our people with great kindnesse." The author recommends that the colonists "must have patience and humanitie to manage their crooked nature to your form of civilitie." 96 Johnson is hopeful that English-Amerindian relations will be peaceful and beneficial, and yet by characterizing them as nomadic and

Virginica (1609), in Force, Tracts, I, 8.

95J[ohnson], Nova Brittania, 8.

96J[ohnson], Nova Brittania, 11.
wild he has justified the forceful and lawful dispossession of their land. In 1622, relations between the colonists and the natives broke down, culminating in bloody exchanges in which both Amerindians and colonists suffered casualties. Thereafter, the English claimed they were released from whatever had restrained their expansion. In the words of one colonist, "our hands which before were tied with gentlenesse and faire usage, are now set at liberty by the treacherous violence of the Savages". As a consequence, the colonists were free to expropriate even more Amerindian land, violently and without compensation. Some colonists recommended the extirpation of the rebellious Amerindians, while more than one official recommended enslaving them.\textsuperscript{97} Liberated from earlier constraints, the Virginians developed a prosperous plantation economy, producing tobacco on this expropriated land turning, at the end of the century, to African slavery to provide the necessary labour power.

In Guiana, the site of concentrated English imperial ambitions, one traveller registered the plenitude and strangeness of the South American territory: "I never saw or tasted more strange, more delicate, & more pleasant fruits, then heere we may continually gather in most infinite aboundance". The author resorts to occupatio, the rhetoric of the ineffable, in order to promote the colonization of Guiana. He writes of its "incomparable and not to be equald wealth" and claims, at the end of his narrative, that to describe Guiana "were to draw a Landskip of that excellent perfection, which no Art could better, hardly imitate." The country, he writes, "hath appeared a very earthly Paradise":

\begin{quote}
there is great store of Cotton, of Silke, of Balsamum, and of those kindes most
\end{quote}

excellent, and neuer knowne in Europe. There are all sorts of Gummes, of Indian Pepper, besides what the Country may afford inwardly, which hee had not leasure to search, is yet unkowne. Also the Soyle is so excellent and so full of Riuers, that it will beare Sugar, Ginger, and all commodities that the West Indies hath.98

The exotic in this description is rendered familiar through the commerce.

In 1631, the Earl of Berkshire promoted a colony in Guiana by compiling a inventory of "the varietie of commodities therein growing for the trade of Merchandise, which in short time by Gods assisting our endeavours may be brought to returne great profit to the undertakers." Descriptions of Guiana always proffered the prospect of gold and silver, but the Earl of Berkshire's colony was promoted through the potential of more reliable, if more prosaic resources. There is sugar cane, a "commodity of estimation," and also cotton, "a profitable commodity, for making of fustians, callicoes and candle-wicke." There is also tobacco and "many commodities for diers" and there are spices such as mace, nutmeg, and peppers.99 Guiana promises to supply the English economy with exports she normally seeks from other nations, natural resources to supply existing English industries and commodities that will allow England to expand her trade with Europe.

Travellers' descriptions of the Caribbean islands observe an analogous rhetorical pattern. Settlers on St.Christophers, the first English West Indian colony, discover resources capable of sustaining the English colonists and providing lucrative commercial crops. They discover wild sugar cane as well as plants familiar to them through domestic agriculture and through international trade and commerce. On St. Christophers the


A colonist will find

Mayes, like the *Virginia* wheat; we have Pine-apples neere so bigge as an Hartichoke, but the daintiest taste of any fruit; *Plantains*, an excellent, and a most increasing fruit: Apples, Prickell Peares, and Pease but differing all from ours. There is Pepper that groweth in a little red huske, as big as a Walnut, aboute foure inches in length, but the long cuds are small, and much stronger, and better for use, than that from the *east Indies*.\(^{100}\)

An early settler on St. Christophers remembers considering the island as a possible site of tobacco production: he "thought it would be a very convenient place for ye planting of tobacoes, which ever was a rich commodetie."\(^{101}\) The language of discovery on St. Christophers is the language of economic opportunity.

A promotional pamphlet published in 1657 attempted to attract settlers to Jamaica, conquered from the Spanish just two years earlier and in need of English colonists. According to the pamphlet, Jamaica compares favourably with more established West Indian colonies: "this Island, for the richness and goodness of the soyl for the pleasantness of its woods and the abundance of all good things, may very well contend with any other of the American Islands".\(^{102}\) Jamaica was the most important achievement of Oliver Cromwell's Western Design; his aggressive expansionist foreign policy aimed at enlarging England's Atlantic empire in the Caribbean.\(^{103}\)


\(^{102}\)Anon., *A True Description of Jamaica, With the Fertility, Commodities, and the Healthfulness of the place* (1657) 3-4.

\(^{103}\)On Cromwell's Western Design see Christopher Hill, *God's Englishman: Oliver
who revealed his personal knowledge of Spanish America to the English government in his popular book, *The English American*, made a personal presentation to Cromwell in 1654, urging him to raid Cuba, Hispaniola, the central American isthmus as well as Jamaica because "ginger hides and sugar are there, and some doe talk of mines of silver formerly discovered". When General Venables landed in Jamaica in 1655 he confirmed the accuracy of some of Gage's intelligence. In addition to spices, tobacco, indigo and cocoa, Jamaica, Venables reported, is "hath much commodity of planting or erecting of sugar engines."\(^{104}\) One of Venables' men on the Jamaican expedition, Henry Whistler, recorded a similar description of the island in his private journal. "The land is as good as any in the indies," he wrote, "and very fruitfull if it be planted." The vanquished Spanish settlers had installed "some small plantations of Shouger" but they required labour and the investment of capital to develop them to their full capacity. With the proper care, Jamaica, Whistler predicts, "may be made one of the riches spots in the world.\(^{105}\)

Less than twenty years after Whistler made his projection, Carew Reynell claimed that "Jamaica is the place that will turn to a great advantage to the English on many accounts". Reynell was an enthusiastic promoter of England's commercial Atlantic empire, arguing that "no opportunity should be slighted, but that we fix Colonies of our own People abroad in the chiefest fastness, and most considerable places of Trade". The West Indies in particular, Reynell writes, "seems designed for all manner of riches, and the seat of Empire." Jamaica, he suggests, is the natural centre of such a commercial empire,

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\(^{104}\) Both quotations from *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe*, 7 vols (1742) III, 59, 546.

"lying in the very Belly of all Commerce."\textsuperscript{106}

The history of Barbados records a similar pattern. First colonized in 1627, by 1654, Henry Whistler could describe the island in his journal as "one of the Richest Spotes of ground in the world."\textsuperscript{107} The enthusiasm of Whistler and other visitors to the island was justified by the island's subsequent development. A French historian of the Caribbean, Charles de Rochfort, observed a few years later that Barbados "is very famous in all parts, by reason of the great abundance of excellent Sugar it hath afforded these many years."\textsuperscript{108} By the early eighteenth-century, the value of Barbados' sugar plantations had grown substantially. A proud planter in Barbados, writing in a colonial newspaper, represented his island's economic development in heroic terms, a testament to the virtues of industry and the power of the market: "this grand Source of Wealth and Treasure to our Mother-Country, arose from so small a Beginning as a few Families seeking Shelter in a desolate island -- This shews what may be done by Industry and Trade rightly applied."\textsuperscript{109} John Bennet, a contemporary, calculated the total wealth of Barbados at £5,500,000. Bennet estimated that in 1731 Barbados exported sugar and sugar by-products valued at £400,000: 25,000 hogshead of sugar and 15,000 hogshead of rum.\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{106} Carew Reynell, \textit{The true English interest} (1674) 88, 89, sigA6v, 92.

\textsuperscript{107} Whistler, "Extracts from Henry Whistler's Journal of the West Indian Expedition," 145.

\textsuperscript{108} Charles Cesar de Rochfort, \textit{The History of Barbados, St Christophers, Nevis, St Vincents, Antego, Martinico, Monserrat, and the rest of the Caribby-Islands}, trans. J. Davies (1666) 9.


Labour was essential in converting colonial projects from text into existence. With varying degrees of failure, and with catastrophic consequences, the first Spanish and Portuguese colonists attempted to bring Amerindians into the colonial economy as either bond servants or as chattel slaves, a practice curtailed by resistance and disease. Although Amerindians continued to be enslaved well into the eighteenth-century, from the sixteenth century, African slavery became the dominant form of labour throughout the New World.\textsuperscript{111} In the English American colonies, planters experimented with the entire range of labour arrangements, including Amerindian bond servants and slaves, white wage labourers, indentured servants, and transported felons. Almost 350,000 white workers, including transported convicts, masterless men, and political prisoners, were imported into British America between 1580 and 1775.\textsuperscript{112} However, the supply of white workers, free or otherwise, was inelastic, dependant on economic factors in England beyond the control of the colonists, and ultimately less profitable than African slavery.\textsuperscript{113} By the end of the seventeenth-century, black African slaves provided the majority of the labour


\textsuperscript{113}For a summary of the economics of labour supply in the English Atlantic world see McCusker and Menard, \textit{The Economy of British America, 1607-1689}, 236-257.
power on colonial plantations throughout the English Atlantic world.\(^\text{114}\)

England been involved in slaving since John Hawkins traded for slaves in Africa on his trading voyage in 1562. England had instituted an organized slave-trade by the turn of the seventeenth-century. Over ten million Africans were transported to American colonies during the period of the Atlantic slave trade, of which almost two million were purchased to work on English plantations.\(^\text{115}\) The English Atlantic plantation colonies were the apex of a triangular trade pattern: ships carried goods from English ports to Africa where they were exchanged for slaves. The middle passage delivered the slaves to the colonies to satisfy the labour demands of the plantations and, finally, the ships returned to England laden with sugar, tobacco and other New World commodities.

Maurice Thompson was among the members of the first organized body of slave-traders in Africa and was also a member of the Guinea Company trading for slaves on the West African coast in the 1650s. In a series of letters, Thompson and his partners issue instructions to the ships' captains and factors in their employ for the purchase of African slaves. Captain James Pope is ordered to "buy for us 15 or 20 young lusty Negers of about 15 years of age" and transport them for resale on Thompson's ship, the ironically named *Friendship*. Bartholomew Howard is ordered by the Guinea Company to "buy and put aboard you so many negers as yo'r ship can cary" and to deliver them to Francis Soane, the Company's agent in Barbados. Concerned about the possibility of a revolt of

\(^\text{114}\)The conversion to African slavery is a controversial historiographic issue. For a recent discussion and survey see James Walvin, *Questioning Slavery* (London: Routledge, 1997) 19-48.

the slaves on the middle-passage, they equip their pinnace, the Supply with "30 paire of shackles and boults for such of your negers as are rebellious". To their Barbados agent, Francis Soane, they send instructions to sell the human cargo to planters eager for unfree labour, and to return the ship to London laden with a cargo of sugar exchanged for the slaves.\textsuperscript{116}

The English Atlantic imagination excelled in calculating the costs and benefits of slavery, transforming human bodies into prices and profit. In 1667, the Company of Royal Adventurers Trading to Africa contracted with the governor of the West Indies to provide the islands with "a constant supply of Negro-servants for their own use of Planting." The slaves were sold in lots at £17 per head, paid in cash, Bills of Exchange or for 2400 pounds of unrefined sugar. Reporting in 1670, John Ogilby lists the most important commodities for exchange in the trade for slaves "of which Brandy and Iron are the chief."\textsuperscript{117} Thomas Philips, commander of the Hannibal recorded his experience of 1693-1694 for the Royal African Company "on a trading voyage to Guiney, for elephants teeth, gold, and Negro slaves." He purchased 700 slaves, of which over 300 died, a "great detriment to our voyage, the royal African company losing ten pounds by every slave that died, and the owners of the ship ten pounds ten shillings". He sold the 372 slaves that survived the middle passage for £19 each in Barbados before returning home.\textsuperscript{118}


\textsuperscript{117} John Ogilby, Africa (1670) 350. This list was compiled at the Senegal River. A list of commodities traded around the Gambia River reveals a similar catalogue of "Merchantable Commodities". On the dynamics of European-African commerce in this part of West Africa see Walter Rodney, History of the Upper Guinea Coast 1540-1800 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970) 171-191.

\textsuperscript{118} Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America, I, 156-157, 392, 408-410. For general discussions of the economics of the slave trade see Michael Craton, Sinews of Empire: A Short History of British Slavery (Garden City, NJ: Anchor
1710, the aptly named Raper arrived in Kingston, Jamaica with 290 slaves for sale. After a stay of fourteen days, she sailed for London with a cargo of 110 hogshead of sugar as well as ginger, indigo, cinnamon and elephant's teeth, purchased in Africa with the slaves.\(^{119}\)

Attempts to understand the English Atlantic as a whole, to measure or quantify the value of the English Atlantic empire, began in the late seventeenth-century. The analytical gaze of political arithmetic was turned on colonial commerce in an effort to gauge the American contribution to England's economy in terms of "number, weight, and measure".\(^ {120}\) William Petty's Political Arithmetic, the paradigmatic text in this genre, is devoted to calculating the strength of England through the size of the economy. Petty examines a single year of transatlantic trade and discovers that English merchants exported £200,000 worth of clothes and household manufactures to the American colonies. In the same period, the southern American colonies produced £600,000 of sugar, tobacco, indigo, cotton, and cocoa while the northern American colonies contributed fish, lumber and fur worth £200,000. The mother country is clearly the beneficiary of this trade imbalance. In addition to this exchange of commodities, in the same year "the value of the Slaves brought out of Africa, to serve in our American Plantations [is] Twenty thousand

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\(^{120}\) On the rhetoric of political arithmetic see A.M. Endres, "The functions of numerical data in the writings of Graunt, Petty, Davenant," History of Political Economy 17.2 (1985): 244-264.
In his 1698 *Discourses on the Public Revenues, and on Trade*, Charles Davenant examines the intricacies of Atlantic commerce in painstaking detail. Davenant recognizes that England's colonies produce commodities not only for the home market, but more significantly for re-export to continental Europe. Davenant demonstrates the means by which individual merchants benefit from this trade pattern:

A parcel of goods sent from hence to Virginia may fetch 10 hogsheads of tobacco, in which the merchant may gain at the rate of only 10 per cent. but when this tobacco is shipped again for Amsterdam, in the freight backward and forward, and outward again, and in the manufactory of the goods sent, when the last return comes to be made, all parties concerned will be found to have got among them 20 per cent. and more, reckoning from the prime value of the commodity exported.

Davenant also calculates the national benefits of this trade arrangement, estimating a total of £950,000 in colonial imports annually, of which over two thirds are re-exported to Europe. Davenant manipulates his figures in order to represent the Atlantic economy in a striking manner. In order to calculate the total value of the American plantation colonies, Davenant estimates the productivity of every slave: "the labour of 100 Negroes is 1600l. per ann. profit to this kingdom; and we have reasons to conclude that there are in America 100,000 Negroes, and if so, the American colonies produce to England 1,600,000l. per ann." Davenant frankly acknowledges that the value of Atlantic commerce depends entirely on the labour wrung from the bodies of slaves: "[t]he labour of these slaves is the principal foundation of our riches [from America]."  

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Calculations of the value of the American contribution to the English economy were produced on both sides of the Atlantic, by merchants and planters. Sir Josiah Child, a prominent merchant and Member of Parliament, argued that the plantations create employment in England at a tremendous rate: "we may reckon, that for Provisions, Clothes and Household-Goods, Sea-men, and all other employed about Materials for victualling of Ships, Every English man in Barbadoes or Jamaica creates employment for four men at home." Included in this measurement of colonial demand were the slaves owned by that planter, estimated at eight or ten slaves for every Englishman.\(^{123}\) William Wood, a Jamaican planter, presented similar arguments in 1718 in *A Survey of Trade*. The American colonies, he argues, are "an inexhaustible Mine of Treasure to their Mother Country." They are "a Spring of Wealth to this Nation, since they work for us, and their Treasure centers all here". Wood produces figures similar to Davenant's, calculating that the mainland colonies produce £600,000 of tobacco annually, of which two thirds is re-exported, and that the West Indian plantations annually produce sugar worth £1,300,000, of which one third is re-exported.\(^{124}\)

Fayner Hall, who claimed to have spent fourteen years living and working in the colonies, calculated in 1731 that the total value of colonial trade produces a trade surplus for Britain of £1,000,000 annually, excluding the slave-trade, which he estimates earns an


annual profit of £95,000.\textsuperscript{125} For these mercantilist writers, the rhetoric of the catalogue, employed by the first colonists in America had been superseded by the rhetoric of quantification.

Malachy Postlethwayt, a prolific economic propagandist, published the first edition of his \textit{Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce} in 1751, when the English Atlantic world was nearing its apex. England had thriving colonies throughout the Atlantic, from Barbados and the Lesser Antilles to the Northeastern portion of North America. At the publication of the second edition of Postlethwayt's \textit{Dictionary} in 1766, the number of England's Atlantic colonies had increased; parts of Canada, among other possessions, had been formally acquired from the French at the Treaty of Paris in 1763.\textsuperscript{126} According to Postlethwayt, the Atlantic economy was extraordinarily profitable for England in the manner and the magnitude that earliest colonial promoters had anticipated. "[W]e may safely advance," Postlethwayt writes, "that our trade and navigation are greatly increased by our colonies, and that they really are a source of treasure...to this kingdom, since they work for us, and their treasure centers here".\textsuperscript{127}

The American colonies, Postlethwayt demonstrates, consume manufactured merchandise imported from England and produce commodities for refinement and re-exportation to European markets through the trade of English merchants and the transportation of English ships:

\begin{quote}
Our manufactures are prodigiously increased, chiefly by the demand for them in
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item 125 Fayner Hall, \textit{The importance of the British plantations in America to this kingdom} (1731) 114, 27.
\end{footnotes}
the plantations, where they at least take off one half, and supply us with many valuable commodities for re-exportation; which is as great an emolument to the mother-kingdom as to the plantations themselves.

England profits from this commercial arrangement, according to Postlethwayt, in two ways: it has a guaranteed colonial market for its own manufactures and a guaranteed supply of raw materials for refinement and re-exportation to other, principally European markets. On the one hand, Postlethwayt argues, the colonies produce commodities for the market different from those produced by the mother country. A great quantity of those commodities, in turn, are re-exported to other European markets, improving the English balance of trade:

The product...is of a different nature to what is produced from the lands of Great Britain; and, of the quantities thereof imported, such a part has been annually re-exported, as hath proved one great means of the ballance we have had from abroad, with those countries which take large quantities of our plantation products.128

The growth of the colonies also greatly increased the demand for English manufactured products. One of the domestic repercussions of this escalating demand is increased employment in a quickly diversifying manufacturing sector: guns and other metal products produced in the north and the midlands for the west African trade, clothing and food for colonists and their slaves.

Cargoes of all kinds, material and human, were moved around the Atlantic: guns and metal products to Africa, slaves to the Caribbean and the Southern mainland Colonies in return for sugar and tobacco for import and re-export, naval stores from New England for the English shipping industry, and food, especially Newfoundland fish, to the colonies to the south. The shipping industry that carried all this trade gained enormously.

128 Postlethwayt, "Colonies."
Postlethwayt was able to generate a quantified analysis of the purported benefits of the Atlantic economy through the authoritative language and methodology of political arithmetic, the calculus of pristine capitalism: "there is exported from Great-Britain and Ireland, to the several colonies belonging to the crown in America, [manufactures] to the value of 850,000l. and...the importations from [the American colonies], including silver and gold, &c. are to the value of 2,600,000l." This wealth, he continues, "centers and remains among us".\textsuperscript{129}

With Postlethwayt's calculations, the utopian Atlantic imaginings of John Rastell, Richard Hakluyt, and Walter Raleigh had been fully realized. In his \textit{Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce}, Postlethwayt paid homage to the contribution of Raleigh in the making of England's Atlantic world-economy, honouring him as the "father of our English colonies." The narrative of Westward expansion, settlement, and economic development that I have traced in this chapter was constructed and promoted by the early Atlanticists themselves. The English Atlanticists fashioned a discourse to represent their history. A chronicler participating in Raleigh's last voyage in 1617 interpreted his patron's Caribbean venture as the culmination of an economic narrative that began in the Portuguese Atlantic islands and then progressed to the transatlantic voyages of the Hawkins' and Francis Drake:

Let us turne back our eyes and looke into the actions of the most famous & noble Gentlemen which haue gone before us, and made those most fayre and large paths, through which we daily walk: wee shall see that M. William Hawkins...made his first discovries but to the Southerne Ilands, called the \textit{Grand Canaries}, and found there great Trade, and great Commoditie...from thence discovered some part of the small islands which belonged to the West Indies, learnt intelligence of the maine: and out of his judgement saw what was fittest both for Traffique and other more

\textsuperscript{129}Postlethwayt, "Colonies". See, also, Coleman, \textit{The Economy of England 1450-1750}, 136, fig. 7.
In the early eighteenth-century, the mercantilist Joshua Gee incorporated a similar narrative of economic expansion into his *Trade and Navigation of Great-Britain Considered* (1738). Gee's history begins where the earlier narrative ends, with Raleigh, but enlarged to account for the existence of thriving colonial economies, established in the century after Raleigh's voyages:

Sir Walter Rawleigh, and others in [Queen Elizabeth's] Reign, discovered the Plantations; and tho' the first Planters met with almost insuperable Difficulties, and were often forced to quit what they had already settled; yet the Greatness of their Souls surmounted all Difficulties, and tho' often baffled in their Attempts, they renewed them again with indefatigable Zeal and Industry, till at last Tobacco and Sugar came to be planted, a great many Ships built, and in a short Time not only supplied ourselves with Sugar and Tobacco from America, but with very large Quantities to send Abroad...²

In Joshua Gee's English Atlantic narrative, the voyages of Raleigh and other English Atlanticists lead directly, and determinedly, from exploration and trade to colonial settlements and tobacco and sugar plantations, the realization of the utopian imagination in American plunder.

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¹ Anon., *Newes of Sr. Walter Rauleigh*, 5.

Like a number of other Atlantic writers, Daniel Defoe traced the beginning of Britain's empire in the New World to the heroic exploits of Walter Raleigh. The English Atlantic world is the realization, Defoe contends, of the imaginations of men like Raleigh:

By seeking out such Adventures and Discoveries, all our Increase in Colonies and Plantations has been produc'd: 'Twas by such happy Attempts, that the famous Sir Walter Raleigh and his Assistants settled the British nation upon the Northern Continent of America; and, had he been encourag'd, or rather had he not been basely betray'd, he had settled us also upon the Southern Continent too.

However, for Defoe the figure of Raleigh is more than historical: the adventuring and discovering Raleigh personifies Defoe's own Atlantic convictions, his belief in the value of "prompting Merchants to rational and probable Adventures, and Sailors to new Discoveries."¹ Defoe wrote a short history of Raleigh, an exercise in Atlantic hagiography that addressed both Raleigh's achievements and his disappointments. The text is divided into two parts, the first of which reviews and praises Raleigh's considerable Atlantic accomplishments. To this is appended a proposal addressed to the South Sea Company concerning the colonization of the South American mainland near the Orinoco River where Raleigh made his final and ultimately fatal voyage. Defoe's enterprise would realize an unfulfilled component of Raleigh's Atlantic imagination. If the Company accepted his proposal, Defoe was prepared to offer them a "Scheme of the Undertaking," the outline of a marvellous project for colonization that he claims he had first developed as early as 1689.² The scheme for colonization he includes in his history of Raleigh is

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²Daniel Defoe, An Historical Account of the Voyages and Adventures of Sir Walter Raleigh (1719) 55.
just one of Defoe's Atlantic projects, but one he wrote about on a number of occasions. This project also informs Defoe's most significant Atlantic project, *Robinson Crusoe*.

Appearing in 1697, *An Essay upon Projects*, was Defoe's first published contribution to the English Atlantic archive. Defoe's *Essay* outlines and promotes projects that were intended to be part of a program to rebuild, extend, and fortify England's economy in the wake of war with France, England's principal imperial rival in the century ahead. In the *Essay*, one of his very earliest texts, Defoe understands and represents England's economy as an expansive, imperial one, encompassing the Atlantic world of commerce, colonies and slavery. *An Essay upon Projects* was dedicated to Defoe's friend Dalby Thomas, an important Atlantic merchant, the author of a history of England's West Indian colonies, and later the governor of the Royal African Company's territory in Guinea.³ Defoe traverses in writing the breadth of Atlantic economic activities of his friend's career. They are both English Atlanticists, sharing interests and opinions.

Many of the examples Defoe uses in the *Essay* to illustrate his projects were drawn from the English Atlantic world.⁴ In Defoe's discussion of the potential role of banks in supporting commercial ventures, for instance, one example invents concerns the importation of 100 hogsheads of tobacco in which he considers the role that banks might play in providing bridge loans for the tobacco merchant until his colonial produce could be brought from America to the market. A maritime project proposes the provision of steady wages and employment for seamen, a recognition of the essential function of

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³Defoe's relationship with Dalby Thomas is an important one, involving the West Indies, the slave-trade, and plans to establish colonies in West Africa. John Robert Moore, *Daniel Defoe: Citizen of the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958) 287-289.

shipping and the navy in England's Atlantic economy. This project, Defoe argues, would eventually reduce the cost of freight, in particular tobacco and sugar imported from the plantations in Virginia, Jamaica, and Barbados. The most unusual scheme contemplated in the Essay is Defoe's plan for the improvement of England's highways, the infrastructure of the emerging national market. Defoe proposes that labour for the ambitious project could be supplied in part by African slaves: the Guinea Company could be contracted to "furnish two hundred negroes, who are generally persons that do a great deal of work."5

In An Essay upon Projects, Defoe visits Atlantic topoi that he would return to repeatedly in his writing: overseas commerce, colonialism, and slavery. What is most important about the Essay, however, is not the Atlantic subjects, which he would treat at greater length and detail elsewhere, but the form that he employs to represent them: the project. Defoe had an unusually elaborate understanding of projects and projecting, and his Essay includes a history of the idea and definitions of these terms. "Projects of the nature I treat about are, doubtless, in general of public advantage," he argues, "as they tend to improvement of trade, and employment of the poor, and the circulation and increase of the public stock of the kingdom."6 Projects, that is, aim at the future improvement of the economy through the development of idle or underemployed resources.7

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6Defoe, An Essay Upon Projects, 34.

Defoe claims in *An Essay upon Projects* that the English nation possess a "projecting humour," and he describes the historical moment in which he wrote as a "projecting age," demonstrated in part by the founding of new colonies and the introduction of new colonial commodities into the English market. In his dedication to the Essay and in the introduction, Defoe defines projects as economic programmes imagined but not yet realized. He argues, moreover, that all economic activity originates as projects. All economic activity, including all "foreign negoce," is "in its beginning all project, contrivance and invention." That is, economic activity such as Atlantic commerce, American colonies, and the trade in African slaves begin as projects. They are the realizations of the imagination.

In the introduction to his Essay, Defoe identifies something he calls a "faculty of projecting." The projecting faculty signifies for Defoe a specific strategy for representing the economy, including the economy of the English Atlantic world. The projecting faculty is a technique for using the imagination in the pursuit of economic ends. In his Atlantic texts, Defoe constantly employed his projecting faculty. It is the predominant characteristic of his contributions to the English Atlantic archive. Although Defoe never travelled across or around the Atlantic, he was able to narrate voyages that might have occurred and to describe the landscapes those voyagers may have seen. Moreover, he recommended projects -- economic plans and policies -- on the basis of these imagined narratives and descriptions. Defoe employs his projecting faculty in a

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travel chronicle such as *A New Voyage Round the World*, in explicitly economic tracts, such as the *Atlas Maritimus & Commercialis*, and in four fictional narratives. In all these texts he used his projecting faculty to suggest ways that England could expand the Atlantic world, suggesting new commodities to pursue, new lands to colonize, and new uses for unfree labour.

Defoe exercised his projecting faculty throughout his literary career, beginning with *An Essay upon Projects*. One of his last books, *A Plan of the English Commerce*, a kind of supplement to his *Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, expands on what Defoe had learned about the state of Britain's economy from his survey to suggest future routes to development at home and, especially, in the Atlantic world of Africa and the Americas. The last section of *A Plan of the English Commerce* proposes plans -- projects -- for innovative trade routes and new lands to colonize, suggesting further uses for wage and slave labour to work on fresh sources of valuable commodities. The ideas he offers his readers demonstrate the contention he makes in the preface to that text regarding the growing importance of the Atlantic world in the English economy: "[h]ere then is an undiscover'd Ocean of Commerce laid open to us."11 The proposals and plans Defoe's text offers, incorporating the past, present and future of Britain and her colonies, of known and unknown parts of the Atlantic world, were made possible by a projecting faculty that explicitly transforms the Atlantic world as it represents it, "[s]haping and patterning, or alternatively disordering and distorting the real, endowing it with certain meanings and depriving it of others."12


For a single author, Defoe's dossier of Atlantic texts is not insubstantial, and it is as diverse as the Atlantic archive itself, incorporating a considerable variety of subjects and employing a comprehensive range of genres and forms. Defoe surveyed the physical and cultural geography of the entire Atlantic hemisphere, analyzing landscapes and populations throughout the Americas and Africa. His paramount geographical concern is economic, from the fisheries of Labrador and Newfoundland to the Southern tip of mineral-rich Argentina, from the slaving coasts of Southern and West Africa to the booming commercial ports of Britain. This economic territory is the Atlantic of Defoe's imagination. He also writes about Africans and Amerindians, primarily interested in their role in England's economic development: the contribution that they make or could make as consumers or producers in England's imperial economy. Defoe examines the Atlantic world historically, relating the thriving maritime empire of the early eighteenth-century to the exploits of its adventuring founders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He assesses and measures the function of the Atlantic world in the development and the current state of the English economy, providing a thorough analysis of the status of overseas colonies in England's Atlantic empire, recognizing the growing importance of the contribution of the Atlantic to the national economy. Defoe is a staunch defender of the economic benefits accruing to colonial expansion. He examines the process and purpose of Atlantic colonization, considering the most lucrative forms of colonization, identifying future sites for new English settlements, and examining the variety and quantity of labour necessary for successful colonization, especially slavery and bond servitude.

No single author's textual contribution to the English Atlantic archive is as generically diverse as Defoe's. He wrote about the Atlantic at length in his periodical journalism, particularly in the Review, but also in minor journals and in occasional pamphlets. Defoe was commissioned to write two such pamphlets on behalf of the Royal African Company, defending the company's monopoly in the Atlantic slave-trade. Defoe
defended and promoted the slave-trade in general and in principle in those pamphlets, throughout his *Review*, and in later Atlantic texts, and at times had financial interests in the slave-trade. He wrote about shipping, the infrastructure of the English Atlantic world, and he contributed to the debates associated with the Atlantic ventures of the South Sea Company. The Atlantic empire figures prominently in Defoe's serial histories of trade and discoveries, and he also compiled general economic studies, such as *A Plan of the English Commerce*, in which the Atlantic empire is examined historically. Late in his career, Defoe composed the textual portion of a remarkable exercise in historical geography, the *Atlas Maritimus & Commercialis*, and wrote a fictional geographical travel narrative, *A New Voyage Round the World*. Defoe's Atlantic is also represented in different textual forms. The Atlantic world is the setting for important sections of three of his fictional narratives, *Captain Singleton, Moll Flanders*, and *Colonel Jack*, and, of course, the Atlantic is the principal setting for the first two parts of *Robinson Crusoe*, the subject of the next chapter.

The Atlantic is insinuated into even Defoe's most domestic, British texts. *A Tour Through Great Britain*, a two-volume survey of the changing British economy, demonstrates the imbrication of Britain and the Atlantic. The *Tour* is an exercise in a special kind of writing, thematic cartography, which employs a representational strategy allowing Defoe to describe and transform the landscape "into a blueprint for economic development."\(^{13}\) It is Defoe's projecting faculty that enables this particular representational strategy. In the *Tour*, Defoe cast what historians Douglas Hay and Nicholas Rogers have called his "mercantile eye" over the landscape, constructing in a comprehensive economic prospect.\(^{14}\) The *Tour* relates the kinds of economic activities


\(^{14}\) Douglas Hay and Nicholas Rogers, *Eighteenth-Century English Society: Shuttles and
undertaken in each region of Britain and their relationship to each other, representing in a single text at an important moment the vision of a unified and integrated national and increasingly imperial economy.

In his survey, Defoe registers the kinds of changes that Atlantic commerce has made to the social and economic landscape of Britain. When he describes Liverpool, for example, he observes that the city is poised to exceed Bristol, the traditionally preeminent maritime city, in terms of the volume of Atlantic trade that passes through its port on the way to domestic and continental European markets: "The town has now an opulent, flourishing and encreasing trade, not rivalling Bristol, in the trade to Virginia and the English island colonies in America only, but is in a fair way to exceed and eclipse it, by encreasing every way in wealth and shipping."¹⁵ Liverpool, like Bristol and London, was a conduit to the Atlantic world of trade, colonies, and slavery. Liverpool, Defoe knows, was a centre for the Atlantic slave-trade and was an important destination for colonial produce destined for both import and re-export to continental Europe. In his account of the port city, Defoe also projects Liverpool's future, suggesting that its place in the Atlantic economy will continue to grow as the Atlantic economy expands, a prediction that proved accurate. Sugar, tobacco, and eventually cotton transformed Liverpool in the years after the Tour was completed.

In an article in Applebee's Journal, written during the time that the Tour was being composed, Defoe offers a brief description of the formation of his Atlantic imagination, the training of his projecting faculty. Although written in the third person, the subject of the description is the author himself:

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In Geography and History, he had all the World at his Finger's ends. He talked of the most distant Countries with an inimitable Exactness...He knew not only where every Thing was, but what every Body did in every Part of the World; I mean what Business, what Trade, what Manufactures was carrying on in every Part of the World; and had the History of almost all the Nations of the World in his Head.\footnote{Daniel Defoe, Applebee's Journal (30 October 1725) in William Lee, Daniel Defoe: His Life and Recently Discovered Writings, 3 vols. (1869; New York: Burt Franklin, 1969) III, 456.}

Certainly there is evidence to support the claim to the combination of geographical, historical, and economic knowledge made in this autobiographical sketch.

Defoe read widely and deeply in geography, history and economics.\footnote{The record of the sale of Defoe's library indicates just how widely he did read in these areas. See Helmut Heidenreich, The Libraries of Daniel Defoe and Phillips Farewell: Oliver Payne's Sales Catalogue (Berlin: Helmut Heidenreich, 1970).} He was well acquainted with the major collections of travel narratives published by Richard Hakluyt, Samuel Purchas and others, made good use of the cartography of Herman Moll and the geographical descriptions of Africa and America written by John Ogilby, and relied on the adventurous narrative voyages of writers such as William Dampier for both information and generic paradigms.\footnote{J.N.L. Baker, "The Geography of Daniel Defoe," in The History of Geography (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1963) 158-172; J.A. Downie, "Defoe, Imperialism and the Travel Books Reconsidered," Yearbook of English Studies 13 (1983): 66-83.} Defoe's well-documented economic proficiency was perhaps even stronger than his geographical knowledge. Like many of fellow journalists, Defoe reported what was happening in England's imperial economy, but Defoe, unlike these other journalists, could also claim to understand how the dynamics of the English Atlantic world worked.\footnote{The most comprehensive and balanced discussions of Defoe as an economic writer are Edgar Illingworth, "The Economic Ideas of Daniel Defoe," 2 vols, diss. Leeds University, 1974, and Peter Earle, The World of Defoe (New York: Athenæum, 1974).}
In the kinds of writing he attempted in the *Tour*, in periodicals like *Applebee's Journal*, and elsewhere, Defoe sought to construct an appropriate language for his projecting faculty. In his *Review*, Defoe claims of his writing that he "speaks in the Language of Commerce". He insists that he is writing in a "Language of Trade," regulated by a specific "Trade-Grammar" in order to represent the economy in a particular fashion. The employment of this economic language is not limited to texts devoted explicitly or narrowly to economic matters, like the *Review*.

In *A New Voyage Round the World*, Defoe begins his fictional travel narrative by setting out a specifically economic textual itinerary. The ship's captain, the unnamed narrator of the voyage, claims he will travel to and write about distant regions that will be of specifically economic interest to his readers:

> when first I set out upon a cruising and trading Voyage...and resolv'd to go anywhere, and everywhere that the Advantage of Trade or the Hopes of Purchase should guide us, I also resolv'd to take such exact notice of everything that past within my Reach, that I would be able, if I liv'd to come home, to give an Account of my Voyage, differing from all that I had ever seen before, in the manner of relating them, And as this is perfectly new in its Form, so I cannot doubt but it will be agreeable in Particulars, seeing either no Voyage ever made before, had such Variety of Incidents happening in it, so useful and diverting, or no Person that sail'd on those Voyages, has thought fit to publish them after this manner.

