Narratives of Amelioration: Mental Slavery and the New World Slave Society in the Eighteenth-Century Didactic Imagination

by

Alpen Razi

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy

Department of English, University of Toronto

© Copyright by Alpen Razi 2016
Narratives of Amelioration: Mental Slavery and the New World Slave Society in the Eighteenth-Century Didactic Imagination

Alpen Razi
Doctorate of Philosophy
Department of English, University of Toronto
2016

Abstract

This dissertation examines the remarkable preoccupation with enslavement in the British didactic imagination throughout the long eighteenth century. Drawing on a range of reformist narratives and writings, I suggest that the representational tendencies surrounding slavery and education in eighteenth-century reform literature can best be understood through what I call the “Protestant utopianism” that informs the didactic imagination of the Georgian era. This study thus examines a specific current of intellectual thought animating representations of colonial slavery—a tradition that was both independent of (and often in tension with) colonialist attempts to naturalize and legitimate the racial ideologies upon which the system of Atlantic chattel slavery depended. In contrast to current critical approaches, which continue to rely heavily upon the lens of imperial race ideology or “colonial discourse” to read slavery in Georgian literature, I examine the ways in which slave societies were engaged as universal landscapes—allegorical and emblematic spaces in which a variety of social process relating to the reform of civil society were enacted. These narratives of amelioration, I argue, continually depict the reform of slave societies not to establish a clear self-other
dialectic based on discrete racial or geographical differences, but rather to identify
Britain’s own *unfinished reformation*—the everyday forms of mental slavery and social
violence which proliferated at home no less than in the far-flung world of the colonies.
The reformed slave society emerges in these works not as the enslaved “other” to a
triumpahalist fantasy of a free and sovereign Britain, but as the model by which an
unregenerate England can one day realize its national destiny of becoming a spiritual and
worldly Zion—a vision of a regenerate Protestant future purged of mental slavery.
Paradoxically, these works present the reformed slave society as a universal ideal and
utopian pattern for social and cultural reform at home.

In the first chapter, I focus on representations of colonial slavery in Daniel
Defoe’s *The Family Instructor*. Chapters two and three continue this examination in the
work of Edward Kimber and Maria Edgeworth, respectively. I conclude by investigating
amelioration-era black writing in the U.S. and Caribbean.
Acknowledgments

My gratitude to the Centre for the Study of the United States (University of Toronto), American Antiquarian Society, Chawton House Library, John Carter Brown Library, Huntington Library, and William Andrews Clark Memorial Library for generously funding portions of this dissertation research. I would also like to thank the graduate students and faculty in the Department of English and throughout the University of Toronto. My special thanks to Elspeth Brown, Michael Cobb, Jeannine DeLombard, Lauren Dimonte, Paul Downes, Alexander Eastwood, Melanie Newton, Anthony Oliveira, Tanuja Persaud, Jason Peters, Simon Reader, Matt Risling, Shivrang Setlur, and Sean Starke. Thanks also to the Ethnic Studies Department at the California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, where I found a home for the last year of this project.

This dissertation was primarily conducted under the supervision of Sara Salih, who has been an incredibly supportive—and patient—mentor and friend for over a decade. My deepest gratitude also to my supervisory committee, Alan Bewell, Thomas Keymer, and Deidre Shauna Lynch, for the phenomenal support and intellectual generosity they provided along the way. Thanks also to Alison Conway and Carol Percy for their feedback as external examiners. I could not have asked for a better committee, and I only wish I had time to more fully incorporate their suggestions, critiques and insights—I have no doubt the project will be exponentially better when I do. Finally, a very special thank you to Brian Beaton for his intellectual, professional, and personal support throughout this entire process.
Table of Contents

1. Introduction 1

2. Unfinished Reformations: Slave Society, Servitude, and the Problem of Social Death in Defoe’s Didactic Fiction 17
   2.1 Introduction 17
   2.2. Protestant pedagogy and the problem of social death 24
       2.2.1. The Protestant paideia 26
       2.2.2. The Schism Act as social death 33
   2.3. The Family Instructor: foreign friends and domestic strangers 39
   2.4 Amelioration and the obedience of slaves

3. The Protestant Uchronia: Unworlding the New World in Edward Kimber’s The History of the Life and Adventures of Mr. Anderson 68
   3.1. Introduction: the “other” world 68
       3.1.1. Unworlding the New World 73
       3.1.2. Lockean didacticism 83
   3.2. Beyond “there-and-back” 87
       3.2.1. The British here: unworlding Britain 87
       3.2.2. The American there: an “unworld” of mental slavery 94
   3.2.3. Coming back home 108
   3.3. Conclusion 121

4. The “Malignant Demon” of Mental Slavery: Servitude, Slave Insurrection and Racial Thought in Late-Georgian Didactic and Juvenile Literature 123
   4.1. Introduction 123
   4.2. Slave insurrection in late-Georgian juvenile literature 127
       4.3.1. Maria Edgeworth’s “Grateful Negro” 139
4.3.2 Protestant anti-fetishism in Edgeworthian pedagogy 145
4.4. Late Georgian didacticism at the dawn of racial modernity 155

5. Servitude as Citizenship: Amelioration, Empire Loyalism, and the Rise of the Transnational Black Press 165
5.1. Introduction 165
5.2. "Coloured Citizens of the World" 170
5.3. David Walker and the ameliorative empire 176
5.4.1. Empire loyalism in emancipation-era Jamaica 186
5.4.2. Imagining empire in the Watchman 191
5.5. Conclusion 204

Bibliography 207
1. Introduction: Narratives of Amelioration

Throughout the long eighteenth century, British writers seeking to promote a message of moral reform and social transformation sought out novel ways to captivate their reading publics as they promoted their didactic purposes. Yet perhaps the single most compelling method they employed to achieve these aims was the imaginative use of the New World slave society as a setting or plot device within their narratives. Indeed, in some of the best-selling and most-influential instructive works of the period—including Daniel Defoe’s *The Family Instructor* (1715-18), Thomas Day’s *The History of Sanford & Merton* (1783-89), Maria Edgeworth’s *Popular Tales* (1804) and various updates and revisions of the anonymous *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes* (1765)—readers were repeatedly confronted with the world of Britain’s slaveholding colonies. This dissertation examines this remarkable preoccupation with enslavement in the British didactic imagination. Why, it asks, did eighteenth-century didacticism so frequently hinge on a discussion of chattel slavery and, conversely, why did considerations of human bondage so frequently engage broader discussions surrounding mental improvement? Drawing on a range of didactic narratives and writings, I suggest that the representational tendencies surrounding slavery and education in eighteenth-century literature can best be understood through what I call the “Protestant utopianism” that informs the didactic imagination of the Georgian era.

This study thus examines a specific current of intellectual thought animating representations of colonial slavery—a tradition that was both independent of (and often in tension with) colonialist attempts to naturalize and legitimate the racial ideologies upon which the system of Atlantic chattel slavery depended. In contrast to current critical approaches, which continue to rely heavily upon the lens of imperial race ideology or “colonial discourse” to examine the representational and narrative logics surrounding slavery in Georgian literature, I suggest that such interpretive tendencies actually understate the importance of Caribbean and American landscapes in eighteenth-century
didacticism. Framing eighteenth-century imaginative works as colonial discourse, I argue, elides the ways in which slave societies were engaged as universal landscapes—allegorical and emblematic spaces in which a variety of social processes relating to the reform of civil society were enacted. As I illustrate in a series of case studies that span the long eighteenth century, the primary engine of these didactic works is a preoccupation with how British society frequently failed to differentiate itself from New World slave societies. These narratives of amelioration, I argue, continually depict the reform of slave societies not to establish a clear self-other dialectic based on discrete racial or geographical differences, but rather to identify Britain’s own unfinished reformation—the everyday forms of mental slavery and social violence which proliferated at home no less than in the far-flung world of the colonies. The reformed slave society emerges in these works not as the enslaved “other” to a triumphalist fantasy of a free and sovereign Britain, but as the model by which an unregenerate England can one day realize its national destiny of becoming a spiritual and secular Zion—a vision of a regenerate Protestant future purged of mental slavery. Paradoxically, then, these works present the reformed slave society as a universal ideal and utopian pattern for social and cultural reform at home.

As the title suggests, this dissertation explores these themes through a sustained literary analysis of the “amelioration” of slavery—a wide-ranging and multifaceted set of reforms which, despite their prevalence in both the cultural imagination and the socio-historical processes of British imperialism, nevertheless remains “much neglected in the scholarship” on eighteenth-century culture. In brief, amelioration names attempts to improve the living and working conditions of enslavement in colonial plantation societies, first carried out in a piecemeal manner by so-called “enlightened” planters prior to the British imperial government’s legislative attempts to ensure such reforms were uniformly enacted throughout the West Indian territories in the early nineteenth century.

---

1 See overview of secondary materials in the respective chapters for specific instances in which a “colonial discourse” approach is employed. For an overview of the approach as well as an excellent study that adopts the approach of colonial discourse analysis, see Boulukos (2008), esp. 11-20.
2 On the utopianist framings of Zion more generally, see Schwartz (2014).
4 Ward; Dierksheide
Depictions of slave amelioration abounded in imaginative writings of the long eighteenth century, and this dissertation joins the scant studies that have examined its imaginative renderings in literary and cultural works of the period.\(^5\) In both socio-historical and cultural studies, amelioration has proven a highly contentious subject given the ways in which it held common ground for both progressive attempts to transition slave societies into free ones and conservative desires to secure slavery by rendering it more humane.\(^6\)

However, in moving away from colonial discourse analysis, this study also moves away from the imperative to demystify the “true” political meaning of amelioration—to evaluate whether ameliorationism truly served the interest of a commendable antislavery sentiment or masked a deplorable proslavery logic that sought to curtail black freedom. Instead, this dissertation argues that the very idea of amelioration was bound up in a much older reform tradition that asserted servitude—not freedom—as the antithesis of slavery.

Notions of slavery and servitude may seem conceptually interchangeable in the modern era, where an opposing notion of radical freedom and sovereign personhood effaces the distinctions between the two. Yet many didactic authors in the Georgian era were fixated with elaborating upon precisely their distinctions. This dissertation thus engages the insights of early modern scholarship on the ways in which ideas of servitude provided an important dimension of what the political historian Quentin Skinner calls “liberty before liberalism.”\(^7\) Indeed, the early modern era bore witness to an intense fascination with the paradoxical idea of “free service,” or forms of consensual and voluntary bondage, as a model for all social relations—not just those of masters and servants or slaves. For instance, the Shakespearean scholar David Evett suggests that progressive and teleological views of the historical development of ideas of liberty are complicated by the widespread acceptance of a concurrent religious paradox of “freedom through service” in the early modern era, while the literary critic David Schalkwyk has illustrated how the

---

5 Ellis’s and Boulukos’s studies are the only full-length monographs to provided a sustained examination of amelioration as a cultural rather than a purely historical or intellectual object of interest. A few article-length studies have also made interesting strides in grappling with the problem of amelioration in the eighteenth-century literary imagination; see individual chapters for examples.

6 See Dierksheide, esp. introduction.

7 Skinner.
“condition of service is both informed by and enables relationships of amity or affection” throughout the period. This dissertation is also strongly inspired by Peter Laslett’s characterization of “premodern” society as one in which “in spite of subordination… everyone belonged in a group, a family group. Everyone had his or her circle of affection: every relationship could be seen as a love relationship… [whereas] with us, the social world is such that no sentiment of the familial kind is likely to attach itself to work relationships.”

As indicated by the title of Laslett’s influential study, *The World We Have Lost*, the paradoxes of servitude were central to the distinctiveness of the early modern era. In contrast, historical and cultural scholarship on the Georgian era has overwhelmingly tended to characterize the period as a modernity in which the influence of Lockean notions of freedom and personal sovereignty eventually displaced an ethos of “freedom-through-servitude” and “servitude-as-love” in governing social relations beyond those of literal servants and slaves. Yet in spite of this modernity—and perhaps because of it—many moral authors reasserted a normative social vision in which all service relationships were companionate relationships and vice versa. Thus, if the idea of sociability as servitude was the hallmark of a paradise lost, it was a world that many eighteenth-century moral writers and social reformers were desperate to regain. In their writings, all social organization, not just relations between masters and servants, took on one of two possible forms: either a normative model of love and friendship—one that they identified with a state of mutual servitude and reciprocity—or a contrasting state of animosity, hatred, and social conflict—one that they identified with tyranny and “true” slavery. The imperative to view society starkly in terms of either servitude or slavery can be seen, for example, when one of the moral authorities of Sarah Scott’s popular didactic novel *Millenium Hall* explains to a visitor how an ethics of social obligation underwrites relations in their

---

8 Chakravarty. 9. Laslett 5-6.
10 For recent works on servitude in the early modern context that have been useful in the development of my line of analysis, see Evett; Schalkwyk; Burnett; and Chakravarty. Few studies have discussed have discussed servitude as, specifically, an ethical value governing ideals of social relations beyond those of literal servants and slaves past the early modern era, one exception being the work of cultural historian Naomi Tadmor, especially 2001. Tadmor's insights are extremely useful in exploring the ways in which ideals of servitude continued to carry over into the Georgian era.
utopian community. Her skeptical interlocutor protests, ‘You seem, madam… to choose to make us all slaves to each other.’

‘No, sir,’ replied Miss Mancel, ‘I would only make you friends. Those who are really such are continually endeavouring to serve and oblige each other; this reciprocal communication of benefits should be universal, and then we might with reason be fond of this world.’

Scott’s didactic novels are fixated with clarifying the obscure difference between “real” slavery and a kind of paradoxical servitude-as-friendship. The latter, according to Mancel, is a state characterized by “mutual confidence, reciprocal services, and correspondent affections” outside of which one encounters a world that can “more properly be compared to that state of war, which Hobbes supposes the first condition of mankind. The same vanities, the same passions, the same ambition, reign in almost every breast; a constant desire to supplant, and a continual fear of being supplanted.” Thus, for Scott, the desire for freedom or independence outside of the social state of service paradoxically creates the condition of possibility for slavery—the Hobbesian state of self-interest and unremitting social conflict and discord. In a similar vein, when the narratives of amelioration discussed in this study turned to notions of freedom and personal autonomy, they almost did so to further clarify the distinctions between the states of servitude and slavery. In the case of servitude, personal autonomy was necessary to forming relations of voluntary servitude, to securing freedom-through-service. In relations of slavery, however, personal autonomy was identified with an antisocial “license” that motivated the desire to lord over and tyrannize others. I argue, therefore, that the common critical imperative to recover notions of resistance and agency in eighteenth-century fiction (or to critique their absence) overlooks the ways in which freedom was not in opposition, but central, to the fictional articulation of both a flawed state of slavery and a countervailing ideal of servitude. These concerns not only governed how these narratives represented actual slave societies but are central to understanding why slave societies became such popular motifs within eighteenth-century moral fiction: the colonial plantation offered a densely literal landscape of bondage for

---

11 Scott 112.
12 112.
illustrating how to regain the lost world of ideal servitude, how to reform an unregenerate modern world characterized by a Hobbesian state of social violence.

Evett’s insight into the religious dimensions of servitude also draws attention to the ways in which the slavery-servitude binary can best be understood as, specifically, a problem of the Protestant imaginary within didactic fiction. This dissertation thus delineates the ways in which notions of servitude and slavery were bound up in a specifically Protestant framework of ethics, aesthetics, and morality. Of course, the ongoing inter-denominational conflicts of the Georgian era challenge any attempt to analyze Protestantism as a unified or unifying framework within British literary culture. Likewise, the dissenting and nonconformist religious background of authors like Daniel Defoe and Edward Kimber markedly contrasts the Anglican orthodoxies of Sarah Scott and Maria Edgeworth, which have still less in common with the ad hoc liberationist theologies of early black authors like Olaudah Equiano and David Walker. Yet drawing upon the influential studies of cultural identity by Linda Colley and Kathleen Wilson, I discuss Protestantism as a broad cultural orientation that cuts across specific theological and denominational iterations of Christianity. In this regard, the religious imperative of Protestantism to protest is crucial, especially as it intersects with a broader civic imperative to engage in antityrannical critique. In the following chapters, I illustrate how contemporary articulations of political and social reform were conceptually linked to the Protestant Reformation, which was typically apprehended by didactic moralists as an ongoing and precarious historical process rather than a discrete historical event in the English past. In this context, discussions of slavery thus took on a complex discursive and interpretive status with little definitional clarity. Indeed, those who decried slavery frequently toggled between several possible senses of the term with an easiness that is as telling as it is troubling.

13 The idea of the imaginary—or pædia—of didactic fiction is discussed at length in chapter one.
14 The inextricability of Protestantism to British identity, culture, society and state-formation has been well established by foundational works of eighteenth-century scholarship. See, for instance, Colley, Wilson, J.C.D Clark; Champion; Wharman.
15 The denunciation of slavery—central to the Protestant Reformation—would also offer a set of crucial slogans and interpretive frameworks in times of political crisis throughout the eighteenth century. See, for instance, Skinner (1974); Hudson.
In the context of British Protestantism, however, the idea of the bondage of the mind—or mental enslavement—stands out among the many invocations of the term slavery. The critique of “mental slavery” is, of course, more commonly associated with the European enlightenment—with the emancipatory movement, in Kant’s familiar description, of “man’s emergence from his self-incurred immaturity” through the courageous will to “to use [one’s understanding] without the guidance of another.” Yet the antityrannical and anticlerical principles implicit in this signal articulation of the Enlightenment ethos were also central to the ways in which contemporary Britons narrated and legitimated the Protestant Reformation as a progressive movement of history. However, unlike the whiggish teleologies of Enlightenment with their unwavering faith in innate and inevitable progress, the Protestant imagination lived in dread of not just a possible, but indeed a probable, reversal of England’s collective emergence from the nonage of “Catholick” slavery. Georgian moralists thus framed their reforms as a continual protest against the forces that threatened to re-enslave the Protestant nation state, forces that sought to enervate and corrupt the critical and mental faculties of its subjects, plunge them into mental torpor, and incite them toward vice. In the didactic works discussed below, this imperative toward learning how to extricate the self from mental slavery was more or less synonymous with training minds to restrain their natural passions—to learn to exert mastery over the mind or risk becoming enslaved to its emotional and temperamental excesses. In these works, friendship and gratitude, while feeling states, nevertheless formed the antithesis of the violent passions of the uncultivated mind. Much as the violent passions were central to the mental slavery underlying the relations of tyranny, oppression, and antisocial disaffection, feelings of friendship and gratitude were presented as the countervailing hallmarks of sociable servitude. Didactic moralists were thus centrally preoccupied with denouncing the “anti-socializing” agents of mental slavery that they saw rampant in everyday life—a state of affairs that not only imperiled civil society but threatened to reverse the course of the Reformation itself, plunging the nation back into the gothic darkness of its Catholic past.

---

16 Kant 54.
17 The thematic parallels between Reformation and enlightenment notions of “mental slavery” are elaborated further in section 3.3.2 below.
18 These arguments also form the basis of Adam Smith’s influential Theory of Moral Sentiments; see esp. sections I.II.2-3.
This broadly reformist cultural orientation towards protesting mental slavery is, in turn, central to how I understand the texts discussed below as didactic writings. Put differently, my focus on literature of reform is hardly intended to offer a genre study of didacticism—a nearly impossible task given the protean and unwieldy status of the “didactic” in the period more generally. Instead the term “didactic” guides me through a series of fictional works that sought to examine and reform the various forms of mental slavery that negated the sociable inclinations toward friendship and gratitude. What follows, accordingly, is a study of the underlying utopianism of different modes of Georgian didactic culture. In these writings, reform entailed a vision of the future—one in which the ideals of sociable servitude eventually triumphed over the unbridled forces of bondage and slavery that currently characterized the modern world. And education was, of course, the central means by which these aims could be achieved—by which the slavery of everyday life could be gradually reformed or “ameliorated” into servitude. Of course, the didactic imperative toward gradual reform and servitude may seem incompatible with any kind of “utopian” project given the associations of utopianism with a radical and revolutionary embrace of freedom. Yet as Anahid Nersessian has brilliantly demonstrated in her recent study *Utopia, Limited*, even the most radical Romantic-era utopian schemes and visions involved a profound imposition of limitation or constraint upon individuals and the collective. Such aims were grounded, moreover, in a “pedagogy of positive bondage” that entailed “learning to manage with less.” As an ideal of reform, servitude formed one such utopian aspiration to transform the world through constraint, limitation, and obligation, just as mental slavery paradoxically augured troubling visions of unconscionable violence in excess of all restraint. Ultimately, then, I understand the utopianism underwriting the work of eighteenth-century moralists as resonant with Raymond Williams’ description of the utopian as seeking “to strengthen and confirm existing feelings and relationships which are not at home in the existing order and cannot be lived through in it.” Forms of slavery—whether manifested as the threat of physical bondage of bodies or, more often, as an ever-

---

19 The most useful overview of the complex literary and cultural status of the eighteenth-century didacticism remains J.P. Hunter 1990; see esp. 225-302.
20 Nersessian 6; 22.
present threat upon the mind—characterized the moralists’ views of the existing social order they inhabited, the world they anxiously sought to reform towards a more socially harmonious and hospitable future.

In this regard, their narratives strategically elided the distinctions between physical bondage and mental bondage—a representational strategy that allowed them to imagine purposeful parallels between the literal slave societies of the New World and the more figurative forms of bondage—including mental slavery—they discerned at home. The colonial slave society thus featured in these narratives functioned as an allegorical landscape in which slavery emerged as a multifarious and universal phenomenon rather than an entry point for reflecting upon or reproducing racial ideologies or colonial discourse. Not that these writings evince a naivety or ignorance about contemporary racial sentiments—instead, in every single work under discussion, racial and cultural distinctions between British (or European) selves and their others are presented only to be imaginatively flattened and undone. In other works, these works anticipate a certain readerly expectation of cultural and racial differences—an expectation which they in turn mobilize in a pedagogical process that involves, first, encountering, then second, demystifying the “superficial” differences between people that obscure transcendental and universal moral truths among them. This procedure entailed reasserting the more important difference of slavery and servitude as the only affordance of kinship and alterity—as a normative device to either produce a sense of identification between individuals or ensure that the morally corrupt agents of enslavement were abjured. In this scheme, ethics—not birth—were meant to determine how subjects affiliated with one another and forged communities of belonging. Moreover, the social relations of servitude facilitated affective connections across divisions of rank, culture, nation, race, and religion, just as the antisocial relations of slavery exacerbated social schisms.

As such, the interpretive approach adopted by this study attempts to negotiate two competing accounts of the nature of Protestantism within the cultural contexts of the second British empire. In one interpretive tradition, religion offers the dominant mode by which all difference was interpreted and understood. As Colin Kidd argues in his
influential study *British Identities Before Nationalism*, eighteenth-century Britons were largely unable to think in terms of ethnic difference. Illustrating instead how certain modes of Biblical historicizing stressed the common origins of humankind and persisted well into the Georgian era, Kidd concludes that "though guilty of prejudice, exploitation, and extirpation on grounds of religion and skin pigmentation, early modern Europeans were not intellectually programmed for ethnic hatred."\(^{22}\) In contrast, Linda Colley has noted not just the commensurability, but the interdependency, between Protestantism and imperialism in the forging of the eighteenth-century British character.\(^{23}\) New imperial historiography has usefully elaborated upon this line of thinking, illustrating the ways in which, as Kathleen Wilson argues, “Protestantism secured to the English and, secondarily the British, the assuredness of their own entitlement, superiority, pulchritude and difference… whose destiny was to impose a *Pax Britannica* on the world.”\(^{24}\) Although Kidd’s innovative arguments strongly influence my own approach to the Protestant utopianism underlying eighteenth-century didactic narratives, my study also examines the ways in which *both* characterizations of the nature of Protestantism hold equally true, albeit for competing intellectual traditions and ideological aims in the Georgian era. In one tradition, metropolitan moralists easily apprehended the colonial antipodes as especially salient sites for examining and theorizing at the register of the universal and transracial. In the other tradition, colonial ideologues put forward claims that served the far more immediate interests of colonial governance and thus the regulation of a racially ordered society over and above the more broadly moral imperatives of the Protestant reformers back home. The narratives of amelioration I study in the following chapters are closely aligned with the former objectives, registering a worldview that increasingly came under pressure as the incipient racialism of the colonial outlook began to gain ascendency across both sides of the Atlantic in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Despite the inherent paternalism of exhortations to embrace the reciprocal duties and obligations of mutual servitude, the Protestant utopianism evident in these works

---

\(^{22}\) Kidd (1999) 10. See also Kidd (2006)

\(^{23}\) Colley.

nevertheless offers a salutary critique of certain forms of chauvinism and bigotry, past and present. Yet I also remain cognizant of the critical risks posed by an interpretive commitment to exploring the allegorical nature of slavery in Georgian literature. To begin with, by insisting that these renderings of slavery are first and foremost a Protestant didactic discourse about mental slavery rather than a specifically colonial discourse, I risk reifying the problematic enlightenment practices of universalizing a particular European subjectivity though normative and descriptive theories about the nature of all human society. This is an undeniable aspect of the representational tendencies within the narratives of amelioration, which figure African and other non-European and non-white subjects as various emblems and exemplars of the author’s norms and values. Yet it should also be noted that if the critique of enlightenment universalism primarily targets the ideological elevation of Europeans above others, who are instead made to inhabit a culturally and historically “backward” position vis-à-vis the enlightened subject—as inhabitants of a perpetual state of nonage, in Kant’s terms—such a critique would fail to account for how Protestant utopianism flattened the distinctions between self and other for the express purpose of mounting a didactic critique, not propagandistic celebration, of British culture more generally. Conversely, neither did this flattening of difference necessarily amount to an equally problematic primitivism that elevated non-white subjects to further underscore the corruption of modern European selves. As discussed in each of the chapters, what is instead most apparent is a commitment to tracing both the elusive capacity for servitude as well as the common embrace of enslavement across cultural borders and racial divisions.

Similarly, attending to the allegorical and figurative dimensions of mental slavery risks becoming complicit with the appropriation of the rhetoric of enslavement to describe conditions of oppression worlds away from the profound human tragedy of the middle passage and the extraordinary scale of brutality of African chattel slavery in the New World. Again, all of the works discussed below certainly elide the specificities of actual racial slavery in their articulation of slavery as widespread and transregional problem of ethics. Yet it must also be noted here that, just as contemporary racial logics operate through a status quo of rigid categorization, early racial logics were also profoundly
invested in dismissing the potential blurriness of slavery. Indeed, one need only look to the anti-tyrannical proslavery rhetoric of Revolutionary America and its slaveholding republicans to find a dramatic attempt to distinguish between literal and figurative forms of bondage, yet such an operative framework is frequently echoed by the work of contemporary cultural studies of slavery in the eighteenth-century Britain, which similarly insist on compartmentalize “true” colonial discourse for the merely figurative usages of the language of enslavement.\textsuperscript{25} In a recently published anthology called \textit{Invoking Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century British Imagination}, Srividhya Swaminathan and Adam Beach argue “literary and cultural studies have focused too narrowly on slavery as a term that refers almost exclusively to the race-based chattel enslavement of sub-Saharan Africans transported to the New World.” In contrast, the contributors to their collection examine how the “term slavery became a powerful rhetorical device for helping British audiences gain a new perspective with respect to their government and the global sphere.”\textsuperscript{26} This study adopts a similar premise, attending to the figurative powers of servitude and mental slavery in order to gain insight to the myriad ways in which chattel slavery was presented, understood, and contested—especially in the writings of early black and formerly enslaved people.

Finally, my primary objective here is to better understand the complex representational functions of slave societies within eighteenth-century literature and culture, not to endorse the idea of servitude as a laudable form of social organization. Yet I also remain interested in how the rhetoric of servitude may offer a productive way into thinking about what Thomas Holt calls the “problem of freedom”—the ways in which the liberal norms of British antislavery and the actual historical process of slave emancipation sought to transform enslaved into free persons without radically undermining the exploitative social relations of plantation labour.\textsuperscript{27} As we shall see, an anxiety about the overlapping nature of slavery and freedom centrally animated the paradox of servitude.

\textsuperscript{25} See, for instance, J. Richardson for an example of this common critical approach to in which literary representations of slavery are correlated to “how much people knew” about the actual colonial context (13).
\textsuperscript{26} Swaminathan and Beach.
\textsuperscript{27} Holt 13-54.
To get there, this dissertation adopts a case study approach in which every chapter examines a different aspect of the Protestant utopianism in narratives of amelioration, but also moves chronologically to offer a meta-narrative about changes within the ways in which didactic fiction engaged with broader notions of racial and cultural difference. Chapter one, “Unfinished Reformation,” examines the ways in which Daniel Defoe’s fictional narratives subsume colonial slavery within a broader ethical framework of ideal servitude versus corrupt sociability. To trace how his novels used the slave plantation as a salient site for reflecting upon the more general effects of education and reform, I return to Defoe’s early didactic *The Family Instructor* (1714-18), his first foray into sustained imaginative fiction. In this earlier work, I argue, the Caribbean slave society offers an explicit allegory for England’s impending social disintegration under the weight of the Schism Act—a series of draconian anti-dissenting measures that, according to Defoe, would inevitably plunge the country into a Hobbesian state of war and eventual social collapse. As the Act sought to curtail “schism” by placing prohibitions on the education of Dissenters, a ready parallel could be drawn with the accounts of colonial slaveholders in their misgovernance of benighted Africans—a connection which Defoe brilliantly laid bare in *The Family Instructor* and which further influenced his treatment of slave amelioration in *Colonel Jack* and *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Although these later novels have been read as espousing an implicit proslavery logic in their defense of a reformed and humane practice of slaveholding, I argue that such an approach obscures the more important distinction between involuntary enslavement and voluntary servitude, which, far from particularizing Defoe’s treatments of African chattel slavery, places them at the heart of his universalist theories of sociability.

Chapter two, “The Protestant Euchronia,” continues to explore these themes in mid-century didactic and sentimental works, focusing on Edward Kimber’s didactic novel *The History of the Life and Adventures of Mr. Anderson* (1754). While the prevailing critical approach to Kimber’s novel views it as a textbook specimen of the transatlantic “there-and-back” narrative (i.e., stories that seek to reinforce a chauvinistic attitude toward the colonial antipodes in order to legitimate British imperial rule), I argue that such a reading fundamentally misapprehends the function of geography in the novel. Instead, I explore
how uppermost in Kimber’s treatment of the Atlantic world is a consideration of time rather than space. In other words, the novel’s primary concern is with examining the future possibility of regeneration and reform across different geographical spaces rather than with reinforcing or “worlding” the divisions that mark cultural, national, and racial difference. Echoing Defoe’s earlier fiction, *Mr. Anderson* identifies the violence of American slaveholders against the enslaved as fundamentally coextensive with the various forms of enslavement endemic in British, continental, and Amerindian contexts—sites which collectively reveal the widespread proliferation of aberrant forms of sociability and conduct across the entire world. In this regard, the novel bears the unmistakable traces of the radical Protestant eschatology explicit in Kimber’s contemporary pamphlets, which decry England as a postlapsarian wasteland in urgent need of pedagogical and social reform. Such millennialist impulses, I argue, reveal how *Mr. Anderson* is marked by a trans-regional and trans-racial refusal to particularize African chattel slavery as a distinct form of human subjugation.

While the encroachments of modernity are subtly evident in mid-century works of imaginative fiction, the later eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century period witnessed a veritable clash between an older universalist worldview and a modern worldview rooted in philosophical and quasi-scientific racialism. In Chapter 3, “The Malignant Demon of Race,” I argue that the broad conceptual shifts in thinking about race and slavery after the Mansfield decision of 1771 and subsequent crystallization of proslavery ideology were as contested in late-eighteenth-century didactic fiction as they were in the slavery debates. Yet as I argue in this chapter, the debate surrounding plantation slavery as either detrimental or advantageous to Africans and their descendants was itself an extension of a much longer debate about mental slavery and its effects—about how different forms of slavery and servitude might corrupt or improve the mind. This chapter explores these themes by focusing on the treatment of West Indian slavery in two works by Maria Edgeworth—*Belinda* (1801) and *Popular Tales* (1804). Specifically, I demonstrate how her now-infamous short story “The Grateful Negro” is part of much broader (if hitherto largely unknown) corpus of transatlantic juvenile and didactic amelioration narratives that explore the causes and consequences of slave insurrections. Although critics have
tended to debate whether the reform of slavery in the “Grateful Negro” evidences a properly antislavery sentiment or a surreptitious proslavery defense of the colonial system, I argue that more is to be gained by thinking about ameliorationist narratives as a distinct conceptual category. These narratives, I argue, sought to assert a universalist Christian paternalism against the “malignant demon” of colonial ideology—the phrase used by William Roscoe in his analysis of the newly racialist theories of human motivation underlying the proslavery belief that blacks would be corrupted, not improved, by better treatment. Placed within this larger corpus of didactic writings, the true subject of Edgeworth’s own ameliorationist narratives is less the grateful slave than the *ungrateful* slavemaster—the living embodiment of all of the aberrant processes of tyranny and miseducation which Edgeworth’s own pedagogical initiatives attempt to abate. Yet if Edgeworth’s didactic treatments of slave society reveal the persistence of holistic ideals of servitude, other works of the period temper such universalism with a more modern understanding of race as a marker of innate difference. The chapter ends by examining the awkward clash between older ideals of sociable servitude and more modern forms of racialist thought in another contemporary didactic work—Helena Wells’s *Constantia Neville; or, the West Indian* (1800). However, the explicit racism of this novel—far from registering a broad epistemological shift characteristic of all late Georgian works—is better understood through Wells’s own status as an colonial-born émigré and through the influence of her brother, William Charles Wells, and his pioneering scientific studies of race as innate biological difference which he carried out using the African slaves in the family’s South Carolina plantations.

The final chapter, “Servitude as Citizenship,” explores the ways in which early black writers drew upon a longer tradition of eighteenth-century didacticism in their own assaults on racialist thought. Examining the cultural legacies of amelioration through a sustained analysis of the rise of the transnational black press in the early decades of the nineteenth century, this chapter brings together key African American and Afro-Creole writers who contributed to the broader transatlantic discourse of reform even as they simultaneously took themselves up as the direct objects of amelioration. I argue that a series of competing political pressures was unleashed by the British imperial amelioration
resolutions of 1823, generating a transnational cultural response best illustrated by two contemporary black publications: the Jamaican antislavery newspaper *The Watchman and Jamaica Free Press* (est. 1829) and David Walker’s radical antislavery polemic *An Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* (1829). Both Walker and the *Watchmen* editors seized upon the ideological shifts in British imperial governance to reimagine the geopolitical reality of the British empire as a critical space, one in which the powerful material and ideological networks of empire could be deployed as a tool for reconfiguring the status of diasporic populations and black subjectivities. Their writings thus offer a fascinating instance of a broader tradition of black internationalism in which loyal servitude to crown and empire paradoxically offered one of the most powerful tools of self-determination. These didactic authors cultivated a form of black self-representation that drew on older traditions of Protestant utopianism to attack the negrophobic and proslavery nationalism of the southern U.S. and Jamaican plantocracies. This dissertation thus ends by tracing the radically transformative possibilities of slave amelioration for African American and Afro-Creole writers who pledged their allegiance to a profoundly symbolic vision of the British empire—a vision which strongly resonated with the critical, didactic, and utopian renderings of imperial space articulated throughout the long eighteenth century.
2. Unfinished Reformations: Slave Society, Servitude, and the Problem of Social Death in Defoe’s Didactic Fiction

Not free, what proof could they have giv’n sincere
Of true allegiance, constant Faith or Love,
Where only what they needs must do, appear’d,
Not what they would? What praise could they receive?
What pleasure I from such obedience paid?
—John Milton, Paradise Lost

2.1. Introduction

A nostalgic longing for a lost sense of social and domestic order pervades Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe trilogy. Early in the well-known original text, The Life & Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1719), Crusoe delivers his fond recollections of the peaceful homestead that he so foolishly left behind and which, following his shipwreck on a deserted island in the Caribbean, he longs to return: “mine was the middle state, or what might be called the upper Station of Low Life, which [my Father] had found by long Experience, was the best state in the World, the most suited to human Happiness, not exposed to the Miseries and Hardships, the Labour and Sufferings of the mechanick Part of Mankind, and not embarrass’d with the Pride, Luxury, Ambition, and Envy of the upper Part of Mankind” (58). According to an influential if controversial interpretation of the text, Crusoe’s erstwhile “middle state” corresponds to the emergent middle-class milieu of liberal capitalism in the early eighteenth century, an ideal social order which Crusoe attempts to re-impose upon his island colony—first, through his own self-government as the representative of the modern bourgeois individual, and later, by the collective government of the increasing number of subjects who populate his island commonwealth. This reading is, of course, predicated on a very modern differentiation of the economic sphere from the broader ethical, political, and religious concerns of eighteenth-century social theory. Yet as Maximillian Novak has pointed out in his study of the submerged political contexts of Defoe’s novels, such a

1 Bk. III, 103-107.
2 See, for instance, Watt. For a critique of this tradition, see Novak and Kay.
A critical approach only necessarily tells half of the story: while anachronistically assuming the independence of economic theory and practice within the text from other aspects of everyday life, it also overlooks how the narrative of the island’s social and political transformation does not conclude with this novel, but rather with the subsequent *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1720). In the sequel, however, one is struck by the very different tenor of Crusoe’s final reflections on the happy fortunes of his little island colony—a world which hardly resembles the one that is implied in the readings of Defoe’s novel as a depoliticized origin parable for *homo economicus*. Where, in the first novel, Crusoe had indulged in “merry reflections” of his being the absolute ruler of the colony and its inhabitants, in the later novel, he reflects back on the colony and declares that “I never so much as pretended to plant in the Name of any Government or Nation, or … any Prince… or to call my People Subjects to any one Nation more than another; but left it as I found it, belonging to no Man; and the People under no Discipline or Government but my own, who, tho’ I had influence over them as Father and Benefactor, had no Authority or Power, to Act or Command one way or other, farther than voluntary Consent mov’d them to comply.”

As this passage illustrates, the curiously domestic nature of Crusoe’s “authority” on the island as “father” or “benefactor” cannot be understood without recourse to the nature of the governing “discipline” that he finally establishes. In fact, the contours of the latter emerge clearly over the course of Crusoe’s return to the island at the start of the *Farther Adventures*. When he first comes back, he is shocked to discover that his colony has degenerated into nothing short of a slaveholding society; he promptly sets out to reform the colony into what Christine Rees calls the “utopia overseas”—the recurrent representational locus of the distant world that was crucial to articulating social and political theory throughout the early modern era. Significantly, the colony’s utopian transformation—the “discipline” that is imposed upon it—is depicted as a movement away from a social order determined based on slave mastery to one where the dominant mode of social relations might be called *servitude*. As Crusoe himself sums up the

---

4 FA 125-6.
5 Rees 73-122.
process, he comes to offer the enslaved subjects the option “to remove, and either plant for themselves, or take them into their several Families as Servants to be maintain’d for their Labour, but without being absolute Slaves, for I would not admit them Slaves by Force by any Means.” As Rees argues, the social order that underlies the sequel differs from the original in this important respect: “although it perpetuates inequality, it at least reinstates the distinction between servants and slaves which Crusoe’s earlier attitudes had starkly disregarded.” In other words, the reform of the colony amounts to the transformation of a slave society into one where consensual servitude is the normative ideal. Amelioration, moreover, is not only a social conversion but a personal one as well: it registers an evolution in Crusoe’s own convictions against forms of absolute power as much as it marks a transformation in social relations.

Yet if the sequel emphasizes Crusoe’s disavowal of absolute rule—his own over the island and his subjects’ over another—how are we to understand the affective relationship between servitude and the domestic form of paternal government that Crusoe later claims to exert as “father or benefactor” over the island? The answer to the question lies in the complex and multifaceted role of domesticity within the novels. Like the original narrative, the Farther Adventures also begins with a moment of profound domestic estrangement, albeit one that has profoundly different consequences. Crusoe begins by describing the “felicity” of the domestic refuge that he finds himself in following his first return to England from the island at the end of the first novel. His wife, he notes, was “the Stay of all my Affairs, the Centre of all my Enterprizes, the Engine, that by her Prudence reduc’d me to that Happy Compass.” Yet, following her death, the vision of the dominant social order of England that Crusoe presents is a perfect inversion of the happy “middle state” which he earlier described:

When she was gone, the World look’d awkwardly round me; I was as much a Stranger in it, in my Thoughts, as I was in the Brasils, when I first went on Shore there; and as much alone… as I was in my Island… I saw the World busy around me: one Part labouring for Bread, another part squandering in vile Excesses or empty Pleasures, but equally miserable because the end they propos’d still fled

---

6 FARC 162.
7 Rees 100.
8 FARC 9.
from them; for the Man of Pleasure every day surfeited of his Vice, and heap’d up work for Sorrow and Repentance; and the Men of Labour spent their Strength in daily Struggles for bread to maintain the vital Strength they labour’d with, so living in a daily Circulation of Sorrow, living but to work, and working but to live, as if daily Bread were the only end of wearisome Life, and a wearisome life the only Occasion of daily Bread.

Here, Crusoe’s vision of England explicitly recalls the Hobbesian “state of war” that comprises the world of humankind without government—that is, a social order comprised of exploited victims and selfish tyrants, where social progress ceases and begins to reverse into a process of social collapse, leaving in its wake “no arts, no letters, no society, and, which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”9 Central to the concerns of this chapter, such dystopian visions neatly correspond to the slaveholding world that Crusoe first discovers on his return to his island in the Farther Adventures. Indeed, Crusoe’s initial vision of the abject state of contemporary London, and its role in compelling him to return to the island, gestures toward an intriguing symmetry between deterioration at home and amelioration abroad.

Such symmetries are the central focus of this chapter, which examines the imaginative connections between the paradise of domestic bliss that is lost in England and the paradise of colonial order that is regained in the West Indies, or, sometimes, vice versa. What, it asks, is the nature of this connection and why does it seem to occur so frequently in eighteenth-century narratives? These questions, I argue, lead us straight to the heart of Defoe’s religious and didactic theories. In the Farther Adventures, for example, Crusoe’s process of ameliorating slavery—despite being overtly “political” in its aims of establishing a utopian polity—is almost exclusively carried out through the implementation of various forms of religious instruction. Similarly, Timothy Blackburn has shown that while the content of the education which Crusoe gives his “slave” Friday is primarily religious, their relationship results in a “civic religion” with explicit social and political undertones.10 Moreover, representations of slaveholding societies hold an

---

10 Blackburn 380-1.
especially privileged position for illuminating Defoe’s broader social theory in his didactic and religious writings no less than in his popular fiction.

To undertake the study, I draw heavily on the historical sociologist Orlando Patterson’s influential analysis of “social death” as the characteristic condition of life for subject populations in slaveholding societies. As Patterson illustrates, the institutionalization of slavery always involves a process of “natal alienation” whereby the enslaved are severed from the cultural, communal, and familial linkages that connect them to their ancestors—a process of socialization which necessary recasts them as a kind of “foreign” presence within the community. This achievement of this alterity can take on two characteristic forms: In the extrusive conception of social death, members who originally belong to a community are rearticulated as outsiders. In the intrusive conception of social death, non-natives come to inhabit the subject position of the “foreign” with all of the material and ideological limitations that such a status entails.

Such themes, as I discuss below, are central to Defoe’s religious and didactic writings. For this reason, I take Defoe up as himself as a kind of early theorist of social death—of the cause and consequences of slavery and social disintegration. To illustrate Defoe’s own attempts at theorizing the sources and effects of social death, we need only look at the striking parallels between Patterson’s theories of social death and the vision of England in the midst of social disintegration that commences the narrative of the Farther Adventures. On the surface, the disintegration of the social order is rendered as a collapse in the network of social relations that connects people and binds them to one another in a shared sense of community—a tearing of the social fabric and of what manifests in his didactic writings as a material and affective “web of gratitude.” At a figurative level, however, this collapse introduces newly emergent alterities and dislocations into the social fray. Not only does the familiar appear newly “foreign”—

11 Of course, I do not mean to suggest that Defoe’s ideas anachronistically evidence Patterson’s mode of theorizing. Rather that the former engages in a line of thinking that has some interesting parallels to the arguments of the latter.

12 I borrow the phrase “web of gratitude” from Keohane, who takes her title from Anne Yearly’s Poems on Several Occasions (1785). For Keohane, the term addresses the largely economic relations that are facilitated by charity and debt in eighteenth-century literature. I expand the meanings—and possibilities—of the phrase in this chapter.
resembling more closely the savage world of the Americas rather than civilized Europe—but the Englishman himself becomes a kind of newly estranged foreigner. Indeed, Crusoe’s moment of social observation explicitly echoes the ‘citizen of the world’ topos that appears in the essays of Michel Montaigne and of Addison and Steele, in which so-called “red Diplomats” (native visitors from invariably “savage” nations) arrive in Europe, only to articulate incisive social criticisms that profoundly refute Europeans’ claims to a more “civilized” status. In Crusoe’s vision, the social collapse of England is likewise depicted through a radically defamiliarizing kinship with the savage other.

Such imaginative concatenations between seemingly disparate geographical and socio-cultural spaces proliferate throughout Defoe’s writings, which I argue flatten differences in order to reconstruct the basis of kinship and alterity in religious and ethical terms rather than according to racial, ethnic, and national differences. In Defoe’s treatment of slaveholding society, I argue, the issue of race, the dominant modern category of analysis for analyzing the problem of African colonial slavery in historical and cultural contexts, is introduced only to be subsumed into “universalist” schemes of participation through religious orientation and ethical conduct—those which define Defoe’s normative ideals of Protestant identity. In section two of this essay, I reconstruct what I call a Protestant paideia—or system of education—that inheres in Defoe’s ‘social imaginary.’ In the first half of the section, I explore the complex interrelationships among education, slavery, and the providential order which emerge from Defoe’s elaborations of Protestant identity, and which I explore more closely in the context of the Schism Act debates (1714-15) in the second half of this section. In section three, I turn to the Family Instructor (1715-18), and examine Defoe’s use of West Indian slave society as an important didactic topos in the text, one that illustrates aspects of his general social theory and his anxieties about the Schism Act in particular. Finally, in the fourth section, I look at the representation of slaveholding society in Colonel Jack, a novel that in many ways hinges upon didactic and religious concerns. Against the dominant mode of reading this novel as proslavery

13 See Montaigne’s “Of Cannibals,” which is clear intertext for the Farther Adventures (discussed below), and Addison & Steele’s Spectator no. 50.
propaganda, I explore how racialized readings of the narrative might productively be complicated by the broad universalism of Defoe’s didactic and social theory.

The central thread running through these sections is an insistence on the remarkable correspondences that recur between English and slaveholding society throughout Defoe’s fiction. In his religious and didactic writings, I argue, it is an ideal of servitude, not notions of radical freedom or liberty, that offers the crucial polarity to slavery—its inverse, so to speak. Recall, for instance, the largely negligible distinction between the “slavery” of the socially dead English poor and the freedom or licentiousness of the socially dead rich in Crusoe’s vision. As Dennis Todd notes in his compelling recent study *Defoe’s America*, virtually all of Defoe’s major fictions hinge upon notions of literal and metaphorical servitude, an ideal which underlies the “spiritual, moral and economic transformations that [the protagonists] go through as they move from being slaves of powerful psychological and social forces to masters of themselves and their environments.”14 As Rees and others have pointed out in studies of the eighteenth-century utopias, the utopian imagination always asserts itself in a stark contrast to the corrupt status quo of the narrator’s contemporary world. Drawing on Todd’s suggestive tensions between slavery and servitude, I analyze the ways in which Defoe constructs a utopian image of a New World—one that invokes the Americas as frequently as it does the account of the Fall contained in Genesis and Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. As Milton did before him in his own didactic and religious writings, Defoe depicts the coming-into-being of a utopian New World that results from a providential “fortunate Fall,” an originary social collapse into social death which paradoxically creates the necessary preconditions for the emergence of socially integrated and viable communities.15 Education, reform, and amelioration become the means of effecting these social and political transformations in the present.

14 Todd ix.
15 The idea of the fortunate fall in Milton’s epic was first described by AO Lovejoy, who used the “paradox” to describe both the fundamental alienation that characterizes the condition of humankind after the fall and the postlapsarian reconciliations which, through Christ’s redemption, are made possible between God and man, between people themselves, and between the first and future generations of mankind. It has been since been elaborated upon in the context of *Robinson Crusoe* by a number of scholars. See, for instance, Starr 93, Barney 236-38, and Fliegelman 70-6.
2.2. Protestant pedagogy and the problem of social death

Arguably more than any other major writer in the post-Restoration period, Defoe elaborates upon notions of a normative Protestant identity, an ideal that is evoked as the aspirational basis for both individual subjectivities and collective politics. Defoe’s ever-present apprehension about what might usefully be called an unfinished history of the Protestant reformation threads across the sizeable corpus of his attributed works, and across the many phases of his authorial career as activist, journalist, novelist, and social critic. These anxieties, I argue, stem from a deeply held set of convictions concerning the ongoing urgency of Protestant reform as well as from his profound desire to see the Reformation more fully realized in the realm of contemporary Britain and in the domains beyond her shores. In this section, I examine these overarching concerns in Defoe’s writings and argue for their centrality in accounting for why his educational and conduct writings provide some of the earliest and most developed instances of representing slave societies through concerns about education and, *vice versa*, the practice of theorizing didactic reform with the aid of slave figures, a representational practice which would become frequent throughout eighteenth-century literature.

