UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Men and Brothers: Idealistic Manhood and the Problem of British Slavery

being a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Research: History in the University of Hull by:

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December, 2021

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‘A man’s character always takes its hue, more or less, from the form and color of things about him’

Frederick Douglass,

1881.

Introduction

In the mid eighteenth-century, Scottish enlightenment philosopher David Hume declared that 'the characters of men depended on the air and climate … and indeed there is some reason to think, that all nations, which live beyond the polar circles or between the tropics, are inferior to the rest of the species, and are incapable of all the higher attainments of the human mind … no people, living between the tropics, could ever yet attain to any art or civility'.[1] The insinuation that men and women who hailed from 'between the tropics', i.e. central America, parts of southern Asia and huge swathes of the African continent, were somehow less 'human' than natives of more temperate climates, was built upon hundreds of years of prejudice and Eurocentric superiority against the global south, a mentality which Hume perpetuated in his hugely influential treatises.

From the earliest of human civilisations, slavery has been a constant and accepted part of society; according to Greek philosopher Aristotle, 'for that some should rule and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary, but expedient … It is clear, then, that some men are by nature free, and others slaves, and that for the latter slavery is both expedient and just.'[2] However, the evolution of transatlantic slavery in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries allowed the commercialisation and mass transport of African slaves[3] to European colonies in America and the West Indies, and was far removed from pre-modern slavery models, thus requiring justification from its proponents, which often came in the form of racial stereotyping. That is not to say that the 'Africanization' of 'New World' colonial slavery was in any way inevitable, as many early European territories used the labour of white indentured servants for their initial commercial enterprises. However, the transportation of African slaves across the Atlantic soon became the preferred

[1] D. Hume, *Essays and treatises on several subjects, vol. I* (London: Cadell & Davies, 1800), 222; 284.
[2] Quoted in M. Levin, 'Natural subordination, Aristotle on', *Philosophy*, 72, 280 (1997), 241-57: 241.
[3] Using the correct terminology when discussing historical groups or individuals must be one of the historian's highest priorities, in order to maintain accuracy and respect. Throughout this dissertation, the word *slave* will often be used to describe the men and women of African heritage who were adversely affected by the transatlantic slave trade. To use the term *enslaved peoples* widens the focus to include the perpetrators as well as the victims, thus demonstrating an understanding of the issue of slavery in its moral context. However, I have chosen to use the term *slave* in the majority of instances for two reason. Firstly, for brevity and ease of widespread comprehension, and secondly, to reduce the risk of underemphasizing the injustices done to people of African heritage by diluting widely accepted terminology.

labour model within American and West Indian plantocracies, not least because African slaves were able to be stripped of the few 'freedoms' which indentured servants enjoyed, such as being released from their obligations after a set period of time, and their their servitude not being transferred to their children.[4] In 1661, the West Indian island of Barbados, which had been colonised by the British in 1625, passed *An Act for the Better Ordering and Governing of Negroes*, more commonly referred to as the *Barbados Slave Code.* This was the first law of its kind which specifically referred to African slaves as property, stating that slave masters were to 'soe farr to protect [slaves] as we doe many other goods and Chattels', a development which officially placed African slaves lower on the social hierarchy than indentured servants both legally and culturally.[5] Thus, the development of African slavery as an international enterprise was not based upon predestined ideas linked to negative colour symbolism. Rather, racial prejudices against Africans stemmed from slavery itself, and were further reinforced by the innumerable acts and laws across European Atlantic territories, such as the Barbados Slave Code, which portrayed Africans purely as a resource for European commercial ventures. [6]

As the eighteenth century progressed, negative colour symbolism and related racial prejudice began to infiltrate many aspects of British society, including literature, art, the media, politics, and the day-to-day interactions of the general public. Thus, for the increasing number of people of African heritage who had begun to settle in Britain (many being former slaves), any possibility of establishing an identity based on comparatively arbitrary concepts such as gender norms was overshadowed by their struggle to be included into society, and be viewed as biologically and intellectually equal to their white neighbours. In a 1789 parliamentary debate regarding the future of British involvement in the slave trade, MP for Malton, Edmund Burke, declared that as a slave's 'mind grew callous to its degradation, and all sense of manly pride was lost … he was no longer a man.'[7] Thus,

[4] J. Handler, 'Custom and law: the status of enslaved Africans in seventeenth-century Barbados', *Slavery and Abolition*, 37, 2 (2016), 233-255: 245-247.
[5] *An Act for the Better Ordering and Governing of Negroes*, 27 September 1661. 13 Charles II (Barbados).
[6] For further discussions on the links between slavery and racism, see: D. Northrup (ed.), *The Atlantic slave trade* (Lexington, Mass.: Heath, 1994), 1-35; J. Walvin, *Questioning slavery* (London: Routledge, 1996), 1-28.
[7] W. Cobbett, *The parliamentary history of England: from the earliest period to the year 1803, vol. XXVIII* (London: T.C. Hansard, 1816), 71.

in some quarters, the mentality remained that male slaves and black freemen should be characterized by their race rather than gender.

This dissertation will therefore attempt to reveal and emphasise the black male's gendered experience as it related to involvement with and proximity to white, British masculine ideals. Displays of black masculinity in British colonies were often condemned by contemporary commentators, and have only recently been recognised by modern historians as an important aspect of the slave experience. Likewise, the importance of analysing the black male experience in late eighteenth century British society is a subject which has long been overlooked by gender historians, with only a handful of dedicated works appearing in recent years.[8]

The following study attempts to add to this new and much-anticipated line of enquiry, by exploring how both black and white masculinity in the age of slavery and abolition were fundamentally intertwined. By necessity, this requires a thorough reading of British masculine ideals, and how British men were affected by their involvement in slavery and abolition, as this would have had a profound effect on how black slaves and free men were treated, and by extension, how they themselves negotiated their own place in the company of white men. According to Hume, 'the propensity to company and society is strong in all rational creatures'.[9] Considering gender historian Alexandra Shepard's conclusion that 'it is imperative that we approach masculinity … in multi-relational terms. This means … comparing the ways in which concepts and experiences of masculinity were premised on differences amongst men', it becomes crucial that in order to unpick the gendered identities of black slaves and former slaves, we must examine their relationships with the white men who governed much of their lived experiences.[10]

The central theory which runs through the following three chapters is that involvement in either slavery or its abolition shaped the way in which white British

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[8] See for example: K.M. Brown, '"Strength of the lion … arms like polished iron" Embodying black masculinity in an age of slavery and propertied manhood" in T. Foster (ed.), *New men: manliness in early America* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 172-92; F.A. Nussbaum, ' 'Being a man: Olaudah Equiano and Ignatius Sancho', in V. Carretta & P. Gould (eds.), *Genius in bondage: literature of the early black Atlantic.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001, 54-71. These works as well as the research of Trevor Burnard in relation to black and white masculinity in the context of transatlantic slavery will be discussed in the literature review which follows this introduction.

[9] Hume, *Essays and treatises*, 197.

[10] A. Shepard, *Meanings of manhood in early modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 18.

men understood their sense of manhood and masculine purpose. Furthermore, British men experienced substantial feelings of underlying anxiety which affected their actions and characters. 'Anxious masculinity' as a concept is not new, and has been accepted by researchers of historic masculinity for a number of years. Mark Breitenberg, for example, has written extensively on how patriarchal anxiety manifested itself in the early modern period in men's obsession with female chastity, and their perceived power over women.[11] I propose that this anxiety which spanned generations of men, was by the late eighteenth century experienced by both pro and anti-abolitionists. Firstly, for those who supported or held interests within the trade, inner anxieties rested on their ability to maintain their lifestyles in the wake of growing abolitionist sentiment, and continue the deluge of resentment and suspicion against black (especially male) slaves. Secondly, for those who supported abolition, I suggest that their anxiety rested on moralistic foundations, particularly as the idea of sentimentalism, which required an intrinsic capacity to relate to the feelings of others, gained momentum amongst the British middling and upper classes.

Crucially, the following chapters will also reveal how these anxieties held by British men affected the lives and gendered identities of the black men who shared their environments. In an 1824 discussion on the emancipation of the slave population in the West Indies, Sir George Canning MP, Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House of Commons, analogised the anxiety surrounding the bestowal of freedom and power upon black slaves which had been echoed since the mid-eighteenth century:

> In dealing with the negroe, Sir, we must remember that we are dealing with a being possessing the form and strength of a man, but the intellect of only a child. To turn him loose in the manhood of his physical strength, in the maturity of his physical passions, but in the infancy of his uninstructed reason, would be to raise up a creature resembling the splendid fiction of a recent romance; the hero of which constructs a human form, with all the corporeal capabilities of man, and with the thews and sinews of a giant; but being unable to impart to the work of his hands a perception of right and wrong, he

[11] M. Breitenberg, *Anxious masculinity in early modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

> finds too late that he has only created a more than mortal power of doing mischief, and himself recoils from the monster which he has made.[12]

This statement, which clearly alludes to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), displays not only the accustomed attitude of pro-slavers that Africans were sub-human, but also reveals the fear surrounding the potential power of black masculinity. It is unclear whether Canning held a genuine fear of black men, or whether his conspicuous metaphor was intended to delay the abolition of slavery for other reasons. However, the underlying anxiety which the statement represents opens other considerations; how did British members of the plantocracy react to the 'threat' of black masculinity? Did the anxieties of pro-slavers reflect the views of wider society in Britain? And crucially, how did black men negotiate these anxieties in order to carve out a life for themselves and realise their own masculine destinies?

The following three chapters will each focus on a particular circumstance in which the institution of slavery and/or abolition influenced the gendered identities of the men involved. The first chapter will consider the notion that direct involvement in either the slave trade or abolition reconstructed what 'idealistic manhood' meant for white, British men. In order to build on current historiography and show that eighteenth-century masculinity was heterogeneous and nuanced, this chapter will argue that rather than masculine principles dictating the actions of these men, the physical or political proximity to slavery and African slaves led to the construction of a unique set of masculine identities which differed considerably from the cults of politeness and sensibility which governed the lives of many urban, middle-class men in Britain at the time. The chapter will explore the behaviours, actions and motives of three groups of men whose lives were by varying degrees connected to those of African slaves. Firstly, the captains of slave ships who were charged with transporting slaves from Africa to the West Indian and American colonies. Secondly, plantation owners with specific focus on British-born Jamaican planter Thomas Thistlewood (1721-1786). Thirdly, abolitionists who, despite rarely being embroiled in slavery or the slave trade itself, spent much of their professional lives campaigning on behalf of African slaves.

[12] *The Parliamentary Papers*, New Series X, 1103.

To discern the feelings and motives behind the actions of these men, a wide range of sources which include conduct literature, contemporary travel guides, parliamentary debate transcripts and personal diaries, have been analysed across the chapter. This multi-disciplinary approach is particularly important considering the varied nature of British men's gendered experiences; in order to determine factors which influenced men's actions and therefore formed part of their gendered identities, the range of sources must be suitable to study a range of men.

The second chapter will look more generally at British society, and how the public engaged with, and reacted to, the increasing black population in Britain's urban centres. By the late eighteenth century, around 20,000 people of African descent had settled in Britain, many of them men who were able to sustain a limited amount of economic mobility. This chapter will therefore explore one of the most powerful and widespread mediums which Britons used to express, negotiate and react to their increasingly frequent interactions with black men and masculinity: art. By the late eighteenth century, art had become more accessible than ever before, and by studying the use and placement of black figures within three genres of art: elite portraiture, satirical cartoons and abolitionist iconography, one can determine how black men were represented to the wider public, which in turn would have undoubtedly affected relationships between black men and their white, British neighbours. An important aspect of this chapter is also to consider how inclusion in various forms of artworks affected the masculine identities and self-worth of the black men who may have viewed them.

Finally, the third chapter will focus solely on the writings of two prominent African authors. By studying Olaudah Equiano's (1745-97) *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings,* and the *Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African* by Ignatius Sancho (1729-80), this chapter will explore how being part of British society, following their lives as slaves in various parts of the British Empire, affected the masculine identities of the two authors. Unfortunately, the lack of written evidence produced by the black community prevents the undertaking of a large-scale study of the masculinity of former slaves in Georgian Britain. However, in exploring the above works it is possible to discern certain characteristics and behaviours which Equiano and Sancho exhibited, and which allowed them to successfully navigate racial

prejudice and construct unique masculine identities. The chapter will consider two aspects of the authors' lives: how they viewed their place in British society, and how their individual aspirations and routes to self-actualisation compared and contrasted to those of the white men around them.

The study of diverse historic masculinities is a relatively new and rapidly evolving sub-discipline, and for the few historians who have begun to incorporate concepts of manhood into the already rich body of work on slavery and the slave trade, an understanding of existing research methods and conclusions is crucial to producing a robust and balanced argument. Thus, before the substantive chapters begin, a literature review of current scholarship on early modern masculinity will form an historiographical foundation for the dissertation as a whole.

Literature Review

According to Robert Shoemaker in 1998, 'far too little work has been done … to identify changing definitions of masculinity and male behaviour. Because men are presumed to be the norm, their history is not differentiated from the general narrative of historical change.'[13] At the time of writing, he certainly had a point. Masculinity as a category of historical analysis is a fairly recent addition to the scholarly stage, and as such is dynamic, engaging and still on the rise. From reticent beginnings in the late 1980s and early 1990s, to a rapid increase in output from the turn of the century onwards, the historiography of British and European masculinity in the Enlightenment period is continuing to be a key contribution to understandings of the past.

To many, the inception of the study of historical masculinity was deeply reactionary to the rise of women's histories, and as such was seen as a threat by some feminist women's historians.[14] The academic community has therefore recognised the importance of cross-gender inclusivity, and has incorporated masculine histories into the sub-discipline of 'gender history'; acknowledging that the lives of men and women were and are inextricably linked, and that 'no understanding of either could be achieved by entirely separate study.'[15] As such, one of the first 'waves' of masculinity scholarship to appear in the mid-late 1990s focused on the relationships between men and women. Anthony Fletcher's ambitious work, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (1995) maps the evolution of the English patriarchy from a misogynistic system based on humoral physiology, to a secular view of gender based on natural law, which casts a more positive light on femininity.[16] The analysis here centres on the notion of 'anxious masculinity'; as concepts of gender shifted from the religious to the secular, men became increasingly concerned about how to maintain their dominance over women. However, Fletcher fails to discuss the roles and influences of women as major

[13] R. Shoemaker, *Gender in English society, 1650-1850: the emergence of separate spheres?* (London: Addison Wesley Longman Ltd., 1998), 13.
[14] K. Harvey, 'The history of masculinity, circa 1650-1800', *Journal of British Studies,* 44, 2 (2005), 296-311: 296.
[15] J.W. Scott, 'Gender: a useful category of analysis', *The American Historical Review*, 91, 5 (1986), 1053-1057: 1054.
[16] A. Fletcher, *Gender, sex and subordination in England, 1500-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

contributors to the patriarchal system, an oversight which was in part addressed in 1999 with the publication of Elizabeth Foyster's *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage* (1999).[17] Foyster's conclusions are based on the premise that the lives of men and women were fundamentally intertwined, arguing that the domestic lives of men, and their ability to adequately control their wives, was key in the formation of their gender identity.

Another early line of enquiry was men's homosocial interactions with each other, particularly within the contexts of cultural behavioural norms, such as politeness, and the later cult of sensibility. Many of these works focused on men from the upper and middling ranks of society, and typically those which either lived in or frequented the urban centres where the influence of such societal vogues were strongest. Lawrence Klein, for example, suggests that 'polite' discourse and behaviour were the ultimate goals of gentlemanly interactions in metropolitan society, and emphasises the importance of male-dominated spaces, such as coffeehouses, for such discourse.[18] However, the most influential work on eighteenth-century politeness continues to be Philip Carter's *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society* (2001).[19] Like Klein, Carter emphasises the importance of male dominated spaces, but also discusses the distinction between 'politeness', which he sees as a uniquely early eighteenth-century phenomenon, and 'sensibility', which emerged later as a reaction to the supposedly unsympathetic tendencies of the polite gentleman. Carter argues that contemporary supporters of the cult of sensibility claimed that 'existing forms of polite conduct had lost their moral integrity … in its place, sentimental writers encouraged more spontaneous, and hence more genuine, displays of social interaction.'[20]

Overarching theories such as those of Fletcher, Foyster and Carter formed the natural starting point for the study of historical masculinity. However, their studies focused heavily on particular gendered spaces, as well as relying on source

[17] In his introduction, Fletcher claims that the historical record 'is partial and … provides a wholly inadequate basis for assessing women's private feelings and thought about early modern patriarchy' (p.xxi), hence his reasons for overlooking them; E. Foyster, *Manhood in early modern England: honour, sex and marriage* (Harlow: Longman, 1999).
[18] L. Klein, 'Liberty, manners and politeness in early eighteenth-century England', *The historical Journal*, 32, 3 (1989), 583-605; L. Klein, 'Coffeehouse civility, 1660-1714: an aspect of post-courtly culture in England', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 59, 1 (1996), 30-51.
[19] P. Carter, *Men and the emergence of polite society, Britain, 1660-1800* (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd., 2001).
[20] Ibid, 2.

material which was biased towards men of the gentry and middling sort. The problem with such methodologies is that they tend to create one-dimensional studies, as well as the misleading impression that masculine identity was homogenous throughout British society. Thus, more recent research has attempted to capture the individuality of men who did not fit the prescribed moulds of 'polite gentleman' or 'household patriarch'. This mode of investigation has its roots in the work of Alexandra Shepard, whose monograph, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (2003), was the first work which successfully critiqued Fletcher's conclusions, and complicated the archetypal understandings of manhood by distinguishing between men of differing social status and age. According to Shepard, current approaches to early modern histories of masculinity fail to recognise those men who were unable to respond to prescribed masculine values. Rather, research should recognise that 'the men who failed to be patriarchs … pursued different codes of manhood which often existed in tension with patriarchal imperatives.'[21]

In order to extract alternative masculinities, historians have begun to focus their research on particular categories of men, defined by social status, biological difference, life stage, geography and upbringing. Helen Berry, for instance, has been instrumental in breaking down the metaphorical barriers of hegemonic masculinity by considering the implications of infertility to a man's identity, as well as suggesting that politeness was 'a potentially repressive social force', which the majority of urban gentlemen took pleasure in transgressing.[22] Furthermore, the dominant genre of source material used by the pioneers of masculine histories tended to be conduct documents, church and legal records, and historical and dramatic literature, which were prescriptive, rather than personal in nature. In order to create more individualistic representations of men, recent research has centred around the use of autobiographical sources such as diaries, journals and letters. Such studies have widened the scope of masculinity historiography and allowed historians into the previously unexplored worlds of military, rural and working class men, to name a

[21] Shepard, *Meanings of manhood*, 6.
[22] H. Berry & E. Foyster, 'Childless men in early modern England', in H. Berry & E. Foyster (eds.), *The family in early modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 158-83; H. Berry, 'Rethinking politeness in eighteenth-century England: Moll King's Coffee House and the significance of 'flash-talk': The Alexander Prize Lecture', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* 11 (2001), 65-81: 81. See also V. Gattrell, *City of laughter: sex and satire in eighteenth-century London* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006).

few.[23] This approach undoubtedly adds to the richness of masculine historiography by considering the agency and identities of under-represented men. However, the challenge continues to be how to extract the complex and often contradictory signifiers of individual identity to inform broader understandings of eighteenth-century masculinity, and ultimately, achieve a comprehensive picture of male identity in the period.