The geographical and narrative course to be followed in *A New Voyage Round the World* is to be set entirely by economic interests: the narrator will be guided by "Advantage of

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Trade or the Hopes of Purchase." The narrator also claims a representational innovation, a different way of relating his observations and his arguments: the projecting faculty.

_A New Voyage Round the World_ begins with a narrative of a conventional Atlantic crossing: after departing from an English port, the narrator's ship sails to the Canary Islands, where the crew trades for supplies. From the Canary Islands, the ship sails West across the Atlantic to Brazil, where there is further commercial activity, before sailing South for the rest of the circumnavigational adventure, one in which commercial opportunity, as the narrator announces, powers and navigates the voyage: this textual voyage is piloted from the ledger book. The travels in _A New Voyage Round the World_ are the author's invention. Defoe transforms factual data borrowed from documented accounts into an invented autobiographical travel narrative. Yet, despite this invention, Defoe intended _A New Voyage Round the World_ to be interpreted as the basis for action: the travels are organized around a colonizing project outlined at the beginning of the text and elaborated at the end of the narrative. _A New Voyage Round the World_ has been persuasively classified as a _roman à thèse_: Defoe constructed his travel narrative from material borrowed from Herman Moll's maps and William Dampier's _Voyages_ in order to promote a colonization scheme for South America.22 The purpose of _A New Voyage Round the World_, argues James Sutherland, was to "realize in imagination" a project for South American colonization.23 The nature of Defoe's literary project in _A New Voyage Round the World_ has led Maximillian Novak to describe the text as propaganda, a term that quite accurately characterizes most of the documents in Defoe's Atlantic dossier.24

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24 Maximillian E. Novak, _Economics and the Fiction of Daniel Defoe_ (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962) 142. This theme has been taken up in a doctoral
Defoe's Atlantic writing, like the archive to which it belongs, is dominated by economic considerations. The fora for Defoe's Atlantic writing changed over time, sponsored by different political factions or commercial interests. However, it is, as Bram Dijkstra observes, remarkable "how consistent he has proved to be in delineating good and bad economic practices." For Defoe, the Atlantic was, from the beginning of his literary career to the end, an undiscovered ocean of commerce, a sea of enormous wealth to be located, claimed, conquered, mined, cultivated, and marketed. Like other writers who contributed to the English Atlantic archive, Defoe's Atlantic texts are concerned with the utopianism of plunder, a preoccupation that is especially well suited to Defoe's projecting faculty.

In 1713, the year in which *A New Voyage Round the World* occurs, Defoe published his *General History of Trade*. 1713 was the year that, among other Atlantic victories, saw England win the *asiento* in the Treaty of Utrecht, a sign of her growing imperial dominance, and the increasingly important role of the Atlantic for England's economy. The *General History of Trade* is a triumphant four part survey of the state of the English economy at this important Atlantic conjunction. The *General History of Trade*, Defoe

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writes, is "like a Map or Scheme in Miniature of the Whole World of Trade." In the second part of Defoe's serial history, he begins with a compact economic tour of the English Atlantic world that traces the ideological vectors of his Atlantic passages.

The geographic centre of Defoe's Atlantic is England. He boasts that England dominates the maritime economy not just of the Atlantic but of the entire globe: "England is said to be near the Center of the Navigation of the World" (5). Defoe's narrative tour embarks from this imperial centre, sailing South to Africa, the first destination in this textual economic voyage. Africa, for Defoe, is the most economically underdeveloped continent in the Atlantic, "the least concerned in Trade, of any Part of the World" (7). For Defoe, this defect is cultural: it is due to the Africans themselves, to the "Brutality, a Degree above Barbarity, of the Inhabitants, who exceed so much all the rest of Mankind in their being entirely unconvosible and incapable of being Civilized" (7). However, Africa does yield some extremely valuable commodities to enterprising English merchants, the most valuable of which, particularly in 1713, are the Africans themselves. In Africa, Defoe writes, "we fetch some Capital Articles of Commerce, (viz.) Gold, Ivory, Civet, and Slaves" (8). Africa and Africans, represented by Defoe's projecting faculty, are easily translated into their commercial value, calculated in relation to the price of mineral and animal commodities and unfree labour. He also sees the possibility in Africa for future colonial ventures. With effort, England can "make the Coast of Africa as good to us, as Ten of the [Caribbean] Islands" (10).

From Africa, Defoe writes, "I pass over the Great Western or Atlantick Ocean into America" (10). Like Africa, America's value lies entirely in its contribution to the English

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and other European economies: "the discovery of them [i.e. the Americas] was an Inexpressible Advantage to this part of the World [i.e. Europe], and made every day more so, by the assistance of Commerce and Navigation." (10-11) Defoe's Atlantic writing gives voice to this "Inexpressible Advantage," finding the appropriate language for the economic ineffable of the New World. According to Defoe, America prior to European "discovery" was terra nullius, empty and meaningless, awaiting invention:

**AMERICA**; not an island, tho' Uninhabited, was to be found in all this new Tract so Barren, not the most *Northern* Parts so Remote, not the Mountains so High and so Dreadful to the Sight, but upon search afforded Matters of Commerce, and had something to boast of which was infinitely valuable, and for which we gladly Sail'd, Settl'd, Planted and Laboured at a prodigious Hazard and Expense. (15)

The power of English commerce converts American barrenness to economic value. Defoe enumerates this economic value in a geographical account of American commodities, resorting to that important colonial trope, the catalogue, in order to represent the potential value of America. Defoe's description traces the Eastern edge of the Americas: furs, fish, and timber are culled in Hudson's Bay, Labrador and Newfoundland; tobacco, "that mighty Trade", is furnished by the Southern mainland colonies; sugar is produced on the plantations of the Caribbean islands; mainland South America yields the mineral wealth of gold and silver. Of the inhabitants of America Defoe has very little to say in the *General History of Trade*: they awaited the arrival of the Europeans to "teach them, by our Example, how to make use of the Wealth they were possess'd of." (7).

Europeans generally, and the English specifically, are engaged, according to Defoe, in an economic mission, in a world history propelled by powerful economic forces: "by Commerce every thing Needful is made present to every Part Needing, and every Part of the World Communicates to, and Receives from every Part, to the encrease of Wealth, and
the Encouragement of Art, Science, and Human Wisdome in the World" (24). Defoe describes not only how this economic history works in *A General History of Trade*, but also how it should be represented:

> I shall not descend to teach Merchants Accounts; to give you Schemes of Voyages, Tables of Exchanges, or Standing Rules for determining the Customs of Merchants; Tho' these things would be very useful in their place; But my View, is of another kind, (viz.) to shew you from whence our Trade is derived, how it came to its present Magnitude, and what the present Magnitude really is; and for that reason I call it a *History*. (20)

Defoe eschews the antiquarian collection of idiosyncratic detail or anecdotal information in favour of a discourse that explains how England developed into a powerful trading nation. The account of the past is shaped by the representational strategy of the projecting faculty. As Robert Mayer has explained, for Defoe, "history should begin at the beginning and trace subsequent developments, showing how the present state of affairs has been reached and providing the basis for future action."\(^{28}\)

In *A General History of Trade*, Defoe presents a brief version of his Atlantic economic history. A more thorough account of his subject, undertaken in the manner Defoe prescribes, is available elsewhere in his Atlantic writing. First announced for publication in 1719, in the second part of *Robinson Crusoe*, the *Atlas Maritimus & Commercialis* was not published until 1728. The *Atlas* is certainly the kind of text that Robinson Crusoe could have written, a geographical and economic account of global travels. The text is a massive geographical guide of the entire world, consisting of two parts: a section of pilot maps and a textual portion providing detailed accounts of the physical and human


\(^{28}\) Mayer, *History and the early English novel*, 164.
geography of the world. The maps in the *Atlas* are derived from charts by Edmund Halley. The economic projections are Defoe's work. The *Atlas* is, as the subtitle describes it, a general view of the world, so far as it relates to trade and navigation. The *Atlas* was written for an audience of British overseas merchants, to provide detailed information about navigating the world's waterways and, more importantly, about the state of world's economy as it relates to British economic interests. The list of subscribers for this large and expensive folio volume include merchants, a few tradesmen, navy personnel, and the governors of Atlantic colonies such as Bermuda and Jamaica.

The contents of the *Atlas* reflect and anticipate the interests of this audience. The geographical descriptions written by Defoe, culled from a wide variety of economic and geographical authorities and documents from the English Atlantic archive, are concerned principally with cataloguing the commodities actually and potentially traded and extracted from distant shores and nations.\(^{29}\) The *Atlas* provides a complete picture of the state of the English Atlantic world at the end of Defoe's literary career, gathering together a lifetime's work on the subject.

Defoe's economic topographia parses Africa into what he considered conventional cultural regions: Barbary, Guinea, Southern and Eastern Africa and Mediterranean North Africa. It is the second of these that most interests Defoe, as it is the richest and most important African region for English Atlantic commerce. The English, Defoe claims, possess seventeen settlements and factories in West Africa. Defoe's analysis of the Guinea trade, incorporating Western Africa from Senegal to the Congo, offers three principal commodities to adventurous English merchants: plant and animal resources, gold, and slaves. Ivory, civet and forest products are the least important of the Guinea

commodities, but are not insignificant in value. Gold, always significant, can be acquired throughout the region. Defoe calculates that the value of gold extracted from Africa in a single year is over £270,000, but he suggests that the gold recovered in Africa is only a small portion of what might be extracted by more conventional mining techniques.30 It is slaves that provide the greatest profit for British merchants trading in Guinea. Defoe estimates that around 100,000 slaves are removed annually from the Slave Coast for Europe's American colonies, and he boasts that, next to the Portuguese, the English purchase the greatest share of this human commodity to be delivered to the West Indies and to North America (271). If the ineffable benefits of trade sometimes escape descriptive language, they can be represented by numbers.

Conducting this trade has required the establishment of fortified settlements and factories on the coast, and Defoe uses the occasion of the Atlas to promote an expanded imperial presence in Africa, arguing in favour the establishment of permanent plantation colonies in Africa to produce agricultural commodities. In his description of the West African economy, Defoe includes an exhortation to the African Company to establish a colonial settlement:

But would the Company apply to Planting, would they extend themselves upon the Country, build Forts and Strengths within Land, drive the Negroes by force further off, and establish themselves upon the Soil, they would not only reap the rich Product from the fertile Soil, but remove the Gold Trade, Slave Trade, and Ivory Trade from the Sea Coast to the Inland frontiers. (251)

A permanent African colony, that is, would secure England's interests in gold, slaves and ivory, removing the centre of commercial activity away from the dangerous coast.

30Daniel Defoe, Atlas Maritimus & Commercialis, Or, A General View of the World, So far as relates to Trade and Navigation (1728) 271. Subsequent references will be incorporated into the text.
While not unusual or original, Defoe's theorizing on race and culture is elaborate; he evaluates races and cultures according to the level of economic and political organization they have obtained.\textsuperscript{31} Africa, for Defoe, is the "worst" part of the world, and West Africa is the "worst" part of the continent, the least economically advanced region. West Africa remains in a primitive state of development because it is "[i]nhabited by the worst Peop[le of any Country under the Sun." Defoe's attack on West African culture is vicious:

the whole Country is possess'd by a vile accursed Race, the worst of Cultivators as to the Earth, and as to the Kind, I may add the worst of Men.
Their Manners are utterly depraved, their Nature wholly brutal and savage; and in the course of Life where they have Order and Government, 'tis altogether unpolish'd, wild, and degenerate to the last degree. (237)

In Defoe's anthropology, political and economic development are related. Poor economic stewards make poor polities. Such a view legitimates the intervention of more advanced societies such as the English, and contributed to a proslavery ideology that claimed that enslavement on an English plantation actually improved the African's life.\textsuperscript{32} While Defoe makes allowances for regional variation, he denounces the entire African continent, and the entire range of African cultures. North Africans are "Thieves, Rovers and Pirates" and the "Moors themselves are a cruel rapacious, devouring Race, rather worse than the Lions, Tygers and Panthers, Leopards and other wild Beasts, among whom they inhabit." Southern Africans are "Hottentots, the worst and most savage of all Savages" (237).

The condition of the Africans, their racial and cultural inferiority, creates a commercial


\textsuperscript{32}I will discuss Defoe's views on slavery and race in greater detail in the next chapter.
advantage for European, specifically British merchants: "the Goods you carry are in
general the meanest of Trifles, the Returns you make the most valuable of all
Merchandize...in a Word you buy the Country for Trash" (237). In the midst of cultural
underdevelopment, Defoe projects economic opportunity. Moreover, that economic
opportunity is a divine gift: he argues that Africa has been determined "by the
Disposition of Providence to be given up to the gains of the rest" of the world, "as if not
the People only were to be sold for Slaves," but that the whole continent "was captive,
and produc'd its immense Treasures, merely for the Use and Benefit of the World, not its
own" (238).

Defoe's Atlas devotes considerable attention to the native inhabitants of the Americas
and to their relations with European colonizers. Although Defoe is interested in the
establishment of African colonies, his principal consideration when discussing Africans is
with obtaining their resources, including, and especially, the Africans themselves.
Amerindians, however, pose a different problem for Defoe because the nature of English
colonization. While Defoe, like many of his literary predecessors, occasionally considers
Amerindians potential customers for English merchandise, he mostly regards them as
obstacles to colonization. Raleigh's 1585 settlement, for instance, failed according to
Defoe because these "first Planters" had not "immediately fortify'd themselves against the
Treachery of the Indians" and they "believ'd themselves secure, and the Indians faithful,
because they appear'd friendly at first" (293).

However, later colonists were more prudent than Raleigh's men, and more circumspect
when dealing with the native population. Defoe's account of the progress of the
American colonies includes the "admirable Story of Captain Smith" and the English
colony in Virginia:

after six or seven years, several Supplies from England lost and consum'd in the
Place; after two furious Assaults by the Natives, and two treacherous Massacres
in cold Blood; and after several times being at the point of abandoning the Settlement, it was at length so effectually supplied by the English ... that they grew too potent for Opposition, and so went on increasing, till they came to the prodigious Heights we see them at present arriv'd to. (294)

The heroic narrative of John Smith and the survival of the Virginia colony is intended to be instructive. Defoe is particularly concerned in the Atlas about the state of the Carolina colony, where the English had faced rather fierce Amerindian opposition. His advice for the Carolina colony is brutal: the English must become formidable enough to "suppress, or totally extirpate the Savages" (297). If the Amerindians cannot be subdued or controlled then they must be eliminated in order that the colony survived.

In his account of the Caribbean and Central and South America, Defoe attempts to revise the common understanding of the historical treatment of the native population at the hands of European colonists, made famous in the writing of Bartholome Las Casas. For example, he argues that "it is a general Mistake, that upon Conquest of America all the People were destroy'd and murder'd by all kinds of Tortures, as Barth. de Casas has intimated." And where the Amerindians were extirpated, as in Cuba, Hispaniola and Jamaica, Defoe contends, this was necessary in order to allow the Spanish colonists to secure their settlements (299). The Portuguese in Brazil, Defoe argues, are justified in their harsh treatment of Amerindians: "the Natives are a fierce, untractable People, who therefore must be kept in awe by force, and so are by the Portuguese" (314). In other places in the Southern part of the Americas, where Amerindians were allowed to survive, they were "civilized" by Europeans: "taught to plant and cultivate the Earth, trade and exchange Goods for Goods on their own Account, breed and feed Cattle, and live very comfortably" (302). Defoe represents this colonial legacy as a progressive one, instituting improvement, property, and commerce where there was only emptiness.

The English colonies in America in the first decades of the eighteenth-century were flourishing. Whereas Africa, according to Defoe, is commercially underdeveloped, the
American colonies have more than fulfilled the utopian expectations of their founders. Defoe's *Atlas* describes the entire commercial coastline of America, cataloguing the commodities that each region contributes to the English Atlantic economy, from Hudson's Bay to the Caribbean coast of Central America. Hudson's Bay, of course, is a source of fur: beaver, bear and deer. Defoe's report offers one example of the volume of the trade, a sign of his knowledge of the commerce and the nature of its value: "In two Ships only lately arriv'd, the [Hudson's Bay] Company imported above Two hundred thousand Beaver Skins, besides other fine Furs." Newfoundland is the site of important fishing, as is New England, which also supplies timber for ship construction. Virginia and Maryland, Defoe claims, "employ generally 160 to 200 Sail of Ships, amounting to above 40000 Hogsheads of Tobacco every Year." The West Indian colonies are devoted almost exclusively to the production of sugar. The size of this industry, Defoe claims, is impossible to accurately quantify because of growing demand: "tis thought, one time with another, *Great Britain* imports 60 thousand Hogsheads of Sugar; A Quantity which it was formerly difficult to dispose of, but of late is not sufficient for the Market; the Consumption of refined Sugar by the late unaccountable Encrease of the drinking of Coffee, Tea, and Chocolate, has made the Difference, and given such a turn to this Trade" (111).

The success of the American colonies, Defoe demonstrates, is a boon to the English economy as a whole. They not only provide important and profitable commodities for the domestic market, employing and enriching overseas merchants and tradesmen, but they also consume English produce. In New England, "[t]he Consumption of the British Produce and Manufactures, is very considerable; the Number of Inhabitants there being very great, and generally rich; and both the Numbers and Riches of them daily increasing" (327). However, not just New England but all
the Colonies, as well on the Main as in the Islands, are supply'd with Clothes, Household Stuff, Linen, Woollen, Silk, nay I may say Manufactures of their own Cotton from Great Britain: From hence they have all their Wrought Iron, Brass, Pewter, Lead, Arms, Ammunition, Tools, Weapons, and in a word every Utensil of common Life. (328)

Impresed by this image of economic growth, Defoe suggests further development for England's American colonies and indicates new places where colonies might be built. The Hudson's Bay Company, Defoe announces, is "resolv'd to increase their Shipping, and to send five Ships a year, and also to extend the Colony, and to plant further within the Country upon some Rivers to the West and to the South," a project that will increase the supply and quality of furs, "of which the Market is never over-stocked" (327). Colonies in the Northern part of America, Defoe points out, "are particularly profitable in the Consumption of Goods exported" from Britain (328). The West Indies, especially, are capable of growth, improvement and development. Several colonies over which England has sovereignty, he suggests, have yet to be settled, and while islands like Barbados may be entirely planted, an island like Jamaica, "being vastly larger, is not only to a Prodigy increas'd and improv'd, but ... Improvement is every day carrying on, as more lands are daily taken in, cultivated and planted." Already Jamaica is populated by "30000 Europeans and 80000 Negroes" producing 25000 hogsheads of sugar annually, yet they have more land to enclose and plant in order to increase the quantity of their exports (312-313).

Defoe's Atlas includes not only an account of Africa and the American colonies, but also analyzes the contribution that the Atlantic makes to England. Indeed, the Atlantic is only important or meaningful for him in relation to its domestic impact. In pamphlets and periodical journalism, Defoe assesses, measures, and evaluates the condition of the Atlantic economy, providing advice to government, merchants and colonists for improvement, development and growth. Defoe's analysis of the domestic economy in
Brief State of the Inland or Home Trade, a text on the role of markets and communications in Britain, records the omnipresence of Atlantic commodities in the nation's market system of distribution and consumption. The "Chocolate of America" and the "Sugars of the Caribees" can be found even "in the remotest Corners of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland."33

The people responsible for this commercial phenomenon are the merchants and tradesmen about whom Defoe wrote at considerable length. The success of Britain's Atlantic economy, the number and strength of the colonies and the volume of trade crossing the ocean, is due, Defoe writes, to these heroic agents of Atlantic commerce. He pays homage to these economic heroes in The Complete English Tradesman:

As trade alone has peopled these countries, so trading with them has rais'd them also to a prodigy of wealth and opulence; and we see now the ordinary planters at Jamaica and Barbadoes rise to immense estates, riding in their coaches and six, especially at Jamaica, with twenty or thirty negroes on foot running before them whenever they please to appear in publlick.34

The contribution of these successful planters to the domestic economy is substantial.

Their private interest contributes to the public good:

This trade to our West Indies, and American colonies, is very considerable, as it employs so many ships and sailors, and so much of the growth of those colonies is again exported by us to other parts of the world, over and above what is consumed among us at home; and also all those goods, and a great deal of money in specie, is returned hither for and in balance of our manufactures and merchandizes exported thither. (I, 322)

The relationship between colonial expansion and the strength of the national economy is,

33Daniel Defoe, A Brief State of the Inland or Home Trade (1730) 20.

34Daniel Defoe, The Complete English Tradesman, 2 vols (1727-1732) I, 315-316. Subsequent references will be incorporated into the text.
for Defoe, obvious. In *A Humble Proposal to the People of England*, devoted to expanding trade, he concludes: "It is evident, that by the Increase of our Colonies, the Consumption of our Manufactures has been exceedingly increas'd; not only Experience proves it, but the Nature of the Thing makes it impossible to be otherwise."35

The security and future of the English Atlantic was at stake in the War of the Spanish Succession, the context and subject of Defoe's massive *Review*.36 His commercial analysis of the war dealt with the control of the slave-trade, the importance of New England's supply of naval stores, and the possibility of increasing the number of England's Atlantic possessions. This is recognized by Defoe in the first volume of the periodical: "if the French were Masters at Sea ... we should have no Trade to the Plantations, so we should have no Plantations to Trade to, in a few Years."37 Defoe repeated this dire warning in the next issue: "it nearly concerns England; to Encourage by all possible Methods, the increase of our Colonies in America, that the growing French Power may never be able to dispossess us there."38 It is important for Defoe to remind his readers about the role of colonies in the English economy: "Trade in general may be, and really is increas'd, in the World by Discoveries of New Countries and planting New Colonies."39 Indeed, he even suggests that were England's European trade to be eliminated altogether as a consequence of the war with France, the Atlantic would be able


to fill the void: "Our Colonies in Africk and America, are capable of so much Improvement, as is sufficient of themselves to Support our Manufactures, Employ our Shipping, enrich our People, and form all the necessary Articles of Trade within our selves."  

As the war drew to a close, Defoe reminded his readers about the significance of the Atlantic colonies to Britain's economy in the strongest possible terms:

*What signifies Canada to us,* said a Merchant to me that once knew better; *I look on it only as a Branch of the South-Sea Project, I am not sorry at all that our Design against it is Miscarried? But to such People that know the Wealth and Strength of this Nation is founded upon Commerce; to those People that know, That the Prosperity of our Colonies is our own Prosperity; That all the Wealth of our Plantations is our Wealth; their Strength our Strength, and that the Preservation of them is as Essential to us, as it is that we should Trade; to those that know, that from these Colonies we really draw every Year and immense Wealth; That they Maintain our Navigation, Nurse our Seamen, and supply great Numbers; that from their Produce is rais'd a prodigious Revenue to the Government; That they are the most capital Article in the Exportation of our Manufactures, and by Consequence, in Employment of our People at Home, Consumption of our Wool and Provisions, and thereby of keeping up the Value of our Lands; They. I say, who know this, must know, That the Preservation of these Colonies is as Necessary to Us, as the Preservation of the Possession of Flanders, is Necessary to the Dutch.*

England's economy, Defoe reminds his readers, is thoroughly imbricated with the Atlantic, in the trade with Africa and the American colonies. Without the Atlantic, Defoe suggests, the English economy would collapse, creating enormous unemployment and precipitating a crisis in government finance and military security. However, alongside warnings Defoe includes enticements: it is not just essential to preserve the colonies, it is possible and necessary to expand them, for they "have yet Treasures of Trade, which are

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hitherto hardly open'd."\(^{42}\)

It was the possibilities for even further Atlantic improvement that animated Defoe's *Plan of the English Commerce*, a triumphant and optimistic text in the projecting style, full of positive assessments of the present, glorious histories, and marvellous prospects. "The Commerce of the World," he writes, "is an unbounded Ocean of Business." The future, he promises, will explore that ocean: "[t]he World is wide: There are new Countries, and new Nations, who may be so planted, so improve'd, and the People so manage'd, as to create a new Commerce; and Millions of People shall call for our Manufactures, who never call'd for it before."\(^{43}\) The condition of the Atlantic economy can be evaluated by measuring the volume of maritime traffic:

How great a Consumption of the British Manufactures has the Encrease of these Colonies been to this Nation? Let the yearly Export of all Kinds of Goods from hence to New-England, Virginia, Barbadoes, and Jamaica, besides all the lesser Colonies, be a Proof of it: Above a Thousand Sail of stout Ships are constantly running between England and these Countries, above another Thousand are employed in coasting and traversing the Seas between the Islands and the Continent, including the Fishing Trade; besides the Numbers of Sloops continually waiting upon the Trade in Virginia, which they tell us is double the Number of all the rest. (107)

The vast number of ships is both a sign of England's commercial power and its vehicle. Through naval power, "the Commerce increased, Trade got Ground, the English Nation swelled into an Empire of Nations, and the English Merchants carried a general Negoece to all the Quarters of the World" (113).

Every sector of the Atlantic economy continues to grow. England employs more fisherman in Newfoundland and New England, Defoe contends, than the rest of the


\(^{43}\)Defoe, *A Plan of the English Commerce*, ix, xi. Subsequent references will be incorporated into the text.
European nations combined. The quantity of sugar imported from the West Indies has similarly increased: "from Thirty Thousand Hogsheads of Sugar which formerly we imported, 'tis certain we now import from seventy to eighty Thousand Hogsheads in a Year." This dramatic growth is more impressive still, Defoe, claims, because if the "extravagant Bulk of the Hogsheads, which now generally contain from seventeen to eighteen hundred Weight of Sugar in each Hogshead" (206-207). Defoe examines an island like Barbados and calculates the cumulative impact of the colony on the English Atlantic economy. The island

employs above 100000 People, including the Negroe Slaves, enriches the Planters to a surprising Degree, and fully employs above 200 Sail of Ships and Sloops, always running with Provisions of Fish, Flesh, Corn, and Cattle, from North America, Wine from Maderas, and with Slaves (Negroes) from the Coast of Africa, and with Manufactory and Merchant-Goods from Great-Britain and Ireland. (231-232)

Defoe boasts that there is not one more inch of soil on Barbados that can be more fruitfully planted, unlike the Spanish islands of Cuba and Hispaniola. All of England's Atlantic colonies are productively developed or incomparably rich with potential. In South Carolina, for instance, "there is as much Fir-Timber growing, as in all the Kingdom of Norway" (262). In short, the entire Atlantic is "a vast Ocean of Improvement" (257).

The history of the Atlantic economy is, for Defoe, heroic. Defoe traces the current prosperous state of the empire to the end of the sixteenth-century and its commercial adventurers:

Sir Walter Raleigh, Drake, Smith, and others, upon the meer Account of Commerce, discover'd and planted the great and now flourishing Colonies of Hudson's-Bay, New England, Virginia, and Burmoodas, with the Fishery of

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44 John McVeagh discusses this aspect of Defoe's economic writing in *Tradeful Merchants*, 53-61.
Newfoundland; the Magnitude and Commerce of which Countries, is not easily to be described; and to which are since then added, the Island Colonies of America, called in common the West-Indies, such as Barbados, Nevis, Antegoa, St. Christophers, &c. (101)

The motive for their discoveries, Defoe makes clear, was commercial: they pursued the smallest hint of commercial opportunity. During the same period, he writes, during the same "enterprising Times, was the Trade to the Gold Coast of Africa begun; a Trade founded upon the most clear Principles of Commerce; namely the meanest Export exchang'd for the richest Return" (103-104). Just as heroic as these commercial adventurers were the first English colonists in America. It was by "the meer Force of indifatigable Application" that they "planted, inhabited, cultivated those inhosipitable Climates, those suppos'd barren Countries, those trifling little Spots of Islands." He goes on to praise how "they have brought them to be the most improved, and the most flourishing Colonies in all that Part of the World" (239).

Defoe's projecting faculty sees in the success of the Atlantic economy further space for expansion, more opportunities for settlement, cultivation and trade. He turns readily from description to prescription, from past accomplishments to future expansion. In his *General History of Discoveries and Improvements*, Defoe surveys the small portion of the Americas that the English have settled and asks:

> How little then of this newly discover'd world is yet known compar'd to what there is yet left to know? And what room is there still for the industrious World to put themselves forth for the extending the Discoveries already made, and forming the Nations, whether by Conquests or otherwise, into Societies, both for Commerce and for Strength?

Defoe goes on to offer an encouraging formula for colonial success: "no Plantation undertaken by sufficient Numbers of Industrious People can fail of Success."45 In the

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General History of Discoveries and Improvements Defoe proposes one possible site for a colonial project. However, in almost all of his Atlantic writing he suggests schemes and plans for colonial expansion, in Africa and throughout the Americas. He states the matter succinctly in a letter to Robert Harley: "No man can object against the advantage of a collony provided the place be well chosen."\(^4\)

In A Plan of the English Commerce, Defoe argues that England should consider expanded imperial projects in both North and West Africa. In North Africa, "settling the Government of the Sea Coast Towns" would benefit English commerce, regulating a sometimes unstable trading partner (242). Defoe also advocates the establishment of settlements of Englishmen in West Africa, asking of the African Company: "Why do they not enclose, fence, and get apart such Lands for Cultivation, as by their Nature and Situation appear to be proper for the most advantageous Productions?" (248). Defoe imagines plantations of coffee, tea, and sugar along the West African coast. These plantations would be especially efficient, he observes, because labour would be cheaper than in America: the cost of transporting slaves would be eliminated from their price. Of course, permanent African colonies would also help England to further dominate the market in slaves, profiting from sales to Portuguese and Spanish planters in America. The company, he writes elsewhere, already supports forts and factories in the area, and he asks: "[w]hy are they not turn'd into populous and powerful Colonies, as they might be?"\(^5\) In the *Atlas Maritimus & Commercialis*, Defoe claims to have evidence that attempts to cultivate sugar, ginger, rice, cotton, indigo, and spices on the coast of West Africa have been successful, evidence that supports his African colonial projects (237).


Despite the number and vitality of England's colonies in America, there is, Defoe insists, further room for development. In the *Atlas*, Defoe argues that every effort should be made to increase the size of the North American colonies, both in extent and in population: "it is doubtless the Interest of *Great Britain* to incourage as much as possible the peopling the Northern Colonies, planting and extending them as far as possible" (328).

When he describes the condition of the West Indies, Defoe compares the conditions of the different islands. Jamaica, for instance, is a large island that, Defoe argues, has unfulfilled potential: land in the interior that could be settled and cultivated, used for sugar production, the growth of spices or raising cattle. Defoe notes the rapid growth of St. Christophers while offering Barbados as an example of an island that has been most thoroughly improved: the "whole Surface is employ'd in Planting for Trade, that is for Sugar, Ginger, Cotton, and Indico" (312). After assuming control of the island from the French, Defoe writes, St. Christophers' "product of Sugar is almost equal to that of Barbadoes, and will in a very few years exceed it." As a consequence, Defoe writes, not only have planters and sugar merchants grown wealthy, but the quantity of exports from England to the island have also increased. Defoe asks, therefore, "[w]hy then do we not increase our Possessions, plant new Colonies, and better people our old ones?" 48 Defoe proposes two possible routes for colonial expansion in America: seizure of colonies possessed by European rivals or the settlement of currently uninhabited islands and tracts of the mainland. In the *Review*, Defoe defends the legitimacy of seizing Spanish territory. He reminds his readers of Raleigh's adventures in Guiana and of the more successful military efforts of Admiral Penn and General Venables in the mid-seventeenth-century. Although they failed to capture Hispaniola, they "took the Island of *Jamaica*, which has ever since remain'd in our Possession." 49

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Throughout his Atlantic texts Defoe argued that new colonies could and should be planted in the "uninhabited" parts of America. In the *Atlas Maritimus & Commercialis* Defoe observes of the vast expanse of land between the Orinoco and Amazon Rivers that "upon all this Coast there is not one European Plantation, except on a small piece of Land between three Rivers, on which the Dutch have a Colony" (313). The implication is clear: the English should seize a portion of this coast for their own colonial project. The narrator of *A New Voyage Round the World* pauses in the middle of his voyage to offer an "observation" about a possible colony in South America. The area in what is now Argentina is "suitable to the genius, the constitution, and the manner of living of Englishmen, and consequently of an English colony." The land has "very good harbours, and some navigable rivers" and the terrain is well adapted for enclosing, feeding, and grazing cattle; also for corn, all sorts of which would certainly not grow but thrive very well here, especially wheat, rye, peas, and barley, things which would soon be improved by Englishmen, to the making of the country rich and populous, the raising great quantities of grain of all sorts, and cattle in proportion.

The colonial plan describes idyllic geography for an agricultural settlement, promising great success and wealth for the colonists: they will not just subsist in Defoe's colony but "thrive."

Defoe used this fictional travel narrative to promote this colonial project, one that he returned to in his *General History of Discoveries*. Defoe repeats and elaborates his account of the natural advantages of the region. He catalogues the resources that can

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50 I will return to this important piece of geography in the next chapter.

sustain colonists and ones that can be converted to commercial ventures he even claims that "the Country is as it were singled out for Englishmen." Defoe's South American colonial projects were part of his lengthy involvement and interest in the affairs of the South Sea Company. Defoe argued that the Company should act on its patent and establish a colony in the lands over which it held authority.

Defoe supplied the company with a number of suggestions for locations and with detailed accounts of how such a colony was to be established. An Essay on the South-Sea Trade is a thorough plan for colonization, describing a "design of Planting, Settling, and Possessing." Colonization for Defoe means that England "shall ... Seize, Take, and Possess, such Port or Place, or Places, Land, Territory, Country or Dominion, call it what you please, as we see fit in America, and Keep it for our own, Keeping it implies Planting, Settling, Inhabiting, Spreading and all that is usual in such Cases" (39). The colony should be planted in the middle of South America's rich resources, "somewhere among the Gold, the Silver, the Drugs, the Indico, Cocoa, Cocheneal and the like" (39). The success of such a colonial project, Defoe promises, "is not only probable to be Great, but capable of being the Greatest, most Valuable, most Profitable, and most Encreasing Branch of Trade in our whole British Commerce" (38). The new colony would serve as "a Foundation, upon which may be Built an immense Trade, a New, and very much Wanted Vent, for our own Manufactures of Britain; a New, and as much wanted Vent for the Provisions, and Cattle, the Produce of our Colonies on the North of America; and a

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52 Defoe, A General History of Discoveries, 289.

wonderful Encrease of our Navigation, Strength, and People" (45).

The proposal Defoe offers the Company is intended to win their support and to encourage action, and is aided by hyperbole which links a single colony to Atlantic commerce and the entire British economy. It is with this form of argument that Defoe ends his Plan of the English Commerce: the appeal to extend England's Atlantic empire. He writes that "Strength, as well as Wealth, grows up with your Colonies, the Climax is really pleasant to look upon" (275). The rhetorical climax is an economic peroration: "An Encrease in Colonies encreases People, People encrease the Consumption of Manufactures, Manufactures Trade, Trade Navigation, Navigation Seamen, and altogether the Wealth, Strength, and Prosperity of England" (276).

The Atlantic expansion that Defoe advocated was to be led by merchants, the heroic imperial protagonists of Defoe's imagination. The labour required to realize their colonial projects was to be supplied, in large part, by slaves. In addition to conventional plantation labour, Defoe imagined a number of novel roles for slaves in the English Atlantic economy. In An Essay Upon Projects, he suggested using African slaves in the construction and repair of England's highways. Defoe also recommended using slaves in the extraction and refinement of New England's timber resources. Valuable naval stores can be readily produced there because "'tis easie to furnish what Number of Servants are wanted from Africa."54 While slavery was far from unknown in this part of America, it was not usually exploited in the manner described by Defoe. One of the advantages Defoe claimed for his scheme for colonizing West Africa was the ready and seemingly endless supply of slaves. By eliminating the high costs of transporting the Africans to America, Defoe's projected colony would be able to produce colonial commodities like sugar and cotton at significantly lower prices. It is this single-minded drive to expand the

54Defoe, Review 1.97 (6 February 1705) 401.
Atlantic economy, to pursue new colonial projects, that informed Defoe's extensive writing on slavery. From his proposal in *An Essay Upon Projects* to his final economic surveys, Defoe consistently supported the slave-trade and the use of slavery as the necessary means to the realization of Atlantic projects.55

In his 1702 poem, *The Reformation of Manners*, Defoe seems to criticize slavers who "barter Baubles for the Souls of Men." Wylie Sypher identified this passage as an early instance of antislavery sentiment but, as C. Duncan Rice has more recently reminded us, the poem is satirical: the genre demands critical circumspection and does not allow easy conclusions to be drawn. What is satirized in this passage is not the activity of slavery and slave-trading but the hypocrisy of some slave traders. Defoe was no such hypocrite on the question of slavery. With this single exception, Defoe's writing on slavery and the slave-trade are unambiguous. As Rice puts it, "[t]hroughout his economic writings, Defoe takes slavery for granted."56 Indeed, Defoe returned to the exchange of baubles for bodies on a number of occasions in which slavery and the slave-trade are unambiguously promoted. In 1710 in the *Review*, Defoe uses the image to describe the value and extraordinary profitability of the slave-trade: "we Trade to the Golden Shoars of Africk, where they Barter Glass for Gold, and Baubles for the Souls of Men."57 He admonishes


57Defoe, *Review* VII.30 (3 June 1710) 114.
his merchant readers not to allow competition or divisions to destroy this advantageous commerce. In the *Atlas Maritimus & Commercialis*, Defoe quotes himself again to demonstrate the lucrative nature of African trade, where wily English merchants can "buy the Country for Trash, and the People for Trumpery." Africans, "ignorant of the intrinsick Value or Virtue of things, cast away the richest Production of Nature as of small value to them." In the trade in human bodies, Defoe writes, "*They barter Baubles for the Souls of Men*" (237).