While it is true that Defoe’s religious and didactic writings comprise his earliest forays into fiction, they do not offer the first substantial use of colonial slave figures or plantation societies either in the imaginative genre of didactic dialogues or in fictional narratives more generally. They nevertheless offer a crucial starting point for this study for several reasons. To begin with, *The Family Instructor* exerted an immediate and profound influence in the realm of eighteenth-century letters—one that was initially equal to, and perhaps even greater than, the *Crusoe* novels. Moreover, in these didactic works, one first discovers a peculiar representational practice of using the slave to address topics of educational reform, a practice that would ultimately become conventional, almost *de rigueur*, in the didacticism of the long eighteenth century. Before turning to this important text, however, this section first maps these conceptual linkages, exploring how Protestantism, education, and the politics of slavery folded into one another in Defoe’s

---

16 See, for instance, Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* (1689) and the Thomas Tryon’s *Friendly Advice to the Gentleman-Planters* (1684) for an earlier instance of each.

thought more generally.

Of course, the already tall task of tracing a coherent worldview of any eighteenth-century writer is only made more difficult when one turns to the question of politics—notoriously a protean word, problematic concept, unstable practice, and chaotic reality in the period. Yet because a preliminary starting point is necessary, the ‘political’ is adopted here in the capacious and broadly ethical meaning assigned to it by David Hume when he used the term to refer to the whole sphere in which to “consider men as united in society, and dependent on each other.”18 Indeed, even Defoe’s Crusoe, once held up as a kind of ideological *urtext* for an antisocial and depoliticized individualism, has since been firmly established as profoundly underlined by a great many contemporary social and political themes. As scholars have since argued, it is instead a novel attentive to the ways in which the individual is, in Carol Kay’s terms, as much or more a “political” man in the broadly ethical sense than he is a *homo economicus*.19 Such an approach refuses to retrospectively project onto Defoe’s worldview the ‘modern’ valorization of a distinction between, on the one hand, ethical and moral concerns and, on the other, political and economic motives as separate zones of existence with little practical or theoretical interconnection (a split that is also sometimes engaged by critics to argue for a disjuncture in Defoe’s treatment of slaveholding when considered in moral and religious terms rather than in economic and commercial contexts).20 Such considerations, I argue, also account for the blurred lines between “private” moralities and “public” politics in didactic works such as *The Family Instructor* (discussed further in section 3). Moreover, this approach has the added benefit of allowing for connections between Defoe’s political concerns in the local or “vulgar” sense of his active involvement with contemporary party politics and polemical controversies (discussed further in section 2.2) and those aspects of his politics that transcend occasional concerns to form a fairly coherent social theory.

Following the field-defining critical and biographical studies by Maximillian Novak and

---

19 Kay.
20 For an overview and complication of this split in Defoe’s various treatments of slavery, see Keymer’s introduction to *Robinson Crusoe* (xxxiv-v).
Paula Backscheider, one can now push past the common attribution of irreconcilable ideological disorder on Defoe’s part to recover a coherent ethical core from the midst of his wildly heterogeneous authorial personae, ideological positions, and seemingly contradictory (if not flat out self-serving) political faces.²¹ Focusing on representations of slave societies and their various representatives in his writings, this chapter thus seeks to contribute to the work of uncovering a sustained social theory operative in Defoe’s writings. Nor is colonial slavery an accidental choice of topos for examining Defoe’s writings on religious and moral education. A central aim of this section is to illustrate the underlying logic by which the slave society could serve as an extensive “master metaphor” for articulating the social and political issues surrounding education and its reform—problems that cut to the heart of Defoe’s social theories. The metaphoricity of colonial slavery is most clear evidenced in the *Family Instructor*, a series of narratives in which, as we shall see, the West Indies provides an emblematic and allegorical proxy for England. In arguably every fictional context in which Defoe reflected upon slavery, discussions of education, social formation, and social disintegration followed closely at hand—a dynamic first initiated in *The Family Instructor*.

### 2.2.1. The Protestant paideia

To contextualize Defoe’s use of slavery as a didactic topos in texts such as *The Family Instructor* and *Colonel Jack*, I draw upon the notion of *paideia* as a useful conceptual anchor point for thinking about the role of education in broader social and ethical theories. In classical political theory, the notion of *paideia*, or the “right education,” made explicit the interdependent relationship between, on the one hand, the content and method of education—how and what people were taught—and, on the other, the very character of the social and political collectives which different forms of education engendered. Thus, in the traditions of classical political theory, the everyday realm of the citizen’s experience was largely continuous with the “high political” realm of rulers and tyrants who ruled over the *polis*. Both realms were mediated by the *paideia* that ensured

---

²¹ Backscheider and Novak. For additional studies which illustrate coherence in the realm of Defoe’s politics, see also Kay, Armstrong, and, more recently, Owens and Furbank. Also relevant to this study is the scholarship on the considerable coherency of Defoe’s religious and theological beliefs across his career as writer and theorist. See especially Starr; Hunter.
(or, in its absence, prevented) the ability to regulate and control the human passions, to achieve and practice the virtue of moderation, to learn to balance the universal imperatives of ruling and being ruled, and to see the wisdom and necessity of being as much an object as an agent of power within one’s social sphere. As Cornelius Castoriadis notes, because paideia is the avenue by which society internalizes its own values, it is thus “not primarily a matter of books and academic credits. First and foremost, it involves becoming conscious that the polis is also oneself and that its fate also depends upon one’s mind, behavior, and decisions; in other words, it is participation in political life.”

It follows, of course, that beyond its utility as a method for social transformation, paideia also registers the social and political values that didactic authorities aim to engineer. One can work backwards, so to speak, and understand the political and ethical values of a particular writer or intellectual current by examining the normative assumptions and practices surrounding education, a fact which Aristotle himself emphasized in his political theory: “education [paideia] ought to be adapted to the particular form of constitution, since the particular character [ēthos] belonging to each constitution [politeia] both guards the constitution generally and originally establishes it—for instance, the democratic spirit promotes democracy and the oligarchic spirit oligarchy.”

Thus, in his recent study of the ways in which the household provides the foundation for Aristotle’s Polis, D. Brendan Nagles notes the widespread belief in the classical world that it was “not possible to have a huge diversity of politeia without at the same time having a corresponding multiplicity of ways of life and educational systems.” An awareness of such “constitutional” diversity is never far from the surface in Defoe’s reflections on education, which illustrate how competing social and political paradigms animate different pedagogical practices and, subsequently, how very different social and political formations emerge from rival didactic systems. His own paideia extols a normative Protestant pedagogy against rival forces of education (i.e., miseducation)—and

---

22 Fotopoulos.
23 Castoriadias 113.
25 Nagle 248.
against the corrupt social and political formations that miseducate and which miseducation serves to reinforce.

At its core, the slave society offers a representational terrain for Defoe to explore these two aspects of *paideia*—to examine how education reflected and reinforced established social relations and, at the same time, offered the crucial conduit from which to intervene and change these social relations. At a representational level, the literal slave society engages the important status of education and slave emancipation within the Protestant imaginary more generally. Foundational to the Protestant mythos is the belief that the Reformation was a kind of historical emancipation from slavery, freed as the British nation now was from the yoke of the Roman Catholic Church, which, according to many contemporary Britons, continued to conspire with England’s foreign and domestic enemies to re-enslave the nation through the early modern era. For Anglicans and Dissenters alike, the education of the Protestant was understood historically as the principal means by which this freedom was achieved, since the success of the Reformation depended upon cultivating forms of religious instruction and literacy that secured for the laity a personal relationship with God and scripture that was independent of clerical overlords and their monopoly on religious interpretation. Thus, education naturally came to be seen as the key site of activism and reform to prevent historical backsliding and counterreformation. Such understandings of the historical and contemporary role of religious instruction in the maintenance of England’s “emancipation” are everywhere apparent in Defoe’s didactic and religious writings, most especially *The New Family Instructor* (1727), which launched an attack against the agendas of deists, Jacobites and other heretics who, according to Defoe, were attempting to reimpose the mental slavery from which the nation broke free during the Reformation.

Given Defoe’s own strongly held religious convictions and the overwhelmingly confessional nature of social and political thought in the period more generally, it is reasonable to assume that a densely Protestant understanding of the dynamics of slavery and emancipation would exert considerable pressure upon the framing of education and its role in the social order. Yet a more complex problem emerges when attempting to
unpack *how* such interpretive pressures exert themselves. Bracketing for now the question of the success or failure of this (or any) attempt to guide an actual reader’s understanding (the business in which didactic texts engaged arguably more than any other genre), one may nevertheless return to notions of authorial and historical intent in order to trace the systemic logic operative in these representations—to lay bare elements of the “social imaginary” which didactic representations index.

To that end, an examination of the logic of slavery in Defoe’s didactic and religious writings can benefit from a sustained engagement with Patterson’s studies of social death, which foregrounds the ways in which religion commandeered the social and political imaginaries of slaveholding societies across the Atlantic world—an ideological process by which slavery offered a “highly symbolized domain of human experience” for slave and slaveholder alike.26 According to Patterson, the long and complex histories of slavery in otherwise Protestant communities suggest how, despite the centrality of tropes of personal and historical emancipation at the core of its ethos, Protestantism could certainly accommodate the practice of slaveholding. At certain historical moments, such as in the Antebellum south, the relationship between Protestant doctrines and slaveholding ideologies could even be in a concordant and largely symbiotic relationship. It would thus be tempting to rely upon the presence of clearly articulated racialist beliefs to account for how the strongly antityrannical impetus of Protestantism could allow Europeans to champion emancipation in their own secular and spiritual struggles while affirming the necessity of African chattel slavery and, later, developing an evangelical proslavery orthodoxy. Yet according to Patterson, the capacity of Protestantism to lead to a simultaneous rejection and affirmation of forms of slavery at different times and in different contexts cannot be understood outside of the hegemonic uses to which religion was put by state and other governing authorities. Although Patterson does not discuss religious instruction in slaveholding societies in terms of *paideia*, his analysis of the ways in which the “structural and ritual aspects of religion” reflected the “centralized nature of political power” on the plantation implicitly deals with the problem of how social death propagated itself and was internalized by slaves, a socializing process in which religion

26 Patterson 37.
was central: “In the same way that the state had to develop a specialized set of laws to deal with the secular problems of the slave, so the state cult needed to develop a more specialized set of rules and beliefs to represent the condition of slavery.”

However, the relationship between slavery and religion on the plantation, according to Patterson, can only be understood in light of the centrality of slavery itself to the Christian tradition. “What is certain,” he notes, “is that the slave experience was a major source of the metaphors that informed the symbolic structure of Christianity.” And nowhere is this immanence better illustrated than in the three “keywords” of Pauline theology: redemption, justification, and reconciliation—each of which, Patterson suggests, relies upon an understanding and acceptance of the experience of slavery for its theological cogency. Thus, “the myth of salvation became the unifying master concept of organized Christianity, and it is most powerfully evoked in the dominant symbol of the religion, that of the death and resurrection of Christ. Man fell into spiritual slavery because of his original sin. Slavery, which on the level of secular symbolism was social death, became on the level of sacred symbolism spiritual death.”

Crucial to Patterson’s analysis are the “two fundamentally different symbolic interpretations” of the relationship of human slavery to Christ’s crucifixion that inhere in, and fracture, the Christian tradition in the west—symbolic interpretations which correspond to contradictory ethical poles within Pauline theology. The first understanding of the relationship between slavery and redemption, Patterson suggests, “held that Christ saved his followers by paying with his own life for the sin that led to their spiritual enslavement. The sinner, strictly speaking, was not emancipated, but died anew in Christ, who became his new master. Spiritual freedom was divine enslavement.” This tradition, which has “profoundly conservative spiritual and social implications, stands in marked contrast to another “far more satisfactory and at the same time more liberating symbolic interpretation” of deliverance. In this interpretation, “Jesus did not redeem mankind by making mankind his slave... Rather, he annulled the condition of

---

27 66. By “state cult,” Patterson refers to the religious culture of a given political community.
28 70.
29 70-1.
slavery in which man existed by returning to the original point of enslavement and, on behalf of the sinner about to fall, gave his own life so that the sinner might live and be free.” As might be expected, the conservative pole, which stressed resignation to worldly conditions, was the dominant principle of Catholicism. During the course of the Reformation, Protestant antityrannicism legitimated its resistance to secular and religious authorities by foregrounding the latter interpretation of the crucifixion. Crucially, however, Patterson suggests that in the Protestantism of the antebellum South, the two poles of resistance and resignation were functionally blended, “with all its contained tension and its contextual shifting from one ethical and symbolic pole to the other.”

Such an emphasis on shifting poles of resistance and resignation is also central to understanding the problems surrounding social death and slavery in Defoe’s religious and didactic writings. To begin with, Defoe’s own politics can rarely be construed using a simple binary between “freedom” and “tyranny”, or between “slavery” and “liberty,” regardless of whether these claims present themselves in the guise of universal political tyranny or racialized colonial slavery. Instead, I argue, Defoe’s social imaginary also contains a functional blending of the liberationist and conservative tendencies inherent in the Christian tradition; in fact, the reconciliation of this tension lies at the very core of his understandings of servitude, which is rooted in the resignation of the individual’s will to the demands of the providential order. For Defoe, however, this resignation, far from implying an ultimate displacement of resistance, is also the basis for it. In fact, his explication of the providential order is itself an explicit model of human agency. As George Starr cogently notes, the design of Providence which appears in all of his narratives “does not excuse man from action, but calls him to it… it indicates solutions rather than simply performing them, it evokes effective action rather than obviating it, and confers human responsibility rather than precluding it.” As J. Paul Hunter and Maximillian Novak have also confirmed in their respective analyses of the providential tradition and Defoe’s use of “secondary means” to effect God’s will, the dynamism of this paradox is an important mainstay of Defoe’s narratives. Even in Jure Divino (1706),

---

30 70-5.
31 Starr 189-90.
Defoe’s most notorious defense of the revolutionary right of English subjects to resist and overthrow tyrannical rulers, the nodding will of Providence continually rears its head, tending to somewhat mitigate the personal responsibility of human action without completely subsuming it. In Protestant theological traditions, this paradox stems from the dualistic nature of Providence to carry forward what is termed “divine government” (or the invisible hand of God which governs the world directly) and “divine correspondence” (i.e., God’s use of secondary means to carry out his will).  

Nowhere is the dualistic role of Providence as the simultaneous limit of and basis for human agency more apparent than in the chapter of Defoe’s *Serious Reflections of Robinson Crusoe* (1720) entitled, “Listening to the Voice of Providence.” There we discover an account of the relationship between human freedom and the providential will which, for the sake of brevity, can be summarized as follows: we are objects in a divine plan; acted upon, used, and made instrumental by the will of God. The greatest gift that God has mercifully given us is the potential to become an “instrument”—a secondary cause—acting in the service of the providential scheme—to be, quite literally, a “servant” of God. If we refuse to read the signs of the providential order, to “listen to the voice of Providence” and obey its dictates, then we can expect the worst: to have the full weight of God’s invisible hand come down in judgment, consigning us to the state of “death” which defines the condition of existence in the postlapsarian world that we have inherited and, if we are not careful, circumscribes our condition in the next.  

In Defoe’s religious and didactic writings, the providential design possesses a very clear intent, a logic that is apparent in its work of effecting both secular reform and spiritual redemption: the creation of socially harmonious communities out of the conditions of social death. In other words, Providence “mercifully” aids man in regaining the paradise that was lost with the Fall—the reparation of mankind’s alienation from each other and from what Milton called the “faithless progeny” who also bear the burden of God’s

---

32 On Defoe and Providence, see Orr.
33 SR 204-22.
judgment for the sins of their first parents in the Paradise of Eden.\textsuperscript{34} It is, in other words, a triumph over the myriad natal alienations that result from inhabiting a fallen world. This understanding of the providential order is clearly evinced in Defoe’s writings concerning the Schism Act, a socio-political controversy which crucially influenced his didactic writings and, especially, the imaginative framing of slavery in the \textit{Family Instructor}.

\subsection*{2.2.2. The Schism Act as social death}

In his writings on the political and social condition of dissent, Defoe dramatically underscores the problem of social death in contemporary England, proffering alarming visions of English Protestants descending into social misfortune, and the nation itself falling prey to nothing short of the repeal of the Protestant reformation. These controversies, moreover, illustrate the ways in which Protestantism and, specifically, ideas of providence focalized issues of slavery, alienation, and community within Defoe’s social theory, allowing for a more detailed reconstruction of the social imaginary that is manifested in his writings. In these writings, Defoe invoked Protestantism and the providential order to articulate an account of social alienation and regeneration which profoundly complicates the contemporary national, racial, and imperial categories of social kinship and division of early Georgian Britain. In nowhere are these representational practices more evident than in Defoe’s responses to the proposed Schism Bill and the subsequent Schism Act that was enacted in 1714. Although only one of many occasional controversies in which Defoe actively participated, the affair of the Schism Act provides a telling case study of the relationship between education and social death in Defoe’s thinking more generally. The historical episode would directly influence his representations of slave societies in the \textit{Family Instructor} and, more subtly, in the later fictional works.

In May of 1714, the Schism Bill, a patently partisan Tory proposal, was introduced before Parliament after being championed by Lord Bolingbroke, who had largely succeeded in garnering support for the measure among his party. The Bill, as B.G. Ivanyi

\textsuperscript{34} See, Milton III.94-7.
has shown, was “generally considered to be a mortal blow to the Dissenters’ educational system and to their whole survival as a religious denomination.”

It comprised a series of far-reaching measures that gave power of law to civil authorities to prosecute not only those Dissenters who ran the academies, but also those who attempted to teach anyone anything at all, including their own children at home. Defoe’s response was as swift as it was impassioned. He unleashed a flurry of pamphlets decrying the tyranny and injustice of the Bill. He was, at the time, regarded as one of the most influential and notorious journalists and champions of the Dissenters’ cause. As revealed in his well-documented correspondence with his patron Robert Harley, the leading member of Queen Anne’s ministry, Defoe was also successful in persuading the government to mitigate its more draconian aspects. The Act that was finally passed limited the harshness of the original bill, including the notorious stipulation against even teaching the “first education” of basic literacy. Nevertheless, he continued to attack the Act in his pamphlets, especially his widely distributed Schism Act Explain’d (1714).

The Schism Act, more than any of the other restrictive anti-dissenting laws in place, laid bare the violent animosity and factional fury motivating the Tories in their attempts to restrict the growth of so-called “schismatics”—policies which were perceived by Dissenters as aiming for nothing short of the total annihilation of the dissenting community. Indeed, even a cursory examination of the justifications of the original Bill in the Tory press reveals why critics were so alarmed. As one especially telling instance from the Examiner suggests, “Does the giving ease to scrupulous Consciences, now in being, preclude the proper methods to prevent the growth of other scrupulous Consciences, by way of succession in infinitum? Certainly not. [I]ndulgence to actual Dissenters [does not] include Potential Dissenters, that is Children, Babes and unborn Posterity; who not only may be, but must be Schismatics, if they are forced to it by their Parents.” Accordingly, the author avows, the Bill is not a tyrannical imposition of the state upon private individuals, but rather “prevents than promotes Persecution; since it rescues innocent Children from those Disadvantages which their rigorous parents would

35 Ivanyi 213.
36 For a summary of Defoe’s involvement see Ivanyi and Rothman. Rothman 213 contains a list of the relevant publications, some items of which have also since been deattributed by Furbank & Owens (1994).
force them into, by denying them the Liberty of becoming Conscientious Churchmen.”37

According to Patterson, the process of “natal alienation,” wherein the social and familial connections between the individual and ancestral community are ruptured, is central to institutionalizing the marginality of a subaltern group within their broader community. Though the Schism Act was framed by the Examiner as a preemptive forestalling of the alienation of future British subjects from the national Church, critics persisted in drawing attention to how such heavy-handed attempts to wrench the children of Dissent away from their parents’ religious community would inevitably have different consequences from those intended—the Bill would institutionalize, not prevent, schism in England and irrecoverably destroy any prospect of a broad-based unity in the Protestant cause. For instance, reviewing Bolingbroke’s Schism Bill in the early spring of 1714, Richard Steele (1672-1729), an Anglican and moderate Whig MP, underlined the profoundly devastating implications of the law for the entire nation:

… [imagine] a poor Schismatick School-Mistress brought before a zealous angry Squire for transgressing this Act, and teaching one Presbyterian, yet little more than an Animal, in what the Letter D differed from the Letter B; maliciously insinuating to another Schismatick aged five Years old, without Licence from the Ordinary, that O is round; and not contenting her self with meerly showing to the said Schismatics the Letters of a certain Book covered with Horn; but instructing the said Heretics to put them together, and make Words of them; as appears by the Affidavit of one who heard one Infant Schismatick say, o-f, of, and o-b, ob. — Prodigious! that a Church adorned with so many Excellent and Learned Members, supplied by two famous Universities, both endowed with ample Revenues, Immunities, and Jurisdictions, should be affronted with the offer of being reinforced with Penal Laws against the Combination of Women and Children!38

The almost hysterical sentimentalism of Steele’s imagery is hardly satirical in light of his adumbration of the tyrannical and antisocial aspects of the Bill: not only would it alienate Dissenters from the Church and undermine its standing in the eyes of critics and members alike, it would shake the very foundations of English liberty itself. The image of the vulnerable school-mistress persecuted for teaching her charges to read their letters underscored Steele’s ultimate point: the Schism act would go far beyond subverting the gains of Glorious Revolution but would undermine the reformation itself, since “it is the

37 The Examiner, 7.11, quoted in Ivanyi.
38 Steele 18.
Characteristick of Protestant Churches to admit with all Candour the Liberty of Studying the Scriptures, and consequently of teaching and being taught them." Thus, declares Steele, 

It will give Arguments to [the Church’s] Enemies, that she is conscious of her Inability to defend her self by Reason and Truth, when she flies to the Secular Power to take off her Dissenters. It will carry in it all the Guilt which we object against the Roman Catholicks, in founding her Power in the blind Obedience of the People, and not in the Conviction of their Minds. When we have this, and used Force in our gaining Proselytes, why should not the Church of Rome, which has more Force, employ it all in reducing us, who are, they say, Schismaticks from them? Can any thing be juster than to make Us suffer, what We in the same case impose on others?

In Steele’s account, the impending subjugation of free-born English subjects by restricting their education and religious instruction—the resurgence in England of “Popish” slavery—instances how religion possessed a far greater status than the sum of theological or doctrinal diversity: it provides the framework for the entire ethical system upon which notions of communal belonging and out-group alterity are negotiated, the “us” and the “others” to which he refers. In Steele’s polemic, the vulnerable school-mistress stands in for no less a figure than the embattled Britannia herself, whose conventionally “foreign” persecutors are now as homegrown any country squire (a fact which was all too readily underscored by the Jacobite uprising in the following year). Here, the widespread decline of Britain’s Protestant spirit augured by the Schism Bill is depicted as far more than the loss of cultural, ethnic, or racial identity, but takes on coherent meaning only as a political outcome, one which causes England to resemble France and its treatment of the Huguenots. Thus, the asymmetrical relation between Britishness and Frenchness is profoundly complicated by the fact that there is little pretense of their being correlative cultural phenomena or accidents of birth; they are instead keyed to, respectively, the very possibility of a civil society to achieve social integration and securely move forward into the future versus the immanent threat of historical collapse and social disintegration. Under the Schism Bill, the decline of education in the present is coterminous with the ultimate decline of England in the future, for the law threatens to plunge England into a state of war and to proliferate the
corruption and social death of all her subjects—transforming them into tyrannical persecutors and tyrannized victims alike. “You may,” warns Steele, “with equal Justice, take away the Lives of the Dissenters, as punish the Dissenters in their Liberty or their Estates for instructing Children their own way. This is a step of the Highest Degree of Violation, and there can be no Progress further than cutting their Throats.”

This pattern of representation is elaborated upon in Defoe’s own polemical contributions, which dramatically spell out how the proposed Schism Bill and the resulting Schism Act fully realizes the visions of faction, mass annihilation, and social disintegration that he first portended in The Shortest Way with the Dissenters (1702). The key figure bridging the two contexts was, of course, Henry Sacheverell (1674-1724), the incendiary High Church clergyman and zealous Tory proponent of these and other repressive policies against the Dissenters, whom Defoe had in mind when he decried the “Right Reverend Fireband” whose most “Persecuting Cruel Clauses” had been rejected by Parliament. In the Schism Act Explain’d, Defoe continued to flatter the members of Parliament and Queen Anne’s ministry, including his patron, who were guided by “a Spirit of Charity, Tenderness and Toleration [that] appeared to act the whole body.” Thus, Defoe distances them from “all those who thought to make this Law a Foundation of Cruelty and Persecution.” Despite having been thoroughly declawed, however, the reformed final Act remained ambiguous as to how far-reaching and open-ended its powers of repression were—how successfully it could be used by enemies of dissent to crush their schools and academies. Thus, in his task of “explaining” the Act, Defoe first denounces the law’s illegitimate nature and dangerous consequences, before finally pondering whether any law can be made “to dissolve the Laws of Paternal Affection and of Humanity that shall prohibit a Parent endeavouring the Eternal Salvation of his Child.” No, he insists, at least none that is “consistent with Reason, with natural Liberty, and with Christianity, as well as with the constituted Liberties of this Nation, can be made to do it.”

40 11-12.
41 Defoe, Schism Act Explain’d, 12.
42 22-4.
43 19-20.
The complex rhetorical strategies that Defoe employs to declare both the negligibility and the danger of the law in *The Schism Explain'd*, however, can only be understood in light of the pamphlet’s multiple audiences, which pull the polemic in contradictory directions. In fact, the pamphlet addresses a three-fold audience: First, the extremist Tories and high-flying churchmen, whose spirit of rage, factionalism, and tyranny renders them the schismatic enemies of Protestant unity and thus the true “others” of civil society. Second, the parliament and ministry who passed the bill, who are praised for introducing precautionary measures into the Act, actions which bespeak their true inclinations to quell schism in the polity. (Here, Defoe is employing the common rhetorical convention of the idealized mirror, which passes off advisory counsel in the form of praise.) Third, the Dissenters whose fears the author hopes to dispel as he encourages them to redouble their efforts in the instruction of their children.

It is through this final address that Defoe reconciles the polemic’s competing claims about the nature of the law—at once futile but also dangerous—by situating the Schism Act within the dualistic order of providence. In this respect, the Act demonstrates the hand of God acting in its simultaneously punitive and merciful capacity, imparting lessons that can only be gleaned when the signs of Providence are read correctly. According to Defoe, mercy, as the animating principle of Providence, can be seen in the passing of the Act in two ways: first, of course, by Parliament’s refusing to enact the original, overly repressive Bill, which thus illustrates God’s strong disapproval of the would-be corruptors of Protestantism (i.e., the factional ministers who would have been all too happy to see “Prisons filled with Free-born English Men, confin’d because they could not in Conscience comply with the Cruel Law; and denied the Benefit of an Appeal to the Queen in her Sovereign Courts of Justice, a Right, which, by Magna Carta is the property of every English subject”). But the second, and more important, aspect of the Act is that it nevertheless reveals God’s judgment against the Dissenters, who, according to Defoe, have been punished for growing lax in the establishment of family worship and religious instruction in their families and for devolving unto others the responsibility for carrying out the education of their “households” (a term which Defoe uses here as

---

44 5-6.
elsewhere to refer to the extended networks that cluster around the domestic home, including servants, friends, and visitors). In other words, the Dissenters have come to resemble those of worldly Anglicans by the dereliction of duty, and providence has used the Act to call them back to the pilgrim’s “straight and narrow” path.

Of course, this latter aspect of the providential order allows Defoe to situate the Schism Act under the interpretive aegis of the “Fortunate Fall.” It has, according to Defoe, created the conditions of possibility for the reform of the British social and political milieu, both for the antisocial tyrants who have pressed for it and for the tyrannized Dissenters, who must resist this punitive enslavement through a renewed commitment to serve God. Thus, resistance comes in the form of a profound resignation to the duty to educate their children—a reform, which he himself offers to help the Dissenters enact. Accordingly he concludes the pamphlet by stating his intention to “speak larger” to the subject of family instruction “on another occasion.”

Defoe’s Family Instructor was entered in Stationers’ Hall in early 1715, a few months after the publication of the Schism Act Explain’d. Maximillan Novak describes the Family Instructor as nothing short of a calculated “war” against the dangers which Dissenters faced, having been made to wander the wilderness of a “contemporary Britain of heretics, deists, and atheists.” While Novak neatly figures the profound sense of alienation that underwrites the work, it may also, as I illustrate below, be more felicitous to think of the work as a declaration of war against the state of war itself.

2.3. The Family Instructor: foreign friends and domestic strangers

The conceptual linkages between Defoe’s participation in the Schism Act controversies and the extraordinarily successful didactic fictions that comprise Defoe’s Family Instructor series are manifest. In this section, I illustrate how an examination of these

---

45 Ivanyi 213.
46 484.
47 For ease of reference, I refer to these texts collectively as the Family Instructor—individual differentiations are cited parenthetically in-text as FI followed by the volume, part, and dialogue number. FIv1 (1715) comprises the first three parts of The Family Instructor. The FIv2 (1718) comprises the fourth and fifth parts. Each book is subdivided into a varying number of dialogues. Thus, for instance, the first dialogue of the fourth part of the
connections—between colonial and domestic relationships, political and private concerns—productively disorients the approaches to the problem of race, slavery, and empire that has dominated discussions of Defoe’s later fictional works.

In both the *Family Instructor* and the earlier polemics, Defoe anticipates Patterson in asserting the centrality of natal alienation—the subversion of the bonds between the individual and their broader familial and social communities—in his theories of social death. In the *Schism Act* controversies, Defoe reframed the arbitrary laws restricting the pedagogical relations between dissenting teachers and pupils as an attack on the very core of the domestic relationship between parent and child. The persecutorial nature of the law, he claimed, was evident both in its intended function of thwarting the will of parents to educate their children into their (or any) Protestant religious communities as well as in its “unintended” merciful function in exhorting Dissenters to reassert the salutary practices of the early Protestant Reformation. Both Steele and Defoe portended England’s social destruction as a consequence of antisocial corruptions in the present; yet unlike Steele, Defoe rooted the cause less in the fault of the law’s architects, whose malicious will was ancillary to their instrumentality as the agents of Providence, and instead shifted the blame onto the Dissenters, who had engendered God’s wrath by their dereliction of duty, by the neglect of their service to their families, God, and the Protestant nation. According to Defoe, Dissenters have been overcome by their worldly and corrupt passions, embracing a form of mental slavery that Defoe aims to ameliorate by guiding them through the process of converting their enslavement into servitude to the Protestant cause and by transforming their fractured communities into a Protestant utopia. In this respect, the *Family Instructor* is nothing short of a “prosocial” how-to guide to the attainment of this conversion, setting out to heal the breaches of alienation and the estrangement of people from one another by reinforcing the normative bonds of sociability. The *Family Instructor* thus represents the realization of Defoe’s concluding promise in the *Schism Act Explain’d*. At this practical level, the connections between the Schism controversy and the *Family Instructor* works have certainly been emphasized in

---

second volume of the *Family Instructor* is cited as FIv2.4.1. Page numbers correspond to the Furbank & Owens’s edition of the text.
the few bibliographical and critical studies of the latter texts.\textsuperscript{48} Overlooked, however, is how this relationship also crucially underlies the representation of colonial slavery in the *Family Instructor*, which is, in turn, inextricably entangled with the ideas of “social death” and enslavement that preoccupy Defoe in his Schism polemics.

This latter connection has been partly obscured by the fact that the depiction of chattel slavery in the *Family Instructor* primarily occurs in the second volume (FIv2)—a work that was published three years later in 1718. At first blush, the gap in publication undoubtedly troubles the assertion of a direct relationship between the first and second volumes of the *Family Instructor*, and thus between the second volume and the original Schism controversies that motivated the publication of the first. In fact, Defoe’s *Schism Act Explain’d* was coincidentally (or “providentially,” accordingly to Defoe) published on the eve of the death of Queen Anne, an event which for all intents and purposes nullified the Schism Act and thus, according to Maximillian Novak, obviated the need for further anxiety surrounding the Act and its threat to the integrity of the Dissenting household. Accordingly, the dangers that animated the first volume of the *Family Instructor* were nullified, at least in practice, after 1714, even before the formal repeal of the Schism Act in 1718. Agreeing with Defoe’s own assessment in the preface of the second volume that it is “so entirely differing… that it seems to be as perfectly new as if no other part had been published before it” (FIv2 ii), Novak suggests that the optimism garnered by the ascension of George I, the return to power of the Whigs, and the “inevitable” repeal of the *Schism Act* in 1718 all ensure that the work “should not be read as an insipid continuation.”\textsuperscript{49} This insistence on the novelty of the latter work, however, stems from a framing of the *Family Instructor* as the precursor to Defoe’s novelistic period, with the second volume illustrating Defoe’s growing strength to “weave together his dialogues and stories in an intricate pattern” even better than the first.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{48} Indeed, the clear relationship between the two contexts provides the basis of Ivanyi’s convincing attribution of *The Schism Act Explain’d* to Defoe, an attribution that remains unquestioned in Furbank & Owens’s subsequent list of deattributions of titles from JR Moore’s checklist of Defoe publications.

\textsuperscript{49} Novak 486.

\textsuperscript{50} 487.
While Novak’s arguments are certainly valid from a purely fictional standpoint, a too-hasty retreat from the political into the literary contexts surrounding Defoe’s artistry overlooks the continued influence of politics upon his writing. In fact, as Paula Bachscheider points out, any optimism which Dissenters may have felt at the death of Anne proved fleeting. For instance, while it is true that Defoe wrote in the *Question Fairly Stated* (1717) that “there seems Room to hope, and Reason to expect our Deliverance from these Burthens… of persecuting Laws, and of unrighteous Distinctions” and that the Dissenters would “be restored to that Freedom which as Englishmen they have a Native Right to, and which as Christians they have a Divine Right to;” yet in actuality, such optimism only reflects Defoe’s advisory mode—his attempts to influence gains in the civil rights of Dissenters, whose interests continued to be betrayed by the Whig ministry in the years following Anne’s death. As Backscheider notes, this was a period of extraordinary frustration for Defoe, and the highly anticipated events of 1718 proved far from a triumph: ultimately, only the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts were repealed, leaving the Test and Corporation Acts in place. Defoe, meanwhile, “reacted with disappointment and anger. He saw clearly that the Dissenters were still second-class citizens and those who felt as he did about communion still barred from civil, military, and crown offices and from the universities.” Even before the enactment of the law, Defoe had used the problem of education to address the alienation of Dissenters in contemporary England, likening the Dissenters’ liberty of teaching their children to their right to get up in the morning. In the second volume of the *Family Instructor*, Defoe’s treatment of education continues to ruminate upon the forces of social death that “enslave” British subjects and threaten the destruction of their communities—threats that are explored in the text by the symbolic proximities of contemporary Britain and the Caribbean slave society.

In fact, Defoe’s claims of proffering a new work in the second volume are belied by his stronger insistence of a *return* to the themes that underwrite the first volume. Indeed, factoring in the inclusion of a third volume, *A New Family Instructor* (1727), the

51 Quoted in Backscheider, *His Life*, 394.
52 Backscheider 396.
sequential ordering of *The Family Instructor* virtually mirrors *Robinson Crusoe* and its sequels. In both cases, a sequence of two works of dialogue-based and episodic fictional narratives is followed by a final spiritual treatise, one that eschews imaginative fiction in favour of direct moral address to the reader. And much like the *Farther Adventures*, the second volume of the *Family Instructor* also continues the first in an immediate manner—a connection which Defoe emphasizes throughout the text despite his claims of the sequel’s novelty. For instance, elsewhere in the preface to the second volume, Defoe notes the “general opinion” among “modern readers of books” that the “Second Parts never come up to the First.” This was the fate, he continues, “of that excellent Poem of Mr. Milton’s, called *Paradise Regain’d*, which… could never obtain to be nam’d with [*Paradise Lost*].” In contrast to received opinions, however, “Mr. Milton himself differ’d from the whole World in his Opinion about it, affirm’d that it was by much the better Poem, and gave this Reason for the general Dislike, (viz.) That people had a common sense of the Loss of Paradise, but had not an equal Gift for the Regaining of it” (i-ii). Of course, Defoe’s invocation of the differing receptions of Milton’s two poems baldly attempts to legitimate the necessity of a second volume, which was undoubtedly published to further capitalize on the extraordinary popularity of the original. Yet just as crucially, however, these sentiments also explicitly introduce the underlying narrative logic of reform in the *Family Instructor*. To wit, the narratives that comprise the *Family Instructor* dramatize the reformist conversion of a number of domestic scenes that all commence from the point of an imaginative “fall,” having lost a paradise of social harmony which they endeavour to regain.

Despite this broad resemblance, however, the Miltonic analogy frequently collapses under the weight of the didactic work’s cautionary tales: while every episode is ultimately resolved through a commitment to reform and a subsequent ‘regaining’ of some measure of social stability and cohesion, the vast majority of them end on notes of profound ambivalence, even terrible violence, that seem worlds away from the confident triumphalism of Milton’s own sequel. For instance, the final episode of the first volume witnesses the return of the disobedient prodigal son (like, Robinson Crusoe, having defied his father’s authority and traveled out to the West Indies), yet the son’s final
repentance does not save him from the fate of a horrible death, having contracted a violent illness from living in squalor. The rhetoric of man’s fallen condition, moreover, resounds throughout the narrative, either through direct didactic exposition by the stories’ moral authorities (e.g., Fi1v.1.1 18-19) or more, more commonly, by the repentant sinners themselves, such as when the dying son asks his sister for assistance in standing up: “I am an Emblem of Mankind, [that] they can fall when they will; but cannot rise without Help” (Fi1v.3.5 310). Likewise, the first episode of the second volume extends the allusions to Genesis in the preface, relating the trials of a family patriarch who is tempted into abolishing regular religious worship and instruction among his children and servants by his seductive wife, a “godless” woman of pleasure who abhors the restrictions which regular family worship place on her time and freedom (Fi2v.4.1). Yet the resolution of this tale, like the episodes that follow, continues to end on more of a cautionary than a conciliatory tone: the eventual conversion of this wife occurs only after her descent into a delusional and murderous lunacy (Fi2v.4.3 143-7), while the volume’s final episode presents the narrative of another family patriarch who succumbs to violent madness and self-destruction. This final tale is explicitly presented as a negative “pattern” to readers, as the narrator urges them to master their own violent passions (Fi2v.5.5 275)—a warning that hardly concludes the Family Instructor with the glorious heralding of Christ’s power to restore paradise within the world of man. Yet a single episode, the most substantial of the second volume and clearly the centerpiece of its didactic moralizing, does in fact conform to the promised enactment of a paradise lost and regained (Fi2v.5.2). Where nearly all of the preceding episodes dwelled upon the “punitive” dimensions of the providential order, startling the reader with dramatic instances of the abject violence and horror to which those who neglect religious instruction inevitably succumb, this episode takes a markedly approach.

Indeed, the very centrality of this narrative to the reformist aims of the text is emphasized by the narrator’s reminder of the Miltonic sentiments of the preface just prior to his relation of the tale. As with all of the episodes of the volume, the tale is related by the narrator, a sage and kindly man, in conversation with a violent-tempered patriarch who lives next door, whom the wise neighbour discourses counsels through a series of
instructive “patterns” that demonstrate how to improve family government. Before turning to the episode in question, the narrator reveals that

*Neigh.* I [do not] love to relate [stories of] the dark side only; it is a more blessed work to tell of the mercies of God to families and persons, than of their breaches and crimes; I think Milton’s *Paradise Regain’d* a pleasanter work, though it may not have so much variety in it, than his *Paradise Lost*, at least there is a greater beauty in the subject.

*Fa.* In that you speak against the common opinion.

*Neigh.* Mr. Milton himself was of my opinion. (Flv2.5.2 159)

The tale in question, relating the blessings of “God’s mercies,” comprises two lengthy dialogues in the fifth and final part of the two-part *Family Instructor* series, the section concerned with “The Management of Children.” As befitting its Miltonic undercurrents, the tale offers an early and lengthy instance of Defoe’s reflections on the contexts surrounding the so-called ‘New World’ of the Caribbean, inaugurating an eighteenth-century tradition in which the articulation of didactic theories are aided by imaginative recursions to the slave society.

Before analyzing this specific aspect of the story, however, a brief summary and contextual discussion of the larger narrative is essential. The frame narrator begins by describing the history of an anonymous family somewhere in “the out-parts of the city,” whose household was “of middling circumstances, as to wealth, not considerably rich, and yet far from poor; the father was of an employment in one of the public offices belonging to sea affairs” (Flv2.5.3 182). Like the other “fallen” households which preoccupy the text, so too is this one “void of religion as a family could be in a country where anything of religion is nationally professed. Their conversation was so far from being religious, that it was scarce sober; nothing of the practice of religion, no, not so much as the show of it; for neither father nor mother were hardly ever known to go to church from one end of the year to the other.” (182). Here, the use of “middle-class” origins hardly signals the vaunted bourgeois morality of the milieu that critics have invariably claimed for Crusoe’s background; instead, the narrator provides ample instances of how “their discourse, as the conversation of such families generally is, was a mere complication of levity and vanity, to say no worse; a collection of ill language, oaths, taking the name of God in vain, and all kinds of loose, lewd, and wicked talk”
Despite the pervasive licentiousness of the “godless” and “hellish” family, there appears in the midst of them a veritable young prodigy in the form of the family’s youngest child, a boy of four named Jacky, who displays a strongly religious orientation.

The development and consequences of young Jacky’s “miraculous” religious inclinations soon becomes the principal engine of the narrative. The child’s moral character is first noticed by a pious sea captain during a visit to the home of the family, where he witnesses the boy’s mother making light of the boy’s religious sentiments and moral rebukes—his precocious sermons a source of jest to her and the other guests (184-5). In contrast to them, the captain is astonished by the young boy’s seriousness amidst the levity of his surroundings, prompting him to confess his belief that “there was something more than common in that child” to a pious cousin of the family:

_Cous._ You would say so indeed, if you had heard some passages that I have heard in the family; there is scarce a day passes but they meet with some seasonable, some strange, and some surprising reproof from that child.

_Capt._ And does it make no impression upon them?

_Cous._ Not at all; there is not sure such a family of heathens and drunkards in the nation. (186-7)

The creation of moral “impressions” is, of course, foundational to the didactic worldview of the _Family Instructor_; it forms the mean by which exemplary individuals—both those whose positive examples are fit to be followed and those whose negatives examples ought to be disowned—become instructive. As the reference to “passages” suggests, the distinction between the occurrences of everyday life and the very form of the didactic text frequently collapses in the paradigmatic world of the didactic narrative. The Captain, cognizant of the ameliorative potential of Jacky to create such reforming and redemptive impressions, thus resolves to do everything in his power to encourage the boy’s moral instruction, declaring to the cousin his hope “that such passages as these, in a child so young… work some great alteration in the family. Why such a child is enough to make a whole house serious, if they were the profanest wretches in nature… [he] will certainly have some effect upon some of them, one time or other, though it may not just now” (196). Yet as the Captain consults further with the cousin, the cause of Jacky’s “miraculous” preservation from the corrupting influence of his family become clearer:
Cous. a poor maid-servant that they providentially, no doubt, took into the house; and that dresses, undresses, and lies with it; you saw her there just now; she is a good, sober wench, and a very good Christian; she has done it all.... I verily think Providence cast her lot here for the sake of this child; for she is better than father or mother to it; nay, indeed, than all its relations; but all the house hates her for it.... She teaches it to read; she is always a talking gravely to it; she has told it a great many religious things, such as... that it is a wicked, dreadful thing to swear, and take God's name in vain... (196)

The captain thus resolves to “hire” Margy to continue attending to Jacky’s religious instruction, offering her a supplementary wage to ensure her duties as maidservant do not interfere with the duty to educate the child.

As suggested by the cousin’s repeated invocations of Providence, the ensuing dialogues among Captain, Cousin, and Margy forcefully reiterates the dualistic nature of the Providential order that is expounded upon throughout the *Family Instructor*. On the one hand, Providence represents the sovereign agency of God that is everywhere invoked throughout the *Family Instructor* narratives. In a deathbed conversion, for instance, the prodigal son of the first volume reflects upon how his prophetic dreams illustrate “the determinate Will of that Sovereign Power that guides and governs the whole World...It is a Testimony that *nothing befalls us* without an Invisible Hand” (FIV1.3.5 396)—an interpretation of prophetic dreams which is also affirmed by Crusoe in his own reflections. Thus, the frame narrator frequently interjects to underscore the importance of the characters’ responsiveness to the impressions created by the “wonderful” Jacky, whose story illustrates “how signally the Providence of God provided [for him]... so that, “that, though it was brought forth in a family where there were no advantages of education to be had, yet the child gained a stock of knowledge above his years, which, added to his original inclination, made him an extraordinary child every way” (FIv2.5.4 207). This is the Providence of divine agency, the one that rewards those who, in Crusoe’s terms, “listen to its voice” and are suitably impressed into reforming and aiding in the reformation of others: “Record[ing] the signal disposition of that Providence which, as in its original decrees singles out objects of mercy from [godless] families,” the frame narrator notes, “is indeed the reason of my telling this part of the child’s story.” Yet on the other hand, he immediately complicates the sovereign “disposition” of the
Providential order by drawing attention to the ways in which it is constrained by the self-imposed limits of the natural order:

… so it does not however illuminate the minds of those so singled out by mere inspiration and miraculous revelation; but furnishes the ordinary means of instruction, letting us know that education, and instructing of children in the knowledge of God, and the most early reverence of religion, is not the duty of parents only, but is the ordinary means which God has appointed for the reaching the hearts of those children who are so singled out for his own service. (207)

As I have already implied, the notion of providential service positions the individual as simultaneously a sovereign subject and an instrument of the sovereign will of God, profoundly complicating any recourse to a straightforward binary in thinking about the problem of agency versus constraints upon action, of resistance versus resignation—complications that are at the core of Defoe’s notions of servitude.

Tellingly, it is the very point at which the narrator offers these reflections that the narrative dramatically veers ‘off-course’ and recommences by bringing the contexts of the colonial slavery to bear upon its examinations of Providential servitude. “But to return to the story,” declares the frame narrator after his brief sermon on the nature of providence, Jacky’s father

…having now got his son home, put him to learn Latin at a grammar-school in the neighbourhood; and as he was acquainted much among seafaring men, a captain of a ship that came from Berbadoes [sic] brought him home a little Negro Boy, about 14 years old. The boy, it seems, though born in that island, spoke but imperfect English; however, as he was of suitable age for such work, he appointed him to wait upon his little son. (207)

The introduction of the colonial slave figure, Toby, serves two primary purposes. To begin with, he further extends the key trope of the ‘faithful servant,’ an idea that was illustrated first by Margy and later by the faithful ‘old woman’ who takes over the task of educating Jacky and his companion Toby after Margy is no longer able. Whether presented in the guise of literal servants to masters/mistresses or figurative servants (as agents of reform) to family, friends, and God, servitude is the overarching normative characteristic of every exemplary character in the Family Instructor. In this respect, Toby’s presence in the narrative is only remarkable for its very unremarkable nature—he is simply one among several characters that constellate around a socially integrated web
of relationships that together provide an exemplary and salutary contrast to the social schisms and estrangements that are characteristic of The Family Instructor’s unregenerate households. Crucially these ideal relations of servitude, without disavowing the varying degrees of power which mark an individual’s position at different points in the web, nevertheless imaginatively neutralize the hierarchical and vertical structure of those relations (a point to which I will return in the final section).

While the ideal of servitude strongly tends toward flattening differences between the characters, Toby is, however, also distinctive in one way that the other ‘servants’ of the tale are not: his exemplary status is revealed through a process of overcoming differences that threaten the universalizing fabric of web of social integration—namely the differences imposed by colour prejudice and racial hierarchy. In fact, disabusing Jacky of his mistaken beliefs concerning “negroes” forms the first and most essential ethical component of Jacky’s own religious education. When the godly cousin discovers Jacky in a fit of anger after he overhears Toby swearing, she admonishes him accordingly: “‘Well, and now you see why you should [give God thanks], child; for if you had not been taught by that poor maid, you might have been as ignorant as this poor black boy.’” Here the child stopped again, the tears running down his cheeks. “What is the matter child, said his cousin, why dost cry again?” The child fetches a deep sigh, O, says he, “what if I had been a black boy, then Margy could have taught me nothing?” (210). The child is assured by the cousin that Toby can be taught and possesses a soul, and that it is incumbent upon Jacky to undertake the duty of providing his Christian instruction accordingly (211). Still uncertain, the boy later poses the same query to his father, which, like all of the most important lessons of the Family Instructor, is rendered in the catechistic form of question and answer:

*Boy.* Dear father, says he, has our Toby a soul?
*Fa.* Yes, child, a soul! what makes thee ask that simple question?
*Boy.* Why, has all the black folks got souls too?
*Fa.* Yes, certainly...
*Boy.* And are their souls black too, father?
*Fa.* Truly, child, their souls are dark; they are darkened through ignorance of the true God, and for want of the saving light of the gospel; but else the soul cannot be said to be of any colour.
*Boy.* How do we know they have souls, father?
Admittedly, Toby’s father explicitly rejects the quasi-polygenetic theories to account for the complexions of Africans race (“Some say it was the effect of the Curse of Ham,” he tells Jacky, “but we have natural reasons for it... so that if a white man was to go to [Africa], and live by themselves, without mingling with the rest of the natives, yet in time their posterity would be as black as the rest” [217]). Yet at this point in the narrative, there appears little to distinguish the text’s universalist Christian organicism from the Victorian ideologies of the Christian civilizing mission. Far from mitigating ethnic, racial, or national differences, such ideologies imbued the British imperial hegemony over colonial others with moral lustre—an extension of the historical logic that sought to rearticulate European particularity as a universal frame of reference by excluding non-Europeans from the category of the civilized and rendering them in a permanently subordinate position vis-à-vis the narrative of modernity.\(^{54}\) However, in the context of the *Family Instructor*, such an assertion would hardly do justice to the extraordinarily complex process of identification and disassociation through which the text articulates its utopian ideal of community. Recall that during the Schism debates, for instance, both Steele and Defoe represented the corruptions plaguing the British polity through another, albeit far less celebratory, universalizing scheme, wherein the imagined differences between England and its ‘unreformed’ others were thoroughly flattened; in the words of another contemporary observer, the Bill was “more like a decree of Julian the apostate, than a law enacted by a Protestant parliament,” whose sponsors closely resembled the “heathen emperors and the Inquisition.”\(^{55}\) Similar themes are echoed in Defoe’s *Religious Courtship* (1722), in which the decay of educational institutions at home prohibit Britons from claiming superiority over “the negro of Africa or the savage of America.”\(^{56}\) So too does the *Family Instructor* extend the practice of using normative Protestant values as the basis for claims of identification and differentiation. Here, the text generates utopian social groupings that easily detach from any stable notion of racial, national, or ethnic

---

\(^{54}\) The scholarship elaborating upon these historical and ideological processes of nation & narration is considerable. See, for instance, Bhaba (ed.).