The expansion of masculine historiography has also led early modern historians to consider manhood in relation to specific lived experiences which were unique to eighteenth-century life.[24] Despite slavery and abolition being an integral and hugely consequential aspect of the early modern international landscape, the masculinity of enslaved men and their white masters has been largely overlooked. The inception of women's and gender histories in the late twentieth century led to an ongoing interest in the history of slave women, and a more recent interest in women slave holders in America and the Caribbean.[25] But it was not until the turn of the twenty-first century that historians began to seriously consider the gendered experience of enslaved men in their own right.

Some scholars, such as Kathleen Brown, have considered slave masculinity in relation to the concept of 'embodiment', an historiographical theme which has appeared in recent years, and aims to 'reconnect the representation of gender with lived experience and bodily practice.'[26] This method of analysis considers physical aspects of the male body, for instance height, weight, shape, and muscularity, and how they relate to individuals' own sense of masculine identity, as well as societal

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[23] See, on military men: O. Brittan, 'Subjective experience and military masculinity at the beginning of the long eighteenth century, 1688-1714', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 40, 2 (2017), 273-90. On rural, working men: H. Barker, 'Soul, purse and family: middling and lower-class masculinity in eighteenth-century Manchester', *Social History*, 33, 1 (2008), 12-35; N. Tadmor, 'Where was Mrs Turner? Governance and gender in an eighteenth-century village', in S. Hindle, A. Shepard & J. Walter (eds.), *Remaking English society: social relations and social change in early modern England* (Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2013), 89-112.

[24] For example, Sarah Goldsmith has written extensively around the effects of participating in the Grand Tour on the emotions of young men. See S. Goldsmith, 'Nostalgia, homesickness and emotional formation on the eighteenth-century Grand Tour', *Cultural and Social History,* 15, 3 (2018), 333-60; S. Goldsmith, *Masculinity and danger on the eighteenth-century Grand Tour* (London: University of London Press, 2020).

[25] For early works on the experiences of enslaved women, see: H. Beckles, *Natural rebels: a social history of enslaved black women in Barbados* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989); B. Bush, *Slave women in Caribbean society, 1650-1838* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). For more recent studies on female slave holders, see: K. Smart, '"De old devil!": Female slave holders, violence and slave management in Louisiana', *UCLA: Centre for the Study of Women: Thinking Gender Papers* (2012); C. Walker, *Jamaica ladies: female slaveholders and the creation of Britain's Atlantic empire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020).

[26] M. McCormack, 'Tall histories: height and Georgian masculinities', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 26 (2016), 79-101: 84.

standards of manhood as they relate to physicality and appearance. Brown successfully argues that bodily aesthetic, as well as how they were able to use and manipulate their bodies, was more important to the experience of enslaved Africans' manhood than it was for other men. In what could easily have been a narrow discussion of how robust, muscular African bodies were more practical for the labours they endured, Brown argues that enslaved men were able to regain a sense of manhood which had been removed from them by the denial of liberty and humanity, by using their bodies for both subtle and obvious acts of defiance which 'defied subordination and stirred the admiration, the fear, and the mindfulness of observers.'[27]

It is of course important to differentiate between African masculinity and *enslaved* African masculinity, as markers of manhood and gendered experience would have altered dramatically for men once they had been removed from African society and placed into the possession of Europeans. Whereas Brown's study considers how enslaved men used their bodies to regain some control over their manhood, Randy Browne and Trevor Burnard reconsider the roles of enslaved men; removing them from spaces relating to their labour, and considering their roles in domestic settings. In their 2017 article, 'Husbands and Fathers: the family experience of enslaved men in Berbice, 1819-1834', Browne and Burnard use legal records from Berbice in British New Guinea to argue that, contrary to contemporary commentary from planters and other white observers, male slaves were active participants in family life, and in many cases relished their positions as husbands and fathers, despite their limited or complete lack of personal liberty and agency.[28]

Other historians consider the manhood of black men as relational to that of white men, and heavily dependent upon their surroundings as well as the negotiation of the masculine identity of those around them. For instance, by examining the written works and biographical documents relating to the lives of Olaudah Equiano and Ignatius Sancho, two former African slaves who found themselves living as freemen in late eighteenth-century Britain, Felicity Nussbaum argues that much of these men's public lives was spent creating an identity for

[27] Brown, '"Strength of the lion"', 189.
[28] R. Browne & T. Burnard, 'Husbands and fathers: the family experience of enslaved men in Berbice, 1819-1834', *New West Indian Guide*, 91, 3/4 (2017), 193-222.

themselves which was acceptable to their white peers. According to Nussbaum, the proliferation of printed media led the British public to create an image of the typical black man, based on 'monstrous racial fictions', such as William Shakespeare's 'Othello', Aphra Benn's 'Oroonoko', Daniel Defoe's 'Friday', meaning that Equiano and Sancho were required to 'forge themselves ... into viable subjects who offered compelling alternatives to reigning notions of white British manhood.'[29]

This model of relational masculinity has also been used to decipher the ideals of manly conduct for British-born men who resided in the Atlantic slave colonies. One of the most distinguished historians of the Atlantic world, Trevor Burnard, has written extensively on the history of plantation colonies in North America and the West Indies. Amongst his works are a number of studies which examine the masculine identities of plantation slave holders. In a 2011 essay, Burnard contends that the patriarchal societal structure in eighteenth-century Jamaica was predicated on 'white male equality and the ability of white men to live in unconstrained ways [which] made them tyrants'.[30] However, Burnard also comments on the anxiety felt by white masters in relation to their fit, strong male slaves. Violence and despotic control were choice methods of controlling wayward or threatening slaves, however, masters also realised that 'supporting [black] male authority was the best way to prevent discord in the slave quarters'.[31] Thus, male slaves were afforded the privilege of being heads of their own household, and having some control over their wives and children.

In recent years, historians have made great strides in their attempts to explore and interpret the masculine ideals and individual experiences of early modern men, and the increased interest in the impact of slavery to the manhood of both black and white men is a welcome addition to historical gender studies. This dissertation therefore attempts to add to this body of research by building on the works of historians such as Brown, Burnard and Nussbaum, and producing a study

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[29] Nussbaum, 'Being a man', 68.

[30] T. Burnard, '"Impatient of subordination" and "liable to sudden transports of anger": white masculinity and homosocial relations with black men in eighteenth-century Jamaica', in T. Foster (ed.), *New men: manliness in early America* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 134-52: 135. See also: T. Burnard, 'Evaluating gender in early Jamaica, 1674-1784', *The History of the Family*, 12, 2 (2007), 81-91; T. Burnard, *Mastery, tyranny and desire: Thomas Thistlewood and his slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican world* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004) - esp. Chapter six.

[31] Burnard, 'Impatience of subordination', 148.

which explores how present or past involvement in the institution of slavery affected the masculine identities of both black and white men. By focusing on the end of the eighteenth century in particular, it is also pertinent to consider the effect of the British abolition movement, which over the course of more than two decades affected a fundamental change in attitude and moral stand-point of a large proportion of the British public, and changed the life-course and identities of both enslaved men and the white men who made their livings from the trade itself.

Current historiography tends to focus on certain locations, such as Burnard's Jamaica, or certain people, such as Nussbaum's study of Equiano and Sancho. This dissertation will therefore attempt to broaden these metaphorical boundaries by taking a transatlantic view; taking into account the spaces at both ends of the 'Middle Passage', and analysing the relationships of slave and master, as well as former slave and British public, and abolitionist and pro-slaver, to discover how the intrinsic and perceived manhood of a variety of men were shaped by, and fashioned from, their connection to transatlantic slavery and its abolition.

Chapter One

'Anxious Masculinities': The development of divergent gendered identities in the face of slavery and abolition

In 1978, Edward Said published the hugely influential *Orientalism*, which attempted to answer the question of how we perceive people who look different to us, particularly with regards to race or cultural background. Said argues that the way in which we come to understand these people and cultures is not random or innocent, but the end result of a process which has been specifically designed to reflect certain interests, many of which portray 'other' cultures as incongruous and threatening.[32] *Orientalism* considers the development of often contemptuous modern Western descriptions of the Middle East. However, the main themes of otherness, anxiety, and the attempts of nationalists to construct a status quo in which non-Western cultures are viewed through a lens which distorts the actual reality of those places and people, could easily be considered in reference to conventional British attitudes to Africa and Africans in the early modern period.

During the eighteenth century, developments in areas such as travel and commerce meant that Britons, especially upwardly mobile men, were coming into contact with different cultures and peoples more often than ever before. Encounters with the colonial 'other', as men ventured outside of the bounds of Western Europe, were often defined by an innate sense of superiority over different races, which arguably fostered the development of a distinct masculine identity amongst British men, connected to a new awareness of national-imperial identity.[33] Thus, as the presence of African men and women in Britain increased at the end of the eighteenth century, the powerful and instinctive need to exacerbate the inferiority of this foreign race became a prominent feature of the British male identity. However, as with all aspects of historic masculinity, the British male experience in the late eighteenth century was not homogenous. Whilst the threat of the loss of a

[32] E. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978).
[33] M. Rothery & H. French (eds.), *Making men: the formation of elite male identities in England, c. 1660-1900* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 108-15.

national identity affected some, the increasing influence of politeness and sensibility fostered an ethical anxiety about the moral foundations of slavery and the slave trade for others. Hence, the simultaneity of an increased black presence in Britain, and doubts about the moralistic sustainability of the slave trade which gave rise to the abolition movement, created a fraught and confusing situation for British men: was mastery over 'the other', or intrinsic benevolence of 'the self' preferable for sustained manly power and authority?

This chapter will answer this question by exploring how British men with differing connections to Africans and the slave trade negotiated their relationships with black men, in accordance with their own sense of masculine responsibility. The first section will consider those men with intimate connections to the institution of slavery, and how their beliefs affected their relationships with African, particularly male, slaves, whilst the second section will examine the priorities and motivations behind British men's involvement in the abolition movement. Also discussed will be the unavoidable effect which the beliefs and behaviours of British men had on the Africans who inhabited the spaces around them, and how the African male's sense of identity was affected by encounters with the foreign white man.

'ON THE EFFECTS OF DESPOTIC POWER': SLAVE-SHIP CAPTAINS, OVERSEERS AND PLANTERS

For those slaves who were forcibly taken from their native Africa, one of their first prolonged associations with white Europeans would have been with the captain and crews of slave-ships.[34] Slave-ships were unique, spatially-limited environments in which captains had unconditional control over African slaves, and according to Charles James Fox during a debate for the abolition of the slave trade in 1791, the despotic power which they exhibited produced 'acts of cruelty so enormous, that

[34] The barbaric treatment which many slaves endured during the middle passage is well documented, one of the most detailed first-hand accounts of the voyage is that of Olaudah Equiano: V. Carretta (ed.), *The interesting narrative and other writings* (New York: Penguin Group, 2003). For recent monographs on conditions during the middle passage, see: D. Eltis & N. Radburn, 'Visualizing the middle passage: The Brooks and reality of ship crowding in the Transatlantic slave trade', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 49, 4 (2019), 533-65; S. Mustakeem, *Slavery at sea: terror, sex, and sickness in the middle passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016).

they have been known frequently to assume the appearance of insanity.'[35] At the heart of such cruelty lay the inescapable truth that despite the Africans' unenviable situation, the balance of power between them and their captors was always close to swinging in their favour. On board the slave-ships, the captain and his crew were significantly outnumbered by their human cargo. Insurrections were common, especially when still moored on the African coast, where freedom was so close at hand. Revolts occurred on around ten percent of all slave voyages, and white seamen were particularly anxious of the strength and resolve of their male captives, as, according to slave-ship captain turned abolitionist John Newton, 'from the Women, there [was] no danger of insurrection.'[36]

Black masculinity was therefore a constant threat to the safety and prosperity of slaving voyages. Newton revealed that 'it is always taken for granted that [male slaves] will attempt to gain their liberty, if possible.'[37] Thus, in order to exert their dominance over numerous men who were often younger, stronger and more physically fit than themselves (not to mention emotionally charged), captains often mitigated their own fears by implementing frequent and tyrannical acts of violent control. For instance, Newton once recounted his disgust at a fellow captain who would often 'boast of his conduct in a former voyage', in which following a failed slave insurrection, he not only sentenced the perpetrators to death, but 'studied, with no small attention, how to make death as excruciating to them as possible.'[38] Although there is no doubt that some captains would have been more humane than others, countless African slaves suffered untold horrors aboard slave ships, in order to reduce the fears of their captors.

The transportation of slaves across the Atlantic was by no means an easy or risk-free exercise. Aside from the physical threat which slaves posed to the white crew, captains were also extremely concerned about the financial impact of losing slaves to disease or suicide during the perilous sea journey. By the late eighteenth century, around ten percent of slaves who boarded ships on the west coast of Africa

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[35] W. Cobbett, *The parliamentary history of England, from the earliest period to the year 1803.* Vol XXIX (London: John W. Parker, 1839), 350-1.
[36] J. Walvin, *The trader, the owner, the slave: parallel lives in the age of slavery* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), 35; J. Newton, *Thoughts upon the African slave trade* (London: J. Buckland, 1788), 19.
[37] Ibid, 14.
[38] Ibid, 17.

perished before reaching their destination, largely due to the spread of dysentery and other related illnesses caused by polluted water, and the fact that slaves were often housed in the overcrowded slave-decks with little or no sanitation.[39] Death from disease was therefore an accepted financial loss which all captains took into account when planning their voyages. However, a second danger to the lives of slaves during the Middle Passage was suicide. In order to prevent slaves from taking their own lives by throwing themselves overboard, they were often manacled together and kept below decks for the majority of the time they were at sea. With this route to 'escape' out of their reach, a further course of action for many desperate slaves was to refuse nourishment. As abolitionist Anthony Benezet revealed in 1784, they would choose 'rather to die with hunger, than to be carried from their native country.'[40]

Anecdotes of captains' reactions to these events were often related by supporters of the abolition movement in order to garner sympathy for the African captives, and condemn the immorality of captains. For instance, Benezet described an incident in which all of the slaves on board a slave ship refused to eat. In order to resolve this 'new difficulty', the captain 'obliged all the negroes to come upon deck … caused his sailors to lay hold upon one of the most obstinate, and chopt the poor creature into small pieces, forcing some of the others to eat a part of the mangled body.'[41] Likewise, a former captain once told of his solution to a similar situation: 'I ordered the chief mate or surgeon, to present [the slave] with a peace of fire in one hand, and a piece of yam in the other … it was reported to me, that he took the yam and ate it.'[42] What is striking about both of these accounts, though, is the two captain's summaries of the outcomes. The first applauded his actions 'as a good act, it having had the desired effect, in bringing them to take food.' The second, 'triumphs in the success of his expedient, and concludes his narrative by telling you that this very slave was afterwards sold for 40*l.* at Grenada.'[43] By preventing slaves from taking their own lives, captains were first and foremost protecting their

[39] Walvin, *The trader, the owner, the slave*, 35-6.
[40] A. Benezet, *A caution to Great Britain and her colonies, in a short representation of the calamitous state of the enslaves negroes in the British dominions* (London: J. .Phillips, 1784), 26.
[41] Ibid, 26.
[42] Cobbett, *Parliamentary history*, vol. XXIX, 258.
[43] Benezet, *A caution to Great Britain*, 26; Cobbett, *Parliamentary history*, vol. XXIX 258.

financial interests; once ships had docked in America or the West Indies, any slaves still alive could turn a profit. However, at a more profound level, the refusal of nourishment was viewed as a subtle act of rebellion. Although the act in itself did not pose a physical threat to the captain or crew, captains were nonetheless anxious to demonstrate their power and authority by coercing the Africans to eat using cruel and sadistic methods, thereby quashing the spirits and agency of their captives.

Unfortunately for the enslaved Africans, the anxiety which provoked their white captors into acts of violent control did not end upon disembarkation in the colonies. Jamaica in particular, which had been occupied by the British since 1655, and had developed into its most valuable colonial possession in terms of sugar cultivation, became notorious for being home to fast-living white men who treated their slaves with undue severity. Between 1751 and 1775, an estimated 177,600 African slaves were brought to the island, compared to approximately 260,000 imported to all other British colonies combined in the same period. By the late 1760s, there were around 18,000 resident whites on the island, making the ratio of slave to free whites around 10:1, which was not dissimilar to the proportion of men aboard the slave ships.[44]

By the mid-1700s, approximately seventy percent of Jamaica's white population were male, and largely made up of Britons who had migrated to the island 'in the fond idea of living luxuriously without labour.'[45] According to contemporary commentators, the way in which white Jamaicans succeeded in constructing a functioning and prosperous community of whites on an island in which they were the ethnic minority, was to promote an equality between white residents regardless of class or economic background. In 1793, politician Bryan Edwards observed the 'display of conscious equality, throughout all ranks and conditions. The poorest White person seems to consider himself nearly on a level with the richest … which, in the countries of Europe, is seldom displayed.'[46] Likewise, Jamaican resident and historian Charles Leslie reported white servants who would

[44] D. Hall, *In miserable slavery: Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica, 1750-86* (Jamaica: The University of the West Indies Press, 1999), xxi. Figures based on those given in R. Sheridan, *Sugar and slavery: an economic history of the British West Indies, 1623-1775* (Barbados: Caribbean University Press, 1974).
[45] B. Edwards, *The history, civil and commercial, of the British colonies in the West Indies, vol. II* (London: J.Stockdale, 1793), 4.
[46] Ibid, 7.

'dine on the same Victuals with their Master, and wear as good Cloaths.'[47] Following his extensive research on eighteenth-century Jamaican society, Trevor Burnard has described this phenomenon as a 'cult of hospitality'; a mode of society in which members of the plantocracy treated employees and labourers with as much respect and congeniality as they did each other.[48]

A further feature of Jamaican white society was that despite being a British colony, conventional British codes of behaviour were not generally adhered to; intellectual cults such as those of politeness and sensibility, which were dominating the urban landscape in Britain, were seemingly abandoned once on Jamaican soil. Helen Berry has suggested that such restrictive codes of conduct nourished an 'underbelly of impolite resistance' in eighteenth-century London, and hypothesised that spaces such as the infamous 'Moll King's Coffeehouse' in Covent Garden provided a much-needed sanctuary from the 'manners and cultivation of new and ritualised forms of behaviour'.[49] Jamaica likewise became a haven in which men had the freedom to more or less do as they pleased, away from the pressure to conform to strict behavioural codes. However, this distinctive Anglo-Jamaican lifestyle was widely condemned by critics from abroad, with one describing the taverns in Kingston as 'occupied by people of the vilest characters', who devoted their leisure time to 'every kind of vice and dissipation.'[50] Despite the superficial benefits of a united white population, Burnard has summarised that to be white man in Jamaica 'was to be a pleasure-seeking, self-aggrandizing, sensuous and violent.'[51]

On writing about slave management on the island, Leslie declared that 'No Country excels them in Barbarous Treatment of Slaves, or in the cruel Methods they put them to Death.'[52] The treatment of slaves in Jamaica was indeed notoriously cruel even by wider colonial standards of the time, a situation which both emerged from and was intensified by the unison of a patriarchal, entitled white population. As on the slave-ships, anxiety surrounding the physical strength and sheer number of

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[47] C. Leslie, *A new and exact account of Jamaica* (Edinburgh: R. Fleming, 1740), 308.
[48] Burnard, *Mastery, tyranny and desire*, 79-83.
[49] Berry, 'Rethinking politeness',66.
[50] J.B. Moreton, *West India customs and manners: containing strictures on the soil, cultivation, produce, officers and inhabitants; with the method of establishing and conducting a sugar plantation* (London: J. Parsons, 1793), 35-6.
[51] Burnard, '"Impatience of subordination"', 135.
[52] Leslie, *Account of Jamaica*, 41.