Defoe had invested in the slave-trade himself, and was even paid on occasion to write on behalf of the interests of the Royal African Company. His knowledge of that branch of Atlantic commerce was extensive. Defoe wrote about the financial affairs of the slave-traders, and he described in detail the mechanics of obtaining slaves in Africa. He defended the importance of the trade as a commercial activity and the necessity of slave labour in the colonies, and he wrote about the relations between masters and slaves, offering, as he does elsewhere in his instructional texts, recommendations for the most economically effective exploitation of unfree labour.

In the *Review*, Defoe reduces the issue of slavery to two pragmatic questions. First, he asks, "[i]s the Trade to *Africa*, a useful, necessary advantageous Trade to *Britain*, and such as ought to be preserved, Or is it not?" Assuming an affirmative answer to his first question Defoe asks how the slave-trade should be conducted. Defoe answers the first of these questions at length. The slave-trade is a "most flourishing and useful Branch of our Trade." It is useful, of course, because it provides much needed labour to the colonies in America. It is flourishing because of the mechanics of the trade: "[i]t makes the best Export, and the best Import of any Trade we drive; it exports nothing, but what we want to part with, and Imports nothing but what we can not be without." That is, the slave-

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trade sees Englishmen trading baubles for bodies. Defoe further insists that the entire English Atlantic economy depends on slavery: it converts the products of English industry into both gold and colonial labour. America, Defoe argues, "could no more be maintained, the Islands especially, without the supply of Negro Slaves carried thither from Africa, Than London could subsist without the River of Thames." Slavery, then, was not merely economically efficient, it was also natural. The work on colonial plantations was, Defoe maintained, only suited to Africans. In the Review, he described the "Work of the Islands": planting, cultivating and refining sugar cane. The labour is "so severe, the Climate so hot, the Food so coarse" that Europeans could not tolerate it. Colonial planters "must have People us'd to the Extremities of the Weather."  

The English slave-trade, Defoe writes, originated out of the need for labour in the island colonies, and from the Caribbean the practice spread to the North American mainland. The "Custom of buying Slaves" came into practice "when the Colonies planted in America encreasing, and wanting hands, the English found the African Negroes very useful there, and so began to carry them to Virginia, Barbadoes, &c. and at last to all the Colonies, as it is at this time." This practice began, according to Defoe, sometime in the middle of the seventeenth-century and continues to grow. He provides his readers with a brief history and evaluation of the triangular trade:

We have had in England for near 50 Years a very beneficial Trade carry'd on from England to the Coast of Africk, vulgarly call'd Guinea, and from thence to our Colonies in America --- Our Exports from England have been, generally speaking, our Woollen Manufactures, particularly Perpetuana's, a Kind of Serge used in that Country, with some Manufactures introduc'd merely by the

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59 Defoe, Review V.140 (17 February 1709) 558, 559.

60 Defoe, Review VI.46 (19 July 1709) 186.

61 Defoe, Review V.140 (17 February 1709) 559.
Company it self, and call'd therefore more properly Guinea Stuffs —— And when the Trade has been flourishing, they have exported of these Things 50 to 60000 Per Annum. —— The Return for this has been partly to England, in Gold-Dust, or in Ivory, or Elephants Teeth, raw Hides, red Earth, Bees-Wax, &c. Commodities all very useful in England, and which we should be oblig'd otherwise to buy from other Nations with our ready Money; the other Branch of their Return has been in Negroes or Slaves carry'd from thence chiefly to our Island Colonies in America, such as Jamaica, Barbadoes, Nevis, Antegoa, St. Christophers, &c. And a few to the Continent, especially Virginia and Maryland. 62

England, Defoe observes, has come to rely on this lucrative Atlantic commerce in which the slave-trade is the foundation. Textile manufactures are exchanged for gold or for slaves at an extraordinary rate of return, and while the former aids the balance of trade, the latter allows the colonies to produce even more valuable sugar and tobacco: a "Trade, which without any export but of Trifles, brings back the most solid, the richest, and the best Return in the World." 63 The "African Trade," Defoe concludes, "is the most profitable Trade in this Nation." 64

Defoe's analysis of the slave-trade in the Review is part of a defence of the Royal African Company's monopoly. If the slave-trade is flourishing and necessary, Defoe had asked, how is it to be preserved? Defoe's response is to defend the control of the slave-trade by the Royal African Company. The importance of the slave-trade to England's economy means that it must be conducted in a reliable and efficient manner. The colonies, he writes, would "bleed to Death for Want of Slaves; for were the Supply of Negroes but to stop one Year --- The Plantations would fall Sick like a Body, when a Supply of Food is with held from the Stomach." 65 It is "evident on many Accounts," he writes, "that 'tis

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62 Defoe, Review V.158 (31 March 1709) 629.
63 Defoe, Review VII.32 (8 June 1710) 122.
64 Defoe, Review V.151 (15 March 1709) 601.
65 Defoe, Review V.142 (19 February 1709) 568.
in the Interest of the Plantations, to have a certain constant Supply of Negroes for their Works, and to have those Negroes at a Reasonable Price."66 This necessary labour supply can best be guaranteed by the Royal African Company because, Defoe reasons, they have already established the infrastructure to preserve the slave-trade. They have built forts and castles on the African coast from which they conduct their business and protect themselves. They are, Defoe argues, the best equipped for this important commerce.

Defoe defended the slave-trade, and the monopoly of the Royal African Company in particular, in a number of pamphlets. In 1711, just as the Company's charter was to expire, he published An Essay on the Trade to Africa. Defoe summarizes and celebrates the contribution of the Company to England's Atlantic economy. He reminds his audience how many "Negroes, they sent to the English Colonies in the West Indies; and how many Thousand Ounces of Gold they brought into England." The Royal African Company, he contends, works in the national interest guaranteeing this important trade -- they "preserve and Maintain it for the Good of the Whole Body" -- and contributing to the national coffers through taxes and duties. The "only way to secure and preserve this Beneficial Trade to this Nation, is to Settle it upon a firm Foundation."67 Two years later, Defoe returned to the slave-trade in A Brief Account of the Present State of the African Trade (1713). Having won the asiento, the exclusive right to supply slaves to America, the stakes in the trade were even higher, and the need to defend the security of it more important. Defoe proposes that if "the General Interest of Trade, if the Prosperity of the British Colonies, if the Export and Consumption of Woollen Manufactures, if the Return of Gold in Specie, if a Trade that brings in the richest Import for the meanest

66Defoe, Review VII.152 (15 March 1711) 567.

67Daniel Defoe, An Essay upon the Trade to Africa (1711) 9, 35, 47.
Export, be worth preserving and encouraging, the Government cannot but value and protect the African Trade."  

In the *Atlas Maritimus & Commercialis* and *A Plan of the English Commerce* Defoe describes the dynamics and volume of the slave-trade in more detail. "The English buy the greatest Number of Negroes, he writes, "except the Portuguese, whom they send to Jamaica and the other Leeward Islands, and to Virginia: and now having the Assiento from the King of Spain, they carry a great many Thousands yearly to the Spanish West-Indies." Defoe estimates that the English transport around 30000 to 40000 slaves annually to the Americas, supplying English, Dutch, French and, since 1713, the Spanish colonies. Indeed, the Spanish colonies alone account for almost a third of the total traffic. In *A Plan of the English Commerce*, he calculates the value of this commerce. "The Rate of Negroes in America, as it is of late Years risen in all the Colonies, is from 25 to 30 l. a Head, according to the Age, the Growth, and the Sex of the Negroes." The rising price encourages Defoe to imagine increasing the quantity to 50000 slaves a year, at which point "the Value of this Trade at a Medium of 25l. per Head upon all the Negroes, amounts to no less than One Million two hundred and fifty thousand Pound per Annum." The "infinite Advantage" of this commerce lies in the rate of profit: "these Negroes do not cost in the Country above 30 to 50 s. per Head." Defoe suggests that transporting 50000 slaves annually is not impossible, and is certain that there is "Business enough for them all in our encreasing Colonies." If their are surplus bodies, the projecting faculty could imagine work for them, invent new ways to plunder the Atlantic's utopian treasure.

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In pamphlets and periodicals, in historical and geographical writing, Defoe represented the Atlantic as a source of real and potential wealth. He described the landscapes of Africa and the Americas, identifying their economic resources and the history of their "discovery" and development by English Atlanticists. Defoe demonstrated the current thriving state of the Atlantic economy, the importance of England's commerce with her American colonies and with West Africa, and he offered plans and schemes -- projects -- for future development: new sites for colonies, new trade routes, new commodities, and new commercial techniques. Through his projecting faculty, Defoe did not simply depict the English Atlantic world as it was reported to him, he transformed it, imagining what it could or should be like. This representational strategy is particularly well suited to an English Atlantic imagination devoted to the utopian desire for plunder, as it converts this utopian desire, by way of plans and proposals, into real plunder: increased commerce and expanded colonial possessions.

Defoe employed the same projecting faculty in different kinds of writing -- not just in different genres, but in different forms of writing. In Captain Singleton, Moll Flanders, and Colonel Jack, Defoe revisited the Atlantic topoi of his pamphlet writing, journalism, histories, and geographies. In their Atlantic episodes, these narrative texts share the concerns of Defoe's other writing with commerce, colonialism, and slavery, but they render these concerns in a different form. Maximillian Novak has recently made a strong case for seeing continuity between the different forms of writing undertaken by Defoe. He identifies a single, economic imagination at work in his texts as early as An Essay Upon Projects and still at work in the fictional narratives he composed at the end of his career. "In such works" as An Essay Upon Projects, Novak argues, "Defoe revealed something like the same imagination that went into the fiction, but his didactic purpose on every page is hardly to be questioned."\(^{71}\) Novak suggests that the use of invented or

\(^{71}\)Max Novak, "Defoe as an innovator of fictional form," in The Cambridge
fabricated narratives as examples to illustrate economic arguments is a consistent element of Defoe's writing. Indeed, Bram Dijkstra suggests that Defoe wrote fiction precisely because he recognized the "considerable didactic possibilities inherent in long narratives, which would entertain as they instructed." It is in this way that Defoe's fictional narratives originate from the same imagination, the same projecting faculty that produced his other Atlantic writing. He is a consistent Atlantic projector.

Defoe did not merely bring to his fictional narratives "the materials of the journalist, pamphleteer and essayist," he wrote those narratives as part of a coherent literary programme that incorporated fictional and nonfictional forms of writing. A New Voyage Round the World, for instance, consisting of an invented first-person travel narrative, was intended, like his pamphlets on the South Sea Company, to serve a "serious function in providing information about foreign lands -- lands which England might profitably colonize." The narratives of Captain Singleton, Moll Flanders, and Colonel Jack are presented to the reader as true accounts of individual lives, lives that are instructive in the manner described by Novak. "In whatever form," Novak has argued, "Defoe propagandized for travel, foreign commerce, and colonization." Writing of A New Voyage Round the World, J.A. Downie has argued that its "mixture of fact and fiction is

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72 James Sutherland noted how a "strong element of fiction is present in many of his earlier writings" in "The Relation of Defoe's Fiction to his Non-Fictional Writings," in Imagined Worlds: Essays on some English Novels and Novelists in Honour of John Butt, ed. Maynard Mack and Ian Gregor (London: Methuen, 1968) 38.

73 Dijkstra, Defoe and Economics, 12.


75 Novak, Economics and the Fiction of Daniel Defoe, 146.
an important element of in propaganda." He sees the same mixture in Defoe's novels:

*Robinson Crusoe* and *Captain Singleton*, as well as *Moll Flanders* and *Colonel Jack*, involve imperialistic propaganda to promote [Defoe's] schemes of trade and colonization. That they do not nakedly state a thesis in favour of empire is a mark of the subtlety with which Defoe approaches the subject, not an argument against such an interpretation of his novels.76

The narratives of Defoe's Atlantic protagonists represent not just the facts of imperialism -- commerce, colonization and slavery -- but the experience of these phenomena. As Ian Watt has described it, Defoe's "novels reflect not theory but practice."77 His fictional narratives are in this respect an integral part of his Atlantic imagination.

Captain Singleton began his Atlantic career when he was only twelve years old. In a town near Southampton, he aided in the construction of a ship and when it was completed the ship's captain took Singleton "to Sea with him, on a Voyage to Newfoundland."78 The voyage to the fisheries of the North Atlantic was a rather ordinary beginning for Singleton, whose life thereafter was to consist of a combination of adventure, plunder, and commerce taking him over most of the world's oceans and across continents. On board a Portuguese ship, Singleton was trained not only in the art of navigation, but also in the art of Atlantic commerce. Despite the exoticism of his commercial itinerary, and the unorthodox nature of his methods, Singleton really is a fictional "embodiment of the complete English Tradesman."79 On the Brazilian coast,


79 Manuel Schonhorn, "A Reassessment of Defoe's Captain Singleton," *Papers on*
Singleton recalls,

our Captain, either on his own Account, or by the Direction of the Merchants, went thither first, where at All Saints Bay, or as they call it in Portugal, the rio de Todos los Santos, we delivered near a Hundred Ton of Goods, and took in considerable Quantity of Gold, with some Chests of Sugar, and Seventy or Eighty great Rolls of Tobacco, every Roll weighing at least 100 Weight. (5)

Singleton learned well. His travels are entirely dedicated to harvesting the riches he can discover, revealing, Laura Brown writes, "the necessary violence of imperialist ideology." When he lands on Madagascar, Singleton observes economic opportunity: "If I had but a Ship of 20 Guns, and a Sloop, and both well Manned, I would not desire a better Place in the World to make my self as rich as a King" (36). From the beginning to the end of his travels, Singleton was devoted to accumulating the wealth that became available to him, in Africa, the Americas, and around the world. He was committed, he confesses at the end of his narrative, to amassing "the Plunder of so many innocent People, nay, I may say Nations" (266).

In the African portion of Singleton's narrative, Defoe invents an economic landscape for his protagonist to explore. The interior of Southern and central Africa at this time had not yet been explored by Europeans, and was, therefore, undocumented. In the Atlas Maritimus & Commercialis, Defoe addresses this gap in geographical knowledge, admitting that "little is at present known of it, the Country being not fully searched into, and what is known is known from the People, who come down from thence with their

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Language and Literature 7 (1971): 51. Schonhorn argues that it is specifically the commercial nature of Singleton's adventures that differentiate his narrative from conventional pirate narratives.

Goods to sell" (24). What information that is available about this region, Defoe claims, is made available through the activities of trade. In *Captain Singleton* it is the possibilities for trade that informs Defoe's imagined geography: the invented landscape invites future exploration and commercial exploitation.  

Although trade was not the cause of Singleton's transcontinental trek, trading opportunities nonetheless were discovered by him, giving shape and purpose to his voyage and narrative.  

Ivory and other animal products were observed and collected by Singleton, commodities identified by Defoe in his *Atlas Maritimus & Commercialis* as valuable items of trade. It was gold that proved to be Singleton's greatest economic discovery. Towards the end of his travels, Singleton and his companions begin to collect gold at a significant rate, skimming it from the land or in the river beds of West Africa, and they contemplate the prospect of even greater mineral wealth: "we might in two Years time, by good Management, and by the Help of our Negroes, gather every Man a Hundred Pound Weight of Gold" (131-132). The potential wealth suggested by Singleton is addressed explicitly in Defoe's Atlas:

if this immense Wealth is found just on the Surface, wash'd out from the Hills, after the Earth is loosen'd by hasty and Violent Rains, rapid Currents, high Floods, and the like; if all this is taken up without the Pick-Ax or Spade, without the least help of Art, without digging or searching one Foot into the Earth; what must the Quantity be which is left in Nature's Store-house; which remains among the Hills and Rocks, and loose but rich Earths that have not yet been disturb'd?

(237)

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81 Walter Rodney observes that "[w]hat was known of Africa in Europe was limited to the coasts of the continent and particularly to the west coast, where trade was most intense," in "Africa in Europe and the Americas," in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, ed. Richard Gray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975) IV, 579.

A permanent English colony in West Africa, which Defoe repeatedly advocated, would answer this rhetorical question, and Singleton's narrative contributes to this answer.

Singleton and his company made use of African slaves throughout their transcontinental journey, compelling them to carry their belongings and to procure whatever merchantable commodities were available. It was not until the second portion of Singleton's adventures in the Caribbean that he was able to realize the commercial value of African slaves. In their cruising voyages around the Atlantic, Singleton and William Walters encounter a ship of Africans who had successfully rebelled against the slavers and freed themselves. Singleton and his Quaker companion convert this meeting into a commercial venture, appropriating the Africans as their own property and selling them as slaves to the planters of Brazil. The Quaker proves to be an adept slave-trader, gaining the confidence of his Portuguese customers. Not only did he sell them the slaves, but he also disposed of the ship. Singleton reports that this "was a very agreeable Account to us, especially when we saw, that William had received in Gold coin'd, or by Weight, and some Spanish Silver, 60000 Pieces of Eight, besides a new Sloop, an a vast Quantity of Provisions" (167). The Quaker Walker instructs Singleton and the others in the art of commerce both by his example and his arguments, persuading the plundering company that wealth is the principle and goal to which they ought to be committed. What, he asks Singleton, is "thy Business, and the Business of all the People thou hast with thee? Is it not to get Money?" (153). All of their energies in the Atlantic must be directed to this end. As a consequence of this argument, Singleton and his company change their course and set a commercial itinerary.

In the preface, the editor of Moll Flanders' life expresses didactic intentions: the reader, it is hoped, will find her story useful, "fruitful of Instruction." The editor of Moll

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Flanders' life offers that history as a specifically Atlantic lesson; the sojourn in Virginia is presented as a paradigm for economic self-improvement. Her life is a model, to borrow Dijkstra's terms, of "how to survive and thrive in the dangerous and prosaic, but enormously exciting world of business." Although her story is instructive, Moll Flanders herself, of course, is not presented as an ideal character, a distinction the editor is careful to establish:

this Work is chiefly recommended to those who know how to read it, and how to make the good Uses of it, which the Story all along recommends to them; so it is to be hop'd that such Readers will be much more pleas'd with the Moral, than the Fable; with the Application, than with the Relation, and with the End of the Writer, than with the Life of the Person written of. (2)

The moral of Moll Flanders' narrative, the "use" of the "fable," is disclosed by the editor later in the preface:

Her application to a sober Life, and industrious Management at last in Virginia, with her Transported Spouse, is a Story fruitful of Instruction, to all the unfortunate Creatures who are oblig'd to seek their Re-establishment abroad; whether by the misery of Transportation, or other Disaster; letting them know, that Diligence and Application have their due Encouragement, even in the remotest Parts of the World. (4)

Even in the least enviable circumstances, America provided an economic opportunity for Moll Flanders. In her life of profit and loss, it was the American episode that proved to be by far the most lucrative. Some of the readers of Moll Flanders' narrative, the editor suggests, might follow a similar Atlantic route with comparable success.

In The Complete English Tradesman and The Complete English Gentleman, Defoe presented a lengthy list of characters whose fortunes, like those of Moll Flanders,

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84Dijkstra, Defoe and Economics, 7.
improved enormously because of their involvement in the Atlantic world of imperial commerce and colonialism. Such texts are intended as encouragement for undertaking similar commercial ventures. While the *Atlas Maritimus & Commercialis* is directed at the merchants, mariners and colonial administrators that are listed as subscribers, *The Complete English Tradesman* and *The Compleat English Gentleman* direct their economic exhortations to individuals engaged in commerce. In *The Complete English Tradesman*, Defoe argued that "trade itself in *England* is not, as it generally is in other countries, the meanest thing the men can turn their hand to; but on the contrary trade is the readiest way for men to raise their fortunes and families." To illustrate his claim he reminds his readers that "we see now the ordinary planters at *Jamaica* and *Barbadoes* rise to immense estates" (I, 306, 316).

Defoe gives a more detailed history of this Atlantic economic phenomenon in *The Compleat English Gentleman*:

> Law, trade, war, navigation, improvement of stocks, loans on public funds, places of trust, and abundance of other modern advantages and private wayes of getting money, which the people of England in these last ages have been acquainted with more than formerly, have joyn'd, I do not say conspir'd, together for some yeares past to encrease the wealth of the commonalty, and have rais'd a great number of familyes to not only prosperous circumstances, for that I am not speaking of, but to immense estates, vast and till of late, unheard of summes of money amass'd in a short time and which have, in the consequence, rais'd such families to a station of life some thing difficult to describe and not less difficult to give a name to.⁸⁵

Among the figures that Defoe identifies for his readers is Sir Josiah Child, Atlantic merchant and author of a number of important texts in the English Atlantic archive. Moll Flanders, Captain Singleton and Colonel Jack are also, in their way, instructive figures for a different kind of English reader. They, too, have benefited from the economic forces of

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the English Atlantic world, from the "modern advantages and private wayes of getting money" offered by the ocean of commerce and the sea of wealth. In overseas commerce (legitimate or otherwise), in the extraction of African or colonial American resources, and in the provision and exploitation of slave labour, these figures amass impressive amounts of Atlantic wealth.

Although Moll Flanders does improve her personal financial position in her first Atlantic passage, it is her second sojourn in America, as a transported felon, that is the most profitable, and indeed the most profitable episode of her career. During her first period in Virginia she is told about the careers of transported felons:

the Planters buy them, and they work together in the Field till their time is out; when 'tis expir'd...they have Encouragement given to them to Plant for themselves; for they have a certain number of Acres of Land allotted to them by the Country, and they go to work to Clear and Cure the Land, and then to Plant it with Tobacco and Corn for their own use; and as the Tradesmen and Merchants will trust them with Tools, and Cloaths, and other Necessities, upon the Credit of their Crop before it is grown, so they again Plant every Year a little more than the Year before, and so buy whatever they want with the Crop that is before them. (86)

Moll Flanders and the reader are informed that not only successful planters, but also magistrates and justices of the peace have risen to their wealth and status through this means. These people, and later, Moll Flanders herself, provide the evidence for Defoe's claim in *A Plan of the English Commerce* that transported felons, "if we have not been misinform'd, have, by turning their Hands to Industry and Improvement, and, which is best of all, to Honesty, become rich substantial Planters and Merchants, settled large Families, and have been famous in the Country" as magistrates, militia officers, and ships' captain (273-274).

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In *Applebee's Journal*, Defoe asked "[w]ho then, in their Wits, would decline wearing out with Patience the Life of Servitude, which is in itself but short, with so certain a Prospect of Safety and Success?" Moll Flanders was the model transported felon: she followed Defoe's projected path to Atlantic wealth to the letter. She and her husband built a successful plantation out of wild American land. They had a servant and a slave to begin their operation, and "a large piece of Land from the Government of that Country, in order to form our Plantation" (331). After a year, they had "near fifty Acres of Land clear'd, part of it enclos'd, and some of it Planted with Tobacco" (331). The size and productivity of their plantation increased dramatically as they cleared and planted more land, requiring even more labour. After eight years their plantation produced tobacco worth £300 annually. To this was added the plantation willed to Moll Flanders, worth another £100 in annual revenue, in addition to cash and English merchandise imported for resale to their American neighbours.

The genres that Defoe adapted in his fictional narratives, travel adventures, and criminal biography were historical forms of writing, familiar as such to Defoe's readers. The editor of Colonel Jack's narrative hopes that the biographical text will be read as history and parable, as both a true and didactic narrative. If it is, then "it will be equally useful, and capable of doing Good." It is the utility of the narrative that is important, the didactic end rather than the fictional means. The lives of Defoe's characters were classified and sometimes described by their titles as histories, and frequently read in that manner.

Richard Kroll has argued that

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with the promise that when they had paid the debt of transportation they would be rewarded with freedom and property: "they would after the time they were ordered to Serve was expir'd, be encourg'd by the Constitution of the Country, to Settle and Plant for themselves" (120). As Defoe represents it, Colonel Jack's American experience conforms to this theoretical pattern, strategically diverting from contemporary practice. Colonel Jack is released by his employer and granted "a Quantity of Land to begin, and Plant" for himself (150). He proves to be a remarkably adept colonist. His plantation expanded rapidly, consuming more land and labour and producing greater quantities of tobacco: "now I began to encrease Visibly; I had a large Quantity of Land Cur'd, that is, Freed from Timber; and a very good Crop of Tobacco in view, and I got three Servants more, and one Negro; so that I had five white Servants, and two Negroes, and with this my Affairs went very well on" (155). After twelve years, Colonel Jack had expanded his enterprise, becoming a merchant as well as a planter. He was trading with an agent in London, exchanging his tobacco for provisions for his own consumption and for sale to other planters. His stature can be measured in the size of his land and his workforce: "I had a very large Plantation, and had near 70 Negroes, and other Servants: In a Word, I was grown really Rich" (159). By the time Colonel Jack left America he was shipping a prodigious quantity of tobacco: "at several times five Hundred Hogsheads of Tobacco," an amount sufficient to make him a significant producer. As an absentee planter, he recalls earning as much as £1000 in a single year from his American enterprise (250).

Colonel Jack's rise from servant to planter is made possible, in part, because of

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92 The available records available suggest that the life of an indentured servant (or a transported felon) would rarely end in the planter status achieved by Defoe's characters. Indeed, these workers suffered remarkably high mortality rates, and those who did survive their labour terms often found that the promise of land was often chimerical. See Richard S. Dunn, "Servants and Slaves: The Recruitment and Employment of Labor," in Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Essay, ed. Jack P. Greene and J.R. Poole (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989) 158-164.
innovations that he introduces in the management of unfree labour. He is appointed overseer of his employer's slaves, "to take Care that they did their Business, provide their Food, and in short, both Govern and Direct them" (127). In the course of performing his duties, Colonel Jack discovers a more efficient means to extract work from them. Rather than whip and torture his workers, he determines that they work more productively, and are less likely to rebel, if they are treated more leniently. The planter recognizes the value of this innovation, admitting that the conventional technique for procuring labour was expensive, losing "a lusty Man Negro, which Cost me at least 30 or 40l." (131). Colonel Jack reports to his employer that "your Business shall be better discharg'd, and your Plantations better order'd, and more work done by the Negroes, who shall be engaged by Mercy and Lenity, than by those, who are driven, and dragg'd by the Whips" (145). Colonel Jack notes with some pride that his managerial technique was adopted elsewhere in the colony (149).

Colonel Jack offers his experience in America as an example to his readers. He presents the construction of his colonial business as a model, describing the progress of his enterprise as it expanded from a small clearing of two acres and a workforce of three into a substantial plantation and import enterprise. Colonel Jack wants his example to "encourage" others, to demonstrate the ease with which he rose from indentured servant to planter. When he describes the beginning stages of his planting career, he (or his editor) provides a footnote telling interested readers that the land in Maryland is "over-grown with high Trees, which must be cut down, and grubb'd up, before any thing call'd Planting can be begun" (152). Such information is intended for those readers that might be inspired to follow Colonel Jack's route to Atlantic wealth. Twice he abandons his narrative to address the question of colonial immigration, providing an abstract example of the advancement of the colonist. After a mere five or seven years, a man will be awarded 50 acres for planting, in addition to a loan or gift of livestock and some credit for the
innovations that he introduces in the management of unfree labour. He is appointed overseer of his employer's slaves, "to take Care that they did their Business, provide their Food, and in short, both Govern and Direct them" (127). In the course of performing his duties, Colonel Jack discovers a more efficient means to extract work from them. Rather than whip and torture his workers, he determines that they work more productively, and are less likely to rebel, if they are treated more leniently. The planter recognizes the value of this innovation, admitting that the conventional technique for procuring labour was expensive, losing "a lusty Man Negro, which Cost me at least 30 or 40l." (131). Colonel Jack reports to his employer that "your Business shall be better discharg'd, and your Plantations better order'd, and more work done by the Negroes, who shall be engaged by Mercy and Lenity, than by those, who are driven, and dragg'd by the Whips" (145).

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purchase of tools and equipment:

THUS the naked Planter has Credit at his Beginning, and immediately goes to Work, to cure the Land, and Plant Tobacco; and from this little Beginning, have some of the most considerable Planters in Virginia and in Maryland also, raised themselves, namely from being without a Hat, or a Shoe, to Estates of 40 or 50000 Pound; and in this Method, I may add, no Diligent Man ever Miscarried, if he had Health to work and was a good Husband; for he every Year encreases a little, and every Year adding more Land, and Planting more Tobacco, which is real Money, he must Gradually encrease in Substance, till at length he gets enough to Buy Negroes, and other Servants, and then never Works himself any more. (153)

Colonel Jack offers some conclusions from his experience, principally that a colonial immigrant "if he will but apply himself with Diligence and Industry to the Business of the Country, is sure (Life and Health suppos'd) both of living Well and growing Rich" (173).

The narratives of the lives of these figures are presented as concrete instances of the mechanics of the Atlantic world, prolonged illustrations from Defoe's projecting faculty. Indeed, Dijkstra claims that Defoe wrote fiction precisely because he recognized the "considerable didactic possibilities inherent in long narratives, which would entertain as they instructed."93 Captain Singleton is a prototypical economic adventurer, discovering new sources of wealth for further plunder, and Moll Flanders and Colonel Jack, Novak has observed, are "perfect colonists." All these figures "add to England's wealth and prosperity... when they used their talents to find new trade routes, explore for new colonies, or develop the older ones, they were making an economic contribution to their country which, in Defoe's terms, was truly heroic."94 These fictional lives play an important role in Defoe's Atlantic writing, embodying in their experience, and ordering through their narratives, the possibly abstract dynamics of foreign commerce, American

93Dijkstra, Defoe and Economics, 12.

colonization, and the profitable use of unfree labour, the Atlantic topoi that Defoe visited in his other writing. In *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe presented the most thorough account of an Atlantic life, a detailed examination of the experience and mental world of an English Atlanticist. I examine this Atlantic life in detail in the next chapter.

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Chapter 3
Robinson Crusoe's plantation complex

In Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Defoe invented a character who was particularly well suited for an Atlantic career. Crusoe was born to wander the wider world, to be a mariner, as he is described on the title page of his Adventures. The map that accompanied the fourth edition of his Adventures traces the maritime voyages of a wandering life that enabled Crusoe to see an enormous amount of the world (Fig. 3.1). Crusoe was ambivalent about the character trait that caused his wandering life. He represented his restlessness as an inherent flaw in his disposition. In the Farther Adventures he describes his wandering character as a "chronical distemper." 1 It was his wandering, curious disposition that drove Crusoe to leave his family in Hull, compelling him to sacrifice the middle station of English life for the risk of adventure in the Atlantic world. After returning from his long Atlantic sojourn he was compelled to risk the middle station once again, leaving his secure family life to return to his island. As a young man, Crusoe rejected the warning attached to his father's opinion that a maritime life was "for men of desperate fortune on one hand, or of aspiring, superior fortune on the other, who went abroad upon adventures, to rise by enterprize, and make themselves famous in undertakings of a nature out of the common road." 2 Crusoe's father was right; his son experienced both adventure and enterprise of an uncommon nature.

To some of his fellow Atlanticists Crusoe would have seemed ideally suited for his Atlantic vocation. To them, the aspects of his character about which Crusoe was

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1Daniel Defoe, The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1719; London: Constable & Company, 1925) 2. Subsequent references will be incorporated into the text as volume 2 of Robinson Crusoe.

2Daniel Defoe, The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, ed. Angus Ross (1719; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965) 28. Subsequent references will be incorporated into the text.
Fig. 3.1 Map of Crusoe's Travels from Robinson Crusoe, 4th ed. (1719)
ambivalent also made him an exemplary colonist. Crusoe would have been eagerly welcomed, for instance, in the American colony planned by Sir William Alexander in what is now Nova Scotia. In his *An Encouragement to Colonies*, a 1634 effort to attract colonists to his imperial project, Alexander examined "what things are necessarie for a Plantation." He concluded that what he principally required for his colony was men like Crusoe in possession of "daring mindes that upon any probable appearance doe dispise danger," complemented by "bodies able to indure as much as the height of their minds can undertake."³ Despite long bouts of fear and doubt, Crusoe demonstrates this kind of mental and physical fortitude, particularly during the long and difficult process of establishing his island colony. According to the colonial promoter William Lodddington, the sort of men Alexander required, men like Crusoe, were not just well suited for their colonial career, they had a colonial calling, a vocation for what Lodddington defined as "plantation work."⁴

In 1682, Lodddington published *Plantation Work the Work of this Generation*, a short pamphlet which was intended to persuade English men and women to relinquish their lives of security for the risks of American colonization, for the important work of establishing colonial plantations. Lodddington's pamphlet appeals to exactly those kind of unsettled people who, like Crusoe, were predisposed to curiosity and ambition, to


⁴On the colonial calling in practice see Michael Zuckerman, "Identity on British America: Unease in Eden," in *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) 130-136. The words "plantation" and "planter" changed during the seventeenth-century. Initially a plantation was any colonial settlement and a planter any colonist. By the middle part of the century the words had come to refer specifically to the social institution that we associate with sugar, tobacco, rice and cotton production. My usage in this chapter reflects this change.
adventure and enterprise. Loddington credits them not only with the existence and prosperity of the American colonies, but also the affluence that England enjoyed:

Some have a sly whispering, slighting way of Reflecting upon those that Transport themselves and Interest into America, as men of unsetled brains, wandering minds, void of Solidity and Gravity, &c. These are unchristian Censures. Let such consider, what a Country England it self had now been, if their Ancestors had not Plantation Principles. If their brains had not been thus unsettled, these grave men had not such pleasant and profitable Settlements as they have.

The characteristics that Crusoe recognizes in himself are exactly those "Plantation Principles" that are required by the successful colonist: "unsetled brains, wandering minds." Loddington argues that the best colonists are those who, like Crusoe, had "considerable Estates, Trades or Employments" in England, and yet "over all these and many more delightful and comfortable Enjoyments, are carried forth with an resistable Zeal to Plant."5

A wide variety of Englishmen like Crusoe were compelled to wander, attracted, as Crusoe's father put it, by the lure of adventure and enterprise. They were called by the "Zeal to Plant."6 The same segment of English society that initiated the colonies in Massachusetts also exercised plantation principles in the establishment of a West Indian colony on Providence Island, a puritan "errand" into the Caribbean wilderness. Crusoe's fellow English dissenters learned that in the West Indian plantation colonies "far from being antithetical, economic individualism and religious fervour were mutually


6 A good survey of the migration to the West Indies in this period can be found in Carl and Roberta Bridenbaugh, _No Peace Beyond the Line: The English in the Caribbean 1624-1690_ (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972) 9-34.
supportive." In its short existence between 1630 and 1641, the puritan colonists on this Western Caribbean island initiated a comprehensive range of commercial economic projects, from silver mining to the cultivation of tobacco and cotton, economic projects undertaken with the labour of African slaves. One of the key figures in the construction of the Providence Island colony was Maurice Thompson, "arguably the most significant colonial merchant of the early seventeenth-century." Thompson was born in 1604 to a minor gentry family in Hertfordshire. Employed as a ship's apprentice, he arrived in the New World for the first time in Virginia at the young age of thirteen. At the time of his death in 1676, Thompson had commercial connections and investments in every corner of the English Atlantic world and he owned property in England, Ireland, Virginia, and on Barbados and St. Christophers. Thompson shared Crusoe's wandering spirit and aspiring thoughts, possessing an expansive economic ambition that would "bestride the world."