\(^{55}\) Quoted in Backscheider 339-40.

\(^{56}\) Defoe, *Religious Courtship*, 45.
identities. Rooting notions of social belonging to its Protestant ideal, the Family Instructor implicitly rejects the claims of the overwhelming majority of contemporary Europeans, especially Britons, of belonging to its imagined community—whether Briton or African, they have in equal measures inherited the same fallen and fundamentally unregenerate world. This much has already been suggested by the dialogues quoted above, wherein the father and the godly cousin reveal to Jacky that he owes his debt of gratitude to the divine impositions of Providence for allowing him to escape the benighted condition of Africans like Toby, not to the accident of his British birth. Indeed, the accidents of his particular birth—in a veritable vanity fair—conspire, if anything, to keep his soul “dark.”

Which leads us to the second primary purpose of Toby’s appearance in the narrative: to induce an examination of the West Indian context and its pointed similitude to the domestic contexts of the narrative’s unregenerate household. Through Toby’s dialogues with Jacky, the slaveholding society that Toby formerly occupied slowly resolves before the reader. It is a place, pointedly, where the neglect of religious and moral education is endemic. The wicked oaths which Toby initially utters, we discover, reflect his West Indian origins—“the common phrase[s] of the island, Dam him, or such like” (216). In this respect, Toby is characterized as having been tainted by the influence of ‘degenerate’ Creole society, which British attitudes were “hardening” against well before the ideological faultlines engendered by the American Revolution. In the Family Instructor, the island colonies are places where drinking, carousing, and vice are prevalent—where planters break the observation of the Sabbath, neglect church-going, and are remiss in their duty to undertake religious instruction in their plantations. As a result, Toby has been left utterly—to Jacky, “shockingly”—illiterate (207-18). Yet these characteristics, we soon discover, are the very same ones that initially afflict Jacky’s household, subsequently rendering its unregenerate members “slaves” to their corrupting passions. Jacky’s mother, for instance, is described as falling into fits of passion which result in her

57 Jack Greene makes the point that by 1760, such attitudes were already firmly in place (156-199). Such presumptions are especially well-documented in the writings produced by the Society of Propagating Christian Knowledge. See, for instance, Edmund Gibson’s “Letter from the Lord Bishop of London to the Masters and Mistresses of Families in the English Plantations Abroad” (London: 1727).
swearing uncontrollably (230); his father’s consumption of spirits, meanwhile, is described in the plain terms of addiction: “he felt his appetite craving and eager, and his stomach out of order: he had taken a glass of wine or two, and found himself better after it; but for want of quantity, the desire returned, and he was scarce able to resist it: he considered, if he complied, he was undone, and should run again to all his former excesses; and if he did not gratify his stomach, he was intolerably sick, and what to do he knew not” (216). Both parents are initially derelict in their duties of establishing regular family worship, church-going, and observation of the Sabbath; and their neglect of Jacky’s education only heightens their amazement when they observe Jacky “miraculously” able to read.

Yet it is, finally, by reckoning the horrors surrounding the regimes of slave labour on the colonial plantations that the family’s own state of social death—their catastrophic resemblance to the slave plantation—is brought home to them and to the reader. In one especially poignant dialogue with Toby, Jacky is shocked to learn that ‘you say you know no God; where was you born?’ ‘Me be born at Barbadoes,’ Toby replies, describing how the “white Mans” there “no much knoW GOD”, and how the black Mans “much work, much Work; no say God prayers. Makee the Sugar, makee the Ginger; much great Work, weary Work, all Day, all night:”

*Boy.* What don’t they go to church?
*Toby.* Little few go to church, very little few.
*Boy.* Why, do not the black men go to church too?
*Toby.* Black mans be servant, white mans be master.
*Boy.* Well, but don’t they make their servants go to church, Toby?
*Toby.* No, no; negree must not go to church, white mans no let them go.
*Boy.* Why do they not teach their servants to know God?
*Toby.* Negree no must know white mans God…
*Boy.* Why will they not let them?
*Toby.* When the negree mans know God, he go take the name, and be free mans. *(Be baptized.)*
*Boy.* So they won’t let them know God because they shall not be free mans; is that the reason, Toby?
*Toby.* Yes, that the reason truly.
*Boy.* Then they are very wicked men there, Toby! very cruel men!
*Toby.* Yes, very cruel, they beat the negree mans very much cruel, for go to church.
*Boy.* Beat them for going to church, Toby! … So they keep them from knowing
God, rather than teach them, for fear of losing their work. 

*Toby.* Yes, indeed.

Here the boy stopped his discourse, and sitting still, the tears ran down his face, and he wept a good while… (215)

The belief that baptism would legally free the subject slave population was, of course, wholly erroneous from the point of view of colonial discourse—a fact which critics have frequently observed when noting the frequency of this assertion in the didactic and moral writing of the period.58 Yet as Dennis Todd has established in his meticulous study *Defoe’s America,* Defoe did know his colonial discourse intimately, most especially as it pertained to the legal frameworks surrounding slavery and servitude in the colonies.59 In fact, Defoe’s representations of the attitudes of the Barbadian planters toward slaves’ education reveal a strong familiarity with the contemporary literature on Creole society. As the Caribbean historian Richard Dunn has shown, the primary accounts of Barbados in circulation in the early eighteenth century, such as those by Richard Ligon and John Taylor, confirm the resistance on the part of the planter class to Christianizing their slaves: “In refusing to admit slaves into their churches the English planters differed markedly from contemporary French, Spanish, and Portuguese slave owners.” The difference, Dunn deduces, “can largely be explained by Protestant versus Catholic conversion techniques,” the former of which “was valueless without some modicum of formal religious instruction.”60 The Protestant planters, he concludes, thus “sensed the danger of “civilizing” the Negro to the point where he might have to be reckoned with as a man with human rights.”61

Dunn’s emphasis on the incommensurability between social relations on the plantation and forms of Protestant education is key to the use of colonial discourse in the *Family Instructor,* which subordinates socio-historical realism and colonial discourse to the requirements of didactic representation. Specifically, the West Indian plantation, where the neglect of education is institutionalized, offers a veritable corollary for England under the Schism Act. The figurative violence—the social state of war—which Defoe asserts

---

58 Todd 82.
59 Todd 1-31.
60 Dunn 249.
61 250.
comprises England under the Act is literalized in the narrative by the brutality of the slaveholders—their “shortest ways” with the enslaved. Reinforcing the emblematic status of the slaveholding society, the narrative explicitly transforms it into a negative pattern, dramatized through the differing interpretive responses of the household—the different “impressions” which it arouses. In the case of Jacky’s mother, the most doggedly unregenerate character and the last to reform in the tale, her refusal to disidentify with the West Indian planters is underscored by her transformation into the hard-hearted slavemaster. Previously, she had scorned the imposition of religious instruction upon her family as filling the heads of children up with so much nonsense (183-4); after the introduction of Toby, however, her response to the imposition of regular instruction takes an even more sinister hue. Objecting to the religious instruction which Toby has been receiving from Jacky, she declares her belief that

_Moth._ Why, [Jacky]’ll cant to [Toby] about religion and his wild notions, till he get a smattering of things; and then he’ll run away to the parson and be baptized, and so you lose the boy [i.e., Toby].

_Fa._ Well, and can you answer what the child said to you? Must the boy be sent to the devil, for fear of running away? For my part, let him run away when he will, if he can be brought to be a true Christian, I shall be glad to carry him to be baptized myself. (213)

The conversion of the father, as may be guessed, is conducted through a process of explicit recognition of the connection between his household and the plantation—a connection he can abjure only through a redemptive transformation of his home. Acting as the “little governor” of Toby, Jacky offers his father a pattern of ideal governance as an explicitly contrast to the misgovernment of the slavemaster, whose errors the father recognizes as an emblem for his own conduct and which prompt the father to undergo a series of redemptive self-convictions. This is made clear, for instance, when the father and cousin witness Jacky crying after his lessons with Toby; after asking him why, they discover that he “cried for joy, and not for grief… that [he was] not born like poor Toby, where [he] should not be taught the knowledge of God, and of [his] duty, nor suffered to know God.” In response, the Father declares that “Truly, child, I have more reason to cry, that have been your father so many years, and never taught you so much as to know who made you” (210). Later, consulting with the elderly woman that has undertaken to continue the boys’ education, the father affirms that the “little governor” has “been [my]
instructor, rather than [I] his” (223).

In bringing about the eventual reform of the household authorities, Jacky and Toby reveal the profoundly complicated relations of power in the social imaginary of the *Family Instructor*. In this respect, they are both the simultaneous objects and agents of education in the narrative. As the ‘passive’ subjects to the moral authority of Scripture, they are both imbued with the providential gift of a strong desire and commitment to learning—that is, to being impressed by things. As Friday similarly will be in *Robinson Crusoe*, Jacky is described as “dr[inking] in knowledge like water; for his search after instruction was so earnest, that nothing was lost upon him” (223); while Toby’s extraordinarily “inquisitive nature” (221) is repeatedly remarked upon throughout the narrative. Like Crusoe’s ‘savage’ pupil, who is eventually elevated to the position of the greatest Protestant that Crusoe has ever known, so too do these ‘others’—a minor and an African—complicate the status of moral and cultural authority in the text. Indeed, the resistance to learning from the examples of pious children is repeatedly invoked throughout the *Family Instructor* narrative as the hallmark of the tyrannical parent whose corrupt rule is defined by an inability to be ruled, to resign their lordly wills to the moral authority of their exceptional subjects and to learn from their examples. In this respect, the narrative of Jacky and Toby realizes the ‘total’ social transformation that defines the utopian reformist aims of the text, which the preface to the second volume outlines as an exercise in governing the governors of families:

> Doubtless there are Duties in our relative Stations of every Sort, one to another, Duties from Parents to Children, and from Masters to Servants, as well as from Children to Parents, and from Servants to Masters; and it must be own’d by all that look narrowly into these Things, that as on the one hand there are great Mistakes committed in the Government of themselves and their Families, by Parents and Masters, so there is perhaps less said upon these necessary Heads in publick than upon any other; even the best Writers upon the Relative Duties, have seemed to be wholly silent upon this Subject: whether they did not see into the Want of it, or thought it was a Point so nice, that their Readers could not bear, or what other Thing has been the Hindrance, I know not. (4)

The commitment to exploring the causal relations between domestic misgovernment and the sins committed by the objects of governance is a mainstay of Defoe’s

---

62 RC 186.
didacticism; it is even carried forth in the *Great Law of Subordination* (1724), his entry into the genre of polemics directed against licentiousness of hired and indentured servants. Complaining about the relative preponderance of didactic treatises in which the bulk of reformation is directed against children and servants rather than their governors, Defoe instead attempts to tackle both issues equally in the *Family Instructor*. Of course, even though all of the *Family Instructor* narratives emphasize the deleterious consequences of domestic tyranny—of parents who violently misgovern their households by “the Noise, the Rage, the Fury of our Passions” (6)—the dutiful subject is nevertheless exhorted not to rebel in righteous indignation, but rather to resign themselves to their fate. Yet this form of resignation cannot be understood outside of the utopian ideal of total social transformation that undergirds the text’s serious commitment to “relative duties.” In the narratives, urging the subjected to resign themselves to the dutiful submission only becomes comprehensible if seen as an act of agential resistance, as the commitment to maintaining one’s duty in the face of external forces that threaten to destroy it. Like the Dissenters in the Schism Act polemics, the dutiful are exhorted to understand such trials as tests of their mettle and to maintain their status as agents of Providence. In the Providential logic of the *Family Instructor*, the consequences for the those who do not submit to the mutualistic scheme of servitude and who exacerbate social schisms is clear: they assure themselves of destruction. The only viable outcome of Providence is the forming and reforming of the utopian Protestant community, and all of those who hinder the working of this divine order are swiftly marked for destruction. For Toby and Jacky, their ‘resistant’ resignation comes in the form of their submission to the duty of family worship. Their servitude is articulated as a willful triumph over willfulness. It marks an overcoming of the licentious will of postlapsarian human nature evidenced by their parents and of the “liberties” that mask the true locus of slavery: that of the individual to the overmastering forces of the human passions.

2.4. Amelioration and the obedience of slaves

The complex interplay of human freedom and resistance, of submission and resignation, centrally underlies what I have been calling the Protestant *paideia* of Defoe’s

---

63 See, especially, the preface. For a general analysis of this genre, see Hill 225-50.
didacticism. I would like to close this discussion with a final analysis of the specific problem of consent that underwrites Defoe’s representations of slavery versus servitude, a problem that is introduced by the figure of the slave in both *The Family Instructor* and *Colonel Jack*.

Defoe’s pedagogical emphasis on forming “consensual” individuals—those who act with a profound degree of self-mastery, self-awareness, and deliberation—can be seen in an interesting episode in the narrative of Jacky and Toby, when the former begins the religious instruction of the latter by giving him a Bible:

*Boy.* We have a book which is God’s book; all that is said in that book, God says.
*Boy.* Yes, it is the Word of God.
*Toby.* Me tell you God no hear me, me can no read his book, he no speak to me. How God speak to me? me can no read.
(He cries and beats himself again.)
*Boy.* You shall learn to read; and till you can read, I will read it to you, Toby?
*Toby.* Read me that what you said, that God bid me pray, me poor black boy.

(220-1)

Here we have an instance of what Henry Louis Gates famously termed the “trope of the talking book” that recurs in writings by and about African slaves throughout the eighteenth-century period, including the well-known passage in Equiano’s narrative of his childhood in which he presses his ear against a bible during his journey across the middle passage.64 Jacky’s introduction of the Bible elicits a similar response from Toby, who initially believes the inanimate item has the magical ability to “speak,” ignorant as he is of the Christian belief in the authorial inspiration of the Bible by the divine *logos* of God. In order to understand the presence of the trope here and its relation to issue of consent in the text, a brief exegetical tour through the *Crusoe* novels is necessary.

In a study of *Robinson Crusoe* entitled “How to Say Things With Guns,” Christopher Loar identifies a “trope of the talking gun” in the ways that Cruose uses military technology to threaten the savages of his island—acts which reflect the text’s central preoccupation with eighteenth-century imperialism and its attempts to secure colonial

64 Gates 127-69; Equiano 68.
hegemony through the politics of fear and terror. Yet a negation of the politics of fear is precisely what is at stake in Friday’s “Protestant” education by Crusoe. The contrast between his own pedagogy and the prevailing religious practices of the native inhabitants of his island becomes clear as he attempts to “lay a Foundation of religious knowledge in [Friday’s] mind.” When Crusoe queries Friday about his former religious beliefs, Friday tells him

... that if our God could hear us up beyond the Sun, he must needs be a greater God than their Benamuckee, who liv’d but a little way off, and yet could not hear, till they went up to the great Mountains where he dwelt... none went thither but the old Men, who he call’d their Owocakee, that is, as I made him explain it to me, their Religious, or Clergy, and that they went to say O, (so he called saying Prayers) and then came back, and told them what Benamuckee said: By this I observ’d, that there is Priestcraft, even amongst the most blinded ignorant Pagans in the World; and the Policy of making a secret Religion, in order to preserve the Veneration of the People to the Clergy, is not only to be found in the Roman, but perhaps among all the Religions in the World, even among the most brutish and barbarous Savages.

Defoe’s use of the term *priestcraft* places Crusoe’s observation within in the nexus of seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century discourses of confessional politics, and explicitly recalls Michael Montaigne’s observations in his essay “Of Cannibals.” There, Montaigne uses an account of the rituals of “Pagan” priests and prophets “dwelling in the mountains” to blur the lines demarcating the religion of the Indians from the equally cannibalistic practices of Catholic communion. Likewise, Crusoe’s observations on clericalism explicitly flatten the differences between ‘savage’ America and the ‘civilized’ world of Europe, whether represented in the form of Roman Catholicism or its crypto-Catholic re-articulation in the High Church doctrines of Sacheverell and others. As the political historian Mark Goldie points out, “the birth of a new word in the political lexicon ‘priestcraft’” signified “the cynosure of Whig anticlericalism.” Originating in Harringtonian political philosophy, the term usefully named how “the craft of divines is exemplified in the Roman Church, [but] it is by no means limited to it, and because Harrington detected this trait in all priests, he coined his new word. Priestcraft was
popery universalized.”⁷⁰ In his study *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken*, Justin Champion examines the ways in which anticlerical critics of Anglican doctrine condemned priestcraft as a coercive “politics of fear,” whereby the clerical orders attempted to secure the hegemony of church and state by manipulating of the minds of the laity—that is, through the force of fraud and imposture.⁷¹ Such an understanding is also explicitly present in the *Family Instructor*. Early in the narrative of Jacky and Toby, for instance, the godly sea captain declares that “the Divine original of religion… is not the effect of priestcraft, or of the prejudices of education, clamoured into our heads by nurses, and whipped into us by schoolmistresses, mothers, and pedagogues, while we are little” (FIv2.5.3 187).

Significantly, the idea of priestcraft also recurs in the *Farther Adventures* when Crusoe discovers that his colony has degenerated into a slave society, which he attempts to socially reengineer into an ideal social state of servitude. In one of his final acts of amelioration, Defoe gives Mary, the native wife of the English sailor Will Atkins, a Bible following her conversion to Christianity. Yet a lingering anxiety remains for Crusoe: what miracle might she assign the appearance of Crusoe’s Bible after having witnessed her husband praying for one? He thus resolves to disabuse her of any ideas of supernatural agency in the day to day mechanics of the providential order: for “it was too serious a matter, to suffer any Delusion to take Place… we did not desire to impose upon the new Convert”.⁷² Having demystified the Bible’s providential arrival, Crusoe sighs easy to the reader: “I assure you, no Priestcraft [was] used here; and I should have thought it one of the most unjustifiable Frauds in World to have it so.”⁷³

The anxieties concerning the supernatural aspects of the Bible in the *Farther Adventures* are strikingly echoed in the *Family Instructor*. This is unsurprising, in many respects, given the latter text’s resounding condemnations of the misgoverning effects of terror and awe as a tool for domestic authority: “it is a tyrannical usurpation, not a patriarchal or

---

⁷⁰ 217.
⁷¹ Champion.
⁷² FARC 114.
⁷³ 115.
paternal exercise of legal authority, and without doubt ‘tis a great sin” (133). As the frame narrator makes clear, the root of the evil of the raging despot lies in the awe and dread that he or she elicits in their subjects, which, while corrupting their minds through excessive fear, socializes them into the aberrant social relations of slavery:

Neigh. I affirm… it is against the nature of the thing: correction, I tell you, is an act of love, pity, duty; duty to God, duty as a parent, as a Christian; love to the child, to his soul, to his body; it is the greatest instance of paternal affection… what concern can the passions of a man have in these things? We know, says the Scripture, that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. The rage and fury with which men correct slaves, is acted upon another principle: it aims at breaking the spirit, subduing the will, and obtaining an absolute entire subjection in the poor bond’s-man, to the tyrannical authority of his patron: there is neither concern for soul or body expected in the master; no love to his slave’s person, or concern for his future state; nothing is in view but to have his work done, and his commands be without reserve obeyed. To treat a child with passion and rage, is the same thing as other men treat slaves. (FIV2.5.2 134-5)

With little alternation, this lengthy exhortation could have been lifted wholesale from Patterson’s explications of the dynamics of social death. It describes in detail the transformation of the relationship between child and father into what Patterson calls the “extrusive” relations of slave and master, depicting, so to speak, the birth of natal alienation. The “spirit” that is broken is, of course, that of the consensual subject, who, in being taught to be obey commands “without reserve,” is transformed into something even worse than a beast of burden. The presence of rational faculties, the Family Instructor affirms, is the principle that separates animals from humans and indicates the presence of a soul (FIV1.1.15), and as the Family Instructor makes clear elsewhere, such barbarous treatment is hardly appropriate for even animals.

The speech is not, however, a condemnation of “correction” itself, by which Defoe refers to the legitimate use of corporal punishment in the management of children and servants, which, when done appropriately (i.e., without anger and passion), is “the most necessary Part of Family-Government, and the best Part of Education” (FIV2.4.1 5). Yet it is not always clear how the appearance of correction differs from the brutal and coercive forms of social violence that it is meant to replace. Nowhere is this truer than in the narrative of Jacky and Toby. As Toby’s “little governor,” Jacky’s methods of instruction are meant
to contrast Toby’s violent treatment at the hands of the Barbadian slaveholders. Yet at one point in the narrative, the threat of Toby’s being corrected for future lapses in his conduct troubles the non-coercive aims of ‘proper’ religious instruction. After hearing Toby utter oaths for the first time, the father informs Jacky “that Toby (so the Negro was called) was not a Christian, and did not know God, and therefore did not know it was a sin; but that he should be soundly whipped for it, and then he would do it no more” (FIv2.5.4 207). Jacky is initially satisfied with this arrangement, but on further reflection, decides that “No, if [Toby] did not know it was a sin, he should not be whipped for it the first time; but that he should be told then what God was, and that it was a sin to use such words, and then if he did it again, he made his father promise that he would have him whipped soundly. Upon this, and his father promising, he took the negro to him again” (208).

The problem with this arrangement is, of course, the core issue in the problematic representation of social violence in the slave plantation of Colonel Jack. As several critics have pointed, Jack’s implementations of slave amelioration measures only entrench the coercive authority of the violent slaveholders. In order to reform the unruly conduct of the field labourers in the plantation of which he oversees, Jack devises a system of education predicated upon eliciting their willingness and gratitude, which he then relates to the master of the plantation in the following manner:

…[the slave awaiting “correction”] remains under the terrible Apprehensions of a Punishment, so Severe, as no Negro ever had before; this Fellow, with your leave, I intended to Release to Morrow, without any Whipping at all, after Talking to him in my way about his Offence, and raising in his Mind a Sense of the value of Pardon; and if this makes him a better Servant than the severest Whipping will do, than I presume you would allow, I have gain’d a Point. (133)

Thus, it has been argued that while abolishing the whip as a physical instrument, Jack continues to lord its symbolic power over the captives. Such a reading of the novel, in which the amelioration of slavery reifies rather than transforms the structural conditions of the plantation, offers the basis for the frequent labeling of Colonel Jack as essentially proslavery propaganda—an early precursor to the unambiguously racist “plantation

74 For instance, Boulukos (2008) 87.
nove$\ldots$ that would pour forth from the southern United States’ presses in the following century. Without denying that $Colonel\, Jack$ offers itself up for this genealogy in numerous ways, an alternative interpretation also presents itself when the work is placed in conversation with the corpus of Defoe’s didactic writings, particularly as they pertain to the use of correction in education.

The first problem for a racialized reading of $Colonel\, Jack$ stems from Defoe’s endorsement of correction in his didactic thought more generally. In this respect, critics are fond of contrasting Defoe’s seemingly conservative, even “retrograde,” use of the whip in education given the liberal “modern” approaches outlined by John Locke in his widely influential didactic treatise $Some\, Thoughts\, Concerning\, Education$ (1692), published nearly three decades prior to Defoe’s major didactic writings.$^{75}$ Yet such a contrast misapprehends the status of the corporal punishment in both writers. In the case of Locke’s treatise, explicit disavowals of whipping as a pedagogical tool appear frequently early on in the text: “This I doubt not,” he remarks, “but by ill-order’d correction many have been taught to be obstinate and refractory who otherwise would have been very pliant and tractable.”$^{76}$ Unsurprisingly given Locke’s place in the pantheon of liberal political theory, his fear of engendering the obedience of slaves— their mental slavery—rather than cultivating the consent of the governed is manifest throughout the text: “Such a sort of slavish discipline makes a slavish temper… Beating them, and all other sorts of slavish and corporal punishments, are not the discipline fit to be used in the education of those we would have wise, good, and ingenuous men”$^{77}$ Later in the treatise, however, a special concession is made in the case of what Locke deems a perversely “obstinate” disposition in the child. Although no child, he insists, can be “concluded unmanageable” until the “milder methods of government… have been thoroughly try’d upon him,” yet

if [such methods] will not prevail with him to use his endeavours, and do what is in his power to do, we make no excuses for the obstinate. Blows are the proper remedies for those; but blows laid on in a way different from the ordinary. He that wilfully neglects his book, and stubbornly refuses any thing he can do, requir'd of

$^{75}$ Leinster-Mackay 70-72.
$^{76}$ Locke §78.
$^{77}$ §50-2.
him by his father, expressing himself in a positive serious command, should not be corrected with two or three angry lashes, for not performing his task, and the same punishment repeated again and again upon every the like default…

Here, the assertion of this child’s will—that is, in his “willfully” refusing to submit to education (rather than in his occasionally failing to succeed in learning while attempting to do so)—begins to more closely resemble Defoe’s treatment of correction in his didactic writings. Indeed, it is safe to say that Locke more explicitly tends toward milder forms of government, yet he does not reject correction outright. As is the case with Defoe, Locke’s very tendency to move away from correction as a mode of government is, in fact, made possible by its deceptively central place in enforcing the system rather than the content of education: it is, quite literally, the guarantor that maintains the authority upon which the entire system of education is predicated. So too for Defoe, whose whole system of education in the Family Instructor depends upon the displacement of social violence rather than its abolition. This dependence is almost comically evident in a description of the proper method of correction which the frame narrator offers to his violent tempered neighbour:

Whenever you correct your child you should first explain to him the nature of the offence, lay before him his sin against God, and his duty to his parents; the sin of the particular crime you have found him committing… you should then with an affectionate tenderness tell him the necessity you are in to correct him, to save his soul from death; how loath you are to do it; how foolish and unkind to himself it is to oblige his father to do this, so much against his will. These discourses will sink deeper in his mind than all your stripes, and to an ingenuous spirit it will be worse than correction, and your blows may be the fewer. For, as before, reproof enters further into a wise man, than a hundred stripes into a fool… (FIv2.1.1 131)

As this passage illustrates, the threat of force surrounds the web of ideal social relations. Circumscribing the individual within the web of gratitude, social violence persists as an ultimatum to enforce the participation of the governed in the system of duties.

The Family Instructor amply illustrates the universal rather than strictly racial status of the threat of correction in maintaining social discipline, yet it could of course be argued that this does nothing more than reinforce the African’s racialized status by rendering them in a permanently infantilized position vis-à-vis the European subject of self-
mastery. While such a reading offers a tempting interpretation of the problem of the displaced violence through which Jack can coerce the labour of slaves of the plantation without the whip, it precisely ignores the ways in which the threat of social violence runs both ways. To wit, within the narrative, it is the “negroes” who themselves appear to initiate the process of amelioration through a very unambiguous declaration of their power to annihilate their masters in violent insurrection. Initially, when Jack is first given the assignment of overseer, his brutal treatment of the slaves prompts a subtle shift in the relations of power in the plantation: “I began with the Negroes, two of whom I was oblig’d to Correct; and I thought I did it most Cruelly; but after I had Lash’d them till every Blow I struck them, hurt my self… the Rogues Laught at me, and one of them had the Impudence to say behind my Back, that if he had the Whipping of me, he would show me better how to Whip a Negro” (128-9). In the defiant responses of the slaves, Jack first begins to glimpse the threat which they are capable of wielding, prompting him to reflect that “the Negroes... must be rul’d with a Rod of Iron, beaten with Scorpions, as the Scripture calls it; and must be used as they do use them, or they would Rise and Murther all their Masters, which their Numbers consider’d, would not be hard for them to do, if they had Arms and Ammunition suitable to the Rage and Cruelty of their Nature” (128-9). Yet it is at this very moment in the narrative that Jack has his coming-to-consciousness about the social influences that shape their “nature,” realizing that the only logical recompense for violent treatment is a violent response. This forces him to reflect on the ways in which the blame for the “obstinate” tempers of the Africans lay principally with the plantation’s governors, who succeeded only in creating the violent temperaments to which they claimed only to be responding: “But I be gan to see at the same time, that this Brutal temper of the Negroes was not rightly manag’d; that they did not take the best Course with them, to make them sensible, either of Mercy, or Punishment; and it was Evident to me, that even the worst of those tempers might be brought to a Compliance, without the Lash, or at least without so much of it, as they generally Inflicted” (129).

Ultimately, then, the process by which the intractable “negro” is transformed into the grateful slave cannot be understood outside of the totalizing system of servitude, which
supposes a “relative duty” on both sides of authority, and creates a web of social relations in which both sides possess the power to enforce through the implied threat of violence—a violence that is mercifully displaced in order secure the gratitude, and service, of the other. In other words, the social web of servitude functions by mirroring the simultaneously punitive and merciful nature of Providence, which is itself the ultimate source of the Christian’s gratitude to God (a fact which Jack’s own “Instructor” makes him sensible of over the course of his own religious education on the plantation [165-7]). Later in the narrative, moreover, Colonel Jack himself transforms into an insurrectionary figure. As a participant in the Jacobite rebellion of 1715, he is ultimately exiled from his native England on pain of death, a decree which mirrors Jack’s previous symbolic “transportation” and “enslavement” in Virginia as the providential punishment for his early life of crime.79 At the end of the narrative, however, George I “mercifully” pardons Jack, eliciting from him grateful paeans to crown and country, and an assurance to the reader of his future loyalty:

And here let me hint, that having now as it were receiv’d my Life at the Hands of King George, and in a manner so satisfying as it was to me, it made a generous Convert of me, and I became sincerely given in to the Interest of King George; and this from a Principle of Gratitude, and a Sense of my Obligation to his Majesty for my Life; and it has continu'd ever since, and will certainly remain with me as long as any Sense of Honour, and of the Debt of Gratitude remains with me. (275)

Yet the true meaning of the passage which Jack only hints at lies in the pointedly advisory nature of his praise: it dramatically foregrounds the potential power of gratitude to transform authority itself, to “coerce” the King to constrain his impolitic will and abide by the constraints of mercy in order to prevent the destructive social consequences of alienated and insurrectionary subjects.

In Colonel Jack no less than in the Schism Act polemics and the Family Instructor, amelioration ultimately emerges as the key process in creating organic utopian communities out of the existing condition of social death. What these texts share is a reliance on education as the agent of these transformations. The slave society and its denizens offer profoundly salient emblems of these processes, offering wide-ranging and

79 For a discussion of these aspects of the text, see Todd 76-117.
universal lessons about the dialectic nature of slavery and servitude. In Defoe’s fictional and didactic texts, the New World slave society most fully illustrates both the destructive consequences of tyranny and slavery as well as a utopian vision of a future purged of their devastating mental effects—an unfinished reformation in which the “universal” slave society of the modern world is transformed into a Protestant paradise of servitude.
3. The Protestant Uchronia: Unworlding the New World in Edward Kimber’s *The History of the Life and Adventures of Mr. Anderson*

Hypothetical questions such as “what might have happened if…?” sometimes lead to absurd speculations… During the colonial epoch, the British forced Africans to sing, *Rule Britannia, Britannia rule the waves, Britons never never never will be slaves*. The British themselves started singing the tune in the early eighteenth century, at the height of using Africans as slaves. “What would have been Britain’s level of development had millions of them been put to work as slaves outside of their homelands over a period of four centuries?” … one could speculate further on the probable effects on their development had continental Europe been enslaved.

—Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*¹

Such [colonial labour recruitment] enterprises were notorious. They featured in a popular London theatrical farce, *The Register Office* (1758), in which the office manager, Gulwell, decides to indenture, secretly, an obnoxious Irishman (“He will fetch a rare price in the plantations’”), but is caught and denounced: “You kidnapping rascal, the Irishman shouts, “you was going to send me into the other world to be turn’d into a black negro.”

—Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West*²

### 3.1. Introduction: the “other” world

In Joseph Reed’s 1758 theatrical farce *The Register Office*, the comical scene of a stock Irish caricature’s deracination presents an interesting precursor to Rodney’s “absurd speculations” of a world market glutted upon white rather than black slave labour.

Though *The Register Office* was first performed over two centuries before the publication of Rodney’s now-classic analysis of African colonialism, the play’s central image of a white Irishman “turn[ing] into a black negro” toys with speculations that are similarly “absurd.” On the one hand, the Irishman’s comic diatribe may have reminded the London audience who crowded the show’s inaugural performance in Drury Lane on 23 April 1761 of the illustrated signage of several of the public houses nearby—that it was a “labour in vain” to “wash the black-a-moor white.”³ The reverse transformation would have struck such them as no less ludicrous. Yet beneath this laughter, there may have also

---

¹ Rodney 101
² Bailyn 299
³ For performance details, see Ogborn 224; for a brief history of this curious signage tradition see: Ramamurthy 30.
been an ironic awareness of the illegal recruitment practices of the so-called “spirits” who, by force or fraud, “trepanned” their white victims into involuntary servitude into a brutal colonial labour system. This awareness would have been shaped by the many of the novels, pamphlets and plays of the first half of the eighteenth century that frequently depicted and denounced this form of conscription, such that the imagined preponderance of white slavery tended to exaggerate the historical reality of the colonial white slave trade both in terms of its size and scale of suffering relative to the African slave trade.⁴

However exaggerated it may have been, a widespread anxiety about white slavery underlies Reed’s condemnation of the illegal enslavement of domestic servants, and his play clearly engages the early Georgian nationalistic consciousness traced by Rodney. According to this contemporary self-understanding, the British imperial world formed a vast slaveholding enterprise in which Britons themselves could not legitimately be enslaved—a sentiment most memorably heralded two decades earlier with the inaugural public performance of “Rule Britannia” in James Thomson’s libretto to Thomas Arne’s historical play Alfred (1740). With its powerful claim of slavery as anathema to the English genius, the song concludes the operetta by prophesizing England’s triumphant colonization of the entire world, evoking the dizzying infatuation with territorial acquisition that guided colonial policy in the period of imperial expansion prior to the American Revolution. Encapsulating a similar ethos, The Register Office was first performed in the midst of the transformation of Rule Britannia into a makeshift rallying cry for the empire.⁵ And like the song, Reed’s play raises the same vexed set of problems concerning the relationship of mid-century culture to Britain’s subsequent imperial history and, more specifically, to the development of the so-called second British empire and the late Victorian scramble for the African continent so powerfully condemned by Rodney.

⁴ Bailyn 296-323. While it could certainly have been meaningfully said to resemble the system of imported African labour at one point, the indentured white servant trade was certainly on the wane by the turn of the eighteenth century. For instance, the literature on the decline of white labour in the slave plantations from the seventeenth- to the eighteenth-century is voluminous. See for instance, Morgan and Beckles, which describe these patterns in the mainland American and West Indian colonies, respectively.
⁵ Armitage 173-4. Although Armitage sees the eventual decline of the importance of Rule Britannia toward the end of the Georgian era, it should be noted that the song notably greeted Nelson’s return voyage home following his victories in the Napoleonic Wars; see, Kairoff 109 and Williams 209.
This chapter sets out to explore these problems in the context of another mid-century literary work, Edward Kimber’s 1754 novel *The History of the Life and Adventures of Mr. Anderson*. Like Reed’s play, *Mr. Anderson* also hinges on the illegal recruitment practices of the colonial spirits, revealing what happens in the “other world” of the plantation colony when the protagonist finds himself spirited away and sold into perpetual white slavery. In section 1 below, I examine a central conceptual flaw underlying many current approaches to the analysis of colonial slave societies in a variety of early and mid-eighteenth-century literary works such as *The Register Office, The Sot-Weed Factor* (1708) and Kimber’s novel. Here, I argue that an over-emphasis on framing these works as “there-and-back” narratives engaged in constructing or “worlding” the colony in diametric opposition to Britain overlooks the fundamental continuities between the two spaces. These continuities, I suggest, are central to the representational logic of the texts as, specifically, works of reform—a logic which I continue tracing in section 2. Here, I briefly examine the writings of Locke to illustrate an alternative approach to thinking about the space of colonial slave society in Kimber’s novel—as imagined landscapes that reveal a set of temporal rather than strictly spatial or cultural concerns. Finally, in section 3, I explore how *Mr. Anderson* rejects a “worlded” approach to thinking about colonial space and *culture* more broadly, and proffer an alternative interpretation that is attentive to the ways in which themes of de- and regeneration animate its depiction of the slaveholding world.6

6 *Mr. Anderson* both illustrates and complicates recent critical refutations that the colonial antipodes of Europe somehow represent the inverse of their metropoles.7 Yet, as I will show in the following section, a rejection of the diametric binaries of the British world and the colonial other is rarely attributed to eighteenth-century writers and thinkers themselves. With few exceptions, contemporary critical discussions of mid-Georgian literary texts typically insist upon their utter inability to transcend the ideological and representational exigencies of imperial rule or to achieve the more analytically dynamic representation.

---

6 The concept of “worlding” is discussed in greater detail in the following section.
7 E.g., Stoler & Cooper.
frameworks for conceptualizing imperial space that the critic, in turn, brings to bear upon the text.\textsuperscript{8} This is especially true in the scholarship on Kimber’s \textit{Mr. Anderson}. For critics, the novel is paradigmatic of colonial discourse intent on wording a variety of national, cultural, and racial differences—all of which served to reinforce a sense of British superiority over continental rivals and colonial subjects alike. My own reading of the novel turns this very assumption on its head. Not only do certain works of Georgian moral didacticism frequently refuse to classify and reorganize imperial spaces into a coherent hierarchy of race, culture, and civilization, many of them identify such a gesture as explicitly antithetical to their aims. Thus, while I appreciate how the notion of colonial discourse can offer an astute critical framework for treating certain strains of eighteenth-century culture—those that undoubtedly serve the ideologies of race and nation in the context of empire-building—I also trace the ways in which other strains of Georgian culture were also engaged in the critical task of naming and denouncing contemporary mechanisms of difference production, especially the racialization of colonial others.

Yet beyond the occasional “anti-colonial” themes evident in the writings of, for instance, Swift and Johnson,\textsuperscript{9} where might we find something approaching a whole tradition at odds with the colonially discursive mode of rendering Britain’s colonial periphery? It is no coincidence that the early to mid-century literary texts I draw upon to support my arguments about the inadequacies of the “colonial discourse” approach are all, like Kimber’s novel, reformist in nature. After all, the colonial contexts that these narratives evoke are slave societies, and, as already discussed in the introduction and previous chapter, enlightenment-era didactic works had a very special—and \textit{general}—interest in the problem of slavery. In one form or other, they all set their critical sites upon the problem of \textit{mental} slavery. Even when the overt language of slavery was not employed (though more often than not it was), Georgian didactic authors were intent on delineating those processes of miseducation which “enslaved” minds. Indeed, the preoccupation

\textsuperscript{8} There are, of course, important recent exceptions to this trend; see introduction for a brief overview.

\textsuperscript{9} Of course, for every study celebrating the seemingly progressive dimensions of \textit{Gulliver’s Travels} and \textit{Rasselas} on questions of nation and empire, there are those which reinforce the sense of these works as colonial discourse. The situation is equally is vexed when considering the anti-colonial themes in pro-American and anti-slavery writings (see the chapters three and four respectively).
with these concerns is one of the defining hallmarks of Protestant moral didacticism, equally evident in as diverse a group of didactic theorists as Locke, Astell, and Defoe at the start of the era to Edgeworth, More, and Wollstonecraft at its close. Despite the many disagreements among these authors as to the origins, consequences, and correctives of miseducation and mental slavery, all of them fundamentally equated it with the process by which the passions came to overrule the mind, rendering subjects unable to achieve the normative self-mastery that could allow them to properly govern themselves and their relations with others. When this concern was explicitly named (as it was by all of them), it railed against the “bondage” and “slavery” of minds which were, like Blake’s “mind-forged manacles,” raised under the tutelage of license, despotism, and social conflict. Mental slavery, they insisted, was borne of and contributed to a kind of widespread social alienation which left its subjects incapable of forming the normative attachments that could ensure a strong, healthy, and truly civil society—the kind of harmonious social organization whose antithesis was discernable in the violent antisocial conflicts of life under tyranny and slavery. Thus, to the chagrin of the modern critic of colonial discourse, it should come as no surprise that a specific iteration of slavery, the colonial slaveholding society, may have struck the didactic novelist as less a site of difference than continuity with their own world—a world in which people were continually enslaved by the forces of miseducation that the didactic author sought to reform. This chapter explores the consequences of taking seriously the undifferentiated nature of the New World context of these didactic writings from the metropolitan world they sought to reform.

In contrast to the “there-and-back” approach that characterizes scholarship on Kimber’s novel (discussed further below), I argue instead that much more may be gained by thinking about Kimber’s treatment of the New World as a kind of Protestant discourse, one that traffics in assumptions about the universal character of mental slavery, rather than a strictly colonial or racialist discourse. Just as the previous chapter linked Defoe’s representations of slave societies to contemporaneous conflicts over dissenting religious identity and practice, this chapter links Kimber’s treatment of the New World to his own

---

10 The utopian/dystopian contrasts are examined at length in the previous chapter.
religious worldview. Specifically, I read Mr. Anderson in light of Kimber’s abiding sense of postmillennial eschatology that subtly permeates the novel. This is, of course, not to suggest that questions of empire, race, and slavery are not important to understanding the novel, but rather that to understand how and why the novel gives these themes such prominence in the first place. The answer, I argue, lies in the narrative’s fundamentally uchronic consciousness—an eschatological logic of representation in which the transformation of spaces (i.e., changes over time) possesses a far greater symbolic and interpretive import than the differentiation of spaces (i.e., static cultural distinctions). In other words, this chapter uses Mr. Anderson to emphasize the newness rather than the worldedness of the New World—a fact that has important consequences for the ideation of slave society prior to the emergence of a “modern” racial and national consciousness in the late Georgian era.

3.1.1. Unworlding the New World

Before turning to my central case study Mr. Anderson, I want to return briefly to the comical protestations of Patrick O’Carrol, the Irishman of the Register Office, to explore how the relationship between literary and colonial discourse might be reconsidered in light of Rodney’s “absurd speculations.” In the current scholarship on Reed’s and other similarly colonialist texts, the relationship is rather straightforward: much as literary and cultural studies of eighteenth-century Britain have tended to use “Rule Britannia” to evidence a wide variety of British imperial “identities” or “ideologies,” so too have Americanist scholars tended to view The Register Office in rather instrumental terms.11 For instance, colonial historians Matthew Mason and Bernard Bailyn have both drawn on the Irishman’s speech to exemplify early Hanoverian attitudes toward America.12 As illustrated in the epigraph above, Bailyn cites the Irishman’s fear of being transported across the Atlantic as a singular instance of the widespread evocation of America as cultural negation—what the historian Howard Mumford Jones calls the “anti-image” of Britain. In this common representational topos, depictions of the savage drudgery of life in the colonial antipodes primarily serve to shore up the metropole’s position as the ruling

11 On “Rule Britannia” and imperial identity, see Wilson and Colley; for “Rule Britannia” and imperial ideology see Armitage and Hudson. For an overview of the difference in these approaches, see Armitage 172.

12 Bailyn 298-300; Mason & Mason 19-20; Mason 109-10.
epicenter of culture, civility, and world-historical progress.\textsuperscript{13} In a related manner, the literary critic Valerie Babb astutely argues that the Irishman’s fear of enslavement represents a signal instance of the broader epistemological shift in the period towards modern ideologies of race: “In [the play], \textit{slave}, a term used also to refer to white indentured servants, is replaced with \textit{black negro}, an indication of the growing racialization of the “slave” caste in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Prior to this time, however, the line between the white and the black slave was an unstable one.”\textsuperscript{14} Thus while Babb views the play in racial rather than national terms, she shares with colonial historians an abiding belief in the play’s production of the ideological polarities of colonialism.

Although these Americanist scholars do not explicitly adopt the analytical terminology of postcolonial scholarship, their approaches evidence a strong belief in the power of mid-century literature to effectively abet the process of what Gayatri Spivak terms the “worlding” of territories under conquest through colonial discourse. According to Maureen Fadem, the idea of \textit{worlding} draws attention to the ways in which colonizing practices “take over the major modes of representation so as to produce rhetorically a common belief in the ‘natural’ inferiority and delinquency of native subjects and cultures.” Through this process, “individuals and areas are presided over and inscribed by imperial figures in conspicuous, dramatic ways… colonized natives and territories are defined in Eurocentric terms, translated through the colonial language and designated as subject to Euro-imperial authority.”\textsuperscript{15} “The worlding of the world,” notes Spivak, “generates the force to make the “native” see himself as “other.””\textsuperscript{16} In the case of \textit{The Register Office}, the “other world” of the remonstrative Irishman—whether understood as colonial anti-image of European civility or African anti-image of an emergent universal whiteness—posits a circumscribed space somewhere beyond the legitimating aegis of the true-born (white) Briton and the full humanity that this birthright accords.

\textsuperscript{13} Jones 35-70; Mason & Mason 21.
\textsuperscript{14} Babb 27.
\textsuperscript{15} Fadem par. 2.
\textsuperscript{16} Spivak 212.
Without denying the validity of such an interpretation, I do, however, want to suggest that alternative genealogies are available to contextualizing the Irishman’s protest, including those with discursive implications that directly conflict with what, following Israel Zangwill, might be termed a “tribal” orientation to enclose the world into discrete spatial orders of race, culture, and nation.\textsuperscript{17} To begin with, the notion of alterity itself is incredibly vexed in the play. Indeed, the Irishman O’Carrol, himself a colonial other in the London employment agency in which the farce is set, is only one of several ethnic caricatures (including a Scotsman and a visiting Frenchman) and socially lower-ordered figures (including prostitutes, maids, and servants) whose respective visits to the employment office provide the play with its narrative engine. By dint of the sheer number of the non-standard “eye dialects” representing the myriad broken, regional, and socially marked iterations of the English language within the printed text of the play, the \textit{Register Office} dramatically exhibits the claims of the eponymous hero of Sarah Fielding’s 1744 novel \textit{David Simple} that one need only travel to London in order to travel the world.\textsuperscript{18} Yet in the revised 1806 edition of \textit{The Register Office}—the version from which all of the above-mentioned studies of the play quote—such forms of internal colonialisms and alterities are elided.\textsuperscript{19} In this later revised edition, the Irishman’s own particularity is indeed attenuated and differences between him and the other British speakers flattened into something which, befitting the shifting cultural reconfigurations of the later Georgian era, might undoubtedly be regarded as a crystallized and holistic sense of white- or British-ness.\textsuperscript{20}

If, however, we turn from the revised 1806 text to the original 1761 text of the play, a very different set of implications becomes imaginable. When asked by a visiting country squire why he has struck the agent of the register office who took his money in exchange for the promise of finding him employment overseas, he remarks

\textit{Irish.} [What’s the] Matter, my dear Joy! Nothing at all— I am only paying him for getting me a Plaish in the West—Ah! The Devil West you, my Dear! Your

\textsuperscript{17} Zangwill 50-1.
\textsuperscript{18} Fielding 21.
\textsuperscript{19} For the revised version of the Irishman’s speech, see Cawthorn (ed.) 53.
\textsuperscript{20} Although the Irishman was not yet “British” in the original edition of Reed’s play, he would have been thoroughly when the play was revised in 1806, five years after the incorporation of Ireland into the United Kingdom.
West is some of the Plantations in the *East-Indies*, where Pickpockets are transported to—This kidnapping Rascal was going to send me into the other World to be turn’d into a black Negro—I had gone shure enough, if it had not been for *Macarrell O Neill*, whom I overtook, as we run against one another in your English St. *Patrick’s* Church Yard—St. *Paul’s* I believe they call it—He told me this Scoundrel Cushin had transported three of my Countrymen, overland in a Ship to the Plantations, on Pretense of getting them Plaishes in the West—I’ll plantation you, you Tief of the World. (41)

In the revised nineteenth-century edition, the text loses most of the markers of his distinctive Irish brogue like “plaish” and “tief” and emends others like “shure” into standardized spelling; yet even more dramatically, it fundamentally effaces both the location and the very logic of the Irishman’s “other world.” Gone is the Irishman’s confusion between the East and West Indies and, with it, the sense of place as a transcolonial ethical situation—one that comprises a sort of floating system of oppressive social relations rather than a set of geographical particularities. Missing, too, is the verbalized reference to “plantation-ing” and, with it, the sense of place, not as a discretely rooted region, but as a verb, action, or turn of events. In other words, the later revisions rewrite the play’s idea of place into clearly worlded geographies, excising the original’s looser sense of place as a narrative possibility. Similarly, the imputation that one can “turn” negro also takes on a very different set of valences when examining the 1761 rather than the 1806 edition. Indeed, these aspects of the earlier edition—the lack of a unitary sense of unmarked whiteness, the shifting relativity of regions, and, above all, the understanding of “plantation” as primarily a social action—all conspire to strip race of its essentializing imperative. This raises the very real possibility that the Irishman’s notion of “negro,” while undeniably a “thing of darkness” (to borrow Kim Hall’s phrase), might just as readily index a set of beliefs about a thing that *happens* rather than a thing that *is.*

But what becomes of worlding in such a scheme? How might returning to the fluidity and uncertainty of space and race reveal an alternative undercurrent in the earlier text’s very strategic and purposeful use of the colonies? I want to suggest that the earlier text actively reinforces two very different representational practices in its treatment of the

---

21 Hall 4.
slaveholding world.

The first is what we might call a strategic un-worlding of the distance between Britain from the colonial world. The play introduces the various kinds of gulfs that separate the old world from the new—terrestrial, cultural, geopolitical—for the primary purpose of eventually undoing them. This is not to say the abjection of the other is somehow overturned or rendered into a neutral cultural relativism, but rather that the other is presented as merely the corollary of a trans-cultural abjection that the text exposes and decries. Put differently, the “other world” offers a somewhat distorted mirror-image, but not an anti-image, of its imagined “this world.” As Michael Ragussis notes, Reed’s multiethnic farce “comically makes fun of outsiders… [even while] it takes their side against English prejudice and English chicanery.” As the self-professed representative of the motley cast of characters who are swindled, betrayed, and exploited by the London agent, the Irishman faces a far more immediate threat than slavery in the plantation: falling into the clutches of the corrupt English dealers who would send him there. Thus, although he comically rejects the “English tricks” of those who would impose beneficial agricultural reforms in his native Ireland, the play suggests that the true tricks are much closer at hand.