African slaves was an ever-present perceived threat to the safety of the white community. The men who had direct contact with slaves therefore offset their fears with acts of despotic control which were detrimental to the well-being of the slaves in myriad ways.

Firstly, the power which was afforded to traditionally 'lower-class' white men, such as overseers who directed the daily lives of plantation slaves, was such that they were often able to exert unnecessary and unchecked violence over them. J.B. Moreton was particularly condemnatory of West Indian overseers, describing them in 1793 as 'mean, low-lived, ignorant fellows', and one in particular, who 'frequently flogged [the slaves] without faults, to shew his authority.'[53] Furthermore, politician William Beckford recognised that the absence of a 'chain of subordination' amongst white Jamaican society gave inexperienced, reckless overseers the power and autonomy to punish slaves in any manner they wished; 'although the inflicter of the punishment may not be possessed of more reason or more sense, than the unhappy wretch who suffers.'[54]

Beckford's comments on the cruelty of overseers are largely representative of the wider rhetoric of British abolitionists concerning the treatment of West Indian slaves. However, the abolitionist narrative typically expands to not only condemn the overseers, but also to vindicate members of the planter class. In the 1791 debate for the abolition of the slave trade, abolitionist William Wilberforce stated that 'one of the principal causes of the negroes sufferings … was the non-residence of planters … who, if they were on the spot, would attend to these poor creatures, and feel themselves bound, both by duty and inclination, to promote their happiness.'[55] Of course, Wilberforce never visited the West Indies, as was the case with many British abolitionists, and was entrenched in regimented, hierarchical British society, whose elite classes acted with decorum and benevolence. It must therefore have been unimaginable for him to consider that the actions of the plantocracy in Jamaica, and of uneducated overseers, were indistinguishable from one another.

Due to Trevor Burnard and Douglas Hall's rigorous studies of the diaries of British-born Jamaican planter Thomas Thistlewood, we now know that the behaviour

[53] Moreton, *West India customs*, 81-3.
[54] W. Beckford, *A descriptive account of the island of Jamaica,* vol. II (London: T. & J. Egerton, 1790), 347-8.
[55] Cobbett, *Parliamentary history*, vol. XXIX, 263.

of gentleman slave owners could be far from benevolent or idealistic. Not only was it commonplace for Thistlewood to administer harrowing punishments upon his own slaves, he also attended court in the official capacities of juryman, vestryman and justice, where he and his colleagues authorized numerous public punishments for black offenders.[56] No matter their economic status or social background, white men in Jamaica felt duty-bound to punish slaves as a physical demonstration of their power and white supremacy. Such demonstrations of authority alleviated their inert anxiety whilst mitigating the threat of black masculinity by making examples of those who dared resist white authority.

A further characteristic of white male behaviour in Jamaica was the propensity for sexual engagement with slave-women; the availability of, and unfettered access to female slaves was often part of the lure of the Jamaican lifestyle. According to Moreton, it was not uncommon for gentlemen to 'keep a favourite black or mulatta girl on every estate', with the offering of slaves for sex even contributing to the white micro-culture of hospitality: 'In the evening the manager is obliged to procure some of the finest young wenches for the gentlemen … and though this is a pimp-like action, most … are guilty of it.'[57] Thistlewood was meticulous in the recordings of day-to-day happenings on the plantations, and thus can offer a quantitative analysis of his personal sexual encounters with slave women. His diaries report '3,852 acts of sexual intercourse with 138 women in his thirty-seven years in Jamaica', therefore substantiating the stereotypical theory of the predatory colonial slave-holder. [58]

Sexual gratification was not the only reason for white men to pursue and abuse their female slaves. One of the main features of idealistic masculine conduct, both in Britain and its colonies, was mastery over dependants, whether they be slaves, employees, women or children.[59] In his *Interesting Narrative*, Olaudah Equiano describes the helplessness he felt upon witnessing the exploitation of his female compatriots whilst working for a British planter on the island of Montserrat: 'it was almost a constant practice with our clerks, and other whites, to commit

[56] Hall, *In miserable slavery*, particularly 70-3, 161, 226; Burnard, *Master, tyranny and desire*, 95-7.
[57] Moreton, *West India customs*, 77.
[58] Burnard, *Mastery, tyranny and desire*, 156.
[59] See: Fletcher, *Gender, sex and subordination*, 205-222.

violent depredations on the chastity of the female slaves; and these I was, though with reluctance, obliged to submit to at all times, being unable to help them.'[60] The continued sexual abuse of African women on the plantations was therefore a further way to demoralise and humiliate the male slaves. By projecting their own ideals surrounding the importance of maintaining order and protecting the dignity of the women in their lives onto the Africans, white colonists were able to further emphasize their own masculine authority and power.

Throughout the world of colonial slavery, the Africans' continual struggle for a sense of autonomy took many forms. For instance, some black women were able to 'transcend the horrors of slavery through their skilful manipulation of privileges gained as a result of close involvement with whites.'[61] Thistlewood's most frequent sexual partner, Phibbah, was one of these women. The circumstances which led her to slavery, and later to become Thistlewood's mistress may have been out of her control, but by being accommodating towards her master and the plantation regime in general, she was able to eventually transcend slavery and become a free, propertied black woman.[62] Phibbah's actions undoubtedly cast doubts on the notion of totalitarian white supremacy in the colonies; her relationship with Thistlewood and subsequent journey to emancipation and social acceptance suggests she wielded a certain amount of power over her white master. However, this quiet, non-threatening form of resistance was not a cause for concern amongst the white male population in general, as ultimately, such a situation was mutually beneficial.

In contrast, the black male population was feared for the physical threat they posed to white society, whether that be violence from an individual slave against a white man, or more organised rebellion which endangered whole communities of whites. Thus, masters and overseers felt it necessary to inflict perpetual discipline and humiliation upon black men. However, in stripping away the dignity, liberty and autonomy of male slaves, white slavers were acknowledging the power and resilience of their characters. In an interesting paradox, the cruelty meted out to

[60] Carretta, *Narrative,* 104.
[61] Burnard, 'Impatience of subordination', 211.
[62] Ibid, 228-40.

slaves acknowledged the masculine identities of Africans and therefore admitted their status as humans, and men, with agency.

When discussing masculinity within the contexts of slavery and abolition, the need to consider the effects of physical distance between Britain and her Atlantic colonies is paramount. As we have seen, planters in Jamaica, alongside their white subordinates, were so far removed from traditional British codes of conduct that they developed their own unique masculine culture, defined by class equality, white entitlement and authorized debauchery. Their distance from the metropole also afforded Jamaican whites a distinctive perspective on African culture, due to residing amongst, and being in constant contact with black men and women on the plantations. Thus, despite (in the modern view at least) being on the 'wrong side' of the abolition campaign in the late eighteenth century, it is reasonable to conclude that white Jamaicans were more understanding and even appreciative of certain aspects of black masculinity, more so even than the British abolitionists who strove for their freedom.

BRITISH ABOLITIONISTS: HUMANITARIAN HEROES OR REMOVED FROM REALITY?

British abolitionism and its eventual success in putting an end to Britain's involvement in the Atlantic slave trade in 1807, and later emancipating the nation's black slaves in 1834, have been heavily debated by scholars for over a century. Historians have discussed the framework for eighteenth-century abolitionist thought in reference to a myriad social, cultural and political developments, including theological constructs, economics, intellectual movements, international conflict, the power of public opinion, and the resistance of black slaves.

In the early twentieth century, the only accepted theory was that the liberty of black slaves in the British Empire was secured due to the humanitarian efforts of British imperial policy. Sir Reginald Coupland's seminal work on the subject, *The British Anti-Slavery Movement* (1933), portrays abolitionism as being a consequence of the heroic actions of men of moral fibre as they struggled to secure justice for

their disenfranchised black brethren.[63] Coupland's interpretation was readily accepted at the time, it being a way to corroborate the position of Britain as being the mightiest and most altruistic of nations.

Coupland's humanitarian argument remained unchallenged until the publication of Eric Williams' *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), which was the first full-length economic explanation for the abolition of the slave trade.[64] Williams' 'decline theory' argued that abolition was pre-empted by a decline in the economic value of the slave trade, and a consequent desire to dissolve colonial sugar plantations and slave trading activities for economic gain. This theory has been challenged repeatedly by fellow historians since its publication, many arguing that the empirical evidence indicates that the value of British slavery declined after, not before, the abolition of the slave trade.[65] The 'decline theory' has thus ceased to be a reliable explanation for abolition, but is often acknowledged as opening up the scholarly framework to considerations of economic impact on both pro and anti-slavery sentiment in eighteenth-century Britain. Although simplistic, it is difficult to find a post-war text on abolitionism which does not cite Williams' work.

In more recent years, historians have shifted their focus to explore more nuanced features of the British anti-slavery movement. For instance, Seymour Drescher and James Walvin have theorised that regardless of the opinions and attitudes of politicians and the ruling classes, abolition and emancipation would not have been possible without widespread public support.[66] Furthermore, the advancement of the sub-discipline of gender history has occasioned a burgeoning historiography on the role of women in both slavery and emancipation. In her bid to highlight the historic achievements of British women, Clare Midgley has written extensively about their role in the abolition campaign, thus rightfully acknowledging their substantial contributions to the cause.[67]

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[63] R. Coupland, *The British anti-slavery movement* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1933).
[64] E. Williams, *Capitalism and slavery* (London, 1944).
[65] S. Drescher, *Econocide: British slavery in the era of abolition* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977). See also G. Mellor, *British imperial trusteeship, 1783-1850* (London: Faber, 1951); R. Anstey, *The Atlantic slave trade and British abolition, 1760-1810* (London: Faber, 1975).
[66] S. Drescher, 'Whose abolition? Popular pressure and the ending of the British slave trade', *Past and Present,* 143 (1994), 136-66; J. Walvin, *England, slaves and freedom* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 97-122.
[67] See for example, C. Midgley, *Feminism and empire: women activists in imperial Britain, 1790-1865* (London: Routledge, 2007); C. Midgley, *Women against slavery: the British campaigns, 1780-1870* (London: Routledge, 1992). See also E. Clapp & J. Jeffrey, *Women, dissent and anti-slavery in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (Oxford:

The following discussion will argue that one of the principle reasons why abolitionism gained momentum was due to the reconstruction of the Briton's sense of morality; which manifested itself as the 'cult of sensibility'. By the late eighteenth century, ideas surrounding sensibility and the 'man of feeling' had developed into a series of essential qualities which both the men and women of middling and high society must possess. In 1778, Church of Scotland theologian Hugh Blair described the state of sensibility as arising 'from reflection on our own failings and wants … it is the heart which easily relents; which feels for every thing that is human; and is backward and slow to inflict the least wound.'[68] At its core, sensibility promoted the development of ingrained moral feeling, which manifested itself in the careful consideration of, and benevolence towards others.[69] As the cult of sensibility spread, people increasingly recognised that these quintessential elements of ideal Britishness were at odds with the institution of transatlantic slavery. This realisation generated extensive public support for the abolition movement, and became arguably one of the foremost reasons that Wilberforce's bill for the abolition of the British slave trade was passed in 1807.

Ultimately, Westminster was the setting in which the decision to abolish the slave trade was made, and was populated exclusively by men of the middling ranks of society, who would have been most susceptible to the influence of intellectual cults. The parliamentary chamber in which the debates took place became a significant setting where men could display their principles and sense of morality, thus, the careful study of two parliamentary debates for the abolition of the British slave trade will reveal how British masculine codes of conduct, such as sensibility and morality, influenced abolitionist sentiment (and vice versa). The first debate took place on 18 and 19 April 1791, and was defeated by a majority of 163 votes to 88. After numerous subsequent debates, the final vote occurred sixteen years later, on 23 February 1807, and saw the long-awaited passing of the Slave Trade Abolition Bill

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Oxford University Press, 2011); K. Sklar & J. Stewart (eds.), *Women's rights and transatlantic antislavery in the era of emancipation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). The development of gender history has also generated an interest in black women and their experience of slave resistance; see for example M.H. Camp, *Closer to freedom: enslaved women and everyday resistance in the plantation south* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); H. Beckles, 'Taking liberties: enslaved women and anti-slavery in the Caribbean', in C. Midgley (ed.), *Gender and imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

[68] H. Blair, *Sermons*, 3rd edition (London: W. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1778), 151.

[69] For an early review of the history of sensibility, see R.S. Crane, 'Suggestions toward a genealogy of the "Man of Feeling"', *ELH*, 1,3 (1934), 205-230. Also Carter, *Men and the emergence of polite society*, 27-32.

by a majority of 283 to 16. These two debates have been chosen for their content, as well as the differences in both abolitionist and pro-slavery rhetorical display due to being held at the beginning and end of Wilberforce's parliamentary campaign.

In the same way in which distance from the metropole affected white Jamaican attitudes towards blacks and their relationships with each other, that same transatlantic distance also affected the ability of white British men to empathise with or fully understand the effects of slavery on enslaved Africans in the West Indian colonies. The majority of MPs who participated in abolition debates were not directly involved in the slave trade and had never encountered the realities of institutionalised slavery on the plantations. The primary concerns of slavery advocates tended to be for the wealth, prosperity and security of Britain and her colonies. For instance in 1791, Colonel Tarleton mused upon the ruinous effect on mercantile and landed interest in Britain, and encouraged members of the House to 'join with him in resisting a measure so injurious to the national glory, commercial honour, and political interests of Great Britain.'[70] Likewise in 1807, General Gascoyne petitioned for the protection of 'the flourishing state of the colonies', arguing that 'no other method had been found out for bringing them into that state but the cultivation of slaves, and that under this system our navy and commerce had so flourished.'[71] Gascoyne also expressed an anxiety shared by many of his anti-abolitionist peers: the fear of slave insurrection in the colonies should the abolition bill come into force. His view was that 'if any insurrection should take place in the islands … he should have a right to conclude, that it was because this act had passed.'[72] It was the feeling of many, that calls for principles such as liberty and humanity, from abolitionists and the slaves themselves, would lead Britain and her colonies down a path of economic decline, political unrest and social destabilisation. This fear was further compounded by the ongoing conflict with revolutionary France and Napoleon, which was unique in that it was based on ideological disparity. France had abolished the slave trade in her own colonies in 1794, thus giving pro-slavers the

[70] Cobbett, *Parliamentary history*, vol. XXIX, 280.
[71] *Hansard's parliamentary debates. Series 1, volume 8* (London: T.C. Hansard, 1807), 957.
[72] Ibid, 959.

ammunition they needed to argue that British abolition would cause rebellion in the West Indies, as well as revolution in the motherland.[73]

MPs who supported abolition were thus required to mitigate these anxieties by testifying on behalf of the African slaves, to accentuate any characteristics which the British psyche would define as laudable. During the 1791 debate, Wilberforce encapsulated what many British men would have considered model attributes; speaking of the 'the acuteness of [the Africans'] capabilities … their genius for commerce … their peaceable and gentle dispositions.'[74] In this short statement, he uses language which mitigates concerns relating both to the commercial decline of Britain, and the possibility of disturbances in the colonies.

However, the issue of distance soon becomes apparent even when reading the speeches of Wilberforce and his fellow abolitionists. MPs on both sides of the debates suffered from a lack of contact with slaves and former slaves and relied on second-hand testimonies from colonists and those with hands-on experience within the slave trade itself. For instance, in 1791 Wilberforce 'begged the committee would advert to the characters, situations, and means of information, of the witnesses … who had themselves been concerned in the slave trade.'[75] Not only did this lack of first-hand knowledge of the realities of the slave trade place him at a fundamental disadvantage in terms of his persuasive technique, it also led him and fellow MPs to inadvertently display a sense of white superiority during their statements. For example, Wilberforce reveals his lack of appreciation of African culture by describing it as 'in general very imperfect', and their morality 'extremely rude'.[76] Likewise, those MPs who championed abolition would often default to a metaphorical rhetoric which likened African slaves to animals, a sentiment which was the antithesis of the principles of humanity and equality which abolitionists strove to promote. The opportunity to form opinions which were in contrast to the overarching narrative of Africans being of a lesser order to white humanity simply was not a possibility to many MPs who were ultimately charged with the fate of their liberty. Despite their commitment to slave welfare, abolitionists were known to

[73] C. Emsley, *British society and the French wars, 1793-1815* (London: Macmillan, 1979), 2-3.
[74] Cobbett, *Parliamentary history*, Vol. XXIX, 258-9.
[75] Ibid, 251-2.
[76] Ibid, 251.

compare African slaves to dogs, horses and even cuts of meat.[77] It was only Charles Fox who ever apologised for his analogy, stating that 'it was not his fault … that he was reduced to the degrading necessity of speaking of human beings as if they were horses', thus indicating that the derogatory comparison was so widespread that the use of such a narrative was the expected way to discuss those of African origin.

Conversely, much like West-Indian slavers, those MPs who expressed their concerns regarding the potential for insurrection in the colonies were arguably more in tune with the identities and desires of African slaves than their abolitionist peers. One of the most impassioned pro-slavery MPs, agent for Nevis John Stanley, echoed the sentiment of colonial slave-owners by advocating the 'necessity for discipline among the negroes … else it would be impossible to keep them in any kind of subjection or order.' Likewise, he declared that 'if slavery was abolished, the negroes would suppose themselves on a footing with their masters.' Unlike the abolitionists who, by necessity, were required to pacify the anxieties of anti-abolitionists by understating slaves' desire or ability to pose a threat to their white masters, due to his 'thirty years experience of their situation', Stanley recognised that slaves (and male slaves in particular) possessed courage, resilience and a yearning for liberty and justice; traits which if transposed onto a fellow white man, would have been admired.[78]

When considering the question of African masculinity in particular, it becomes clear that abolitionist MPs present at both the 1791 and 1807 debates possessed contradictory views regarding how far African masculinity could be compared to that of the British. In one of the latter speeches of the 1791 debate, MP Charles Fox took a different approach to many of his peers. Rather than recounting tales of barbaric cruelty in order to evoke emotional reactions from his fellow committee members, he presented an account of a slave who was once 'high in military station', who, on finding himself on a slave-ship bound for the British West-Indies 'was heard to burst into loud groans and lamentations … mixed with the meanest of his subjects, and subjected to the insolence of wretches, a thousand times lower than himself.' His point was thus:

[77] Cobbett, *Parliamentary history*, vol. XXIX, 281, 290, 329.
[78] Ibid, 315.