In 1626, Thompson's ship, the Plough, sailed to the Caribbean island of St. Christophers for the purpose of establishing a colonial plantation on land he had managed to obtain from the island colony's founder and governor, Thomas Warner. The cargo of the Plough contained the necessary supplies for colonial settlement -- clothing, food, and tools -- in addition to sixty slaves. Thompson had assembled the elements necessary for a successful colonial plantation: land, capital, and labour. A year after he landed in the Caribbean with his tools and his slaves, Thompson shipped a cargo of almost ten

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8Paul G. E. Clemens, "The World of Maurice Thomson," Reviews in American History 21 (1993): 575. (There are two spellings for Thompson's name.)

thousand pounds of tobacco to Southampton. After this success, Thompson's planting work took him around the Caribbean, from St. Christophers to Providence Island, where he supplied the Puritan colonists with provisions and slaves, and to Barbados where he was among the first West Indian planters to cultivate sugar.\footnote{Richard B. Sheridan, \textit{Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775} (1974; Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1994) 88-90.}

Cary Helyar was, like Crusoe, the younger son, "a man of educated tastes, inherited self-confidence, and very limited means." His career resembles Crusoe's in a number of ways. He was drawn initially to Atlantic commerce and eventually to America in 1669 by the "prevalent belief that here was as likely place as any for a man of little capital to rise to wealth."\footnote{J. Harry Bennett, "Cary Helyar, Merchant and Planter of Seventeenth-Century Jamaica," \textit{William and Mary Quarterly}, 3rd. ser. 26 (1969): 54-55.} Like Crusoe in Brazil, Helyar's life in Jamaica combined plantation work with a commercial venture in slave-importation, attempting to satisfy an acute need for labour that developed as Jamaica's planters began the transition from diverse agricultural activities to sugar production. Like Crusoe, Helyar left a detailed account of the slow construction of his plantation, in letter rather than journal form. He described how year after year he cleared and cultivated more and more land on his way from subsistence to commercial farming. At first he was concerned to secure a source of food - "2 or 3 acres must bee fallen for provision to live on and [for] stock." When he had the necessary tools and slave labour he planted cash crops "so that in 7 yeares time it will produce a hopefull busines."\footnote{Quoted in Bennett, "Cary Helyar, Merchant and Planter of Seventeenth-Century Jamaica," 60.} With each planting season, the returns from Helyar's plantation work increased. A crop of ginger was succeeded by tobacco, cacao and, finally, he planted sugar, the most lucrative plantation product. Unsettled in his English life...
and at odds with his father, Thomas Verney, second son of Sir Edmund Verney, travelled to Barbados in 1634 on the Merchant's Hope in order to do his planting work. In a 1638 letter to his father, Verney described the process of constructing his Barbados plantation for the commercial cultivation of tobacco, cotton and indigo. "I have obtained one hundred acres of land," he reported, and predicted confidently that "I make noe question but (by the grace of God) to rais my fortunes in a few yeares." To fulfill this ambitious prediction, Verney required labour and capital, and he turned to his father for both, appending a lengthy invoice to his letter, an "inventory of such necessities as are usefull for mee in this countrey." Primarily he needed labour: "twenty able men, whereof two to be carpenters, two sa[wy]ers, a weaver that can weave diaper, and the other a taylor." Of the twenty men he requested, six were intended for work in the trades necessary to support the construction and provisioning of a plantation and the remaining fourteen would be put to work in the fields. In addition, Verney requests supplies for his workforce and tools and hardware for construction and farming -- axes, hoes, and spades in particular. Finally, Verney demands "[f]our bolts of canvas to send cotton home in," an indication of the planter's commercial aspirations.13

Robinson Crusoe's experience in Brazil was similar to those of Thompson, Helyar, and Verney on their West Indian plantations. Like his contemporaries, Crusoe needed capital, land, and labour in order to establish his Brazilian plantation. The Portuguese sea captain provided Crusoe with capital, purchasing the Englishman's slave, Xury, and his meagre cargo of animal hides, bottles, and guns for a generous sum. After arriving in Bahia, Crusoe lived with an established planter, learning Brazil's advanced techniques for sugar

production in order to put them into practice when he had secured his own property. The _ingenio_ that Crusoe's planter owned was a mill devised for extracting juice from the sugar canes, what Richard Ligon, in his 1657 history of Barbados, called the "Primum Mobile" of the plantation (Fig. 3.2). Eventually, Crusoe "purchased as much land that was uncured as my money would reach, and formed a plan for my plantation and settlement" (55). In the early stages of his planting work, Crusoe, like Helyar, concentrated on clearing land and growing food for survival: he "rather planted for food than anything else" (55). In his third year he was sufficiently established to grow tobacco, and then he cleared "a large piece of ground ready for planting canes in the year to come" (55). To assist his work he sent to England for the equipment he needed, the "tools, iron-work, and utensils necessary for my plantation." (57).

Crusoe experienced "great success" on his plantation, producing in one year 50 rolls of tobacco of over a hundredweight each. This lucrative plantation work was partly enabled by the additional labour power he had acquired. Cultivating tobacco or sugar on a scale significant enough to be profitable required additional labour and the appropriate tools and supplies. Crusoe had arranged for the transportation of an English servant, bonded to him for six years service. Later, Crusoe was able to purchase a much coveted African slave and he also managed to contract a second European servant. Nonetheless, like his fellow-planters, Crusoe longed for even more labour power to maximize the potential of the land he possessed, and to begin sugar production in a meaningful way. This need for labour caused Crusoe to bemoan his earlier decision to sell Xury: "now I found more than before, I had done wrong in parting with my boy Xury" (55).

Crusoe's desire for more labour power was a constant colonial refrain. The letters of Christopher Jeaffreson, a planter in St. Christophers in the 1670s, are regularly

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14Richard Ligon, _A True & Exact History Of the Island of Barbados_, 2nd ed. (1673) 56.
The sugar ingenio from Richard Ligon's A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados, 2nd ed. (1673)
punctuated by calls for more hands. Jeaffreson immigrated to the West Indies in 1676 to assume control of his father's plantation, one of the earliest on the island. He found his plantation, and the island generally, still in the early stages of colonial development. In May 1677, he wrote home requesting English servants: "if any laborious and industrious men would transporte themselves, I should gladly receive them." In 1681 Jeaffreson was still pleading for more labour power: "[i]t is long since my request to you to sende me some white servants, especially a mason, carpenter, taylor, smith cooper, or any handy craftsmen...for any sorte of men, and one or two women if they can be found." Tradesmen like carpenters and tailors were eagerly sought on plantation colonies. When Crusoe returned from England to his island colony, these were precisely the kinds of servants he transported for his fledgling colony. In 1682, Jeaffreson wrote to his English agent and requested slave labour, and suggested that he and his London commercial agent should arrange for a shipment of Africans, "a parcel of negroes," which he would use on his plantation. If there was a surplus, he would sell them for a profit to his neighbours.

Crusoe and his Brazilian associates also looked to slave-trading to satisfy their labour needs. In his conversations with fellow planters and with the merchants of St. Salvadore, Crusoe related his experience of the Guinea trade, "how easy it was to purchase upon the coast, for trifles, such as beads, toys, knives, scissars, hatchets, bits of glass, and the like, not only gold dust, Guinea grains, elephants teeth, &c., but negroes, for the service of the Brasils, in great number" (59). Crusoe and company agreed to invest in a scheme to

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17Letter from Christopher Jeaffreson in *A Young Squire of the Seventeenth Century*, II, 8. In an earlier letter he had proposed importing 900 slaves, many more than he could have possibly used on his own plantation.
import slaves for their plantations, circumventing official sources of supply. Crusoe arranged to leave his plantation in trust while he ventured to West Africa to purchase slaves. In exchange for the effort of his voyage and knowledge of African commerce, Crusoe was to receive an equal portion of the human cargo without investing any of his own capital. Of course Crusoe never reached Africa. He was shipwrecked on an island in the gulf of the Orinoco River where he began his plantation work once again, albeit in very different circumstances.

Despite the doubts he expressed about his wandering character, Crusoe was a successful Atlanticist precisely because of that trait. Crusoe chose to pursue "aspiring thoughts" (a phrase he absorbed from his father) at the expense of his family's middle station, waiving the opportunity for a safe career in law for the dangers and possibilities of the sea (40). He fulfilled his maritime urges by joining a trading voyage to West Africa where he converted £40 of "toys and trifles" into gold worth £300 on the London market, an impressive return not inconsistent with his characterization of the lucrative Guinea trade (39-40). Crusoe later escaped Barbary captivity to become a colonist, slave-master, and hopeful slave-trader in Brazil.18 As his father suggested, Crusoe's Atlantic adventures did lead to his "rise by enterprize." In Brazil, Crusoe established a colonial plantation that expanded from subsistence farming to tobacco cultivation and eventually to sugar production, an enterprise that would rise to be worth an astonishing £1000 annually (280). An income of that size would have elevated Crusoe far above the middle station that he quit and well into the highest ranks of English society. According to Gregory King's 1688 demographic survey of England, only 1000 families enjoyed the kind of

18Paul Baepler has shown how the Barbary captivity narrative was used by Americans as a means of justifying their own involvement in the slave trade and slave holding in "The Barbary Captivity Narrative in Early America," Early American Literature 30 (1995): 95-120.
income Crusoe earned from his Brazilian plantation. An English lawyer, by comparison, could expect an annual income of only £140.\(^{19}\)

In addition to his African commerce and his Brazilian plantation, Crusoe established a small West Indian colony, transforming an accident into a significant achievement in the tradition of European Atlanticism. Through his own efforts and the subsequent labour power of slaves and European colonists, Crusoe constructed a plantation colony on his island in the gulf of the Orinoco River that showed all the signs of thriving. Crusoe was similar to many pioneering founders of American colonies, creating the opportunity for prosperity in the Caribbean wilderness, clearing the way for future generations of colonial planters. "These Robinson Crusoes," writes the historian Richard Pares of the founders of colonies, "were succeeded and absorbed by a massive migration of planters."\(^{20}\)

Beginning like similar West Indian colonies as a subsistence settlement, Crusonia was, when Crusoe finished his account of it in his *Farther Adventures*, on the verge of being transformed by the sugar revolution and becoming fully assimilated into the Atlantic world.

After sailing from Crusonia for the last time, having left his colony in good order, Crusoe returned to Brazil where he dispatched further colonists and slaves with provisions and supplies for planting as well as "materials for planting sugar-canes, with


some plants of canes" (II, 192). Assuming that this ship reached its destination with its cargo intact, Crusonia would have developed into a plantation colony much like the other English colonies in the Caribbean: St. Christophers, Barbados, Jamaica, and the rest. Crusoe did not record the profits realized from this commercial development as proprietor of the colony, although he did establish a system for collecting rents before leaving the island for the last time (II, 171). The wealth generated by sugar plantations on the other West Indian sugar islands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, even on small islands like Nevis, suggests that the profits earned from Crusonia might have even eclipsed those Crusoe collected from his Brazilian enterprise. In 1628, the first English planters went to Nevis, a tiny island of fifty square miles. After experimenting with tobacco, the planters converted to sugar production and by 1678 they exported over 1,500 tons of sugar annually to the eager markets of England and continental Europe.21

While remarkable, Crusoe's Atlantic achievement was by no means unique.22 James Drax experienced an even more vertiginous rise to colonial prosperity through his enterprising adventures. Drax's Atlantic career is comparable to that of Defoe's imagined planter at a number of points. Drax left behind his modest origins and sailed to Barbados in 1627 at the age of 25 with the very first English settlers. He went to America with only £300 and "from these £300 had built up a fortune so vast that it was only a question of how soon he would be able to go home to England and buy an estate of £10,000 a year."23 After his first year, he had cleared enough ground on his land to grow food to support himself and to cultivate a crop of tobacco for export. Drax turned his tobacco

21Bradenbaugh, No Peace Beyond the Line, 41, 295; Dunn, Sugar and Slaves, 202-203.

22Defoe was keenly aware of the careers of colonial planters, citing their successes as evidence of the fortunes to be made in the Atlantic. For a discussion see chapter 2 and Daniel Defoe, The Compleat English Gentleman, ed Karl D. Bülbring (1890) 261-263.

profits into labourers in order to expand and intensify his plantation. He contracted white servants and purchased Taino (Arawak) slaves imported from the Orinoco River region before eventually resorting to African slaves. Drax was one of the first colonists in Barbados to convert his plantation from tobacco to sugar cultivation, introducing the efficient industrial plantation techniques developed in Brazil to his plantation in Barbados and importing the island's first ingenio.24 During a period of residence in Brazil, Drax learned how to make sugar production profitable and translated that knowledge to the West Indies.

Gordon Lewis has observed that it was not "incidental that Defoe should have made the foundation of Crusoe's success his earlier venture as a slave-owner in Brazil, for it was from Brazil that many of the early Caribbean planters emigrated in order to establish the slave-based sugar economy in the islands."25 In significant ways, Crusoe's Atlantic career followed important historical patterns: from tobacco to sugar, from Brazil to the West Indies, from middling wealth to immense prosperity. The history of Crusonia repeated other important patterns: from wilderness to plantation, from subsistence agriculture to commerce. Plantation work and plantation principles -- an ensemble described by Philip Curtin as "the plantation complex" -- are at the centre of the historical patterns that Robinson Crusoe reformulates.26

In Ian Watt's famous description, Robinson Crusoe is classified as an example of homo


economicus, swept along in his travels and adventures by the external historical forces of incipient capitalism. The behaviour Crusoe exhibited, in the Atlantic and on his island, was expected of someone who internalized the characteristics of a society in transition to capitalism. While certainly he belongs to the epoch and class to which Watt assigns him, Crusoe has a much more specific identity as a colonial American planter, an Atlantic species of the genus *homo economicus*. Gordon Lewis has classified Crusoe in terms similar to Watt's, but with more precision. He argues that:

Defoe's book is better seen as a celebration of the heroic exploits of the *homo faber europeanus* in the New World, utilizing his European technology, in the form of goods and tools salvaged from his wrecked ship, to cultivate his island, once he had at hand a subordinate labor supply in the person of Man Friday; undertaking, that is to say, an economy of primitive capital accumulation.

What are the qualities of *homo faber europeanus* that enabled Crusoe to undertake the tasks that Lewis describes, to undertake plantation work? What plantation principles were required of Crusoe for possessing and cultivating a Caribbean island, controlling slaves, and governing a colony?

In a brilliant piece of historical synthesis, Jack Greene has identified mastery as the basic plantation principle, the central feature of the colonial mentality:

Mastery meant domination, rule, superiority, or preeminence. To master meant, first, to rule or govern or conquer or overpower. A master was a director or governor, an owner or proprietor "with the idea of governing," a lord or ruler, a chief or head, a "Possessor," "One uncontrouled," one who had servants.

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28 Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought*, 70. Although Lewis has confused some of the sequence of Crusonian history, he has captured its ideological nature quite effectively.

The planter exercised mastery over the environment, overcoming the difficulties of a strange or hostile climate to establish his plantation. He exercised mastery over Amerindians, inducing them to trade, waging wars of defence, dispossessing them of their land, and in some cases even eliminating them altogether. He exercised mastery within the plantation that he constructed, dominating the labour that he controlled as master of his servants and slaves. Greene offers Robinson Crusoe as an exemplary colonial master. Crusoe exercised mastery in all the ways identified by Greene in the construction of his colony on Crusonia. Mastery is the dominant trait of homo faber europeanus, the necessary complement to Crusoe's "aspiring thoughts" and wandering disposition.

Although most closely associated with the economy of colonial America, the plantation complex was a transatlantic importation and not a New World invention. The migration of the plantation anticipated Crusoe's route in the Atlantic, moving with the Spanish and Portuguese from Southern Europe and North Africa, westward across the ocean to Brazil and the Caribbean. The English pioneered their own variant of the plantation complex in Ireland in the sixteenth-century, using the first and most proximate English colony as a laboratory for the techniques of land acquisition, settlement, and labour exploitation. Appropriately, the technicians of the Irish colonial experiment were in the vanguard of expansion into America at the end of the sixteenth and into the seventeenth-century,

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30 Greene, Imperatives, Behaviors & Identities, 362.


providing the personnel, the techniques, and the texts for the colonial experiment in the New World. In the New World as in the Old, the plantation complex involved cultivating colonized land for agricultural commodities through the exploitation of mostly unfree labour: tobacco, indigo, cotton, and especially sugar.

The plantation complex was not merely an economic phenomenon but a cultural one that created unique social relations between European colonists, the Amerindians they encountered, and the Africans they imported. Richard Dunn has effectively described the context in which these social relations obtained:

Had the English pioneers been trying to escape from their acquisitive European culture, had they been craving for peace, simplicity, ease, and innocence, they might indeed have found paradise in the Indies. But the English were looking for El Dorado, not Eden. They had geared themselves for wealth, excitement, and violent combat, so they fought and played feverishly in the enervating heat, exploited the labor of white servants and black slaves, risked sudden death from mysterious diseases or the annihilation of their profits in smashing storms and buccaneering raids. The expectations the English brought with them and the physical conditions they encountered in the islands produced a hectic mode of life that had no counterpart at home or elsewhere in the English experience. This is


what it meant to live beyond the line.\textsuperscript{36}

It was in such circumstances that men like Crusoe risked adventure to rise through enterprise, initiating a unique physical and social environment created when English aspirations and experiences were brought to bear on American soil with the aid of slave labour.

In his \textit{Historical Account of the Rise and Growth of the West Indies Colonies} (1690), Defoe's friend Sir Dalby Thomas analyzed the elementary structure of the colonial plantation. In order to be profitable, a plantation, whether it produces tobacco, cotton, or sugar, demanded a particular combination of capital, land and labour. Thomas' model plantation produced sugar, and consisted of one hundred acres of West Indian land and a number of Amerindian or, more frequently, African slaves employed in a range of difficult tasks. Sugar, by 1690 the most important West Indian commodity, required a significant investment in tools and heavy equipment: implements for planting and harvesting, as well as mills, boilers, and stoves for refining the cane. On the plantation property of Thomas' model, twenty acres of land had to be devoted to pasture and food production and to a nursery for the sugar canes, and the remaining eighty acres were divided into two fields constantly rotating crops of sugar cane.

Eighty acres of sugar cane, Thomas claimed, required a labour-force of sixty men, including slaves, servants and waged employees: "80. Acres is just Employment for the continuall Labour of 50 Blacks and 7 Whites in the field, and for three others for overseeing, Carting and Curing the Plantations." The slaves were to be employed in preparing the soil, spreading manure and planting in the wet season and in cutting, carrying, grinding and boiling the harvested canes during the wet season. The white servants supervised this labour under the management of the waged overseer. Thomas

\textsuperscript{36}Dunn, \textit{Sugar and Slaves}, 45.
calculated that:

A plantation of 100 Acres well stockt and provided as aforesaid, and manag'd to its full height, without those accidentall Casualties ... may probably produce annually 80 hogsheads of Sugar of 1000 pound weight each hogshead, that is 2000 pound weight of Muscovado Sugar from each Acre, and Mellasses of 20 hogsheads of 700 pound weight each hogshead.

Against the value of this sugar yield, the planter had to deduct the cost of his operations. According to Thomas' account, the slaves were accrued as capital expenses alongside the livestock, tools, and the land. The balance was a good profit for the planter.37

Thomas' model plantation was a mature one, having developed through the stages of settlement and subsistence farming to lucrative sugar production. He based his plantation model on Barbados, the first colony in the West Indies to be transformed by the sugar revolution, and almost at its economic apex at the time that Thomas' book was published.38 By the early eighteenth-century, Barbados was, in Defoe's estimation, "a Prodigy of Improvement," an island on which the "whole Surface is employ'd in Planting for Trade."39 The correspondence of the Winthrop family of Massachusetts relating to Barbados records the period of the island's prodigious improvement up to the stage of development that Thomas encountered in 1690.

Henry Winthrop arrived on Barbados in 1627, among the first English planters to settle on the island. In a letter to his uncle he wrote that,

37 Sir Dalby Thomas, An Historical Account of the Rise and Growth of the West Indies Colonies (1690) 14-18.


I do intend god willinge to stay here on this Iland called the Barbathe in the west indyes and here I and my servants to joine in plantinge of tobaccoe which 3 yeres I hope will be very profitable to me.

Winthrop recognized that in order to be a successful tobacco planter, he required more labour than the few servants he brought with him. He declared that he intended every year to bring two or three new servants to the island, bound to him for a period of three years and "there allwayes to have a plantatione of servants for the Iland." He observed that other Barbados settlers had discovered different solutions to the plantation labour problem, reporting the presence of "50 slaues of Indyenes and blacks" on the island. 40

Within months of his first letter, Winthrop put his plan into motion, asking his father to arrange to have the indentured servants he requested contracted and sent to him along with provisions and tools for himself and his plantation work force. He promised his father that "within this halfe yeere I hope to send you 500 or a Thousand wayght of tobackow." The Winthrop's maintained their interest in the Barbados as the island colony developed. In 1645, Sir George Downing wrote to John Winthrop that "if you go to Barbados you shall see a flourishing Iland." The labour problem that Henry encountered in 1627 appears to have been permanently solved, the mixture of Indian and African labour having been replaced by a labour force comprised almost exclusively of African slaves. "I believe," Downing reported, "they have brought this year no less than a thousand Negroes; and the more they buie the better they are able to buye, for in a year and a halfe they will earne (with gods blessing) as much as they cost." James Parker described Barbados' flourishing economy to John Winthrop the following year: "it is now and is like to be very wealthy, full of sugar, cotton, indigo, and ginger, some have made

this yeare off one acre off canes about 4000 weight of sugar."\textsuperscript{41}

Barbados during the period of its transformation was examined in detail by Richard Ligon, author of the first and most famous of colonial histories, \textit{A True & Exact History Of the Island of Barbadoes}.\textsuperscript{42} Ligon arrived on Barbados in 1647, the year that sugar production began to be cultivated, as on Crusonia, from canes imported from Brazil. In a few decades, Barbados developed from an uninhabited island in the Eastern Caribbean into a productive capitalist machine, a pattern repeated wherever the plantation complex was installed:

Some of the most industrious men, having gotten Plants from \textit{Pernambock}, a place in \textit{Brasil}, and made tryal of them at the \textit{Barbadoes}; and finding them to grow, they planted more and more, as they grew and multiplyed on the place, till they had such a considerable number, as they were worth the while to set up a very small Ingenio, and so make tryal what Sugar could be made upon that Soyl.\textsuperscript{43}

Ligon observed that in a period of just a few years, land in Barbados multiplied in value, so that a 250-acre plantation originally purchased for £200 was sold for £7,000 after the introduction of sugar. The map that accompanied his history shows a leeward shore cluttered with planters hoping to profit from the sugar revolution (Fig. 3.3).

Ligon's history includes a census of the island's population, and a discussion of the status of Europeans, Amerindians, and Africans. Barbados was "divided into three sorts

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{41}Henry Winthrop to John Winthrop, 15 October, 1627, in \textit{Winthrop Papers}, I, 361-362; Sir George Downing to John Winthrop, 26 August, 1645, in \textit{Winthrop Papers}, V, 43; James Parker to John Winthrop, 26 April, 1646, in \textit{Winthrop Papers}, V, 83.


\end{footnotesize}
Fig. 3.3 Map of Barbados from Richard Ligon's *A True & Exact History Of the Island of Barbados*, 2nd ed. (1673)
of men, viz. Masters, Servants and Slaves." While servants were contracted for a limited time period, slaves were bound to their masters in perpetuity: the children of slaves, and their children after them, become the chattel of the master. When they arrived on the island they were brought to market where, Ligon writes, the masters "choose them as they do Horses in a Market; the strongest, youthfûllest, and most beautiful, yield the greatest prices." The Amerindians on the island, though few, had been transported from Guiana. They were all either slaves or servants, and if they were servants were conventionally bonded to their masters for life, and therefore de facto slaves. All unfree labourers on Barbados' plantations, Amerindian and African, lived in severely harsh conditions and were viciously exploited by their masters and overseers who lived, according to Ligon, in some luxury. As for the masters of Barbados, Ligon writes that they "are men of great abilities and parts, otherwise they could not go through, with such works as they undertake; the managing of one of their Plantations, being a work of such a latitude, as will require a very good head-peece, to put in order and continue it so." These plantation masters, another contemporary observer noted, had an enormous amount of power: they were "like little Sovereigns in their Plantations."

John Locke wrote a theoretical blueprint for the plantation complex, The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina, published in 1669. The constitutional articles were written specifically for the new colony of South Carolina, granted a royal charter just a few years earlier, but they were based in part on the model of Barbados from which planters were drawn to begin the new mainland settlement. Locke himself was interested and involved

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44Ligon, A True & Exact History Of the Island of Barbados, 43, 46.

45Ligon, A True & Exact History Of the Island of Barbados, 55.

46Quoted in Greene, Imperatives, Behaviours & Identities, 31.

47A close relation between Barbados and South Carolina existed throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. See Greene, Imperatives, Behaviors &
in both the mainland colony and the West Indies. He was, in fact, an extremely versatile Atlanticist. Locke served as the unofficial secretary to the proprietors of South Carolina, aiding his patron Lord Ashley and the seven other Englishmen who had been granted ownership and control of the colony in 1663. In his role as unofficial secretary, Locke corresponded with the planters, and it was in his capacity as unofficial secretary that he wrote the constitutional document. Locke also held two official Atlantic offices. He became Secretary to the Council of Trade and Plantations in 1673, performing for all the American colonies the role he performed unofficially for South Carolina, corresponding with all the colonial planters and addressing their concerns. As one writer describes it, a great deal of the Council's energies, and therefore Locke's, were devoted to "expediting the triangular trade of slaves, sugar, and manufactured goods." The Board of Trade, on which Locke sat as a paid Commissioner for four years after 1696, was involved primarily in matters of colonial government and policy, matters in which Locke played an active role into the next century.

Locke's interest in the English Atlantic world was also commercial. He made investments in the Royal African Company and in the colonial venture to develop the

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48 In addition to the South Carolina constitution, and the Two Treatises of Government, Locke wrote an introduction for an edition of Churchill's collection of voyages, demonstrating a wide knowledge of the history of travel and settlement in America and Africa.


Bahama Islands. Locke was one of the first investors in the slave-trading enterprise, contributing £600 in 1672, the year the company was formed. The investment was made on the advice of Ashley, one of the company's largest investors. Ashley, in addition to his South Carolina proprietorship, also owned a plantation in Barbados and was part-owner of a slaving ship, the *Rose*. Locke invested in the company of Bahamas Adventurers, a company formed in 1672 by Ashley and some of the other South Carolina proprietors who had been granted control of the islands by the king. Locke was one of eleven investors, risking at least £200 in the enterprise intended to stimulate plantation work in the newly acquired colony.\(^5\) There is also some evidence that Locke may have considered moving to the islands himself to take on a more active colonial role as a plantation master, putting his theory into practice.\(^5\)

The *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* were an elaborate colonial design, establishing the principles governing the plantation complex, including the laws relating to property and slavery in the new colony. The constitution of South Carolina was admired by Defoe, who wrote in 1705 that South Carolina stood "upon some better Foundations...than the rest of the English Colonies seem'd to stand upon."\(^5\) Locke's constitution granted the South Carolina proprietors extraordinary authority. It was based on the obscure Palatine model, a quasi-feudal arrangement that conferred enormous powers on the colony's owners, giving them authority over property and people.\(^5\) The

\(^{51}\) Glausser, "Three Approaches to Locke and the Slave Trade," 200-201.


plantation work itself would be undertaken by tenants producing for the market from which the landowners intended to collect rent. The landowners, their deputies, and their officers empowered themselves to exercise control over the planters to which they rented: not only did they control and benefit from the land they colonized and owned, they had the right to establish and operate courts to govern it. The constitution gave the subordinate colonists similar power within the realm of their own plantations. The cumulative effect was to constitute plantation authorities of an almost absolute character, and, indeed, the planters' power over their slaves was explicitly absolute. In the constitution it was stipulated that "[e]very freeman of Carolina shall have absolute power and authority over his negro slaves, of what opinion and religion soever."55

The Atlantic world of commerce, colonization, and slavery also informed Locke's Two Treatises of Government. The importance of the New World in Locke's Two Treatises has led one historian to describe him as "a great philosopher of the developing world system."56 Locke's Second Treatise sets out to provide a theoretical justification for private property through a specifically colonial example: the seizure and settlement of American land without the consent of the original Americans. As well as defending the institution of private property generally, Locke's discussion legitimates the practice of America's first English colonists. "As the English began to settle and plant," writes James Tully, "they began to argue that the Amerindians neither occupied and used in the appropriate manner the lands they claimed, nor did they live in political or civil societies. Hence, most of the land was vacant, no consent was required for its use."57


colonists, that is, were justified in their seizure of America because Amerindians could not make a recognizably legitimate claim to own the land they inhabited. Locke's argument, which draws on a century of colonial practice, was subsequently employed to defend colonization as the frontiers of America expanded and conflict with Amerindians intensified.

It was Locke's intention to demonstrate how one might legitimately claim a portion of America as private property. "In the beginning," wrote Locke, "all the World was America." Anybody may own some of the products of the New World, which are designated common property, provided that they take them for themselves. For example, the "Fruit, or Venison, which nourishes the wild Indian" belongs to him since he has gathered the fruit and hunted the deer himself (287). He has, in Locke's terms, mixed his hunting and gathering labour with America's common property and made it his own. It is this labour that "put a distinction between them and common" property (288). It was not simply the natural products of the land but the land itself that was Locke's principle concern, but he based the legitimacy of real property on this hunting and gathering model. By mixing labour with common land, a person becomes its legitimate owner: "As much land as a Man Tills, Plants, Improves, Cultivates, and can use the Product of, so much is his Property" (290). Just as Locke's "wild Indian" could claim a deer from the forest as his property because he has hunted it, so an Englishman could claim that forest and make it his property because he had tilled, planted, improved, and cultivated it.

The key to Locke's argument as it pertains to American colonization is the nature of the work undertaken in the act of possession. Only particular kinds of labour could be mixed with common land in order to convert it into private property. The list of suitable forms

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of labour that Locke provides was drawn, as Neal Wood has demonstrated, from the discourse and practice of seventeenth-century agrarian capitalism. The man Locke posits in his American example was not merely subsisting, he was producing for the market according to the standards of contemporary English agriculture. These specific forms of labour distinguish Europeans from Amerindians in their use of American land. Only English forms of agriculture were recognized as productive, an act, according to Francis Jennings, of willful blindness to the experience of English colonists in America with Amerindian cultures and economies.

While the land of America was given by God to both Europeans and Amerindians in common, Locke argued that "it cannot be supposed he meant it should always remain common and uncultivated" (291). There was an obligation, in other words, to undertake plantation work. The more efficient and productive the cultivation, the more legitimate the claim to property: "an Acre of Land planted with Tobacco, or Sugar, sown with Wheat or Barley" is better cultivated than an acre "without any Husbandry upon it" (296). Land in America that "hath no improvement of Pasturage, Tillage, or Planting, is called, as indeed it is, wast" (297). Customary forms of agriculture, as practiced by Amerindians, did not qualify as productive forms of labour and so the land encountered by the colonists was declared waste and transformed by appropriation and capitalist colonial planting into private English property. The colonists attempted, E.P. Thompson writes, "to reify and translate into terms of palpable property ownership the custom and

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usages of whole peoples which had inherited communal grids of a totally different character.\textsuperscript{61}

According to Locke, Amerindians were "rich in Land" but they had failed to mix the appropriate labour with the land to make it productive. Locke calculated that they were only one per cent as productive as Europeans, a ratio he used for rhetorical effect on more than one occasion. Amerindians had "a fruitful Soil, apt to produce in abundance, what might serve for food, rayement, and delight; yet for want of improving it by labour, have not one hundredth part of the Conveniences we enjoy" (297). Amerindians had, by their neglect, rendered the land they inhabited waste: "I aske whether in the wild woods and uncultivated wast of America left to Nature, without any improvement, tillage, or husbandry, a thousand acres will yield the needy and the wretched inhabitants as many conveniencies of life as ten acres of equally fertile land doe in Devonshire where they are well cultivated?" (294). Such unimproved waste could be legitimately claimed by colonists as their property if they cultivate it productively. "Aware that Indians in the New World could claim property through the right of occupancy," Barbara Arneil has remarked, "Locke developed a theory of agrarian labour which would, through the right of agricultural labour, specifically exclude the American Indian from claiming land."\textsuperscript{62}

Of course, Locke's landowner did not need to perform the necessary labour himself, he could use the labour of others to acquire and improve his land: "the Turfs my Servant has cut; and the Ore I have digg'd in any place where I have a right to them in common with others, become my Property" (289). Even though the labour mixed with the land was


executed by a servant, it belonged to the man who controled that servant. The same landowner could also legitimately use slave labour to acquire and cultivate colonial property since the slave was also his legitimate property. In his chapters "Of Slavery" and "Of Conquest" in the Second Treatise, Locke describes some of the ways that slaves could be legitimately obtained, an argument that is ipso facto a justification for the institution of slavery in general. Locke famously denounced slavery in the first chapter of the First Treatise of Government, describing it as "so vile and miserable an Estate of Man, and so directly opposite to the generous Temper and Courage of our Nation; that 'tis hardly to be conceived, that an Englishman, much less a Gentleman, should plead for't" (141). The slavery of this sentence, however, was the slavery of Englishmen by an absolute monarch, and the gentleman in question is Sir Robert Filmer, the theorist of absolutism against whom the First Treatise is largely directed. For Locke, slavery is an unacceptable condition for Englishmen, but not for Africans or Amerindians who, in his estimation, were naturally inferior to Europeans and so deserving of the condition of slavery. Indeed, the patriarchal power to which the Englishman must not be subject was precisely the kind of power that a master could legitimately exercise over his African or Amerindian slave.

Slavery was principally justified for Locke as a consequence of war or conquest. Slavery, he writes, "is nothing else, but the State of War continued, between a lawful Conqueror, and a Captive" (284). A prisoner was captured or rescued in war or conquest and in exchange for his life was enslaved: the conqueror becomes master. For the English Atlantic imagination, it was not difficult to argue that Englishmen were constantly at war with Africans or Amerindians; the resistance encountered by slavers and planters was sufficient evidence for that argument when other philosophical considerations caused equivocation. A purchased slave, it was assumed, had been legitimately captured prior to
being sold. The power of the master over the slave was the power of life and death, it was absolute and arbitrary, as it is in the article on slavery in The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina where "[e]very freeman of Carolina shall have absolute power and authority over his negro slaves." In the Second Treatise Locke reiterates this in principle, stating that slaves "are by the Right of Nature subjected to the Absolute Dominion and Arbitrary Power of their Masters" (322). The definition of slavery that Locke offers in the Second Treatise is an American-inflected reworking of the Roman law of slavery. It is also quite similar to the laws on slavery and freedom adopted in other English Atlantic colonies and quite like those slave laws that were drawn up for South Carolina during the time that Locke served as a colonial administrator.

In the First Treatise Locke provides a sense of how he thought the mastery of a colonial planter over land and slaves was exercised in practice. The West Indian planter, in his example, had power over his slaves comparable to that of an absolute patriarch. He had that power by right of conquest or, more usually, by having purchased slaves that had been legitimately captured and transported by the commercial slave-trade. In Locke's hypothetical plantation complex, the master's authority was almost unlimited. He calls them "little Kings in the West-Indies" (254). Not only did the master have the power to

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63 For the theoretical arguments used to justify slavery in the Americas see Herbert S. Klein, African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean (new York: Oxford University Press, 1986) 1-20. I will return to this issue later in this chapter.

64 Locke, The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina, 230.

65 Glauser, "Three Approaches to Locke and the Slave Trade," 206. See David Brion Davis, The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture (1966; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) 118-121. Davis properly identifies the two different arguments Locke uses to justify slavery: natural inferiority and just war. Locke does not seem to systematically reconcile these two distinct positions. Like many Atlantic writers, he used whatever rhetorical weapons were at hand. See, also, James Farr, "So Vile and Miserable an estate: The Problem of Slavery in Locke's Political Thought," Political Theory 14 (1986): 263-289.
govern his slaves absolutely, he had the power to wage war against the islands Amerindians, "to seek Reparation upon them for any Injury received from them" (237). The planter, then, had the power to seize territory from the Amerindian to improve, cultivate, and protect it, and he had comparable power over his plantation subjects, the authority to purchase slaves and to rule them absolutely, and to capture Amerindian slaves in war and to rule them absolutely.

The plantation complex that Locke imagined in his *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* and described allusively in the *Two Treatises of Government* was a theoretical one. The South Carolina constitution is a statement of desires and intentions, and the *Two Treatises* is a statement of general principles. Nonetheless, Locke's colonial writing does tell us something about the historical plantation complex in Carolina and elsewhere in America. As Robin Blackburn has observed, Locke's writing captured some of the "felt experience" of colonists. Indeed, Locke's South Carolina constitution incorporated the existing slave practices of that colony, laws that were themselves the result of the planter's experience. In practice, as Locke would have known, both Africans and Amerindians were enslaved by the colonists and controlled on their plantations in the manner he describes. The first Amerindian slaves were used in South Carolina soon after colonization and the practice did not cease until the 1740s despite official efforts to control it. In fact, trading Amerindian slaves to the planters in Barbados was an important commercial activity for the first colonists as they attempted to earn an income while their plantations continued to develop.

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67 M. Eugene Sirmans, "The Legal Status of the Slave in South Carolina, 1670-1740," *Journal of Southern History* 28 (1962): 463-467. Laws governing slavery in the West Indies tended to follow and codify practices that were established outside the law.