Although the negative transvaluation of the English metropole is rather subtle in the Register Office, this proposition takes on a far greater importance when it is situated in a longer literary tradition of putative “colonial discourse” that persistently, if paradoxically, indulges in transatlantic unworlding. One need look no further to see this practice in action than Ebenzer Cooke’s infamous poem The Sot-Weed Factor; or a Voyage to Maryland (1708). This Augustan satire is one of the most frequently cited examples of early British attitudes toward America as a barbaric provincial backwater immersed in a perpetual Hobbesian state of war—the colonial “anti-image” of British civilization at home. Yet what usually gets cited are several lines near the beginning of the poem: “With heavy Heart, coucern’d that I/ Was forc’d my Native Soil to fly/ And the Old-
World must bid good-bye… Freighted with Fools, from Plymouth sound/ To Mary-Land
our ship was bound” (1). These lines neatly render the narrator’s emigration from Britain
as a sorrowful descent narrative, that of a man forced to leave his “Native soil” on
“Albion’s Rocks” aboard a ship “Freighted with Fools” to Maryland, where his
misfortunes grow. As soon as he lands, he is accosted by an ill-clad “Crew” of “Sot-
Weed Planters” who strike him as “Figures so strange” that “no God design’d” them “to
be a part of Humane Kind” (2). He continues to elaborate upon the wretchedness of
Maryland and the degenerate Americans that populate the colony until finally, toward the
end, a British fleet appears and he runs at “full speed” to leave “this Cruel, this
Inhospitable Shoar,” leaving behind a “dreadful Curse” on Maryland as he departs (20).

Granted, the well-known lines concerning the narrator’s mournful departure from his
native soil certainly reinforce the “anti-imaging” sense of colonial discourse. But if
instead one turns to the less-cited opening verse of the poem, which sets out why Cooke
is “forc’d” to depart the first place, a very different representational structure begins to
emerge: “Condemn’d by Fate to way-ward Curse,/ Of Friends unkind, and empty Purse;/
Plagues worse than fill’d Pandora’s Box./ I took my leave of Albion’s Rocks” (1). When
this opening curse is set against the final curse upon Maryland that ends the narrative, the
narrator essentially ends exactly where he began: a cursed British land which he departs
only to return—and which presumably remains as accursed as when left. Indeed, The
Sot-Weed Factor presents no indication of change, transformation, or a regenerative
homecoming in its narrative, but rather a perfect structural symmetry of a cursed land
from beginning to end.

Thus rather than view this poem as a narrative of descent and ultimate restoration, I’d like
to suggest that it is as much a narrative about going nowhere. And “nowhere” was, of
course, the central pun inherent in Thomas More’s coinage of the term utopia, which
conceptually linked a “eu-topia”, or good place, with a “u-topia,” or no place. In the
reformist logic of the poem (which, as an Augustan satire, at least nominally attempted to
amend and correct the flaws of character and society), The Sot-Weed Factor enacts the
first step of the process that I see as the hallmark of eighteenth-century didactic narratives
more generally: flattening the differences between the British home and the corrupt
slaveholding world abroad. Yet the more explicitly reformist works of the later period
take the next logical step: enacting the process of reform and regeneration to
imaginatively transform the nowhereness of the transatlantic un-world into various sites
of social eu-topia—the aspirational and ideal locations that were the goal of the reformist
text.

In the case of The Register Office, the reformist impulse is made manifest throughout the
play: its moral—repeated almost verbatim at the opening, halfway mark, and closing of
the two-act farce—is continuously affirmed by the central character who, acting as proxy
for the audience, secretly observes and judges the proceedings while hidden off-screen:
“were I not fully convinced of the great Service, arising to the Community, from the
Institution and proper Management of a Register-Office, I should be apt to conclude,
from the Trick, Villainy, and Chicanery I have seen practiced within this Hour, that none
but a Fool or a Knave would ever set foot within it’s Walls.”24 Although Reed may have
been partly motivated by deference to Henry Fielding, who had himself earlier devised
the system of register offices and whose novel Tom Jones Reed had previously adapted
into a comic opera, the clear purpose of his farce is to advocate institutional reform.25

With its repeated admonitions of the national benefit that such an overhaul could one day
inaugurate, the play, like “Rule Britannia,” casts a quasi-utopian eye toward a future state
in which the inhabitants of Britain might eventually never will be slaves, but who
continue to face this shameful prospect at present. Ultimately, then, the “other world” of
The Register Office does not stand in a worlded polarity with a social and cultural
superiority of the imperial world; instead, the other half of this other world is first and
foremost a relation of temporal and historical remoteness rather than topographical and
geographical distance. Which finally brings me to the second representational practice
that I want to suggest is operative in mid-century literary treatments of the colonial
plantation: a process we might call new worlding. By this phrase, I mean to draw

24 Reed 41.
25 For Fielding’s role in devising in the system of Register Offices, see Ogborn 201-11.
attention to a representational structure and a concomitant worldview manifested in Georgian writing, one that is more attuned to the “newness” than the “worldliness” of the New World as a site of regeneration.

Of course, the suggestion that a sense of time might play an important role in forging cultural understandings of place is hardly novel in the wake of the important studies of early British nationalism conducted by Tom Nairn, Benedict Anderson, and Homi K. Bhabha among many others. And as a generation of postcolonial-inflected literary scholarship has demonstrated, literature was among the grand ideological mechanisms of the ongoing post-Enlightenment project to schematize nation and narration such that non-western others inhabited a fundamentally “backwards” position vis-à-vis modern Western progress—as atavistic materializations of Europe’s own primeval descent. But by focusing on only those examples which reinforce the dynamics of contemporary imperialism, we overlook not only the specificities of other Georgian cultural logics, but also the ways in which didactic works of Protestant moralism might proleptically challenge the ethno-culturalist assumptions of late Victorian imperialism.

How, then, might a lens attuned to the mechanics of “new worlding” reshape how we approach the prominent role of American landscapes in Georgian didactic fiction? In the case of Mr. Anderson, such an approach suggests an interpretive trajectory that diverges from the dominant protocols surrounding how the eighteenth-century novel is currently read. Indeed, contemporary scholarly treatments of Kimber’s novel have typically employed variations of the same worlding logic as outlined in the discussions of The Sot-Weed Factor and The Register Office above. For instance, Melissa J. Homestead, borrowing a phrase from Julie Ellison’s account of transatlantic novels, discusses Mr. Anderson as a paradigmatic instance of the “there-and-back” narrative that proliferated throughout the eighteenth century. According to Homestead, “the central characters of these transatlantic fictions begin in England but leave for the British North American colonies (there), where they recover their fortunes by engaging in colonial enterprise and

26 See especially Bhabha 1-7.
then return “back” home.” The historian Matthew Mason agrees, adopting Homestead’s and Ellison’s label but elaborating further on the ways in which Mr. Anderson reinforces the imperialist ideologies that underlie and are served by the “there-and-back” representational structure. As colonial discourse, Mason argues, the novel exemplifies the mid-century discursive construction of America as colonial “anti-image” thereby “help[ing] frame generations of Englishmen’s views across the Atlantic, which took on particular significance on the eve of the American Revolution.” As a sentimental novel, he suggests, Anderson must be read alongside Adam Smith’s famous estimation of the American colonies as “populated by the refuse of the jails of Europe” in The Theory of Moral Sentiments; both of these works participate in the broader propagandistic project to influence popular understandings of the colonial world as the “anti-image” of Britain.  

In contrast, Joe Snader moves away from such culturalist ascriptions when he correctly notes that “within [Kimber’s] novel, neither tyranny nor liberty nor subjugation seems attached to any particular culture.” But, placing Mr. Anderson in the genre of transatlantic captivity narratives, he too inevitably draws the rather worlded conclusion that the novel figures “all cultures [as] seem[ingly] capable of despotism in colonial America, while only the exceptional gentleman, of whatever cultural origin, can remain free of taint.” Finally, in George Boulukos’s suggestive study of racial thought in eighteenth-century culture, Mr. Anderson boldly illustrates the incipient racialist and proslavery propaganda underlying colonialism in the period—its worlded other is not so much America as Africa, whose descendants in the new-world are confined to the essentializing roles of the “grateful slave” and who stand in marked contrast to the white character’s rational intolerance of being enslaved.

Of course, the critical tendency to use Kimber’s novel as an evidentiary case study of the contemporaneous project of worlding America and bolstering imperial ideology is amply justifiable: following the logic of the “there-and-back” narrative, Mr. Anderson’s comic

---

27 Homestead 530-35. Although Homestead notes that “the complete geographic trajectory of Tom's life is far more complex than “there and back” implies” given his multiple transatlantic voyages and the novel’s broader preoccupation with circulation, she does not explore how such a complexity might, for instance, undermine the imperialist ideologies that animate the larger “there-and-back” representational structure.

28 Mason 24.

29 Snader, 193, emphasis added.

30 Boulukos 116-126.
conclusion witnesses the emancipation of the eponymous (white) British character from violent subjugation in the savage colonies and his triumphant return to England. The narrative thus lends itself to this genealogy of this particular form of colonial discourse, especially if the recovery of this genealogy motivates critical interest in the book from the outset. However, in section 3 of this chapter, I explore how such a worlded approach also fails to take into account the fundamentally vexed status of alterity within the novel itself, which repeatedly invokes both cultural and racial differences only to undermine the very logic by which these differentiations are upheld. Foremost amongst these differences is the ideological gulf which separates the English “back” from the “there” of American slave society: as we shall see, the novel imbues these locations with a sense of something far stranger than the dualities of “home” and “away,” “familiar” and “foreign,” “civilized” and “savage,” and, above all, “free” and “enslaved.” Yet the text doggedly insists upon this categorical indeterminacy surrounding “there-and-back” in order to create a very purposeful didactic vacuum—an unlearning of the worlded world—and to plant in its stead coherent alternative to the meaning of home and away. The significance of this alterative construction, as we shall see, lies in its vision of a new world buttressed not by geographical and cultural differences, but by moral transformation and the utopic temporalities of reform and eventual regeneration.

Of course, this scheme risks accomplishing little more than confirming the rather self-evident fact that the reform narrative places great emphasis on reform. The question might rightly be asked, what does a reading attentive to moral progress and social transformation gain beyond merely accepting the didactic intentions of the reform narratives at face value? Above all, placing an emphasis on the movements of reform and regeneration (rather than on shifts in direction and place) reveals the strategies by which readers of eighteenth-century fiction were frequently compelled to correlate the dimension of time (and, by extension, narrative progression) with the dimension of place. In contrast to the problem of static cultural differences, didactic and reformist narratives tend to be far more engrossed with the problem of personal and social change; as I illustrate below, reckoning the role of temporality and change (and, by extension, reformation) within these works is crucial to understanding the function of particular
places, and of place itself, within these narratives. Continuing this dissertation’s overall project of examining why the New World “there” was such a privileged and pivotal theme in the articulation of eighteenth-century didactism, I argue that fictions of slavery and amelioration use slave society to explore competing theoretical accounts of sociability and conflict, of kinship and alterity, and above all, of degeneracy and regeneracy. These ideas not only define the many worlds of the didactic novel, but allow us to chart their relations to one another in the narrative more felicitously than a geographical map.

3.1.2. Lockean didacticism

As I have suggested in the previous section, the critical fixation with the role of cultural differences in *Mr. Anderson* is justified in light of the relentless peregrinations of the hero across England, the continent, various American colonies, and even Amerindian nations throughout the New World. It is undeniably a “travelling” fiction and participates in the broader generic reliance of the early novel upon travel and voyaging literature to both structure its narrative and to legitimate itself as fiction. As the introduction to the novel asserts, the story is both a true account that the author has fashioned out of his friend Mr. Anderson’s history while it is simultaneously a didactic fiction that is presented “under the guise of a rational entertainment” to “stea[l] instruction upon the peruser, and produc[e] benefit to the mind” (47). Yet, as I have also suggested, scant attention has been paid to how and why foreign locations were given such a prominent place in the didacticism of eighteenth-century novels beyond their seemingly endless need to reinforce colonial ideology and reproduce imperialist hegemony. This interpretation, as I have been arguing, rather tends to place the cart before the horse, assuming a relatively *a priori* cultural orientation toward colonial discourse (on the part of ideologically motivated cultural producers) in order to trace the “emergence” of this cultural orientation in the novels themselves. Without denying that these novels do lend themselves to a genealogy of the imperialist propaganda that would crest in the following century, I have suggested that alternative interpretive traditions are available to understanding the role of the culturally foreign—especially when the foreign locale is constituted as a slave society—and that a consideration of time and, specifically, the
processes of regeneration, may be key to reading the so-called “histories” that comprise the early novel tradition. Thus, before turning to a closer examination of the specific role played by localized transformation in shaping the fictional geographies of *Mr. Anderson*, the remainder of this section contextualizes my approach by situating *Mr. Anderson* within a broader impulse to connect time and place in contemporary moral and sentimental philosophy—a practice which, as I will show, critically underlies the didactic investment in the planation colony as a representational site.

To that end, a brief recursion to the pedagogical strictures of John Locke offers a compelling starting point, both in light of his undisputed influence on Georgian didacticism generally, but also the particular place accorded him in the *paideia* of *Mr. Anderson*—the “social imaginary” evident in novel’s treatment of education as the central site from which to examine the relations of power and sociability that exist not just between instructor and instructed, but between authority and subject more generally.\(^3\) In *Mr. Anderson*, characters repeatedly read Locke and discuss his theories in the course of their studies. Moreover, both the eponymous hero, Tom, and his intended, Fanny Barlow, evidence their learning when they explicitly paraphrase Lockean philosophy at key moments in the text—Tom in his lengthy harangues against his status as an involuntary indentured labourer and Fanny in hers against the domestic tyranny of her planter father. Indeed, *Mr. Anderson* imaginatively weaves together the didactic and political theories of Locke precisely along the point at which both strains of Lockean discourse converge: the critique of the illegitimate use of force in different kinds of government. Where Locke’s *Second Treatise* condemns political tyranny (which threatens to debase naturally free men into positions of abject servility), so too does his *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* censure paternal tyranny (which threatens to debase freedom-loving children into overly servile “poltroons”). In broader terms, both the political and the didactic treatises condemn the enslaving violence of arbitrary power and tyrannical overlordship as tending to produce “mental slavery,” the sinking of the subjects of political and family government alike into a form of social alienation whereby

\(^3\) See previous chapter for my elaboration upon this notion of *paideia*. 
their overly servile natures ultimately, if paradoxically, become continuous with their rebellious incapacity to be ruled by any authority, rational or otherwise.\textsuperscript{32}

Yet in far less obvious manner, Locke’s educational strictures might also be seen as animating the novel’s representational strategies as a didactic novel of world travel. Specifically the novel exemplifies the Lockean strictures that an immersive study of geography, by itself, is a wholly inefficacious tool for either moral or mental improvement. “Geography,” Locke maintains, only becomes a worthwhile pursuit when it is joined together with “chronology” (i.e, the rhetorical narration of time) to produce what Locke calls “history”—the “great mistress of prudence and civil knowledge” outside of which knowledge about places and events alone form no more than a “little useful… jumble of matters of fact.”

Tis [only] by these two [i.e., geography and chronology]… that the Actions of Mankind are ranked into their proper Places of Time and Countries, under which Circumstance they are not only much easier kept in the Memory, but in that natural Order, are capable to afford those Observations which make a Man the better and the abler for reading them.\textsuperscript{33}

Accordingly, it is only when geography and chronology are fully imbricated with each other—not when geography functions as a discrete component within a larger story but rather when it is itself presented as itself a meaningful platform for narrative development—that geography becomes an effective tool for moral exposition.

Locke is here talking about “historical” moral narratives in the contemporary sense of the term, but his analysis might usefully be applied to the many other types of “histories” which poured from the presses of the early- and mid-century, especially those which, like The History of the Life and Adventures of Mr. Anderson, crafted their narratives with the explicit didactic purpose of making their readers “the better and the abler for reading them.” In this regard, Kimber’s use of plantations as the primary setting of action can be

\textsuperscript{32}Locke’s characterizations of servile minds as paradoxically the most rebellious in both The Second Treatise and Some Thoughts Concerning Education were, of course, a mainstay of the republican critique of the vitiating effects of tyranny from Plato and Aristotle onward. Such ideas remained current well into the nineteenth century; for a curious iteration of this psychological theory, see Sir Walter Scott’s treatment of mental “idiocy” as a continual vacillation between stupors of insensibility and violent fits of rage through the character of the “fool” Davie Gellatley in Waverley.

\textsuperscript{33}Locke STCE §181-2.
seen as uniting two central Lockean concerns, bringing together the examination of servitude and slavery in the *Treatises on Government* with the pedagogical interrelationship of time and space described in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. As readers of Locke’s political ethics, the impressionable protagonists of the novel navigate the world of the slave society in terms which virtually mirror the readers of the didactic novel: both groups are encouraged to view the plantation as a very particular problem site in which to consider different theories of sociability and ethics in practice. Moreover, the novel’s protagonists work through these problems in no less narratological terms than the novel’s readers. Tom, a so-called “slave” of Fanny’s father, is as desperate to discover the mysterious history of his birth that led to his enslavement, while Fanny, a so-called “slave” of parental despotism, is to ascertain her fate at the hands of her cruel father. As the novel progresses, both become increasingly aware that the resolution of their respective forms of bondage—and that of the African slaves who are brutalized on the plantation—will occur somewhere beyond their present situation of oppression, a mysterious future augured to them by omens, presentiments, divine signs, and prophetic dreams.

Ultimately, as I discuss in the final section, the didactic yoking of geography and chronology will become most apparent when the two main plantation “plots”—the romance plot between Tom and Fanny and the conspiratorial plotting of the insurrectionary slaves—finally merge together at the novel’s climax. For the time being, it is sufficient to note that *Mr. Anderson* was itself hardly unique in using the scenes of enslavement as sites of didactic reflection that move beyond the here-and-there geographical dialectics of colonial discourse. Kimber’s elaboration of these themes can therefore be situated within a larger contemporary pattern of using scenes of slavery as a problem space to theorize moral reflections of a more scope than the rendering of a pro-imperialist or anti-American cultural propaganda. Singular for the degree to which it does, *Mr. Anderson* instances a contemporary pattern of representing slave societies within a broader ethical and didactic framework—one that builds upon Locke’s moral and educational strictures regarding the correlatation of time and space.
3.2. Beyond “there-and-back”

As I will show in the remainder of this chapter, Kimber’s novel uses the social landscape of America to explicitly reflect upon universal processes of social regeneration rather than to buttress a logic of pre-established cultural alterities. The layout of this final section roughly mirrors the peregrinations of the protagonist across his putatively “there-and-back” adventure, starting with a close examination of the England from which the hero initially ventures outward—the English “here.” As this first subsection illustrates, cultural identity—in the sense of a distinct notion of in-group belonging and kinship—is presented in the novel as subordinate to a broader trans-regional vision of ethical sociability. As we shall see in the second subsection, the novel’s rejection of the logic of “there-and-back” is especially evident in its treatment of America, which exhibits a degenerate status only insofar as it registers a Hobbesian undercurrent—a state of anti-friendship—that is not only evident but prevalent throughout the world. This degenerate state of affairs is characterized as “slavery” and stands in marked contrast to “servitude,” its moral antithesis. The final subsection proposes an alternative interpretation to the novel’s treatment of the American “there,” one which focuses on the uchronic dimensions of the “new” world—a world ordered by time, transformation, and providential regeneration. I argue that the “newness” of the novel’s New World reveals the strongly postmillennialist dimensions of eighteenth-century reformist thought. By reading the novel through the lens of Kimber’s explicit engagement with eschatological concerns contained in his other writings, the chapter concludes by examining how the novel’s final “return” voyage back to England must be read less as a recursion than a regeneration—the universal triumph of servitude over slavery at home and abroad.

3.2.1. The British here: unworlding Britain

*Mr. Anderson* opens by introducing an important thematic element that will continue to inform the narrative’s early transatlantic voyage to America as well as its closing return to England. Namely, the British setting that readers first encounter might only be called “home” for the young protagonist in the most immediate sense of a milieu of familial love and protection. Beyond this immediate sphere of domesticity, however, lies the broader social context of London, an altogether hostile and alien world. The
novel opens with Tom, age five, walking with his father through the bustling streets of the metropolis. Left outside by himself momentarily while his father returns home to retrieve a forgotten item, the boy is quickly snatched by a man named Williamson, whom we soon discover is a “spirit” in search of human souls to sell as labour for the colonies. With young Tommy in tow, Williamson makes his way to a ship and sets sail for America, where he sells the young boy in “perpetual servitude” to a rich Maryland planter named Barlow (53).

While much of the subsequent narrative focuses on the savagery of Tommy’s daily life under a violent and tyrannical slavemaster in the colonies, the novel very carefully paints the shift to America as coterminous with, rather than a rupture from, Tommy’s experiences in his native abode. Williamson, a degenerate English spirit who has frequent dealings in the colonies, embodies the general social “refuse” (in Smith’s terms) that can crisscross the Atlantic so easily. During Williamson’s kidnapping of Tom, the moralizing narrator pointedly interrupts the narrative to suggest that culpability for the crime may extend beyond the individual’s vicious nature to the social world of London itself. How, the narrator asks, did the many passersby ignore the snatching of the child? Perhaps they assumed the man and child were acquainted, or perhaps they were simply too absorbed with their own lives to notice. To assume otherwise, the narrator states, is to suggest that the citizens of London

might be of that class of mortals who would not turn out of their ways or busy their heads to do a humane or charitable action, where the least trouble or difficulty attended it; contenting themselves with this merciless adage, People must take of their own—I have enough to do to mind one; for such wretches really exist in human shape. (48)

At this point in the narrative, the question of the everyday antisocial disaffection that pervades England is left open. Later, however, the truth of the matter resolves itself through a series of subsequent flashbacks. By the end of the novel, the imputation of England as a land populated by “wretches in human shape” will be set into sharp relief. But before this can unfold, the novel primes the reader for this condemnation of the English people’s casual disregard for the value of life through a series of forays into the very meaning of cultural difference.
Throughout the novel, examinations of different cultural contexts occur in episodic and interrelated subplots, the personal narratives of the various characters whom Tom encounters across his travels. Of these, two interrelated subplots are particularly relevant for tracing the novel’s approach to the issue of cultural difference: the personal narratives of Calcathouy, a Creek chief, and Du Cayle, a young French nobleman. These narratives are especially useful insofar as they both engage and trouble two popular culturist frameworks of non-British alterity: the primitivist figure of the noble savage and the anti-Gallic figure of the degenerate Frenchman.34 Strongly echoing the Oroonoko narratives of Behn and Southerne, Calcathouy’s tale is narrated by a paternalistic Indian trader named Matthewson, who recounts the noble Indian’s love for a virtuous and amiable woman of his tribe named Taloufa. Soon after the two marry, Calcathouy is captured as a war slave by French troops but escapes and returns home. There, Calcathouy and Taloufa are joined by Marsillac—a French officer who had previously shown Calcathouy kindness during his captivity and whom the grateful Chief subsequently saves from execution—and the three of them live together in idyllic friendship for several years. Unbeknownst to the lovers, however, the duplicitous Marsillac has fallen in love with Taloufa, and his true character is revealed when, taking advantage of the chief’s trust, he recaptures Calcouthey and attempts to rape Taloufa, who murders him before he can. Calcathouy, meanwhile, is rescued by a band of his Indian and English friends, but is soon heartbroken to discover that Taloufa, erroneously believing her husband dead and herself still in the power of French, has killed herself—“an example of consummate virtue and heroic fortitude” (98). Though devastated by the loss of his wife, Calcathouy joins the English troops and victoriously re-engages the French in combat. He is eventually recompensed by the Quebec government, which surrenders the men involved in Marsillac’s conspiracy for execution by Calcathouy.

On the surface, the tale of the noble Indian taking sides with the honorable English troops against the immoral French would seem to reinforce imperialist jingoism of midcentury

---

34 The literature on these stereotypes in eighteenth-century culture is voluminous; see, for instance, Ellingson and Colley for an overview on primitivism and anti-Gallicanism, respectively.
Britain, trafficking in the forms of cultural representation that would reach their pinnacle during the various engagements of the Seven Years’ War. However three things complicate this straightforward triangulation of noble savages, virtuous Britons, and the terrible French. In the first place, Calcahouy’s anti-French (and eventually) pro-British loyalties are rooted in a specific set of attitudes toward enslavement and emancipation. As Calcahouy comes to identify his own interests with those of the British, he makes it clear that he does so only in a contingent manner: no threat, he declares, will cause him to betray his allegiance with his English friends, so long as they “fight, like me, in the common cause of mankind, against their enslavers” (100). The anti-tyrannical framing of the actions of the heroic British troops in the American colonies stands not only in marked contrast with French self-interest and arbitrary power, but indeed, as the narrative has already suggested, the corrupt British world back home. In other words, rather than present a uniform portrait of British valor, the narrative distinguishes between its ideal and corrupt manifestations. Second, although the noble Indians Calcahouy and Taloufa clearly exemplify sentimental ideals—Smith’s respectable and amiable virtues, respectively—they do so not as cultural representatives, but rather as cultural leaders who stand at odds with the depravity of own culture. Put differently, the pair represents a kind of cultural progress within their culture—an evolution that is explicitly not self-identical with Europeanization, but which rather suggests that Creek culture is capable of the same cultural dynamism as European cultures, possessing the same capacity to transform within its own terms. And once again, the novel’s vision of cultural advancement is tied to an anti-tyrannical orientation to various forms of bondage, to an “inflexible disposition… to preserve that jewel liberty” (98). During their courtship, for instance, the narrator makes it clear that Calcahouy

…scorned the ways of the Indians, who marry as they are bid by their parents, and would accept of Taloufa, upon no other condition, than that of convincing her he sought her happiness in his own, and that he meant to make her his companion and the friend of heart, and not to destine her to that drudgery and servile submission, which he abominated, but which was universally practiced by the Indian women. (99)

Here, the tempting recourse to notions of noble primitivism versus savage barbarism fundamentally overlooks the dynamism—the sense of cultural relationality—within the
novel’s Amerindian context. Rather than evaluate the relative “progress” or “backwardness” of Indian culture, or adopt a kind of cultural relativism to account for its specificities, the text uses the Creek nation to further illustrate the ways in which all cultures are capable of manifesting the same, broadly trans-regional capacity for ethical sociability or the lack thereof. In fact, there is nothing especially culturally distinct about the novel’s description of Indian patriarchal arrangements. These practices merely look forward to the wide-spread instances of domestic despotism that abound within the novel’s French, British, and white colonial contexts, just as Calcathouy’s “progressive” eulogizing of free companionate love serves as yet another instance of the novel’s overarching theme of Lockean anti-tyranny in matters of marriage. Recalling the Anderson family’s own disconnection from their broader English context, the novel’s central paradigm of the noble savage actually emerges in contradistinction to the broader “degenerate” Indian nation. Likewise, Calcathouy and Taloufa model for their Creek compatriots a reformist vision of social progress that is not meaningfully tied to an assimilationist embrace of any other cultural form: although the pair certainly might be seen as representing a Eurocentric, primitivist representation of the Indian as Enlightenment ideal, they do so against a backward and unregenerate backdrop. In other words, neither cultural paradigm—noble primitive or uncivilized savage—is allowed to fully stereotype Indian culture in toto. Instead, the native American context is ultimately accorded the same status as European cultures—all are characterized as a largely corrupt cultural milieu out of which emerge a few morally exemplary model representatives.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the novel’s rejection of static cultural stereotyping becomes most explicit through its eventual repudiation of the patriotic anti-Gallican prejudice towards the French and Catholicism. Though the licentious and despotic Marsillac fulfills every negative British stereotype of the base Frenchman, his characterization sets up a didactic contrast for the far more sympathetic character Du Cayle, another French officer, albeit one who is eventually included within the extensive trans-Atlantic surrogate family that forms around the orphan protagonist. Shortly after hearing the story of treacherous Marsillac and the French troops, Tom successfully captures a French battalion, among whom the virtuous and kind-hearted Du Cayle creates
Having been prompted by Tom, Du Cayle delivers his own tale of domestic despotism and the impeding forced marriage of his beloved. Tom, deeply affected by the story of his prisoner of war, promptly frees Du Cayle, who pledges eternal gratitude in turn. Later in the narrative, the two are re-united in France, where Du Cayle rescues Tom from an order of arrest as an enemy of state, and the two are thenceforth bound together in mutual friendship and loyalty. Where the earlier narrative of Marsillac’s betrayal of the benevolent Calcathouy provides an object lesson in “abominable and black” ingratitude of the French (103), the subsequent Du Cayle episode reveals a moral opposite: a noble, virtuous, and kind-hearted Frenchman. Tellingly, the exchanges between Tom and Du Cayle are cast within a didactic context in which cultural prejudice is both introduced and then undone. At first, Tom’s patriotic fervor is so fired up by hearing of the betrayal of the “worthy Indian” that he longs to engage the French in combat and gain “a fresh opportunity of chastising that base and perfidious people” (105). Yet through his sympathetic intercourse with Du Cayle, a man whose circumstances are so similar to his own, Tom is able to see the French-English conflicts from a neutral perspective. As Du Cayle’s narrative brings “his dear Fanny’s sufferings at once to his mind,” the generous Tom tells his captive

You lost a father—I lost a father and a friend. Let us remember these things no more—The two governments are not concerned in this affair—go—I give you your liberty, and that of your companions, without ransom, and will furnish you with arms to defend, and provisions to subsist yourselves in your tedious march—Go… Let my generosity make you a friend to any English subject, you may see [as] a captive with your nation. (109-10)

Tom’s perspective of the war is transformed from a sweeping clash of cultures—the romance of Patriotic propaganda—to a mere series of local skirmishes between “two governments;” consequently, he imparts to Du Cayle the cosmopolitan lesson that he himself has so recently learned: friendship and ethical sociability can, indeed, must transcend the tribalizing consciousness of culture and find a common humanity across difference.

Having both engaged and deflated commonly held expectations about French and Indian culture—indeed, about cultural difference itself—the narrative primes the reader to
return to and reassess the British context through the first-person narratives of various countrymen that Tom meets during his travels across the world. Throughout the narrative, Tom encounters Britons—Englishmen and Scots—in the New World who provide for him a profoundly negative portrait of the homeland that he himself was too young to remember. In America, he meets a kindly Scot named Ferguson, who relates both his own and his wife’s tales, both of which turn on their the various forms of betrayal they suffered while in England. Subsequently, the portrait of English society that the reader is left with is one of a uniformly callous and unkind world in which the everyday course of events is marked by social conflict. Indeed, the Ferguson’s extraordinary sufferings at home compel their departure to America, where they eventually prosper and create a true home for themselves, one which they never intend to leave (60-5). This negative depiction of “back home” is repeatedly reinforced throughout the novel, such as when Tom hears his biological father’s narrative of all that has happened since he, their son, was kidnapped. His father’s account echoes the story’s initial evocation of London as largely inhabited by an unkind and uncaring populace, a city full of children “exposed and deserted” by an uncharitable world (146). In fact, Tom’s final journey to England is preceded by an earlier return shortly before his reunion with Fanny in America, and the London to which he first arrives “back” confirms the novel’s initial framing of the metropole as a Hobbesian world of social violence: Tom is shocked by the gross injustice of the debtor’s prisons in the country and by the “sordid medicants that so crowd our streets and avenues” (131). Soon after his arrival, Tom witnesses a man violently stabbed and assaulted by muggers near the pub where he was snatched, a man who is revealed to be yet another one of the virtuous Frenchmen he had previously encountered in one of his earlier journeys.

In sum, the narrative profoundly complicates cultural expectations surrounding French, Native American, and colonial culture, all the while refusing to valorize England as the missing home of its displaced citizens. In all of these contexts, friendship and humanity are exemplary but scarce, and they frequently give way to the powerful forms of violent self-interest and exploitation that are, instead, the ruling principles of everyday life. It is no coincidence that the gravest danger faced by the American heroine Fanny, like the
virtuous “squaw” Taloufa, is rape at the hands of a dastardly white man: young Tommy is himself raped by the slave trader Williamson—his first encounter with an Englishman outside his family unit.

3.2.2. The American there: an “unworld” of mental slavery

Given the seamless way in which Tom’s Maryland sojourn continues the dynamics of social violence and alienation that were first discernable in London, it is unsurprising that the remainder of the didactic narrative is marked by an almost obsessive preoccupation with critically evaluating different forms of sociability, not cultural differences. To pursue this assessment, Mr. Anderson evokes the complex imaginative linkages between the domestic household and the colonial slave plantation which Defoe had previously drawn out in his Family Instructor. Even more than the earlier text, Mr. Anderson filters this representational interconnection through the Instructor’s adage that a person who has “no Sense of Filial Relation, can have little or none of a Social Relation.”35 Where Defoe’s text sees the reform of the latter as an effect of the former—that is, of amending the broken bonds between members of a discordant family—Mr. Anderson asserts the inverse: all interpersonal relations, whether those between parent and child or between master and servant, must be rooted within the normative sociability of friendship. It is the cultivation of the duty of companionship—of friendship—that is at the core of the Mr. Anderson’s paideia. Indeed, at several moments along the way, the plot of the novel contorts into some rather bizarre circumstances in order to ensure that every domestic—and even familial—relation has its roots in friendship first and foremost. Before the planter’s kindly wife, Mrs. Barlow, furtively adopts Tom as a foster child, she first becomes strongly attached to the sensitive and loving young boy. Before he and Fanny, the Barlows’ daughter, fall in love, they first grow up together as playmates and best friends. When Tom is exiled by Barlow from the plantation, he is adopted by an Indian trader named Matthewson only after he proves himself an indispensible friend to the older man. After his death, Tom is invited by his French “frère,” Du Cayle, to marry his sister after Tom proves a trusted ally to their family’s righteous cause. Indeed, Tom’s

35 FI II.312
ultimate final reunion with the parents occurs only after—and precisely because of—their first having formed a friendship while still ignorant of their true biological relation.

In all of Tom’s various familial arrangements, friendship always precedes the formation of familial relations and provides the normative models of obligation and attachment by which families must accord. The relentless obsession with ethics and sociality, as repeatedly made manifest in the main and sub-narratives of the novel, ensures that Kimber’s notion of “family” cannot be identified with any given set of circumstances or accidents of birth. Instead, family always results after the fact—eventually forming out of a sociable impulse and maintained only through the ethical exertions of those who would claim one another as friends. Indeed, the novel suggests that, in familial and national matters alike, the kinship we passively inherit by birth is more often than not a set of relations that must be resisted until they are actively reformed into friendship. By the end of the novel, Tom returns from England to America in order to reunite with his wife and adoptive mother, Mrs. Barlow; together, they travel to England where they are invited to live with Tom’s long-lost biological parents, the Andersons, in a coterie of friends—a “queer” family which faintly prefigures the deliberative kinship circles of Scott’s *Millennium Hall.*

But what is even more remarkable about the sociability of friendship in the novel—and its relevance for the portrayal of chattel slavery on the plantation—are the ways in which the relations of love and servitude are virtually interchangeable. In all of Tom’s various adoptive kinship situations, the affective engagements between him and his chosen family are all mediated through service—he quite literally serves and is served by them. In each case, the affective substance of social ties is comprised of a mutualistic sense of obligation and duty which bonds the participants into their social-domestic configuration. As already described in the episode with Du Cayle, Tom first recognizes the Frenchman as a man of merit, which prompts Tom to assist the man, which in turn proves Tom’s worth to Du Cayle, who later dutifully helps Tom, and so forth, until social relations based on obligation thicken into a veritable familial claim of “brothers.”

---

36 On queer kinship in the context of utopianism especially, see A. Jones 231-268.
In matters of romantic love, relations are similarly bound up in claims of servitude and obligation in the novel. This is especially noteworthy given the ways in which eighteenth-century sentimental fiction typically offers up an ideal of “free” companionate love in contradistinction to the gothic forced marriages and commodified daughters associated with Spain and Italy. While Mr. Anderson also engages this contrast between consensual and coerced love, Tom’s love for Fanny—like his filial duty to Mrs. Barlow—is rendered in terms of servitude with a remarkable frequency throughout the narrative. When, for instance, Tom protests the illegitimacy of his being made Barlow’s servant against his will, he adds that despite “the degrading dress he wore… he thought it the most honourable livery in the world, as it betokened his servitude to his lovely Fanny, whose livery he hoped to wear to the end of his life” (59). Such sentimental expressions might of course be considered pat, were they not relentlessly rearticulated within the novel’s Lockean frame of sovereignty and subjectivity. A little later, Tom neatly captures the central ethic of the novel when he declares that

[Though] I am sensible I am now in the condition of a slave… I have a conscious dignity of principle, that tells me I have an equal right to all the blessings of providence with my neighbours, and, except the offspring of love and gratitude, which I owe only to five persons living, that I know of, am neither naturally nor legally obligated to serve any man on earth, unless he can prove that I voluntarily made myself his property, by contract or indenture. (60, emphasis added)

Though his screed is prompted by a reading of Locke’s political theory, Tom explicitly does not contrast his slavery with a freedom based in possessive individualism or some other Lockean variation of sovereign personhood; rather, he subsumes his own desire for freedom into the more important consideration of voluntary servitude—borne of love and gratitude—that he owes his extended plantation family (i.e., Mrs. Barlow, Fanny, and his three kindly neighbours, Mr. Gordon and Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson). Later in the narrative, Tom reiterates the importance of his own freely willed “grateful” slavery when he asks Mrs. Barlow to tell him, “how I came to be your [chattel] slave—who, and what I am?—[though] to be sure, I am, and ever shall be, your slave, by inclination, and my sister’s slave” (66).
This seemingly paradoxical opposition of slavery with servitude rather than with freedom in *Mr. Anderson* is a powerful if underappreciated thematic current which runs throughout eighteenth-century didactic fiction. When, for instance, one of the didactic authorities of Sarah Scott’s *Millennium Hall* attempts to explain to a visitor the social obligations that underwrite the Hall’s philosophy of sociability, her skeptical interlocuter protests, ‘You seem, madam… to choose to make us all slaves to each other.’

‘No, sir,’ replied Miss Mancel, ‘I would only make you friends. Those who are really such are continually endeavouring to serve and oblige each other; this reciprocal communication of benefits should be universal, and then we might with reason be fond of this world.’

Scott’s didactic novels are fixated with clarifying the obscure difference between “real” slavery and a kind of paradoxical servitude-as-friendship. The latter, according to Mancel, is characterized by a “state of mutual confidence, reciprocal services, and correspondent affections” outside of which one discovers a world that can “more properly be compared to that state of war, which Hobbes supposes the first condition of mankind. The same vanities, the same passions, the same ambition, reign in almost every breast; a constant desire to supplant, and a continual fear of being supplanted.” Thus, for Scott, the desire for freedom or independence outside of the social state of service paradoxically creates the condition of possibility for slavery—that Hobbesian state of self-interest and unremitting social conflict and discord.

So too is *Mr. Anderson* vitally engrossed with rendering and clarifying this contrast. Indeed, while relations of servitude animate the novel’s reformist ideal of sociability, so too does a form of anti-sociability, or wide-ranging pattern of anti-social relations, underwrite domestic and other social relations in an unregenerate state. Engaging the method of juxtaposition central to both didactic and utopian genres, Mr. Anderson initially outlines the differences between ideal sociability and corrupt anti-sociability in the contrast between the villainous planter Barlow and his kindly wife, Mrs. Barlow. Although contemporary critics have viewed Barlow as the personification of the novel’s specifically anti-American attitude, Barlow’s kindly and sympathetic American-born

---

37 Scott 112.
38 112.
wife would necessarily complicate such prejudice. It is far more appropriate to regard Barlow as a representative of the trans-regional corrupt domestic authority that populated the sentimental and gothic novels of the long eighteenth-century. Indeed, the novel frequently draws a suggestive link between Barlow’s specifically colonial slaveholding practices and his inability to practice good governance over his domestic household. Consequently, the planter’s frequent violent temper is frequently rendered in terms that illustrate the interchangeability of the white and black, familial and enslaved, subjects of his authority. While his wife and daughter look upon him in a perpetual “fear and trembling, whenever he was home,” Tommy soon becomes the target of his “cow-skin… (a twisted thong with which [planters] usually discipline their negroes)” (54-6). His wife, on the other hand, a “woman of “sense and humility” (53), beseeches her husband to treat the unfortunate boy more like a “father… than a tyrant” (56). In contrast to her husband’s obduracy, Mrs. Barlow discovers in Tom “a promising genius, and a softness and good nature of disposition, that would have melted any heart” (51), and in contrast to her husband’s cruelty, she “began to look upon him… with the tenderness of a mother, which was sensibly increased by her Fanny’s fondness of her new playmate, who could not bear him out of her sight, and for whom he seemed to have contracted an equal affection” (53). And just as her husband’s domestic temperament is inextricable from his slavekeeping practices, so too is her kindness bound up with her attitudes towards slavery: “she was surprized that there could be persons so hard hearted to sell innocent and helpless infancy, to perpetual servitude; when perhaps, as ills are common to all alike, and the most affluent may meet with a reverse of fortune, their own children might be exposed to the hands of merciless strangers” (53).

Barlow is, of course, a vicious tyrant, and he alternates between cruelty to Tom and his inhumanity toward the slaves of the plantation. And given that the critique of the vicious slavemaster is central to the didactic moral of the novel, it may come as no surprise that the greatest form of social oppression condemned by the novel is in matters of education. As with so many other didactic novels of the period, the plantation setting offers a powerful stage to illustrate the linkages between moral education and sociability, as well as their antitheses—mental corruption and anti-sociability. Indeed, the passages which
are most frequently cited to illustrate the putative anti-American pro-imperial bias of the novel almost all hinge on a reflections about the state of learning in the colony. Shortly after the voyage to America, we discover that Barlow “had little notion of the necessity of knowledge himself, as he could but just write his name mechanically, and consequently was somewhat excusable in thinking any instruction for Tom of no manner of service” (58). Tom, like Barlow’s other slaves, is forbidden from receiving any formal instruction, but he covertly poaches an education by attending to his young mistress Fanny during her lessons. In contrast to Barlow’s mental defects, Tom and Fanny reveal a strong intellectual curiosity: “their ideas of men and things to open surprisingly; and after having exhausted all their stock of knowledge, they thirsted for more” (57). While Tom’s remarkable progress in Latin and French amazes his instructors, he remains “supposed by Barlow to still be as ignorant as himself” (59). Later we are introduced to another equally coarse planter patriarch named Col. Carter, who arranges with Barlow to marry his son to Fanny in order to satisfy their own mutual avarice. And his rakish son, we find, is a “lad of bad principles, unlettered, and of coarse manners” (67). Taken together, such characters confirm Tom’s doleful impressions of Maryland as a place where “good sense, learning, and politeness seem not to be in so much request” (59). Yet Tom’s observations of the country immediately elicit from Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson their own personal narratives, in which England is revealed as hardly any better—a fact already hinted at the start of the narrative.

Furthermore, although an association of Creole culture with coarseness and ignorance was already commonplace by midcentury, the novel complicates this cultural stereotype by contrasting Barlow with the instructive portrait of his American-born wife, “a woman of the best descent in Maryland” (57). While shielding her daughter from the damaging influence of her father, she also covertly facilitates the education of her adopted son, Tom. Indeed, her principal function as a moral authority in the novel is to covertly amend the forms of social breakdown left in the wake of her vicious husband and to repair the natal alienation of the young Tom. As one particularly revealing episode illustrates: “Mrs. Barlow taught the little cunning folks [i.e., Tom and Fanny] how they should behave to each other; and they obeyed her lessons so well, that whenever the
husband appeared, miss shewed an haughty distance, and Tommy a lowly reverence and respect; but never were happier than when he was out of their way, and they could indulge their innocent familiarities with each other” (57). Indeed, even at a formal level, Tom and Fanny’s schooling enacts the reinforcement of their kinship bonds, such as when the Fergusons discover Tom “explaining a passage in Locke to his mistress, with her arm gently reclined upon his shoulder; nor did their innocence tempt them to alter their posture at their entrance” (68).

Thus rather than presenting a blanket co-articulation of creolity with the coarseness of mind, the novel carefully uses the plantation to contrast the virtues of moral sentiment, education, and social harmony against the misgoverning state of tyrannical violence, ignorance, and social alienation associated with the arbitrary rule of the undereducated and undereducating slavemaster. When Barlow informs his wife of his intention to marry Fanny against her will, his status as a domestic tyrant is again indistinguishable from his slavemastery: “‘am I not her father, and can do with her as I please?’… In such strain the brute ran on, and upon his wife’s reasoning him further, flung out of the room, with curses and oaths, that he would be obeyed, without reply in what concerned his own property” (70). Tom reiterates this link between miseducation and anti-sociability even more boldly when he laments the prospect of seeing his beloved Fanny “sacrificed” by a forced marriage to one “whose mind is all low and mean—and so far from being fitted for the refined enjoyments of love and friendship, that he is not even an eligible acquaintance” (73). Behind the novel’s vision of domestic and social estrangement lies a veritable complex of interconnected problems of paideia: the heartlessness of domestic and social tyrants who place self-interest before social good; the miseducative power of tyranny to abnegate subjects’ free will and, with it, their voluntary servitude; the ignorance of those who, like Carter, form “barely the image of a man” (73) and who subsequently keep their subjects in a similarly benighted position. In place of proper social integration, violence is the only lesson that Barlow and Carter impart their African slaves—a violence which is mirrored in the treatment of both the sexual “slave” Fanny (who is compelled to marry against her will and subsequently arranged to be raped by her father when she persists in refusing) as well as the white “slave” Tom (who is nearly
beaten to death by Barlow when he discovers that his daughter is in love with him). Just as the children become accustomed to keeping up a charade of social distance before their ignorant governor’s watchful eye, so too do many of the novel’s plantation slaves dissemble their obedience to their masters—a fact which becomes all too evident at the climax of the novel.

The novel provides a further opportunity for examining the place of moral education to distinguish between the baseness of slavery and the benefits of servitude by setting up an illustrative contrast between Mr. Barlow’s and Tom’s plantation stewardship. Even before Tom is banished from the Barlow plantation, the narrator describes how “the kindness of [Tom’s] behaviour to the servants, his humanity and his consideration of the Negroes, and their families, gained him all their loves; and, in short, he and his Fanny were become blessings not only to their own, but all the surrounding plantations” (69). Conversely, “no body loved Barlow, but ev’ry body feared him” (69). Indeed, the life-saving medical attention which Tom receives after his violent assault by Barlow is itself an effect of the loyalty of the faithful slave Squanto, who places the well-being of the kindly Tom over the will of his violent master. After nearly being killed by Barlow, Tom is banished to an even more remote plantation, where he is compelled by threat of violence to oversee slave labor more profitably. While Tom is forced to live “in drudgery the remainder of his life” as a slave driver (79), the novel uses the opportunity to put theories of learned sociability into action by having Tom implement a scheme of slave amelioration. Principally,

By his sweet treatment of the Negroes, he gained their good-will, and shewed that kindness and clemency to those miserable creatures will make them more serviceable than cruelty and brutality; for, in the first fortnight, he had more tobacco hoed and housed, and more work of every sort completed, than was ever seen on the plantation before. (81)

The entire episode that follows offers an object lesson in the proper forms of social governance, contrasting Tom’s humane and “profitable” management of the estate with Barlow’s tyrannical and violent overlordship.
Of course, the “ethical” underpinning of this amelioration episode can be fairly called into question by its seemingly instrumental concern with “serviceability” and the privileging of surplus gains over sentiment. The tension here only thickens when, as Tom takes his final leave of Barlow’s service, he offers a parting “piece of advice that may be of service to you—if you use your servants and dependents with kindness, your work will be done cheerfully, and you’ll gain as many friends as you purchase; on the contrary, you’ll have as many friends as you purchase; on the contrary, you’ll have as many enemies… [who] will take all opportunities to spoil and destroy” (91). Although Tom’s final warning foreshadows the dramatic conclusion of the novel, the alterative prospect of “purchased” friends seems rather bereft of any true sentiment independent of economic interests. As George Boulukos notes, “the contrast between the bland optimism of the word “friends” and the inhumanity of “purchase” captures the contradictions of the ameliorationist position. One cannot reasonably expect to keep people as chattel slaves, to conceive of them as mere “creatures,” and yet to accepted by them as a “friend”… Nonetheless, ameliorationist novels expect nothing else.” According to Boulukos, such ameliorationist mystifications are part of the larger pattern by which Anderson, “rather than wishing to transform slavery radically… wishes to make plantation life more pleasant for the slaves and more profitable for the master.”