> Mr. Fox appealed to the House, whether this was not as moving a picture of the miserable effects of the slave trade, as any could be imagined … how should we feel, if conquered and carried away by a tribe as savage as our own countrymen on the coast of Africa show themselves to be? How should we brook the same indignities, or bear the same treatment ourselves, which we do not scruple to inflict on them?[79]

It was undoubtedly an inspired and perceptive strategy. The 251 MPs who carried the fate of African slaves on their shoulders were exclusively men, who arguably would have identified more with the effects of losing one's status than attempting to imagine the conditions on board ships and on islands they had never visited. Part of Fox's narrative describes a dream the slave had, in which 'he was in his own country, high in honour and in command, caressed by his family and friends, waited on by his domestics, and surrounded with all his former comforts of life.'[80] Fox thus projects British masculine standards upon this African for the purpose of his argument, forcing MPs to consider their own precarious positions in life. Wouldn't it be terrible for any man to lose their social status, their family, and their worldly possessions: the external markers of their manhood?

By equating the masculine identities and needs of Africans to those of the British, Fox manages what many of his fellow abolitionists could not: to acknowledge that black men not only deserved protection and liberty, but were comparable to the whites in terms of their characters, aspirations and lifestyle. But rhetoric which placed too much emphasis upon the uniformity of racial masculine identities was problematic in itself, as Charles Bathurst emphasized in 1807. Being one of the many supporters of abolition during the final debate, Bathurst mocked the notion that slavers were liberating Africans from misery and destitution in their native country. He declared:

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[79] Cobbett, P*arliamentary history*, vol. XXIX, 355.
[80] Ibid, 354.

> O benevolent crusaders! Thus to become voluntary missionaries in this perilous pilgrimage, purely to impart happiness to the sable sons of sorrow! … But how presumptuous is man not to square the happiness of other beings by any ideal standard of his own! To what absurdity, as well as cruelty, would this lead![81]

Bathurst continues to illustrate in no uncertain terms how favourable abolition is to his own sense of morality, but in so doing terms the African 'stupid and sulky', whilst also using an analogy which compares Africans to ferrets.[82] Although Bathurst recognises that to project British experience and masculine identity onto Africans would be doing them a disservice, in contrast to Fox, his testimony is saturated with derogatory language and an explicit air of superiority.

The final element to consider is much more prominent in the debate of 1807, when abolition was all-but a foregone conclusion to those in the House: the unapologetic and excessive pride which the abolitionist MPs felt for themselves, Wilberforce, and Britain as a whole. By the time the committee members met on 23 February 1807, abolitionist sentiment and support had reached its pinnacle, and MPs on both sides of the debate were conscious of the fact that by the end of the year, The Slave Trade Act would become law. Furthermore, many of the arguments presented by abolitionists had been repeated in parliament on numerous occasions. Evidence of Africans' intellect, for instance, which had been a key element of abolitionist rhetoric for more than two decades, had been substantiated with the publication of works from black authors, such as Phyllis Wheatley's *Poems on Various Subjects* (1773), Ottobah Cugoano's *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery* (1787) Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano* (1789). Thus, the continued insistence that Africans deserved to be treated as sentient, erudite members of humanity was no longer strictly necessary.

Rather, the superiority displayed during the 1807 debate was directed inwards, as abolitionist MPs celebrated their achievements in occasioning the dissolution of Britain's part in the Atlantic slave trade. Much praise was directed at

[81] *Hansard's parliamentary debates,* 976.
[82] Ibid, 976.

Wilberforce, with Sir John Doyle praising his 'unwearied industry, his indefatigable zeal, and his impressive eloquence', and Lord Mahon Rose declaring that his 'name will descend to the latest posterity … for his indefatigable exertions in the cause of suffering humanity.'[83] Likewise, many MPs expressed their unapologetic pride in themselves, and Britain as a whole, by stating that a vote for abolition 'reflected the highest credit on ministers', and that a positive outcome would cause them to 'rejoice in [their] country, and in this house, for the great act of humanity they appear willing to complete.'[84] The decision to abolish the slave trade in Britain did of course rest on this group of middle-class white men at Westminster. However, the language they used betrayed their overwhelming self-righteousness, and failed to acknowledge the struggles and determination of rebellious slaves in the colonies, as well as the efforts of black former slaves on British soil.[85] By contrast, it enhanced their feelings of superiority over Africa and its former inhabitants, which they viewed as 'helpless', and furthermore, afforded themselves some solace from the guilt of injuring and insulting the rights of humanity over the course of Britain's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade. By finally succeeding in passing the Slave Trade Act in 1807, abolitionist MPs could rest easy in the knowledge that their manhood, as it was defined by their benevolence and empathy, had been firmly reinstated.

CONCLUSION

By exploring the worlds of those men who were intimately involved in the British slave trade and its abolition in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it becomes apparent that the force underlying the cruelty of slave masters, as well as the benevolence of abolitionists, was an inescapable anxiety linked to their own masculine identities. The groups of men which this chapter has discussed, be they slave-ship captains, West-Indian planters, pro-slavery MPs or abolitionists, all found

[83] *Hansard's parliamentary debates*, 977, 969.
[84] Ibid, 963, 967.
[85] For a good overview of slave resistance see M. Craton, *Testing the chains: resistance to slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1982). The protests of former slaves on British soil is considered in P. Linebaugh & M. Rediker, *The many-headed hydra: sailors, slaves, and commoners, and the hidden history of the revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), 287-326.

ways to mitigate their fears, and constructed divergent masculine ideologies which were ultimately driven by their individual relationships with blacks and with slavery.

To varying degrees, all of these men viewed black masculinity as a threat. Arguably, slave-ship captains, West-Indian overseers and planters, and other men charged with the transportation and management of African slaves faced the most obvious and tangible danger, that of physical violence and insurrection. The men involved in debating the validity and continuance of Britain's part in the transatlantic slave trade from the security of Westminster, however, did not have to worry about such hazards, but that is not to say that they did not also have the weight of apprehension resting on their shoulders. For those MPs who steadfastly argued in favour of the continuation of the trade in human traffic, anxieties were based upon the perceived ruinous effect which abolition would have on the wealth of Britain and her colonies, as well as the nation's position on the world stage. On the other hand, MPs who fought for and supported abolition expressed their desire to restore Britain's moral high-ground by ending the barbaric traffic of African slaves. In their minds, the necessity to demonstrate benevolence and empathy towards Africa and its people outweighed any commercial or political considerations.

By the early nineteenth century, all of the above-mentioned classes of men had become adept at mitigating their anxieties in various, contradictory ways. Those who were faced with the direct threat of black masculinity chose to issue cruel and humiliating punishments to black men, and created unified micro-cultures of white masculinity in the colonies, in order to protect themselves. Conversely, supporters of abolition whose anxieties were based around the incongruity of slavery and sensibility, chose to campaign on behalf of the black community abroad, some sacrificing years of their lives to the cause.

Of course, it is obvious that in alleviating their private apprehensions, abolitionists in Georgian Britain did more for Africa and its people than any British subjects before them, whilst the brutality practised by British men in the Atlantic colonies caused thousands of African slaves to live their lives in pain and misery. However, in order to arrive at a more accurate and nuanced conclusion than simply stating that abolitionists were the benevolent heroes and white colonists the villains, it is important to recognize that West-Indian slave owners and their employees were

considerably more appreciative of the strength and resilience of black slaves, men in particular, than abolitionists on the British mainland. In many respects, the physical and perceptive distance which abolitionists enjoyed from the horrors of slavery and the slave trade led them to construct an image of black men as helpless victims. Thus, it would not be remiss to conclude that on a deeper and more philosophical level, the reactions of slave holders in the West-Indies displayed more appreciation for black masculine character than the abolitionists who strove to save them.

Chapter Two

The Black Male in Eighteenth-Century Art

Renowned portrait artist Sir Joshua Reynolds once said that 'the great end of all arts is to make an impression on the *imagination* and the *feeling,*' a sentiment which seems particularly pertinent when we consider how eighteenth-century artists chose to represent the black community in Britain.[86] Over the course of the 1700s, European artists began to incorporate black figures into their paintings and prints, for the first time portraying them as familiar subjects, rather than exotic entities.[87] This development was pivotal in shaping British attitudes towards the rising numbers of blacks residing in urban centres, and signified a critical shift in how the public imagined interracial encounters.[88] Furthermore, the cult of sensibility which overtook politeness as the emotional and behavioural foundation for middling and high society, prescribed the need to perceive and react to the emotions of others. Sensibility, coupled with the rise of abolitionist rhetoric in the late 1700s, thus provided the ideal backdrop for artists to incorporate black figures in their work as a way to induce an emotional response from the viewer. Whether these responses be sympathetic or contemptuous, they nevertheless succeeded in making an impression; as Tony Frazier states, 'The ambiguous status of blacks in Britain found reflection in the multiple images that whites constructed of them.'[89]

Until the latter half of the eighteenth century, fine art was almost exclusively created on commission for display in private collections and homes. However, with the opening of London's Royal Academy in 1768, followed by numerous galleries, art was for the first time available to the viewing public. This, coupled with the growth of the printing press, led to various forms of visual culture, from elite portraits to

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[86] E. Malone, *The works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, knight: containing his discourses, idlers, a journey to Flanders and Holland, and his commentary on Du Fresnoy's art of painting* (Edinburgh: William Forrester, 1867), 132. [My emphasis].
[87] M. Wood, *Blind memory: visual representation of slavery in England and America, 1780-1865* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 153.
[88] C. Molineux, *Faces of perfect ebony: encountering Atlantic slavery in imperial Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 201.
[89] T. Frazier, 'The black image in the English gaze: depictions of blackness in English art', *International Journal of Art and Art History*, 7, 2 (2019), 39-52:51.

political cartoons, being more accessible than ever before.[90] Prior to this, one of the only ways in which the British public were able to relate to people of African descent was through their fictional representation. Characters such as William Shakespeare's Othello, Aphra Benn's Oroonoko and Daniel Defoe's Friday came to represent the foundations on which the British public based their perceptions of black masculinity. Despite the readers of the original works of fiction largely being part of the upper echelons of society, stage reproductions of various novels and plays also allowed those of lower socio-economic status to engage with the black characters, and thus create for themselves a perception of what black masculinity constituted.

Felicity Nussbaum has argued that these characters, who often combined the identities of 'noble and slave, refined and fierce … threatened to expose the myths of a white masculinity uncertain of its nationalist moorings and seeking to justify imperial violence.'[91] This conclusion could also relate to the art of the period. As this chapter will demonstrate, representations of the black male in eighteenth-century visual culture performed two functions pertinent to the manhood of both the white audience and the black subject. Artworks revealed key anxieties threatening the political, sexual and moral foundations which underpinned the concept of British manhood. By exploring elite portraiture, satirical art and abolitionist iconography, this chapter will reveal how artists navigated these fundamental British anxieties, and how representations of black subjects related to the apprehensions of white men. Furthermore, an important aspect of the discussion will be a consideration of how these images affected the self-worth and gendered identities of the black men who may also have viewed them.

Visual representations of black figures vastly outweigh the written documents composed by former African slaves themselves, which meant that art became one of the foremost indicators of black masculinity in the period.[92] However, depictions of the black male consistently disregarded any indication of a link to

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[90] P. Dumas, *Proslavery Britain: fighting for slavery in an era of abolition* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 91.
[91] Nussbaum, 'Being a man', 55.
[92] See: K. Huang, 'Blackness and lines of beauty in the eighteenth-century Anglophone Atlantic world', *African and Black Diaspora*, 12, 3 (2019), 271-86:272. The first full-length narrative from a former slave was that of Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, published in 1772. However, widespread interest in the writings of freed slaves did not peak until the publication of Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* in 1789, when abolitionist sentiment had gained momentum in Britain.

plantation slavery (with the exception of abolitionist iconography). Although images did exist of slave auctions, shipment and the lives of slaves on plantations, such subject matter was not popular amongst the British audience, as it brought the realities of slavery too close for comfort. As Jan Pieterse has argued, ' Invisibility was one way in which slavery was kept psychologically at bay.'[93] The following analysis will therefore argue that this almost universal disregard for former slaves' past experiences led to the systemic and consistent emasculation of the black male in eighteenth century art.

POLITICAL ANXIETY: THE TROPE OF THE BLACK ATTENDANT IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PORTRAITURE

In the early sixteenth century, Titian's portrait of Laura Dianti (Figure 1) marked the beginning of a burgeoning iconography which would become an integral feature of many elite European portraits. In Titian's image, Dianti is presented in her finery, accompanied by a young, black page who occupies the bottom-right corner of the frame and looks adoringly up at her as she rests a protective hand upon his shoulder. Although often associated with portraits of aristocratic women, eighteenth-century artists such as Sir Joshua Reynolds and George Morland also included black attendants in portraits of men of the landed gentry and their families (see Figures 2 & 3). The juxtaposition of white and black, along with the considered, subservient placement of the black figure thus became a popular way for elite Europeans to highlight their own power, affluence and beauty.[94]

The black attendant trope was also one of the principal ways in which Europeans negotiated their connections to slavery. Catherine Molineux has suggested that these portraits 'visually represent the ideological conception of slavery … that English slavery, unlike that of the French or Spanish, reflected their benevolence, cultural superiority and religious virtue.'[95] By the mid-1700s, the

[93] J.N. Pieterse, *White on black: images of Africa and blacks in Western popular culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 53.
[94] Yale Center for British art, *Figures of empire: slavery and portraiture in eighteenth-century Atlantic Britain* [exhibition catalogue] (Yale Center for British Art, 2014).
[95] C. Molineux, 'Hogarth's fashionable slaves: moral corruption in eighteenth-century London', *ELH*, 72, 2 (2005), 495-520:513-4.

Figure 1: Titian, *Portrait of Laura Dianti.* c.1520-5 [Oil on Canvas]. Kreuzlingen, Collezione H. Kisters.

Figure 2: J. Reynolds, *Charles Stanhope, Third Earl of Harrington, and a Servant.* 1782 [Oil on Canvas] Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

Figure 3: G. Morland, *Fruits of Early Industry and Economy.* 1789 [Oil on Canvas]. Philadelphia Museum of Art.

'cult of sensibility' had begun to dominate the social interactions of the upper and middle classes, and had a profound impact on how elite men thought and behaved. In his essay *On the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences* (1742), David Hume argues that in order for a refined society to flourish, men must 'correct such gross vices as lead us to commit real injury on others … a polite man learns to behave with deference towards his companions.'[96] In order to showcase the benevolent and refined nature of British manhood, the portraits of Reynolds, Morland and others often depict an obedient yet content, safe, healthy and well-dressed black figure.

Furthermore, the portraits represented an extension of the need for validation and superiority on the world stage. Following the Seven Years' War (1756-63) and wars with the American colonies between 1775 and 1783, the nature and future of the British state was precarious, and this political uncertainty manifested itself as a fundamental anxiety in the minds of upper and middle-class British men. Thus, in the second half of the eighteenth century it was vital to showcase not only personal affluence and power, but also to demonstrate Britain's colonial accomplishments and moral superiority. In order to separate themselves from the French and Spanish, who spared 'neither Cost nor Pains' to populate their colonies with slaves, and the Dutch, who 'wou'd impale [the slaves] alive or take out their Bowels' they depicted black attendants as healthy, well-cared for members of the British household.[97]

However, the non-threatening postures afforded to the white sitters in these paintings do not fail to emasculate the black, often male, attendants which often appear in the periphery. The ideal master-servant relationship was one of mutual obligation and respect, but the 'exotic appeal' of being served by a man or boy of African heritage was nothing more than an addition to a collection of foreign curiosities.[98] Furthermore, the analogy between the placement of black attendants and that of animals is striking. In Reynolds' *George, 3rd Earl Temple and his family*

[96] D. Hume, *Essays and treatises on several subjects, vol. II* (London: Cadell, 1793), 132-3.
[97] R. Robertson, *The speech of Mr. John Talbot Campo-Bell, a free Christian-negro* (London, 1736), 21, 23.
[98] For more on master-servant relationships see L. Davidoff & C. Hall, *Family fortunes: men and women of the English middle class, 1750-1850* (London: Routledge, 1987), 388-96.

Figure 4: J. Reynolds, *George, 3rd Earl Temple and his family.* c.1780-2 [Oil on Canvas]. National Gallery of Ireland.

Figure 5: J. Reynolds, *Mrs. Elisha Matthew.* 1777 [Oil on Canvas]. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Figure 6: J.S. Copley, *Sir William Pepperrell and his Family.* 1778 [Oil on Canvas]. The North Carolina Museum of Art.

(1780-2) (Figure 4) for example, the black attendant is taking his traditional artistic position and stance; occupying the bottom-left hand corner of the frame and gazing respectfully upwards towards his young master. If one were to compare this portrait to Reynold's *Mrs Elisha Matthew* (1777), and John Singleton Copley's *Sir William Pepperrell and his family* (1778) (Figures 5 & 6), one can clearly see the parallels between attendant and family pet. In *Elisha Matthew*, her obedient spaniel possesses the same adoring gaze as many a black attendant, and the Pepperell family dog occupies the bottom-left corner of the frame, the space often reserved for an African child. This symmetry could be interpreted as symbolic of a master's need to be shown loyalty by his black attendant. Throughout the eighteenth century, hundreds of newspaper advertisements were placed by masters and owners, appealing for the apprehension and return of runaway black slaves and servants.[99] For instance in 1760, Mr. Orby Rich offered a reward of five shillings for the discovery of his 'Negro Boy, called John Cheslea', a repeated runaway who was 'frequently absent … from his said Master's Service, and is disobedient to his Commands.'[100] Many masters and mistresses believed that the taking in of a black attendant was to show them a kindness; saving them from a life of toil on the plantations. To have a servant abscond was therefore a personal insult against their character. In terms of portraiture, to place a black attendant in the same position as the notoriously loyal and obedient family dog, was to demonstrate both the faithfulness of the servant and the benevolent atmosphere of the master or mistress's household.

The symmetry between African and animal in these portraits also fed into the common European belief that people of African heritage were 'an inferior and subordinate race of men', a sentiment which did not go unobserved by black servants themselves.[101] In an early edition of the *Tatler,* a male servant complains that in the eyes of his mistress, 'the Parrot who came over with me from our Country is as much esteemed by her as I am'.[102] Thus, the visual iconography of the black

[99] Runaway Slaves in Britain Project, *Runaway slaves in Britain: bondage, freedom and race in the eighteenth century.* Available online: www.runaways.gla.ac.uk [Accessed: 20.04.2021].
[100] *Daily Advertiser* (London) 29 May 1760, 2.
[101] G. Sharp, *An essay on the African slave trade* (London: C. Dilly, 1790).
[102] *Tatler,* no.245 (November 2, 1710). Cited in F.A. Nussbaum, *The limits of the human: fictions of anomaly, race and gender in the long eighteenth-century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 137.

attendant, which accentuated the wealth, status and benevolence of the white elite, was simultaneously responsible for the further humiliation and emasculation of the African community in Britain.