In 1712, John Norris, a planter in South Carolina, wrote a promotional pamphlet encouraging his English readers to join him in the cultivation of the colony's fecund rice plantations. The South Carolina colony that Norris described is different from the one Locke constructed in his writing but there are echoes in Norris' description of the theoretical model. His pamphlet was written in the form of a dialogue between a planter and an English farmer considering a colonial life. The Englishman had a number of questions about slavery: "Who are these Slaves you speak of? And why are they so call'd? What Slavery are they oblig'd unto? And in what Manner are they kept by their Masters?" Slaves, the planter replies, were "bought to Employ them in any sort of Labour, either in Town or Country, in what ever their Masters, or Owners, have occasion to be done." There were, he reported, two sources of slaves. They were "bought by the Inhabitants, from the Merchants Trading to Guinea" or they were Amerindians. Both African and Amerindian slaves "are never Free-Men, or Women, during their Life, nor their Children after them, who are under the same Circumstances of Servitude as their Parents are, during their Lives also." Norris was quite specific about the extent of the slaves' subjugation: "[w]hen these People are thus bought, their Masters, or Owners, have then as good a Right and Title to them, during their Lives, as a Man has here to a Horse or Ox." The planters' authority over their slaves was as great as that prescribed by Locke in the South Carolina constitution and justified in the Two Treatises: it was absolute.


70[Norris], Profitable Advice for Rich and Poor, 87.
An earlier promotional pamphlet, published in 1710 by Thomas Nairne, described the conditions of property ownership and agricultural improvement in South Carolina. The original charter for the colony had given the proprietors the authority to grant land, to distribute Amerindian territory into individual pieces of colonial property for sale or rent to planters. Nairne writes that when a planter wanted to "take up Land, (as we term it) he first views the Place, and satisfies himself that no other has any Property there," a survey that, presumably, searches for other Englishmen, assuming that Amerindians pose no legal threat to their possession.\(^7\) Nairne's definition of the South Carolina planter is comparable to Locke's discussion of the colonist in the Second Treatise. "A Planter," he wrote, "is a common Denomination for those who live by their own and their Servants['] Industry, improve their Estates, follow Tillage or Grasing, and make those Commodities which are transported from hence to Great Britain, and other Places."\(^2\) Nairne included instructions for establishing a plantation that trace a course of development from an initial state of waste through stages of land clearance, house construction, and the cultivation of commercial crops. Through his labour, or that of his servants and slaves, a planter transformed vacant unowned land into a productive plantation by way of improving agricultural techniques and slave labour, satisfying the requirements for property ownership established in Locke's Second Treatise.

These documents indicate to the audience of potential planters what was ideally required of potential colonists and what they could expect of plantation life in South Carolina. However, since they were written by active planters, the pamphlets also show how colonists would be affected by the experience of plantation work, the subjective dimensions of the plantation complex. The investigation of the planter's mentality is

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\(^7\)Thomas Nairne, A Letter from South Carolina (1710), in Selling a New World, 61.

\(^2\)Nairne, A Letter from South Carolina, 59.
limited, Jack Greene contends, because "firsthand testimony on the rationale behind the vast transatlantic migration that issued out of Britain and Europe beginning with the early seventeenth-century is largely limited to scattered letters and other personal accounts from individual emigrants." The kinds of texts that Greene identifies in the English Atlantic archive as valuable sources for insight into the planter's mentality -- firsthand testimony -- resemble and resonate with *Robinson Crusoe*. Defoe's invented planter shares important features of the colonial planter's mentality with figures like Norris and Nairne. The texts of Robinson Crusoe include, like these documents, firsthand testimony of the colonial planter's experience.

Although Robinson Crusoe first becomes a colonial planter in Brazil, a process he describes in a condensed narrative in his *Adventures*, it is on Crusonia that the minutia of the plantation complex is represented, magnified by the unusual conditions of Crusonia and the reflective, autobiographical form of his writing. On his island in the gulf of the Orinoco River, Crusoe created a colonial plantation not unlike that described from experience in the promotional pamphlets of Norris and Nairne and outlined and defended in theory by Locke. Using some of the same literary techniques as writers like Norris and Nairne, as well as some of the literary techniques of Locke, Defoe projects a pristine colonial situation on Crusonia and represents the construction of the plantation complex *ab origine* in journal form. Like the pamphlets of Norris and Nairne, Crusoe's *Adventures* and *Farther Adventures* represent the experience of plantation work. Like Locke's theoretical writing, Crusoe's texts attempted to legitimate the foundations of the plantation complex he constructed, absorbing theoretical arguments into the texts' narrative form. The account of Crusonia narrates, explains, and justifies colonial mastery.

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The story of Crusonia is, in this sense, a literary redaction of the historical experience of the planter and a defence of plantation principles.

On Crusonia, Defoe's Atlantic protagonist became one of Locke's "little Kings in the West-Indies," one of the "little Sovereigns" observed on the island of Barbados in the late seventeenth-century. At an important moment in the Adventures, Crusoe described himself using just this kind of language. After spending ten months on the island, having invested time and energy in establishing a residence, Crusoe made a tour of his surroundings. He surveyed Crusonia's geography and made a catalogue of the fruits, vegetables, and timber he encountered -- an account of useful and merchantable commodities similar to those made by other Atlantic writers. Crusoe's catalogue includes the important commodities of tobacco and sugar (112-113). At a crucial point in his tour, Crusoe entered a clearing in which he is offered a wide prospect of the island:

At the end of this march I came to an opening, where the country seemed to descend to the west, and a little spring of fresh water, which issued out of the side of the hill by me, run the other way, that is, due east; and the country appeared so fresh, so green, so flourishing, every thing being in a constant verdure or flourish of spring, that it looked like a planted garden. (113)

Crusoe's imagination transformed the wild island valley scene into a landscape that he can comprehend. He saw the island as an experienced colonial planter would, as a cultivated, "planted garden," that contains, among other things, tobacco and sugar.74 While it might have been unlikely for Crusoe to have discovered these valuable crops growing wild on the island, he could certainly imagine them being cultivated in the future, for Crusoe's imagination was that of the experienced colonial planter. The memory of his experience in Brazil survived the shipwreck intact.

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After gaining an elevated perspective of the territory he has surveyed, Crusoe claimed the island as his possession. He climbed the side of the valley and observed "with a secret kind of pleasure" that the Crusonia was "all [his] own" (114). With the prospect before him, Crusoe declared the terms of his relationship to the island: "I was king and lord of all this country indefeasibly, and had a right of possession; and if I could convey it, I might have it in inheritance as compleatly as any lord of a mannor in England" (114). Crusoe's declaration seems to include two distinct claims, one concerning power over people the other concerning power over land.75 However, the language Crusoe used to describe his relationship to the island at this important moment in the novel was drawn quite accurately from the English Atlantic archive. His declaration defined powers congruent with those of other English colonial masters in America.

First, Crusoe fashioned himself as a king, monarch of all that he surveys. Later in the Adventures he repeated this comparison. Presiding over a dinner scene in his house, Crusoe described himself as the absolute ruler of his domicile: "I had the lives of all my subjects at my absolute command; I could hang, draw, give liberty, and take it away, and no rebels among my subjects" (157). He assumed, in short, the authority of a patriarch. Although his power in this scene extended only to animals, he would eventually exercise this power over human subjects, Friday and the other islanders. The second claim contained in Crusoe's declaration is a right to property. To define this claim, Crusoe compared himself to an English lord with the power to alienate his land, the right to convey his property to sell or bequeath it freely. As both lord and proprietor his right to...

75 The contradictory surface of Crusoe's rhetoric has led some readers of the novel to interpret Crusonia's history in two divergent ways, as a royalist allegory of English politics or as a Whig one, emphasizing one or other of the different claims Crusoe appears to make. See Manuel Schonhorn, Defoe's Politics: Parliament, Power, Kingship, and Robinson Crusoe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and Richard Braverman, "Crusoe's Legacy," Studies in the Novel 18 (1986): 1-26.
the island was indefeasible: his authority over his colonial subjects cannot be challenged and his property cannot be forfeited.

The nature of the power that Crusoe claimed for himself in his declaration of colonial mastery was comparable to that granted to Thomas Warner in his 1625 patent for Barbados and the Leeward Islands. Warner, "haveing lately discovered towards the Continent of America fower Islands, vizt., St. Christophers alias Merwarshope, Nevis, Barbador, and Monserate inhabited by savage people, and not in the possession or government of any Christian Prince," is granted the authority to "doe all such things as tend to settle a colony and advance trade there." Moreover, he was granted authority over the inhabitants of the islands, both the colonists and the colonized, "to governe and rule all persons there, and to punish the disobedient, and represse all such as shall seeke in hostile manner to invade the said Islands."76

Warner was an experienced American planter when this patent was granted. He had participated in a colonial project in Guiana before sailing to St. Christophers in 1624 with a small group of planters. Captain John Smith's history of the West Indies includes Warner's account of the progress of the fledgling colony: "we built a Fort, and a house: and planting fruits, by September we made a crop of Tobacco."77 When Warner returned to England in 1625 he brought with him a large cargo of tobacco, and for the next dozen years St. Christophers was an important tobacco producer. One of the original planters reported in a subsequent recollection that in the first year on St. Christophers, Warner


and the others had "made themselves masters of ye Island." It was after this plantation work had begun that Warner went to England to obtain the patent confirming his status as founder of the colony, as its owner and governor.

Warner's patent, along with the account he gives of his first year on St. Christophers, establish some plantation principles for colonization. First, the patent claims that Warner was the first European to discover Barbados and the three Leeward islands. The priority of Warner's discovery was important only in relation to the actions of other European nations, in particular France who made a rival claim to the island. That St. Christophers was already inhabited by Amerindians, classified in the patent as "savage people," was not relevant to Warner's claim: their ongoing presence on St. Christophers did not give the Amerindians a legitimate claim to possess the island. Second, Warner was not just permitted to "settle a colony and advance trade," he was required to do so. Building a house, erecting fortifications, and planting tobacco were not just pragmatic and commercial activities, they were also, along with the claim to first discovery, the foundation of Warner's rightful possession. The patent simply made Warner's de facto colonization explicit: the combination of first discovery and settlement made the claim in Warner's patent legitimate. Third, the extent of Warner's mastery was established: he was both the indisputable owner of the islands as property and the rightful governor of the colonists. He was permitted, indeed obliged to defend his mastery from external attack, from either European or Amerindian threats. Within a year of obtaining the patent, Warner's mastery would extend to the African slaves who arrived on the island with the first returns from tobacco.

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78 John Hilton, "Relation of the First Settlement of St. Christophers and Nevis" (1675), in 
Colonising Expeditions to the West Indies and Guiana, 3. On the early years of the colony on St. Christophers see Dunn, Sugar and Slaves, 117-122. Warner eventually lost the patent for the islands to the Earl of Carlisle, but he remained governor.
Robinson Crusoe gained authority on Crusonia similar to that of Warner and other founders of English colonies. In his discovery, occupation, and cultivation of the island, Crusoe anticipated in practice the abstract claim that he made in his declaration concerning his ownership and governance of the island. Crusoe's hilltop declaration made explicit and complements a claim to the island that he had already warranted through his actions. The combination of discovery, occupation, and cultivation with his hilltop declaration made Crusoe's claim legitimate. When Crusonia became more populated, the nature and extent of Crusoe's mastery had already been established as the foundation upon which the plantation colony would be constructed. Crusoe's *Adventures* includes an account of all the necessary stages involved in discovering, occupying, and cultivating a colony in the manner prescribed in Warner's patent specifically and in English colonial practice generally. In conventional fashion, Crusoe became a legitimate colonial master, combining *imperium* -- authority over people-- and *dominium* -- authority over property -- in his status as the "little sovereign" of Crusonia.79

The colonial right to property of the kind claimed by Crusoe claimed entailed rights over people. Colonial masters like Crusoe owned land and they also governed other, subordinate settlers and the colony's workers, both free and slave. By the end of the *Adventures*, Crusonia was populated with people in all these categories. The right to governance bestowed an exalted degree of authority. Crusoe also gained this power over people. The status that Crusoe obtained is congruent to that of a specific historical contemporary, the colonial proprietor. In colonies throughout the English Atlantic world, proprietors held powers equal to those granted to the Carolina proprietors, outlined in Locke's *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*. Whereas colonial charters were issued to

79For a related interpretation see the important article by Max Novak, "Crusoe the King and the Political Evolution of His Island," *Studies in English Literature* 2 (1962): 337-350.
commercial companies, as in Virginia, proprietary patents were issued to individuals, frequently but not always the founders of colonies, granting them mastery over a defined piece of territory. The holder of the proprietary patent owned the territory and had the power to distribute land by sale or rent in order to populate and improve it. Subsequent immigrants to the colony, subordinate planters, with their labourers and slaves, were also subject to the proprietor's authority. Proprietary patents were issued in the early seventeenth-century for the West Indies -- Thomas Warner briefly held a proprietary patent -- and some mainland North American colonies, such as Maryland. After the Restoration proprietary patents were granted for places such as South Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, and in 1732 the last proprietary patent was granted for Georgia.80

The proprietary patents bestowed both ownership and governance of new colonies on a powerful individual, someone who held power that was comparable to a monarch. The patent for Maryland in 1632, for example, described the extent of the property that could be claimed by the proprietor, Lord Baltimore, and it also allowed him to make and execute laws independent of the crown's supervision, an arrangement that survived in Maryland until the American Revolution:

Lord Baltimore, his heirs and assigns, we do by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, make, create, and constitute the true absolute lords and proprietaries of the said country aforesaid, and of all other the premises (except before excepted) saving always the faith and allegiance, and sovereign dominion due unto use, our heirs and successors, To have, hold, possess, and enjoy the said country, isles, inlets, and other the premises unto the said now Lord Baltimore, his

heirs and assigns, to the sole and proper use and behoof of him the said now Lord Baltimore, his heirs and assigns for ever. 

In addition to ownership of the land, and the right to alienate it as he deemed most profitable, Baltimore was granted extensive power over the other residents of the colony, including planters, labourers, and slaves. He was "the absolute lord and Proprietor" and was, in this sense, Mayland's "little Sovereign." Over time, Robinson Crusoe would claim the same kind of authority as colonial proprietors like Lord Baltimore or the proprietors of South Carolina. The story of Crusonia narrates how he came to be a legitimate colonial master of that kind.

The hilltop declaration that Crusoe made stating his claim to ownership constitutes a symbolic act of possession, similar to those conducted by other English colonists. The most dramatic of these was Humphrey Gilbert's in Newfoundland. Gilbert was issued the patent for American colonization in 1578 licensing him to "discover searche finde out and view such remote heathen and barbarous landes countries and territories not actually possessed of any Christian prince or people." Furthermore, he was to "have hould occupy and enjoye" his possessions as well as "all comodities jurisdiccions and royalites both by sea and land." Gilbert was, in other words, granted the authority to travel to and claim those parts of America unclaimed by other Europeans. The land and its wealth were to be his to own, with the stipulation that he should pay a portion of the American plunder to the crown, the underwriter of his colonial authority.

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81 "Maryland Charter" (1632), in Charters of the Old English Colonies in America, ed. Samuel Lucas (1850) 89-90. Emphasis added.


Gilbert exercised his rights and fulfilled the requirements specified in his patent when he travelled to Newfoundland in 1583. After landing on the island he held a remarkable ceremony, narrated by George Peckham:

[Gilbert] caused his Tent to be set upon the side of a hill, in the viewe of all the Flete of Englishmen and Straungers, which were in number between thirty and fortie sayle, then being accompanied with all his Captaines, Maisters, Gentlemen and other Soldiers, he caused all the Maisters, and principal Officers of the Shippes, as well Englishmen as Spaniardes, Portingals, and other nations to repayre unto his Tent: And then and there, in the presence of them all, he did cause hys commission, under the great seale of England to bee openlie and solemplie reade unto them, whereby were graunted unto him his heyres, and assignes, by the Queenes most excellent majestie, manie great and large royalties, liberties, and priviledges. The effect whereof being signified unto the Straungers by an Interpreter, he tooke possession of the sayd land in the right of the Crowne of England by digging of a Turfe and receiving the same with an Hasell wande, delivered unto him, after the manner of the lawe and custome of England.\(^\text{84}\)

On a hilltop overlooking the international North Atlantic fishing fleet, Gilbert publicly declared the terms of his patent, specifying the source and extent of his authority to take possession of Newfoundland, an act symbolized by digging the turf and receiving a hazel twig. At the moment the declaration was read and the symbolic act performed, the property of Newfoundland became his and all the fisherman present on the island, English and otherwise, fell under his command and became subject to his governance.

In other corners of the Atlantic world, English voyagers made colonial claims in similar ceremonies. On his second voyage in 1577, Martin Frobisher came ashore in the Arctic and claimed possession of the land at the North of what was later called Hudson's Bay by making piles of stones, signifying to future European travellers that the territory had been

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discovered and claimed. On his third voyage in the following year he performed a similar ceremony on what was probably Greenland. In this case, Frobisher's claim of discovery was made within sight of some Inuit fisherman in a nearby harbour who, it was assumed, posed no obstacle to legitimate colonization. Symbolic acts of possession occurred in the Caribbean as well as in the North Atlantic. A voyage to America led by Sir Robert Dudley in 1594-1595 landed a party on the island of Trinidad and claimed it for England. The landing party marched in procession up the side of a hill to the summit where a declaration was read aloud in English and Latin stating the nature and extent of Dudley's claim to anyone who might have been listening. The ship's carpenter nailed a sign to a tree announcing Dudley's claim in Latin, signifying the anticipation of rival claims from European rather than Amerindian nations.

The colonizing performances of Gilbert, Frobisher, and Dudley belonged to a legal convention prescribing how unclaimed foreign could be claimed by European powers. John Thomas Juriceck describes these symbolic acts as "ritual pantomime on the part of the new owner designed to advertise his unchallenged mastery over the land in question. Thus, he might dig up clods of earth, tear up vegetation, cut tree branches, drink water found on the premises, perambulate the bounds of the tracts, and so forth." The specific content of such an act was less important than its meaning: "it somehow demonstrated

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absolute control." Whatever the content, the symbolic act was essential for making a colonial claim legitimate. Patricia Seed explains that "[e]ven as the conquest of the New World was often accomplished by military means or by occupation, its authority -- that is the right to rule -- was established by language and ceremony."

Crusoe's hilltop declaration is a symbolic act of possession in this way, following as it does a perambulation of the bounds of his colony and a catalogue of its present and future commodities. The declaration is not just a description of Crusoe's status, it is a performative act whereby that status is established. The ceremonial requirement of the act, the need for witnesses, is met by recording the event in the published Adventures for future English readers.

To be effective, symbolic acts of possession depended on the legal fiction that the land being colonized was terra nullius, vacant land where no recognizable, European authority claimed control. Crusoe satisfied this criterion for himself and his readers, stating soon after landing on the island that "I found also that the island was barren, and, as I saw good reason to believe un-inhabited except by wild beasts" (71). Claiming an uninhabited island, insulata nata, was the paradigm for the American colonization undertaken in the wake of Columbus. The model was derived from a provision of Roman law: "if a new

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90 For a discussion with pertinent colonial examples see James Simsarian, "The Acquisition of Legal Title to Terra Nullius," *Political Science Quarterly* 53 (1938): 111-126.
island appears in the sea (which is not a frequent event) it belongs to the occupant as being a res nullius.91 Discovering a new, unknown island in America was indeed an infrequent event. However, even those islands (or other lands) inhabited by Amerindians were considered unoccupied; the only occupation recognized by colonists was that of other Europeans. As unoccupied land, it legally belonged to the first person to claim it. Land inhabited by Amerindians was classified as terra nullius in the patents granted to English Atlanticists. The patent granted to John Cabot, for example, the model for Humphrey Gilbert's, specified that he could only colonize those lands "unknown to all Christians."92

Even land the existence of which was "known" to Europeans could remain unclaimed and available to English colonists if it had been initially discovered by an Englishman. Cabot's voyage to Newfoundland established for England and future English colonists the right to colonize large portions of North America since it was argued that he had discovered the land when it was terra nullius and legitimately claimed it as England's territory.93 When Gilbert arrived on Newfoundland, he did so on the understanding that Cabot's discovery validated later claims, even if, in the meantime, the island was seasonally inhabited by other Europeans. Although the Newfoundland fishing fleet was, at the time of Gilbert's possession, international, Cabot's prior discovery of the island gave the Englishman the right to claim it in 1583.


93Anthony Pagden, Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500-c.1800 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) 76-82.
Crusonia qualified as unclaimed land in a number of ways. It appeared to Crusoe to be an uninhabited island, an *insula nata*, and therefore was available for colonization to whomever discovered and occupied it. Even the later detection of an ongoing Amerindian presence on the island -- the mystery of the first footprint -- did not disqualify Crusoe's claim, as Amerindian occupation would not have been recognized as nullifying his "indefeasible" possession. The location of the island, however, posed a more substantive threat to his rightful possession. Crusoe seemed aware that his island might lie within Spanish territory, "near the Spanish dominions," as he put it (121). He therefore tried to be as specific as possible about the location of Crusonia, a difficult task considering the circumstances that brought him there. However, the editing of his *Adventures* for publication would have allowed him to be as exact as he needed to be. According to his estimation, Crusonia lay off "the savage coast between the Spanish country and Brasils" (122). It is located, therefore, in a liminal space between Spanish and Portuguese territory and was therefore unclaimed as a European colony.

Defoe was especially interested of the status of this particular region of the Caribbean around the time *Robinson Crusoe* was published. In the *Weekly Journal* in 1719, he announced the imminent publication of a "flaming Proposal" from the South Sea Company for "erecting a British Colony on the Foundation of the South-Sea Company's Charter, upon the Terra Firma, or the Northernmost Side of the Mouth of the great River Oroonoko." The projected "Factory and Settlement" would be established on territory that was rightfully claimed by the South-Sea Company. It was, in addition, in "the same Country and River discovered by Sir Walter Rawleigh."94 In his life of Raleigh, published the following year, Defoe reiterates the legitimacy of English claims to the area around the Orinoco River: "[t]he Country is within the Patent or Charter of the South-Sea Company,

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The undertaking seems to be their due; their charter begins at the River Oroonoque. The South-Sea Company's charter, Defoe argues, permits the English to establish legitimate colonies in this part of the Caribbean. Walter Raleigh's discovery on his voyage to Guiana in the late sixteenth-century also gives them the right by virtue of first discovery. Crusonia, if it was not terra nullius, had already been claimed by the English, by either Raleigh or the South Sea Company, and so the island could be properly colonized by an Englishman. In either case, Crusoe's possession of the island was founded on sound terms.

Discovery of terra nullius was the basis of legitimate colonial claims, but discovery construed as sighting and identifying unoccupied territory -- prescription -- was insufficient to sustain a claim to it, something especially important to the English who were latecomers to American colonization. Discovery, comments Anthony Pagden, "even if genuinely 'prior' -- constituted only the first step towards legitimate occupation." Being the first to view terra nullius bestowed the right to acquire it; the necessary complement to legitimize a colonial claim was occupation. The combination of discovery and occupation solidified possession. Gilbert's colonial patent required him to "travell thither to inhabbite or remayne there and build and fortifie" in order to exercise his right to "have houlde occupe and enjoye." Gilbert had to erect buildings, or indicate

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97Pagden, Lords of All the World, 81.

98"Letters patent to Sir Humphrey Gilbert," 188.
the intention to maintain a permanent presence in Newfoundland in order to fulfil the terms of his patent and legitimate his claim.

In his defence of the legitimacy of the colony in Virginia, William Strachey argued that "[n]o Prynce may lay clayme to any more amongst these new discoveryes...then, what his People have discovered, tooke actuall possession of, and passed over to his right." Any other European claim to Virginia had to contend with the English who were already living there and had seized a portion of *terra nullius* for themselves. They were occupying the land in the manner prescribed in their colonial patent. However, even in the absence of a formal, written patent, ongoing occupation and habitation were sufficient grounds to establish possession; the textual authority could supplement *de facto* occupation. This was the process of *usucapio*: "after something had been legitimately possessed and constantly used for a period of years...the possessor became recognized as the owner of the property." As Pagden has explained, "occupation could confirm retrospective rights of property." Robert Harcourt travelled to Guiana in 1609 and performed a symbolic act of possession to make a colonial claim to the unoccupied territory. When he returned to England he left his brother behind "as chiefe Commander in my absence, and to continue the possession on the Kings behalf." For Harcourt, maintaining the presence of the colonizers was essential to maintaining the claim and realizing the terms of his right to possession.

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100 Juricek, "English Claims in North America to 1660," I, 154.

101 Pagden, *Lords of all the World*, 89.

Just as English colonists employed symbolic acts of possession, so they also used other symbols to demonstrate occupation: houses, fortifications, and property boundaries such as fences, walls, and hedges. These structures, argues Patricia Seed, were the necessary features of a settlement landscape, but they were also the shared cultural signs of property for colonizing Englishmen who believed that "by fixing a boundary, such as a hedge around fields, together with some kind of activity demonstrating use (or intent to use, i.e., clearing the land), anyone could establish a right to apparently unused land." ¹⁰³

Thomas Warner and his party, after landing on St. Christopher in 1624, "began to build their houses & and alsoe a fort of pallesadoes with flanckers, & loopeholes for their defence." ¹⁰⁴ Their houses and fortifications did not merely protect them, they signified occupation and ownership. When the validity of Francis Willoughby's claim to Guiana in 1651 was being defended, the actions taken by the planters were offered as evidence of occupation and habitation. According to one report, after landing in Guiana Willoughby "fortified: disposing his servants there for clearing the ground, planting provisions, and consulting how best to proceed." ¹⁰⁵ Crusoe, although on his island by accident rather than design, followed the practice followed by Willoughby, Warner and others in the Caribbean in the seventeenth-century: establishing and fortifying a habitation for himself and demonstrating an intention to use the land he occupied.

By good fortune, Crusoe was able to salvage many necessary items from the wreck, and so began his forced settlement on a sound footing. He was able to rescue the food


¹⁰⁵ "Reasons Offered by the Lord Willoughbie why Hee ought not to be Confined in his Settlement upon Serranam" (1650), in *Colonising Expeditions to the West Indies and Guiana*, 179.
necessary to survive until he could harvest the seed he plants, and locate local
nourishment to be foraged or hunted. Crusoe also managed to find a good variety of the
tools needed to create a settlement and to defend it, from a carpenter's chest to a supply
of munitions. The author of a 1643 West Indian promotional colonial pamphlet included
a list of the items required by a single planter -- "necessary provisions as every
adventurer is to carry" -- that suggests that Crusoe was comparatively well-equipped to
begin his Caribbean sojourn. Crusoe managed to find bread, rice, three Dutch cheeses, five
pieces of dry'd goat's flesh" and other provisions (69). Daniel Gookin suggested that one
man for six months will require grains such as Crusoe recovers, some alcohol and "20.
pounds of Suffolk or Holland cheese."106 Crusoe also managed to find a good variety of
the tools needed to create a settlement and to defend it: a carpenter's chest, two saws, an
axe, and a hammer, items that were recommended to the novice West Indian planter to
complement his victuals and clothes.

Having salvaged the valuable stores, tools, and supplies from the wreck of his ship,
Crusoe began the work of establishing a home.107 His "next work" after landing his
salvaged goods, he writes, "was to view the country and seek a proper place for my
habitation" (71). Crusoe rejected his first pitch for a "more healthy and more convenient
spot of ground." It is essential, he understood, to find a situation for his house that offers
him health, security, and access to the sea: "I consulted several things in my situation
which I found would be proper to me: 1st health and fresh water I just now mentioned;
2ndly. shelter from the heat of the sun; 3rdly. security from ravenous creatures, whether
men or beasts; 4thly. a view to the sea" (76). Setting up his habitation on his well-chosen
spot of ground, Crusoe proceeded to fortify himself. He erected a wall of sharpened

106[Daniel Gookin], Certain Inducements to well minded People (1643) 17.

107For an interpretation that emphasizes this aspect of Crusoe's island life see Pat
stakes into the earth around his tent, "so strong that neither man or beast could get into it or over it" (77). Crusoe's compound was inaccessible from the outside when he was inside, so that in the end he was "compleatly fenced in and fortify'd" (77). He removed his supplies from the shore into "this fence or fortress" to secure them from possible enemies (77).

In his "Discourse on Western Planting," as an appendix to his justification for colonization, Richard Hakluyt offered instructions for choosing an appropriate spot of ground for a settlement and securing it. With proper fortifications a fledgling colony can "holde faste [their] firste footinge, and readily annoy such weary power of any other [European nation] that shall seke to arryve" and "these fortifications shall kepe the naturall [Amerindian] people of the Countrye in obedience and goood order." By these acts they "shall purchase [their] owne safety and make [them]selves Lordes of the whole."108 Alone on his island, Crusoe undertook the work of constructing, fortifying, and supplying his habitation. In doing so, he not only ensured his survival but created the physical marks of occupation and property ownership. His first acts on the island therefore guaranteed his future security while also instituting a conventional English sense of property as the exclusive domain of the owner.

A fortified habitation installed on *terra nullius* provided the outward signs of occupation. The 1606 patent for the colony in Virginia, for example, stipulated that the planters "shall and may inhabit and remain there: and shall and may also build and fortify."109 The early Virginians were licensed to occupy and required to do so through

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109"Virginia Charter No. 1" (1606), in *Charters of the Old English Colonies in America*, 3.
erecting buildings and fortifications. By installing the boundaries and markers of property, Crusoe had indicated that he occupied the island with the intent to possess it, and that future occupation by others would violate his right to seize unoccupied land. The fortifications Crusoe constructed served to protect himself against the attack of those who might wish to make a rival claim to his island or, more likely, against Amerindians who might wish to defend their territory.

Crusoe's fortifications were not immediately necessary, but they did prove useful when, after many years on the island, he believed himself to be under seige from Amerindians. In the event that he needed them, his fortifications and his arms would allow Crusoe to defend himself and his claim. Not only would he have had a right to defend the island as his property, he would have had a right to defend himself against violent opposition. This defence itself would validate his claim to the island, a principle understood as *occupatio bellica*, occupation through conquest. Conquest, however, "did not require a conflict between kings, a formal state of war, or even the slightest act of violence; seizure was enough." Even before he was compelled to defend himself, Crusoe had effectively seized his island and made it his through conquest.

Crusoe's claim to his island was legitimized in yet one more manner, through cultivation. The provisions that he was able to save from the shipwreck were inadequate to sustain Crusoe for more than a few months. The cultivation of grain crops supplied him with staples that the island's natural environment could not. Crusoe's first crop of barley was the result of accident and good fortune: the husks and dust from a bag of rat-eaten grain contained seed, and were scattered before the rainy season (94). Crusoe discovered a patch of rice which was planted, he reckoned, through a similar mixture of accident and good fortune, some rice kernels having been discarded with an empty container of chicken

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110 Juricek, "English Claims in North America to 1660," 1, 135.
feed (95). Crusoe capitalized on his good fortune, and when he harvested his first crop saved some seed for future planting, calculating that in time he would have enough to grind into flour for bread (95). He also gathered "20 or 30 stalks of ryce" which he also preserved "to the same purpose": the future production of bread.

Crusoe's economic behaviour on the island was driven by acquisitiveness and accumulation and not simply by use and survival. Just after declaring the island to be his property, he decided to expand from one to two residences, a move that increased the extent of his agricultural operations (115). The argument made by John White, a puritan colonist in New England, to justify the expansive rather than subsistence behaviour of the planter could have been made by Crusoe himself:

It cannot be denied but that the life of man is every way made more comfortable, and afforded a more plentiful supply in a larger scope of ground, which moves men to bee so insatiable in their desires to joyne house to house, and land to land to land, till there be no more place; exceeding, I grant, there in the measure and bounds and Justice; and yet building upon a principle that nature suggests, that a large place best assures sufficiency.\(^{111}\)

Expansive economic behaviour, then, was natural even if it seems unnecessary. Crusonia was not the Land of Cockaigne, free of unnecessary work, but an island colony regulated by the principles and practices of production and discipline.\(^ {112}\) Crusonia may have looked like Eden but its history is more like El Dorado's.

For colonists, cultivation was also an act and a sign of the occupation of *terra nullius*. It was the use of land that converted it into property, an argument used by colonists


throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and formalized by Locke in his
*Second Treatise*. English and not Amerindian agricultural practices qualified as property-
forming cultivation. In *New-England's Plantation*, a promotional pamphlet describing the
benefits of American colonization, Francis Higgeson observed that the "*Indians are not
able to make use of the one fourth part of the Land, neither have they any setled places,
as Townes to dwell in, nor any ground as they challenge for their own possession." If
a colonist came to New England outfitted with the list of provisions and supplies
Higgeson appends to his pamphlet, he might easily and lawfully appropriate Amerindian
land through the work of English agricultural techniques.

Of England's seventeenth-century Atlanticists, John Winthrop made the most famous
of these arguments:

> That which lies in common, and hath never before beene replenished or subdued is
free to any that possesse and improve it. For God hath given to the sonnes of men
a double right to the earth; there is a natural right, and a Civill Right. The first
right was natural when men held the earth in common every man sowing and
feeding where he pleased: then as men and their Cattell encreased they
appropriated certaine parcells of Grownde by inclosing and peculiar manuerance,
and this in time gave them a Civill right.  

Beginning from the premise that God intended men to increase, multiply, replenish, and
subdue the earth, he contended that the colonists had a right and an obligation to claim
land from the Amerindians, to possess and improve it with "inclosing and peculiar
manuerance," the agricultural techniques of their native country.  

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113 Francis Higgeson, *New-Englands Plantation Or A Short and True Description of the
Commodities and Discommodities of that Countrey* (1630), in *Proceedings of the
Massachusetts Historical Society* 62 (1928-1929) 316.

114 John Winthrop, "Reasons to be Considered, and Objections with Answers" (1629),
in *Winthrop Papers*, II, 140.

Crusoe became "master" of his agricultural "business," learning the climate of the island in order to cultivate his crops of barley and rice successfully so that he "might expect two seed times and two harvests every year" (118). Crusoe did not merely clear, plough, and plant his land, he manures it and makes "an enclosure about it with a hedge" (128). He also wanted to expand. Crusoe calculated that his harvest amounted to two bushels of rice and over two and a half bushels of barley (129). He decided to "prepare more land" since, with his healthy harvest, he had "seed enough to sow above an acre of ground" (131). With his "stock of corn increasing" he decided he also wanted bigger barns to store it (131). From grain crops he expanded into to animal husbandry, establishing a farm for that purpose at his second habitation. In order to "keep the tame from the wild," he needed "some enclosed piece of ground, well fenced either with hedge or pale" (155). To raise his herd of goats he chose an "open piece of meadow-land, or savanna (as our people call it in the western colonies)" (155). The herd reproduced quickly under Crusoe's care, growing to twelve goats after the first year and then to over forty a year later. He enclosed even more ground for feeding and milking. Crusoe had procured both a source of meat and, as he calls it, a "dairy" producing milk, butter, and cheese (156-157). After narrating his exploits in animal husbandry that Crusoe again declared his status on the island, describing himself as "the prince and lord of the whole island" (157). He possessed, he concludes, "two plantations in the island" (160). In order to expand his colony, Crusoe needs more labour-power. He needed to extend his mastery from land to people.

Crusoe's power would, in fact, extend from land to people, from a single slave to a large, growing, and diverse colony. When his island was eventually populated with subjects, he described himself as both "lord and lawgiver" (241). When Crusoe left his island at the end of the Adventures he had assumed the role of the island's proprietor, and his authority was recognized by his colonial subjects (268-269). The first and most important subject of Crusoe's imperium was his slave, Friday. It is slavery that is the true measure of the colonial planter's mastery.

The enslavement of Friday, like Crusoe's hilltop declaration of possession, involved a symbolic performance in which authority is established. The ritual of enslavement occurred in two scenes. First, Crusoe rescued one of the Amerindians from his Kalinago (Carib) captors:

I beckoned him again to come to me, and gave him all the signs of encouragement that I could think of, and he came nearer and nearer, kneeling down every ten or twelve steps in token of acknowledgement for my saving his life. I smiled at him, and looked pleasantly, and beckoned to him to come still nearer; at length he came close to me, and then he kneeled down again, kissed the ground, and laid his head upon the ground, and taking me by the foot, set my foot upon his head; this it seems was in token to of swearing to be my slave for ever; I took him up, and made much of him, and encouraged him all I could. (207)

Crusoe interpreted this scene as an act of self-enslavement, as "tokens," or signs, of Friday's surrender and voluntary and perpetual servitude. The second scene in the ritual of enslavement was the renaming of Friday:

I understood him in many things, and let him know I was very well pleased with him; in a little time I began to speak to him, and teach him to speak to me; and first, I made him know his name should be Friday, which was the day I saved his life; I called him so for the memory of the time; I likewise taught him to say Master, and then let him know, that was to be my name. (209)
Through this act, Crusoe reconfirmed his status as slave-holder, enslaving Friday on his terms and securing and naming his colonial mastery. As Robin Blackburn has described it, Crusoe's power as master is total: "the slave holder owns/controls all the time powers of the slave, in reproduction as well as production." As a slave-holder, Crusoe possesses absolute authority over the life of his slave. In practice, this power was slightly qualified, but the principal of mastery remained intact in the English Atlantic colonies until the abolition of slavery.