Yet the contrast between slavery and servitude can only be said to lack an underlying transformative difference if (and only if) we import into the novel an alternative ideal of sovereign subjectivity and individual freedom—yet such ideals are conspicuously absent from the entire moral and pedagogical imaginary of the novel. In fact, the “serviceability” of the humanely managed plantation cannot be disentangled from the broader ideal of service and servitude that powerfully animates the social and domestic relations between all creatures—not just racially marked ones. For instance, after Tom is sold by Barlow to the Indian trader Matthewson, he continues to universalize the lessons of learned sociability by applying them to the relation with his new master: “Already you have inspired me with gratitude, which is a principle that cannot fail of making me faithful—I am content to leave that tyrant [looking fiercely at Barlow], who does not understand

how to use a *fellow-creature*” (91, italics added). True to form, the narrative quickly transforms the social relationship between master and slave into a quasi-familial friendship, as the master Matthewson also proves himself every bit as dutiful a servant to his newly purchased friend, Tom. When Tom is later manumitted and put into a position of trust and mutually beneficial service by Matthewson, he completes his transformation into a grateful slave by remarking, “I looked upon you as my father, when you first interposed between me and Barlow’s fury—I loved you without knowing why—but here I vow, that if the most respectful duty—the humblest attendance—the exactest fidelity, can at all make me worthy of your favours—it shall be my study night and day to deserve them… I am as happy this moment, as if I had recovered my real parents!” (93).

When considered from the universalist vantage point of a culture of service, it is hardly surprising that moral sentiments promote personal interests in matters of plantation governance: according to the novel’s moral imaginary, servitude is always based on mutual duty, and mutual duty on reciprocal gains. The assumption, then, that a “disguised” set of self-interested economic motives somehow negates the moral and sentimental values of the novel overlooks the far more complex relationship between social duty and personal benefit in the sentimental novel. If anything, it is the vicious planter who insists upon the non-self-identity of the moral and economic. Barlow, would, for instance, knowingly risk monetary gains in the long term by selling Tom, his profitable overseer, to Matthewson; Barlow’s short-sighted and anti-social passions circumvent economic motives in ways that the sentimental outlook does not. Yet the point hardly matters: economic interests are always secondary to the maintenance of a strongly formed web of interpersonal bonds in the novel’s social imaginary. At virtually every turn, the narrative promotes an ideal of servitude as the needle that stitches together the constituent threads of the social fabric, regardless of whether these threads consist of horizontal and vertical power relations. This is how *Millennium Hall*’s Miss Mancel can amend “slaves” into “friends,” and why Tom can “reasonably expect” they can be had by purchase as by any other way. According to both works, it is, instead, *unreasonable* to expect a social state outside of service—the only available social configurations are
between an ideal state of friendship versus one that, in Scott’s words, “might more properly be compared to that state of war.”

Following Tom’s departure from Maryland, the novel uses Fanny’s narrative to explore the collapse of servitude and the veritable state of war into which the slave plantation has sunk without Tom’s ameliorative influence. In doing so, the narrative reinforces its central ethical proposition that a service culture—not a specifically British or (white) Euro-American culture—marks the antithesis of savagery. Indeed, the frequent descriptions of the planters as “inhuman,” “barbarous,” and “devilish,” (e.g., 75-9) and their frequent comparisons to violent “savages” (e.g., 158, 167) only underscores their abject difference from the novel’s actual non-Euro-Americans who, like the Creek chief Calcathouy and the African slave Squanto, embody the novel’s central moral and sentimental virtues of humanity.

Even more than the main narrative of Tom’s kidnapping and arrival, Fanny’s subplot reveals how the unregenerate condition of the planters’ world is manifested by their savage treatment of both their domestic and literal slaves. After Fanny witnesses young Carter and his sister’s particularly gruesome treatment of their enslaved workers, Fanny adopts the rhetoric of Christian captivity and the so-called black legends of the Spanish conquistadors to denounce their savagery: “In fine, all the tortures that we have read are pratis’d in Barbary to Christian slaves, all the cruel inquisitions of Spain and Portugal, act in their prisons and dungeons, were outdone by these two monsters, which at the same time it render’d them fear’d, nurs’d up a spirit of hatred and revenge, in the breasts of the slaves” (158). As discussed in the previous chapter, the black legends of Catholic brutality provide an important representational structure for articulating notions of alterity rooted more in ethical rather than strictly cultural parameters: As Mr. Anderson itself demonstrates, the trope is easily unfastened from its original cultural referent and repurposed against any group that participates in anti-social violence. In the case of the outlandish planters, the Hobbesian destruction of communal bonds by violent slavemastery extends beyond the social world of plantation labour to the domestic milieu as well: at virtually every turn, the text draws an insistent parallel between the plight of
Fanny and the other “slaves” on the plantation (just as the narrative had done earlier in the case of Tom). Prior to his departure, Tom predicts that Fanny will also soon be no better off than he was as a plantation slave; later, Fanny herself indicts the “tyrannical usage” (157) of the slaves on the Carter plantation as coextensive with their attempts to coerce her into marriage, and she comes to view the sympathetic slave Squanto especially “in the light of a fellow sufferer” (165). Barlow’s repeated denunciation of Fanny as his “property” ensures that her commodification in the marriage market echoes the bondage of the plantation workers. By the novel’s climactic insurrection, the twin enslavement plots come to form a single confluence: in Fanny’s own words, she cannot tell the story of her forced marriage without revealing the substance of racial terror in the plantation—the two narratives have a “miraculous and intimate connection” (165).

If slavery is the primary characteristic of the unregenerate Hobbesian world, its root cause remains steadfastly in the miseducation of both master and slave, a mental corruption which results in the alienation of the affective bonds and relative duties by which a state of “friendship” is defined. When Tom, for instance, opines that Fanny will be sacrificed to one “whose mind is low and mean… who shall embrace [her] in common with the loathsome slaves he is master of” (73), his indictment gestures toward the mutually corruptive influence of master and slave when both are immersed in the mental torpor and moral degeneracy of the unreformed plantation, sharply contrasting the sentimental and mutually salutary connections between the virtuous characters like Fanny and Squanto. But the complex relationship between miseducation and enslavement is perhaps most dramatically underlined during Fanny’s “antislavery” harangue during her captivity, when she relies upon her own political education to reason with her ignorant and tyrannical father against his depredations against her autonomy. She denounces his attempts to “sacrifice my present and eternal peace and happiness to gratify the vanity of one person, or the pride and way-ward inclination of another” in a manner which transgresses the natural obligations of both “reason and religion” (153-4). Fanny is undoubtedly drawing upon her and Tom’s extensive reading in Locke to protest the denial of her free will (much as Tom did earlier), but this fact does not necessarily confirm Matthew Mason’s assertion that Locke is being used to isolate white slavery
from a proslavery argument.\textsuperscript{40} Even if one were to accept Mason’s characterization of Locke’s political philosophy as strategically distancing the problem of Atlantic chattel slavery from considerations of the illegitimacy of political tyranny, such an assertion still overlooks how the ultimate aim of the novel’s Lockean critique of slavery—both white and black—remains rooted in the cultivation of servitude and the forging of sociable links. Just as Tom’s notions of “freedom” are tantamount to a capacity for voluntary servitude (at one point, he “rave[s] for \textit{Fanny}’s chains,/ With gladsome, willing mind I bear [83]), so too does Fanny frame her objections to marrying Carter in terms of a willingness to serve rather than an adherence to self-will \textit{qua} personal agency: “My dear father… I have ever, to the best of my remembrance, behav’d with duty and reverence to you, and cannot yet bear the thought of parting with my parents… let me still live with you, watch your desires, and obey your commands, with ready attendance, and let me not be forc’d to give my hand, where I can never surrender my heart” (153). The emphasis on service and duty certainly bristles against modern notions of political emancipation. If anything, these ideals share more in common with the thickly interdependent social field that comprises the scenes of Locke’s pedagogy rather than the independent subjects of his political philosophy. After all, the argument that Lockean political theory furnishes a conceptual platform to protest political tyranny while defending racialized slavery is generally made to rest upon his notions of possessive individualism and of a sovereign personhood based on the claim of property rights—rights which may be protected in the context of slaveholding but which are not extended to the “legitimately” enslaved, who, by definition, have lost their claim to personhood.\textsuperscript{41} Fanny does not seek to exercise the personal agency upon which companionate love is based any more than she seeks to claim for herself a share of her own capital as marriageable property. Indeed, in her protestations to her father that she would “go a virgin to the grave… depriv’d of every farthing that is in your power to bestow upon me” and “marry no other man breathing” without “your consent and liking” (154), she \textit{freely} relinquishes any such claims. Instead, she promulgates the novel’s central moral theories just as Tom had done with Matthewson earlier: their particular brand of “antislavery” does not explicitly serve the

\textsuperscript{40} Mason 216.

\textsuperscript{41} Overviews on the problem of slavery in the \textit{Second Treatise} are numerous. See, for instance, Nyquist 326-29.
exigencies of Lockean individualism (possessive or otherwise), but rather upholds the novel’s relentless utopian aspiration for social kinship—for love and friendship rooted in the *bindung* of servitude.

In this regard, the narrative of Fanny’s forced marriage, while clearly modeled on Richardson’s *Clarissa*, nevertheless moves further than the latter in refusing to compartmentalize domestic power and despotism from the wider questions of social, political and even colonial governance. If anything, the few mentions of New World slavery in Richardson’s novel almost always serve to reinforce a sense of their difference, as when Clarissa asks her mother if she is to be a “child or slave” or states her ironic preference to be a “slave to the Indies” rather than be forced into marriage with an unworthy man.  Kimber’s novel would hardly be the last to take up *Clarissa’s* leading suggestion to consider domestic tyranny at home in comparison to African slavery in the colonies—indeed, it would become a mainstay of abolitionist-inflected didacticism well into the nineteenth century. Yet *Mr. Anderson* is remarkable for the way in which it draws the analogy into more literal terms, weaving colonial slavery into the plot in order to form the central allegory of the text. When, for instance, Fanny blames her father’s moral transgressions on his mental deficiencies (154) and points to Carter’s heedlessness of his own father as evidence of his lack of a proper education—his instruction in slavery and nothing else (160)—she cleverly denounces the two slaveholders as lacking the very virtues which she and her faithful slave Squanto possess: the capacity to serve another. Fanny’s refusal to rebel against parental authority thus underscores the endless paradoxical slippage between liberty and license at the heart of the ameliorationist narrative. Her virtuous refusal to *take freedom*—to claim the Lockean individual’s sovereign rights—only more potently underscores her father’s depravity in *taking freedoms*—his refusal to adhere within the constraints of society, obligation, rational love, and relative duty.

42 Richardson VI.145.
43 See, for instance, my study of this confluence in Susanna Strickland Moodie’s novella *Richard Redpath* and in the slave narrative of Mary Prince.
Recalling *Clarissa* once more in this regard, *Mr. Anderson’s* most potent instance of despotic licentiousness is illustrated by the errant father’s “curse” upon his daughter for her perceived disobedience. In the earlier novel, James Harlowe’s cursing of Clarissa is the capstone to the downfall of the eponymous heroine, whose every fatal “misstep,” the novel suggests, is a tragic but inevitable consequence of her father’s vicious self-interest. Miss Howe reinforces this reading when she asserts that Harlowe’s curse is a “diabolical” usurpation of God’s prerogative to cast judgment and damn the unrighteous.\(^4^4\) Much as Clarissa’s plight is predetermined—damned, so to speak, by the lack of alternatives afforded her by her father’s unrelenting pursuit of his own interests—so too do the portentous curses which Barlow delivers upon Fanny foreshadow her (attempted) rape and destruction: “[my father] soon return’d me a hundred curses, and the most bitter oaths that I should marry whether I would or no, [even] if he was sure of my death the minute after, and that I should never look upon my mother or home again, till he had seen it perform’d” (154). Cast in terms of domestic—even natal—alienation from home and family, the “enslaving” curse immediately precedes banishment to the plantation of the Carters, who frequently curse their own slaves and whose violence will be extended to Fanny via young Carter’s intended sexual violence upon her.

Here, amidst the graphic scenes of racial and sexual subjection, we discover the American landscape in its most unregenerate, most Hobbesian form—a fully abject site of “there” according to the logic of the descent narrative. The plantation, the faithful Squanto warns her, is a veritable “hell” on earth (164). Yet it is also here—not England—that the descent narrative reverses course.

3.2.3. Coming back home

The plantation from which Tom is banished (and in which Fanny Barlow is left behind) is undeniably a site of pathological social relations—both within the master’s family and with his extended household of servants, dependents, and slaves. Yet when Tom comes back to the plantation from his itinerant adventures across North America and Europe, the entire situation is reversed: upon his return, Tom is reunited with his love, Fanny, who

\(^{44}\) Richardson VIII.L54.
reveals that her father and the novel’s other vicious slaveholders, the Carters, are all dead; no longer are she, her mother, and the slaves subject to their violent and tyrannical rule. With the restoration of Tom to his loving adoptive family and the revelation of the felicitous punishments which fate had in store for the novel’s principal villains, the chronological narrative has effectively ended. Chronologically speaking, nothing else happens in the narrative. From this point forward, all that is left is approximately one page’s worth of description appended to the end of the novel describing the family’s final voyage to England—the putatively all-important return “back” according to the logic of the there-and-back narrative.

Yet the actual narrative itself is far from over. A full one quarter of the storytelling still remains between the reunion and the voyage back: an account of the reversal of all of the plantation’s misfortunes that is delivered in retrospective narration by Fanny. *Mr. Anderson* is, of course, a novel that uses nested first-person subnarratives to a remarkable degree, even by the standards of the eighteenth-century fiction. And yet, as is common with this tradition, the bulk of these sundry flashbacks provide interesting background information or minor sub-plots for both the hero and the reader to consider, deepening their engagement with the novel’s sentimental didacticism. By any standard, however, the unfolding of the *entire* main plot retrospectively is remarkable. How might we account for the odd temporality in which the novel reaches its conclusion, which is at once concluded with the longed-for reunion yet nowhere near being over at the same time?

Let us consider, for the moment, that in order to make sense of the rather off-kilter chronology of the conclusion, we might do well to consider the narrative’s chronological end—that is, the decisive reunion that elicits Fanny’s retrospective narration shortly before they sail to England—as a sort of imagined utopian *future* point within the overall structure of the narrative. In other words, the flashback narrative that concludes the novel is a sort of *leading along* of the reader on a tragicomic journey from a present-day moment of peril and uncertainty to a future of ultimate social restoration. This however begs the question, why should the dimension of time—as the *process* of reform—be
regarded as having a greater role in understanding the narrative’s final movements than the physical relocation back to Britain itself? The answer lies within the ethos of Protestant millennialism that unmistakably, if faintly, suffuses the entire novel.

Typically, scholarship on the socio-religious contexts of the Georgian era tends to emphasize a progressive and far-reaching decrease of the eschatological zeal that had crested, by contrast, in the hegemony of seventeenth-century Puritanism. Indirectly, however millenarian fantasies continued to underlie Protestant didacticism well into the Georgian era, albeit in the softened form of postmillennial optimism and an endless striving towards perfection through personal and public works. Gone, seemingly, were the radical and even violent exhortations to the believer to recreate Zion on Earth through direct action, replaced by the far more indirect and Pietistic strictures that sought to reform everyday life via submission to the workings of the providential order, either through the reform of the individual self or of those aspects of society which obstructed the social and spiritual progress of the temporal world (this ethos, of course, is the “millennium” at the core of Scott’s vision in Millenium Hall).45

As a didactic author, Kimber was, of course, steeped in these reformist traditions. Yet, in several important respects, his religiosity was also more resonant with the radical eschatology of the seventeenth-century dissenters. Like Defoe’s Family Instructor, the Kimber family’s own pedagogical worldview was also borne out of the interminable “schismatic” controversies that surrounded nonconformist education throughout the long eighteenth century. Around the time of Edward’s birth in 1719, his father, Isaac Kimber, was finishing his training for the General Baptist ministry at London’s Moorfields Academy, which had recently begun operation as a school for the children of religious dissenters (Edward himself studied there when his father Isaac later became employed as head tutor at the Academy prior to the closing of the Academy in 1736).46 Not only had his Isaac been an ardent Baptist minister, but Edward himself continued the family practice of ministering through powerful Christian exhortations to repentance through the

45 Schwarz; For Scott, see Kelly 29-30.
46 Gordon.
print business that he inherited from his father (who had gradually traded preaching for the more lucrative professions of journalism and print throughout the 1720s). Just a few years before he published *Mr. Anderson*, for instance, Edward Kimber authored and printed a strongly eschatological pamphlet entitled *A Letter from a Citizen of London to his Fellow Citizens, and Through Them, to the people of England in General, Occasioned by the late Earthquakes* (1750). As the title implies, the pamphlet takes as its occasion the powerful earthquakes which hit London in February and March of that year. In it, Kimber interprets the quakes as powerful signs of God’s displeasure with the city and its inhabitants.

The few studies of Kimber that have noted the radical nonconformist moralizing of his journalism have distanced these elements from his known corpus of fiction, despite the explicitly moralistic and didactic objectives of his fiction in every instance. While Mason and Mason admit the *Letter* reveals “just how thoroughly his worldview had been colored by his Baptist heritage,” they nonetheless assert that its “apocalyptic visions, pronounced anti-Catholicism, and lamentations over the moral decay of society” present a marked departure from the authorial tone of his novels, in which Kimber instead “comes across as a dedicated but moderate Christian, rarely showing any signs of religious zealotry.”

Yet the *Letter* is insightful for the extent to which it illustrates how *Mr. Anderson* might indeed be coloured by Kimber’s larger preoccupation with temporal and narratological mechanics of end-time.

In the *Letter*, Kimber warns that unless the city purifies itself of its manifold social vices and moral corruptions, then so too will London join the pantheon of Biblical cities that God has smitten in righteous retribution. In terms of narrativizing tendencies, what is essential here is Kimber’s rendering of social reform as the millennial transformation of the present. Contemporary British society, Kimber declares, is comprised of little more than a litany of various forms of abject moral decay—a nation rife with the fashionable vices of swearing, gambling, pornography, adultery, irreligion, licentious printing, theatre-going, and a whole host of other forms of degeneracy (*Letter* 10-18). In a

---

47 Mason & Mason 14-15.
representational stroke of cultural relativism that will later be employed *ad nauseum* in *Mr. Anderson*, Kimber’s *Letter* frames the kingdom as having degenerated below even the most savage nations, which possess greater moral integrity by contrast: “it would puzzle the Search of a Christian, in this Country, to know where true [and undefiled] Religion was to be found… it has been, almost, totally lost amongst us. The worst and most barbarous Nations have paid greater Regard to Writings they erroneously hold as Divine, than we have to the undoubted and authentic Doctrines of the Lord of Life and of Salvation” (9). Ultimately, the accumulation of vice and folly in Britain threatens to reverse the progress of the Reformation itself, plunging the nation headlong into mental slavery by “taking hold of the weak and wicked” and “terrify[ing] them with Ideas of what may betide them hereafter” (25). Drawing upon the so-called black legends of Catholicism to render the fast-approaching horrors of that “most cruel and bloody religion” (25), the *Letter* affirms the mutually reinforcing interplay of Hobbesian anti-social relations and mental slavery that are explored in his novels, especially in the plantations of *Mr. Anderson*.

In light of the radical evangelical worldview, the problem with a “there-and-back” (or any other culturalist) approach is that it underestimates the degree to which Kimber accepts the radical Protestant premise that the entire physical world is fundamentally in a postlapsarian state of full depravity. Such a universalizing first principle hardly lends itself to acts of imaginitive *worlding*, which are instead premised on the implicit valorization of *particular* racial, national, or imperial supremacies against an abject other. We have already seen how the novel encourages the reader to encounter various forms of global differences only to *unworld* them. Accordingly, no single “other” culture—whether French, Amerindian, African, or white Creole—is presented as inherently savage or corrupt, but rather each is largely comprised of detestable figures who sharply contrast morally laudable (if numerically marginal) representatives within the same cultural group. Likewise, *Mr. Anderson* also passes such judgment on the British metropole itself, which the narrative presents *ab ovo* as a constitutionally perverse land that is coextensive with—not contrasted by—the Hobbesian savagery of (white) colonial civilization.
In this regard, Mr. Anderson bears all the traces of the Letter’s own representational logic of place. Both texts evidence a radical Protestant reformism that frames the utopic as a truly impossible place—a true no-where—within the fallen world, but both also do so only to force a greater emphasis on the uchronic as an alternative possibility. The use of the term “uchronia” is anachronistic, having developed in relation to the proliferation of counterfactual and alternate histories following its coinage in 1876 by the French novelist Charles Renouvier. Yet the concept itself—identifying a mythical past golden-age or hypothetically possible perfect future—was foundational to the Protestant reformation and its powerful nostalgia for the primitive church and eventual regeneration in the future. This is especially true of the Reformation context in early modern Britain, where, to give one potent example, virtually all of the internecine religious and political conflicts deployed some rhetorical variation of the Norman yoke—the idea that the errant contemporary world can only be reformed by striving to more nearly replicate the perfect Anglo-Saxon culture that fell captive to the Gallic influences of the Norman invasion. Such uchronic undercurrents are even more manifest in eighteenth-century didacticism, which was fundamentally predicated on a futurist repudiation of the present. Even at the close of the century, Mary Wollstonecraft, one of the period’s most stridently reform-minded progressives, could comfortably frame her reformism by noting that “Rousseau exerts himself to prove, that all WAS right originally: a crowd of authors that all IS now right: and I, that all WILL BE right.” In concentrating their efforts on the temporal world-to-come over the spiritual afterlife, the reformist futurism of late-Georgian progressives reflects only a further secularized hypostatization of Protestant postmillennialism. In Kimber’s Letter, however, the ascesis of reform is more explicitly associated with future progress through the guidance of divine providence. Moreover, the link between reform and futurity is buttressed by the promise that the only other future available to unregenerate present—the total social annihilation that will inevitably result from contemporary social disorder—is instead no future at all.

48 On “Uchronia,” see: Portelli.
49 Wollstonecraft 17.
50 In marked contrast, a highly stimulating contemporary body of thought on “queer” temporalities has asserted the rejection of futurity as the remedy for modern social alienation rather than its cause (see, for instance,
“Heads and Rulers of Families” as well as the “Legislators and States,” Kimber warns that the “Fruits of the rising Generation” will grow into “a Race of unformed Beings, fit for no Trust or Office in the State, and perverted to every commendable, useful, and sociable Aim of Life.” The consummate didactic moralist, Kimber continues blurring the lines between the political and domestic through his exhortations to be “careful in the Education and Conduct of your Children, and those committed to your Charge” and to provide regenerative moral patterns for the subjected to follow, since “[w]hat are we to expect from the just Vengeance of Heaven, if the next Generation should appear in its Eyes to be growing like unto this” but total annihilation, like the smitten Biblical cities of yore. (26).

It is this threat of the end of history—of total social demise—that is augured by the novel’s depiction of the slave plantation as either a potential site of both violent destruction or of ultimate social regeneration. As the novel’s emblematic daughter of the New World—Fanny is one among a group of virtuous American women that includes her creole mother (“a woman of the best descent in Maryland” [57]) and the indigenous Taloufa (a woman “[c]harming to the eyes of any Indian, nay, of any European” [98]), who together represent the imperiled future of the country as a whole. As previously mentioned, her narrative heavy-handedly underscores the analogous link between herself and the chattel slave that is continually implied throughout the novel. In the account of the insurrection she offers, she describes how she and her mother are tricked by her father Barlow, who sends her away to the nearby plantation of the Colonial Carter, where he has plotted for her to be raped by Carter and then forced to marry him. Indeed, even before she can give Tom an account of this history, she declares she must first “make a small digression from my own affairs to another subject, which you’ll soon find will have an intimate and miraculous connexion with them” (169). The substance this “digression”—an overview of social relations between masters and slaves on the Carter plantation—and its intimate “connexion” to the narrative of her own bondage are central to the novel’s logic of the reform and regeneration of the fallen world.

Edelman). However, my goal in this chapter is only to illustrate how and why an opposite proposition plagued eighteenth-century didactic and reform cultures, not to evaluate its merits as a liberationist ethic.
Fanny begins her account by noting young Carter’s mistaken belief that he possesses the most servile slave population in the land due to his excessively violent and tyrannous treatment of them. As her careful eye observes, the only thing discouraging the slaves to revolt is the fact of Carter’s not prohibiting them from marrying and establishing families amongst themselves. Although Fanny attributes this to Carter’s indifference and greed—his only concern is to secure a larger slave population—the “soft tye” of marriage has the unintended consequence of making the slaves more willing to endure the slaveholders’ mistreatment as a duty to their families rather than to the slaveholders (169-70). Barlow and the Carters, inept family men themselves, are wholly oblivious to this fact, which reinforces the central moral lesson of the book: kindness begets gratitude, and gratitude begets love and loyalty. In other words, it is not their social death (in Patterson’s terms) that ensures the slaves’ fidelity, but rather their wish to avoid becoming natally alienated and thus temporally dispossessed. In other words, the enslaved only begrudgingly obey in order to secure the few social bonds that they have been able to forge despite the perpetual state of war they inhabit as the subjects of planter brutality.

The emphasis on domesticity and kinship, moreover, is meant to keep at the forefront the “intimate connexion” between the slaves and Fanny—not only are their respective plights intertwined and reflect back upon each other, but she quite literally looks upon the slaves “in the light of fellow sufferers” under a shared yoke of tyrannical slavemastery (165). Lacking this kinship with the African, the imperious Carters do not understand that their slaves have carved a small and secret place for themselves in voluntary servitude despite their slavery. They obey because they ultimately choose to submit, not because the choice has been taken away from them. It is, ironically, the same underlying principle that motivates Fanny in voluntarily pledging to her parents that she will never marry Tom and will instead live with them forever as their unwed daughter rather than marry young Carter. In both cases, the prospect of some sense of social community, however unsatisfactory, stands in marked contrast to certain social death. In both cases, “voluntary” obedience, however precarious, subtly instantiates the novel’s underlying ethical and sentimental distinction of ideal servitude (i.e., a state of social
mutualism and interdependence) from true enslavement (i.e., a state of social annihilation)—a distinction at the core of Sarah Scott’s own clarification between “slaves” and “friends.”

In contrast, the crucial element about the newly arrived “rebellious” Africans from the Gold Coast is that they do not have this choice to make. They have no outlet for their natural sociable sentiments, having been torn away from their own families and displaced from their own communities by slavetraders just as Tom was at the start of the novel. They have, literally, no one and nothing to serve: on the one hand, they lack the “soft ties” of marriage, a fact which Fanny further emphasizes by noting how the new Gold Coast contingent easily draws “the unmarried old ones to the same sense of the injuries they endur’d, and the schemes of revenge” (170). On the other hand, and just as critically, the slaveholders’ impolitic practices prevent the new slaves from redirecting their natural sociability toward them. The result, in Smithian terms, is that the unsocial passions of the slaveholders beget the same in their newly enslaved subjects, who meet brutality and unkindness with resentment and a spirit of vengeance. Fanny further emphasizes how the rule of kindness can regenerate social relations when she describes how she was abetted in an unsuccessful attempt to flee the plantation by Squanto, a Gold Coast African whose only difference from the others stems from the fact he was one of the few slaves who was able to establish a proper (and grateful) relation of interdependence with authority under Tom’s ameliorationist management. Thus, in affirming that the principal black representative of the sociability ideal hails from the same African nation as the insurrectionists, the novel pointedly ensures that social ethics rather than a racialist account are the principal determinant of virtuous and vicious character, whether it be Squanto’s “docibility” or the other West Africans’ “intractability.” This ethical imperative towards the strengthening of social bonds underlies the novel’s concern with the plantation as a Hobbesian realm of anti-sociality and slavery. The factious social dystopia of the Carters’ slave estate, pervaded by Smith’s “unsocial passions,” is the same corrupted social realm into which Fanny is involuntarily thrust, having increasingly grown to hate her planter father. Indeed, Fanny describes her entree into anti-sociability in terms of mental enslavement: the violence
perpetrated against her “extinguishes” her dutiful sentiments toward her father, whom she now views as her mortal enemy, a feeling which she describes in terms of kind of madness slowly overcoming her (171). This is especially compelling in terms of her earlier indictment of young Carter, whose ingratitude toward his own father coterminous with his violence toward the enslaved. Her own father, as a corrupt didactic authority, is tragically “miseducating” her, forcing her into an “insurrectionary” antagonism toward domestic authority and vitiating the sentimental virtues that distinguish her from the unfeeling planters.

As we have seen, Mr. Anderson mirrors domestic relations of power with broader social and political relations by continually asserting the analogous link between Fanny’s captivity and that of the unfree labourers. This fellowship is also crucial to understanding the resolution of Fanny’s narrative and the part played by Providence—the “watchful protection” that has preserved her from every snare (169). In fact, Fanny’s account of the insurrection merely confirms what is known at the outset—that the Carters are all dead, murdered at the hands of the rebellious slaves whom they brutalized. The conclusion thus renders the slave insurrection as a direct agent of a restorative and retributive Providence. Nor does the narrative, as some have suggested, “condemn” insurrection through the ambivalence by which it is eventually put down (namely, a militia guard pursues and kills many of the insurrectionists, even as sixty of them “gain of the fastness of mountains,” where these newly minted maroons “hold out against all the force of the two colonies” [176]). The novel’s ultimate reassertion of colonial order over the insurrection does not so much represent a return to the appropriate relations of slaveholding, but rather underscores the tragic consequences of the planters’ domestic and social misgovernment, both toward their families and toward their slaves.\footnote{Boulukos (2008).} Dying of a fever soon after the insurrection, Barlow is allowed to live long enough to atone for his mistakes and to repent of his treatment of Tom, his family, and the plantation slaves (177). And while Fanny disavows gratitude to insurrectionary slaves \textit{per se}, her very depiction of the struggle \textit{not} to feel grateful to them underscores the central moral: that violence is the only logical outcome of unjust treatment. In the end, Tom’s “humane”
management of the plantation is vindicated over the inhumanity and greed through which Barlow and the Carters rule their estates. The conclusion sees the American plantation regenerated into a place of a *home*—a tightly bound community of mutual servitude that is evident in both the new regime of social order of affection and mutual duty between masters and servants as well as in the language of service and duty which Tom uses toward his lover Fanny and his adoptive mother, Mrs. Barlow.

As previously mentioned, *Mr. Anderson* focuses the reader’s attention on the work of moral progress by employing the common eighteenth-century didactic strategy of the instructive comparison, contrasting the depiction of justly rewarded virtue (the moral exemplum) with justly punished vice (the cautionary tale). The result is an elaborate narrative—not of “there-and-back”—but of cause-and-effect. In terms of their eventual outcomes, the social relations of servitude and slavery form a kind of event horizon that determines, respectively, whether the world will bind together into an affective web of mutual obligation or will continue to sink into the alienation and factionalism of tyranny and insurrection.

In compelling the reader to reckon with the potential consequences of the unregenerate plantation—either as eventual regeneration (via Tom and Fanny) or as social annihilation (through Barlow and the Carters)—Fanny’s concluding narration dramatically evokes the movement of *time* as central to the work of moral progress and reform. Indeed, the Barlow women repeatedly draw attention to the future both through their forebodings about the looming dangers that await Fanny at the Carter estate and through their repeated evocations of the certainty of Providence as a redemptive force (“If any harm is intended my child,” Mrs. Barlow presages at one point, “God, who sees all things, will I hope… turn the machinations of our enemies upon their own heads” [152]). Yet the novel’s strange self-consciousness around movements in time are perhaps best evidenced by Fanny’s account of a dream which she has prior to leaving for the Carter estate and which she relates to Tom because of its seeming prophecy of both the violent perils and joyful resolution that await her. Fanny begins by describing how she dozes off only to find herself “transported into a wide, howling, savage desert, that extended farther than
my aching eyes could reach” (156). The desert, a potent symbol in the Puritan tradition for spiritual ascesis—the tests, snares, and hardships that both threaten and strengthen Christian faith and resolve—fundamentally manifests Fanny’s anxieties for the future as total alienation from the world. From the desert, she notices a verdant hill full of streaming brooks far off in the distance and spies at its summit a “gaily decorated” alcove spread with carpets. She presses forward with “utmost toil to reach its base,” when she is suddenly attacked by two tremendous lions ready to devour her. In an instant, however, she discovers her beloved Tommy, who slays the beasts and invites her to “come and enjoy, in yonder bower, all the charms of love and friendship” (157).

Because Fanny herself pointedly underscores the importance of the dream in the midst of her narrative, I want to spend a moment consider its significance and relation to the narrative as a whole. Specifically, I want to suggest that the dream encapsulates the very logic of the relation between space and time that underwrites the novel more generally. In it, the relationship between space and time is reordered such that shifts in time cause a movement in place, not the other way around. The fantasy-world of dream affords a quite literal subordination of the constraints imposed by geography to the exigencies of the narrative movement, which, like the novel generally, amounts to a story of social alienation and ultimate reintegration. Indeed, in Fanny’s relation, physical exodus from the desert seems virtually impossible—the “wide, howling, savage desart [extends] farther than my aching eyes could reach”—and the ground virtually dematerializes as she is set upon by the lions. As she is attempting to flee, the land itself moves to bring her nearer to destruction: “Lo! The whole sandy waste was moving like the waves of the ocean, by the impetuous wind, and the dreadful sea rolling to overwhelm me” (156).

Here, as in the narrative throughout, space remains unstable and contingent: its very physical nature derives from the story of social and spiritual progress that it contains. Put differently, the tale of spiritual progress determines the nature of geography, not the other way around. But if the logic of space is unfastened from reality, the movement of time provides a countervailing narrative coherency: though Fanny reaches the hill from the desert instantly, she does so “at length” and through pure “incredible labor;” and though

---

52 For the symbolism of the desert as a “lack” in the Christian tradition, see Gersdorf 16-17.
she perceives Tommy on the mountain, he is instantly in her arms—and “we ascended in a minute to the alcove” (156-7). Indeed, the seeming indistinctness of space that separates the barren wilderness and the luxuriantly fertile alcove only takes shape as marking the relative distance between Fanny’s initial despair at being separated from Tom to the “serene satisfaction overspread[ing her] soul” when they reunite.

Her inexpressible joy at finding herself reunited with Tom in the alcove causes her to wake and relate the dream to her faithful servant Martha, who agrees that that the dream is a “heavenly notice of relief from my pains, and of future happiness in your arms” (156-7). I want to end my analysis by suggesting that Fanny’s foreknowledge of the future in no way detracts from the tension of the impending events that threaten and menace her, but are fundamentally linked to the novel’s uchronic re-organization of the relation between space and time. Even in the midst of the most gothic portions of Fanny’s relation of the dangers which she faces following her prophetic dream—dangers that at one point plunge her into a suicidal despair (171)—the certainty of the future and the guiding hand of providence remain unmistakable throughout. The dangers she faces are as real as the certainty that she will triumph. Ultimately the novel realizes both possible prospects: the devastation of the obstinately unregenerate world and the regeneration afforded to those who remain committed to spiritual and social progress. The latter prospect affords the realization not of a utopia but a uchronia—an earthly Zion that assuredly “will be” only if the appropriate steps are taken and if, in Bunyan’s terms, deviations from the “straight and narrow path” of moral progress are amended (even Barlow briefly wins the “charms of love and friendship” through his death-bed repentance and final magnanimity towards his family and slaves).

Like Alfred and its notorious anthem “Rule Britannia,” Mr. Anderson revels in the future prospects that stand in marked contrast to the present. It proffers a vision of an alternative future to the one augured by the present world, which it understands as hurtling toward imminent collapse. Underwriting the temporal relation between the utopic future—or uchronia—and the certain self-destruction of the present is, of course, the radical Protestant dialectic between human agency and divine Providence. In this
respect, the Protestant quest for Zion through reform strongly resembles Israel Zangwill’s clarification of the role of national destiny in framing Jewish diasporic notions of redemption. The phrase “chosen people,” he argues, distorts the true nature of the biblical Israelites, who are in reality the “choosing people.” In contrast to the idea of nationalism as manifest destiny (which Zangwill traces, in part, to “Rule Britannia” and the early modern British worldview), the biblical notion of Zion implies a constant compact between God and his followers: the latter must hold up their end of the bargain—through obedience, faith, and resolve—in order to gain the dispensations assured to them by the former. Yet as Mr. Anderson so neatly illustrates, the redemptive journey home could be just as much a process and prospect in time for the radical Protestant imagination of Georgian Britain. In this regard, the scant paragraphs devoted to chronicling Tom and Fanny’s final return journey to Britain, where they unite with Tom’s loving birth parents, merely provides a capstone to Tom’s true return journey “back” home—to a newly regenerate America, a new New World.

3.3. Conclusion

A universalizing imagination—one that can so easily render an imaginative proximity between unregenerate England and its slaveholding colonies rather than dwell upon the obvious or assumed distances between them—is not explicitly obvious in the eschatological Letter that Kimber published following the earthquakes of 1750. Yet the very real power of an earthquake to quite literally unworld was certainly on the minds on radical millenarian polemicists of his father’s generation. In the 1690s, for instance, a spate of similarly eschatological pamphlets warned London readers to look to the recent powerful earthquakes in Jamaica as sure warning signs of God’s wrath toward England. As the nonconformist minister Thomas Doolittle wrote Earthquakes Explained and Improved (1693), “It is confest by some that write from Jamaica, that they were a very wicked People; great Swearers, Drunkards, Unclean, &c. and are there not many such in England, yea, in and about London?” (124). Doolittle first introduces the physical and cultural gulf separating England and the West Indies only to stage its undoing and invoke the universal corruption of a fallen world: between here and there, he notes, “Sin is the

53 Zangwill 42-3.
same, and God’s wrath is the same, and his power is the same, to punish one People, as well as another” (125). In fact, turning to England, Doolittle surveys a nation which has grown worse, ignoring the religious instructions of “God’s servants, the prophets and preachers,” and becoming a land of “miserable and sinful Slaves of Satan” (134-5). In Mr. Anderson, Kimber would extend such an imaginative unworlding by drawing upon the colonial slave society as a densely allegorical site to critique the manifold errors of the modern world. But he would also use the reformation of slave society via amelioration to paint an equally powerful vision of a future—a postmillennial uchronia—in which idealized forms of servitude stand in marked contrast to the social and spiritual alienations of the postlapsarian world. In this respect, Mr. Anderson’s voyage home depends upon attaining prospects that are distant in time more than it does upon traversing physical distances. Like the “unfinished reformation” underlying Defoe’s treatment of the New World, Kimber’s depiction of America offers a densely allegorical site for examining the British world in its present unregenerate state and its possible future state of regeneration. And as the next chapter illustrates, a powerful reform-minded Protestant imagination that linked the British and colonial worlds in universalizing terms continued to exert itself in late-Georgian didactic fiction. As a result of the continued influence of this representational tradition, the didactic imaginary of the period not only came into direct conflict with an emergent modern worldview—the more coherent nationalism and scientific racism of the late-eighteenth-century Atlantic world—but also increasingly registered this cognitive dissonance within fiction as well.
4. The “Malignant Demon” of Mental Slavery: Servitude, Slave Insurrection and Racial Thought in Late-Georgian Didactic and Juvenile Literature

4.1. Introduction
Maria Edgeworth’s didactic novel *Belinda* was met with widespread popularity, if not approval, upon its publication in 1801. In the face of criticism that her eponymous presented a defective “model of the female character,” Edgeworth felt defensive enough to keep the narrative intact when she published an amended second edition in 1802. Despite Edgeworth’s clear preference for the narrative in its original form, the early editions of the novel would be superseded by a substantially revised version that Edgeworth produced for Anna Letitia Barbauld’s *British Novelists* series in 1810—a groundbreaking literary venture that strongly helped to consolidate the place of the British novel in an emergent national literary tradition.¹ In this revised version, *Belinda* had undergone a significant transformation, and this was most apparent in the novel’s implicit attitude towards colonial persons and their relationship to the British metropole. Specifically, the new edition removed the possibility of romantic relationships between English women and creole men. These changes reflected Edgeworth’s reluctant capitulation to the dictates of her father, Richard Lowell Edgeworth, whom she claimed had “great delicacies and scruples of conscience about encouraging such marriages.”² Accordingly, the revised edition not only minimized the marriage prospect between *Belinda*’s English heroine and her would-be creole suitor, Mr. Vincent, but also erased the novel’s casual references to a marriage between Juba, a black West Indian servant, and an English country girl named Lucy. The result, as the critic Kathryn Kirkpatrick notes, suggests that “in order for *Belinda* to merit inclusion in a series defining the British novel, Edgeworth had to make her colonial characters less visible, less integrated socially

¹ Indeed, prior to Kathryn J. Kirkpatrick’s 1992 Oxford edition of *Belinda*, an accessible version of the original text had been largely available for nearly two centuries. For an overview of the publication history of *Belinda*, see Kirkpatrick xxvi–xxiii.
² Quoted in Kirkpatrick xxvii.
into English society. And she certainly had to banish that spectre of interracial marriage.”³

While the revised edition of Belinda undoubtedly gestures toward a complicit link between late-Georgian didactic fiction and forms of colonial discourse, too few critics have seriously questioned why this change needed to be made in the first place. Instead, critical attention has been overwhelmingly focused on the novel’s rendering of a very particular representation of national life, one that downplayed the complexities of Britain’s cultural, social and economic interdependence upon the West Indian sugar plantations. As such, the scholarly discourse on Belinda has attended to its status as colonial discourse, typically reading it alongside Edgeworth’s other important fiction of the West Indies, the short didactic narrative “The Grateful Negro” (1804), to explore its resonances with the various racist and ethnocentric ideologies that bolstered the late Georgian imperial project.⁴ Yet this critical preponderance on Belinda as colonial discourse overlooks the very originality of the original, taking at face value Edgeworth’s confession to Barbauld that “as I do not understand the subject, I trust to [my father’s] better judgment.”⁵ In reality, Edgeworth understood these subjects all too well. She was in fact one of the shrewdest observers and critics of colonial life in late eighteenth-century British fiction—a fact that is as evident in her two West Indian tales (both of which contain footnotes documenting her extensive research in historical and contemporary life in the Caribbean) as it is in the vaunted realism of her critical Anglo-Irish writings. Given the seemingly inexorable nature of racial and colonial ideology at century’s end and Edgeworth’s own interest in colonial matters generally, few have stopped to ponder how or why the original text’s “indelicacy” of marrying an African servant to an English country maid could have occurred in the first place.

Yet in its own way, the original text reveals as much about the colonial imaginary of the late Georgian era as the revision. As one of the few critics to seriously consider its underlying racial dynamics, Andrew McCann notes that

---
³ Kirkpatrick xxii.
⁴ For further discussion of this critical approach, see 3.3.3 below.
⁵ Quoted in Perera 17.
In [the original] *Belinda*, Juba does not just participate in a narrative of developing egalitarian sentiment, he also demonstrates that a former slave, mired in the fetishism of Afro-Caribbean culture, can be transformed into a subject capable of demonstrating the rationality and autonomy that apparently typify an enlightened culture. In a novel of domestic enlightenment, in which characters move inexorably towards the ideal of conjugal love and harmonious private space, Juba’s marriage implicitly establishes the universality of these ideals and their ability to mediate a community of equals comfortably beyond the effects of prejudice, power, and exploitation. Domestic enlightenment, in other words, takes on a genuinely world historical significance largely through the presence of Juba as an index of its ability to assimilate racial difference.

This chapter takes up McCann’s suggestive lead about the universalizing function of the African subject in the original narrative. Where McCann views Juba as emblematic of the “world historical significance” of domestic enlightenment, I consider the ways in which her African characters universalize a different enlightenment ideal that was also of profound interest to Georgian didacticism: the extrication of the mind from mental slavery. Specifically, I argue that the characters of Juba in *Belinda* and Caesar in Edgeworth’s “The Grateful Negro” offer key case studies in the amelioration of mental enslavement, understood as a universal problem of character, social, and civil formation. In this regard, Edgeworth’s texts can be situated in a historical moment when competing representational traditions conscripted the African in the service of their respective worldviews—the one rooted in a universalist Protestant fixation with mental slavery that purposefully transcended racial differences and the other bent on reinforcing racial difference itself. As fictions of slave insurrection, moreover, *Belinda* and “The Grateful Negro” also straddle two competing intellectual traditions that drew on the rebellious slave colony as key social landscapes to illustrate these respective worldviews.

Situating Edgeworth’s prose within these divergent worldviews offers some insight into Edgeworth’s perplexing, even misleading, claims regarding what she did and did not “understand” about racial difference and colonial slavery. To trace the two poles of the representational traditions surrounding the insurrectionary slave, we might usefully contrast the theories of Edward Long, an early and highly controversial proponent of

---

6 McCann 56.
7 For an important reading of the latter framework, see D. Scott.
racial thought, with the attitudes of those who rejected his quasi-scientific racism. In his three-volume *History of Jamaica* (1774), Long developed a “polygenetic” account of Africans as a separate and inferior race from Europeans. The grotesque racial calumnies he used to evidence his claims of innate African inferiority stood out even among the minority of people who had begun to adopt and promote the heterodox position of polygenism. Yet as Suman Seth has recently illustrated, Long’s anticipatory racialism can be understood in light of his own status as a West Indian slaveholder, and offered a “solution to the most pressing social problem of the sugar islands: slave insurrection.” In fact, Long’s self-contradictory polygenetic theories only attributed innate biological inferiority to African-born blacks, whom he deemed more likely to rebel than creole Africans—the result, he claimed, of biological (not environmental) factors. “The vulgar opinion in England,” he concludes, “confounds all the Blacks in one class, and supposes them equally prompt for rebellion; an opinion that is grossly erroneous.” It was instead “imported Africans” who were to be most feared.  

In marked contrast to Long were the many metropolitan writers who assiduously refused to use racial theories of human behaviour to account for the problem of colonial uprisings. For instance, in William Roscoe’s *Inquiry into the Causes of the Late Insurrection* (1792), a contemporary analysis of the massive slave insurrection that had broken out in French colony of Saint Domingue, a very different representational pole surrounding the black subject is evident. Taking stock of the commonplaces by which the West Indian planter class had denounced ameliorationism as tending to incite rather than obviate rebellion among enslaved Africans, Roscoe satirically asks whether “human crimes [have] their origin and causes in human affairs; or are they incited by some malignant demon, who possessing himself of that cup of affection, the human heart, pours out its contents, and fills it with poison?” Roscoe’s incredulous condemnation of the illusory “malignant demon” animating racialist thought would resonate in the treatments of slave insurrection in a great deal of contemporary didactic fiction. In section 2, I situate Edgeworth’s texts within this now-obscure tradition of juvenile and

---

8 Seth.
9 Long 444.
10 Seth.
didactic literature that, I argue, used slave insurrections to trace broadly ethical considerations rather than render narrowly racial ideologies. After surveying this tradition, I return to Edgeworth’s texts in section 3 in order to elaborate upon McGann’s insights about the African figure as a key exemplar of the universality of Enlightenment ideals in Edgeworth’s texts. I argue that, in these narratives, the West African slave religion of Obeah possesses a general and universal status that is the source of its pedagogical function in “The Grateful Negro” and Belinda, and I examine the ways in which these texts use so-called primitive fetishism to pursue a broadly Protestant and universal program of education and sociability. Specifically, I illustrate how Obeah and, by extension, slave insurrection provided the means through which these works engaged with Edgeworth’s broader pedagogical interest in the problem of mental slavery. In the final section, I examine how the revised edition of Belinda resonated with broader changes and conflicts occurring within late Georgian didacticism. This chapter thus seeks to complicate the common framing of the late Georgian period as the moment in which race emerged as a rapid ideological seachange, one that is passively reflected in the didactic fiction of the period.\textsuperscript{11} Didactic culture of the period illustrates the contested and chaotic process by which the norms of racialism gained ascendency during the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth centuries. And nowhere is the fraught nature of turn-of-century racialism more evident than in the literary treatments of colonial rebellion.

4.2. Slave insurrection in late-Georgian juvenile literature

Roscoe’s rhetorical question in the Inquiry—whether slave insurrections have “origins and causes in human affairs” or are they incited by some “malignant demon” that substitutes affection for poison—offers a key point of departure for a contemporary body of British moral and didactic narratives. With the exception of Edgeworth’s “Grateful Negro,” these works have been almost totally overlooked in the contemporary literature.