The vast majority of portraits which feature black attendants conform to accepted iconographic principles; including them within the frame but giving them no purpose, and insinuating their obedience, submissiveness and silence. However, one painting stands out as an important anomaly to the accepted norms. At the 1787 Royal Academy exhibition, Reynolds displayed a portrait featuring George IV (then Prince of Wales), accompanied by a black servant (Figure 7). Unlike other images of the genre, the prince's servant ventures from the outskirts of the frame, his stance suggesting movement and purpose as he leans across the prince's body to tighten his master's belt. Paula Dumas has argued that the servant's lower position serves to highlight the prince's dominance over the man, as well as Britain's domination over its colonies, therefore conforming to the standard versions of the black attendant trope.[103] However, the painting was met with intense interest and criticism, directed largely at the figure of the black servant, rather than the prince. Upon the unveiling of the portrait, The *World* expressed discomfort that 'the black is pushing [the prince] about as he pleases', and returned to the issue six months later in an attempt to exonerate both Reynolds and the prince for the controversial piece, stating that it was in fact the Duke of Orléans, 'that has to answer for the introduction of the aforesaid black'.[104] Comments such as these call attention to the growing anxieties of Britain, especially its men. Despite the fact that the black figure is serving his expected purpose as subordinate to the white figure, the fact that he has been given an active role was enough to spark controversy, and threatened to undermine the superiority of both prince and nation.

Throughout the eighteenth century the trope of the black attendant also received criticism from more socially-conscious artists and viewers, who recognised that the addition of a black servant indicated nothing more than material excess and the false pretensions of those who commissioned such paintings. In the mid-1700s, artist and pictorial satirist William Hogarth lampooned the trope of

[103] Dumas, *Proslavery Britain,* 92.
[104] *World, fashionable advertiser* (London), 1 May 1787; 27 November 1787. Cited in M.Postle (ed.), *Joshua Reynolds: the creation of celebrity* [exhibition catalogue] (Tate Publishing, 2005), 138.

Figure 7: J. Reynolds, *Prince George with Black Servant.* 1786-7 [Oil on Canvas]. Arundel Castle, West Sussex.

the black attendant in an attempt to ridicule what he saw as the materialistic, overindulgent nature of the middle and upper classes. His *The Toilette* (*Marriage A-la-Mode* series), *Taste in High Life* and plate II of *A Harlot's Progress* (Figures 8-10) all feature a familiar black figure, dressed in exotic garb and occupying the periphery of the frame. Hogarth juxtaposes familiar signifiers of wealth and power, such as the drinking of tea and the keeping of black servants, with signs of moral corruption, for instance, having the child in *The Toilette* pointing to the antlers on a figurine - a common symbol of cuckoldry.[105] Hume declared that to overindulge in materialistic luxuries 'is a quality pernicious … to polite society.'[106] Thus, the images all serve to condemn what Hogarth saw as sinful overindulgence and reliance on foreign goods, and his anxiety over the moral condition of the British upper-classes manifested itself in his work.

[105] See Molineux, 'Hogarth's fashionable slaves'.
[106] Hume, 'Of refinements in the arts' in *Essays,* 267.

Figure 8: W. Hogarth, *Marriage A-la-Mode: 4. The Toilette.* 1743 [Oil on Canvas]. The National Gallery, London.

Figure 9: W. Hogarth, *Taste in High Life.* 1742 (published 1746) [Etching and engraving]. Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

Figure 10: W. Hogarth, *A Harlot's Progress, Plate 2.* 1732 [Etching and engraving]. Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

David Dabydeen has suggested that the use of black figures in Hogarth's art was a protest against exploitation. Hogarth was well-known for his philanthropic gestures towards the poor of London, and identified a parallel between them and the African community, both victimized by economic and political systems.[107] Although David Bindman has recognised that due to abolitionism being in its infancy when Hogarth's career was most active, he probably would have accepted the institution of slavery as a basic principle, and concentrated his efforts on making visible London's exploited black community.[108] However, one of the biggest problems with Hogarth's depiction of blacks, is the visual analogy between figures of African heritage and other 'exotic' ephemera. In plate II of *A Harlot's Progress,* the ornately-dressed black page is depicted as part of the backdrop to the main scene, and is surrounded by objects of exotic appeal, such as a china tea set and a pet monkey. Despite his attempt to mock the visual iconography of the black attendant, the similarities between his work and that of Reynolds and others may have served to reinforce the idea of insignificance in the minds of black servants, and the wider British public. Rather than warning against the immoral practice of objectifying human beings, Hogarth removes the human agency from his black characters, thus further degrading the black community and emasculating their men.

SEXUAL ANXIETY: MOCKERY AND DEGREDATION IN SATIRICAL ART

The genre of satirical art rose in prominence and began to proliferate within the London art scene from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, with an estimated 20,000 humorous prints being produced between 1770 and 1830.[109] Taking cues from early literary satirists such as Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope, artists such as Hogarth, James Gillray and Thomas Rowlandson harnessed their artistic creativity and produced comical drawings which became one of the principle ways in which the British public negotiated the changing social and political climate. It has long been understood that the aim of satire, both literary and pictorial, was 'reformation

[107] D. Dabydeen, *Hogarth's Africans: images of Africans in eighteenth century English art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 130-2.
[108] D. Bindman, 'A voluptuous alliance between Africa and Europe: Hogarth's Africans', in B. Fort & A. Rosenthal (eds.), *The other Hogarth: aesthetics of difference* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 260-9.
[109] Dumas, *Proslavery Britain*, 94.

through perceptive ridicule. The satirist saw what was wrong with the world; the reader reciprocated by agreement and amendment.'[110] In other words, vices, immorality and shortcomings of individuals or society at large were ridiculed with the intention of provoking positive change. For instance, in Gillray's 1792 depiction of Prince George (Figure 11), the royal slumps on a chair following a lavish meal, yet the overflowing chamber pot in the background and the action of him picking his teeth with a fork warns against the dissolution of traditional, refined masculine values within an elite culture increasingly preoccupied with decadence. In a 1779 essay, Dr. James Beattie recognized that 'Things *ludicrous* and things *ridiculous* have this in common, that they both excite laughter,' which suggests that the eighteenth-century surge in the popularity of visual satire may have been due to the incongruous nature of the subject matter.[111] Thus, the most esteemed works were

Figure 11: J. Gillray, *A Voluptuary Under the Horrors of Digestion.* 1792 [Hand-coloured etching]. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

[110] R. Morton, 'Satire and reform', in J.D. Browning (ed.), *Satire in the eighteenth century* (New York, 1983), 1.
[111] J. Beattie, *Essays on laughter and ludicrous composition*, 3rd edition (London: E. & C. Dilly, 1779), 340; see M. Knights & A. Morton, *The power of laughter and satire in early modern Britain: political and religious culture, 1500-1820* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017), 6.

those which portrayed humorous transgressions of accepted norms or expectations.

The genre of satirical art was therefore ideally placed to highlight another of the nation's anxieties: the sexual unity of black men and white women. By the late eighteenth century, an estimated 20,000 people of African heritage had settled in English urban centres, many of them male and increasingly able to sustain a limited amount of economic mobility.[112] The relatively unfamiliar phenomenon of encountering black freemen in urban areas created a considerable amount of white apprehension about black male sexuality, and the supposed effects which interracial sexual encounters would have on society and the state. According to some contemporary social critics, to incorporate children of mixed heritage into British society was to 'produce a vile mongrel race of people', and that 'there cannot be a greater degradation' than to allow Africans and native Britons to procreate.[113]

One of the most recognisable images to outline this anxiety is the anonymous *The Rabbits* (1792) (Figure 12). The sketch portrays a heavily caricatured black rabbit-seller, kneeling in a white woman's doorway as he offers her his wares. The position of the black figure is interesting; the artist places him in a kneeling, subservient position, gazing up at the white woman, which is reminiscent of the placement of black figures in elite portraiture. However, the artist overturns the symbolism of such a stance by adding suggestive details which create an awareness of erotic charge. For instance, in his left hand, the rabbit-seller holds out a carcass for the woman's perusal, but the head of the rabbit points directly between her legs. The use of rabbits as the black salesman's merchandise of choice is also an obvious indication of the underlying anxiety that black men and lower-class white women might fraternize and reproduce 'like rabbits'. In an attempt to curb the abolitionist tide, pro-slavery campaigner Edward Long warned that interracial unions among the working classes 'may spread so extensively, as even to reach the middle, and then

[112] Contemporary sources estimate number of Blacks in Britain in the late 1700s to be between 15,000 and 30,000. However, abolitionist Granville Sharp's estimate of 20,000 is often deemed most reliable by modern scholars. See J. Walvin, *Black and White: the Negro and English society 1555-1945* (London: Penguin Press, 1973), 46-7.

[113] C. Reeve, *Plans of education, with remarks on the systems of other writers, in a series of letters between Mrs. Darnford and her friends* (London: T. Hookham & J. Carpenter, 1792), 90-1.

the higher orders of the people, till the whole nation resembles the *Portugese* and *Moriscos* in complexion of skin and baseness of mind.'[114] Although objectors of

Figure 12: Anon. *The Rabbits.* 1792 [Etching and engraving]. Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

[114] E. Long, *Candid reflections upon the judgement lately awarded by the Court of King's Bench, in Westminter-Hall, on what is commonly called the Negroe-cause, by a planter* (London: T. Lowndes, 1772), 48-9. Cited in A. Rosenthal, 'Visceral culture: blushing and the legibility of whiteness in eighteenth-century British portraiture', *Art History*, 27, 4 (2004), 563-92:580-1.

interracial unions were in the minority by the end of the eighteenth century, this quote suggests that advocates of slavery were able to tap into wider social anxieties.[115] As such, the pro-slavery argument was less about the perceived threat to British women, but the danger of a weakening of the social and intellectual fabric of the middle and upper classes.

The imagery of rabbits also represented deeper anxieties about social order. In 1726, a poor, labouring woman from the town of Godalming, Surrey, managed to convince both her local community and a series of eminent London doctors that she was giving birth to rabbits.[116] Although the births were eventually discovered to be a hoax, the actions of Mary Toft, the 'Imposteress Rabbett Breeder', presented society with the uneasy realisation that the dispossessed had agency, and given the appropriate audience and circumstance, could deceive and humiliate members of the middling and upper classes, thereby threatening the very basis of societal power structures.[117] Thus, the fact that the peddler in *Rabbits* was advertising this particular commodity not only represents sexual deviance, but also insinuates the eventuality of black men resisting or humiliating those in authority, just as Toft had done over sixty years earlier.

Alongside the threat of black male sexuality, there also existed a certain anxiety surrounding white, particularly upper-class, men indulging in sexual relations with black women. Hogarth's *The Discovery* (Figure 13), first produced in 1743 but not widely circulated until after his death in 1788, shows a former theatre manager, Mr. Highmore, on the discovery of a sparsely-clad black woman in his bed. The image is a satire of Highmore's notorious yet unsuccessful attempt to seduce the wife of a friend. In discovering his desire, a group of his acquaintances decided to openly ridicule him in the most blatant way possible, by placing a black woman in his bed in place of the white woman he craved.[118] Similarly, Isaac Cruikshank's 1807 print, *A Morning Surprise* (Figure 14) shows a white man waking to find a black woman in his bed. The man's expression is one of horror as he grips the bed-curtains, seemingly

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[115] Wheeler, *The complexion of race: categories of difference in eighteenth-century British culture* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2000), 141.
[116] K. Harvey, *The imposteress rabbit breeder: Mary Toft and eighteenth-century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).
[117] Ibid, 129.
[118] T. Frazier, 'The black image in the English gaze', 48.

attempting an escape from the grinning, sinister-looking woman next to him. Although pro-slavery commentators almost exclusively focused their outrage towards black men taking lower-class white female partners, both *Discovery* and *Morning Surprise* indicate that the anxiety surrounding interracial unions was multifaceted. However, rather than the anxiety being funnelled into society by anti-abolitionists under the guise of concerns for the future of the state, concerns surrounding relations between black women and white, upper-class men are of a more social and individual nature.

One of the most pervasive features of eighteenth-century polite society, and the later cult of sensibility, as they related to men, was the manner in which each societal vogue affected how heterosexual males related to each other. Lawrence Klein and Philip Carter have both recognised that the development of male-dominated spaces of social interaction in English cities, such as coffeehouses and

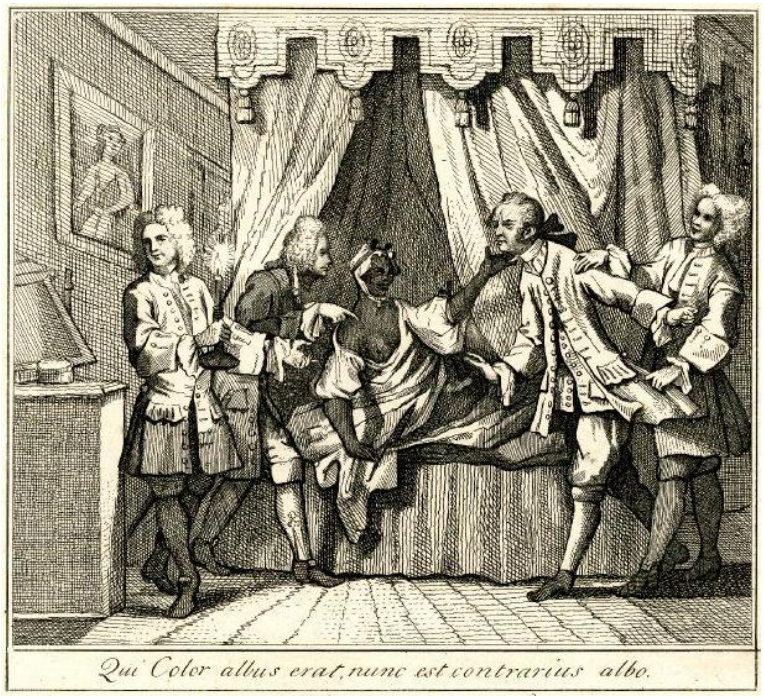

Figure 13: W. Hogarth, *The Discovery.* 1788 [Etching and engraving]. The British Museum, London.

Figure 14: Isaac Cruikshank after George Woodward, *A Morning Surprise.* 1807 [Hand-coloured etching]. The British Museum, London.

public gardens, led to a man's desire to conform to the behavioural standards of his peer group, this being a vital prerequisite of social acceptance.[119] In the same way in which satirical artists lampooned the tendency for upper and middling class men to seek the service of white working women, for example Rowlandson's *Touch for Touch* (Figure 15), the purpose of *Discovery* and *Morning Surprise* was to highlight the licentious nature of both prostitutes and black women, as it was perceived at the time, and make clear the detrimental effect such an act would have on a man's public reputation.

The notion of black women being somehow a threat to white manhood also has more sinister roots. James Gillray's *Philanthropic Consolations after the Loss of the Slave Bill* (Figure 16) shows William Wilberforce and the Bishop of Westminster being entertained by women of African descent. Wilberforce is depicted as frail and ageing, and in need of a cushion in order to prop himself up to the eye-line of

[119] Klein, 'Liberty, manners and politeness', 587-8; Carter, *Men and the emergence of polite society*, 36-9.

Figure 15: T. Rowlandson, *Touch for Touch, or a Female Physician in Full Practice.* 1811 [Hand-coloured etching]. The British Library, London.

Figure 16: J. Gillray, *Philanthropic Consolations, after the Loss of the Slave Bill.* 1796 [Etching and engraving]. Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

his buxom, black companion. The women are large and domineering compared to the white male figures, and expose their breasts in an overt display of their sexuality. The predatory nature in which black women are represented in *Philanthropic Consolations*, *Discovery*, and *A Morning Surprise* was part of a larger pro-slavery design to hold African women responsible for the iniquity of white men, particularly in the colonies. By presenting slave-women as highly-sexed temptresses, white colonial men were able to deny responsibility for illicit sexual encounters with their slaves, thereby maintaining their refined façade and saving themselves from public disgrace and scandal.[120]

MORAL ANXIETY: THE PROBLEM WITH ABOLITIONIST ICONOGRAPHY

As an extension of the cult of sensibility, by the late 1700s, widespread appeals to abolish the British slave trade had emerged to accentuate the moralistic and benevolent nature of high society. According to Robert Winder, 'in liberal society it became as fashionable to declare oneself opposed to slavery as it had been to have a black boy passing the scones.'[121] However, rather than the humanitarianism of anti-slavery generating widespread content in terms of white men's moral and religious conscience, the visual iconography produced for the abolitionist cause instead reveals deep-seated anxieties surrounding British manhood. Furthermore, the visual culture which surrounded abolitionism simultaneously apotheosized the white abolitionist whilst removing slave agency and minimising male slaves' ability to showcase any semblance of their manhood.

The most recognisable abolitionist emblem continues to be the seal which the *Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade* adopted in 1787 (Figure 17).[122] Designed by Josiah Wedgwood, the seal depicts a kneeling, shackled male slave, hands together and looking upwards as if praying to a figure situated outside of the frame. Accompanying the image are the words, 'Am I Not a Man and a Brother?', a phrase which would become the Society's motto. The image proved

[120] H. Altink, 'Deviant and dangerous: pro-slavery representations of Jamaican slave women's sexuality, c.1780-1834', *Slavery and Abolition,* 26, 2 (2005), 271-88:272-5.
[121] R. Winder, *Bloody foreigners: the story of immigration to Britain* (London: Abacus, 2005), 134.
[122] Henceforth, 'Society'.

incredibly popular amongst abolitionists, and was reproduced to be worn by both men and women as brooches, jewellery, and to decorate snuff boxes and other household items. It even reached an international audience after Wedgwood sent a large package of medallions to Benjamin Franklin in Pennsylvania, who declared that the motif 'may have an Effect equal to that of the best written Pamphlet in procuring favour to those oppressed people.'[123]

The dilemma surrounding Wedgwood's design, however, is that its popularity was directly related to the image's clear and unapologetic emasculation of the black slave. By placing the slave on his knees with his hands raised and together, the design incorporates the conventional Christian iconography of the dutiful follower of Christ, which naturally gives more emphasis to the unseen object of the slave's supplication, than to the figure of the slave himself. Condemning the slave trade as being fundamentally subversive to Christian teachings was a common argument of the abolitionist lobby, with supporters often arguing that slavery was 'in direct opposition to the whole tenor of Christianity' in parliamentary debates.[124] Thus, rather than Wedgwood's image invoking solidarity with, or empathy for the enslaved, it highlights the piousness and benevolence of the white abolitionist, to whom the slave is gazing. It functions as a visual reminder that it is the white abolitionist who holds the metaphorical keys to the slaves' emancipation, and to show support for such a cause would consequently ease any anxieties surrounding the immoralities of Britain's involvement in the slave trade.

Similarly, as a reaction to the pro-slavery argument that slaves being transported from Africa were 'treated with every possible Care, Attention and Tenderness', the Society designed and released a hypothetical projection of the cramped conditions aboard the average slave ship.[125] The diagram of the 'Brookes Slave Ship' (Figure 18), depicts the Brookes loaded to its full capacity of 454 slaves, and was designed to 'give the spectator an idea of the sufferings of the Africans in

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[123] B. Franklin, 'To Josiah Wedgewood, May 15, 1788', *Benjamin Franklin collection and papers.* Unpublished. (Yale University). Cited in Z. Trodd, 'Am I still not a man and a brother? Protest memory in contemporary antislavery visual culture', *Slavery and Abolition,* 34, 2 (2013), 338-52:340.
[124] Cobbett, P*arliamentary history*, vol. XXIX, 317.
[125] *Report of the lords of the committee of council appointed for the consideration of all matters relating to trade and foreign plantations* (London, 1789), 65.