Friday's slave status was somewhat more complex than that of his master. Herbert Klein has described the "true slave" as someone "without the bindings and linkages common to even the lowliest free persons, and who were thus completely dependent on the will of their masters." Certainly Friday was dependent on the will of his master; Crusoe's paternalism is marked. In trying to define slavery, Stanley Elkins has argued that "the master must have absolute power over the slave's body," transforming a free man or woman into a master's chattel property, to be disposed of as he or she wishes, limited only by the conventions of property law. In this respect, Crusoe acquits himself in the manner of a slave-master, a skill he first learned in Brazil at the sale of Xury. "It was in such a setting," Elkins goes on to write, "that those rights of personality traditionally regarded between men as private and inherent, quite apart from the matter of lifetime servitude, were left virtually without defence."  

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117 Klein, American Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2.  

The definitions of Klein and Elkins have the merit of acknowledging that while the material conditions of slavery were unequivocally appalling, its true degradation lay elsewhere. James Walvin has made the point that "to focus on material conditions as a defining characteristic of slavery is to misunderstand the problem." Some slaves in the English Atlantic world, Friday included, did not suffer from hunger or physical punishment, or go without clothes or shelter, and many slaves were given some education and a modicum of personal freedom. Walvin goes on to argue that:

slavery is not, and cannot, be merely (even largely) a debate about levels of economic deprivation. At times slaves did find themselves at the bottom of the economic heap. But the real definition of their status was that they were normally at the bottom of every other heap as well. More often than not they were also denied formal access to any local social structures. They were, so often, non-people. To be a slave was to be denied those basic rights which distinguishes mankind from lesser creatures; they were, in fact, stripped of humanity and rendered dehumanized.119

The conditions in which slaves lived in the English Atlantic world depended entirely on the whim of the master, and could be worsened or enhanced at will. A slave could be the intimate companion of a master or his beast of burden, consigned to the most difficult drudgery. A slave was not defined by the work that he does or the conditions under which he works and lives, but by his status, his relationship to others. Walvin's discussion incorporates the central problem that arises defining slavery and the slave, the relationship between the identity of the slave and his status. In the concise terms of Moses Finley, "[I]legally he is not a person. Yet he is a human being."120


Orlando Patterson has offered the most comprehensive and persuasive definition of slavery and the slave, based on a survey of hundreds of slave societies. Slavery, he argues, is social death, it is "the permanent, violent domination of natally alienated and generally dishonored persons." Despite the possibility of manumission, slavery was permanent because it was, as in Friday's case, for life or for as long as the master wanted. Indeed, in practice the children of slaves were also slaves, extending the period of enslavement from the slave's own life to that of his or her children. The domination of the slave, while not always violent, always held the potential threat of violence. Robin Blackburn explains that "since the very life of the slave had been spared so it could be expended in the service of the slave holder." These are the very terms under which Crusoe enslaved Friday; indeed, Friday's first task as a slave is to risk his life in defence of his master's. Most significantly, the slave was natally alienated, he had lost his birthright and therefore forfeited his basic human rights. Enslavement, according to Patterson, is the process whereby this natal alienation occurs: free persons becomes slaves when their birthright is taken from them. They suffer a social death and experience rebirth as slaves.

Patterson's research has identified the variety of ways that enslavement can occur. The scene of enslavement that Crusoe described represents Friday voluntarily submitting himself to perpetual servitude. However, self-enslavement of the kind Crusoe narrated was extremely rare, and occurred almost exclusively as a consequence of economic need whereby individuals sold themselves (or, more frequently, a family member) into slavery

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122 Blackburn, "Defining Slavery - its Special Features and Social Role," 271.

123 Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 17-77.
to pay debts. There is no evidence of this practice occurring in America, either before or after colonization. Arguments that slaves submitted to their role voluntarily, Patterson suggests, "often turn out to be self-serving propaganda among the slave-purchasing and slave-trading groups." The key to the ritual of enslavement described by Crusoe is the narrator's interpretation of it. Crusoe interpreted the signs or "tokens" of Friday's gestures and actions as voluntary enslavement, despite his ignorance of Kalinago culture and language. Crusoe's interpretation of Friday's actions is, as Patterson suggests, self-serving. It is retrospective justification for actions guided by expedience. Crusoe had, after all, devised in advance a plan to capture a Kalinago Indian as a slave. Indeed, in one version of that plan Crusoe weighed the possibility of taking more than one prisoner "to make them entirely slaves to me, to do whatever I should direct them" (204).

Crusoe performed a less ambiguous ritual of enslavement of his own design when he renamed his prisoner. Patterson has observed that "in every slave society one of the first acts of the master has been to change the name of his new slave." The reason for this is clear: "[t]he changing of a name is almost universally a symbolic act of stripping a person of his former identity.... The slave's former name died with his former self." In renaming Friday, Crusoe fixed his status as slave. Crusoe states that he gave Friday his name because it was on a Friday that he was enslaved. Naming him for the day on which he suffered his social death and rebirth as a slave was not an insignificant act. Friday's name was a constant reminder of his status.

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124 Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 131.


126 Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 55.
English American slave holders took a great interest in the names of their slaves. Slaveholders chose demeaning classical names, such as Cato and Hercules: the contrast between the status of the slave and his literary name was a patronizing absurdity. Names were also chosen from English places such as Cambridge or London, or from famous Englishmen such as Pitt or Nelson. Other names were based on qualities or characteristics perceived by the slave holder: Beauty, Carefree, Monkey, or Villain. Examining the records of Worthy Park, the Jamaican plantation from which these names were selected, Michael Craton has commented that "all these single slave names were distressingly similar to those of the estate's cattle, so that it is almost possible to confuse one list with another in the Worthy Park ledgers."

One source for names used in the ritual baptism of enslavement was the custom of day-names. In some West African societies, children were given names for the day of the week on which they were born. Male children born on Monday, for instance, were called Cudjoe, or Monday, and male children born on Friday were called Cuffee. These names were adapted by slave-holders, in either their original form or in translation, throughout the English Atlantic world as the names by which they would address their slaves. The Royal African Company, for example, owned a personal Company slave called Coffee in 1703, who worked on board a Company ship that visited Cape Coast Castle in West African at the time that Defoe's friend, Sir Dalby Thomas, was governor. The practice

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129 "The Royal African Company: Extracts from a Memorandum Book" (1703), in Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America, ed. Elizabeth Donnan, 4 vols (1930; New York: Octagon, 1969) II, 5-6. Many Cuffees can be found in
of using day-names for slaves was also known to readers of published Atlantic writing. William Bosman's narrative of travels in Guinea, translated into English in 1705, notes that when a child is born it is given three names, "the first is that of the Day of the Week on which it is born."\textsuperscript{130}

The historical linguist J.L. Dillard has discovered the name Cuffee and the name Friday occurring throughout America. A Friday Bush turns up, for example, in eighteenth-century Halifax. Dillard writes that "Cuffee seems to have been the most widely known of the day names; its translation, Friday, is on the whole even better known." The most famous Friday, he observes, is Crusoe's: "Defoe, who knew his African pidgin traditions, utilized the day name for the character in Robinson Crusoe -- although of course Friday is not an African."\textsuperscript{131} In renaming his Amerindian slave, Crusoe has engaged in one of the most important rituals of enslavement. The name he chose drew attention to the social death and rebirth associated with Friday's enslavement. The name marked the day on which Friday's social death occurred, and, in selecting a day-name from the familiar tradition of African slavery, Crusoe emphasized the fact that it is he who granted Friday his new life as a slave.

Crusoe could have learned about the practice of Amerindian slavery from his experience as a planter in Brazil. The Portuguese Lord Proprietors turned from trade and cutting dyewood to sugar production in Brazil early in the sixteenth-century, a transition that

\textsuperscript{130}Willem Bosman, \textit{A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea} (1705) 209. When Europeans began to understand this practice, they superimposed the seven day week on the West African calendar, with the result that the day-name Friday is really a European invention.

required a much larger and more reliable labour force. Planters raided Amerindian communities to capture slaves, and for decades the slave labour force on the sugar plantation was dominated by Amerindians (Fig. 4). As one historian has observed, the Amerindians who survived the initial impact of colonization "were transformed from members of vigorous tribal society to members of an indigent, exploited class." Gradually, the planters turned to African slaves, but in the 1650s when Crusoe was a sugar planter a few areas in Brazil were still using Amerindian slaves.

The practice of Amerindian slavery, although numerically less significant than African slavery, was widespread in colonial English America in the seventeenth and early eighteenth-centuries. Amerindian slaves performed the same work and occupied the same official status as their African counterparts in English colonies from Massachusetts to Barbados. In addition to using Amerindians as slaves themselves, the colonists in New England shipped Amerindians captured during war to other colonies as plantation slaves. Amerindian prisoners were sent to plantations on Bermuda and in the West Indies, and New England also accepted Amerindian slaves imported from the other mainland colonies. During the Pequot War, captured Amerindians were shipped to the Puritan Caribbean colony, Providence Island, in return for cotton, tobacco, and African slaves, a beneficial exchange for both colonies. After Bacon's Rebellion, Virginia used and exported captured Amerindians as slaves, and codified the legitimacy of the practice in their slave laws. In South Carolina, the capture and sale of Amerindians was even more common, and the West Indies was the most frequent destination for this human commodity. In 1710, Amerindian slaves represented a quarter of the unfree workforce in a colony that was

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Fig. 3.4 An Amerindian woman on a sugar plantation in Brazil from Stuart B. Schwartz's *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550-1835*
increasingly dedicated to the labour-intensive rice plantation. After 1710, Amerindian slavery dwindled in South Carolina because of problems with supply. The Amerindian population was devastated by warfare, the territorial expansion of the colonial planters, and by slaving raids. As in Brazil, the importation of African slaves simply became more expedient, and so their numbers increased while Amerindian slaves disappeared.133 Amerindians were enslaved from the beginning of Caribbean colonization, a tradition established by the Spanish and continued by the English. Thomas Warner's colony on St. Christophers required the assistance of Kalinago Indians to establish their tobacco plantations and to teach the English how to cultivate local food crops. When the Kalinago resisted forced labour, Warner and the English decided to clear them from the island and years of violence ensued.134 The English planters on Barbados had more success with Amerindian labour. Soon after colonization, Henry Powell sailed to the South American coast and persuaded 32 Taino Indians to return with him to teach the planters how to cultivate local plant species: tobacco, cassava, and sugar cane. These Taino guides were eventually forced into slavery. This act of English treachery is memorialized in the legend of Inkle and Yarico, the story of an Amerindian woman who rescues an English colonist only to be sold into slavery by the man she saved. Richard Ligon, whose history of Barbados narrates this story, observed on his visit to the island that the plantations were


populated with a small number of Amerindians who were "fetched from other countries; some from neighbouring islands, some from the main; which we make slaves."\textsuperscript{135} Barbadian planters imported Amerindian slaves from the North American colonies, especially South Carolina, and raided the South American mainland for Kalinago and Taino slaves. In 1673 and 1674, for example, Peter Wroth made a series of commissioned slave-raids around the Orinoco River, capturing Kalinago Indians. As sugar came to dominate the economy of Barbados, a more regular and reliable source of labour was required, and so, as in Brazil, the planters turned to African slaves. By the late seventeenth-century there were only a few Amerindians remaining in a slave population of over 40,000.\textsuperscript{136}

The practice of Amerindian slavery was driven by expedience: the need for Amerindian land or the need for labour. The need for larger tracts of land for cultivation drove colonists to expand their territorial demands, instigating violent conflict with resisting Amerindians, and producing captives for use or for sale to those colonists in need of labour. Although motivated by economic forces, colonists were concerned to justify their actions, to make necessary slavery legitimate. For English colonists, the slavery of Amerindians occurred through and was justified by conquest and warfare and by cultural or racial differences, arguments also used to justify African slavery. As David Brion Davis argues, "Negro slavery was in actuality imposed on top of a pre-existing Indian slavery."\textsuperscript{137} Crusoe's narrative incorporated evidence that justified the enslavement of

\textsuperscript{135}Ligon, \textit{A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados}, 54.


\textsuperscript{137}Davis, \textit{The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture}, 176.
Friday on the same grounds argued by his historical contemporaries. Like other colonial planters, Crusoe understood that slavery, like colonization itself, was an economic instrument. He recognized that expedience was the cause of slavery. Nonetheless, Crusoe was also concerned to justify his actions, to find legitimate grounds for them.

In order to legitimate his possession of the island, Crusoe must have believed that he had discovered it, that it was unoccupied by other Europeans. Crusoe also believed that his island was uninhabited, a belief he maintained even after discovering the footprint on the beach (162). He claimed that he lived there "fifteen years now, and had not met with the least shadow or figure of any people yet" (168). Soon after he encountered the first sign of what he assumed was a visitor to the island, the evidence of Amerindian presence appeared. Despite his fifteen years of solitude, it was unlikely that Crusoe's island was uninhabited. As Peter Hulme has remarked, there were very few uninhabited islands in the Caribbean prior to the arrival of Europeans, and any islands that were uninhabited were likely uninhabitable. After seeing the footprint Crusoe conceded that perhaps some Amerindians would "shoot over to that side of the island for harbour" (171).

However, their activities there were likely not those that could possibly contribute to a legitimate claim of possession: "as they often met and fought in their canoes, the victors, having taken any prisoners, would bring them over to this shore, where, according to their dreadful customs, being all canibals, they would kill and eat them; of which hereafter" (171).

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138 As I showed in chapter 2, this was also Defoe's position. The views of Crusoe and Defoe have been closely linked in Patrick J. Keane, "Slavery and the Slave Trade: Crusoe as Defoe's Representative," in Critical Essays on Daniel Defoe, ed. Roger D. Lund (New York: G.K. Hall; London: Prentice Hall, 1997) 97-120.

139 Peter Hulme, Colonial Encounters, 185-186.
For somebody who had never encountered any Amerindians, Crusoe demonstrated remarkable knowledge of their "dreadful customs," knowledge likely learned by way of other Atlanticists and their texts. Of course, this information could have been supplied retrospectively when Crusoe was compiling and editing his journal for publication. Although his description of the Amerindians he encountered, and Friday in particular, was ethnographically confused, the language he uses to represent them is consistent.\footnote{See Hulme, Colonial Encounters, 175-222; Roxann Wheeler, "'My Savage, 'My Man': Racial Multiplicity in Robinson Crusoe," English Literary History 62 (1995): 821-861.}

The Amerindians were "savages" even before Crusoe knew for certain that they practiced cannibalism (171). To represent the Amerindians on his island as "savages" was not to describe but to classify them. The word "savage" came to mean not "sylvan," wild and untamed, but wild and ferocious. "The special development of "savage" in English," writes Francis Jennings, "was a stress on beastly ferocity that displaced simple wildness as the dominant meaning of the word. The savage persons came to be wild like wolves instead of wild like deer."\footnote{Jennings, The Invasion of America, 74. See, generally, Roy Harvey Pearce, The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization, rev. ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965).}

This later and dominant meaning of the word "savage" was a result of the English colonists' experience with Amerindian resistance at the beginning of the seventeenth-century. As James Axtell has described it, "the intruders could not help but turn their genial hosts into stereotypical "Savages," whose "otherness: was as unfathomable as they were expendable."\footnote{James Axtell, Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) 74. On the shifting view of the Amerindian in see Loren Pennington, "The Amerindian in English promotional literature 1575-1625," in The Westward Enterprise: English activities in Ireland, the Atlantic and America 1480-1650, ed. K.R. Andrews, N.P. Canny, and P.E.H. Hair (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1978) 175-194.}
For Crusoe, the classification "savage" meant wild, "beastly ferocity." When he constructed his first fortification he did so in defence of "ravenous creatures, whether men or beasts" (76). Despite the difference he observed between Friday and his compatriots, Crusoe uses the word "savage" uniformly to classify the Amerindians he encountered. This classification justified his fear and, he believed, legitimated his conflict with the Amerindians and his enslavement of Friday. Between his discovery of the footprint and his first fight with the Kalinago, Crusoe debated the appropriate response to the threat from Amerindian presence on his island, showing particular care to avoid being compared to Spanish colonists in their treatment of the Caribbean's Amerindian people (178). Despite the vacillations of his reflections, Crusoe's actions were consistent: he prepared for and executed a plan of self-defence and conquest, waging a "just" war against the Amerindian "savages" that threatened his island.

Crusoe's first response after seeing the first, ambiguous sign of Amerindian presence was to strengthen his fortifications in order to defend himself and his colonial possession (162, 168). By the time he finally engaged with Amerindians in combat, Crusoe's military preparations were thorough. He had also planned and justified taking a prisoner to serve as a slave to him, "to get a savage into my possession" (203). "Those men were enemies to my life, and would devour me, if they could," he claimed of the Kalinago Indians who visit the island. Under these circumstances, his plan of attack "was self-preservation in the highest degree" (203). A preemptive attack on the Amerindians would be an act of self defence, he contends, "as much as if they were actually assaulting me" (203).

Other English Atlanticists made these arguments to deal with similar circumstances. In "Virginia's Verger," a defence and encouragement of the colony in Virginia, Samuel Purchas presented an argument for self-defence like Crusoe's. The English in Virginia claimed, as Crusoe did, that by virtue of discovery, settlement, and cultivation they had "Right of Plantation and may not by other after-comers be dispossessed, without wrong to human
nature." However, in 1622 the Amerindians who had been displaced by the Virginians unlawfully attacked the English, killing 347 colonists. In response, the English killed over 20,000 Amerindians, engaging in a program of extirpation. Purchas' argument to defend this violence was an instance of retrospective justification. The Amerindians, Purchas argued, had by their actions become "Outlaws of Humanity" and deserved the cruelty inflicted on them in response. Indeed, Purchas suggests that they merited such a brutal response not merely for what they had done, but because of their very natures and therefore what they might yet do to the English. The Amerindians were "wild and Savage" and as such any English attack on them was justified: "Slaves, bordering rebells, excommunicates and out-lawes are lyable to the punishments of Law, and not to the priviledges; So it is with these Barbarians, Borderers and Out-lawes of Humanity."143

In conditions where "civilized" colonists are under threat from "savage" Amerindians, it was legitimate to wage war, capture prisoners, and make slaves. The Virginia planters in 1622 did not enslave their prisoners, but "[f]rom Canada to South America," writes David Brion Davis, "colonists took the enslavement of hostile savages as a matter of course."144 The court in Massachusetts resolved that "there shall never be any Bond-Slavery, Villenage or Captivity amongst us, unless it be lawful Captives in Just Wars." Emanuel Downing suggested that capturing Amerindians was not only be just but also expedient. He wrote to John Winthrop that:

143Samuel Purchas, "Virginia's Verger: Or a Discourse shewing the benefits that may grow to this Kingdome from American English Plantations, and specifically those of Virginia and Summer Ilands" (1625), in Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes Contayning a History of the World in sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and others, 20 vols. (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1906) XIX, 222, 224. See Gary Nash, "The Image of the Indian in the Southern Colonial Mind," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser. 29 (1972): 197-230.

144Davis, The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture, 176.
If upon a Just War the Lord should deliver them [Naragansett Indians] into our hands, wee might easily have men, women and children enough to exchange for Moores [i.e. African slaves], whch wilbe more gayneful pilladge for us than we conceive, for I do not see how we can thrive until we get a stock of slaves sufficient to doe all our business.¹⁴⁵

It is doubtful that the Massachusetts colonists ever instigated conflict with the Amerindians for the sole purpose of capturing slaves and executing the kind of plan Downing proposed, but his suggestion demonstrates how easily legitimation could be improvised to suit expedient ends.¹⁴⁶

In the same way that English colonists enslaved Amerindian captives in their "just" wars, Crusoe captured and enslaved Friday. Indeed, enslavement by conquest or war was the most common form of slavery.¹⁴⁷ Crusoe's actions could find justification in the practice and writings of his fellow Atlanticists, and also within English law. In 1625, just three years after the massacre of Amerindians in Virginia, Sir Edward Coke described relations between the Virginians and their "savage" Amerindian neighbours as a state of perpetual war, and argued that in general "he that was taken in Battle should remain Bond to his taker for ever, and he to do with him, all that should come of him, his Will and Pleasure, as with his Beast, or any other Cattle, to give, or to sell, or to kill."¹⁴⁸ According to Coke, a prisoner captured in war owed his life to his captor. In exchange for his life, the prisoner forfeited his freedom and became the slave of the captor. Locke makes the same argument in the Second Treatise of Government. The captor owned the

¹⁴⁵Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America, I, 8, 4.


¹⁴⁷Patterson, Slavery and Social Death, 106-115.

life of his prisoner; slavery occurs because the captor decided to "delay" taking the prisoner's life, and decided to "make use of him to his own Service" (284).

In exchange for sparing his life, Crusoe made use of Friday in his service as a slave. He taught Friday those skills necessary for working: "every thing that was proper to make him useful handy and helpful" (213). In particular, Crusoe taught Friday language in order to take instruction, and he taught him to work on his agricultural projects: "I set him to work beating some corn out, and sifting it in the manner I used to do ... and he soon understood how to do it as well as I" (215). In order to accommodate and make the most of his slave, Crusoe decided to expand his cultivation "and plant a larger quantity of corn than I used to do" (215). Friday proved to be quite tractable in this endeavour. He "worked very willingly and very hard, but did it very cheerfully," letting Crusoe know that he would work even harder with more instruction (215). Crusoe observed of Friday that "never man had a more faithful, loving, sincere servant, than Friday" (211). Friday was "without passions, sullenness, or designs, perfectly obliged and engaged; his very affections were ty'd to me, like those of a child to a father" (211-212). The observation of Friday's slave-like nature led Crusoe to speculate on the roles and functions best suited to different kinds of people, "the best uses to which their faculties and the power of their souls are adapted" (212). In this respect in particular, Friday resembled the figure of the natural slave, an anthropological invention used to justify Amerindian slavery.

The theory of natural slavery was extrapolated from ancient sources for use in America to argue that Amerindians were suited to slavery by the fact of their nature. They were "guilty of idolatry and of sins against nature and therefore deserved to be slaves." Unlike Europeans, Amerindian "minds were barbarous and darkened by vile superstitions; they were in short inferior beings."149 Through contact and the instruction of his master, the

natural slave could improve, much as Friday did. The theory of natural slavery was a racial justification for the enslavement of Amerindians, a supplement to the argument from conquest, "savagery," and "just" war. Some writers, such as Locke, used both arguments in order to justify slavery.\textsuperscript{150} If Amerindians were "savages," they could be enslaved because it was assumed that they were hostile to the "civilized" English colonists; resistance to colonization or enslavement merely confirmed this argument, providing the occasion for enslavement as well as legitimate grounds for it. Where there was resistance to colonization or hostility was absent, colonists could claim that Amerindians were natural slaves, also by virtue of their assumed "savagery."

Arguments to legitimate slavery on the basis of race followed rather than led colonial practice. England entered the slave trade in the middle of the sixteenth-century, and English colonists owned slaves years before Coke or Locke formulated arguments in defence of the practice. From the beginning of English colonization, it was assumed that Amerindians and Africans could be enslaved. "Indian slavery was practiced in all of the English settlements almost from the beginning," notes Carl Degler, "and, though it received its impetus from the perennial wars between the races, the fact that an inferior and onerous service was established for the Indian makes it plausible to suppose that a similar status would be reserved for the equally different and pagan Negro."\textsuperscript{151} The colonists in Virginia made provisions in their slave code that reflected these assumptions. The law of 1682, written in response to Bacon's Rebellion to specifically include Amerindian as well as African slaves, created a broad, racial category for slavery:

\textsuperscript{150}Davis, \textit{The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture}, 118-121.

...all servants except Turks and Moores ... which shall be brought or imported into this country, either by sea or land, whether Negroes, ... Mullattoes or Indians, who and whose country are not christian at the time of their first purchase of such servant by some christian, although afterwards, and before such their importation ... they shall be converted to the christian faith; ... shall be judged, deemed and taken to be slaves.\footnote{Quoted in Herbert S. Klein, \textit{Slavery in the Americas: A Comparative Study of Virginia and Cuba} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967) 47.}

With the ambiguous exception of Turks and Moors, all non-Europeans in Virginia were to be considered to be slaves. Even if the slave is later converted to Christianity, she shall still be considered a slave on the basis of her race.

Although justified by recourse to arguments from conquest and "just" war, the real nature and cause of Friday's slave status on the island only becomes clear when it is compared to that of Crusoe's European subjects. Like Friday, the European subjects on Crusonia were under their proprietor's \textit{imperium}; Crusoe was, in his terms, the "lord and lawgiver" for all Crusonians (241). Crusoe and his first three subjects also undertook the same work on the island. "So we fell to digging all four of us," Crusoe writes of himself, the Spaniard and his first two Amerindian subjects (245). The difference between Friday and the Spaniard lay not in the work they did but in the terms under which they did it. The Spaniard and his fellow Europeans were welcome on Crusonia if they agreed to be "directed wholly and absolutely" by Crusoe's orders (244). They must consent to Crusoe to be "entirely under and subjected to his commands" (247). That is, they formed contracts with Crusoe. Whereas Friday was enslaved as a consequence of his rescue, the Spaniard and the other Europeans owed allegiance for their rescue; they did not owe their lives. Instead, the Europeans became free Crusonian subjects through voluntary contract. Even the English mutineers, who had forfeited their lives through their crime, were pardoned after they agreed to become planters on Crusonia, becoming the island's first
"transported felons." Crusoe is the "lord and lawgiver" for all these subjects, but they are not equal under his rule: the European subjects are free while Friday is enslaved. Their unequal status is explained by racial difference: a rescued "savage" is a slave, a rescued European is a free subject.

On many West Indian islands, Africans, Englishmen, and Amerindians were all present from the beginnings of colonization, occupying roles that remained fixed for the duration of the Atlantic empire. A commentator on the early years of Barbados observed the racial basis for the different status of the islanders. "Its the Custome for a Christian servant to serve foure yeares," he writes, and then enjoy his freedome" as well as some form of payment for his indentured labour. On the other hand, "the Negros and Indians (of which latter there are but few here) they & their generation are Slaves to their owners in perpetuity."153 Although the Barbados planters did not codify their slave practices until later in the seventeenth-century, the basis of those laws was in place much earlier. An order from the governor in 1636 decreed that all Africans or Amerindians present on the island were to be considered slaves. Their status was fixed in advance on the basis of race.154 In 1643, the governor rejected the suggestion that the planters be permitted to purchase some Portuguese prisoners captured by a Dutch ship and offered for sale on the island. Rather than enslave the prisoners, the governor liberated the men.155

Crusoe made the same sort of assumption about the subjects of his island. After the population of Crusonia had expanded from one to four, Crusoe once again described the


155 Jordon, White over Black, 64-65.
nature of his authority, returning to the image of himself as the "little Sovereign" of the island:

My island was now peopled, and I thought my self very rich in subjects; and it was a merry reflection which I frequently made, how like a king I looked. First of all, the whole country was my own meer property; so that I had an undoubted right of dominion. 2ndly, my people were perfectly subjected: I was absolute lord and lawgiver; they all owed their lives to me, and were ready to lay down their lives, if there had been occasion of it, for me. (241)

Crusonia was his "own meer property," but not only does he have "an undoubted right of dominion," he also has a right of imperium, the right to be "lord and lawgiver." Crusoe had three subjects when this declaration is made, but the island's population would continue to grow, incorporating both slave and free subjects. Although Crusoe was governor of all the islanders, they do not all share the same status. Crusoe's first subject, Friday, was a slave, while others would join the island under different conditions. It is his relationship with Friday, however, that is most important in demonstrating the extent and nature of Crusoe's imperium. For it is the peculiarity of slavery that most distinguishes the mastery of the colonial planter.

In the course of the first quarter-century of Crusonia's existence, plantation principles were established governing colonial mastery over property and people. Crusoe established himself as a legitimate colonial proprietor with rights and powers similar to those of other English colonial proprietors in the seventeenth-century. When Crusoe left the island for England, he left his colonial English subjects with instructions for survival based on his own experience (272-273). These instructions became a guide for subsequent immigrants to the island; they were passed on to the Spanish colonists when they arrived (II, 42). Crusoe also left his colonial subjects the plantation principles that he established during the early years of the colony. Despite the difficulty that the
colonists experience, both between different island factions and between the islanders and Amerindians, the principles established by Crusoe in his role as "lord and lawgiver" were proven to be as important for the development of the island as his instructions for survival.

In the absence of the colony's founder and proprietor, the Spaniard that Crusoe rescued assumed the role of governor. He ruled the affairs of the island in the place of its proprietor and, as he admitted, according to the example established by Crusoe. When he was forced to contend with Atkins and the others, he did so conscious of how Crusoe had behaved towards the subjects under his authority:

The Spaniard, who was Governor, told them in so many words, that if they had been of his own country, he would have hang'd them; for all laws and Governours were to preserve society; and those who were dangerous to the society, ought to be expelled out of it; but as they were Englishmen, and that it was to the generous kindness of an English man that they all ow'd their preservation and deliverance, he would use them with all possible lenity. (II, 67)

The Crisonians employed all of Crusoe's plantation principles, including the less generous principles governing slavery established by their founder and proprietor in his dealings with Amerindians.

When Crusoe returned to the island, the Spanish governor had to explain to him how some island Amerindians became enslaved. It was necessary, the Spaniard claimed, "for our own preservation, to disarm them, and make them our subjects" (II, 38). Crusoe accepted this explanation, since it is, in fact, the argument that he used to justify the attack on the Amerindians that led to the rescue and enslavement of Friday. The Amerindians encountered by the Crisonians were, Crusoe admits, "a parcel of refractory, ungovern'd villains, and were fit for any manner of mischief" (II, 39). That is, they deserved to be enslaved. The Crisonians and the Amerindians were in an almost constant state of war in Crusoe's absence, much like the colonists in early Virginia or St.
Christopher. In the course of this war, the colonists later took three other Amerindian prisoners and enslaved them according to the principles established by Crusoe: "these three being lusty stout young fellows, they made them servants, and taught them to work for them, and as slaves they did well enough" (II, 62). Like the early colonists on Barbados, the English colonists on Crusonia decided to go to the mainland on a slaving raid. They became

weary of the laborious life they led, and without hope of bettering their circumstances; and a whim took them, that they would make a voyage to the continent from whence the savages came, and would try if they could not seize upon some prisoners among the natives there, and bring them home, to make them do the laborious part of their work for them. (II, 71)

Although the plan was not well executed, Crusoe admits that the "project was not so preposterous" (II, 71). He approved, it seems, of the spirit if not of the details of the idea.

Crusoe informed his subjects on his return that he came to the island to encourage them in their plantation work, to "establish them there, not to remove them" (II, 119). He lets them know that to assist their work he brought them the kinds of tools and weapons that planters need, "all things necessary, as well as for their convenience, as their defence" (II, 119). In addition, Crusoe had brought with him further colonists to assist them in their work of expanding their number and their activities: "as well to encrease and recruit their number, as by the particular necessary employments which they were bred to, being artificers, to assist them in those things, in which at present, they were to seek" (II, 119). Other colonists were added to their number, including the passengers Crusoe had taken in the Atlantic, and the others he sent from Brazil in the company of their slaves (II, 191). The island's population was growing with the addition of both free colonists and slaves. The principle of economic expansion established by Crusoe was continued.
Having established his possession of the island and his status as slave-holder by way of symbolic ritual, Crusoe employed the same device on his return to his island.

Approaching Crusonia, he "caus'd the English antient to be spread, and fir'd three guns" to announce his arrival, and to announce, presumably, his authority. If the national identity of Crusonia was in doubt during its early years, it was clearly an English colony from this point, although one that, like early Newfoundland or Jamaica, had a multinational population of colonists. Before his departure, Crusoe held a feast in which he ritually distributed the cargo of tools and supplies that he had brought for his colonists. In response to this largesse, the colonists pledged their support to the island and its founder and proprietor. Crusoe described their reaction to his gifts:

I cannot express what pleasure, what satisfaction, sat upon the countenances of all these poor men, when they saw the care I had taken of them, and how well I had furnished them; they told me, I was a father to them, and that having such a correspondent as I was, in so remote a part of the world, it would make them forget that they were left in a desolate place; and they all voluntarily engag'd to me not to leave the place without my consent. (II, 122)

The colonists freely chose to remain on the island and to continue the plantation work begun by Crusoe according to the principles that he had established. The immediate future of Crusonia, then, was secured.

All that remained to be done before Crusoe's departure was to establish the conditions under which the colony would henceforth expand and grow, to establish the future of Crusoe's mastery as an absentee colonial proprietor. The planters devised a plan to distribute the land on the island, approved and signed by Crusoe. The planters were given the "right to the whole possession and inheritance of the respective farms, with their improvements to them and their heirs." (II, 171). Having established the principle of private property on the island, Crusoe was able to exercise his prerogative as proprietor to grant pieces of his property to subordinate planters for the development of the colony.
Crusoe reserved the remainder of the island as his own, presumably to be developed or sold later when other planters come to the island. He also asserted his right to collect rent in the future from his subordinate planters.

This final provision was an important one. Crusonians could only pay rents to their proprietor if they intended to cultivate crops for the market; there was no other way that they could collect the revenue necessary to meet this condition. Crusoe must have assumed that his colony will grow to become a conventional West Indian colony, producing crops like tobacco, cotton, indigo, or sugar for sale in Europe. It was this kind of commercial agriculture that produced colonial revenue as Crusoe, an experienced sugar planter, knows. However, in addition to providing the terms under which rent can be collected, he also provided the conditions under which it could be generated. When he left the island he sailed to Brazil from whence he dispatched supplies and livestock for his colonists, including cattle, pigs, and horses. He also sent some more colonists, with their African slaves, bringing the population on the island to between sixty or seventy. At that point, the island's population included planters and their families, supported by a collection of slaves, both Amerindian and African. (II, 192). In addition to colonists, livestock, and supplies, all useful for the slow expansion of the island's economy, Crusoe sent the Crusonians them some cuttings for planting sugar canes in the care of a Portuguese planter who, like Crusoe, was an experienced sugar planter (II, 192). If the colonists used these plants, adopting the correct techniques for sugar production, Crusoe could have expected to collect very handsome rents indeed. Perhaps the Adventures and Farther Adventures would have persuaded some English readers to immigrate to his colony, helping to swell the population and the productivity of the island.

An early map of Crusonia represents the history of the island up to the departure of colony's founder (Fig. 3.5). It shows the conflict between Europeans and maps the patterns on settlement on the island prior to the arrival of the sugar cane. Richard Ligon's
Fig. 3.5 Map of Crusoe’s island from Serious Reflections (1720)
famous map of Barbados is also historical as well as geographical. Ligon's drawing also represents conflict and struggle alongside the prosperity that it maps (Fig. 3). The difference between the two islands is the stage of development at which they are mapped. Crusonia is pictured at the earliest stages of its history, prior to the introduction of sugar. The Barbados of Ligon's map had already begun cultivating sugar. After almost two decades of constant immigration, the population of Barbados in 1655 was 43,000, of which 20,000 were slaves. The population of Barbados continued to grow as sugar cultivation was adopted by every planter on the island. The growth of the colony reflected the needs of sugar production: by 1712, the number of English or creole colonists had actually decreased to less than 13,000, but the number of slaves had more than doubled.156

Barbados developed and expanded according to the principles established by the colony's founders. The first proprietors established a pattern of property ownership and governance which dominated the island's future.157 Other colonies in the West Indies more or less replicated this pattern, albeit at a different rate. Jamaica was not colonized by the English until 1655, and did not become devoted to sugar production until the next century. In the year Defoe died, Jamaica produced exported over 300,000 hundredweight of sugar and imported over 4,000 slaves. By the middle of the century the exports of sugar had doubled. In 1754, the population of Jamaica consisted of 12,000 European or creole colonists and 130,000 slaves. A large Jamaican planter in the late seventeenth-century, Edward Pennant, owned over 8,000 acres in Jamaica and a workforce of almost

156 Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 87.

600 slaves. In 1736, an inventory of his property showed it to be worth over £30,000. As a consequence of the power this wealth represented, Pennant's grandson was appointed to the House of Lords.\textsuperscript{158} The rewards of colonial mastery were very rich indeed. The profits realized on Barbados and Jamaica were built on the foundation of plantation principles similar to those established in Crusonia: the legitimacy of colonized property and the legitimacy of slavery. Of course, any history of the island after the end of Crusoe's narrative is purely speculative, but the examples of Barbados and Jamaica do indicate possibilities. I explore some of these possibilities, and some others, in the next chapter, an examination of the legacy of Crusoe's plantation complex.