\textsuperscript{11} I agree with the historiographical tendency to view the Mansfield decision of 1776 and the American Revolution as important precipitators for the racial thought. However, I argue, as others have, that the relationship between these colonial effects and the adoption of racial attitudes in metropolitan Europe remains far from straightforward. See section 3.4 for an overview of this secondary literature.
on race, slavery, and romantic-era fiction.\textsuperscript{12} Yet bringing these works together as a corpus reveals the surprisingly widespread extent to which slave insurrections were used as a didactic motif in late Georgian didactic and juvenile literature. On the one hand, the topos of slave revolt clearly reflects the wider public awareness of and interest in colonial insurrections following the Haitian revolution, a uniquely world-historical event that would eventually establish the first free black republic in the Atlantic world in 1804 (the same year Edgeworth published “The Grateful Negro”).\textsuperscript{13} Yet on the other hand, slave insurrections also provided didactic fictions with a critical problem space—a vantage point from which to search after the origins and causes of all social, political, and moral conflicts. The echoes between the moral and ethical inquiries in these works of juvenile literature and those in Roscoe’s \textit{Inquiry} are hardly coincidental: in addition to being an outspoken abolitionist, Roscoe was himself, of course, an author of didactic literature and a theorist of educational reform.\textsuperscript{14} In this regard, his \textit{Inquiry} joins other contemporary didactic writings that broaden the representational and critical potential of slave insurrections—that extend the imaginative potential of these menacing and dystopian landscapes beyond the confines of an exclusively colonial discourse in order to expound upon the very nature the nature of enlightenment, education, sociability, and civil society.

While providing a shared topos, however, slave insurrections nevertheless could be engaged in a variety of different ways within Romantic-era didactic and juvenile fiction. Sometimes, as with Edgeworth’s \textit{Belinda}, the slave rebellion merely offered a minor plot detail or passing point of reference within the main narrative. Near the start of Mary Pilkington’s \textit{Emma Hamilton; or Human Vicissitudes} (1803), for instance, we discover that the eponymous heroine’s family loses their fortune after the “blacks rose upon the island and destroyed and burnt all [their] property there,” with no further mention made of the colonial context again in the narrative.\textsuperscript{15} Yet even when used in passing, slave revolts could offer significant opportunities to elaborate upon the moral and didactic

\begin{footnotes}
\item[12] The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century period witness a massive proliferation of literary treatments of race and slavery. For a good overview these works, see AA Markley.
\item[13] For the historical and cultural aftermath of the Haitian revolution throughout the Atlantic world, see Garraway.
\item[14] For an overview of Roscoe’s life and work, see A. Wilson.
\item[15] Pilkington 131.
\end{footnotes}
principles of a particular work. In Catharine Maria Sedgwick’s *The Sagacity of Dogs* (1828), a mother, while teaching her children about the tracking skills of bloodhounds, offers a rather startling aside about the Haitian revolution: “During this contest [between slaves and masters], the French trained bloodhounds to pursue and devour negroes. I will read you the description of this mode of training the dog, as it is given in the Encyclopedia.”16 The text then reproduces the full passage of this encyclopedia article, replete with a long and gruesome description of the vicious dogs “tearing the babe from the breast of its mother” and “returning with their jaws drenched in gore”17 The inclusion of such an extreme scene of graphic racial violence in children’s literature is remarkable even by the standards of the early nineteenth century, a time when the conventions of the genre were still very much in flux.18 And although the “children were loud in their expressions of indignation at these base cruelties,” the passage seems most remarkable for reflecting a certain matter-of-factness about colonial violence and conflict in juvenile literature.19

Beyond such fleeting considerations, however, slave insurrections could also significantly structure the plot of the narrative and, as with Edgeworth’s “Grateful Negro,” prove a central concern within the story itself. Among these tales, insurrections not only afforded a critical opportunity to explore and critique racialized assumptions about the black character, they provided an especially salient instance of the general didactic principles informing the fiction as a whole. In Mary Belson Elliot’s *The Adventures of Thomas Two-Shoes* (1818), an update and sequel to John Newbery’s extraordinarily popular children’s story *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes* (1765), the slave insurrection is employed as a central plot device not once, but twice, within the episodic adventure narrative. To briefly summarize, the young English protagonist of *Thomas Two-Shoes* suffers a series of misfortunes and eventually finds himself employed to a kindly ship’s captain en route to Jamaica. Soon after their arrival, the captain dies of yellow fever, and Tommy is forced into the service of a more brutal captain who

---

16 Sedgwick 158
17 158-9.
18 Grenby 3-18.
19 159. On Sedgwick’s own ambivalence on issues of slavery and abolitionism, see Ryan.
violently mistreats him. After a time, he meets and befriends a man named “Black George”—a kindly free black Jamaican who assists the child after his master abandons him in Kingston. Black George takes the boy to live with him and his family in their cabin, which causes the grateful child to reflect how the “same powerful Being had formed us all, and, to the heart of a black man, had given a portion of humanity denied to the white one, my late master” (17). After living with the family awhile, Tommy discovers that George “had a brother, who formed one of a wretched set of beings—slaves to a great planter in the island.” George frequently visits this brother, Anthony, to comfort him in his afflictions, but when George does not return home one evening, Tommy ventures out to the plantation to look for him. Along the way, the boy stumbles upon a clandestine meeting of a “large body of negroes” and overhears their discourse, “the object of which was the completion of a plan, long formed, for massacring all the whites in the island: [and] at the head of the ringleaders was Antony, the brother of my friend.” Tommy also perceives his friend George among the group, noting “his proposals were more humane than those of the others—he was for saving many individuals; but his companions would not hear him out, insisting on general destruction, even to the white boy he had so long fostered” (30-1). The threat causes Tommy to fall into a swoon and reveal his hiding place. George intervenes to prevent the boy from being murdered, but is forced to leave Tommy with the rebels, extracting “a solemn promise from his brother that no harm should befall me” (31).

While in their custody, Tommy takes the opportunity to reflect how “ill usage and slavery had instigated them to such inhuman proceedings, and that many of them might have proved both tractable and humane, had they been treated more leniently” (32). These ethical considerations, in turn, prompt Tommy to reflect on the “savagery” of insurrectionists, albeit in religious rather than racial terms: “The spirit of revenge in a savage bosom is strong, and when not softened by religion, dreadful. Here I must observe, that George had been taught the principles of Christianity, and this, added to his naturally generous mind, tempered his revenge; and his heart pleaded strongly for many white persons who were mild masters, and whom he thought it criminal to destroy” (32). Eventually Tommy escapes and is rescued by an anti-insurrectionary militia. Though
Tommy reluctantly helps the troops capture Anthony and the other insurrectionists, he is also instrumental in protecting his benefactor George and the rest of his adoptive black family from any reprisals. Much later in the narrative, Tommy attempts to sail back to England, but is captured by “American privateers” bound for Africa on a slaving venture. Tommy is then sold as a slave in the Barbary Coast, where he stumbles upon and foils yet another slave revolt, this time against his African master, who subsequently allows him his freedom and assists him to return to England.

Just as Mary Belson Elliot had done before her, the juvenile author Mary Martha Sherwood also made use of slave rebellions to revise yet another classic children’s story, “Babes in the Wood,” into a modern didactic narrative. In Sherwood’s Babes in the Wood of the New World (1823), the two children find themselves lost in the forest following a massive slave uprising in Surinam. The English narrator, now grown up, relates the tale by recollecting the events that followed his mother’s death and his father re-marriage to a plantation mistress in Surinam. While still in England, his kindly aunts describe his father’s many slaves, “who had thick lips and woolly hair, and looked very different from white men,” but teach him that “though black, are of the same flesh and blood as white men, for God hath made all nations of one blood; and though for the most part dull and ignorant for want of education, yet possess the same natural feelings as white men” (242). They also warn him that, while in Surinam, “he should see some people behaving very cruelly to [slaves], but that they hoped I would try to show them every kindness in my power” (243). Upon his arrival, the young boy is indeed shocked by the cruelty and violence of his father and stepmother towards the black labourers on their estate. He also meets his young stepsister Catharine, who has inherited her mother’s passionate temperament and haughtiness towards the enslaved. After a year, the boy soon discovers that there are “rebel negroes” who “being unable to bear cruelties of their masters, had run away into the woods, where they lay concealed, coming out in bands from time to time, plundering the estates, and even murdering their inhabitants… and I could not help wondering why it did not make the masters more careful, and deter them from being so very cruel.” (247). One of the slaves of his father’s estate, having been cruelly and unjustly punished by the wicked stepmother, eventually runs away to join
these maroons, who soon attack the estate. Assisted by a young black slave named Quince whom he had befriended, the boy narrowly escapes death. With his little sister in tow, the boy hides in the forest, where he is further assisted by some of the other slaves whom he had treated kindly.

His deliverance from the murderous rebels prompts the boy “to reflect how wickedness is often punished in this world; and how any little right thing that we have been enabled to do, is sometimes rewarded beyond its deserts; and I was led to thank God for having helped me to treat my father’s slaves with kindness, by which I had been instrumental in saving the life of little Catharine” (251). These considerations lead him to reflect on the “poor negroes, and of the injustice and cruelty of white men to these poor creatures,” who, like anyone else, “are most inclined to revenge” when “they are unjustly treated” (252). After escaping further dangers during their sojourn in the wilderness, the children are eventually rescued by their father, who is led to them by the faithful Quince. Finding the children in a swoon and believing them to be dead, the affair proves transformative for the father: “All his offenses against the African race… presented themselves before his mind in long and terrible array, and he feared that the effects of divine retribution were then only beginning their awful operations” (256). Discovering them to be alive, however, the father experiences a profound conversion and repents of his past conduct toward his slaves. He later rebuilds the estate, which now “consists in a new generation of faithful and affectionate negroes, who love their old master, because they see in him a living example of those lively Christian principles, which he caused them to be taught to reverence in their early childhood” (258).

Like Thomas Two-Shoes, “Babes in the Wood of the New World” is strongly framed by ideas of Christian quietism. Yet Sherwood goes even further than Elliot in pointedly refusing to take the masters’ side against even the most “savage” (252) of the islands’ black rebels.20 Indeed, at one point, the text implies that death might have even been a suitable punishment for the protagonist’s sister, given her childish emulation of the

---

20 See Trumpener 231-2 for an interesting overview of the relationship colonial and religious themes throughout Sherwood’s writings more generally.
grown-ups’ imperious treatment of their slaves (251). Through its near-total validation of black-on-white violence in the colony, including a potential act of infanticide, the narrative dramatically circumscribes the true target of its religious condemnation: the fear, hatred and spirit of vengeance that can proliferate when domestic authorities remain heedless of the ethical lessons of the Gospel—when those who are tasked with governing the household estate compel, but do not return, duty and service. Both Elliot’s and Sherwood’s texts thus situate their anti-racist reflections within a framework of Christian morality, yet both also partly subordinate the religiosity of their texts to a more general ethical consideration of the breakdown of normative social relations. These texts thus straddle a generic line between propagandistic Christian tracts, which explicitly endorse the civilizing mission of non-Christians in the colonies, and narratives of amelioration, which primarily focus on clarifying the distinction between slavery—as a social state of Hobbesian conflict—and servitude—as a social state of mutual duty and interdependence. In other words, the texts balance the aim of Christianizing the colonial African against the aim of condemning the white “Christians” who betray the Protestant ethical imperative of creating a humane and socially harmonious world. The most “malignant demons,” they both suggest, are those who seek to hide their manifest depravity through racialist mystifications and ideologies of inherent black inferiority.

An even more direct fictional illustration of the principles of Roscoe’s Inquiry can be found in the anonymous juvenile narrative Clarissa Dormer; or, The Advantages of Good Instruction (1808). Published four years after Edgeworth’s “Grateful Negro,” the narrative takes an even more radical approach to linking the problems of general sociability and colonial governance than either Elliot’s or Sherwood’s (or, indeed, Edgeworth’s) texts. Born in an unnamed British West Indian settlement, Clarissa is a young Creole girl whose parents “were not black enough to be esteemed descendants of those unhappy beings whom perfidy or avarice brought into the hands of Europeans, not yet so fair as to pass for natives of our temperate clime” (3). However ambiguous their racial status, their character and temperament are perfectly clear: the Dormers were “born amid the tears and groans of their fellow creatures, and taught by example to tyrannize over the miserable Africans, they were callous to their sufferings and unmindful of the
barbarities inflicted upon them” (3). Clarissa, their only child, is over-attended by slaves who bend to her every whim, and thus, “can it be wondered at then, that, before she was five years of age, she was a tyrant?” (4). Eventually, a governess named Miss Melville is brought over from England to educate young Clarissa. Melville is described as a “young lady born to happier prospects, educated under the eyes of the most tender and indulgent, as well as the most accomplished parents.” Yet an “unjust executor” deprives her family of their fortune—losses that were severe but endured with a degree of composure that proved “reason, not passion, governed her mind” (6-7). The recruiting agent who hires Miss Melville cautions her that Clarissa “must not be corrected; and even if she strikes you, you must not complain.” At once Melville finds Clarissa to be that monstrous antithesis of normative Lockean pedagogy—the spoiled child-tyrant—yet she also discovers that Clarissa is “not destitute either of good nature or good sense” (8). Melville soon makes headway in the education of the child, who is initially averse to learning and prefers to spend her time in the company of the plantation slaves whose creole speech she has adopted. Despite this, Melville finds Clarissa less “irrational” than her mother, who continually spoils the child and interferes with her lessons. Clarissa eventually submits to the patient and persevering tutelage of her governess but still persists in many “bad habits and real errors,” of which lying is foremost. On one occasion, Clarissa steals a treasured family keepsake box from her governess to show to her mother. Distraught at discovering the box missing, Melville asks Clarissa and Mrs. Dormer if they have seen it. Both mother and child—embarrassed at having been caught in the act of snooping—lie about their knowledge of the box’s whereabouts. Overhearing this exchange and ignorant of the deception, a nearby slave named Dinah innocently tells Miss Melville that she’d seen the child carry it to her mother while Miss Melville was out. Miss Melville confronts Mrs. Dormer, who, doubly embarrassed at now having been caught in lie, falsely accuses the slave of lying. The ensuing melee reveals the all-important didactic contrast between Mrs. Dormer and Miss Melville as didactic examples and moral types on the plantation:

“Hold your tongue this instant, cried Mrs. Dormer [to Dinah], in a violent passion; “call the overseer; let him see Dinah flogged for an hour, and let it be done immediately.”

“For mercy’s sake, Madam, I entreat you, and beg as the greatest favor,
that you will not punish the poor creature,” said Miss Melville; “she meant not ill—she did not mean to offend—pray spare her, and let your anger fall upon me.”

“Upon you!” Exclaimed Mrs. Dormer; “I cannot flog you; but I have her in my power; and she shall be beat till I have pieces of flesh from her back.” (20-1)

After witnessing in horror the scene of Dinah gruesomely whipped till she “sunk beneath the lash, without exhibiting signs of life,” Miss Melville rebukes Clarissa in the presence of her mother:

“Shame on you, Clara! you know you took the box from my chamber, and carried it to your mamma’s; and yet you could see this unhappy girl beaten almost, if not quite to death, for declaring what she had seen—Where is your feeling? Where is your humanity?”

“A fig’s end for feeling and humanity too,” replied Mrs. Dormer; “what has feeling or humanity to do with slaves? We buy them for our use, we feed and clothe them, and we have a right to treat them as we please?”

“You have certainly no right to treat them with cruelty and injustice,” said Miss Melville.

“Cruelty and injustice!” exclaimed Mrs. Dormer; “I beg, Miss you won’t put such nonsense into the creatures’ heads; or they will mutiny, and perhaps murder us.”

“They would do neither, I am persuaded, were they well treated,” said Miss Melville. (22-3)

Recalling the ideological contrivances repudiated by Roscoe, Mrs. Dormer believes that her slaves are motivated by a kind of “malignant demon” that responds to just and humane treatment with rebellious ingratitude. In the face of Miss Melville’s continued remonstrance about the plantation mistress’s duty to her slaves, Mrs. Dormer summarily dismisses Miss Melville from her presence, unwilling to concede either the moral or pragmatic benefits of Melville’s ameliorationist sentiments. Unwavering, Miss Melville privately confronts the young Clarissa and underlines the central moral of the amelioration narrative: that justice and humanity require a dutiful submission by masters and mistresses equal to, perhaps even greater than, the duty owed them by their servants and slaves. These lessons make a “deep impression” upon the young child’s mind: “to the slaves, she became gentle and kind, and during the illness of Dinah, which was the consequence of her undeserved punishment, none attended her with more kindness than Clara, who endeavored, by every means in her power, to make her amends for her sufferings” (27-8). After her personal reformation, Clarissa “soon gained the esteem of
all of the slaves, and was so universally beloved, that there was not a person in the house, or plantation, but would have almost sacrificed their lives to serve her” (28).

By the early nineteenth century, the pat ameliorationist sentimentalism of *Clarissa Dormer* was hardly remarkable, yet the text nevertheless warrants a closer look in light of Roscoe’s earlier analysis of the relationship between sentiment and slave insurrection. In his *Inquiry*, Roscoe had used normative domestic and familial affections to illustrate the irrationality of racial thought as a theory of human sociability—an irrationality not refuted by a polygenetic denial of humanity to slaves since even “beasts” responded to humane treatment in a predictable manner. To illustrate his critique of planter ideology, which claimed that “kindness and compassion excite in the [slave’s] breast implacable and deadly hatred; but stripes, insults, and abuse, generate gratitude, affection, and inviolable attachment,” Roscoe fixed squarely on the scenes of the “white father fall[ing] victim to the unnatural rage of his mulatto son:”

However the Author of nature may have instilled affection into the breast of a parent, as the means of preserving the race from destruction, we must allow that the corresponding sentiment in the mind of the offspring, is merely the effect of a long continued course of care, partiality, and tenderness. Shall the harvest then rise up without feed? And where no fondness has been shown, shall filial attachments be expected? In a country where it is by no means unusual for the known children of the Planter to undergo all the hardships and ignominy of slavery, in common with the most degraded class of mortals, is it there we are to seek for instances of filial affection? (Roscoe 6-7)

By recasting colonial race relations as familial relations, Roscoe is of course dismissing basic racist assumptions about the very possibility of the *distinction* of races—assumptions that belie the common state of interracial families in the slave society. Yet Roscoe’s emphasis on the logic of filial attachments also serves to bolster his illustration of the “human” origins and causes of the “human” affair of slave insurrection—he draws an analogous link between filial relations to all social relations as connected by the same underlying logic, the same underlying principles of human motivation based on mutual gratitude and duty. So too does *Clarissa Dormer* employ the domestic analogy to similar ends. In her moral exhortations to Clarissa, Miss Melville declares that she is

…grieved to see how very lightly you think of my lessons, and how poor a compliment you pay my instructions. Be assured, that lying is a most dangerous
and detestable vice; and a liar is more to be dreaded than any other character. Locks, bolts, and bars may secure us from the thief; but what can secure us from the tongue of the liar? How many scandals are fabricated—how many families set together by the ears—how many parents have their hearts turned against their children, husbands weaned from their wives, brothers from their sisters, and the most intimate, firm and steady friendships broken by the tongue of a liar. (26-7).

Melville uses the context of familial estrangement and disaffection to enjoin Clarissa to think about the broader estrangements on the plantation—estrangements whose broken bonds will soon have fatal consequences for the Dormer estate. Echoing the representational practices of Defoe and Kimber earlier in the century, Clarissa Dormer joins a train of amelioration narratives in which servitude—understood as love, duty, and a kind of friendship that transcends differences in rank and social positioning—stand in marked contrast to slavery—a state of Hobbesian contention and conflict emblematized by the broken bonds of love between members of the same family.

While situating the master-slave relation firmly within the “logic” of domestic and filial relations, Dormer’s ameliorationism is remarkable to the extent to which it blames white misgovernance rather than black ingratitude as the sole origins of insurrection. In her private discourse with Clara, Miss Melville very clearly identifies the lies of the child and mother as, in Roscoe’s terms, the “human causes and origins” for the ensuing “crimes” of the plantation. Even more remarkably, the attribution of blame to white tyranny rather than black ingratitude is fully borne out in the climactic insurrection of the narrative when, “a conspiracy, secret and dreadful in its consequences, broke out in the plantation among the slaves, who rose in the dead of the night, to revenge the sufferings they had endured” (30). The insurrectionists begin by killing the overseeing and the “whipper in” responsible for doling out their brutal punishments. Hearing the commotion, Miss Melville, Mrs. Dormer, and young Clarissa lock themselves in a bedroom, but are soon discovered in their hiding spot. The rebels are prepared to kill all three when Dinah steps forward to intervene in their behalf:

“Who be dat lady?” said the ringleader to Dinah, pointing to Miss Melville.

“She be good lady,” said Dinah; “she pity poor blacky man and woman—she never get poor slave beat but cry, cry, weep, weep, to see dem hurt.”
“We no killy you, Missy—we only fight wid dem dat use poor black ill—
get him beat—order bad Jackson to flog, flog, flog, till poor slave fall down, 
almost dead.”

Clara was seized by another of the slaves; but was set at liberty after a similar account had been given of her conduct by Dinah… and they were ordered out of the room, but with such marks of respect as convinced them that they had nothing to fear on their own account; but their distress respecting Mrs. Dormer was great indeed. (31-2)

Their uncertainty regarding the fate of Mrs. Dormer is brief. In a remarkable piece of schadenfreude, one made even more so by its inclusion in both the British and U.S. editions of the text, the narrator relates how Mrs. Dormer

…was dragged to the very post at which her cruel orders had frequently been put into execution, and treated by her slaves with as little mercy as she had treated them. Their lives had been spared for future service; but they had no such wish to see her survive.

…Clara fainted when she saw the mangled body of her parent, and was afterwards conducted by her amiable companion to the next plantation. A little reflection, however convinced them that they had nothing to fear from those DISCRIMINATING SLAVES who had deemed them worthy their clemency… (33-4).

Not only is the text unambiguous in its refusal to punish the “DISCRIMINATING SLAVES” working as agents of providential justice (indeed, the rebels are never mentioned again), the narrative further vindicates the propriety of such “crimes” by concluding with a description of how Clarissa eventually inherited the plantation and, retaining Miss Melville as her advisor, implemented an estate management system under which “no slaves were treated so well… indeed it is improper to call slaves; for she made them all free; and few plantations ever flourished like hers” (35). In freedom, however, their servitude to their mistress remains unwavering, as when a maroon rebellion later breaks out, prompting the “free men of Clara” to “for[m] a phalanx round their mistress, [which] preserved both her life and property, while those of many others were lost (35-6).

Through the straightforward and unambiguous condemnation of the vicious planter, Clarissa Dormer renders even more starkly the tendency of amelioration narratives to have a greater interest in examining characters of tyrannical versus humane slavemasters than they do in racializing the characters of grateful and ungrateful slaves. “The moral of
this little history,” it concludes, “will speak for itself. Humanity is due to all; difference of colour, or inequality of rank, can never warrant the exercise of oppression or injustice” (36). The narrative is thus broadly in line with Roscoe’s objectives to turn away from race as an explanation—or even a factor—in the breakdown of social relations on the plantation, one of several such works that latched onto the slave insurrections for its potential to articulate this broadly didactic rather than narrowly racialist discourse.

4.3.1. Maria Edgeworth’s “Grateful Negro”

Situating “The Grateful Negro” within the tradition of Romantic-era didactic narratives of amelioration, especially those that engaged the slave insurrections as their primary focus, can shed further light upon the ways in which Edgeworth’s writings also employed West Indian slave societies to survey a broad array of universal and ethical concerns. In partly transcending the imperative to render and reinforce cultural and racial assumptions, these texts challenged the colonialis”.

This approach thus departs from the dominant approaches to Edgeworth’s fictional treatment of slavery, which have centered on the ways in which these texts pursued densely racialized and colonial discourses. In Susan Greenfield’s well-known reading of Belinda, for instance, West Indian Mr. Vincent’s expulsion from the narrative allows

---

21 Of course, debates surrounding the use of term enlightenment in regards to early modern England and Georgian Britain are extraordinarily fraught (see introduction). However, for a very good discussion of Edgeworth and, specifically, Edgeworthian pedagogy as an enlightenment discourse, see Friedman 2001.
Edgeworth to maintain the boundaries between “At home” and “Abroad” that are threatened by the presence of Creoles,\textsuperscript{22} while Jessica Richard argues that this division is maintained by the racialized characterization of Mr. Vincent’s gambling as a “specifically ‘negro’ activity… like obeah… [which] implicitly blames Vincent’s propensity to gamble as an adult on the ‘negroes’ who introduced him to games of chance as a child.”\textsuperscript{23} The issue of slavery has similarly been viewed through the lens of colonial discourse, albeit one that resists any straightforward assignations of pro- and anti-slavery sentiment. Moira Ferguson and others have read “The Grateful Negro” as “emphatically commend[ing] emancipation.”\textsuperscript{24} More recently, George Boulukos has counter-argued that Edgeworth’s writings are better understood as an “attempt to re-imagine slavery as humane” and “deplo[y] sentiment to support slavery.”\textsuperscript{25} Aligning her with unambiguous proponents of proslavery ideology such as Henry Bougham and Bryan Edwards (Edwards is cited once in \textit{Belinda} and throughout the “The Grateful Negro), Boulukos asserts that “in typical sentimental fashion, Edgeworth focuses on the psychology of individual relationships in order to imagine a slave who comes to accept his slavery by internalizing a paternalistic, sentimental contract.”\textsuperscript{26}

Either assertion would, of course, have been anathema to Edgeworth herself, who was always careful to couch her discursive practices in strategically depoliticized terms. In the preface to \textit{The Practical Education} (1798)—the pedagogical treatise co-written with her father Richard Lovell—the Edgeworths demurred that “on religion and politics we have been silent, because we have no ambition to gain partisans, or to make proselytes, and because we do not address ourselves exclusively to any sect or to any party.”\textsuperscript{27} Reading her fictions through the lens of Edgeworthian pedagogy certainly risks ignoring the myriad social and political contexts in excess of these self-professed aims of instruction. As Edgeworth notes in the preface to \textit{Belinda}, “the following work is offered to the public as a Moral Tale—the author not wishing to acknowledge the Novel” (3).

\begin{footnotes}
\item[22] Greenfield 214-28.
\item[23] Richard 201.
\item[24] Ferguson 233.
\item[25] 12.
\item[26] 13.
\item[27] Quoted in Friedman 36; the original preface is not included in the 1855 edition cited throughout this essay.
\end{footnotes}
Similar sentiments are echoed in the explicitly didactic *Popular Tales* collection (in which “The Grateful Negro” first appeared), framing her fiction as an educational and edifying respite from “the folly, error, and vice [that is] disseminated in books classed under the denomination [of ‘novel’]” (5). Yet, I want to argue that her pedagogical theories also offer a vantage point for uncovering a set of submerged issues that have deeply political interest: the methods by which different kinds of education—like different kinds of fiction—can structure, reform, or, indeed, ruin systems of social relations. Indeed, Edgeworth’s description of the sensory field surrounding the vulnerable reader of novels is mirrored by her narratives themselves, where various characters confront a world populated by things—objects ranging from luxury items, trinkets, portraits, pets, books, fetish objects and, indeed, *slaves*—all competing with each other for the power to captivate attention.

Of course, slaves occupy a disturbing place in this list. As Lynn Festa reminds us, “contrast[ing] personified things with reified persons may seem like docile replication of the objectifying logic of slavery,” but my aim here is to trace a specific pattern within Edgeworth’s representational practices that allows for a better understanding of the different ways in which representations of Africans were *themselves* put to work in Romantic-era writing. Although enslavement obviously entailed the objectification of persons into chattel property, Edgeworth’s fictions take a central interest in the status of the enslaved as agential subjects—specifically, as the potential agents and subjects of Protestant reform. Elaborating upon McCann’s insight about the African figure as the key exemplar of the universality of Enlightenment ideals in Edgeworth’s texts, I want to suggest that Edgeworth frames practices of Obeah in general and universal terms—a framing that imbues Obeah with its pedagogical value in her narratives. Obeah, in other words, is central to the exposition of the didacticism of these narratives and provides the means by which these works engage Edgeworth’s broader pedagogical concern with the problem of mental slavery. Specifically, Edgeworth uses these fictions to engage a pedagogy of critical anti-fetishism, one that invokes a Protestant abhorrence of the destructive mental, moral, and social consequences caused by the “Catholic” power of

---

28 112.
seductive things. Yet at the same time, her pedagogy tempered this iconoclastic rejection of fetish objects with a recuperation of the captivating potential of other things—good things. Put differently, her didactic fiction—stories designed to instruct and delight—necessarily presupposed a world in which the “charms” of certain moral and didactic phenomena were to be embraced, not resisted by the imagination. The role of insurrectionary plot in the “Grateful Negro” was to provide an entry point for this inherent ambivalence within Edgeworthian pedagogy—to illustrate the differences between the healthy and aberrant mental states and their relationship to things.

Employing the typical didactic conceit of instructive moral contrasts, “The Grateful Negro” tells the tale of two neighbouring Jamaican slave plantations. The first is owned by Mr. Jefferies, a man “who considered the negroes as an inferior species, incapable of gratitude, disposed to treachery, and to be roused from their natural indolence only by force; he treated his slaves, or rather suffered his overseer to treat them, with the greatest severity” (227). The second is owned by Mr. Edwards, who “treated his slaves with all possible humanity and kindness.” Even more than his namesake, the proslavery Jamaican historian Bryan Edwards, Edgeworth’s Mr. Edwards personifies the inherent political ambivalence of ameliorationism, which often toed a line that was at once antislavery and anti-abolitionist:29 “He wished there was no such thing as slavery in the world; but he was convinced, by the arguments of those who have the best means of obtaining information, that the sudden emancipation of the negroes would rather increase than diminish their miseries. His benevolence, therefore, confined itself within the bounds of reason.” (228). Within these “bounds,” Edwards adopts a series of plans “for the amelioration of the state of slaves” (228). In contrast to the actual ameliorative measures that the British imperial government would implement in the decade after the publication of the Popular Tales, Edwards’s ameliorative reforms attend to the education of slaves only indirectly through the introduction of incentives designed to encourage the enslaved to become voluntary, though still unfree, labourers (e.g., a wage structure, additional free

29 In fact, I believe it is rather mistaken to assume that Bryan Edwards inspires the character of Edwards in any straightforward way. Indeed, some of Bryan Edwards ideas are put into the mouth of Jefferies, who is the very obverse of the enlightened planter. It may be more felicitous to think of Edwards and Jefferies as representing different aspects of Bryan Edwards’s attitudes, those that Edgeworth encourages and condemns, respectively.
time, etc.).

The topic of education, however, soon becomes of central importance for the story, and the narrator begins by offering a thoroughgoing assessment of the deplorable mental and moral state of those planters heedless to the benefits of reform. Jefferies, we discover, was a man of “thoughtless and extravagant temper. He was of such a sanguine temper, that he... never had the prudence to make allowance for unfortunate accidents” (227). In contrast to Edwards’s thoughtful animadversions against planter ideologies, Jefferies repeatedly reveals that his racist and proslavery attitudes are primarily the result of a lack of critical judgment: “Of [the ethics of slavery] I don’t pretend to judge. All I know is the West India planters would be ruined if they had no slaves, and I am a West India planter” (231). So too does his wife, meanwhile, display the characteristic creole defect of ennui—her indolence of temperament is only matched by the violence of her passions when they are aroused. Jefferies and his wife happily join the rest of the island’s elite planter class in indulging in raucous entertainments and the decadent consumption of food, spirits, and luxury goods—tastes, the narrator claims, which reflect the vitiation of minds “accustomed to tyranny and cruelty” (240). Thus, while providing an instructive contrast to the “enlightened” planter Edwards, the Jefferieses certainly reinforce racial and cultural stereotypes of the indolent, ignorant, and passionate Creole (stereotypes that also subtly characterize Mr. Vincent in Belinda). Yet in the broader context of Edgeworth’s writings, the Jefferies also typify all of Edgeworth’s stock lordly and aristocratic characters, especially, for instance, those of Ennui, Castle Rackrent and her other Anglo-Irish novels.

In a further echo of the Irish novels’ negative assessment of the semi-feudal aristocratic class structure of Britain, “The Grateful Negro” pairs its critique of corrupt governing authorities with an examination of the effects and social consequences of their misrule upon the lowly classes. To do so, the narrative mirrors the didactic contrasts of the two planters with similarly instructive portraits of two enslaved characters from the Jefferies plantation, Caesar and Hector. Though the two men differ greatly in their

---

30 For an overview of the Creole stereotypes in literature more generally, see Sypher.
temperaments—Caesar is naturally loyal and industrious, while Hector prone to resentment and rash behavior—they are bound together by their common “Koromantyn” origins and their shared resentment of the cruelty of white creoles. However, the two come into conflict after the wastrel Jefferies attempts to sell Caesar in order to discharge a debt, an act that threatens to separate Caesar from his beloved wife Clara and to force him to relinquish the substantial plot of provisions that he has cultivated. Edwards, having long admired the industry of his neighbour’s slave, is immediately moved by Caesar’s plight to purchase the pair, who in turn express their profound gratitude and happiness at serving a benevolent master. Hector, meanwhile, grows in his hatred of Jefferies as he is repeatedly subjected to violent punishments and his own wife is mercilessly flogged for a trifling accident. Thus, both of these slaves are locked into a symbiotic relationship with the two planters, albeit in diametric manners: where Edwards and Caesar are bound together by mutually reinforcing exchanges of affection and duty, Jefferies and Hector are instead bound up in a kind of Hegelian master-slave dialectic—Hector’s subjection feeds his animosity and hatred, which in turns provokes the paranoid planter to more cruelly punish him. Exasperated by the cruelties under Jefferson’s dominion, Hector and his fellow slaves “leagued together in a conspiracy… [the] object [of which] was to extirpate every white man, woman, and child in the island” (233). Yet Caesar remains steadfast in his fidelity, gratitude, and sense of duty to Edwards. The insurrection is ultimately foiled before achieving the total annihilation of Jamaica’s white population, but not before the story’s key villains reap the disastrous consequences sown by the tyrannical management of their estates. The heartless overseer suffers a violent death at the heads of the black rebels, while the Jefferieses have their lives narrowly saved by Edwards, despite the destruction of their estate. The narrative ends by relating how the Jefferieses were subsequently forced to return to England “where they were obliged to live in obscurity and indigence” (245), a stark contrast to the continued prosperity of Edwards and his humanely managed estate. Having surveyed the differences of the regenerate and unregenerate slave plantation, an examination of the role of mental slavery and education is key to understanding the ambivalences inherent in Edgeworth’s articulation of reform in the story.
4.3.2 Protestant anti-fetishism in Edgeworthian pedagogy

As previously mentioned, the topic of mental improvement is crucial to the narrative development of “The Grateful Negro,” which explores the power of plantation management to either enlighten or corrupt the subject mind and the ways in which the corrupt mental state of oppressive planters begets a corresponding mental corruption in the oppressed. As both a cause and consequence of mental corruption, Obeah is indicted in the “Grateful Negro” as an important agent of slave insurrection and of the mental slavery that it identifies as the most significant outcome of enslavement and tyrannization. In this regard, “The Grateful Negro” participates in a much older imperialist discourse about Africans as particularly susceptible to forms of mental, not just physical, captivation. This tradition, as the historian William Pietz notes, can be partly traced back to A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea (1705)—the influential account of the Dutch explorer Willem Bosman’s African travels that “provided the image and conception of fetishes on which Enlightenment intellectuals based their elaboration of the notion into a general theory of primitive religion.” In it, Bosman provides an origin myth for the distinction between the “white” and “black man,” whom God gave the choice of either “the Knowledge of the Arts of Reading and Writing” or “Gold.” Given first pick, the black man fell victim to the seductive snares of gold. Accordingly, God grants the “knowledge of letters” to the white man, resolving that the “Whites should for ever be [the blacks’] Masters, and [the blacks] obliged to wait on them as their Slaves.” Bosman’s characterization of the African mind’s innate fetishistic tendencies would set a tone for imperial attitudes well into the following century. As the critic WJT Mitchell has noted, “bad objects” are “endemic to the discourse of imperialism and colonialism: totems, fetishes, and idols—the things that produce ambivalence and need to be neutralized, merely tolerated, or destroyed.” These “things… seem (truly or falsely) to ‘come alive’ in the colonial encounter, implying the animation of inanimate objects.” As a result, in imperial contexts, all physical objects

31 Pietz 5.
32 Bosman 147.
labor under a “whole language of aesthetic judgment… saturated with colonial discourse,” a complex status “not to be lamented or overcome but to be understood.”

Yet in order to more fully understand the role and status of the fetish object in colonial discourse, one must consider how Bosman’s attempts to reify the racial and cultural hierarchies of early European imperialism were also betrayed by a latent universalism at the core of his discursive practice. As he notes elsewhere in his account, “if it was possible to convert the Negroes to the Christian Religion, the Roman-Catholicks would succeed better than we should because they already agree in several particulars, especially in their ridiculous ceremonies.” Much like Defoe’s analysis of primitive religion in *Robinson Crusoe*, Bosman’s representations of an African *priestcraft* directly address issues at the heart of domestic and intra-European conflicts surrounding the ascendency of the Protestant confessional state.

The common tie uniting both the colonialist and Protestant abjuration of bad objects is, of course, a rejection of the dangers of mental slavery, a state that stands in marked contrast to an “enlightened” Protestant whose normative subjectivity derives from their literacy and access to print. As Michael Warner describes this enlightenment formation, this rationalist orientation is defined by “critical distance” and depends upon “a clear opposition between the text object and the reading subject—indeed, critical reading could be thought of as an ideal for maximizing that polarity, defining the reader’s freedom and agency as an expression of distance from a text that must be objectified as a benchmark of distanciation.” In effect, this is a continuation of the pedagogy espoused by the republican political theorist John Locke: the child’s “innate” love of liberty is facilitated by reading habits which train an objective mastery over the world and the things in it. As Pierre Bourdieu notes, this Enlightenment criticality defined itself against an inverse process of mental slavery—what he calls—the “enslaving violence” of “the loss of the

---

33 Mitchell 146-7.
34 Bosman 154.
35 On *Crusoe*, see chapter one. For an interesting recent discussion of this mode of historiographical narration in the context of the British enlightenment, see Goldie 209-31.
36 Warner 20.
37 For an overview of Lockean influences on Edgeworthian pedagogy, see Friedman 40.
subject in the object” which enslaves the free subject into a “willing subject, subject to every desire, every servitude.”

These normative psychological processes—a “critical distance” which resists being enthralled into “mental slavery”—certainly define fundamental aspects of Edgeworthian pedagogy. In her pedagogical writings, Edgeworth continually presents different methods to encourage pupils to overcome the power and influence of “bad” things through a process of critical anti-fetishism. Indeed, one could go as far as describing the entirety of Practical Education as one long treatise on how parents can demystify the effects of bad things on children’s minds. The governing process involves first exposing the child to awful, magical, or just seemingly lucky events in order to then illustrate the underlying rational principles behind them. As one exercise relates:

There is more danger that... hateful passion[s] should be created in the minds of young competitors... where it is supposed that some knack or mystery is to be learned before they can be played with success. Whenever children play at such games... we may show them, that in reality, there is no mystery in anything, but that from certain causes certain effects will follow; that, after trying a number of experiments, the circumstances essential to success may be discovered. (25)

In Edgeworth’s fictions, Obeah’s effects on African minds provide a critical occasion for demystification and espousing rationalist norms. In Belinda, the heroine takes up the role of the benevolent parental authority by disabusing Juba of his “lethal” if “superstitious” illusions concerning the conjuring tricks being played on him by Mrs. Freke, one of the novel’s unsympathetic villains:

In the morning he told his master that he had been again visited by the obeah-woman, and he exhibited all the signs of extreme terror. Belinda then suggested that one of the children should show him the phosphorous, and should draw some ludicrous figure with it in his presence. This was done, and it had the effect that she expected. Juba, familiarized by degrees with the object of his secret horror, and convinced that no obeah-woman was exercising over him her sorceries, recovered his health and spirits. His gratitude to miss Portman, who was the immediate cause of his cure, was as simple and touching as it was lively and sincere. (222)

---

38 Bourdieu 489.
In “The Grateful Negro,” the slave Caesar’s reception of planter benevolence has equipped him with a critical rationality capable of overcoming the charms of Esther, a black “Sorceress” who:

…had obtained by her skill in poisonous herbs, and her knowledge of venomous reptiles, a high reputation amongst her countrymen. She soon taught them to believe her to possessed of supernatural powers; and she then worked their imagination to what pitch and purpose pleased… [as] the chief instigator of this intended rebellion. (237)

Caesar’s critical resistance to Obeah later functions as a rational voice—an agent of Edgeworthian pedagogy among the other slaves—denouncing the effects of Obeah and illustrating the ways in which “fears deprive [them] of their reason” (238). Given the central place of Obeah (understood as a fetishistic relationship to “bad” things) in fomenting slave revolt in the “Grateful Negro,” a closer look at the status of objectivity in Edgeworth’s pedagogical thought is certainly in order.

As an exercise in the critical emancipation of subjectivity from the passions, Edgeworth’s use of Obeah in effect literalizes the imperial subtext of Marx’s highly influential account of anti-fetishism that he would develop a half-century later. Yet Edgeworth’s use of Obeah also looks forward to the fundamental ambivalence of fetishism therein. In volume one of Das Kapital (1867), Marx famously relates the conversion of a table to market commodity by noting how “so soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than ‘table-turning’ ever was.”\(^\text{39}\) Simultaneously animate and intimate, Marx’s commodity fetish presents what Michel Serres terms a paradoxical \textit{quasi-object}: “the quasi-object is not an object, but it is one nevertheless, since it is not a subject, since it is in the world; it is also a quasi-subject, since it marks or designates a subject who, without it, would not be a subject.”\(^\text{40}\) Serres’s notion of the quasi-object productively opens up the complex nature of certain things to form a third space between subject and object, simultaneously sharing both aspects to guarantee their

\(^{39}\) Marx 63.  
\(^{40}\) Serres 225.
difference by rendering itself as a displaceable intermediary. The quasi-object is thus one of the ways in which we might explore—as Bill Brown has—how “the story of objects asserting themselves as things…is the story of a changed relation to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names a particular subject-object relation.”

Imbued with “subjective” qualities, the “quasi-object” is precisely what allows Marx to elaborate the fetishized object of capital as distinct from the ordinary object of use-value.

Yet a curious feature of his mini-narrative is easy to overlook: Marx offers in this instance not one but two quasi-objects. On the one hand, there is the grotesque, dancing table on its head; on the other, there is also the presence of the far less menacing “wooden table” that stands on its legs. It is easy to miss how the latter of these things is as imbued with subjectivity as the former. At least in relation to tables, a “leg that stands” is as much an attribution of animation as a “head that dances,” albeit through the more muted form of the dead metaphor of “legs.” Thus, we may distinguish these two quasi-objects, not by an attribution of liveliness, but by the differential effects of this animation upon subjectivity in Marx’s account. Whereas the fetishistic commodity form has “mastery over man” instead of “being controlled by him” and casts a “superstitious” thrall of “magic and necromancy” over its captive idolators, the benevolent object of use-value instead lends itself to facilitating “a community of free individuals, carrying on their work with the means of production in common” who can thus rule over the things they produce instead of “being ruled by them.”

In this regard, Marx’s table is cleft by the inherent problem of freedom: the fraught tension between, on the one hand, the cultivation of the “free” individual as sovereign subject and lord of things and, on the other, the need to bind such free individuals into a “community.”

So too does the imperative to community formation profoundly complicate Edgeworth’s use of objects in her pedagogy. Indeed, a neat historical parallel is evident in the fact that Edgeworth’s pedagogical model also originates at a “quasi-objectified” table. Describing

---

41 Brown 4.
42 Marx 80; 85-6; 82-3; 79.
the origins of the “Edgeworth family model” at the root of Practical Education, Jean Friedman notes that

A cheerful family gathered around the breakfast table in the Edgeworth household during the early decades of the nineteenth century. The breakfast table acted as something of an icon. When Maria Edgeworth wrote home, as she often did her travels, she inquired where the family members sat. She said to her young stepmother, Frances Anne Edgeworth, “I want to know at what table you & Harriet dine? oval? small oval? & do you sit at each end? or how?” The memory of the breakfast scene created a family continuity, intimacy, and security as the absent Maria imagined her domestic “friends” around the table.43

As an agent of domestic and social formation, the Edgeworths’ breakfast table illustrates what Bruno Latour calls the “gathering” of the social at the core thingness.44 Moreover, in this object—as in all good objects that appear in Edgeworth’s writings—a “socializing” (i.e., gathering) effect is intimately bound up in its “socializing” (i.e., pedagogical) function. As Friedman notes, family members (known as the “Parliament”) frequently convened at the table for critical and pedagogical ends: “a book of poems [would] appea[r], and Maria read one, only to be interrupted by her father, who asked his young daughter Fanny if she understood the poem. Fanny then read the poem and interpreted it herself… Breakfast ended as the family slipped away to their own morning diversions.”45 Bearing this thing in mind, we might return to how Edgeworth’s discursive practices abound in what Deidre Lynch calls the “clutter” of sentimental objects of Georgian fiction:

The emotional attachments that people form with possessions in these mid-eighteenth-century fictions can seem as freighted with consequence as the emotional attachments that people form with each other. Indeed, modern readers… might be pardoned for finding it hard to distinguish one sort of relationship from the other—even if normal notions of the folly of fetishism predispose us to believe that the difference between, say, ownership and friendship is a difference worth preserving.46

While “sentimentalism invited people to be (in the standard phrase) ‘tremblingly alive’ to dead matter,”47 Edgeworth’s concern was to distinguish the normative variants of this

43 Friedman 36-7.
44 Latour 232-3.
45 37.
46 Lynch 245.
47 246.
relationship of subjects and objects from its fetishistic counterparts—illustrating the curious propensity of objects to promote either “friendship” or “ownership,” or, in Edgeworth’s own terms, to “ameliorate” the subject’s capacity to form social bonds or “enervate” the mind of the subject into the mental torpor underlying the anti-social states of tyranny and slavery.

To understand how, it should first be noted that empiricism and scientific experimentation dominates the instructive experientialism of the Pedagogical Writings. While this ensured engagement with objects in the external environment, the Edgeworths further engaged the “power” of things through David Hartley’s theories of associational psychology. As Friedman notes, “by paying attention to a child’s responses to stories and parents’ clear, accessible language, Edgeworth hoped to develop simple associations derived from a child’s own experience. A pupil’s mental associations formed his or her nature and character.” In private correspondence, the Edgeworths note that Hartley “put us upon our guard to prevent false associations in early education and has encouraged us to employ this faculty of the mind in forming… character.” The empirical associationism of the Practical Education, however, is complicated by Edgeworth’s critique of and departure from Rousseau’s educational methods. As Catherine Toal argues, “whereas Rousseau distrusts any departure from mimesis in his pupil’s attempt at drawing, ‘lest he should substitute absurd and fantastic forms for the real truth of things,’ the Edgeworths quote approvingly the opinion of Joshua Reynolds that too much realism in art diminishes aesthetic stimulation in the viewer.” In the endorsement of imagination and inventiveness, the Edgeworths sought to discourage pupils from forming a purely objective vision of the things in their external environment (i.e. as purely “dead” matter in relation to their own live subjectivity). They encouraged a muted animism that is safer than fetishism (its excessive and irrational counterpart) since the imaginative mind is still held in check by the “unshakable self-assurance of the Edgeworths’ belief in the moderateness of the imagination” and its dominance over “that most overpowering

---

48 Friedman 45.
49 44.
50 Quoted in Friedman 44.
51 Toal 218.
of... eighteenth-century aesthetic categories, the sublime,” a phenomenological experience they declare meaningless for children. As agents of Edgeworth’s pedagogical ideals, good objects are not just allowed, but encouraged, to come alive in the imagination of the onlooker. Indeed, good objects must do so in order to exploit their quasi-objective status: a certain amount of agency is necessary to exert their positive influence while a degree of power renders them capable of securing and maintaining their subject’s attention. But unlike their fetishistic counterparts, they are tempered in their effects. Such things produce some critical distance—necessary for the extrication of the mind from mental slavery—but also continue to “captivate” enough to ensure the continued integrity of subjective interdependency in the mind—an interdependency that is at the heart of normative social formations.

Indeed, an illustration of these effects is the central purpose of Clarence Hervey’s bumbling attempts to use a Rousseauian education program to engineer an ideal wife in one of the subplots of Belinda. As Toal notes, “at the outset of her account of Hervey’s plan, Edgeworth repeats the [Practical Education’s] insinuation that Rousseau may be less interested in recovering ‘natural learning’ than he is in exercising absolute control over it.” Through Hervey, Edgeworth is able to reconstruct the Rousseauian education program as a form of subjection—the “enslaving violence” that threatens to diminish the pre-existing personhood of Hervey’s engineered mate, Rachel Hartley: “[Hervey] was some time delayed, by the difficulty of finding a proper object for his purpose… it was difficult to find simplicity without vulgarity, ingenuity without cunning, or even ignorance without prejudice… a heart wholly unpracticed, yet full of sensibility” (373). Renamed Virginia St. Pierre and sequestered within an idyllic cloister, the young woman is exposed to no other male company or occasion for critical reflection, leaving her critically defenseless to the romances she finds. This potentially catastrophic state of affairs is finally resolved by her self-assertion and rejection of Hervey’s tyrannizing authority. She has instead fallen in love with a stranger in a portrait whom she mistakenly identified with the heroes of chivalric romance, but whom we later discover is

52 218.
53 220.
actually Captain Sunderland—the man who rescued her father from a slave insurrection on a Jamaican plantation. This realization is particularly important in light of the prior discussion of the pedagogical imagination. Both Sunderland and his objectified proxy, the portrait, do not lack romantic and captivating powers as rationalizing agents, but rather they replace one form of romance within another: the mentally enervating French romance novels with the quasi-romantic grandiosity of a slave insurrection. As Toal notes, her “early associations… infiltrate and overturn the purpose of the fabricated, claustrophobic environment, just as the revival of Virginia’s ‘real’ name, Rachel Hartley, heralds the triumph of British empiricism over French Rousseauianism.” As rationalizing agents, good things (like Sunderland’s portrait) are marked by how they encourage critical reflection and demystify the mind, while bad things (like Freke’s Obeah or Virginia St. Pierre’s romance novels) prey upon the mind and seduce it into an enervating torpor. Their greatest threat is not to the subject’s freedom and autonomy, but rather to her ability to form secure and healthy attachments to others.