Figure 17: Attributed to J. Wedgwood, *"Am I Not a Man and a Brother?"* 1787. Public Domain.

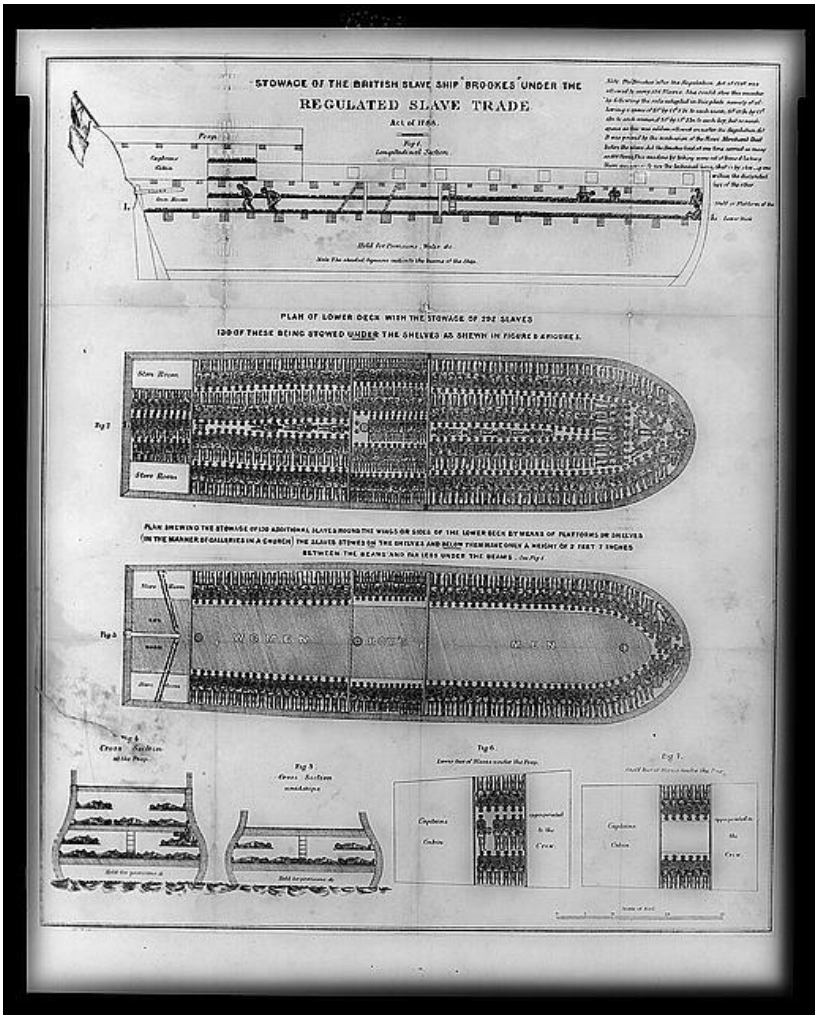

Figure 18: T. Clarkson, *Stowage of the British Slave Ship Brookes under the Regulated Slave Trade Act of 1788.* 1788 [Black & white film copy negative]. Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

the Middle Passage.'[126] According to Thomas Clarkson, the image 'seemed to make an instantaneous impression of horror upon all who saw it', despite its purposeful omission of any real sense of pain or anguish as experienced by the real people which those small, faceless illustrations represented.[127] The anonymity of the enslaved figures leaves little room for genuine compassion; rather than explicitly demonstrating the conditions of slave-ship holds, which 'were so crouded … that the Stench of the Hatchway was intolerable', the image of the Brookes sanitises the slave experience, attempting to appeal to the audience on behalf of the enslaved, without offending their delicate sensibilities.[128]

The Brooke's diagram and, 'Am I Not a Man and a Brother?' sigil are arguably the most recognisable items of abolitionist visual propaganda from late eighteenth-century Britain. However, the rise in popularity and accessibility of political cartoons also led to some of the nation's leading satirical artists to design and publish their own images in support of the abolition campaign. Commonly, these drawings depicted the treatment of slaves in British colonies, or on board slave ships, and were significantly more violent and graphically distressing than the images authorized by the Society (see Figures 19 & 20). One of the cornerstones of the culture of sensibility in eighteenth-century Britain was the display of empathetic concern for the pain and distress of others. In 1724, William Wollaston captured the essence of this new-found mindset by declaring that 'When a man cares not what sufferings he causes others, and especially if he delights in other men's sufferings and makes them his sport, this is what I call cruelty.'[129] Thus, the purpose of portraying African slaves as bound, whipped, tortured and humiliated was clearly to shock the reserved British audience, and compel them into realising the true, brutal nature of the trade in slaves. However, they also revealed another of the nation's fundamental anxieties, which was more pervasive amongst British men - the fear of slave insurrection, and by extension, the threat of African manhood to British society.

For every cartoon which condemned slavery, there existed an image created by those who supported its continuance, for example the anonymous *Abolition of*

[126] T. Clarkson, *The history of the rise, progress, & accomplishment of the abolition of the African slave trade*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, 1808), 90.
[127] Ibid, 90.
[128] *Report of the lords of the committee*, 62.
[129] W. Wollaston, *The religion of nature delineated* (London, 1724), 139.

the Slave Trade, or the Man and the Master (Figure 21), which depicts a black man dressed in traditional upper-class European attire, in the act of beating an almost-nude, cowering white figure with a length of sugar cane. Surrounding them are images of white field-labourers, who are juxtaposed with the black characters, dancing together and enjoying a hearty meal. Such visual satires offer a stark representation of a dystopian future in which freed slaves rise up and conquer their white masters, condemning them to a fate which was once their own.

Following the successful slave insurrection of the French-colonised island of Saint-Domingue (modern-day Haiti) which began in 1791, British newspapers indulged the public's apprehensiveness surrounding the power of liberated slaves by publishing explicit accounts of the uprising, depicting the Africans as barbarous heathens. The *St. James Chronicle* announced that 'the people of colour have risen, and subdued the inhabitants with dreadful massacres', whist the *Star and Evening Advertiser* reported that 'the savages had totally burnt and destroyed between fifty and sixty sugar-plantations, and killed a great many white people'.[130] Supporters of slavery and the slave trade immediately blamed European abolitionism for such insurrections, claiming that they were a 'dangerous consequence' of allowing West Indian slaves to detect even the possibility of liberation, and pointed out that to continue on the path of abolition would be to jeopardise the safety of West-Indian planters, whose 'lives had been, and were, exposed to imminent danger.'[131] Thus, it was vital that visual abolitionist propaganda portrayed African slaves as victims who lacked both the physical prowess and the inclination to rise up and threaten white manhood and the British state as a whole.

However, as with Brooke's slave ship diagram and Wedgwood's seal design, the portrayal of slaves as being entirely subject to the control and caprice of white slave drivers, plantation owners and slave-ship captains, removed their agency as human beings and the acknowledgement of their own struggles against bondage. In 1736, 88 slaves were accused of plotting to take over the island of Antigua, and were

[130] *St. James Chronicle, or the British Evening Post* (London) 25 October, 1791; *Star and Evening Advertiser* (London) 27 October 1791.
[131] *An inquiry into the causes of the insurrection of the Negroes in the island of St Domingo* (Philadelphia: J. Crukshank, 1792), 2; Cobbett, *Parliamentary history of England*, vol. XXIX, 280.

Figure 19: R. Newton, *A Forcible Appeal for the Abolition of the Slave Trade*. 1792 [Hand-coloured etching]. The British Museum, London.

Figure 20: J. Gillray, *Barbarities in the West Indies.* 1791 [Hand-coloured etching]. Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

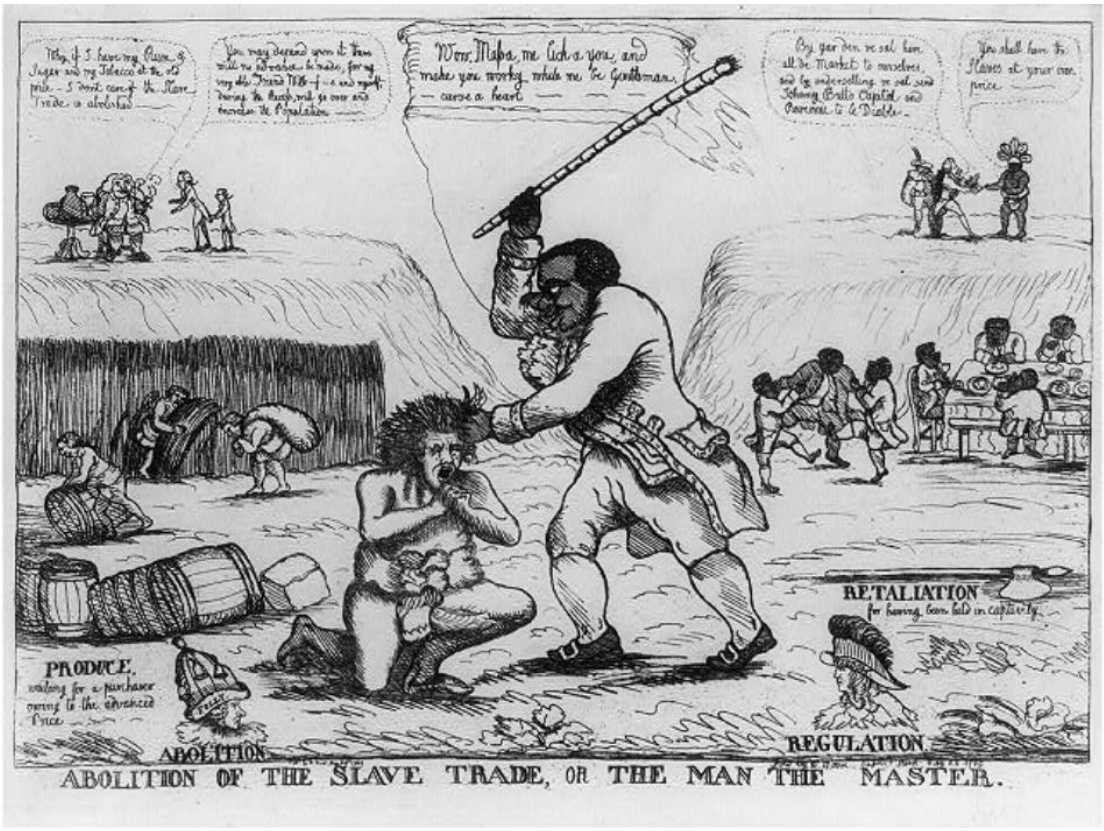

Figure 21: Anon., *Abolition of the Slave Trade, or the Man and the Master.* 1789 [Etching]. Library of Congress.

subsequently executed by the island's white inhabitants.[132] Later, in 1760-1, an estimated fifteen hundred slave men and women rose up on British-controlled Jamaica, in a rebellion described at the time as 'more formidable than any hitherto known in the West-Indies'.[133] These and the countless other slave insurrections which occurred in North America and the West-Indies throughout the eighteenth century and beyond, are not alluded to in any of the most familiar abolitionist artworks. Rather, the abolitionists framed their appeal as one which centred on sympathy-inducing imagery and discourse. The narratives which included insurrection, or any form of violence or defiance instigated by slaves were entirely absent, thus further compounding the belief that African slaves were devoid of agency, and that the magnanimous abolitionists were the only instrumental actors in the quest for emancipation.

[132] D.B. Gaspar, *Bondsmen and rebels: a study of master-slave relations in Antigua* (Durham: Duke University Publishing, 1985).
[133] E. Long, *The history of Jamaica*, vol. 2 (London: T. Lownudes, 1774), 462.

As well as rejecting the notion that African slaves had any control over their fates once captured, to depict male slaves as supplicant, passive or abused was to deny them the masculine identities which defined them before their lives in bondage. In a 2007 study, Linda Heywood and John Thornton traced the origins of the first generations of Atlantic slaves to Kongo-Angola in West Central Africa, an area which had been plagued with wars and conflict from the late sixteenth-century onwards, largely due to the unwelcome presence of European traders. The masculine culture of Kongo-Angolan society was therefore built on 'military prowess and reputations for ferocity and bravery'.[134] Furthermore, Equiano describes the men of his native Essaka (modern-day Nigeria) as being 'taught the use of weapons … our whole district is a kind of militia: on a certain signal given, such as the firing of a gun at night, they all rise in arms and rush upon their enemy.'[135] Thus, the slave insurrections which tormented North American and West-Indian planters were inherently linked to the masculine norms of the slaves' native cultures and traditions, and no amount of subjugation could extinguish their instinctive desire for self-preservation and the protection of their communities. It is however unfortunate that, alongside the attempts of planters, traders and pro-slavery supporters to dehumanise and emasculate African slaves, abolitionists also failed to acknowledge some of the key characteristics of both men and women of African heritage which made them unique individuals with agency and determination of their own.

CONCLUSION

As the dominance of visual culture continued to develop throughout the eighteenth century, the sensory experience of viewing both fine art and mass-produced prints came to be a crucial means for the public to form their views on interracial encounters in Britain. As the ramifications of years of conflict and changing societal cults of behaviour continued to threaten the foundations of British manhood, the black man, who was a relatively new and unfamiliar addition to urban society, was viewed with suspicion and often used as a scapegoat to excuse the apprehensions of

[134] L. Heywood & J. Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the foundations of the Americas, 1585-1660* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 175.
[135] Carretta, *Narrative*, 39.

white, British men. The art of the period, from elite portraits to cheap political prints, compounded the theory that an increased black and mixed-race population would negatively affect the strength of the British state, and by extension, the identity of native British men.

What becomes clear, is that the three major genres of art which have been explored in this chapter, are intrinsically interlinked. The black attendant trope of elite portraiture, designed to overcome political anxiety relating to Britain's place on the world stage, was also lampooned by artists wishing to highlight the immoralities of the upper classes. Likewise, the idea of interracial sexual encounters not only threatened the sexual prowess of white men, but also threatened the political and intellectual stability of the British state in the minds of the British public. In order to placate these anxieties, it became necessary for artists to remove the intrinsic masculine identities of the African male. Even the iconography of abolitionism, geared as it was towards garnering support and sympathy for the enslaved, required male slaves to be portrayed as submissive; lacking any qualities which could indicate that they would become a threat to national security should they gain their freedom en masse.

Chapter Three

Black Manhood in the Age of Abolition: Olaudah Equiano and Ignatius Sancho

Figure 22: D. Orme (after W. Denton), *Olaudah Equiano.* 1789 [Stipple engraving]. National Portrait Gallery, London.

Figure 23: T. Gainsborough, *Ignatious Sancho.* 1768 [Painting]. National Gallery of Canada.

The previous two chapters have focused primarily on the white, British response to black, male sexuality, and the effect of interracial encounters on the gendered identities of white, British men. In order to examine more thoroughly the experiences of Africans in Britain, the following discussion will explore the writings of Olaudah Equiano and Ignatius Sancho, two men of African origin who experienced slavery first-hand before finding themselves able to live as free men in eighteenth-century England.

OLAUADH EQUIANO AND IGNATIUS SANCHO: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

According to Equiano's published memoirs, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa, The African* (1789), he was kidnapped at the age of eight from his native village in Western Africa, and sold onto an Atlantic slave ship which transported him along with a full cargo of African slaves to Barbados, where he disembarked before being taken to Virginia. There he was bought by English naval officer Michael Pascal, who took him to England in 1754 in order to put him to work aboard British ships, thereby saving him from the horrors of plantation slavery. Equiano travelled with Pascal for eight years, during which time he was baptised a Christian and also learned how to read and write in English.

In 1762, Equiano was sold onto a ship headed for Montserrat, where he was bought by the merchant Robert King. Due to the skills he had acquired during his time with Pascal, he was put to work primarily as a deckhand, but also became private valet to King. Over the next three years he accumulated enough capital through the trade of small commodities to buy his freedom, which was awarded to him by King in 1766. He then spent most of the next two decades travelling the world as a freeman, working as a deckhand and sailor on voyages to the Mediterranean, Middle-East and Arctic Circle. He eventually settled back in London, where he became a prominent figure in the abolition movement, and also a member of the 'Sons of Africa' - a group of twelve black men who campaigned to end the slave trade. Equiano's *Narrative* was first published in 1789, and a further seven editions printed before his death. As one of the earliest books published by an African author, *Narrative* became hugely popular amongst the British public as an important piece of abolitionist propaganda, as well as making Equiano a considerably wealthy man. He married Englishwoman Susannah Cullen in 1792, and they had two daughters. He died on 31 May 1797 at his home in Marylebone, London.[136]

In contrast to Equiano, Ignatius Sancho never published his memoirs. Rather, his private correspondences were published as two volumes in 1782, two years after his death. Most of what is known of the first thirty years of his life is therefore

[136] For more see: J. Walvin, *An African's Life: the life and times of Olaudah Equiano, 1745-1797* (London: Cassell, 1998).

revealed in the work of his first biographer, Joseph Jekyll, who suggests that Sancho was born during the Middle Passage and orphaned soon after birth, sometime in the late 1720s. At the age of two he was gifted by his master to three maiden sisters living in Greenwich, England, but soon caught the eye of John, second Duke of Montagu, who taught the young slave to read and write in English. After the Duke's death in 1749, Sancho became butler to the Duke's widow, and served her until her death in 1751. The Duchess left him a considerable annuity in her will, which he quickly squandered before returning to serve the Montagu household as the valet of George, the late Duke's son-in-law.

By 1774, Sancho had married Anne Osbourne, a West Indian woman, and aided by George, had opened a grocery shop in Westminster after obesity and ill-health rendered him unfit to serve the household any longer. Through contacts made during his time with the Montagus, as well as his own thirst for learning and self-betterment, Sancho was able to publish a number of musical compositions during his lifetime. Also, due to his elevated status as business owner and head of household, he became the first African to vote in a parliamentary election in 1774. Sancho died in December 1780 and became the first person of African origin to be given an obituary in the British press.[137]

Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative* and the *Letters of the late Ignatius Sancho, an African,* have both received substantial scholarly attention in recent years, focusing largely on the identity of the two Africans, or the literary and political significance of their writings within the context of the abolition of the British slave trade. The identity of Equiano has been the subject of particular scrutiny due to the revelation in 1995 that the description of his birth and upbringing in *Narrative* contradicts his recently discovered birth and baptism records.[138] According to these

[137] Jeckyll's biography is published in full in Vincent Carretta's edited version of Sancho's letters. See also Carretta's introduction in the same volume: V. Carretta (ed.), *Letters of the late Ignatius Sancho, an African* (London: Broadview, 2015).