Chapter 4
Friday's grandchildren

The long and interesting history of Crusonia just begins with the publication of Daniel Defoe's *Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* in 1719. Even after Crusoe finished his account of the island in the *Farther Adventures* the history of Crusonia had not ended. Defoe's novel was reprinted, abridged, continued, and adapted, dispersing the Robinson Crusoe story throughout the English Atlantic world which it represented. In the eighteenth-century alone well over a dozen official editions of the novel were published, in addition to a number of pirated ones.¹ The readership of *Robinson Crusoe* in eighteenth-century Britain and the rest of the English Atlantic world was extremely broad. At the end of the eighteenth-century it was observed that Defoe's novel had joined John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and Thomas Paine's *Right's of Men* among the most popular English books.²

In addition to authorized and unauthorized editions of the three parts of *Robinson Crusoe*, a variety of responses, continuations, abridgements, and dramatizations of the novel were produced, extending knowledge of the Robinson Crusoe story even deeper into eighteenth-century culture, well beyond the limits of any conventionally conceived literary audience. For those readers who pursued unconventional literary pursuits, an interpretation of the Robinson Crusoe story could be read in 1774 on the painted sign of a public house in Gateshead:

Stop my good friend, and cast your eyes around,
Behold a figure rarely to be found--
The figure of *Man*, in veiled distress;
Yet armed, as if he would defiance show.

¹For a short account of the publishing history of *Robinson Crusoe* see Pat Rogers, *Robinson Crusoe* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979) 4-16.

Is this the fancy of the sage Defoe?
It is the same; -- and now by memory led,
Robinson Crusoe half the world have read.\(^3\)

Complemented by an image of the protagonist, this sign is evidence itself of the claim that it's text makes about the social circulation of the Robinson Crusoe story. By way of either publishers or publicans, in time Crusoe's story became part of the broad public consciousness.

The Robinson Crusoe story was not transmitted intact through the course of its wide dissemination. Different versions of the story appeared with particular elements of the original story abstracted from Defoe's novel, given unusual emphasis, transformed or amplified, producing a variety of Robinson Crusoe stories, each interpretation possessing a distinctive shape. This is particularly evident in the remarkable history of the Robinson Crusoe story in the United States of America, before and after the 1776 Revolution. In 1720 alone, three pamphlets were produced in Boston that employed the Robinson Crusoe story, adapting one of its features to local American concerns. The anonymous authors of these texts clearly interpreted the story economically, using the history of Crusonia to argue publicly about financial matters relating to Massachusetts. *Reflections upon reflections: or, More news from Robinson Cruso's island* (Boston, 1720) considers a question of currency. It prompted a response which continued to use the framework of the Crusoe story to reply to the author's argument. A third text, *New news from Robinson Cruso's island* (Boston, 1720) advocates loosening credit for colonial merchants to allow them to expand their enterprises, an argument that almost certainly would have interested Crusoe, the figure with whom these colonial merchants chose to identify.

\(^3\)The sign is quoted in P.M. Ashraf, *The Life and Times of Thomas Spence* (Newcastle: Frank Graham, 1983) 156.
A particular interpretation of the Robinson Crusoe story was attractive to the American republic in the late eighteenth-century, one that allowed the incipient nation to embrace Defoe's Atlantic protagonist as a prototypical American: colonist, planter, and commercial champion. One American edition of the novel, published in Boston in 1791, used Defoe's original title but made an addition which made explicit the fact that Crusoe colonized his island: *The wonderful life and surprising adventures of that renowned hero Robinson Crusoe, who lived twenty-eight years on an uninhabited island, which he afterwards colonised.* This example of publisher's editing suggests that Crusoe may have been seen as the prototypical American, the ancestor of the independent citizens of the commercial republic who claimed themselves as Crusoe's progeny, his cultural and ideological grandchildren. In the years after the 1776 Revolution, a prodigious number of editions of *Robinson Crusoe* were published in the Western Atlantic's first independent creole state. Between 1774 and 1825, over 125 editions of the novel appeared, published in Boston, New York and Philadelphia as well as in smaller cities and towns. In some way, through some hermeneutic procedure, the Robinson Crusoe story provided a model for imagining the new American nation. As Leanne Smith has observed, Defoe's story was "transformed through some national alchemy into a text identifiable with that particular culture."4

The illustrations of *Robinson Crusoe* are good indicators of the ways that the story was being interpreted around the Atlantic world. The most famous of these illustrations and the one most frequently reproduced is John Pine's frontispiece for the first edition representing Crusoe as the conquering colonist in armed equipoise (*Fig. 4.1*). Crusoe is

Fig. 4.1 Pine's frontispiece to *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)
positioned as the link between the colonial plantation, on the right, and the ship at sea, on the left, two of the most potent icons of the English Atlantic world. As the central figure in the picture, Crusoe connects the plantation to the ship, transforming the resources of the island into the commodities of Atlantic commerce. An 1833 edition of the novel provides a somewhat different illustration of Crusoe the Atlantic colonist. In this illustration, Crusoe is pictured in his rough island household surrounded by his possessions, in particular the tools of colonial agricultural production and distribution, from shovels to barrels (Fig. 4.2). The caption below the illustration, taken from elsewhere in the novel and employed as an interpretation of this image, makes the intended meaning of the picture clear: "I am monarch of all I survey./My right there is none to dispute." Crusoe is the plantation master, absolute governor of his island colony. Other popular illustrations for later printed versions of the Robinson Crusoe story represent a different, but no less important aspect of Crusoe's colonial mastery. In these images Friday is poised as a colonized suppliant, willingly enslaving himself to Crusoe (Fig. 4.3). In this illustration, the planter's mastery is exercised over his human property, but his right remains no less absolute, equally indisputable.  

The colonial mastery of Crusoe and the domination of his slave, Friday, obtains a peculiar intensity in an 1840 illustration, printed as the frontispiece for an edition of the novel. This image is a departure from the story itself but remains, nonetheless, an accurate representation of its ideological tenor. In a clearing in a tropical forest, an imposing monument has been erected on Crusonia to celebrate the colony's founder (Fig. 4.4). Crusoe is sculpted in enormous, exaggerated proportions, seated on a plinth and surrounded by the icons of his colonial power. The monument an excellent example of

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5 The illustrations of Robinson Crusoe are reproduced and discussed in David Blewett's indispensable study, The Illustrations of Robinson Crusoe 1719-1920 (Gerard's Cross: Colin Smythe, 1995).
"I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute."

Fig. 4.2 Illustration of *Robinson Crusoe* by Limbard (1833)
Fig. 4.3 Cruikshank-Fox's frontispiece to *Robinson Crusoe* (1831)
Fig. 4.4 Grandville & Français-Brevière's frontispiece to *Robinson Crusoe* (1840)
the imperial aesthetic, celebrating the invented history of the colony. Situated below Crusoe is a relief profile of Friday, represented in his true subaltern role. This fantastic monument is not so much a distortion as a magnification and extension of the meaning of the Robinson Crusoe story, projected forward in time. Surrounding the monument are later generations of Crusonians, paying homage to the founding father of their island colony. In the distance a ship in full sail is a reminder of the colony’s place in the Atlantic economy, delivering sugar to the metropolitan market.

The makers of this powerful and complex illustration have imagined a plausible history for Crusonia, a representation of what might have happened to the island had it successfully planted and cultivated the sugar that Crusoe sent from Brazil. In this pictured history, Crusonia has developed into a conventional Atlantic colony with, by 1840, a strong creole hegemonic class duly loyal to the source of their prosperity. That the figurative descendants of Friday are absent from the scene is not accidental: they are undoubtedly working the sugar cane in the fields and mills and on the docks and ships while their plantation masters, freed from the burden of plantation labour, have the time and leisure to celebrate their history and develop their island identity.6

The interpretive tradition that represents Crusoe as a commercial colonial hero culminated in the early nineteenth-century in capitalist political economy in which the story of Robinson Crusoe and Friday was utilized allegorically as a way of demonstrating the development of international market economies, a paradigm known as the Robinson Crusoe Economy. In this interpretation of the story, Crusoe represents the ideal rational economic actor, allocating his resources, including the labour of Friday, in the most efficient manner in the development of his island colony. In the midst of the industrial

revolution, and in the zenith of Britain's second imperial age, a writer in the British Quarterly Review could write that Robinson Crusoe "embodies, as it were, the chivalry of the middle class, the heroism of the bourgeoisie. Every page of his writings is impregnated with the spirit of rational industry." Something significant, it seems, was found in the translation of Crusoe's story from the Caribbean to Manchester: the idyll of imperial capitalism.

It was this reading of Robinson Crusoe to which Marx would respond in the Grundrisse and in Capital, objecting not only to the content of the interpretation, but to also to the hermeneutic procedures that inspired it. The Robinson Crusoe of the imperial capitalist idyll, Marx argued, concealed the very history that produced him, the context to which he belonged. Marx's comments on the Robinson Crusoe story of the capitalist political economists suggest that a different interpretation of the story is necessary, one that would return Crusoe to his actual history, and this in turn requires a different form of interpretation. Stephen Hymer has accurately characterized the reading of Robinson Crusoe to which Marx objected as one in which the protagonist "is pictured as a rugged individual -- diligent, intelligent, and above all frugal -- who masters nature through reason." But, Hymer insists, this does not correspond to the actual Robinson Crusoe story, one which narrates "conquest, slavery, robbery, murder, and force." "That this side of the story should be ignored is not at all surprising," Hymer suggests, quoting Marx, "for in the tender annals of political economy the idyllic reigns from time immemorial."

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9Stephen Hymer, "Robinson Crusoe and the Secret of Primitive Accumulation,"
There is a difference, Hymer argues, between the actual Robinson Crusoe story and the idylls that have been generated from it by capitalist political economists. He suggests a different reading of the Robinson Crusoe story that accounts for the history concealed in the form and content of the imperial capitalist idyll. "In the story of Robinson Crusoe," Hymer writes, "Defoe describes how a seventeenth-century Englishman amassed capital and organized a labour force to work for him in Brazil and in the Caribbean...[Crusoe] established...a plantation and settler economy such as was used by capitalism in the non-European world."

Hymer's alternative interpretation of the Robinson Crusoe story questions the celebration of the exploits of the colonial protagonist, beginning with the way that Crusoe himself represents them. Although Crusoe is the narrator of the story of Crusonia, he is not allowed to be its only interpreter, its only historian. Hymer observes the way that Crusoe occludes Friday's story in his narrative and suggests, in a particularly adroit phrase, that historians of Crusonia also need "the story of Friday's grandchildren."

The story of Friday and his cultural grandchildren is different from that of Robinson Crusoe and his legacy and must be located and interpreted differently. E.P. Thompson has called one of these forms of interpretation "history from below," a view of social reality that includes and takes into account the experiences and perspectives of its subaltern peoples. The task of reconstructing the story of Friday and his grandchildren,

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11 Hymer, "Robinson Crusoe and the Secret of Primitive Accumulation," 36.

understanding the English Atlantic imagination as seen and experienced from below, faces what Eric Hobsbawm has called "technical problems," principally the matter of finding the appropriate documents to interpret within the historical archive. While reconstructing the story of Robinson Crusoe and his cultural genealogy and legacy is not unproblematic, it is made easier by the existence of an enormous quantity of documentation. The English Atlantic archive documents historical predecessors, parallels, and analogues for a character like Crusoe, providing us with the material needed to understand him. This is not the case for history's subaltern subjects such as Friday and his grandchildren. To write their history, Hobsbawm argues, the appropriate material must be found by interpretation: "[t]here is generally no material until our questions have revealed it." ¹³ Interpreting these documents to locate and articulate subaltern stories involves treating existing archival documents as "multivocal," in Victor Turner's words, "susceptible of many meanings." ¹⁴ Documents in the English Atlantic archive frequently leave subjects such as Friday silent. Their experiences, thoughts, and actions are simply not recorded, or if they are recorded they are distorted through the perspective of power and assimilated into narratives like Robinson Crusoe's. ¹⁵ The construction of historical archives, including the collection of literary texts, is one of the prerogatives of power. In the process of assembling these archives subaltern stories may have been intentionally omitted or distorted. Locating the story of Friday and his grandchildren must address what David William Cohen has called the production of history. The construction of the archive


itself, as well as the material in it, must be confronted in a process he describes as the "combing of history" which analyzes and participates in "the struggle for control of voices and texts." It must also address archival silences: "a claim of some who would want to seize an authority to speak for others." These historical silences are the result not only of neglect but also of active silencing. "One 'silences' a fact or an individual," writes Michel-Rolph Trouillot, that is, "[o]ne engages in the practice of silencing." Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has proposed some techniques for recovering voices from textual silences, arguing that one must examine a document like Robinson Crusoe in which the subaltern has been represented and "unravel" it. The interpretive procedure appropriate to such an unravelling, according to Spivak, is elaboration, working out from the text into its contexts and interpreting the document as a truly social text. This interpretation must make recourse to other texts and contexts in order to articulate the subaltern's story effectively. As a consequence, the interpretation of Atlantic texts like Robinson Crusoe needs to be dialogic and recognize the polysemous nature of the archive's extant documents, to attend to what Mikhail Bakhtin has called their social

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heteroglossia. A novel like Robinson Crusoe is heteroglot in the social sense Bakhtin implies in that it represents the contact of historical forces and different cultures. Reconstructing the other Atlantic imagination will therefore emphasize the conflict in that contact, interpreting the Atlantic's social texts to discover, in Ranajit Guha's piquant phrase, the "prose of counter-insurgency." This is the necessary revision to the idyll of imperialist capitalism.

One place to look for the story of Friday and his grandchildren is at the "frontier" of the English Atlantic world, those places where Crusoes and Fridays first encounter one another. Notices of East Florida, a travel narrative and geographical description published in 1823, records an unusual incident, a significant literary and historical discovery made on this Atlantic frontier. The author learns that a family of Indians is at present residing at Volusia -- one of whom, Mr Dexter, likening his situation to that of the hero of Defoe's tale, has called Friday, from the faithful attachment which this honest creature evinced towards him, under many trying circumstances, and when his life was exposed to daily danger.

Alone in this remote part of the world, Mr Dexter, an American, drew from literary resources to make sense of his situation, to give it a recognizable order, to give it meaning. The figure with whom Dexter most closely identified was Robinson Crusoe and so he redescribed or remade his world through the paradigm of Defoe's novel of Atlantic

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colonization and domination. Following Crusoe's example, he named one of his Seminole neighbours Friday.

That an incident such as this should have occurred at all is not surprising. Dexter recognized, like the literary critic Tony Bennett, that a text like *Robinson Crusoe* is "a site on which the production of meaning -- of variable meanings -- takes place." Dexter used the Robinson Crusoe story in order to produce meaning for his specific situation. Frontier East Florida was more easily comprehended, more meaningful for Dexter, when it was interpreted through the coordinates of Defoe's novel, giving order, for example, to his relations with his Seminole neighbours. The author of *Notices of East Florida* must have understood Dexter's intentions, readily perceiving the source and purpose of Dexter's literary allusion. The effects of Defoe's novel in the Atlantic world, as this incident suggests, were not merely literary, they were also social.

How do we interpret this story of Friday's progeny from below, from the other side of the frontier? Where is the social conflict in this story where the text's social heteroglossia can be explored? To answer those questions it is necessary to cross the interpretive frontier of the English Atlantic world, the "shifting space in which two cultures encounter one another," to consider the Robinson Crusoe story from the "other" side of that line, to understand the Atlantic world from the perspective of both Robinson Crusoe's Friday and for Dexter's, and to inquire into the vectors of their imagination, the "other" Atlantic imagination.

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24 There were a number of "frontier" Crusoe's produced in the nineteenth-century, including Catherine Parr Traill's *Canadian Crusoes* (1852), set around Rice Lake in Southern Ontario. For an excellent discussion see Richard Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire: A Geography of Adventure* (London: Routledge, 1997) 22-44.

The author of *Notices of East Florida* tells us very little of the Seminole Friday's story or of the extent of his relationship with Dexter, his American Robinson Crusoe. However, we can unravel the text, working out from it into its contexts, in order to suggest something of what their relationship might have been like. The Seminole nation was comprised of renegade Creek Indians. From the beginning, Seminoles were notorious in the Atlantic imagination for their willingness to absorb other renegades into their independent society, particularly maroon slaves from Spanish and English colonies and, later, from the Southern United States. This aspect of their culture was dangerous for Europeans in America. In 1740, for example, when Governor Oglethorpe of Georgia attacked St. Augustine, he was repulsed by a combined military force that included Amerindians and maroon slaves. In this instance and at other times, the Seminoles resisted the expansion of the Atlantic world into theirs. It seems possible that the Seminole Friday had a disposition rather different than that attributed to his literary progenitor.26

The Atlantic archive includes documents in which the stories of Friday and his grandchildren are articulated, in which they are the subject of narrative. In 1782, the English radical Thomas Spence published a chapbook continuation of Defoe's novel: *A Supplement to the History of Robinson Crusoe*. In Spence's chapbook history of Crusonia, the colonial order established by the island's founder and described in his *Further Adventures* is turned upside down. The story of Friday and his grandchildren is

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central to this inversion. Interpreting Crusonia while attending to the story of Friday and his grandchildren leads Spence to imagine a social revolution in the Atlantic world. In projecting the development of Crusonia, Spence has written a story of Friday and his grandchildren based in large part on conflict and resistance. Spence interprets the Robinson Crusoe story in order to pursue a radical agenda in which the story of Friday and his grandchildren is central, serving both as a critique of the social order of the English Atlantic world, and of stories that represent and promote it.

Spence's Supplement to the History of Robinson Crusoe includes on its title page the popular frontispiece illustration of Crusoe in his furs, heavily armed and standing on the shore of his island (Fig. 4.5). Very little else in Spence's rendering of the story is conventional. Although working in a traditional medium, Spence does not produce a standard chapbook interpretation of the Robinson Crusoe story. Spence's chapbook drew from of a tradition of eighteenth-century abridgements of the Robinson Crusoe story. The chapbook versions of the Robinson Crusoe story present a rather specific interpretation of the novel's story. Eliminating some parts of the story, emphasising some incidents, and adding others, the producers of the chapbook Crusoes present an interpretation of the original story in which Crusoe is presented differently from the Crusoe of the dominant tradition. In 1750, for example, an eight-page Robinson Crusoe was published which emphasizes only two aspects of Defoe's novel: travel adventure and labour. This interpretation of the Robinson Crusoe story addressed the interests and the experience of its intended audience, at least those interests and experiences that the

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ROBINSON CRUSOE.

A SUPPLEMENT to the History of
ROBINSON CRUSOE,
Being the History of
CRUSONIA,

or

Robinson Crusoe's Island,
Down to the present Time.
Copied from a Letter sent by Mr. Wilheit,
Cotton of the Camden Society, to an intelligible Friend in England, after being in a
Storm in May 1781, driven out of his
Country to the same Island.
Published by the late Sportsman, for the
sake of the furtherance of Robinson Crusoe's
Friends in 1781.

NEWCASTLE:
Printed and Sold by T. SAINT, in 1782.
Price 6d.

Fig. 4.5 Title page to Thomas Spence's chapbook continuation of Robinson Crusoe (1782)
publisher deemed significant. Spence chose the chapbook form and tradition for his Crusoe story because Defoe's novel was already established in that format; it was in part through chapbooks that the story had permeated those parts of eighteenth-century culture that he wanted to reach. Having found his audience, Spence went on to exploit the rules of the genre and to subvert the meaning of the story.

Spence's chapbook opens with a poem, "On reading the history of Crusonia", an apostrophe to the Crusonian reader:

Hail! Happy Cruso! there is no praising thee
In aught less than a complete History.
Let them that speak which this wants Room to shew,
And let the wretched World thy matchless Fame know.29

Spence's intention is to write the history of Crusonia, dedicated to Crusonians, beginning at the moment that Crusoe left the island in the Farther Adventures until 1782, when the narrator of the chapbook, a sea captain, returns from the colony to England. Spence writes a continuation of the story in the form of speculative history, an account of the development of Crusonia and the fortunes of its inhabitants, both colonizers and colonized. He begins his story inquiring about what happened to the island after Crusoe's second visit, and goes on to write a conjectural utopian history.30 In Spence's history, the island colony grows and prospers as one might expect of a West Indian plantation colony. However, some time after Crusoe left the island, a dispute arose concerning the allocation of colonial resources. When a second generation of Crusonians became old

29Thomas Spence, A Supplement to the History of Robinson Crusoe, Being the History of Crusonia, or Robinson Crusoe's Island, Down to the Present Time, 2nd ed (Newcastle, 1782). Subsequent references will be incorporated into the text.

30Although A.L. Morton discusses both Robinson Crusoe and the work of Spence in his discussion of the eighteenth-century utopia, he does not map out the connections between them. See Morton, The English Utopia (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1952).
enough to want to live independently, they found that the first generation of inhabitants were unwilling to grant them any land on which to establish their own plantations. The dispute appeared as though it could become violent:

the better Half of the rising Generation could get no vacant Spot to live on, which occasioned great Uneasiness in the minds of those unfortunate Youngsters. The Disturbances from this Cause, became at length so serious, as to make it necessary to settle some Authority and Government to keep the Peace, and to determine what the People might call their own. (6-7)

Seeking a solution to this conflict amongst the colonists, the Crusonians decided that rather than continue the conventional course of the plantation complex, they would adopt a different, radical program. They divided the plantations on the island into smaller, manageable plots of land distributed equally and controlled through local, parish authorities:

A small Rent or Rate, shall, according to the Determination of the Parishioners, be paid by every Person, suitable to the Valuation of the House and Land he possesses, to the Parish Treasury, to be put to such uses as the Majority please. (9)

A democratic local government was established to regulate rents and property, eliminating the competition for scarce resources. The outcome of this arrangement was a landscape rather different from the original colonial landscape. The inhabited and cultivated portion of the island now consists of a variety of houses surrounded by garden plots just large enough to support the individual or family that uses the land rather than a series of large plantations owned by a few powerful plantocrats.

The sceptical narrator of Spence's chapbook story is surprised to discover that altering the social structure of Crusonia has been successful:
This view quite astonished me, for instead of Anarchy, Idleness, Poverty, and Meanness, the natural Consequences, as I narrowly thought of a ridiculous Levelling Scheme, nothing but Order, Industry, Wealth and Pleasing Magnificence.(11)

In a conversation between the narrating English sea captain and an island inhabitant, Mr Mann, we learn the details of Crusonia's new constitution. Elections on the island are conducted by private ballot with truly universal suffrage.31 As a consequence of reform, the island's politics have been freed from corruption; neither physical force nor financial influence are effective in a polity where all citizens have an equal interest in the island's fortunes. Immigrants to the island are welcome without regard to age, race, or language. The first inhabitants of the island, the cultural descendants of Friday, his grandchildren, are given full political and economic equality with the other islanders. Indeed, a province of the colony is named Fridinea to honour Crusonia's other founder.

Crusonia has become a much different island than the one left in the middle of Crusoe's Farther Adventures. The history of the island that Spence's chapbook narrator recounts suggests that the island colony as founded and arranged by Crusoe had collapsed. In fact, the plantation arrangements that Crusoe made during his second visit are posited as the direct cause of the crisis that eventually transformed Crusonia into a nation founded on Spencean principles. Spence's account of Crusonia's history is a challenge not just to the history of the island as it may have occurred or been intended, but rather a more profound challenge to the ideological forces that made that history possible, a challenge to the English Atlantic imagination itself. Spence does not simply offer an interpretation to Defoe's novel but an ideological critique of its content and context.

31 Spence, then, is one of the few radicals to explicitly include women explicitly in the call for universal suffrage. In The Rights of Infants (1797), a rejoinder to Mary Wollstoncraft, Spence examined with some acuity the relationship between the political and economic positions of women in eighteenth-century England.
Although Spence was extremely interested and involved in English concerns, he was attracted to the story of Robinson Crusoe and Friday specifically because of its Atlantic setting. In his radical writing, Spence identified the cause of England's poor and disenfranchised with the causes of both displaced Amerindians and enslaved Africans. He imagined that they shared a common enemy and a common history. Defending himself at his trial for libel in 1803, Spence declared: "I have no such narrow views as an eye to one country only. My politics are for the world at large."32 Even in a project as ephemeral as the tokens Spence stamped with radical messages, he promoted this alternative Atlantic imagination. One of these tokens represents Cain slaying Abel below the slogan "THE BEGINNINGS OF OPPRESSION," an illusion to the mythological justification of slavery in the curse of Cain. In the English Atlantic imagination both Amerindians and Africans were identified as the sons of Cain (Fig. 4.6).33 Spence borrowed images and slogans from abolitionist tokens, such as the famous image, first produced by Josiah Wedgewood, of the kneeling slave below the words "AM I NOT A MAN AND A BROTHER." Spence identified the disenfranchised Englishman with the enslaved African, using that image to claim equality for all, regardless of social class or race. One of his tokens is stamped with the image of an Amerindian man above the slogan "IF RENTS I ONCE CONSENT TO PAY/MY LIBERTY IS PASSED AWAY" (Fig. 4.6). The pristine culture of the Amerindian, for Spence, represented a form of propertyless equality. The very aspect of indigenous culture that the English used to justify the expropriation of American land was the thing to be celebrated and preserved.34


Fig. 4.6 Spence's tokens
Spence also pursued the alternative Atlantic imagination in print. "The Reign of Felicity" (1796) consists of a dialogue staged in a London coffee house about the plight of Amerindians in the young American republic. A clergyman asks his interlocutors what they make of George Washington's plans to "civilize" the Amerindians. A courtier responds by arguing that religion will render them "good and submissive subjects," a prospect that alarms a third participant: "I would be very sorry to see the independent minds of these North American Indians, the only freemen remaining on the face of the earth, poisoned and depraved by superstition" (41). It is the fourth speaker, a farmer, who recognizes the social and economic costs of Washington's proposal: "If there can be no civil society without paying rents to individuals, I could heartily wish the Indians to remain for ever in their native freedom" (41). The farmer proposes a different course of action. "If I were allowed to form a plan for the civilization of the Indians," he argues, "it should be such a one as should preserve to them their individual independence and property" (42).

The farmer argues that if civil society must be instituted among the Amerindians it should be a just one, following a different course than that of Europeans and Euroamericans. The farmer argues that it is the public who is the owner of all property and not private individuals. Rather than allow the imposition of a market in land, the Amerindians, the first residents of the land they inhabit, should divide land according to need, with each paying rent to a common body for the provision of public services, the same solution he offered for Crusonia's crisis. In the middle of his exposition, the farmer's rhetoric shifts from dialogue to an apostrophic address to his imagined Amerindian readers: "Hearken then to the disinterested lessons of a man that pants for the emancipation of all the human race, that has from his infancy endeavoured to discover a

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35Thomas Spence, The Reign of Felicity (1796) in The Political Works of Thomas Spence, 41. Subsequent references will be incorporated into the text.
system of society, founded on equality, justice and the individual independence of mankind" (43). All citizens in this Spencean society of free and equal Amerindians are enfranchised and eligible for election to legislative bodies. Such a polity, the farmer claims, "must be the most pure and perfect democracy" (44).

Spence described an imagined island republic, Spensonia, in three different texts, a utopian model for the reformation of Britain's imperial government. The last of these texts was *The Constitution of Spensonia* (1803) outlining civil, political, and social equality, regardless of race, ethnicity, or class. The constitution permits anybody to become a full citizen of Spensonia the basis of only one year's residence on the island.\footnote{Thomas Spence, *The Constitution of Spensonia* (1803), in *Pig's Meat: Selected Writings of Thomas Spence Radical and Pioneer Land Reformer*, ed. G.I. Gallop (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1982) 170-171. Subsequent references will be incorporated into the text.}

The document directly addresses the question of colonialism and empire. Article 152 declares that "Spensonia disclaims all financial benefits from foreign Provinces, Dominions or Colonies" (184). Furthermore, all colonies that Spensonia controls prior to the adoption of the 1803 Constitution shall be declared independent states constituted on the basis of Spensonian democratic principles.

*The Constitution of Spensonia* is intended to remedy the inequities of Britain's corrupt imperial state. It ends with a poetic epilogue, a reflection on the document and its possible uses in the Atlantic world:

>'And though my book's in queer lingo,
I will send it to St. Domingo:
To the Republic of the Incas,
For an example how to frame Laws.
For who can tell but the Millennium
May take its rise from my poor Cranium?
And who knows but it God may please
It should come by the West Indies?'
No harm I mean by this reflection;
And thus I end my application. (185)

In 1803, the year this text was published, San Domingo had resisted the attempt of Napoleon to reclaim the island from its rebel slave government.37 Spence offers his constitution to San Domingo as a model, and suggests that it could be sent to the British West Indies where it might inspire slave revolts and the establishment of postcolonial, democratic states: neighbours to liberated San Domingo and liberated Crusonia.

Spence's last publication before his death in 1814 was a periodical, The Giant Killer. Only three issues of the journal were ever produced, but in them Spence publishes articles on domestic social and political reform alongside articles on slavery and Amerindians.38 More than any other of his publications, The Giant Killer demonstrates Spence's contribution to the formation of a radical transatlantic imagination. An open letter from one G.G. Fordham to the abolitionist William Wilberforce argues that Britons have an obligation to prevent, by force if necessary, the conduct of the slave-trade by any nation at all: "if I see a ship bound for the coast of Africa, for the avowed purpose of slavery, which involves all manner of atrocities, to be committed upon a helpless and unoffending race, it is my duty to prevent its sailing."39 Britain had ended her official participation in the slave-trade by 1814, but the writer suggests that she has an obligation to obstruct those nations that continue the practice.

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38I have been able to see only two of the three issues, preserved, fortunately, in the papers of Francis Place. Place collected a comprehensive range of materials on Spence and the Spenceans for a projected history which was, unfortunately, never completed.

39The context for this letter was a treaty between Britain and France, signed earlier that year, protecting the French slave trade. The Giant Killer, or Anti-Landlord 6 August 1814: 4. Subsequent references will be incorporated into the text.
The same issue also published a letter describing the efforts of the American government to "civilize" the Cherokee Indians along the lines discussed in Spence's *The Reign of Felicity*. The letter is criticized in one of Spence's editorial commentaries in which he expresses hope that this "civilizing" process will not lead to the commercializing of Cherokee land: "Then begins the Buying and Selling of Land. Then the Lawyers find Employment. Then Equality and Individual Independence vanishes, and Poverty, Distress, and the Slave-Trade commences, and all the incurable Woes of civilized Life" (7). With this editorial critique, Spence compresses the entire history of the English Atlantic world into a single sentence. In *The Giant Killer* Spence offers his readers an allegorical strategy for undermining this history: attack the problem at the source: "the Axe is laid to the Root of the Trees, and every Tree therefore which bringeth not forth good Fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the Fire" (1).

The image of the world turned upside down in a levelling jubilee attracted Robert Wedderburn to Thomas Spence's radical ideas. Wedderburn made this image the central motif of his political life. One of Friday's cultural grandchildren, Robert Wedderburn was born in Jamaica in the early 1760s, his mother a slave and his father a plantation owner from Edinburgh. Wedderburn left Jamaica and worked as a seaman, arriving in Britain in 1778 where he trained as a tailor and, later, as a Unitarian preacher, earning the title Reverend. Wedderburn met Spence in 1814, just before his death, and joined the Society of Spencean Philanthropists. In his preaching and his writing, Wedderburn continued the work that Spence began, even sending Spence's plan back across the Atlantic to Jamaica as the dead writer had suggested, hoping to inspire a slave revolt.40

Reverend Wedderburn operated a chapel in Hopkins Street in Soho, preaching Spence's radical politics to a large, boisterous audience. The activities of Wedderburn's chapel attracted more than one spy, and like Spence Wedderburn was imprisoned without trial for libel on at least one occasion. Ironically, it is due to the reports of spies that we know that Wedderburn continued to focus the attention of London radicals on the struggle between Amerindians and the American government. In January 1817, a spy reported that Wedderburn debated "whether the American Government [is] to be applauded or Condemned for the means they have taken to civilize the Indians by giving them a Portion of Land." Two years later, Wedderburn's congregants at the Hopkins Street chapel -- up to 200 of them, paying 6d to listen to the preacher's performances -- heard him debate whether it was lawful for a slave to kill a master that refused to liberate her. The decision, in favour of the slave, was unanimous. Wedderburn's rhetorical rebellion resulted in prosecution for sedition and blasphemy.

In addition to his preaching, Wedderburn published a number of radical texts for distribution in Britain and in his native Jamaica. In 1824 he published an autobiographical tract, The Horrors of Slavery, dedicated to William Wilberforce. The title page of the text is a superb exercise in Spencean irony (Fig. 4.7). The illustration of the mulatto Wedderburn is positioned above a title declaring his father's identity as a white, Scottish planter: "James Wedderburn Esq. of Inveresk." The text is in the form of the slave biography, offering testimony from his early life in Jamaica as evidence in the case against slavery.


42James Wedderburn himself was famous in abolitionist circles for his attempt in 1768 to enforce slave status on a runaway slave in Scotland. Cases such as these contributed to the legal fight against slavery in Britain. See Douglas A. Lorimer, "Black Slaves and English Liberty: A Re-examination of Racial Slavery in England," Immigrants and Minorities 3.2 (1984): 121-150.
DEDICATED TO W. WILBERFORCE, M.P.

THE HORRORS OF SLAVERY;
EXEMPLIFIED IN
The Life and History
OF THE
REV. ROBERT WEDDERBURN, V.D.M.
(Late a Prisoner in His Majesty's Gaol at Dorchester, for
Conscience-Sake.)
Son of the late JAMES WEDDERBURN, Esq. of Inveresk, Slave-Dealer,
by one of his Slaves in the Island of Jamaica:
IN WHICH IS INCLUDED
The Correspondence of the Rev. ROBERT WEDDERBURN
and his Brother, A. COLVILLE, Esq. alias WEDDERBURN,
of 35, Leadenhall Street.
With Remarks on, and Illustrations of the Treatment of the Blacks,
AND
A VIEW OF THEIR DEGRADED STATE,
AND THE
DISGUSTING LICKERISHNESS OF THE PLANTERS.

LONDON:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY R. WEDDERBURN.
23, Russell Court, Druy Lan;
And Sold by R. Carline, 34, Fleet Street; and T. Davison,
Duke Street,
West Smithfield
1824.

Fig. 4.7 Title page to Robert Wedderburn's The Horrors of Slavery (1824)
It was in his 1817 periodical, *The Axe Laid to the Root*, that Wedderburn applied his Spencean background to the struggle against slavery. *The Axe Laid to the Root* is addressed to a Jamaican audience, both planters and slaves, providing, Wedderburn supposed, a warning to the former and inspiration to the other. In the first issue, Wedderburn urges the slaves to prepare for their jubilee, for the day when they will control the island's plantations. Wedderburn threatens the plantocracy with the image of Toussaint L'Ouverture and violent slave rebellion: "the island of Jamaica will be in the hands of the blacks within twenty years. Prepare for flight, ye planters, for the fate of St. Domingo awaits you." Wedderburn's journal took its title from Spence's *Giant Killer*, as well as the jubilee motif, the biblical promise of levelling and liberation. The jubilee, a periodical carnivalesque phenomenon, inverts the social order: slaves are liberated and wealth is redistributed. The jubilee metaphor combined the two central interests of Spence and Wedderburn: colonial slavery and inequality. The jubilee would, in Spence's terms, restore the world to its original condition, a state he associated with the pristine liberty of the Amerindians.

The relationship between Thomas Spence and Robert Wedderburn suggests the outlines of an alternative Atlantic story and an alternative Atlantic imagination, that of Friday and his grandchildren. The Atlantic imagination of Spence and Wedderburn opposes the utopianism of plunder, promoting, in its place, the utopianism of egalitarianism. Spence


used the Robinson Crusoe story as the vehicle for constructing this imagination, using a representative text of the English Atlantic imagination in the work of constructing an assault on it. The imagination that motivated English Atlanticists like Robinson Crusoe to displace and dispossess Amerindians and displace and enslave Africans is challenged in the work of Spence and Wedderburn by an imagination that would protect the integrity and security of Amerindians and their land and liberate African slaves.

This other Atlantic imagination is, as Paul Gilroy has described it, "an explicitly transnational and intercultural perspective."45 It is based on and shared by subaltern people across the Atlantic world: slaves, Amerindians, poor Britons, and radical intellectuals. The vectors of the other Atlantic imagination have been surveyed by historians Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker in "a study of connections within the working class -- connections that have been denied, ignored, or simply never seen by most historians."46 The association of Thomas Spence and Robert Wedderburn is only one instance of this phenomenon. An English radical, Spence, along with a descendent of slaves, Wedderburn, cooperated in a single, transnational, transatlantic political campaign to end slavery in Jamaica and to end inequality in Britain. The campaign was coordinated through an ensemble of ideas and a collection of texts in which all the subaltern peoples of the Atlantic are figured as unified in a common cause: Africans against slavers, slaves against their masters, Amerindians against the further encroachments of Europeans on their land and independence, and the white working class against their employers and their governments.