Returning to the insurrectionary romance of “The Grateful Negro,” the dual pedagogical function of good objects—as things which encourage the emancipation of the mind from the bondage of mental slavery while reinforcing the bonds of social interdependency—is even more apparent. This occurs most memorably in a highly consequential exchange between Edwards and Caesar, when the former freely entrusts the latter with a gift of a knife to aid in his labors: “Caesar received the knife without uttering a syllable; but no sooner was Mr. Edwards out sight than he knelt down, and in a transport of gratitude, swore that, with this knife, he would stab himself sooner than betray his master” (239). In Hector’s hands, the narrative suggests, the knife would be a weapon of violence, but in Caesar’s, it becomes an instrument of peace. That the same knife could have such radically different effects draws from the underlying social relation that “gathers” and animates the object. The associational links are intimately bound up in the very different sensibilities of the two slaves, which are in turn borne of the very different socializing effects of Edwards’s and Jeffries’s plantation management: “Revenge was the ruling passion of Hector: in Caesar’s mind [there] was rather a principle instilled by

54 220.
education… Hector’s sense of injury was acute in the extreme; he knew not how to forgive. Caesar’s sensibility was yet more alive to kindness than to insult… Caesar would devote himself for the defence of a friend” (234).

As discussed in the previous chapter, the distinction between slavery and servitude within the eighteenth-century didactic imaginary frequently rested on a distinction between social conflict and friendship. Much as it was in Millennium Hall, the clarification of this distinction is also emphasized throughout “The Grateful Negro.” When, for instance, Hector incites Caesar to kill his “master,” Caesar corrects him—“he that is now my benefactor—my friend!” “Friend!” Hector retorts, “How can you call a white man your friend?” Caesar responds by asking him to “hear me with patience,” but the latter’s furious passions prevent any further reasoning (235). While the passions of the insurrectionary slaves are continually ignited by “those strange fantastic charms with which the [Obeah] sorceress [used to] terrify” (242), the knife possesses a very different kind of power—to evoke the gratitude that “overpowered [Caesar’s] manly heart” (233). Moreover, just as the “charms” of Obeah reinforce the social relation of slavery by reinforcing the mental enslavement of the subject, the knife’s ingratiating effects are expressly designed not to emancipate the individual into radical freedom. Thus, although the “charms of freedom” (239) possess as powerful a thrall as the charms of Obeah for Caesar, yet the power of gratitude to resist both—to abjure the antisocial nature of both freedom and slavery—remains fundamental to the elaboration of the story’s didactic moral.

In this regard, Edgeworth’s treatment of slavery encompasses the same fraught ambivalence between progressive and deeply conservative tendencies that has confounded the evaluation of both her politics and pedagogy more generally. As Friedman notes, contentiousness has been a general hallmark of Edgeworth scholarship given the manner in which her writings “reproduced an enlightened cultural pattern that enables scholars to attribute an ‘oddly double’ reputation to [her] literary works. Maria Edgeworth has been identified as a moderate feminist and a patriarchal apologist, a

---

55 See [page in chapter 2]
thoroughgoing individualist and a dedicated traditionalist.” The point here is not been to critically appraise the merits of her ethics of servitude, but rather to understand how these ideas both engaged a much older tradition of Protestant thought concerning the relationship between slavery and education and a contemporary tradition which used slave insurrections to explore these concerns. In this regard, Edgeworth’s African figures can be viewed the conscripts of a universalist and enlightenment worldview that was at odds with the rapidly emergent racial modernity of the Georgian era. As Weiss has noted of her Anglo-Irish fictions,

At a time of widespread turmoil—a time of terror, repression, and rebellion—Edgeworth turns to Enlightenment concepts of economics and education for both diagnosis and cure. Rather than hold English colonial practices, religious sectarianism, or native Irish intransigence responsible for the unrest, Edgeworth clearly blames the semi-feudal socioeconomic system in which the aristocracy and peasantry have been educated, and in which the character of the classes has been formed.

Edgeworth’s evocations of West Indian slave society elaborate upon this vision. What they offer, in particular, is a fuller and more felicitous social landscape for examining the causes and consequences of mental slavery—a phenomenon which not only explained slave insurrections, but also accounted the wider appeal of slave insurrections for late Georgian didactic writers more generally.

4.4. Late Georgian didacticism at the dawn of racial modernity
A corollary of the advent of modern nationalism in the age of revolutions, the emergence in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries of a newly racialized outlook, one based on so-called modern and quasi-scientific assumptions about human difference, is well documented in studies of the literature, culture, and social milieu of the period. In accounting for this intellectual transformation in the Euro-American worldview, scholars have emphasized the influence of debates over slavery and abolition. In the British context, important precipitators of racial modernism have been identified in the Mansfield decision of 1771 and the American and Haitian revolutions, each of which

56 Friedman 36.
57 Weiss 2.
58 For an overview of this scholarship and influential approach to the topic, see Wilson (2003).
spurred on the refinement of proslavery thought and negrophobic essentialism. And although Britain lagged behind other European countries in the widespread adoption of, specifically, biologically grounded theories of race, the period nevertheless bore witness to a crystallization of race thinking that increasingly emphasized the rigid and hierarchical nature of the putative races of mankind. As a result, the remarkable proliferation of representations about colonial and New World cultures in the didactic and moral literature of the period has typically been seen as reflective of (and even instrumental in) this broader process of change. For instance, Carolyn Berman has argued that representations of Creole women as “Other” allowed didactic writers to impose ideological limits on what it meant to belong to the British nation—to be a proper British subject as it were. More recently, Angela Rehbein argues that contemporary didactic authors like Jane West introduced “the ordering power of the domestic Englishwoman into disorderly West Indian society, a role she thus upholds as crucial for her young female readers.” These and similar studies have illustrated the sometimes very subtle ways in which representations of empire were invariably marshaled to legitimate British imperial projects. Thus, in addition to their explicitly reformist agendas, didactic literature of the period thus strove to teach a self-other dialectic of “whiteness” that reinforced imperial hegemony and the ideologies of racial and national difference that would crystallize into their modern form by the early nineteenth century. In this narrative, older philosophical and stadial traditions of the Enlightenment that linked ideas of alterity to widely ranging notions of political, national, and religious difference gave way to a more coherent form of chauvinism that contrasted an increasingly narrow definition of Euro-American whiteness with a range of subordinate categories of culture, race and racial admixture.

This chapter thus continues the New Historical project of investigating the specific mechanics of this historical process, examining how, precisely, “race thinking” translated

59 Fields; Dubois, Tise.
60 On Britain’s laggardness vis-à-vis colonial America and metropolitan Europe, see Stepan. For an excellent overview of the change in British attitudes throughout the long eighteenth century, see Boulukos.
61 Berman.
62 Rehbein 95.
63 See also Wheeler; Boulukos (2008); Lee; Bohls.
into the realm of the cultural imaginary as well as the status of other and older traditions within this shifting context. I want to suggest that the problem of a paradigm shift in thinking about race and nation is explicitly manifested in the writings of the now obscure American-born British writer Helena Wells Whitford (1758?-1824). In the following section, I examine the ways in which her didactic novel *Constantia Neville; or, the West Indian* (1800) registers a veritable collision between two competing modes of enlightenment thought, those gestured to by the original and revised editions of the Edgeworth’s *Belinda*. On the one hand, *Constantia Neville* expressly adopts the universalist and cosmopolitan orientation associated with an older tradition of critical and didactic writing throughout the eighteenth century. The eponymous heroine of the novel, Constantia Neville, moves to Britain, where her eponymous cultural identifier, her *West Indianness*, marks a strange form of imperial subjectivity. Initially, she looks forward to quitting the West Indies, having become “accustomed to hear Great Britain talked of as home… she considered that she was now bound to a place to which she naturally belonged, and that her being born in the West Indies was purely accidental” (76). In Britain, however, the narrator continually frames her through creole markers. This all-encompassing difference allows her to function throughout the novel as a kind of didactic “alien,” someone outside and above the milieu of domestic vice, corruption, and errant sociability that she must continually navigate while in Britain. While Constantia’s creoleness marks a moral rather than purely cultural or racial distinction within a plural and reformist vision of the empire (where inclusion is an effect of morality and character rather than birth), the novel also bears the traces of an exclusionary and hierarchical framework of difference that appropriates the norms of scientific racism. As Sara Salih demonstrates in one of the few critical analyses of the novel, *Constantia Neville* exemplifies the striking ways in which black and so-called mulatto characters were caught up in an explicitly and quasi-scientific racialist discourse in Georgian literature, one that troubles “the comforting critical truism that “scientific” or “institutionalized” racism did not really begin until the latter decades of the nineteenth century, post-“Indian mutiny” and Governor Eyre controversy.”  

64 How might we account for this extraordinary tension regarding matters of cultural and racial difference in Wells’s novel?

64 Salih 334.
As is the case for Edward Long, Helena Wells’ own social positioning as a late British imperial subject sheds critical light on the seemingly incommensurate frameworks of alterity within the *Constantia Neville*. Indeed, her own biography—and that of the Wells family more broadly—clearly inspires many of the major fictional events and characters in the narrative. Helena Wells was born in South Carolina sometime between 1758-1765.65 Her father, Robert Wells, had arrived there from Scotland with his wife Mary in 1753 and promptly established a printing shop in Charleston. Although the elder Wells professed a great distaste for the plantation slavery that surrounded him in the southern colonies, he employed a number of slaves in his shop as well as the home in which Helena, and her four surviving siblings, were raised. A staunch Tory, Robert Wells’s politics were increasingly at odds with the revolutionary government of South Carolina in the 1770s. Firm in his loyalist convictions, he was eventually driven out of the colony in 1775, at which time he departed for England. While the two male children stayed behind in America, Helena and her sister Louisa joined their father in England three years later. Louisa’s journal of their loyalist emigration, published in 1906, remains an important primary source for documenting the experiences of loyalist émigrés in the early years of the Revolution (Louisa would eventually return to the New World after marrying the Jamaican printer Alexander Aikman). Back in England, the appropriation of the family’s business and property by the Revolutionary government and the subsequent failure of the imperial government to properly compensate them led to a profound reversal of their fortunes: Robert Wells died penniless and apoplectic in 1794, leaving behind his wife and two daughters unprovided for. It would be a number of years before Helena’s eldest brother, William Charles Wells, could draw an income from his medical practice and assist in the support of his female dependents. Due in part to these pressures, Helena turned to a career as a writer, publishing two didactic treatises and two didactic novels, *The Stepmother, A Domestic Tale* (1798) and *Constantia Neville; or the West Indian* (1800) in the course of ten years. Spanning thirteen hundred pages of near-relentless didactic moralizing, *Constantia Neville* tells the tale of the heroine Constantia’s loyalist emigration to England from her birthplace in Barbados. Following the death of her

65 For a biographical overview of Helena, see Moltke-Hansen. On the Wells family in general, see C. Gould.
parents, she is left vulnerable and unprotected in England, and is assailed from all sides by a series of crooked suitors, corrupt tradesman, and tyrannical domestic despots in the various households that take her in. Relying on the critical moral education that she received from her father, however, Constantia is able to detect the true merit of a young gentleman who has fallen in love with her, and is ultimately able to restore her domestic security through marriage—but not before a voluminous stream of moral reflections concerning the proper conduct of young men and women.

*Constantia Neville* was relatively popular with contemporary audiences (enough at least to warrant second edition in the same year) and positively received by critics, who praised the novel’s virtues and recommended young people read it for “pleasure and profit.” Yet several reviews hedge their praise with subtle discomfort over the rather more complicated political dimensions of the text. According to one of these reviews, the novel’s didactic utility is undercut by the fact that “frequently political opinions are introduced, without their being necessary to the story.” The political opinions to which the critic refers are, of course, the staunchly loyalist sentiments that continually surface throughout the narrative, often in highly obtrusive ways. These politics, moreover, cut to the quick of matters of national and racial belonging within the text. In one particularly telling example from early in the story, a benevolent man named De Eresby, who had been Constantia’s primary protector and one the text’s central moral authorities, is killed in a duel with a young Creole planter. The dispute, it seems, had arisen from “one party praising the Americans for their resistance, and speaking in terms highly disrespectful of Great Britain, for her attempt to subjugate them. De Eresby had with more justice than prudence declared, that all men who thought so were poltroons [and hypocrites], if they remained in a settlement receiving protection from a government, whose ministers they vilified, &c.” On the one hand, Wells uses the iniquitous West Indian planter to further vilify the Revolutionaries who evicted her loyalist family from America in the years leading up to the Revolutionary war. However, this condemnation of colonial hypocrisy never explicitly rises to, for instance, the antislavery critique resonant in

---

67 *The Monthly Review* (vol. 33) 206
Samuel Johnson’s famous denunciations of slaveholding republicanism—that “we hear the loudest yelps of liberty from the drivers of negroes.”⁶⁸ Although Wells’s later writings articulate clear (if pat) antislavery sentiments, *Constantia Neville’s* attitudes toward abolitionism remain, on the surface, silent. Yet by placing these sentiments in the mouth of a Barbadian planter, Wells was nevertheless commenting on the fomentation of revolutionary separatism that had taken firm hold of the colonial legislative assemblies at the time she was writing. During the early years of the nineteenth century, colonial officials in the Britain’s most established West Indian possessions began to seriously deliberate a secession from the empire as independent Southern “states” under the aegis of the United States in the face of Britain’s increasing commitment to abolitionist and, later, antislavery policies. Such sentiments are most especially evident in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth polemics increasingly issued forth from the Jamaican press, of which Wells’ sister and brother-in-law were the most conspicuous, as well as in the anti-imperial American newspapers of her brother John.⁶⁹ Given her position within one of the most publicly influential networks of the most influential loyalist families in the late Georgian empire, it should come as little surprise that Wells would use her novel partly to respond to such developments.⁷⁰ The novel’s cosmopolitan loyalism is thus partly framed through a rejection of revolutionary nationalism and slaveholding republicanism—a critique which readily drew on the longer tradition of representing the immorality and ingratitude of slaveholders in eighteenth-century didactic fiction more generally.⁷¹

Yet an even more compelling line of ideological affiliation can be traced in the novel’s problematic representations of non-white characters. In the abovementioned notice from the *Monthly Review*, the critic avers that he is “sorry to observe that many of the sentiments of this lady betray a degree of intolerance, and a want of liberality, which

---

⁶⁸ *Political Writings* 454.
⁶⁹ In addition to her in-laws, the Aikmans, Helena’s brother John also established a newspaper in St. Augustine, Florida and later in St. Nassau, Bahamas, both of which espoused pro-American sentiments very much at odds with the loyalism of the rest of his family. For a more detailed discussion of revolutionary separatism in the early nineteenth-century Caribbean, see next chapter.
⁷⁰ On the prominence of the Wells family and their network of print in the history of imperial loyalism, see Jasonoff.
⁷¹ For a further discussion of loyalist cosmopolitanism, see the next chapter.
ought not to escape animadversion. That unhappy portion of the human species, the Negroes in the West Indies, and also the mixed race called Mulattoes, are mentioned as beings with whom to associate is contamination.” Indeed, the novel’s treatment of Constantia’s early childhood education in Barbados repeatedly emphasizes the ways in which the heroine was isolated from the corrupting influences of the West Indian landscape; her mother, for instance, is reluctant to have Constantia stay in the Caribbean because “the hot weather, the mosquitoes, and the negroes were grievances that she could not have borne” (74). In turn, the telling juxtaposition of the Africans slaves with such vectors of disease as the climate and insects early in the narrative explains why Constantia refuses employment as the companion of the “Afric creolian” Ned Carleton and his sister Louisa much later in England. These characters, as we soon discover, evidence the degenerated speech and character that are typical of the novel’s treatment of mixed-race Creoles, and Constantia shelters herself from their corrupting contagion in England much as her mother did earlier in Barbados. In this regard, Wells’s novel resonates with the theories of racial science that her brother William Charles Wells published in the early years of the nineteenth century. In essays such as “On The Causes of the Differences of Colour and Form Between the White and Negro Races of Men” and “An account of a Female of the White Race of Mankind, Part of whose Skin resembles that of a Negro,” William Charles drew upon his observations living in and near the plantation societies of South Carolina to articulate some of the most comprehensive accounts of racial and biological essentialism, and discussed the admixture of white and black blood in terms of a process of degeneration. Given the ways in which Wells used the novel to engage in an extended dialogue with her transatlantic network of siblings, it seems reasonable to assume that William Charles, who lived just a short distance from Helena in London and who supported her financially throughout her life, was as much an influence in shaping her assumptions around race in the novel as her own experiences growing up in colonial South Carolina.

Moreover, William Charles Wells’s “innovations” in scientific racism allow for a

---

72 *The Monthly Review* (vol. 33) 206

73 On the “maximum importance” of Wells’s influential ideas in the history of racial theories, see Lettow 138-9.
relatively stable vantage point from which to evaluate the fraught racialism of *Constantia Neville*: where William Charles explicitly posits Euro-American whites as the obverse of innately corrupt people of African descent, Wells’ novel does not explicitly contrast her racialist assumptions surrounding black and Creole subjects with a clear and unambiguous account of national, ethnic, or cultural antitheses.\(^74\) Thus, while it may be tempting to resolve the novel’s ideological contradictions surrounding race and difference by suggesting that the text perhaps minimizes the “intra-racial” differences between Britons and white Creoles in order to maximize the saliency of whiteness (a unifying logic that is further underscored by attributing categorical difference to the “in-between” figure of the mulatto), the novel hardly lends itself to such tidy interpretive consequences. In fact, as the novel’s heroine, Constantia retains her Creole identification as the eponymous “West Indian”—the same appellation used to describe both white and non-white Creoles throughout the narrative. Indeed, while her “whiteness” may be buffered from the ruinous contagion of blackness, her West Indianness is continually used to mark the heroine’s alienation from the corrupt elements that dominate the British world in which the loyalist émigré finds herself. Thus, *Constantia Neville* attempts to subordinate certain forms of race thinking to differences of moral character (a didactic axiology that would be undermined by the undeserved elevation of otherwise mentally and morally corrupt people of European descent under the aegis of whiteness); yet racialist ideas are nevertheless reified by the use of mulatto characters who emblematize the horrors of race mixing even as they register the ubiquitous presence (if complex function) of people of African descent in Georgian literature. In other words, the tension between interrogating and reifying the logic of racial difference illustrated by the two editions of *Belinda* is apparent here in the single work, and the ensuing logic of difference is one that, in its own way, is as bizarre and self-contradictory as Long’s notorious racialism. And as with Long, the apprehension of race in the writings of William Charles Wells and the novels of his sister also directly reflects the practical and ideological exigencies of social governance and racial order in the colonial context. Rather than force these contradictions into resolution, I want to suggest that they are fundamental to the historical context from which all of these works emerged—an era in which the Protestant

\(^{74}\) For an extensive analysis of W.C. Wells’s racial theories, see K. Wells.
assumption of universal depravity competed with the racialist imperative to inscribe inherent depravity to the non-white other. Recalling the wider array of didactic materials interested in slave insurrection, *Constantia Neville* fixed on another colonial rebellion—that of America’s revolt against the British Empire—to furnish a universal theory of ethics of loyal servitude. The consequences of this ideological tension are extraordinary. As the final chapter illustrates, claims of loyal servitude—and its absence in the hearts and minds of new world slaveholders—would be crucial to the representational tactics by which early black Atlantic authors challenged the negrophobia and racial essentialism of their proslavery interlocutors, a conflict inherent in the text of *Constantia Neville*. 

5.1. Introduction
This dissertation traces the prehistory of slave amelioration as a recurring representational topos in eighteenth-century British literary and didactic writing. As such, it risks representing critical narratives and allegories of colonial reform as primarily metropolitan phenomena, giving the erroneous impression that the reform was theorized, represented, and debated primarily by white British authors and statesmen prior to the emergence of an active antislavery movement in the early nineteenth-century Americas. While wide-ranging studies of the period such as Edward Said’s *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) and Srinivas Aravamudan’s *Tropicopolitans* (1999) have certainly demonstrated the powerful influence of metropolitan voices in reinforcing imperialist ideologies and the ways in which the colonized resisted the determinative effects of such ideas in their cultural and everyday practices, this chapter examines how the potential radicalism inherent in amelioration discourse conversely invited active participation by colonized, racialized, and other subaltern populations. Examining the cultural legacies of amelioration through a sustained analysis of the rise of the transnational black press in the early decades of the nineteenth century, this chapter brings together key African American and Afro-Creole writers who contributed to the broader transatlantic discourse of reform even as they simultaneously took themselves up as its direct targets. As I illustrate below, the Canning resolutions of 1823 unleashed a series of competing political pressures that were felt throughout the Americas, creating a transhemispheric cultural moment best illustrated by the emergence of Jamaica’s first black and antislavery newspaper, *The Watchman and Jamaica Free Press* (1829-36).\(^1\)

---

1 Originally called *Watchman and Jamaica Free Press*, the newspaper shortened its name to *Jamaica Watchman* in 1832. The American Antiquarian Society and the National Library of Jamaica hold substantial collections of the *Watchman* newspaper. Wherever possible, I have tried to cite both the dates and the page numbers in referencing issues of the *Watchman*, but where the original pagination is no longer available, I have provided only the date of the issue.
Founded in 1829, just two years after the first African-American newspaper in the U.S. was inaugurated by the *Freedom’s Journal*, the *Watchman* steadfastly publicized the planter-dominated colonial government’s refusal to implement the civil rights and amelioration measures that had been extended to the island’s free black and slave populations by the British parliament in the years leading up to emancipation. Despite publishing in the face of the Jamaican Assembly’s repeated attempts to force its suppression, the newspaper achieved a degree of influence that was well-attested by a variety of nineteenth-century observers: British abolitionists credited it with providing the accurate reportage they needed to pressure their government to more quickly enact full slave emancipation in the West Indies, while colonial officials denounced the newspaper’s editor as a principal instigator of the massive colonial slave rebellion which broke out late in 1831. Moreover, within the competition for transatlantic influence and readership among pro-colonial and anti-slavery factions upon the island, the *Watchman* clearly and consistently bested their many rivals. While the gulf between the planters and the metropolitan proslavery lobby increasingly widened (the former raging against the latter for too cowardly acquiescing to the reformist mandates of the imperial government, while the latter urged the former to begin compromising for the sake of their own economic self-preservation), the planter press struggled to convince an imperial audience that control of colonial affairs should devolve back to the island legislatures, often having to resort to paying metropolitan editors to write sympathetic accounts and to reprint their publications in domestic serials—a fact which the *Watchman* gleefully brought to light. The *Watchman*’s articles, on the other hand, were regularly reprinted in a variety of British antislavery press organs (most notably in *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter*), provoking white Jamaican pressmen to denounce it as a veritable fifth column—a hired shill for foreign and anti-colonial factions—and calling for its censorship even as they jealously guarded their own press liberties.

---

2 Roberts 78; Petley 83.
3 Ragatz 420.
5 Volume 3 of the *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter* (June 1829 – December 1830), contains dozens of extracts from the *Watchman* as well a lengthy feature about it (see no. 55, 162-66).
Yet the important contributions made by this and other early non-white serial publications from the Caribbean have since largely disappeared from the narrative of the rise of early black print culture in the nineteenth century. This absence is especially surprising in light of the several panegyrics to the Watchman’s primary editor, Edward Jordon (1800-1869), by his African American contemporaries. For instance, William Wells Brown, one of the most widely published and influential African American authors of the mid-nineteenth-century, reflected back on Jordon’s trial for printing seditious libel against Jamaica’s plantocracy some three decades earlier, noting: “[i]t is indeed a cheering sign for the negro to look at one of his race, who, a few years ago, was tried for his life in a city in which he is now the chief magistrate.... to all who think that the negro is only fit for servitude, we reply by saying, Look at Sir Edward Jordan [sic].” In a eulogy published after Jordon’s death in 1869, Phillip Alexander Bell, the pioneering editor of the black periodicals The Colored American (1837-42) and the Elevator (1865-1883), noted that he then stood as the oldest black editor in the Western hemisphere.6 As Bell and Brown illustrate, the progenitors of an early African American print culture evidenced a strong sense of connection with their creole contemporaries in the Anglophone Atlantic world beyond the mainland U.S. Yet subsequent studies of the early black press continue to figure its history strictly within American national borders.7

Indeed, there may be good reasons for its continuing to remain so: the historical legacies of both slavery and race diverged considerably between the early Caribbean and the U.S., and it is at best problematic to talk about “black” phenomena in the West Indies in the

---

6Armistead & Wilson 69; Brown 287-88.
same way as it is done in American contexts. In the West Indies, the emergence of a non-white press coincides with the rise of the free people of colour as a vocal faction in the islands’ political public sphere. Traditionally the mixed-race descendents of white European fathers and free or enslaved African or Afro-Creole mothers, the coloured or “brown” community inhabited a fraught middle area in the West Indian system of racial domination—a social pyramid constituted by a white planter minority at the apex and a base of enslaved blacks. Although their social and civil rights were marginalized vis-à-vis the elite white caste, free brown people could also claim some level of social privilege and prestige—many, at times, disavowed any connection with the black population or were themselves slaveholders.

However, there are also compelling reasons for including the West Indian periodicals within an account of the rise of an English-speaking black press. After all, the Freedom’s Journal, widely considered to be the first genuinely black newspaper in America, was co-edited by John Brown Russworm, a Jamaican-born free man of colour (like the Watchman’s co-editor Robert Osborn, Russworm was the son of a white merchant father and an enslaved mother). Moreover, following cultural theorist Paul Gilroy’s usage of “blackness” as a relationship to a broader diasporic and cultural consciousness forged by the legacies of African chattel slavery and the middle passage, one can discern important confluences in the rise of an Anglophone black press in America and the Caribbean. In the West Indian context, the story largely begins with Henry Loving, an Antiguan man of colour who took over editorial duties at the Antigua Weekly Register in 1827—the same year that Russworm and his collaborator Samuel Cornish founded The Freedom’s Journal in New York. Although there had existed other Caribbean periodicals which had served the brown community or were edited by men of colour, Loving’s newspaper was the first to become radical, evincing a strong sense of race consciousness as it agitated against the planter-dominated colonial government and the proslavery lobby in Britain. Loving published alongside the Watchman’s Jamaican

---

8 For an engaging discussion of these differences, see: Hodes.
9 Hall; Heuman (1981); Campbell; Salih (2011).
10 Pride & Wilson 12.
11 Gilroy 1-40.
editors, Edward Jordon and Robert Osborn, Samuel Cable in St. Kitts, and later Samuel Jackman Prescod in Barbados to create a bulwark of liberal non-white periodicals which actively undermined plantocratic hegemony throughout the Caribbean.\textsuperscript{12}

As I demonstrate further below, these periodicals are best understood as collectively forming an early colonial \textit{black} press, both for the extent to which their mixed-race editors proudly (and pointedly) asserted their status as the “children of Africa in the colonies” and for the ways in which they used this identification as the basis of racial solidarity for an imagined readership that brought together brown and black, free and slave alike.\textsuperscript{13} This chapter thus situates the free coloured periodicals of the early Caribbean within a broader transnational Anglophone black print culture, one that early black editors like Bell and Delany saw themselves affiliated. Specifically, I map how the \textit{Watchman} editors adopted the rhetoric of loyalist imperial servitude to cultivate a sense of transnational community for Jamaica’s free and enslaved Afro-Creole population. A seeming capitulation to British imperial majesty and rule, this editorial discourse nevertheless provided the means to mount a sharp counter-offensive against the Jamaican planter press and the incipient proslavery nationalism by which colonial elites raged against British interference into slaveholding. While drawing attention to the plantocratic threat to secede from the British empire and establish an independent American state, the \textit{Watchman} editors also joined their American counterparts in articulating ideals of black citizenship that powerfully opposed the exclusionary nationalism of American slaveholders.

As I illustrate below, Canning’s amelioration resolutions were instrumental in giving shape to the powerful cultural imperatives which motivated both the rise of the black press and to the concurrent politicization of the reactionary proslavery press—a dual process that unfolded in both the U.S. and the West Indies. In both of these regions, black pressmen engaged in a series of representational and narrative tactics that explicitly


\textsuperscript{13} Newton.
drew upon the British empire’s vocal commitment to amelioration and reform. Specifically, they seized upon the ideological shifts that had taken place in imperial governance to reimagine the geopolitical reality of the British empire as a critical space, one in which the powerful material and ideological networks of empire could be appropriated as a tool for boldly articulating new and critical forms of black subjectivity. The loyalist consciousness of the Watchman, like that evidenced by David Walker’s infamous Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World (1829-31), offers a fascinating instance of a broader tradition of black internationalism in which allegiance to crown and empire paradoxically offered one of the most powerful tools of self-determination. This chapter thus explores the radical possibilities of slave amelioration for those African American and Afro-Creole writers who pledged their allegiance to a profoundly symbolic vision of the British empire—a vision which strongly resonated with the normative, didactic, and utopian renderings of amelioration articulated throughout the long eighteenth century.

5.2. “Coloured Citizens of the World”

As the Caribbean newspaper historian Andrew Lewis has noted, the political and social orientations of early West Indian periodicals were diverse, even within individual islands. And though colonial press liberties in the Caribbean had largely been the exclusive right of those who worked to maintain racial hierarchy in their slave societies, the strong traditions of a free and critical press persisted as an important component of the political culture of England’s sugar colonies. Beginning in 1823, however, island assemblies felt compelled to more seriously regulate the production and transmission of colonial news after the British Parliament announced its implementation of measures to improve the conditions of slave and free black populations in the slaveholding colonies. Despite the government’s deliberate vagueness in committed to a timeline for colonial action, the ameliorative mandates they imposed were fairly interpreted as locking Britain into the formal abolition of slavery across its empire. As a result, the colonial slaveholding oligarchy reacted with a countervailing flood of print propaganda that was

14 Lewis 143-70, 174-6. One might also, for instance, usefully recall here that it was Barbados in the mid-seventeenth century, rather than Boston in the late-eighteenth century, which first rallied against the British empire under the banner of “no taxation without representation.”
hostile to the home government’s critique of colonial governance and to imperial interference with the islands’ legislative autonomy.\textsuperscript{15} Despite their heterogeneity, all of the Jamaican serials prior to the \textit{Watchman} expressed an active hostility to ameliorationist and antislavery sentiment in any form; thus the term “planter press” fairly captures the overwhelmingly proslavery commitments of Jamaica’s print culture. Among these newspapers, the daily \textit{Jamaica Courant} was seen as the chief organ of the planters, the \textit{Jamaica Chronicle} its nearest rival in influence. Through their thunderous invectives against the British parliament and abolitionists as well as the missionaries and free people of colour closer to home, the \textit{Courant} and \textit{Chronicle} strongly reinforced the ideological bounds of proslavery conformity in the island’s political public sphere and its attendant print culture. Indeed, when the \textit{Watchman} began publication in 1829, Jamaica had become what historian Philip D. Curtin terms an “over-papered” society, with over twenty different periodicals publishing in an area smaller than that of Connecticut.\textsuperscript{16} By their own reckoning, the \textit{Watchman} was “but one semi-weekly publication—a dingy little sheet, which differs in opinion from the others,” while “there are, in Jamaica, supported and patronized by the planters, five weekly and two daily papers, ALL of them decidedly pro-slavery, and many directly opposed to the Government under which we live.”\textsuperscript{17} 

Given the oversaturation of the island by a pro-colonial print culture, it would seem that pre-emancipation Jamaica should offer a veritable case study in the use of creole newspapers to inculcate what Benedict Anderson so famously described as an “imagined community” of readers bound together in a shared sense of simultaneous existence via the social saturation of print. After all, Anderson’s account of the formation of nationalist sentiment emphasizes the historical played by early-nineteenth-century creole presses of the Americas. In early U.S. newspapers especially, Anderson traces the principal medium by which nationalistic ideologies could be framed within their characteristic spatial and temporal dimensions, converting the “particularistic localism” of the provincial press into a broader sense of nationality through, for instance, the newspaper’s “refraction of even ‘world events’ into a specific imagined world of vernacular readers” that unfolded

\textsuperscript{15} For a comprehensive overview of the abolition-era print wars, see Ragatz. See also: Lewis 268-309.

\textsuperscript{16} Curtin 57.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Watchman}, April 25, 1832, 5.
through a “steady, solid simultaneity through time.” During the revolutionary period between 1776 and 1838, when a radically modern nationalistic ethos swept across the American continents, newspapers became the primary vehicle through which individual readers learned to see themselves as inhabiting a common space, imagining themselves as members of an emerging nation and shared national culture.\(^{18}\)

Yet for the brown editors and anonymous contributors who came to challenge Jamaica’s white monopoly on cultural production in the pages of *Watchman*, their own critical interventions into the proslavery public sphere often hinged on the inevitable failure of print as nationalizing propaganda—its inability to engineer a sense of creole society along the lines of the imagined community. Such awareness is neatly illustrated by one *Watchman* contributor, writing under the nom de plume “Monitor,” in his several dispatches to the newspaper.\(^{19}\) In November 1831, for instance, he ridicules the “besotted ignoramus” editing the *Courant* specifically for an excessive use of the first-person plural pronoun within editorial discourse. He has amused himself, he declares, by “counting the number of WEs which have appeared [in the *Courant*] from Monday until Sunday last,” and proceeds to fill nearly two-thirds of a page with examples of such usage from the *Courant*: “Monday. WE learn/ WE have not/ WE are assured/ WE shall anxiously/ WE understand/ WE hope/ WE are satisfied/ WE shall resume/ WE have been taught/ WE have no doubt/ WE shall, however... Tuesday. WE understand/ WE hope...” and so forth, listing some ninety more instances of the offending predicate phrases which feature the word *we*.\(^{20}\)

There is of course a sharp critical edge to this playful satire. *Ad hominem* attacks on rival editors and their prose were conventional within contemporary print wars, and the *Watchman* frequently coupled its criticism of the proslavery ideologies of the planter press with pleas to “spare us the mortification of beholding the King’s English maimed,

---

\(^{18}\) Anderson 49-68.

\(^{19}\) Despite the androcentric nature of the coloured public, the *Watchman* did occasionally publish letters by correspondents who explicitly identified themselves as female. When the purported gender of an anonymous correspondent is unknown, I use “his” to reflect the broader gender biases of the newspaper.

\(^{20}\) *Watchman*, November 13, 1830.
mutilated, and murdered.” Moreover, such attacks were inextricable from the articulation of racial consciousness within the paper. Devaluing the literary merits of the white periodicals, the *Watchman* elevated its own standing and defended the respectability of the coloured community against the many negrophobic attacks made in the planter press. Monitor’s letter to the editor thus offers an instance of the larger strategies by which brown people articulated a sense of community over and against rival claims by whites. Yet the paradox of a seemingly communal rejection of the Courant’s editorial “we” cuts much deeper than a simple self-other binary. In fact, by stripping the planter press down to its barest ideology of manufactured consensus, Monitor’s burlesque looks forward to contemporary attempts to complicate and rethink the hegemonic instrumentalities of the printed medium—suggesting, for instance, the very self-aware role played by readers themselves in the formation of reading publics. In contrast to the Courant’s editorial practices, Monitor models reading strategies that resist consensus-based language. As I discuss in further detail below, such tactics were part and parcel with the *Watchman* newspaper’s broader editorial strategy of fomenting resistance and dissent on the island.

Yet here as elsewhere in the newspaper, the problem of racial exclusion and homogeneity was even greater than the matter of dissenting voices, further vexing any attempt to imagine community in the West Indian slave societies. By 1831, the free coloured communities of the Caribbean had every reason to ridicule the planter press’s attempts to elide their presence within the West Indian public sphere. In addition to providing an efficient tool for expressing a radicalized brown consciousness, their newspapers had also begun to undermine the well-established social and complexional hierarchies of the Caribbean by including free blacks and slaves under their auspices. According to the

21 *Watchman*, January 8, 1831, 5.
22 This is not to suggest the disappearance of conflict between the brown and black community, or even within these communities themselves. As Heuman and others have demonstrated, interracial conflicts continued to press upon attempts to unify the non-white community, especially in the wake of emancipation and apprenticeship; these conflicts dramatically resurfaced, for instance, in the debates surrounding black and brown representative in the colonial legislature in the post-emancipation period. Similarly, the expanding spheres of inclusion evidenced in the brown newspapers should not obscure either the elite nature of brown leadership or the exclusions which persisted amidst the reconfigurations of social and racial allegiances in the age of emancipation. For instance, on the marginalized place of women of colour within the Jamaican public sphere during the emancipation era, for instance, see: Newton 58-9; Sheller 90-117. Nevertheless, these more
Watchman, “the policy of the whites has occasioned a union between the blacks and browns which never before existed; and there is now so good an understanding between them as nothing will ever dissolve or injure.” 23 Similarly, despite himself being a slaveholder, Henry Loving used his tenure as the editor of the Antigua Weekly Register to advocate for the cause of slaves, free blacks, and the coloured class of Antigua. 24 As the historian Gad J. Heuman has noted of Jamaica, the abolition-era plantocracy’s laggard attempts to secure an interracial coalition of the free as a bulwark against abolitionist sentiment were “too little, too late.” 25 An emergent sense of racial solidarity had come to unify brown and black free and enslaved persons. When, for instance, a Courant editorial suggested that the free coloureds “ought to be satisfied when [they] find the respectable part of [their] class treated with every mark of consideration [by whites],” the Watchman boldly scoffed that the “opinion of every coloured man” is that “[t]he people of colour seek a participation in civil rights ONLY; any further association is to them a matter of perfect indifference.” 26 Brown editors like Jordon and Loving were steadfast in their unwillingness to limit their newspaper’s we to a colonial free caste.

Perhaps most critically of all, neither would the imagined community of the coloured periodicals share the regionalistic resentments of the Jamaican planter class. 27 From its very inception, a self-conscious globalism characterized the Watchman’s own self-representation of its black reading public as it resolutely positioned its own publication within the broader chorus of black voices resisting slavery across the Americas and in the world beyond. Casting an alternately anxious and hopeful eye upon the plight of free and enslaved blacks in Canada, the U.S., Haiti, and other West Indian colonies, the coloured periodicals situated the concerns of their readers within a framework in which African diasporic subjects were not aligned with any specific national or regional particularity. Yet an even more direct form of cosmopolitanism was evident in the coloured

---

23 Quoted in Heuman 50-1.
24 Lewis 119-20.
25 Hueman 44-51.
26 Watchman, December 8, 1830.
27 For a recent examination of the political culture of the white creole slaveholders in Jamaica that stresses how a regionalist identification was articulated in reaction to local and imperial challenges, see Petley 69-102.
periodicals’ use of the British empire as an affective locus of identification, one that furnished black diasporic subjects with a powerful sense of political and spatial affiliation. As a world power that had made an explicit commitment to combating slavery (however belatedly), the British crown could command what Melanie Newton rightly calls a “proimperial nationalism” in the Caribbean which, while a seeming capitulation to the hegemony of Anglo-imperialist rule, could nevertheless be used to facilitate the diasporic and racial consciousness of the free people of colour. Ultimately, discourses of “empire loyalism” could be functionally repurposed for a variety of radical political aims, including challenges to the exclusionary logic of the nationalism itself.

In this vein, the early coloured periodicals of the Caribbean forcefully claim a place in the ongoing history of black Atlantic cultural formations, which articulate what Gilroy terms a “counterculture of modernity” by virtue of their inherent challenge to Eurocentric models of nationalism. Indeed, the empire loyalism of African Americans in the post-Revolutionary moment has been the subject of a number of recent studies elaborating upon the cultural aftermath of Lord Dunmore’s proclamation, which declared that any enslaved person of African descent who fought in the Revolutionary War alongside the British redcoats would receive immediate manumission. As these studies suggest, the reverberating after-lives of this first “emancipation proclamation” can be traced in the submerged royalism and the affective engagement with crown and empire that is evident in the creation of what Sylvia Frey terms “a global African world”—from the events of the Haitian Revolution to the early pan-Africanist colonization movements which established free black settlement communities throughout the world. Moreover, the fact that the imagined communities of the early black Atlantic were so often articulated as a loyal ‘we’ complicates their relationship to the print cultural process by which the American press and a nationalist ethos became intertwined. In an influential reworking

---

28 Newton 167-68. On coloured loyalism in Jamaica, see also Heuman 23-32.
29 The phrase “empire loyalism” appears in Bayly 112. I prefer this phrase to imperial nationalism since the print controversies I examine below explicitly challenge the exclusionary logic of nationhood and participate within a longer political tradition of loyalism. However, Newton’s elucidation of the “uncertain political implications of proimperial African diasporic consciousness” (206) is a crucial reminder of the profound ambivalences within the critical and political discourses of the abolition-era free people of colour.
30 Gilroy 1-39.
31 Frey 47-71. See also: Sidbury; Pybus; Gosse; Gilbert.
of Anderson’s thesis for the early national U.S. context, Trish Loughran has shown how cultural visions of an expansive federal nation encompassing the totality of the United States began to dissolve when the material channels of trade and communication became efficient enough to enable various local contexts to reflect upon what has happening in other states or, indeed, the nation as a whole. In other words, as soon as the nation developed the technological capacity to transmit a sense of national “simultaneity,” sectional interests tended to reject the idea of national unity rather than incorporate themselves within it. But if, as Loughran suggests, empire gave way to nation as the totalizing menace against which declarations of American cultural and regional identity were proclaimed, contemporary black authors nevertheless responded with a simultaneous movement against the retreat into exclusion and disavowal—increasing rather than narrowing their scale of affiliation in relation to their abilities to transmit and circulate their texts widely in and beyond the nation.

5.3. David Walker and the ameliorative empire
A strategic and calculated hostility to nation-based and regionally limited forms of political community not only gives the early West Indian black its most incendiary charge, but offers an important site of connection for the early black counterpublics of the Anglo-American world. Turning to the Antebellum U.S., the circulation in the south of the *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* (1829-31) by the free black South Carolinian David Walker (1796-1830) caused no less alarm for paranoid southern authorities than the *Watchman* did in Jamaica. Walker’s *Appeal*, a signal publication in the rise of the antebellum black press, is worth examining in relation to the contemporary *Watchman* newspaper for several reasons. Both publications portended the insurrectionary potential of domestic free and enslaved black populations, and both immediately preceded large-scale slave insurrections of 1831 (the Nat Turner slave revolt in Virginia and the so-called Baptist War in Jamaica), for which both were held culpable by their respective southern critics. And while scholars have tended to examine the subversive dimensions of Walker’s *Appeal* through its prophecies of a black leader who would help lead the slaves in armed resistance against their southern masters, little

---

32 Loughran 1-29.
attention has been paid to the extent to which such radical assertions are of a piece with the *Appeal’s* broader attack on American “nationhood” itself.

In fact, the *Appeal* explicitly savages the idea of the “nation” as a modern form of political community—a rejection which remains obscured in the persistent critical framing of Walker as a pioneer of early African American nationalism. In fact, the *Appeal* adopts a highly vexed attitude toward the first two terms which comprise the appellation “African American Nationalism,” and these ambivalences in turn complicate any attempt to situate Walker in relation to the third term. To begin with, the term “African” is rarely used by Walker to identify the creole descendents of Africans in the *Appeal*; “coloured” is the preferred nomenclature to identify what Walker calls his racial “brethren.” This is unsurprising given the *Appeal’s* arguments against schemes to repatriate free blacks to Africa by the American Colonization Society (the most influential American antislavery organization in the pre-Garrisonian era in which Walker published). Yet if for Walker the term “African” is fraught with colonizationist fantasies of racial nationalism and a “purified” America, the term “American” is itself a veritable synonym for the slaveholders and their supporters, sometimes functioning as the shorthand to refer to the hypocritical “white Christians of America”—Northerner and Southerner—whom Walker excoriates throughout his polemic. Using a very explicit logic of identification and disavowal, Walker quickly establishes “American” as a commonplace to refer to “our natural enemies” (62). This “nature,” he makes clear, arises from the historical and contemporary political legacies of slaveholding rather than any kind of biological essentialism (62-3). Thus, when the second-person address of the *Appeal* shifts from the coloured readership to the “Americans,” it does so to reinforce an underlying disavowal of any connection with them: “O Americans! Americans!! I call God—I call Angels—I call men, to witness, that your DESTRUCTION is at hand, and will be speedily consummated unless you REPENT” (45).

---

33 The attribution of this title to Walker is now practically axiomatic. See, for instance, Stuckey; Burrows.
34 I have counted only a few instances where Walker uses the term African in this manner, as when he identifies *we*, “the blacks, or Africans,” (77); uses of the term “coloured” are almost innumerable in the text.
While “white Americans” appear almost in toto as “our natural enemies” (62), the political rather than racial basis of this disavowal is further underlined by what the historian Van Gosse identifies as the “fervent anglophilia” apparent in the *Appeal*.\(^{35}\) For instance, in striking contrast to the Americans, who “treat us more cruel than any people have treated another, on this earth since it came from the hands of the creator” (43), Walker maintains that:

> The English are the best friends the coloured people have upon earth. Though they have oppressed us a little and have colonies now in the West Indies, which oppress us sorely.—Yet notwithstanding they (the English) have done one hundred times more for the melioration of our condition, than all the other nations of the earth put together. The blacks cannot but respect the English as a nation, notwithstanding they have treated us a little cruel.

> There is no intelligent black man who knows any thing, but esteems a real Englishman, let him see him in what part of the world he will—for they are the greatest benefactors we have upon earth. We have here and there, in other nations, good friends. But as a nation, the English are our friends. (43)

One of the few scholars to take seriously the extent to which the English loom large in Walker’s polemics,\(^{36}\) Gosse situates such sentiments within the broader traditions of black loyalism that grew out of the Dunmore proclamation of 1775. Bringing the idea of a pro-black imperial authority “home” to African Americans, the proclamation underscored the already widely assumed status of England as a new Zion for slaves in the wake of the Mansfield decision of 1772—the legal precedent which formally nullified the bondage of any enslaved person brought to the British Isles.\(^{37}\) According to Gosse, the pro-British dimensions of Walker’s thought can thus be placed within a powerful dimension of African American politics that persists as late as the onset of the civil war:

> What lesson would David Walker have drawn from these facts [of Britain’s commitment to abolitionist policies]? First, that Britain was capable of aiding African people in good faith; second, that British law could be relied upon; and third, that Britain had tangible global power. None of these claims could have been made for the U.S. government. Yet everything that Walker observed was a prologue to the efflorescence of imperial solidarity from the 1830s on, when American Negrophobia met its mirror image, an emphatic embrace of blackness, leading Frederick Douglass to observe sardonically on his first visit to Britain that

---

\(^{35}\) Gosse 1005.

\(^{36}\) When noticed at all, Walker's Angophilia tends to be brushed off as little more than a “sentimental notion of British freedom,” as Simon Schama puts it (13).

\(^{37}\) Gosse 1007-1010.
it was “an advantage to be a nigger here,” even if he was “hardly black enough for British taste. (1010)

Of course, it is tempting to examine Walker’s sentiments, as Gosse suggests we do, within the pattern of mid-Victorian black Anglophilia and British Negrophilia outlined in Elisa Tamarkin’s influential recent studies. Yet as her studies convincingly demonstrate, the affective engagement with Englishness evidenced by later African American intellectuals such Frederick Douglass and William Wells Brown represented less a sweeping condemnation of the American nation-state than a novel form of belonging to it. Thus, according to Tamarkin, these strains of Anglophilia represented “a devotion that provided not so much a place where antebellum Americans found release from the burdens of their own nationality, but where their “Americanness” was lived in other languages of national expression.” With his overwhelming tone of radicalism and fury, Walker makes at best an awkward fit among such African American strivings for new modes of American national belonging. In fact, his profound ambivalence toward belonging to the American nation is perhaps most trenchantly illustrated by the full title of his Appeal, which addresses itself “to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in particular, and very expressly, to those of the United States.” As Levine has observed, Walker’s notion of a “coloured” citizenship invokes a black Atlantic subjectivity in which selves seek out extensive transmission and free circulation, much as his notoriously suppressed text of the Appeal was able to surreptitiously. Yet Levine’s own delimiting of this process to the national concerns engendered by the Missouri Compromise ignores the explicitly transnational frame of Walker’s title. Walker’s text explicitly posits a coloured “world” citizenship defined in excess of the nation, and it is from this supranational register of black Atlantic subjectivity that the deeply symbolic attachment to the British crown evinced in his and other black publications gains its rhetorical power. Where the planter-oriented white presses in both the antebellum South and the West Indies responded to British ameliorationism with a stalwart counter-rhetoric that recapitulated an Anglophobic revolutionary tradition, they also provided racially

40 Levine 116-72.
marginalized populations with a powerful means of opposition and resistance by rendering themselves loyal subjects of that tradition.\textsuperscript{41}

As the Black Public Sphere Collective has suggested, black public spheres are often a “transnational space whose violent birth and diasporic conditions of life provide a counternarrative to the exclusionary national narratives of Europe, the United States, the Caribbean, and Africa.”\textsuperscript{42} Similarly, a carefully crafted redeployment of imperial rhetoric offered the early antebellum black press with a way of representing their own counter-publics, situating them within an expansive and interconnected framework that was inherently antithetical to the forms of racialized nationalism espoused by planter elites and their allies. In order, therefore, to better understand the complex linkages between Walker’s diasporic consciousness and his proimperial sentiments, one must look to the contemporary historical contexts surrounding British colonial amelioration and to the role played by amelioration itself in the text. For Walker, Britain’s signal contribution—the very basis of its claim to black loyalty—is rooted in the fact of its having “done one hundred times more for the melioration of our condition, than all the other nations of the earth put together” (43).