[138] Vincent Carretta was the first to reveal such documentary evidence and elaborate on its possible implications in a number of publications, including most recently in his biography of Equiano, *Equiano, the African: Biography of a self-made man* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005). Paul Lovejoy, in 'Autobiography and memory: Gustavus Vassa, alias Olaudah Equiano, the African', *Slavery and Abolition,* 27, 3 (2006), 317-347 has since argued that the accuracy in which he writes about his Igbo upbringing in *Narrative* proves that he was in fact born there. The issue continues to be debated.

documents, Equiano was born in South Carolina and not, as he states in his *Narrative*, 'in a charming fruitful vale, named Essaka'.[139]

Early works such as that of Robert E. Stepto recognised that the quest for freedom and literacy was a prevalent and conspicuous aspect of many eighteenth-century Afro-British and Afro-American writings.[140] Later scholarship has attempted to place the literature of former slaves more precisely within the context of abolition. In 1988, Keith Sandiford discussed the ways in which the works of Equiano, Sancho and Quobna Ottobah Cugoano (1757-91) 'document and characterize three distinct phases in the evolution of antislavery thought.' From the early 'cultivated benevolism' found in Sancho's *Letters,* to Equiano's later use of political ideology and humanitarian sentiment in his *Narrative.*[141] Most recently, scholars have explored the interconnectedness of the writers and the larger abolitionist networks which surrounded them. Kerry Sinanan recognised that texts from both white and black abolitionists 'respond to each other and exhibit an interdependence that invites us to read them as coterminous.'[142] Furthermore, Ryan Hanley has explored not only the reasons behind the publication of slave narratives, but also how the Africans were able to become published authors and in some cases reach celebrity status in an age of slavery and racial prejudice. He does this by highlighting the significance of the political, religious and social networks which surrounded the authors, and concludes that the content of their writings underscores a wide variety of political and social agendas, not least that of abolition.[143]

However, despite this wealth of research on eighteenth-century black British writing, there has been a distinct lack of scholarship which explores the authors' own sense of masculinity, and how their experiences of slavery and British society, as well as their intrinsic African identities, shaped the way in which they navigated British masculine culture once they had settled in England. Nussbaum's article, *Being a man: Olaudah Equiano and Ignatius Sancho,* was one of the first to look explicitly at

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[139] Carretta, *Narrative*, 32.
[140] R.E. Stepto, *From behind the veil: a study of Afro-American narrative* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979).
[141] K.A. Sandiford, *Measuring the moment: strategies of protest in eighteenth-century Afro-English writing* (London: Associated University Presses, 1988), 10.
[142] K. Sinanan, 'The slave narrative and the literature of abolition', in A. Fisch (ed.), *The Cambridge companion to the African American slave narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 61-80: 76.
[143] R. Hanley, *Beyond slavery and abolition: Black British writing, c.1770-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

signifiers of manhood within *Narrative* and *Letters*, and admits that to consider the masculinity of the two African authors before the abolition of the slave trade 'may seem somewhat odd', considering the general feeling towards people of African descent before abolition in Britain. She suggests that, 'both works were written, one might argue, when the question of the humanity of Africans superseded all other elements worthy of consideration, including gender and sexuality.'[144] Indeed, one of the principal and most repeated arguments of the anti-abolitionist lobby throughout the latter part of the eighteenth century was that Africans were sub-human; an argument which tireless abolition campaigner William Wilberforce alluded to during the debate of the motion for the abolition of the slave trade in 1791: 'It had been maintained, that they were an inferior species: that they were even doomed by the almighty to the sufferings they underwent, and that we were merely the instruments of divine vengeance.'[145] Likewise, within the same parliamentary debate, Member of Parliament for Chester, Thomas Grosvenor, alluded to the pervasive belief that Africans were more akin to members of the animal kingdom than those of the human race. Whilst campaigning against the abolition of the slave trade, he 'acknowledged it was not an amiable trade, but neither was the trade of a butcher an amiable trade, and yet a mutton chop was, nevertheless, a very good thing.'[146] The community of freed slaves which populated many English urban centres thus faced an unabating deluge of racial hatred and suspicion throughout much of the eighteenth century, despite the ever-increasing intensity of the abolition crusade. The fact that the above statements were uttered by members of one of Britain's most powerful institutions a full two years after Equiano first published his *Narrative*, indicates how ingrained the concept of Africans being of a 'lower-order' compared to white humanity really was.

The predominant reason for the publication of Equiano's *Narrative*, and the posthumous publication of Sancho's *Letters*, was therefore to help convince a British audience that the authors were worthy of membership into the human race; not only with their empathy-inducing content, but also by demonstrating their literary

[144] Nussbaum, 'Being a man', 55.
[145] Cobbett, *Parliamentary history*, Vol. XXIX, 259.
[146] Ibid, 281.

abilities.[147] However, as with all writings which contain a personal element, further layers of self-awareness can be distinguished within the main narrative - including that of their masculine identities. This chapter will therefore establish how the authors' unique circumstances shaped their own identities and sense of what it was to be a man. I consider it important to clarify at this point, that due to the scarcity of primary sources emanating from the British black community in the eighteenth century, it has become necessary to focus only on the writings of those Africans which were able to become literate in the English language, (in the case of this study; Equiano and Sancho) and gain enough of a political and social network of supporters to be able to have their voices heard in their own lifetimes. Therefore, the conclusions made here surrounding the authors' gender identities cannot be transferred to the wider eighteenth-century black community in Britain. As E.P. Thompson declared when discussing the lack of evidence from the eighteenth-century British poor, the fact is that they 'did not leave their workhouses stashed with documents for historians to work over.'[148] Likewise, the lived experiences of the myriad men and women of African descent who found themselves immersed within eighteenth-century British society and culture will likely continue to elude contemporary scholars. Thus, it is necessary for this study to be one which centres on the masculinity of the literate black abolitionist, rather than the common man.

PLACE IN SOCIETY

During the latter part of the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century, the expansion of international trade, domestic industry and mass urbanisation led to a gradual end of the feudal system which had defined the social and economic constructs of medieval England. As Jonathan Swift observed in a 1710 issue of the *Examiner*: '*Power*, which according to an old Maxim was used to follow *Land*, is now gone over to *Money*'.[149] The development of cultures of industry and consumerism led to an innovative belief in 'social mutability'; rather than one's ancestry dictating

[147] H.L. Gates Jr., 'Introduction: the talking book', in H.L. Gates Jr. & W.L. Andrews (eds.), *Pioneers of the black Atlantic: five slave narratives from the enlightenment, 1772-1815* (Washington: Counterpoint, 1998), 1-30: 2.
[148] E.P. Thompson, *Customs in common* (New York: The New Press, 1993), 17.
[149] J. Swift, *The Examiner*, no.13, 1710.

where one was placed on a firmly rooted social hierarchy, an individual had the opportunity to secure a more luxurious manner of living by exploiting systems of education, trade and industry.[150] This new, 'middling sort' of people who were distinguishable from the labouring poor, yet unable to enter the realm of the nobility, were defined by their ambition and unquenchable thirst for self-improvement.[151] As early as the 1660s, naval official and diarist Samuel Pepys wrote at length about his desire to 'learn what I can of all things necessary for my place as an officer of the Navy', and the need to advance his skills and knowledge in certain dignified areas, such as music, dancing and fashion.[152] However, contemporary critics did not always see this as a beneficial reconstruction. As clergyman and author John Trusler alluded to in his 1775 book of conduct, 'The great degree of luxury to which this country has arrived, within a few years, is not only astonishing but almost dreadful to think of'.[153] Along with this new 'luxurious' way of living came the need for men and women of middling rank to distinguish themselves from those lower down the social spectrum, and the powerlessness and woefulness which, in their minds, defined the lives of the labouring poor. As urban society continued to evolve, those of middling rank used external indicators such as dress, behaviour, and possessions which could be displayed in public.[154] Affluent or reputation-conscious households began to seek out black servants to be one of these indicators, due to their association with the wealth and prestige of the empire. There were obvious negative implications for the masculine identities of black men who were used in essence as a prop to bolster the social standing of their masters. However, for Sancho his engagement as valet to the Duke of Montagu was the catalyst which launched his acceptance into British middling society.[155]

To place people of African heritage within the social hierarchy of eighteenth-century Britain does not come without its complications. For many, the perception lingered that they were not only of a lower social standing than the poorest white

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[150] P.J. Corfield, 'Class by name and number in eighteenth-century Britain', *History*, 72, 134 (1987), 38-61: 60.
[151] P.Earle, *The making of the English middle class: business, society and family life in London, 1660-1730* (London: Methuen, 1989), esp. 4-14.
[152] R. Latham & W. Matthews (eds.), *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: 1663* (London: Harper Collins, 1995), 206; 277; 122-3; 369.
[153] J. Trusler, *The way to be respectable. Addressed to men of small fortune* (London: The Literary Press, 1787), 3.
[154] Corfield, 'Class by name and number', 41.
[155] Carretta, *Letters*, 15.

Briton, but were also a separate order of human being entirely. One early attempt to solve the issue of black class-consciousness was that of J. Jean Hecht, who proposed that there existed a vague class structure within the black community. According to Hecht, blacks found in Britain in the latter half of the eighteenth century may be divided into three broad categories: those brought to Britain by traders and merchants to be sold; those arriving as the possessions of colonial officials to serve in their own households; a smattering of Africans who, by virtue of their high social status in Africa, travelled to Britain voluntarily to be educated, often sponsored by benevolent British individuals or organisations.[156] Keith Sandiford has since recognised that it would be remiss to exclude another group; those who had been emancipated from their bonds of servitude and hence made their own livings in areas such as entertainment, domestic trade or as sailors.[157] If one were to take these now four broad and somewhat simplistic categories of former slaves in eighteenth-century Britain, one could begin to recognise a rudimentary class structure within the black community. For instance, those who came to Britain freely and enjoyed the protection and education of philanthropic patrons could arguably find themselves close to the top of the hierarchy, with self-supporting free blacks representing the 'middling classes', and finally those still in servitude occupying the bottom rung of the proverbial ladder. Of course, to bind the black community to the same principles as their British counterparts is to take a Eurocentric view of black culture. However, I would argue that in order to thrive as outsiders to British cultural norms, our authors would have needed to understand the place of former slaves within both the black communal hierarchy, as well as the British social spectrum.

Consideration must therefore be given to the importance of 'place', both physical and in relation to social hierarchies. A common thread which runs through much of the current literature of British masculinity in this period, and indeed within the writings of Equiano and Sancho, is that despite differences in upbringing and lived experience, it was important for men to represent the societal and behavioural norms of his own community or peer-group. If not, he risked mockery and repudiation. For instance, the behavioural norms of both noble and middling men

[156] J. J. Hecht, *Continental and colonial servants in eighteenth century England* (Northampton: The Department of History of Smith College, 1954), 1-61.
[157] Sandiford, *Measuring the moment,* 21.

were often influenced by their social circles, especially as the 1700s progressed and polite, and later sentimental discourse became the ultimate goal of gentlemanly interactions. Likewise, Hannah Barker's study of the diaries of four working men from provincial Manchester demonstrates that men who were detached from such urban cultural trends, were nonetheless still concerned about their reputations within their communities. However, rather than evidence of their manliness arising from discourse with their peers, indicators of their masculinity came from being 'domesticated, religiously informed and hard-working.'[158]

From reading *Letters* and *Narrative*, it becomes clear that neither Sancho nor Equiano were immune to their concepts of masculinity being connected to their places in society. However, the positions in which the two authors place themselves on the social hierarchy once in England, differ significantly. When ill health and reduced physical mobility prevented Sancho from continuing his employment at the Montagu household, his former employer, the second Duke of Montagu, secured the finances to enable Sancho to open his own grocery shop at 20 Charles Street in Westminster. Sancho's ties to the Montagu family and the acquaintances he had made whilst in their service undoubtedly equipped him with the capital and customer base he needed to build a successful business.[159] It has been noted that Sancho enjoyed a more favourable relationship with his master than most black, and indeed white, servants in the 1700s. Theoretically, the master-servant relationship was one of mutual obligation, in which servants were protected and guided by their masters as if they were members of their own family.[160] Sancho and Montagu's close relationship is evidenced a number of times in *Letters,* such as when Sancho describes his former household as 'one of the best families in the kingdom.'[161] However, the transition from household servant, no matter how pleasant the employment, to self-sufficient grocer indicates progression within the social hierarchy of the period. This is especially true for Sancho considering that his regular patrons and correspondents included men and women of high society, such as the

[158] Barker, 'Soul, purse and family'.
[159] F. Le Jeune, '"Of a Negro, a butler and a grocer" (Jekyll 7) - Ignatius Sancho's epistolary contribution to the abolition campaign (1766-1780), *Etudes Anglaises*, 61, 4 (2008), 440-454.
[160] Davidoff & Hall, *Family fortunes*, 391.
[161] Carretta, *Letters*, 128.

Duchesses of Queensbury and Northumberland, politicians, bankers, actors and artists.[162]

This impressive social circle seems not to have inflated Sancho's ego as it may have done his British peers. In his *Letters* he regularly refers to himself in derogatory language with an air of self-mockery, such as when he describes himself as a 'coal-black, jolly African'.[163] Sandiford has suggested that this form of self-description as 'to carry a double-edge: on the one side a structure of accommodation intended to appease the myths of his white audience, on the other a structure of sarcasm intended to resist them.'[164] Much of the rhetoric in *Letters* would undoubtedly have been intended to maintain the affections of his correspondents, hence the self-deprecating language which cements his lower position in the social hierarchy. However, there are instances in *Letters* which reveal a more sincere belief that he will never enter the realm of the English middling-sort, no matter how successful his business. For example, on 17th December 1779, Sancho writes a letter to Daniel Braithewaite, clerk to the Postmaster General, petitioning to be permitted to run a 'General-post-office' from his shop. He believes that running a post office would 'emancipate [him] from the fear of serving the parish offices', in particular, being called to serve as night watchman.[165] In the absence of a police force, local men were called upon to patrol London's streets at night, their main duty being to prevent crime, such as 'the Mischiefs which may happen from Fires, as Murders, Burglaries, Robberies, and other Outrages and Disorders.'[166] It seems that Sancho was keen to forgo this parish responsibility, due to being 'utterly unqualified through infirmities - as well as complexion.'[167] The fact that he gives his race as a reason for being unqualified for the post suggests a certain amount of insecurity about where he places himself within British society. He suggests that 'a black face … with all the supercilious mock dignity of little office', would become a 'banquet for wicked jest

[162] Carretta, *Letters*, 17.
[163] Ibid, 262.
[164] Sandiford, *Measuring the moment*, 84.
[165] Carretta, *Letters*, 248.
[166] E. Reynolds, *Before the bobbies: the night watch and police reform in Metropolitan London, 1720-1830* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 24. See also J.M. Beattie, *Policing and punishment in London, 166-1750: urban crime and the limits of terror* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[167] Carretta, *Letters*, 249.

and wanton wit', from those he would attempt to apprehend.[168] It seems that despite his relatively comfortable condition as proprietor of his own business and influential circle of friends, he is nonetheless painfully aware that he would have no authority over white British citizens, even those viewed as outcasts to society such as prostitutes and petty criminals.

It is likely that this anxiety over his place within the British social spectrum remained with Sancho throughout his lifetime, as he strove to achieve self-conscious manhood amongst the confusion and prejudice generated by his African identity. His path to acceptance involved spending his life 'studiously cultivating the art of friendship'; his letters showcasing his talent for shifting personas to meet the needs of each particular correspondence.[169] Evidence from Sancho's obituaries suggest that his efforts were not made in vain. The *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* announced Sancho's death on 15th December 1780, describing him as a 'grocer, and tea-dealer … whose generosity and benevolence were far beyond his humble station.'[170] The eulogy did not mention his race, only celebrated the quintessential masculine characteristics of generosity and benevolence. Likewise, in a poem written shortly after Sancho's death, Anthony Highmore, legal writer and abolitionist, laments: 'Brother, in whom Affection's swifter pace; Outstrips alliance in the social chace,'[171] thus indicating that fondness afforded to Sancho by his friends transcended the barriers of social division. The fact that Sancho seemed to have been held in such high regard is indicative of how assimilated he managed to become. Despite his African heritage, and because of his ability to appease his white acquaintances with self-mockery, benevolence, kindness and humility, he was able to create a place for himself within British society.

Unlike Sancho, Equiano came to be a prominent figure in the late eighteenth-century abolition movement, and therefore needed to construct his social status in order to garner the support of not only his immediate acquaintances, but also the wider public. In reading *Narrative*, it becomes clear that Equiano considered himself

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[168] Ibid, 249.
[169] Sandiford, *Measuring the moment*, 77.
[170] *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 15 December 1780, 3.
[171] A. Highmore, 'Epistle to Mr. J. H - on the death of his justly lamented friend, Ignatius Sancho', in J. Nichols (ed.), *A select collection of poems: with notes, biographical and historical; and a complete poetical index, vol. VIII* (London: 1780), 277-280: 277.

at a higher social advantage than other independent blacks, such as Sancho, but still retained the necessary modesty so as not to appear arrogant to his audience. Rather than comparing himself to his fellow abolitionists and other white gentlemen, he emphasizes the aristocratic connections he enjoyed as a child in Africa. He explains that his father 'was one of those elders or chiefs I have spoken of, and was styled Embrenché; a term, as I remember, importing the highest distinction, and signifying in our language a mark of our grandeur.'[172] He also mentions the 'cutting of the skin across the top of the forehead', which was the physical symbol of the Embrenché's wealth and status.[173] Once scarified in this way, men were considered members of the aristocratic class of chieftains and other titled men, such as political officials.[174] In 1822, John Adams noted that the '[Em]Breeché…is not allowed to perform … any menial office. He inherits, at his father's death, all his slaves, and has the absolute control over the wives and children,' which suggests that had he been permitted to remain in Africa, Equiano would have enjoyed all of the advantages of an elite Igbo lifestyle.[175]

This association with the high society of Africa, rather than that of Britain, indicates how well Equiano understood the sensibilities of the wider British public. More so than Sancho, Equiano needed his writing to resonate with its audience, in order to validate himself as an author and create a larger support network for the abolitionist cause. By representing himself as a high-born African, he was feeding into the nation's familiarity with African princes, who had become the unlikely yet popular heroes of fictional literature. However, Equiano's awareness of how difficult it was for blacks to ascend the British social hierarchy is also evident in *Narrative.* After living in England for three years, Equiano reflects on his situation: 'I begin to consider myself happily situated … I now not only felt myself quite easy with these new countrymen, but relished their society and manners. I no longer looked upon them as spirits, but as men superior to us; and therefore I had the stronger desire to resemble them.'[176] In order to describe the English as 'countrymen' was to identify

[172] Carretta, *Narrative*, 32.
[173] Ibid, 32.
[174] P. Edwards, 'Embrenché and Ndichie', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria,* 2, 3 (1962), 401-2: 402.
[175] J. Adams, *Sketches taken during ten voyages to Africa between the years 1786 and 1800* (London: Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1822), 41-2.
[176] Carretta, *Narrative*, 77-8.

with them on a relatively equal level. However, he is quick to also emphasize his desire to emulate his white compatriots, thus acknowledging his social and racial inferiority.

The majority of *Narrative* charts Equiano's quest for liberty, and arguably, the most profound shift in his identity occurred when he was finally awarded his freedom by his final master, Robert King, in 1766. He describes this day as 'the happiest day I had ever experienced', and remarked that 'the fair as well as black people immediately styled me by a new appellation … which was freeman.'[177] According to Equiano, his manumission not only awarded him the personal and political freedom he had so long desired, but allowed him to be viewed more favourably by the black and white communities alike. Almost a decade after his reported kidnap from Africa, Equiano found himself rising above those blacks which were bound by slavery or servitude in Britain and her colonies. At that moment in time, rather than aspiring to be African nobility or part of the upwardly-mobile English middle classes, the position of 'freeman' was 'the most desirable in the world.'[178]

ASPIRATIONS AND SELF-ACTUALISATION

The final five chapters of Equiano's *Narrative* charts his adventures after his freedom is obtained. In her 1789 review of the text, Mary Wollstonecraft states that 'the narrative should have closed when he once more became his own master. The latter part of the second volume appears flat; and he is entangled in many, comparatively speaking, insignificant cares.'[179] This is a point of view which was likely shared by many members of Equiano's contemporary audience, considering the increased familiarity between his life as a former slave, and their own day-to-day experiences. In reading *Narrative,* it becomes clear that Equiano's aspirations adapt according to his personal circumstances. Whilst in bondage, his only ambition was to gain his freedom. However, once he had reached this supreme milestone, he needed to find

[177] Carretta, *Narrative*, 137-8.
[178] Ibid, 138.
[179] M. Wollstonecraft, 'Review of *The Interesting Narrative*', *The Analytical Review: or, the History of Literature*, 4 (May, 1789), 27-9: 28.

another focus; a means of securing his newly formulated identity, and creating for himself a masculine purpose.

The question was, how could a black man shape a masculine identity within a society which regarded the accumulation of wealth, industry and trade (including the trade which had rendered him a chattel) as prime indicators of virile manhood? For Equiano, this came in the form of becoming an advocate for the black community, dedicating the latter part of his life to assisting 'in the cause of [his] much injured countrymen'.[180] In the mid-1780s, Equiano became a representative of the ill-fated Sierra Leone scheme, which sought to resettle poor black Londoners in West Africa, but was dismissed from his post following his criticisms of the problems and corruption which surrounded the expedition.[181] After his dismissal, Equiano immersed himself in the abolition campaign as he befriended and increasingly was supported by white abolitionists such as William Wilberforce and Granville Sharpe. In 1788 he took the unprecedented step of sending a personal letter to Queen Charlotte, imploring her 'compassion for millions of my African countrymen, who groan under the lash of tyranny in the West Indies', and by 1789, had garnered enough financial and popular support to enable him to publish his *Interesting Narrative*, to widespread critical acclaim.[182]

Eighteenth-century African writers such as Equiano were acutely aware of their social responsibility as literate members of the black British community.[183] Although it was not uncommon for British masters of black servants to provide them with a limited education, those who acquired enough learning and influence to publish their work felt an added sense of duty towards their black countrymen. For instance, in his *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evils of Slavery* (1787), Cugoano contemplates that 'when my master perceived that I could write some, he sent me to a proper school for that purpose to learn', and was thus able to campaign for 'my

[180] Carretta, *Narrative*, 231.
[181] Walvin, *An African's life'*, 137-49. In April 1787, three ships left England for Sierra Leone, carrying a total of 350 black passengers along with 59 white wives. After four years in Africa, disease, hostility from the indigenous locals and recapture into slavery had left only 60 of the original settlers still alive.
[182] Carretta, *Narrative*, 231.
[183] Sandiford, *Measuring the moment*, 17.

brethren and countrymen in complexion, and … those who are barbarously sold into captivity, and unlawfully held in slavery.'[184]

Despite his race creating insurmountable barriers to conventional markers of masculine sociability once in Britain, Equiano's investment in abolitionism replenished the power he had lost whilst in bondage, and allowed him to create his own sense of manhood. His dual national identities of African and Briton were fundamental in his exclusion from conservative British society. However, by embodying the identities of both enslaved African and freed Englishman in his writing, he was able to construct a sense of authority and power which was unobtainable by white abolitionists. As such, his early ambition for freedom was projected onto those Africans still shackled in slavery, and his own self-actualisation became reliant on the liberation of his fellow Africans.[185]

However, it would be remiss to insinuate that Equiano's masculine identity was solely dependent on his benevolence towards his fellow Africans. It is also clear that, much like his white contemporaries, he was also concerned about his financial condition. As with his ambitions, it seems that Equiano's views of money and how being financially secure would benefit him changed dramatically following his manumission. Whilst still bound in servitude, the accumulation of wealth meant only one thing: the possibility of being granted his freedom, as demonstrated by his eagerness to return to sea in 1766, in order to 'have an opportunity of getting a sum large enough to purchase [his freedom]'.[186] Likewise, in an earlier anecdote, Equiano describes the theft of two bags of fruit in Santa Cruz, which he intended to sell on the island. In that instance, he was 'deprived of every farthing [he] was worth', and laments his 'insupportable misfortune!'.[187] The tale of the lost fruit reveals Equiano's economic outlook at the time; he is beginning to realise that goods are more desirable for their commercial value than their personal, or practical, usefulness.[188] For Equiano, the theft of his fruit did not mean that he would go hungry that night,

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[184] V. Carretta (ed.), *Thoughts and sentiments on the evil of slavery* (New York: Penguin Group, 1999), 17.
[185] A. Kopec, 'Collective commerce and the problem of autobiography in Olaudah Equiano's "Narrative"', *The Eighteenth Century*, 54, 4 (2013), 461-78: 462.
[186] Carretta, *Narrative*, 131.
[187] Ibid, 117.
[188] Kopec, 'Collective commerce', 468.

rather, the loss of a commercial opportunity left him further from his ultimate goal of freedom.

However, once Equiano was a freeman and had gained a certain amount of notoriety and popularity amongst his British peers, there is evidence to suggest that his relationship with money came to revolve around his ego and new-found status in society. In 1792, two newspapers accused Equiano of fraudulently claiming that he had experienced the infamous Middle Passage, and was in fact born in the West Indies.[189] His response to these accusations was to preface all subsequent editions of his *Narrative* (editions 5 to 9) with the foreword, 'To the reader', which stated that the newspapers' claims were intended to 'hurt my character, and to discredit and prevent the sale of my Narrative.'[190] The mention of 'character' and 'sales' indicates Equiano's fear of losing his current wealth and status, which would place both his new-found comfortable lifestyle, and his ability to aid the abolitionist cause in jeopardy. Moreover, the clear anxiety which the accusations caused him signifies the extent of his assimilation into British masculine culture. Wealth and status were paramount to a man's success, and connected to this would have been considerations of family provision and protection. In order to provide for his family and prove to society that he was capable of doing so, would have required the continued popularity and marketability of *Narrative*, which explains the repetitious denial of the accusations in the latter editions. Thus, in both instances, having a reliable income meant an increased possibility of Equiano realising his ambitions. First, it was the means which would enable him to purchase his freedom, thereafter being the signifier of a precarious position within an arbitrary British social hierarchy.

Unlike Equiano, who chronicles each stage of his life in great detail, all we know about Ignatius Sancho comes from Joseph Jekyll's limited biography which introduced each edition of Sancho's *Letters*, and what can be gleaned from the contents of the letters themselves. One of the most stark differences between the ambitions of Equiano and Sancho relates to their liberty. Although Sancho asserts that he 'love[s] liberty in every sense', there is no personal record of his desire to become free, although Jekyll does report that his 'love of freedom had increased

[189] Full transcripts of these articles are available in the appendix to Carretta, *Narrative.*
[190] Carretta, *Narrative*, 5.

with years, and began to beat high in his bosom', which led him to flee his mistresses and seek liberty under the protection of the Duchess of Montagu in 1749.[191] Due to his surviving letters commencing in 1768, almost twenty years after his manumission, it is therefore only possible to determine his ambitions and routes to masculine self-actualisation after becoming a freeman.

According to Jekyll, Sancho was brought to England as an infant, and therefore grew up knowing little of his African heritage, and much about British society and culture.[192] However, despite England being the only home he had ever known, his race and peculiarity of his diasporic background would have isolated him from any true sense of place in British culture.[193] There is evidence in Sancho's letters which suggest he was influenced by societal vogues, such as sensibility, as he would often attempt to empathise with his addressees as they presumably wrote to him expressing their own personal difficulties, for example, when their children or family members suffered illness or injury.[194] However, the way in which Sancho asserts his masculinity most dominantly, was by providing and caring for his family. He was spared abject poverty due to the modest income he received from his shop, and the pension which he continued to receive from Montagu, but, much like Equiano, he continued to strive for financial stability and increased wealth. In 1775, the publication of one of his letters to novelist Laurence Sterne, in the posthumous *Letters of the Late Rev. Mr. Laurence Sterne, to his most Intimate Friends,* facilitated an increase in Sancho's notoriety in London. He was able to capitalise on this new-found fame by widening his circle of affluent friends, and selling his own music and poetry from his shop.[195]

Despite raising a family in the heart of Westminster, and socialising with the middling and upper classes, Sancho's masculine ideals are more akin to those Britons from poor and working backgrounds. He often laments his poverty or struggling business, once declaring that 'my prayer and hope is only for bread, and to be enabled to pay what I owe … trade is duller than ever I knew it - and money

[191] Carretta, *Letters,* 49.
[192] Ibid, 49.
[193] Sandiford, *Measuring the moment*, 78.
[194] See for example: Carretta, *Letters,* 209-10; 218.
[195] Ibid, 17-18.

scarcer.'[196] These concerns echo those of Surrey-born shopkeeper Thomas Turner (1729-93), who, like Sancho expressed his financial concerns, but rather than in letters, kept a diary: 'Trade I find to be very dull. Not that I want to get an estate; no, if it will please the Supreme Being to bless me with only enough to pay everyone their own and to maintain my family in an indifferent manner, I am satisfied.'[197] The voices of Turner and other working class men which we have been able to explore, such as Hannah Barker's Mancunian diarists, place more emphasis on family and household governance than social status. Although Equiano and many other Englishmen at the time relied on the accumulation of wealth in order to prove their manhood, Sancho and other poorer men desired only enough financial success to enable them to feed their families and keep a roof over their heads.

Sancho may have committed himself to his family and business in life, but after his death, his biographer bestowed upon him the virtues and attributes which would, in differing circumstances, have enabled him to enter metropolitan middling society. In his preface to Sancho's *Letters*, Jekyll describes him as having 'rapid and just conception … wild patriotism … universal philanthropy', as well as acknowledging his 'rigid industry [which] decently maintained a numerous family of children … and merited public imitation.'[198] Jekyll's praise was of course linked to the abolitionist cause, as he needed to present Sancho as an intelligent and sophisticated man. There has been much speculation as to Sancho's contribution to slave and black welfare while he was still alive. Some critics have condemned his willingness to gratify his correspondents with self-deprecating language. Paul Edwards and James Walvin describe it as 'a self-indulgent sentimentalism', which only served to popularize himself, and did little to help the African cause.[199] However, Sandiford affords him more credit, recognizing that the abolitionist cause had not yet gained enough momentum in order for society at large to accept or condone outright criticism of the slave trade from the pen of a black man.[200] Unlike later authors such as Equiano and Cugoano, being openly critical of slavery or the slave

[196] Ibid, 131.
[197] D. Vaisey (ed.), *The diary of Thomas Turner, 1754-1765* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 35.
[198] Jekyll, 'The life of Ignatius Sancho', 51.
[199] P. Edwards & J. Walvin, 'Africans in Britain, 1500-1800', in M.L. Kilson & R.I. Rotberg (eds.), *The African diaspora: interpretive essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 172-204: 200.
[200] Sandiford, *Measuring the moment*, 89.

trade would have done him more harm than good, alienating him from his much-needed patrons, whilst having little to no effect on their sensibilities or opinions.

In place of radical anti-slavery language, he therefore often took on the persona of moraliser. His letters abound with sermon-like phrases, such as 'the truest worth is that of the mind - the blest rectitude of the heart - the conscience unsullied with guilt - the undaunted noble eye, enriched with innocence, and shining with social glee - peace dancing in the heart - and health smiling in the face. - May these be ever thy companions!'[201] By using virtuous and philosophical rhetoric in his letters, Sancho is identifying himself with the social vogues of benevolence and religious enthusiasm, which, according to Sandiford, were 'the broadest bases from which early antislavery objections were launched in England', and thus demonstrates an ability to 'manipulate his audience's impulses to general liberalism and philanthropy.'[202] Although not as obviously abolitionist in substance as Equiano's *Narrative*, Sancho's *Letters* are inherently anti-slavery in nature. By being outwardly accommodating to the sensibilities of his audience, Sancho was able to contribute to the humanisation of Africans, and thus fulfil the responsibility which all literate and independent blacks would have felt was upon their shoulders.

CONCLUSION

Nussbaum declared that, 'defined in negative terms, black manhood meant *not* being a boy, *not* being a beast or monster, *not* being effeminate or a woman.' In other words, in eighteenth-century British society there was no place for black men, and no expectation that they would want, or indeed be capable of, living up to cultural masculine ideals. However, even in the face of prejudice and exclusion, Equiano and Sancho were able to forge for themselves their own masculine identities.

Both authors found themselves socialising with Londoners of 'middling' rank, Sancho by virtue of the connections he had made through the Duke of Montagu, and Equiano through his political associations once he had committed himself to the

[201] Carretta, *Letters*, 73.
[202] Sandiford, *Measuring the moment,* 75.

abolitionist cause. But for both, their heritage and dual identities prevented them from ever securing a true sense of place amongst the London elite, instead using their literary prowess and carefully constructed behaviours to seek acceptance and self-preservation in a strange and prejudiced land. Both became successful, even reaching celebrity status in their own lifetimes, in part due to fortunate encounters with amiable Britons. But it is clear that both men also built lives for themselves and were able to independently achieve their individual goals and ambitions, whether it be the successful maintenance of a family, or commitment to a political cause, and thus carve out a sense of masculine purpose and gender identity.

Conclusion

'A man's character always takes its hue, more or less, from the form and colour of things about him'.[203] These wise words were penned by Frederick Douglass in 1881, following his time as a slave in nineteenth-century Maryland, and later calling as American abolitionist and social reformer. Douglass recognised that 'the slaveholder, as well as the slave, was the victim of the slave system. Under the whole heavens there could be no relation more unfavourable to the development of honourable character than that sustained by the slaveholder to the slave.'[204] In many ways, this dissertation has acted as confirmation of Douglass' assertions, by demonstrating that the characters and thus fundamental masculine identities of men involved in slavery and the slave trade at the end of the eighteenth century, were fundamentally and inextricably tied to the distinct environments which they inhabited. Furthermore, it becomes apparent that the treatment of, and reactions to, both African slaves and black members of British society were not predestined responses determined by pre-existing conventions of British masculinity. Rather, inclusion in the institution of slavery, or indeed, dedication to the abolitionist cause, created a series of unique masculine ideals and identities which built their foundations on the connections that white men shared with black men and women.

The most conspicuous example of this alteration of masculine norms was the formation of the Jamaican micro-culture of masculine norms and societal regulations, which differed considerably from those seen in British urban centres at the time. However, even the standards of British masculinity at the metropole were undeniably altered by the perceived intrusion of black communities. The inclusion of black men and women into British society led to a widespread alteration in what it meant to be a man; transforming from identities which related to social rankings, to

[203] F. Douglass, *The life and times of Frederick Douglass, written by himself* (London: Christian Age Office, 1882), 50.
[204] Ibid, 50.

those which incorporated consideration of racial difference. The relational impact of increased interaction with people of African descent was therefore highly instrumental in reconstructing conceptions of British manhood.

Furthermore, the increased anxiety felt by white British men ultimately affected the lived experiences and masculine identities of black men in turn. It is human nature to experience a certain amount of apprehension when there is a change to the status quo, whether this be at an individual or societal level. It is therefore unsurprising that increased contact with black masculinity led to feelings of unease amongst British men, though the ways in which men reacted to this anxiety varied considerably. It is reasonable to conjecture that much of black men's lived experiences, whether they be embroiled in slavery or following their manumission, were determined by the underlying anxieties of the white men around them. Todd R. Reeser has suggested that the tradition of masculinity being related to the underpinning of male power places British men in a 'win-win' situation, wherein the status of male domination over the 'other' both informs and arises from power over the self.[205] I would argue, therefore, that to be a black man thrust into eighteenth-century white society placed them in the opposite circumstance. On the one hand, the exhibition of masculine prowess would have placed them in precarious situations, either facing the wrath of their captors upon slave ships or plantations, or facing further suspicion and debasement on British soil. On the other, to abandon any sense of their gendered identity would be to substantiate the representation of Africans as being sub-human.

However, as has been demonstrated by Equiano and Sancho, there were ways in which black men could forge identities for themselves amongst their white neighbours. From his assimilation into British society and dedication to the abolitionist cause, Equiano was able to regain a portion of the status he would have enjoyed in his native Essaka, and both authors succeeded in becoming favoured members of their British communities as well as enjoying domestic lives as husbands and fathers. Furthermore, the tendency of slaves to revolt in European Atlantic colonies demonstrates that despite the immediate danger to their lives should they

[205] T.R. Reeser, *Moderating masculinity in early modern culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 28-9.

fail, black men and women were unable to accept their lives as human chattel. Acts of defiance in the colonies thus exhibited African men's intrinsic gendered identities, and the use of inherently male characteristics such as strength of body and character, allowed them to regain a sense of manhood which had been removed from them by the denial of liberty and humanity.

As stated in the opening pages of this dissertation, the study of diverse historical masculinities is in many ways still in its formative years, and more needs to be done to thoroughly surrender the notion of universal masculine codes of conduct which governed the lives of all early modern British men. This dissertation has endeavoured to challenge conception of homogenous masculine ideals, as set out by the pioneers of masculine histories such as Anthony Fletcher, Philip Carter and Alexandra Shepard, by exploring masculinity in a way which incorporates relational aspects of racial identity, as well as considering the effects of slavery on victims, perpetrators, and wider society. The significant works of Kathleen Brown, Trevor Burnard, Felicity Nussbaum and others have formed essential starting points to discussions surrounding the impact of transatlantic slavery on both black and white manhood. However, by examining the behaviours, motives, and experiences of black and white men on both sides of the Atlantic, and on either side of the abolition debate, as well as the sensibilities of the British public more generally, the preceding chapters have demonstrated that involvement in institutionalised slavery affected the ideals and identities of men on a global scale.

Whereas this study has incorporated black masculinity into the wider landscape of white British codes of manhood, future scholarship may offer a more tailored analysis of black gendered experience in its own right. A more robust study of former slave narratives from across the period of transatlantic slavery and abolition may reveal a more complete representation of black masculinity. Furthermore, subsequent scholarship should more thoroughly investigate the gendered norms of various African communities, as this would create an essential backdrop to how black men and women negotiated the reconstruction of their identities following slavery and oppression. The importance of scholarship of this nature cannot be understated, considering pressing concerns of the modern world. Current racial prejudice - characterised by the raised profile of the international

Black Lives Matter political and social movement, which aims to protect against incidents of racially motivated violence against black people - and the ongoing men's mental health crisis in Britain, which has only in recent years emerged as a legitimate issue for consideration, are subjects which will continue to influence the lives and identities of modern men. Thistlewood's need for authoritarian control, Equiano and Sancho's determination, and the roots of British society's anxiety over finding an appropriate place for the racial 'other', are thus key elements in ensuring a future model of relational masculinity which is a 'win-win' for all.

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