A literary correspondence in the Northern American colonies provides an illustration of the formation of the other Atlantic imagination. In 1774, the former slave poet from Boston, Phillis Wheatley corresponded in the press with the Mohegan writer, Samsom Occom, about the related questions of slavery and Amerindian rights. Occom, also a published author, had by 1774 been involved for a number of years in the pursuit of a land claim for the Mohegan Indians, an effort to protect his community's security and independence in upstate new York. He wrote to Wheatley in support of abolition, and Wheatley in turn expressed solidarity with Occom's cause.47 Wheatley understood the role of the imagination in pursuing their aims: "Imagination!" she wrote in the year of her manumission, "who can sing thy force?"48 The forceful imagination of Ottahab Cugoano spanned the entire Atlantic. This former slave and active abolitionist argued in his Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery (1787) that the English Atlantic imagination that led to the enslavement of Africans was the same that dispossessed the first Americans. He describes that imagination in the uncompromising language of judgement and condemnation:

None but men of the most brutish and depraved nature, led on by the invidious influence of infernal wickedness, could have made their settlements in the different parts of the world discovered by them, and have treated the various Indian nations, in the manner that the barbarous and inhuman Europeans have done: and their establishing and carrying on that most dishonest, unjust and diabolical traffic of buying and selling, and of enslaving men, is such a monstrous, audacious and

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47 Wheatley's letter, which describes the contents of Occom's, is reprinted in The Heath Anthology of American Literature, ed. Paul Lauter et al (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1990) I, 727-728. Although the causes of abolition and Amerindian sovereignty were radical ones, neither Wheatley and Occom pursued radical methods or inflammatory language, and their correspondence was published in the mainstream press.

unparalleled wickedness, that the very idea of it is shocking, and the whole nature of it is horrible and infernal.⁴⁹

According to this judgement, the English Atlantic imagination must be rejected; it cannot be redeemed. In London, Cugoano fought for abolition alongside Granville Sharp and the other English abolitionists.

One of the most forceful statements of the other Atlantic imagination, the *Interesting Narrative* of Oladuah Equiano, was written in the house of the London radical, Thomas Hardy. In addition to providing shelter, Hardy put Equiano in contact with British abolitionists and radicals who, like Spence, combined anti-slavery activities with their own pursuit of political and social equality. Hardy himself declared in his 1792 *Memoirs* that "I am fully persuaded that there is no man, who is, from principle, an advocate of the liberty of the black man, but will zealously support the rights of the white man, and *vice versa.*"⁵⁰ Marcus Rediker describes the combined work of people like Spence and Wedderburn, Wheatley and Occom, Cugoano and Sharp, and Equiano and Hardy as instances of "a transatlantic class consciousness" in which the "thoughts and actions that emerged from England were joined and jostled by the rich traditions of working people from Africa, continental Europe, Ireland, Scotland, native America and numerous other spots on the globe."⁵¹

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Peter Linebaugh has suggestively argued that the process by which the people of the Atlantic came to know of each other's disparate struggles, and to conceive them as related, was an effect of that most central of Atlantic objects, the ship. The ship was the means by which the Atlantic world was made and the vehicle of the English Atlantic imagination, transporting colonists, slaves and commodities, but it was also the vehicle by which this dominant imagination was challenged and resisted.\textsuperscript{52} Information, ideas, and texts (printed and oral) moved back and forth across the ocean by ship in the formation of the subaltern Atlantic imagination. The sea and the ship were the conduits for this information, these texts and these ideas.\textsuperscript{53} Equiano's \textit{Interesting Narrative} is a pioneering text in this regard, a model of the slave autobiography and the testimonial style, and a good example of the way the other Atlantic imagination was formed. Equiano worked in the shipping industry, on the docks and in ships, as a slave and as a free man, and so his Atlantic perspective is remarkably broad. In that respect, and in its autobiographical form, it is the perfect foil to the perspective of Robinson Crusoe.\textsuperscript{54}

The \textit{Interesting Narrative} describes Equiano's enslavement in Africa and transportation across the Atlantic into colonial slavery. This was just the first of Equiano's Atlantic voyages. He would cross and recross the Atlantic a number of times in his amazing


career, travelling from America to Britain, from the Arctic to the Caribbean. It was in the middle of the Atlantic, on board the Aetna where Equiano was serving as a seaman, that he learned to read, taught by his messmate. In London, in 1767, Equiano worked as a barber in Haymarket, and was present in the capital for that year's "Wilkes and Liberty" riots. In the Caribbean, he recorded observations about the conditions of slaves and their relationships with their masters, and like an ethnographer he described the culture of the Amerindians of the Mosquito coast as they interacted with African slaves and British colonists. In 1787, just before he composed his autobiography, Equiano became the Commissary for Stores for the campaign to open up Sierra Leone to London's poor Africans, thus completing, in some respects, his long Atlantic voyage.

In addition to the common Atlantic setting, Equiano's Interesting Narrative owes something to the autobiographical form of Robinson Crusoe. After Equiano, the autobiography would become a paradigm for others to narrate their subaltern Atlantic stories. Friday and his grandchildren would effectively appropriate and adopt the form of Crusoe's autobiographical story in order to narrate their own stories. In 1831, for example, the West Indian slave, Mary Prince, used this model in recording her History, the first published slave narrative written by a woman. Prince's History was published as testimonial evidence for the abolitionist cause, and describes her voyages around England's Atlantic colonies and her eventual arrival in London in order to persuade readers to support the abolition of slavery.

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56 For a brief account of Equiano's life see Fryer, Staying Power, 102-112.

The same year, William Apes, the son of a Pequot Indian and Methodist preacher, used this technique in his own autobiography, *A Son of the Forest*, in order to give voice to the experiences of New England's Amerindians. Later, Apes would use the life-story as a technique to advocate the rights of the Pequot Indians and to explore the representations of Amerindians by Europeans and Euroamericans. A collection of biographical and autobiographical writing that Apes assembled, *The Experience of Five Christian Indians* (1833), was subtitled *The Indians Looking Glass for the White Man*. It was a reflection on the origins and effects of white racism written just after the passage of the Indian Removal Act (1830). The most powerful text in this testimonial tradition is the first autobiography of Frederick Douglass (1845). A descendent of slaves, Europeans, and possibly even Amerindians, the prose of Douglass' autobiography -- the story of a former slave and a transatlantic traveller -- was even explicitly compared by one contemporary reviewer to Defoe's. Of course, Douglass had rewritten Defoe's Atlantic story from Friday's perspective, with a view to undermining the social reality that his literary model had represented.\(^{58}\)

The story of Friday and his grandchildren can also be found in the documents of the English Atlantic archive in the records of actions motivated by this other Atlantic imagination. The name Friday (Kofi, Coffee, Cuffy, Cuffe, Cuffay, etc.) appears frequently in the English Atlantic archive, particularly in the history of slave revolts and rebellions in seventeenth and eighteenth-century America.\(^{59}\) Kofi is an Akan day name, and the Kofis that led these slave revolts were transported from the Gold Coast into New

\(^{58}\)See William L. Andrews' introductory comments to Douglass' 1845 *Narrative* in *The Oxford Frederick Douglass Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) 21. Douglass himself was unsure of his Amerindian connections and his early inquiries into his background were rebuffed. See *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, (1892) in *The Oxford Frederick Douglass Reader*, 317.

\(^{59}\)For a discussion of Friday's name see chapter 3.
World slavery and known to Europeans as Coromantine Africans. Akans were the Africans most feared by their plantation masters. Choosing this name for his slave, Crusoe invokes this history of resistance even if his representation of Friday suppresses it.

In 1676, the year after Crusoe discovered the stranger's footprint on his island, a slave revolt was discovered on Barbados. The details of the event are documented in a pamphlet, *Great newes from Barbadoes*, the first time that English readers were presented with an eye-witness description of slave unrest. The pamphlet was intended by its author to allay whatever fears that potential English immigrants to the island might have of slave unrest and violence. Accordingly, in the pamphlet narrative of the revolt, the slaves' plot is exposed and the leaders quickly and mercilessly punished. The pamphlet itself frames the narrative of slave unrest with rather conventional promotional rhetoric: the history of the colony of Barbados and a description of its natural splendour precedes the story and an account of the state of the island's thriving commerce follows it.

Between these two rather orthodox products of the English Atlantic imagination, however, there is the account of the slave revolt. This narrative can be read against the grain of the English Atlantic imagination, in a challenge to the author's rhetorical strategy, in order to begin the story of Friday and his grandchildren, a story discovered in the interstices of the English Atlantic archive.

The Barbados slave conspiracy, as it is designated in the surviving documents, was reported to have been "hatched by the Coromantee or Gold-Coast Negro's". The revolt was, apparently, three years in the making, and the plot had slowly been conveyed from plantation to plantation, and from these plantations to the households. It was in this final stage of communication that the plot was discovered. A domestic slave woman, Anna,

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overheard some field slaves discussing the revolt and reported it to her master, Justice Hall who, in turn, interrogated the men involved, and the extent and nature of the plot was revealed. The slaves had planned to attack their masters, "the Bacararoes", to kill them and free themselves. The discussion that Hall's household slave, Anna, overheard in the field was a debate about the wisdom of sparing the masters' families. The narrative names very few slaves besides Anna, the faithful domestic servant. One of the named conspirators, however, was the leader of the plot, a slave named Coffee. According to the English author of *Great newes form Barbadoes*, the slaves' grand design was to choose them a King, one Coffee, an Ancient Gold Cost [sic.] Negro, who should have been Crowned the 12th of June last past in a Chair of State exquisitely wrought and Carved after their Mode; and with Bowes and Arrowes to be likewise carried in State before his Majesty their intended King: Trumpets to be made of Elephants Teeth and Gourdes to be sounded on several Hills, to give Notice of their general Rising, with a full intention to fire the Sugar-Canes and to run in and Cut their Masters the Planters Throats in their respective Plantations whereunto they did belong.61

The slaves under Coffee's leadership intended to turn the colony's social order upside down, to destroy the plantocracy and replace the English colonial administrators with a leader of their own choosing: Coffee would be crowned monarch of the liberated island. The plotted revolution, of course, did not occur. After uncovering the conspiracy, Justice Hall notified Governor Atkins who crushed the revolt just eight days before it was to begin. In response to the plot, the slave laws of Barbados were tightened in an effort to prevent future revolts; movement of slaves between plantations, the mechanism that allowed revolts and other forms of coordinated resistance to be plotted, was curtailed. The leaders of the slave revolt were arrested and, according to the author of *Great newes from Barbadoes*, seventeen slaves were executed: six of the rebels were burnt alive and

61 Anon., *Great newes from the Barbadoes* (1676) 9.
eleven were beheaded and then burnt with the others. Five of the conspirators hanged themselves rather than be punished, and an undisclosed number were imprisoned.

Unpublished reports of the event add that a further twenty-five slaves were executed and others were deported, probably to Jamaica.⁶²

A renegade African named Cuffy was the leader of a slave revolt in Berbice in 1763. Although the rebellion was ultimately defeated by the Dutch planters who had colonized the area, letters survive written by Cuffy to the leader of the Dutch colony presenting the grievances of the slaves and their demands for liberty and autonomy.⁶³ Cuffy represented the 4,000 African and Amerindian slaves in negotiations with the Dutch colonists who had been forced to retreat from their plantations after the rebellion spread. In his first letter, Cuffy stated that the "causes of this war is that there have been many masters who have not given their slaves their due." He informed the Dutch that the liberated slaves intended to occupy and govern Berbice exclusively, a claim that was naturally ignored. During the time of their occupation, the freed Africans and Amerindians erected a government and continued to work on the plantations producing food for themselves. They also enjoyed some of the fruits of the plantation complex. A contemporary observer remarked that the freed slaves "spent most of their time in revery and debauchery and drink, dressing themselves up in the clothes which they found on the plantations." In short, he concluded, they were "imitating the planters."⁶⁴ What was seen

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⁶³For accounts of the incident see Vere T. Daly, A Short History of the Guyanese People (London: Macmillan, 1975) 141-152 and Schuler, "Akan Slave Rebellions in the British Caribbean." Cuffy is recognized as the founder of modern Guyana, and honoured with an annual holiday.

⁶⁴The contemporary account, which quotes Cuffy's letters, is J.J. Hartslinck, "The
as imitation was, however, a form of rebellion rather than reverence, a difference that the Dutch reporter could not perceive.

The son of a manumitted African father and an Amerindian mother, Paul Cuffe was born in Dartmouth in 1759. Cuffe had an extraordinary Atlantic career. He became a sailor on a whaling ship, was a prisoner of war during the American War of Independence, fought off the attack of pirates, and eventually captained and owned his own ships. Cuffe dedicated the last years of his life to promoting the cause of abolition and the repatriation of free black Americans to the Freetown colony in Sierra Leone. Cuffe made a number of voyages to Africa himself and invested some of his own capital in the Freetown colony. In 1812, he published *A brief Account of the Settlement and Present Situation of the Colony of Sierra Leone*, a narrative of his African travels intended to increase support for African repatriation. The text borrows all the tropes of the colonial promotional pamphlet, praising the unusual fecundity of the soil and predicting future prosperity for immigrants to the settlement:

Sierra Leone is a country on the west coast of Africa. Its situation is inviting, and its soil generally very productive. A river of the same name passes through the country, and the land for a great extent on each side is peculiarly fertile, and with the climate well calculated for the cultivation of West-India and other produce.66

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65 H.N. Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe," *Journal of Negro History* 8 (1923): 153-229. Although he was of mixed parentage, Cuffe identified himself as African. Like his father, Cuffe married an Amerindian but their son, the author of an autobiography, identified himself with his mother as a Pequot Indian.

Although not intentionally ironic, Cuffe's pamphlet subverts the tropes of the English Atlantic imagination, turning them towards a plan the aim of which was to redress some of the damage that that imagination had wrought.

A portrait of Cuffe (Fig. 4.8) illustrates his interesting place in the Atlantic world. The sea captain is represented in fashionable silhouette above one of his ships. Below the man is a symbolic landscape representing his role in the Atlantic: on the right is a temperate American landscape, on the left is Africa, and the space between the distant chores has been compressed by Cuffe. He has created a new connection between the two sides of the Atlantic. In 1816, Cuffe's ship, the Traveller, made a final transatlantic voyage, carrying 38 free black Americans to Freetown to join the black loyalists from Nova Scotia and the repatriated black Britons. Cuffe died the following year while organizing a second, larger contingent of exodants. These descendants of Friday may have disembarked in Freetown like Thomas Peters, a former American slave who sailed to Africa from Halifax, singing the hymn of freedom: "the Year of Jubilee has come/Returned ye ransomed sinners home."67

Fridays grandchildren were active in all corners of the English Atlantic world. They participated in urban riots, such as those in New York in 1741 where several Africans named Friday were among the 155 slaves indicted for conspiracy.68 In Britain, they participated in the popular political movements of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century, from the Gordon Riots to Chartism.69 One of the most radical of the

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Fig. 4.8 Illustration of Paul Cuffe (1812)
Fig. 4.9 Illustration of William Cuffay in *Reynold's Political Instructor* (1850)
London Chartists was William Cuffay, the son of a former slave, born on a ship returning from St. Christophers to England in 1788 (Fig. 4.9). A tailor by trade, Cuffay founded the Metropolitan Tailor's Charter Association and was one of the "physical force faction" that advocated violence as a means to obtaining the Chartist's goals. Cuffay was pilloried by the mainstream press, satirized in *Punch*, for example. When he opposed the Anti-Corn League in 1842, the *Times* identified Cuffay as the Chartist's London leader, referring to them as the "black man and his party." 1848, the year of political upheaval, was Cuffay's *annus horibilis*. He was arrested on 15 August at the Orange Tree Tavern in Bloomsbury, betrayed by a government spy. At his trial Cuffe challenged the legitimacy of the court, arguing that the propertied men who comprised the jury were not his peers. He called the Attorney General the Spymaster-General and declared his willingness to suffer any punishment for his beliefs, including the scaffold. Cuffay was spared execution and deported to Tasmania where he continued to agitate for freedom.

I located these stories of Friday's grandchildren in the English Atlantic archive by working out from the text into its context, elaborating (to use Spivak's term) some of the heteroglot or polysemous features of *Robinson Crusoe*. It was only in this way that the other, subaltern Atlantic imagination could be identified and explored. The difficulty of this kind of interpretation results, in part, from the nature of *Robinson Crusoe*. In his *Adventures* and *Further Adventures* Crusoe occluded the story of his slave in his narrative, representing Friday in such a way as to make the resulting version of the island's history partial. However, as Maximillian Novak has recently argued, there "was much about the evils of colonialism that Defoe did not grasp, but ... *Robinson Crusoe*

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provided the materials for mounting an attack against it." Similarly, Lincoln Faller has argued that with Defoe's narratives "more than one story can be told out of any given set of circumstances." Defoe transforms circumstances into one narrative, but it is possible to locate and tell other stories. The Robinson Crusoe story seems to be such a narrative, incorporating in its central island episode two significant imaginations, but allowing only one of these to construct a narrative out of their circumstances. Robinson Crusoe, like Defoe's other narrators, is not to be trusted, or taken at his own valuation. These narrators, Faller argues, "conceal important facts, engage in special pleading." Working out from the Robinson Crusoe story into its contexts, we can construct a different interpretation of Friday and his legacy, reconstructing his imagination and his undisclosed response to his island encounter with Crusoe. We can move beyond Crusoe's special pleading to make room for the testimony of Friday and his grandchildren, the other Atlantic imagination. Through this imagination we can see the English Atlantic world, the


world of Defoe's projections and Robinson Crusoe's plantation complex, from the other side.
Conclusion
A Supplement to Crusoe's Adventures

This dissertation has been devoted to interpreting Robinson Crusoe historically: reading the history in and of Daniel Defoe's novel considered as an important document in the archive of the English Atlantic world, the hemispheric imperial zone of the early modern period. My argument is that Robinson Crusoe is a representative text, one which can be used to interpret the English Atlantic world in which it is set and one which can most meaningfully be interpreted through that context. Martin Green has made a similar contention: "Robinson Crusoe is a central mythic expression of the modern system, of its call to young men to go out and expand that empire; and the more you know about the latter, the richer the meanings you find in the former." An argument such as the one I am making requires a historiography appropriate for the exploration of the English Atlantic imagination, and a cultural theory adequate for the interpretation of a literary document belonging to that specific context. As a consequence of the historiographical and theoretical discussion in the introduction, the social imagination emerges as the most important category of analysis for the study of literary texts in historical contexts. The social imagination, I maintain, is not merely a consequence, reflection, or effect of social reality, it is also the means by which social reality is constituted and, importantly, reconstituted.

After establishing the historiographical and theoretical protocols by which I proposed to interpret Robinson Crusoe, I examined the ideological vectors that piloted the economic exploration of the English around and across the Atlantic Ocean to Africa and the Americas in the early modern period as they are represented in travel narratives, colonial discourse, and economic treatises, the kinds of texts which Robinson Crusoe most closely

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resembles. In chapter 1 I argued that the geographically and institutionally diverse activities undertaken by the English Atlanticists -- both textual and material -- can be understood as products of a social imagination preoccupied with a utopian desire for plunder: the discovery and accumulation of wealth at the direct expense of displaced and exploited Amerindians and Africans. In Defoe's words, the Atlantic was for these Englishmen an "inexhaustible Fountain of Gold."²

Chapter 2 isolated the texts of a single writer from the archive explored in chapter one and his substantial dossier of Atlantic texts. I argued that in his ideological preoccupations and in the language of his texts Defoe is a conventional English Atlantic author, but one who is unique in the variety and quality of his Atlantic writing, particularly in the way that he developed and employed what he called a projecting faculty, a distinctive representational strategy, in different forms of writing and different textual genres. Defoe used both fictional and factual forms of writing in the description, evaluation, and promotion of Atlanticism in pamphlets, economic histories and surveys, travel narratives, and periodical journalism, and also in some of his novels. In this formal variety, in the generic breadth of his texts, and in the distinctive representational strategy that is common to them, Defoe emerges as an extraordinary contributor to the English Atlantic imagination.

The first two chapters dealing with Defoe and the English Atlantic imagination enabled a close reading of Robinson Crusoe, Defoe's Atlantic masterpiece. My interpretation of Robinson Crusoe, the fulcrum of the dissertation, concentrated on understanding the world Robinson Crusoe made in the Atlantic, in particular the plantation complex that he constructed and cultivated on his Caribbean island colony, Crusonia. In narrating the establishment and construction of his colony, Robinson Crusoe deployed familiar principles of conquest and colonial property ownership and deployed conventional ideas

²Daniel Defoe, An Historical Account of the Voyages of Sir Walter Raleigh (1719) 43.
of labour exploitation, particularly slavery. In a fictional first-person narrative, Robinson Crusoe represents the mentality of an Atlantic colonialist, the mastery at the heart of the plantation complex, and in this respect, Defoe's novel can be understood as complementing the less-well-articulated experience of English Atlanticists of the same period. Robinson Crusoe provides, by way of a fictional text, significant insight into important historical phenomena.

My reading of Robinson Crusoe was followed by an exploration of the legacy of Defoe's novel, an unconventional reception study of its historical effects in the English Atlantic world. In chapter 4 I inquired into the possible histories of Crusonia after the end of Crusoe's narratives by examining some of the ways that his texts were interpreted. In particular I investigated Thomas Spence's speculative, radical interpretation of the history of Crusonia. I used Spence's fictionalized ideological critique as a pivot to turn from an examination of Crusoe and the historical world of the colonizers to the other, colonized Atlanticists, the story of Friday and his grandchildren, attempting to articulate their presence in the Atlantic world, the other Atlantic imagination. I searched for these things both in the literary texts of the colonized and in the record of their actions. I wanted to demonstrate that, as Jack Greene has argued, the establishment of colonial mastery was always contested, and that resistance to mastery affected the history of colonial cultural spaces, even if, as in Robinson Crusoe, the effects of resistance are not acknowledged.³

The route that this dissertation has followed has demanded frequent movement between the discourses of literature and history. This exchange between conventionally distinct academic discourses has been necessary in order to interpret Robinson Crusoe effectively. Often considered the first English novel, Robinson Crusoe must be interpreted in relation to those other discourses from which it had allegedly broken, particularly historical forms of writing. As Defoe remarks in the preface to Robinson Crusoe, the "thing" he has

produced is "a just history of fact" without "any appearance of fiction in it." I hope I have shown that Robinson Crusoe belongs both to the English Atlantic archive and the canon of English novels.

It is not just the unusual textual nature of Robinson Crusoe that demands historical interpretation but the very subject of the novel. Because of the autobiographical nature of Robinson Crusoe, there is a danger in seeing Friday only in the manner that Crusoe represents him, a danger that exposes the limits of some of the conventional techniques of literary analysis. Written in the form of an autobiography of an English Atlanticist, Defoe's novel occludes the history of the colonized Atlanticists. This suppressed history consists in part of acts of resistance in which the power of dominating Crusoes was contested by subaltern Fridays. However, a more comprehensive understanding of the English Atlantic world, one that attends to the experience and imagination of the colonized, can be extracted from Robinson Crusoe, beginning with a genealogy of Friday, if the text is read against the grain.

The Robinson Crusoe story, as Pierre Macherey has classified it, is "not just an adventure story but is the instrument of an inquiry." Since it was published, the Robinson Crusoe story has been interpreted, as Martin Green suggests, as a sign for colonialism. I explored that phenomenon in the last chapter. Subsequently, Robinson Crusoe has become a site of debate and struggle in the movements of anticolonialism and the process of decolonization. Octave Mannoni, for example, used the Robinson Crusoe story to explain his theory of colonial relations and his interpretation of the anticolonial rebellion in Madagascar in 1947. The psychoanalytically and anthropologically trained Mannoni, an official in the French colonial bureaucracy, argued that Robinson Crusoe was

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a literary prototype for the colonial "dependency complex," a psychological theory of the paternal relationship that exists in colonial situations between the colonizer and the colonized. For Mannoni, the 1947 Rebellion in Madagascar was adequately explained as a breakdown in the relationship between paternal French Crusoes and Malagasy Fridays, and not, for instance, as the result of years of foreign domination and forced labour. Mannoni goes further, suggesting that Crusoe is not merely a prototype but a progenitor of the modern colonial figure, chillingly suggesting that many colonial vocations, perhaps even his own, were owed to readings of Defoe's novel: "The story of the friendship of Robinson and Friday no doubt accounts for many colonial callings." Mannoni was challenged by Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire who argued for a different historical interpretation of colonial relationships in general and the anticolonial struggle in particular, one that examined those phenomena from the perspective of the colonized.

In both colonial and anticolonial scenarios, and from the perspectives of both the colonizer and the colonized, Robinson Crusoe's island story is the site of contention, a literary text through which the meaning of history can be disputed. Elaborating on Bronislaw Malinowski's conception of historical charters, as "collectively held, publicly expressed and ideologically charged versions of the past," Arjun Appadurai has identified an important variety of historical discourse "whose essential purpose is to debate other pasts." History thus conceived is distinct from conventional accounts of change and temporality. Instead it is the discourse through which the past and its legacy are


contested. History thus conceived is the site where "values are defined, images of transactions contrived, and interpretations of a situation necessarily imposed by one party on another." The bearing of such a debate on the present in which the past is contested is obvious. Histories of this kind do not just interpret the past, they seek to use the past to interpret the present and to motivate future action.

It is in this way that Robinson Crusoe has and should be interpreted. For many readers, Robinson Crusoe's island story is not only a literary narrative, it is an historical one: "public knowledge of the past: not public in the sense of being institutional, but public in the sense of being culturally shared, expressed in some way." The Robinson Crusoe story became for these readers what Pierre Nora has described as a site of memory, a place "where memory crystallizes and secretes itself." Nora identifies colonial and postcolonial situations as instances where sites of memory are particularly important. In this respect, the Robinson Crusoe story is not just an archived historical narrative, it is remembered, and for being remembered is more compelling. Mark Houlahan has discovered a powerful instance of this phenomenon from the Pacific imagination of the second British empire. A mid-nineteenth-century Maori translation of Robinson Crusoe undertaken by Henry Kemp, an official in the British colonial apparatus, was interpreted by his Maori audience, in at least one case, as historical. Hearing the narrative read aloud, a Maori chief replied, "[t]hat is no tale, that happened." 

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11Mark Houlahan, "The Canon on the Beach: H.T. Kemp translating Robinson Crusoe and The Pilgrim's Progress," unpublished paper. I am grateful to Mark Houlahan for letting me read this fascinating essay, and for interesting discussions about the colonial imagination.
I was compelled to begin reflecting on these questions in relation to Defoe's novel two years ago while working as a literacy tutor with Thomas, a student from St. Lucia. As part of our sessions, I used short literary texts to illustrate the specific grammatical or vocabulary problems with which we were dealing, to engage our imaginations in the process of learning language's rules and paradigms. I chose some of Derek Walcott's *Castaway* poems because I was interested, for academic reasons, in contemporary literary appropriations of the Robinson Crusoe story and because, like Thomas, Walcott is from St. Lucia. I had assumed that the familiarity of the poems' geographical setting would somehow aid the pedagogical project, but I had been so preoccupied with teaching the grammar and vocabulary of the poems that I had not considered how Thomas would interpret them. When the circumstances and outline the poems' narratives had been established, Thomas told me that his grandmother had used the same story when he was a child in order to teach the history of St. Lucia. Robinson Crusoe's island story, for Thomas' grandmother, was interpreted historically in a way that I had not anticipated. For Thomas, Walcott's Crusoe poems narrated what he had known as an historical story in the form of a literary one.

This experience presented the Robinson Crusoe story to me in a new way as something alien, something strange. My encounter with this new interpretation of *Robinson Crusoe* compelled me to reconsider what kind of story it was at the same time that I had to reconsider what the story might mean in the present. I could no longer take for granted the distinctions that we make between literature and history as categorically different ways of narrating the same phenomenon, the same social reality. I found it necessary to reexamine not just the elements of the story of Robinson Crusoe and Friday but the very mode of its narration, and hence our interpretation of it. I was also forced to confront the legacy of the Robinson Crusoe story as it affected the present in which I live. This

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moment of estrangement has compelled me to reconstruct my knowledge and experience of this important story, to think of it as both a literary and a historical fiction in the sense of being something made by and about the English Atlantic world, and also to consider at the same time the materials and conditions necessary for that making and the consequences of it having been made.

I later discovered that Derek Walcott had an experience with *Robinson Crusoe* as a schoolboy in St. Lucia similar to Thomas'. He recounts this experience in a 1965 lecture, "The Figure of Crusoe," where he discusses the place of the Robinson Crusoe story in his education: "Crusoe is a figure from our schoolboy reading. He is a part of the mythology of every West Indian child." Walcott himself provides evidence for this claim. In his remarkable 1992 Nobel Lecture on the colonial imagination, Walcott recounts hearing schoolchildren in Trinidad singing lines from *Robinson Crusoe*, a song that begins "I am monarch of all I survey." The children of Trinidad reappropriate in song the central trope of colonial mastery, demonstrating that they are truly postcolonial or, in this case, post-Crusonian.

Like Walcott, the Kenyan critic and novelist Ngugi wa Thiong'o has observed that Defoe's story was frequently employed as an instrument of colonial pedagogy, and that as a consequence Crusoe's narrative was legitimated and internalized by colonized subjects. They were taught, he argues, to see themselves as Friday through Crusoe's narrative of colonization, from the colonizer's perspective. They were taught to see themselves as Crusoe represented Friday. In his essay, "Literature in Schools," he writes:

> the teaching of only European literature, and mostly British imperialist literature in our schools, means that our students are daily being confronted with the European reflection of itself, the European image, in history. Our children are

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made and seen by Europeans. Worse still, these children are confronted with a distorted image of themselves and their history as reflected and interpreted in European imperialist literature. They see how...Crusoe discovers and remakes Man Friday in Crusoe's image, but not how Friday views himself and his heroic struggle against Crusoe's exploitation and oppression.\(^{15}\)

Ngugi has argued that one of the necessary responses to this continuation of colonization by means of literature is the decolonization of the imagination, beginning, for instance, with the narration of the Robinson Crusoe story from Friday's point of view.

Culture, Ngugi argues in *Decolonising the Mind*, is an essential weapon in the history of colonization. "Economic and political control of a people can never be complete without cultural control," he contends. If control of the imagination is necessary for colonization, it is also one of the objects for which decolonization can be fought: "if we are to do anything about our individual and collective being today, then we have to coldly and consciously look at what imperialism has been doing to us and to our view of ourselves".\(^{16}\) Decolonization's cultural task, he suggests, is the reclamation of the colonized imagination, and indeed one of the most conspicuous and contentious features of the post-Crusonian world, the postcolonial, globalized moment that we inhabit is the often violent struggle for culture that Ngugi describes.

The power of culture is something that was recognized by Amilcar Cabral, articulate leader of the anticolonial movement in Guinea-Bissau: "Culture is simultaneously the fruit of a people's history and a determinant of history... Ignorance of this fact may explain the failure of several attempts at foreign domination -- as well as the failure of some international liberation movements."\(^{17}\) Reflecting on the imperial *longue durée*,

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Immanuel Wallerstein has argued that in the history of colonialism and anticolonialism the "construction of culture becomes a battleground, the key ideological battleground in fact of the opposing interests within this historical system."18

Texts like Robinson Crusoe are particularly important ideological battlegrounds in the history of colonization and are therefore important in the history of anticolonial struggles and decolonization, and in future postcolonial histories. One of the instruments of colonization, Robinson Crusoe can be an instrument of decolonization if, as Ngugi suggests, it is interpreted from Friday's perspective. One of Friday's distant legatees, the Trinidadian writer Marion O'Callaghan, has made a similar argument. Acknowledging the role of the imagination in the history of colonization, she argues for the importance of the decolonization of the imagination in addressing that history as it survives in and affects the present. Decolonizing the imagination is essential, she argues, to the decolonization of social reality: "[t]he decolonization of the imagination, then, is closely linked to structural change, at a level at which ... new types of legitimation and, therefore, 'imagination,' occur."19

Stories like Robinson Crusoe's for Walcott and Ngugi are not merely disciplinary fields, sites for the production of etiolated specialist knowledge, they are also, in Nancy Schepere-Hughes terms, "force fields, sites of action where power relationships are constructed."20 Conceiving of Robinson Crusoe as a force field suggests certain kinds of interpretive imperatives. Using the same metaphor, Michel de Certeau argues that it is

Press, 1973) 41.


necessary to "repoliticize' the [human] sciences, that is to focus their technical apparatus on the fields of force in which they work." The force field at the centre of Defoe's novel is Crusonia. The historical voyage that brought Crusoe and Friday together in their island force field was a destructive one. For too many Fridays, voyages in the Atlantic like Crusoe's were fatal, and the descendants of Friday continue to live in the shadow of the consequences of those Atlantic voyages. In those destructive voyages, however, something useful can be identified and preserved. "Voyaging," Nicholas Thomas has observed, "will always involve intrusion and injustice as well as gift giving and new knowledge. It will always foster stereotypes and misrepresentations as well as deeper appreciations of other people's stories and situations."

The consequences of the intrusions, injustices, and misrepresentations fostered in the making of the English Atlantic world have been profound, but it is possible to reread stories such as Robinson Crusoe as a form of engagement with the historical social reality -- the force field -- they have helped to constitute, in order to acquire better forms of knowledge, to express solidarity, to address the legacies and the contemporary forms of these past intrusions, injustices, and misrepresentations. It is possible to use stories like Friday's in the decolonization of the imagination and also in reconstitution of the social reality made by Crusoe, in the pursuit of what Edward Said has called "non-coercive knowledge produced in the interests of human freedom."23

For an interpretation of Robinson Crusoe to be effective, it is necessary to identify to some extent with Crusoe the narrator. Although the English Atlantic world was made by

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what Stuart Hall has called its three "presences" -- African, Amerindian and European --
the representation of that world in the period in which Crusonia was established was
dominated by just one of them.²⁴ The island that Crusoe inhabits is a total one: Crusonia
is entirely his invention, having been discovered, possessed, developed, and governed by
him. Most importantly, Robinson Crusoe is the narrator of its history. It is necessary to
identify with Crusoe in order to understand his island and to know its origins and its
legacy. And, while it is necessary in this respect to identify with Crusoe, it is equally
necessary to state one's solidarity with Friday, to interpret the history of Crusonia in his
memory and in the memory of his grandchildren and their grandchildren. It is this
solidarity which has motivated this dissertation. Although it has explored the vision of
the victors, to borrow Stephen Greenblatt's terms, it has been written against it.²⁵

In an effort to express solidarity with Friday, I have reconstructed the circumstances
that brought Crusoe into contact with him and reconstructed some of the outcomes of
that contact. Those outcomes, however, extend beyond the novel itself, back into the
history to which the novel belongs. The imagination, which played such an important
role in the making of the English Atlantic world, also has a role in engaging with the
outcomes of that phenomenon, including their present forms. In this respect I have been
concerned with exploring what Mary Louise Pratt has called the "contact zone": "social
spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly
asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination -- like colonialism, slavery, or
their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today."²⁶

²⁴Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in Identity: Community, culture,

²⁵Stephen Greenblatt, Introduction, New World Encounters (Berkeley: University of
California, 1993) vii.

²⁶Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel writing and Transculturation (New York:
Understanding stories like *Robinson Crusoe* from the "native's point of view," Said has reminded us, is not simply another one of the hermeneutic strategies of academic discourse.²⁷ Indeed, he has argued that incorporating this subaltern perspective in what he describes as contrapuntal reading -- one that moves between Crusoe and Friday -- requires crossing the boundary that has conventionally delimited analysis and experience and fact and value in literary studies: "[t]he question is a matter of knowing how to read, but not detaching it from the issue of knowing what to read."²⁸ Said has observed that: stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world; they also become the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history. The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future -- these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative.²⁹

But, as Homi Bhabha has argued, "we must not merely change the narratives of our histories, but transform our sense of what it means to live, to be, in other times and different spaces, both human and historical."³⁰

The transformation Bhabha describes requires the powers of imagination. The imagination, which helped to constitute the English Atlantic world of Robinson Crusoe and Friday, is also essential for reconstituting a contemporary Atlantic world in which conquest, domination, and exploitation have been confronted. "It is the imagination," Arjun Appadurai argues, "in its collective forms, that creates ideas of neighbourhood and

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nationhood, of moral economies and unjust rule... The imagination is today a staging ground for action, and not only for escape." We need, then, a post-Crusonian Atlantic imagination that, in Said's words, moves "past domination, toward community."

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N.B. Unless otherwise noted, the place of publication is London.

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