Correctly interpreting Britain’s amelioration policies as a mass pedagogical intervention into slave society, Walker thus allegorizes the British imperial project as the fulfillment of his own textual agency—the education of black populations writ large.\textsuperscript{43} A recurring concern throughout the text (but most especially the second section, entitled “Our Wretchedness in Consequence of Ignorance”), didactic objectives centrally antimate the Appeal. To begin with, the text formally presents itself as an address delivered by a hyper-educated and well-informed coloured man (and frequently incorporates the writings of other educated blacks such as the speeches of African Methodist Episcopal reverend Richard Allen and articles from the Freedom’s Journal, the black newspaper for which Walker was also a contributor and agent). The text as a whole thus cleverly

\textsuperscript{41} For the southern U.S. context more generally, see Rugemer 221-48.
\textsuperscript{42} The Black Public Sphere Collective 1.
\textsuperscript{43} See Blouet. Blouet’s is one of the few studies which examines amelioration as an educational interventional in the lives of slaves rather than as squarely an extension of disciplinary power upon (especially gendered) bodies—in other words, one of the few to seriously engage and examine its own explicit logic.
reinforces its own initial analysis of the negrophic assertions of Thomas Jefferson and other founding fathers of the nation (12-18), offering itself as a meta-critique as it refutes racist claims of innate black mental inferiority. Moreover, Walker stresses throughout that the demonstrably low condition of American blacks is the consequence, not the cause, of their plight. For Walker, the true violence of enslavement—what Orlando Patterson calls the “social death” inflicted upon the forced labourer within the slave system—is the proscription of education to free and enslaved blacks in the New World slave societies. In fact, in the revised 1831 edition of the Appeal, Walker inserted diatribes against the new state laws that were enacted as a result of his text’s surreptitious circulation throughout the South—policies which further reinforced the disabling of the black mind that Walker lamented in the original text.44

I heard a wretch in the state of North Carolina said, that if any man would teach a black person whom he held in slavery, to spell, read or write, he would prosecute him to the very extent of the law.—Said the ignorant wretch, “a Nigar, ought not to have any more sense than enough to work for his master... God has however, very recently published some of their secret crimes on the house top, that the world may gaze on their Christianity and see of what kind it is composed.—Georgia for instance, God has completely shown to the world, the Christianity among its white inhabitants. A law has recently passed the Legislature of this republican State (Georgia) prohibiting all free or slave persons of colour, from learning to read or write; another law has passed the republican House of Delegates... in Virginia, to prohibit all persons of colour, (free and slave) from learning to read or write, and even to hinder them from meeting together in order to worship our Maker!!!” (55-6)

Walker’s ironic references to the “republicanism” of the tyrannical Southern states is further reinforced by his description of their hypocritical confrontation with the text itself:

Why do the Slave-holders or Tyrants of America and their advocates fight so hard to keep my brethren from receiving and reading my Book of Appeal to them? ... Why do they search vessels, &c. when entering the harbours of tyrannical States, to see if any of my Books can be found, for fear that my brethren will get them to read. Why, I thought the Americans proclaimed to the world that they are happy, enlightened, humane and Christian people, all the inhabitants of the country enjoy equal Rights!! America is the Asylum for the oppressed of all nations!!! (75-6)

44 For an account of the impact of the Appeal in the South, see Hinks (1997) 116-73.
Consciously framed as an agent of black education, the *Appeal* thus sets out to undo the mental damage of slavery, and these later insertions strongly reinforce the extent to which Walker saw the structural role played by his own circulating text in the confrontation between agents of amelioration and the hypocritical "Americans."

This confrontation—in which competing ideas of empire and nation most forcefully, and tellingly, clash—is the very crux of what might be termed the “political education” that Walker sought to provide the benighted black populations of the New World through the mass circulation of his text. Inextricable from the text’s political analysis, these complex didactic imperatives can best be discerned in the fourth and final section: “Our Wretchedness in Consequence of the Colonizing Plan.” In this section, Walker uses his criticisms of the racial nationalism of the American Colonization Society as an opportunity to engage with the founding logic of America—the slaveholding republic understood in its national and historical entirety. The section begins by providing an extensive overview of the Liberia colonization plan of Henry Clay, the American secretary of state and co-founder of the ACS. According to Clay, whom Walker quotes extensively, “coloured men” are a peculiarly situated class in America, neither enjoying the “immunities of freemen” nor subjected to the “incapacities of slaves.” Given “their condition, and the unconquerable prejudice resulting from their colour, they never could amalgamate with the free whites of this country. It [is] desirable, therefore... to drain them off” onto Africa (47-8). This colonization scheme, Clay further notes, would have the additional benefit of “introduc[ing] into that quarter of the globe, of the arts, civilization, and Christianity.” At this point in the *Appeal*’s summary of the ACS plans, Walker interjects to critique the fallacy of Clay’s desire to uplift and enlighten blacks at home and abroad. The Americans’ true motive for establishing an African colony, Walker maintains, is “to fix a plan to get those of the coloured people, who are said to be free, away from among those of our brethren whom they unjustly hold in bondage, so that they may be enabled to keep them more secure in ignorance and wretchedness... [For] the free will learn the slaves bad habits, by teaching them that they are MEN, as well as other people, and certainly ought and must be FREE” (49). And just as colonization would leave Walker’s enslaved brethren in perpetual mental torpor by removing the socializing
influences of free blacks, so too would the scheme sink freed people back into their former state of mental degradation through re-enslavement in Africa: as labourers, free blacks will ultimately join their African brethren in being forced to “dig up gold and silver” for the benefit of Clay and the other avaricious white Americans (53). Here, Walker’s repeated references to “digging up gold and silver” in the Appeal explicitly conjure the so-called “black legends” of the Iberian conquest of America. In effect, Walker traces a line of historical continuity between, on the one hand, the aims of present-day American colonizationists and slaveholders, and, on the other hand, those of early modern Spanish conquistadors who “import[ed] the Africans from the Portuguese settlement in Africa, to dig up gold and silver, and work their plantations for them” (38).

Stripping America of its very claim to a foundational Protestantism—the vantage point from which the early nation could legitimate itself by narrating its emergence as a providential triumph over tyranny—Walker then sets the stage for the chapter’s blistering deconstructions of American revolutionary rhetoric. Against Henry Clay’s own public self-fashioning as a modern day Benjamin Franklin, Walker points to the statesman as a perfect illustration of the hypocrisy at the core of American civic nationalism: “Hearken to this Statesman,” Walker pronounces, “whom God sent into Kentucky, an orphan boy, penniless, and friendless, where he not only gave him the comforts of life, but raised him almost to the very highest honour in the nation.” (50) Not only, he asserts, is such a triumphalist narrative of individual progress barred to blacks, but it is absolutely contingent upon the system of racial exclusion that drives it. 45 The hypocritical Clay is thus one of the many degenerate “Americans of North and of South America, including the West India Islands” whom “God blessed... with all the comforts of life... [and] of everything calculated to do them good—not satisfied with this, however, they wanted slaves, and wanted us for their slaves, who belong to the Holy Ghost, and no other, who we shall have to serve instead of tyrants” (51). Indeed, the inherent guilt of the slaveholders leads Walker to the most explicit condemnation of Americans as a group: “Oh Americans! ... you are ruined!!! Some of you are good men; but the will of my God must be done. Those avaricious and ungodly tyrants among you, I am awfully afraid will

45 On the contingencies of revolutionary ideologies and racial exclusion, see for instance: Harris.
drag down the vengeance of God upon you” (51). Much as Samuel Johnson did before him in his infamous pamphlet *Taxation No Tyranny*, Walker exploits the deliberate aporias that were necessitated by the slaveholding republic’s adoption of the metaphors of political emancipation: “Hear your language further... Now Americans! I ask you candidly, was your sufferings under Great Britain, one hundredth part as cruel and tyrannical as you have rendered ours under you?” (78). The section ends with the *Appeal*’s famously sardonic discussion of *The Declaration of Independence*, the document that encapsulated the moral and political justifications for seceding from the British empire. Just as the Appeal begins by demystifying Jefferson’s racialist theories as so much slaveholding ideology, so too does it conclude by revealing how the American republic, as an outgrowth of Enlightenment modernity, remains indissolubly bound up with forms of racialized tyranny and exploitation.

Along the way, Walker’s pedagogy of political reform is never far from the surface. Throughout the final section of the *Appeal*, he repeatedly underscores the imagined kinship between his own textual practices and Britain’s ameliorative empire to create an alternative basis of allegiance and identification for his audience. Indeed, the final section repeatedly offers a series of didactic prompts, such as Walker’s introductory declaration that he “presume[s], that every intelligent man of colour must have some idea of Mr. Henry Clay, originally of Virginia, but now of Kentucky; they know too, perhaps, whether he is friend, or a foe to the coloured citizens of this country, and of the world” (49). After unmasking the insidious motives of the ACS, Walker states that “[n]ow I appeal to and ask every citizen of these United States and of the world, both white and black... Do you believe that Mr. Henry Clay, late Secretary of State, and now in Kentucky, is a friend to the blacks, further, than his personal interest extends?” (52). These numerous instances of direct address to his readers culminate in his final appeal to his black audience (including, he hopes, the slaves who will have the address read aloud to them in the South); there, he declares that the *Appeal* contains “language so very simple, that the most ignorant, who can read at all, may easily understand... that your freedom is your natural right” (74). And if an understanding of black freedom entails that “every intelligent man of colour must have some idea Mr. Henry Clay,” so too does it
presume that there is “no intelligent black man who knows any thing, but esteems a real Englishman”—a presumption that is dramatically enforced by the heavy hand of Walker’s pedagogy. In the midst of his critique of Revolutionary ideology—the exposition of the ways in which the national narrative is fundamentally serves to reinforce the interest of white primacy and the political supremacy of slaveholders—the British empire looms as an ever-present counter-ideal: “If any of us see fit to go away, go to those who have been for many years, and now our greatest benefactors—the English” (58). “Escape,” Walker suggests, “from the U. States (or to [blacks] hell upon earth!!!) to the hospitable shores of Canada… among the English, our real friends and benefactors” (51).

To imagine the black diasporic community, the text links coloured citizenship with an affective loyalty to Britain, highlighting the confluences between the black Atlantic and the British empire as mutually exceeding the ideological and geographic limits of the nation and, therefore, challenging the most basic premises of slaveholding republicanism. Yet there remains the obvious problem of how to translate this appeal into a viable model for the black diasporic community, a viable alternative to the exclusionary nationalism of the U.S. In a recent study of the role of “emplacement” in the Appeal, Christopher Apap cogently notes that the contemporary critical emphasis on distinguishing between currents of radical separatism and liberal integrationism in the study of early black political theories elides the complexities of Walker’s own sense of community.46 Yet Apap’s own attempts to move beyond this dualism nevertheless illustrates the inescapability of this binary logic: for Apap, Walker’s use of the Biblical narrative of Exodus gestures to his belief in the “essential Americaanness of African Americans” and his desire to expand the idea of America into a “multiethnic democratic nation” that looks forward to the reformist patriotism of Frederick Douglass in mid-century.47 Ubiquitous in American studies, the notion that the critique of the nation always suggest a deeper embrace of it hardly makes sense of Walker’s fervent Anglophilia. As he makes clear throughout the Appeal, the only way for the Americans to head off God’s impending

46 Apap 331.
47 331, 349.
wrath is by aligning themselves with the imperial program of mass black education and amelioration. In other words, national redemption can only occur by embracing the designs of both the black author and the British, by symbolically repudiating the revolution that severed this imagined kinship of blacks and Britons. Offering a rejection rather than a reformist expansion of the narrative of modern nationhood, the Appeal articulates a vision of a black British Atlantic that anticipates the complex negotiations of national and international space in twentieth-century black civil rights discourses. As the historian Nikhil Pal Singh has argued

It is important to distinguish the black capacity to represent America from the idea that Negroes were simply Americans, as if that relationship was and always is self-evident. Like America itself, the formation of black communal identity in this period was open to multiple determinations. A flawed view of “nation”—whether it is the typical Stalinist view of the black “nation” as a territorial, cultural, and psychological unity defined by population concentration alone, the liberal assumption that race and nation are antithetical principles, or the Garveyite vision equating racial separatism and nation-building—should not obscure the modern dynamic of black nationality.48

A fuller examination of the empire loyalism of early black writers in the Caribbean proves useful to making sense of the complex dynamics of black representational strategies in the amelioration era.

5.4.1. Empire loyalism in emancipation-era Jamaica

In terms which powerfully echoed Walker’s articulation of the transatlantic allegiances of American blacks, brown editors in Jamaica were even more determined to contrast a deeply symbolic vision of British empire against the American slaveholding republics. Speaking on behalf of the coloured Jamaicans, the Watchman declared that “[t]hose who are at all acquainted with the character of the people of colour... [must know that] they will be found rallying under the British banner, wherever that banner is unfurled, and shedding the last drop of their blood in maintaining the supremacy of that government against the attacks of both internal and external enemies.”49 This loyalty, moreover, is principally underlined by the “deep rooted aversion in their minds to the Americans,

49 Watchman, June 08, 1831, 4.
under whose protection it is almost certain an attempt would be made to place the Island, in the event of the Crown entertaining the idea of absolving [Jamaica] from our allegiance.”

Similarly, in an address to the Antigua colonial legislature in a November 1829 issue of the *Antigua Weekly Register*, Loving would affirm that though he (as a non-white West Indian) “labour[ed] under unmerited political disabilities and privations enough to shake the loyalty of one possessing less religion and education than myself... let me tell you, Gentlemen, that *I* have never thought of rallying around an American Eagle for some fancied offence offered me by the parent state.”

Such editorials evidence the largely unified response of brown community leaders against revolutionary nationalist outpourings in the oldest of the West Indian legislative colonies. This proslavery groundswell was particularly fervent in Jamaica, where it found clearest expression in the planter press and its call for independence and secession from the British Empire—a movement that self-consciously evoked the rhetoric of the American Revolution.

From its earliest extant issues to those leading up to the enactment of slave emancipation in 1834, the *Watchman* sought to publicly excoriate the island’s white newspapers for giving voice to and encouraging the movement for Jamaican separatism. In the above-quoted letter to the *Watchman*, Monitor demonstrates aspects of the loyalist counter-tactic in his satirical deflation of the planter press and its increasingly “nationalized” consciousness. In fact, the resonances between the *Courant’s* compulsive recourse to “WE” phrases and the famous opening words of the preamble to the American Constitution could have hardly struck the *Watchman*’s readers as an accident, nor could the American origins of the *Courant’s* infamous editor and owner, Augustus Hardin Beaumont, have escaped their attention. As early as 1829, the *Watchman* identified Beaumont as the epicenter of a burgeoning separatist movement among the island’s planter elite, who threatened to secede from the British empire and seek an alliance with...

---

50 Quoted in Lewis 213.
51 Curtin 75-80. Barbados was an important exception to the general pattern of emancipation-era revolutionary foment among the oldest West Indian plantocracies; its “embryonic nationalism” was curtailed by its dependencies upon the metropole in the wake of the devastating Great Hurricane of 1831. See also Lambert 177.
the U.S. if the emancipation of the island’s slaves were accomplished.\textsuperscript{53} By the early
1830s, Beaumont had begun to fashion rhetoric of Jamaican independence and
nationalism that explicitly drew on his lifelong allegiance to the revolutionary traditions
of the U.S., his language of revolutionary self-government offering some of the most
radical instances of the ways in which the planter press adopted the Southern states’
discourse of “states’ rights” as a device for protecting slavery.\textsuperscript{54} In \textit{The Jamaica Petition for Representation in the British House of Commons or for Independence}, an 1831
pamphlet aimed at a British audience, he laid out the Jamaican assembly’s “breach” with
the parent government in detail. Much like his newspaper editorials, this pamphlet
employs a number of rhetorical strategies that seek to detach white Jamaicans from their
ties to British imperial culture. He disassociates them, for instance, from the absentee
Went Indian planters and merchants abroad, who “have no community of interest, no
identify of feeling with the resident inhabitants of Jamaica… so long as they can, by any
other means, retain in England what they call their station in society: that is, live among
your aristocracy, imitate their vices, and surpass their follies.”\textsuperscript{55} Through such
disavowals, Beaumont echoed the editorial strategies of those southern newspaper editors
who, anxious about the influence of the Canning resolutions upon the seemingly
receptive Northern states, responded with a renewed appeal to purge any taint of British
cultural influence from the republic.\textsuperscript{56} Beaumont’s own articulations of a strongly
regionalistic Jamaican identity likewise assumed a Revolutionary repudiation of Britain
in as bold a manner:

\begin{quote}
We have well and accurately viewed our situation—it is similar to that of the
Colonies of North America in 1775, when their protests against aggression were
called contumacy, and their threats of resistance ridiculed as contemptible. Our
situation is the same, precisely the same, as was that of the Southern part of those
Colonies, when an attempt was made to instigate the men who had been robbed
from Africa, to murder the men in America upon they had been forced; this attempt
was made by those who had stolen the Africans; it was considered a beautiful and
effectual stroke of policy; \textit{we remember the failure of this attempt, and we feel that
we had deserved not less than the Inhabitants of the Southern part of the now
United States of America, the attachment of those whom British barbarity put under}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{53}{Watchman, September 12, 1829. On Beaumont, see Maehl.}
\footnotetext{54}{Curtin76.}
\footnotetext{55}{Beaumont 15.}
\footnotetext{56}{Rugemer 224.}
\end{footnotes}
Beaumont was correct in reminding both the British public and the Jamaican free people of colour that Britain bore ultimate historical responsibility for planting slaveholding societies in both the southern U.S. and the British West Indies; however, the descendents of African slavery in the island were no less determined to keep the cultural memory of Lord Dunmore’s proclamation alive, albeit in the service of black freedom rather than against it. Thus the leaders of the Jamaican brown community continued to hail the free community with a loyalist we in opposition to the planters’ ethos of proslavery nationalism. Because, the Watchman asserted, every friend of the amelioration on the island was branded an enemy by the colonial authorities, therefore
to the reflective mind it appears evident that the greatest crime which a man can commit in this Colony of Great Britain is to be attached to the British Crown and Government. Here the term loyalty has altered its signification, for he only is loyal, according to Colonial parlance, who breathes opposition to the Government, and threatens to throw off his allegiance. The enemies of the colony are those who dare to avow their allegiance, and determination to support the views of the parent Government, and these are marked out for persecution, and against them is brought to bear the whole force of colonial prejudices and abused power.

The result, Curtin confirms, was that by the 1830s “the status of real nationalism in Jamaica became paradoxical. The white caste, who felt alien and had no love of the country, were the political separatists. The coloured class, who were in the process of developing a more genuine national feeling, were to be among the strongest supporters of the British government.” The paradox of abolition-era Jamaican nationalism, moreover, underscores the differences between how reactionary white pressmen and the loyalist brown pressmen used exclusion and disavowal to render their different ideas of community within the Jamaican public sphere. On the one hand, both sides continued to rely upon clearly demarcated notions of foreignness—internal and external—to articulate competing ideals of normative Jamaican citizenship. For Beaumont and the planter elite, the attempt to render Britain as a newly “foreign” and invasive force was mirrored by concurrent social experiments that sought to designate the Jamaican free population as

---

57 Beaumont 16 (my italics).
58 Watchman, April 18, 1832. 3.
59 Curtin 79.
internal aliens—a strategy which had been used by colonial authorities against two prominent Jamaican-born brown civil rights activists, Louis Lecesne and Edward Escoffery, to deport them to Haiti by declaring them “dangerous aliens.” In other words, the planters’ attempts to define Jamaican nationhood along the lines of the slave system further reinforced the already liminal social status of free people of colour. In the case of the coloured press, however, the U.S. was the necessary political collaborator for the colony’s transformation into a semi-autonomous slaveholding states; thus “Americanness” became an explicit site of foreign alterity in the Watchman’s attacks upon Jamaica’s rebellious planters. Not only, the Watchman warned, was Beaumont “ready to advance the propriety of delivering this island into the hands of his countrymen, and to swear fealty to the United States,” but his election to the Colonial Assembly in 1829 itself flouted the island’s own “Laws of Alienage,” according to which the American-born Beaumont was ineligible for his seat.

On the other hand, the Watchman’s recourse to notions of alienage can only be understood in light of their carefully crafted redefinition of “America” as the nationalist inverse of the supraregional forms of community that they envisioned for the black diaspora. Given the strong associations between exclusionary cultural identifications and proslavery nationalism, however, the Watchman persistently refused to appeal to any essential racial, national, or social rubrics to positively demarcate its imagined readership. Instead, as the tone of the island’s planter press became increasingly hysterical as an emancipation decree came to seem more and more likely, the Watchman responded by boldly heralding the importance of a dissenting press as the island’s most effective agent of social and political transformation. As they insisted in what was to become their most infamous column, “Ours is a ‘free press’, our columns... are as open to Mr. Beaumont as to any other gentleman in the island of Jamaica,” and they would continue to be, the newspaper maintained, “until we bring the system down by the run—knock off the fetters, and let the oppressed go free.”

60 Heuman 33-43.
61 Watchman, October 31, 1829, 1.
62 Watchman, April 07, 1832, 6.
with the crucial problem of how to position their own imagined we against the tyrannical consensus-making of the planter press.

This tension was partly negotiated in the *Watchman* by creating forms of textual community as a self-conscious and pluralistic fiction, one emptied of a unified and cohesive national self-identity. Translating their loyalty into a material and representational practice in the *Watchman*, its editors formally entextualized a vision of a transnational coloured citizenry within the newspaper. In form and content, they created a pluralistic patchwork of babelic voices—an unassimilated mélange that pointedly contrasted the planter press’ attempts to transform the printed medium into a vehicle for reactionary nationalist propaganda. In this space of identification, a powerful and expansive vision of empire was transposed upon the material substrate that composed the networks of newspaper circulation and transmission.

### 5.4.2. IMAGINING EMPIRE IN THE **WATCHMAN**

An important hallmark of black Atlantic countercultures evident in the *Watchman* newspaper is the transvaluation of the historical traumas of black diasporic life—the transformation of the historical legacies of African chattel slavery into social and cultural forms that challenge the very logic of race-based oppression. Characteristic in this regard are a series of *Watchman* articles chronicling the forced exodus of nearly half the free black population of Cincinnati, Ohio between 1829 and 1830, following months of anti-black rioting and state sanctioned legal proscriptions directed against the city’s free people of colour.\(^{63}\) In the first of these reports, the newspaper “refer[s] our readers to the following article, which we have extracted from the Cincinnati Gazette... respecting free people of colour in the State of Ohio, which we publish... to shew our free coloured fellow colonists how arbitrarily and unjustly that class are treated under what the Americans are pleased to term the freest Government in the world!”\(^{64}\) As each subsequent installation of the *Watchman*’s world news makes clearer, these dispatches from America

---

\(^{63}\) Baily.

\(^{64}\) *Watchman*, Sep. 12, 1829.
provided the editors with indirect critiques of the Jamaican slaveholders’ own attitudes and policies against the British crown.

The quasi-allegorical potential of the Ohio exodus was itself helped along by state authorities in Ohio, who drew out the broader political resonances of the expulsion as a “revolutionary” process. In fact, the state’s anti-black campaign culminated with an official proclamation of banishment that was decreed to coincide with its publication in the July 4, 1829 issue of the city’s *Daily Gazette.* Amidst the patriotic Fourth of July celebrations, the Ohio proclamation recalled the inextricable linkages between Revolutionary triumphalism and racist ideologies in forming the early republic. Yet the colonial authorities of Upper Canada who welcomed Ohio’s dislocated blacks were no less insistent in framing the affair as metonymic of the broader clash of the nationalist versus loyalist interests unleashed by the slavery debates. For instance, when the representatives of the expelled people of colour met with John Colbourne, the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, to discuss the establishment of what would eventually become the Wilberforce colony; he reportedly directed them to “[t]ell the Republicans on your side of the line that we Royalists do not know men by their colour. Should you come to us you will be entitled to all the privileges of the rest of His Majesty’s subjects.” As Colbourne’s declaration makes clear, the rhetoric of loyalism was very obviously implicated in Anglocentric ideologies that were as politically ambivalent as any other form of patriotic chauvinism. Yet in the *Watchman*’s hands, it could also be purposefully reclaimed as a trenchant critique of the white primacy of American nationalism. Thus, according to the *Watchman,* the republican hypocrisies of the United States are shown up by Britain, who continues to exhibit a “strong disposition to cultivate the future welfare of the subordinate classes in her colonies” by “offering the Yankee outcasts a home upon English ground in the province of Upper Canada.” As the editors continue to equate the imperial interests of the British crown with those of blacks in the

65 Baily 429.
66 The literature on these linkages is considerable; see, for instance: Van Cleve.
67 Quoted in Taylor 289.
68 *Watchman,* July 14, 1830. 3.
New World, they concurrently transform the diasporic expulsion of the Cincinnati blacks into a veritable homecoming.

While hardly a celebration of the dislocations and transnational flows of the black Atlantic diaspora, these reports nevertheless reflect the *Watchman’s* attempts to envision the possibility of a supranational authority more powerful than planter interest—of an imperial allegiance which conversely allows heterogeneous and dissenting communities to establish themselves within their nations. In this respect, the *Watchman*’s treatment of the Ohio exodus mirrors David Walker’s in the *Appeal* in an intriguing manner. As Apap has illustrated, Walker sought to reinforce the “emplacement” of African Americans in the U.S. against those trying to eject them from it.\(^{69}\) Unsurprisingly, then, the *Appeal*’s treatment of the Ohio exodus also imbues it with a symbolic weightiness, fraught as the expulsion is with the exclusionary desires of racial nationalists. Indeed, Walker suggests the events in Cincinnati are *literally* unspeakable: “I forebear to comment on the cruelties inflicted… I will leave it in the dark!!! But I declare the atrocity is really to Heaven daring and infernal, that I must say that God has course of exposition among the Americans” (56-7). And though the Ohio exodus obviously embodies the essence of the problem of racial nationalism [“Do the colonizationists think,” Walker asks, “to bundle us up like brutes and send us off, as they did our brethren of the State of Ohio? (71)], he nevertheless also frames the resulting exodus as an emancipatory restoration: the pilgrims have left the “U. States (or to them *hell upon earth!!!*) to the hospitable shores of Canada” (51) and gone “away… to those who have been for many years, and now our greatest benefactors—the English” (58). The point here is that in both the *Appeal*’s analysis and the *Watchman*’s critical reportage, allegiance to this symbolic empire is continually set against the imagined community of the nation because, they insist, such imagined communities epitomize the paranoid fantasies of racial nationalism. Reviewing the Ohio authorities’ actions, the *Watchman* asserts that

> The Americans are fully aware that the march of human improvement is not the exclusive property of one country, and that they have in the bosom of their own republic, their [William] Wilberforce’s, their [James] Stephens’s, their [Thomas] Buxton’s and their [Zachary] Macauley’s. Hence we find the Southern Planters

\(^{69}\) Apap 319-50.
perpetually conjuring up dreams of rebellion, and would fain sweep their free coloured population from the face of the earth, as persons of dangerous principles. Conscience is a man’s unerring monitor thro’ life, and the truth of such an opinion of [the coloured] class may appear quite reasonable with those who have been the instruments of keeping them in a state of great mental debasement and abject degradation, compared with the rapid advancement of their caste throughout the British possessions.  

Citing recent southern measures to curtail African-American civil rights (such as the new state proscriptions on black literacy and education which had provided Walker with a powerful impetus for his own Appeal), the Watchman editors conversely frame their own newspaper and the other West Indian brown periodicals as agents of coloured education, social stability and racial uplift.

Reinforcing their status as a fifth column in the midst of the Caribbean plantocracies, the Watchman strongly evidenced the network of shared information and republication among the liberal brown newspapers. Typical of the other brown newspapers in this regard, it relied heavily upon an inter-colonial system of exchange that ensured the dissemination of news throughout the colonies. By extracting from neighboring periodicals in its articles on the Ohio exodus, the newspaper incorporated the surrounding islands’ declamations against racial nationalism into its own productions. It thus formally recapitulated its principal message—that the coloured community themselves embody the universalizing force of the “march of improvement,” one that exceeds any “exclusive property” and will inevitably undermine slaveholders’ attempts to monopolize and control national destiny.

Unsurprisingly, then, the newspaper abounds with images and practices that reinforce the strategic excesses and uncontainability of black life in the Americas. Republishing an Antigua Weekly Register article entitled “Expulsion of the Coloured Inhabitants From Ohio,” the Watchman superimposes its own critical commentary onto the article as it reiterates the very impossibility of the containment strategies which animate American racial nationalism:

70 Watchman, July 14, 1830. 3.
71 Lewis 58-9.
We have extracted from the *Antigua Weekly Register* an article... [on the state of Ohio’s] absurd plea that it was ‘not the notion of the founders of the State, that free-coloured people should form any part of the population.’ We should like to be informed whether the begetting of coloured children was, or was not, the act of the founders of that State, and in what manner they intended to dispose of them, so as to prevent their forming a part of the population.⁷²

Through such frequent citations of the other brown newspapers, the *Watchman* neatly incorporates into its own editorial practices the broader trans-American black counterpublic—the discursive space in which the *Watchman* was itself a central agent. These gestures may be usefully read as formally emulating the transnationalism of the black presence, reinforcing the diasporic affiliations that transverse the slaveholding republics.

Indeed, these articles amount to a multi-vocal joint publication effort, as the newspaper incorporates articles and responses from Kansas, Ohio, New York, Upper Canada, and the surrounding West Indian colonies within their own heavily-editorialized reports. Yet the seams of this patchwork are always present, a single article sometimes containing handfuls of obtrusive citations that indicate exactly where and how different regional newspapers provide one segment of a larger story. In turn, these differentiated and far-ranging fragments construct articles that are themselves interspersed with the ubiquitous letters from readers, which often subdivide a single article into several discrete sections.⁷³

The result is a series of fragmented authorial voices and positions—chunks of text abstracted from what Anderson terms the “simultaneity” of regional or national contexts, reconstructed as an expansive vision of a community, and held together by the powerful sinews of the British empire. In its commentary on the Ohio exodus, for instance, the *Watchman*’s editorial extrapolations conclude with a triumphalist vision of empire allegorically reclaiming the rebellious state via the increasingly subversive potential of each future black generation, each of which further realizes the promise of Dunmore’s proclamation: within the loyalist exile colonies, the *Watchman* predicts, the “superiority of [coloured] numbers and their proximity to their former place of abode... [will] make

---

⁷² *Watchman*, July 14, 1830.
⁷³ Such letters are found in virtually every issue of the newspaper and sometimes provided upwards of two-thirds of a single issue’s total content. The appeal of these letters for the *Watchman*’s readership is clearly apparent in the few issues where, due to an excess of news items, the editors offer their profuse apologies for not publishing letters, promising to make up the absence in forthcoming issues.
these tyrants tremble at the danger to which they have exposed themselves... Jonathan may therefore yet have occasion to regret performing an act, which we sincerely hope may be the means of placing a thorn in his side!” Although meant to a sound a warning to racial nationalists against following the lead of the Ohio governors, such sentiments powerfully underline the dynamic mutualism of empire loyalism and self-determination in the brown political imaginary.

While strategies of critical opposition were central to challenging planter hegemony, heterogeneity and dissent also crucially marked the newspaper’s inscriptions of textual community within its own pages. In this regard, the Watchman ensured that their newspaper could truly claim to be Jamaica’s only “free” press. Independent of the planter regime itself, the Watchman’s editors felt free to selectively republish articles from the planter press, yet always did so in order to further bring their rivals under the watchful eye of the newspaper’s editorial persona, Mr. Watchman. Thus an early Watchman editorial on the exodus incorporated a denouncement of the State of Ohio in a Courant editorial, which Beaumont had written in order to remind the free people of colour how much worse things could get for them if they continued to be “led away by the machinations of a few turbulent and evil disposed individuals.” Following their republication of Beaumont’s editorial, The Watchman flatly responded by reminding Beaumont that “this is a British Colony, and not an American State!” The Watchman’s strategic engagement with the planter press was similarly instanced some two years later, when the Jamaican assembly came even closer to realizing the Watchman’s fears of planters “sweep[ing] their free coloured population from the face of the earth”—this time through the introduction of draconian press censorship laws which contained a clause that whereas several seditious libels calculated to excite the lower class... against those in over them... have lately been published—Be it enacted... [that] whoever shall write, print, or publish... any such libel shall, on conviction thereof, be transported for life to such place as the governor may appoint, and if he or she return, to suffer death, or be worked in chains in some workhouse in the island for life.

74 5.
75 Watchman, Sep. 12, 1829, 2.
76 The entire bill is reproduced in Watchman, November 30, 1831. 5.
Through a series of reports affirming the necessity of the freedom of the press for the vitality of West Indian civil society, the *Watchman* continually returned to and republished critical pieces against press censorship that had previously appeared in the planter press.\(^{77}\) Knowing full well that these laws were intended to target the free coloured press—as they eventually would be when Jordon was charged with a capital offense for the *Watchman*'s publication of the infamous “knock off the fetters” editorial—the *Watchman* redeployed the arguments of the planter press in their own defense, reminding colonial authorities that it was the *British* laws permitting freedom of the press which had allowed their colonial disaffection to be voiced in the first place.\(^{78}\)

But it was through the publication of letters to the editor that the *Watchman* most dramatically inscribed an ideologically pluralistic and heterogeneous textual community within its pages. Of course, whether or not these letters represented “real” readers’ contributions to the newspaper or merely offered an avenue for further editorialization for Jordon and Osborn is beside the point: when examined in relation to the *Watchman*’s criticisms of the planter press, it becomes clear that these letters possess both an editorial and a didactic function. Tasked as the brown newspaper was with the important function of cultivating the education of the island’s non-white subjects, the *Watchman* carried forth its object lesson by inculcating a normative model of critical engagement with the broader Jamaican public sphere. As clearly illustrated in a letter to the editor by one anonymous contributor named “A.,” these readers’ letters often took the *Watchman* to task no less pointedly than Monitor’s own attack on the planter press. Yoking a critique of the newspaper’s editorial strategies to an attack on the person of Mr. Watchman, an engraving of whom began to appear in the masthead of the newspaper late in 1830 [fig. 1], A. concluded his letter by informing the editors of his continuing mission to assault the newspaper, so that by “[n]ext post I shall commence with that fine looking fellow at the head of your journal, and if I do not succeed in breaking one of the horns of his lanthorn, or clapping a wedge in his rattle, I will pull every cocoa-nut off the tree.”\(^{79}\) On the one hand, the inclusion of such hostile voices of dissent *within* their own dissenting

\(^{77}\) See: *Watchman*, November 15, 17 & 30, 1831.

\(^{78}\) *Watchman*, November 30, 1831.

\(^{79}\) *Watchman*, January 01, 1831, 5.
newspaper allowed the *Watchman* to distance themselves from the awkward conformity of the proslavery press. Such instances of contention and disagreement, moreover, allowed the *Watchman* to escape the charge of editorial ventriloquization which it repeatedly leveled against the planter press and their intermittent publication of letters from coloured readers which expressed pro-planter sentiments—the “buckrification” of the brown voice, as one *Watchman* editorial called it.\(^80\) Again, whether or not such letters in the planter newspapers were fictional remains beside the point: the imputation of editorial manipulation worked to further chastise the planter press for falsely manufacturing ideological unanimity within the island’s public sphere and to set the *Watchman*’s own ideological independence in relief.

\(^{80}\) *Watchman*, August 24, 1831. For other instances in which the *Watchman* accused the planter press of ventriloquizing brown readers, see: September 8, 1830; January 01, June 08, June 15, 1831.
Figure 1: An engraving of Mr. Watchman, who begins to appear in the masthead of the *Watchman* shortly before January 1, 1831. Standing at the foot of a stylized representation of Jamaica, he is clutching a rattle and lantern. The text below the broken chains reads “Nunquam dormio” (never asleep).
Yet much like its incorporation of articles from the planter press, the *Watchman’s* inclusion of oppositional viewpoints through readers’ letters also fulfilled a didactic function, allowing the editors to further promote the brown political agenda. Indeed, Mr. Watchman’s responses to such letters often maintained an agenda of neutralizing opposing viewpoints without assimilating dissent into conformity. Mr. Watchman, recalling that paragon of popular British periodical consciousness, Mr. Spectator, pursued his own political agenda by using wit and irony to declaim participation within the violent factional discourse of the slavery debates.\textsuperscript{81} In response to his A.’s diatribe, for instance, the editors drily remark that “[o]ur reply to A. shall be very short... he is quite welcome to criticize our productions... he may break the lanthorn or steal the cocoa-nut if he can. This however he ought to be told that the representation is that of a *Palm*, not of a Cocoa-nut tree.”\textsuperscript{82} Taking a bemusedly patronizing tone toward their would-be combatant’s ignorance of even basic aspects of the Jamaican landscape, the editors brilliantly marginalize his criticisms. Thus whether or the author of the letter is (or is meant to stand in for) the ‘alien’ American Augustus Beaumont, A. is made to inhabit the same hopelessly ineffectual and enfeebled position in Jamaica’s public sphere usually reserved for Beaumont and his attempts to undermine loyalism on the island: “[a] Lilliput versus Brobdinag... the Polish dwarf... in defiance of Big Ben... A Hop-o-my-Thumb North American... against the Parliament of Great Britain.”\textsuperscript{83} As other fugitive pieces surrounding A’s letter in the same issue of the newspaper make clear, Mr. Watchman’s unflappability in the face of would-be adversaries like A. and Beaumont is itself a function of his status as the only legitimate influence and moral authority in the Jamaica. Preceding A.’s attack in the same issue is a special New Years editorial in which Osborn and Jordon declare their commitment to educating the black and brown populations, thus leading the island’s inevitable transition to freedom through Mr. Watchman, who “wholly regardless of the yells of a modern Cerberus [and] animated by the love of liberty... stood forth the guardian—the friend—the defender of his persecuted—his oppressed brethren.”\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{81} On the *Spectator’s* strategies of political partisanship, see: Cowan.
\textsuperscript{82} *Watchman*, January 01, 1831. 5.
\textsuperscript{83} *Watchman*, September 12, 1829. 1.
\textsuperscript{84} *Watchman*, January 01, 1831. 1.
To realize this ameliorative potential, the Watchman’s editors and contributors imaginatively transformed Mr. Watchman into both an agent and a veritable proxy of the King—the very apogee of the loyalist empire for the newspaper’s reading subjects. Later in the same issue as A.’s letter, the editors publish another letter from a reader who writes to congratulate Mr. Watchman for the successes he has met in transmitting and circulating his superior knowledge of Jamaican social and political affairs in England, where “he goes... by every Packet, and proclaims [instances of cruelty and oppression in Jamaica] at the foot of the Throne, and in both Houses of Parliament, and also excites the British Public to use their influence for the purpose of banishing slavery, injustice, and irreligion for the Western Isles.” The correspondent ends his toast to Mr. Watchman with a series of occasional verses, wherein Mr. Watchman’s moral authority in Jamaica strongly echoes the vaunted benevolence of Britain’s slave-loving King and the loyal empire over which he reigns—both of which are praised in nearly identical terms: “Brave Watchman, go forward, be faithful and true,/ And the wise for thy friends though wilt have,/ The good from all quarters will raise the exclaim/ Of “success to the Watchman—so brave.” Moreover, in remaking Mr. Watchman in the monarchical image, so too did the editors remake the King in Mr. Watchman’s image. In their disputations with the planter press concerning crown attitudes toward slave emancipation, the newspaper carefully figured England’s monarch as a liberal ruler who legitimately earned the gratitude and affection of his loyal subjects throughout the empire. Thus, as the Watchman maintained in an 1830 article, the British public, led as they are by a “Sovereign whose tolerant principles are such as to render him an object of regard to every good man,” can now hear the cries of the “suffering sons of Africa” over the rebellious yelping of the Courant editor—a “rebellious, unprincipled, and uneducated infidel.”

85 Watchman, January 1, 1831. 4-5.
86 Watchman, September 8, 1830.
Figure 2: The engraving of Mr. Watchman as it appears after May 30, 1832, shortly after attempts by colonial authorities to charge Edward Jordon for the capital crime of printing seditious libels and “exciting” the slaves to insurrect.
Later in the same issue, another anonymous letter writer draws out the imaginative parallel between Mr. Watchman and the King in remarkably explicit terms. Congratulating the newspaper for its achievement of a broadly transatlantic sphere of influence, the correspondent also points out the augury of the newspaper’s establishment coinciding with the accession of William IV. Thus, “[i]t is rather singular that your success should take such a spring just at the new commencement of the reign of the new King; some enthusiast would perhaps be led to venture a prediction from such a circumstance, but I shall do no such thing: but conclude this by exclaiming ‘God save the King!!’ and ‘long life and great success to the Jamaican Watchman!’”

Mr. Watchman’s own self-fashioning as the ruling authority of an ameliorative empire reached its apex following the 1831-2 Baptist War Rebellion, the massive slave revolt which resulted in the imposition of martial law and the summary execution of several dissenting missionaries and hundreds of black Jamaicans. In the wake of the insurrection, Jordon and his newspaper were tried for contributing to the “excitement” of the slave populations by their incendiary writings. Shortly thereafter, the Watchman editors self-consciously invoked the editorial which resulted in the prosecution—the infamous threat to “knock off the fetters” from the colonial system—by creating a new masthead [figure 2]. In an image rife with ambiguity, Mr. Watchman is shown in chains, bracing himself for coming the political “storm,” ready to face certain martyrdom at the hands of colonial authorities. To begin with, although the complexion on the engravings appears pale or light-skinned, Mr. Watchman was repeatedly identified in the newspaper as a member of the brown community and even, according to one editorial, a former slave. This is important to note given how the “incendiary” Watchman was immediately seen as a primary catalyst for the servile war by both Jamaican and metropolitan pro-colonial critics. Not only, its critics asserted, did the newspaper rouse disaffection among slaves for the colonial order, it also encouraged the slaves’ mistaken idea that the planters had been suppressing an immediate emancipation order from the King—a belief which

87

88 Turner 151.
was widely reported as motivating the slaves to revolt. In light of the insurrection and the subsequent sedition trial, the new masthead can thus be seen as both a rather daring response to planter hegemony as well as a further extension of monarchical self-fashioning, recalling, for instance, the traditions of tragic royal slavery and the insurrectionary “royal slave” Oroonoko who was destroyed by a corrupt and degraded government of slaveholders in the Caribbean. In this respect, the Watchman editors—subtly acknowledging their own power to upset the slave system—responded to colonial persecution by successfully appropriating the power and authority that could be “devolved” to them as the guardians of Crown interests in rebellious Jamaica. Under extraordinary metropolitan scrutiny and fearing the outbreak of a veritable race war at home, the charges against Jordon were ultimately dismissed.

5.5. Conclusion

Virtually self-identical with the King in his ability to elicit the empire loyalty of the newspaper’s readers, Mr. Watchman presided from his masthead over a territory that is no less expansive: an imaginatively rendered representation of the geopolitical space of empire that was textually inscribed in the pages of his newspaper and presented as a powerful site of identification for its readers. The Watchman’s editorial consciousness thus enfolded and contained a discursive empire, represented as a patchwork incorporating heterogenous and discrete voices that emanated from as diverse an array of regions as ideological positions. Moreover, the Watchman newspaper was successful in ensuring that their own imagined empire was inextricably bound up with the material networks of transatlantic transmission and circulation, so much so that paranoid planters repeatedly accused the newspaper of being funded and operated by British interests—of being a “foreign” fifth column which challenged a plantocratic ideal of community imagined as an independent Jamaican state. For planter pressmen like Beaumont, attempts to frame Jamaica within notions of exclusionary nationalism dangerously alienated allies in Britain like the so-called West India Interest, who could and did pursue proslavery advocacy among the British public via domestic periodicals such as John Bull

---

89 See, for instance, the account of slave leader Samuel Sharpe in Bleby’s eye-witness history of the Baptist War.
and the *Glasgow Courier*. His embrace of Revolutionary American nationalism and its deep-rooted traditions of virulent Anglophobia ultimately provided the *Watchman* with a powerful counter-strategy for articulating their own textual community; one which situated Jamaica within a supranational field of representation, identification, and loyalist allegiance.

As also illustrated by David Walker’s use of the British empire to articulate his notion of a radical “coloured” world citizenship, West Indian brown periodicals like the *Watchman* and the *Antigua Weekly Register* imaginatively aligned their reading publics with the broader transatlantic networks of circulation and transmission, inscribing a strongly diasporic sense of consciousness within their print productions. In the *Watchman*, crown and empire are purposefully appropriated and reimagined as emblems of the diasporic individual. Under loyalist auspices, coloured citizens of the world could align their communities with the uncontainability of print and its continual tendency to free circulation in order to challenge the logic and practices of would-be racial nationalists. The imagined empire thus offered the diasporic reader an avenue for achieving a sense of rootedness against the threat of being “swept out of the nations.” Paradoxically adopting supranational ideals to entrench community, emancipation-era black authors thus used the loyalist auspice to critically engage with, and even reject, modern revolutionary and nationalist traditions. They also undoubtedly did so to further fuel the desperation and paranoia of the ruling white caste—like Virginia Governor Henry Wise, who, in his diatribes against “New Englandish” abolitionism, “declared as self-evident fact the political alliance between a subhuman chattel and a [British] power that bestrode the world.”

For the incendiary *Watchman* of Jamaica especially, a seemingly conservative loyalist countermovement against the slaveholding republics was used to reject the ethos of statist elites and their strategies of censorship, containment, and exclusion. Echoing Samuel Johnson’s famous charge against the American revolutionaries that one hears the “loudest

---

90 Butler 11.
91 Gosse 1021.
yelps of liberty from the drivers of negroes,” the Watchman kept alive a loyalist tradition of anti-nationalism, one that continued throughout the revolutionary period in which Western European state formations began to crystallize into their most recognizably modern form. Of course, such radically anti-nationalist endorsements of Britain in early antebellum black publications would eventually wane in the coming decades, as many prominent mid-nineteenth-century African-American and Afro-Creole intellectuals came to espouse forms of cultural nationalism predicated upon a reformist vision of the state purged of rather than defined by its plantocracy.92 Yet in framing a sense of the African diasporic community through notions of empire loyalism, the Watchman periodical may have also offered a significant link in the transition from a model of pan-African diasporic consciousness that was modeled on the geopolitical space of empire to one that was later redeployed against it: when Marcus Garvey (1887-1940), the Jamaican founder of the radical Pan-Africanist movement known as Garveyism, named his first newspaper Garvey’s Watchman (est. 1909?), he was likely recalling the signal challenge leveled by the early Jamaican people of colour in their fight against slavery and oppression.93 Yet as Michel Stephens has illustrated, Garvey’s own self-construction as a “black emperor” reveals the persistence of (especially British) imperialism in shaping twentieth-century pan-Africanism. Moreover, Garvey’s appropriation also highlights the incipient form of black internationalism that is evident in the empire loyalism of early black Atlantic print culture, wherein a transnational vision of political affiliation and an expansive scale of inter-connectedness was central to how an emergent Anglo-American black public imagined its relation to the world at large. For many early black authors, the imperial model of ameliorative social transformation was embraced not as an attempt to ensure the continuity of the racialized system of plantation labour following emancipation, but as the basis for a rooted and lasting social existence in the diasporas of the black Atlantic. In this regard, their appropriations of models of imperial space and governance greatly contributed to the imaginative depth and cultural complexities of the amelioration debates.

92 For a discussion of the importance of discourses of national reform for mid-nineteenth century African American authors, see: Sundquist. For the turn toward cultural nationalism among Afro-Jamaicans in the post-emancipation period, see: Heuman 97-116.
93 See: M. Stephens. On Garvey’s own Watchman newspaper, see: R. Hill 36n.6. I am grateful to Elaine Savory for first drawing my attention to these connections.


Bosman, Willem. A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea, Divided Into the Gold, the Slave, and the Ivory Coasts. London: James Knapton, 1705.


Linguistic Survival.” How2 2.3 (April 2005).


Pilkington, Mary. *Biography for Girls, Or, Moral and Instructive Examples for the Female Sex.* Philadelphia: Johnson and Warner, 1809
---. *The Register-Office: a Farce of Two Acts. Acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.*

*By J. Reed.* Dublin: Saunders, Watts, & Whitestone, 1761.


Schwartz, Hillel. *The French prophets: the history of a millenarian group in eighteenth-
219


Steele, Richard. A Letter to a Member of Parliament Concerning the Bill for Preventing the Growth of Schism. London: 1714.

1982.


Watt, Ian P. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. Berkeley:


