

SEXUAL STEALING

BY

WENDY WALKER



TEMPORARY CULTURE

HER FATE

A large party at second breakfast, and all the conversation about a sad affair that has just taken place. A Mr. Irvine, in a fit of jealousy, having murdered one of his servants. It seems the favourite was a brown lady; and to, (*sic*) mend the matter, Mr. Irvine is a married man, and his unfortunate wife has been long nearly broken-hearted, as his attachment to this lady had occasioned his treating her often with the greatest cruelty even. His own brother endeavoured to secure him after the murder, but he has made his own escape. It is to be hoped that he may lead a life of penitence, if for the present he eludes justice.

— *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica from 1801 to 1805*, November 17, 1803

apprehension gently listened by bed
 chamber anguish
 chamber once despair indulgence
 procured her state
 coffin
 unequal fortitude interred
 mentioning where
 this was person
 body also black
 pause service
 the coffin shuddered

that *ma'amselle*
dead in chateau
formerly appeared affected
Ah what change
her dread Alas surprised
ma'amselle suddenly circumstances
of error
 expression
force over lips
must consent be anguish
repeat
that dear remorse

16

THE PLANTER'S FAVORITE SLAVE
HAS HAD ENOUGH

hear further
dared ink

the slave
faithful of fade
cheerless pale
him assured smile
 my *my* my
smile said

“He doubted not, that being beyond the reach of help, cut off from all the world, and totally in his power, Antonia would comply with his desires . . . Secure from a discovery, he shuddered not at the idea of employing force; or, if he felt any repugnance, it arose not from a principle of shame or compassion . . .”

— Matthew G. Lewis, *The Monk*, 1796.

morning seemed disorder
faint slowly with waiting breakfast
little breakfast waited
envy neat health
 and sir presence
cream with anxiety

length of hope
 to depart silently
going over long trembling lustre
 current of regret
O tenderness safety childhood
Place long regret
imposed home

state not years
person days sunk road
she road
thought world
closing

her will
 of interruption
 began

with botany



H. Andrews, *Mimosa Pudica* (Shame Weed, Dead or Awake), c.1800

“There are certainly many excellent qualities in the negro character; their worst faults appear to be, this prejudice respecting Obeah, and the facility with which they are frequently induced to poison to the right hand and to the left. A neighbouring gentleman, as I hear, has now three negroes in prison, all domestics, and one of them grown grey in his service, for poisoning him with corrosive sublimate; his brother was actually killed by similar means; yet I am assured that both of them were reckoned men of great humanity.”

— Matthew Lewis, *Journal of a West India Proprietor*, January 28, 1816

HIS WIDOW FINDS CONTENTMENT

Madame alone
 conversing impatiently
 gloom now beneficent pleasure
 gloom enthusiasm
 for mourning manner
 involuntarily expressed
 countenance art

. . . the slave, Jean, at whose quarters she arrived on Friday, went to find some herbs . . . they were blue verberna, wild raspberry, and *pois puants* with their roots, which he piled into a wooden container in front of Assam, the interrogated; that he mixed an egg yolk into them along with boiler scrapings, and made it all into a ball as fat as his finger was black . . .

— Interrogation of the Negress Assam, Extract of the minutes from the registry of the Tribunal of le Cap, 27 September 1757

more little grief
came to this widow
estate
in magic balm
 of consolation
in another parting

PLANTATION SOCIALITY

distress perfections

hint

enough distressing

opposite porticos

subsided with season

into continually surrounding agreeable light

leaving bustle adjoining self-importance

once contemptuous they

attended to pleasure of disappointments

on topics faint-drawn

beyond family friends

enjoying bank living

and portico salutations

the plain plantations

with descent

to some chain hid

with branching

of pride

commonly convulsed

observed sullenness lurking



Akan drum, 18th century.

19

THE SOUND OF DRUMMING

the habitation listened
remote something
was ill feared
distance necessary
had fainted in if
friends to gold pause
view spies
behind dance
swelling the shadows
mountain to

must

can

shall

light

lead

watch

your now *once*

happy laugh

with your wealth

observe countenance
towards dancing
fear dancing
very life
danced perceiving
dance but accomplish
dancing now enquiring
rose in not bowed look
known for will dancing
the deep I
 of grow
 within roar
 inmost guide
 bid
 for wide wild fall
 dance name the lie
 hear through clouds
 hour vessel
 all cry that wave

midnight became manner
of working
agitation
and charging
to circumstances already hatred
present vigilance
strain uninterrupted



Zacharias Wagener, [Divination Ceremony], Brazil, c.1630.

THE SLAVES DANCE

heighten dance
 round
 curiosity and contention
 conductor assisted moon-beams
 all with unfeigned fever
 found
 communicated family
 sweet old sympathy
 of possessed strain
 only family lost
 family dancing
 may live by hope
 live not scarcely
 where moon-light permitted
 body no effort
 hope guides spirits meet
 meet
 moon-light
 stealing

roused voices in moonlight
made waves
ever return
forms unfolded

air mansion
beyond
secluded landscapes
moved picture
that world thought world
seldom lost dignity
the selfishness of truth

fearing dying part hesitated upon riot
doubting that purpose of
dance before terror
hastily elder entreated animation
heard himself honour cannot be Frenchman
following
streaming
of dance
regret subsided

Canga bafio té
Canga mousse délé
Canga do ki la
Canga li'

Eh! eh! Mbumba
Tie up the BaFioti
Tie up the whites
Tie up the witches
Tie them.

BECOMING A MAROON

own you

impending whip

which

which

terrified quietly

How tired I am of keeping a mask on my countenance. How tight it sticks — it makes me sore.

— William Beckford, Journal, May 27, 1787.

imposture
 constant over-acting
 that immoderate animation
 which sufferings command
 prudence designed
 silence of policy
 a torturing stupor
 also last hope
 with consider future
 must be existence
 will lately grief
 silence
 every consolation
 that persecution permitted

object with eyes
perceived road
 into smile
adjoining conviction
for might just open window
 immediately avenue

 route do that distance
 me would take offer
 take little road
 bright branches steeps
 half-waving mountain-tops
melting horizon
cliff often curious
banks listening
silence seen

 perched
appeared again
the overhanging plants
 of eye fringed
 the blueish air
of instant higher forests
 sloping from full thoughts
 along that brow
 bounded to objects
 of never sorry

precipice perceived

bounded turf equally perceived

long ascent meanwhile

fastened steps

far

to further

would whip stop

question

some difficulty

which woods mean yonder

window

for he woods

only the people among foliage

and bright sail

a horror

between purposed accommodation

and separation morrow

I have been hunted down and persecuted these many years. I have been stung and not allowed opportunities of changing the barking, snarling style you complain of, had I ever so great an inclination. No truce, no respite have I experienced since the first licenses were taken out . . . for shooting at me. If I am shy or savage you must consider the baitings and worryings to which I allude — how I was treated in Portugal, in Spain, in France, in Switzerland, at home, abroad, in every region.

— William Beckford, Letter to Lady Craven, c.1790.

THE WIZARD

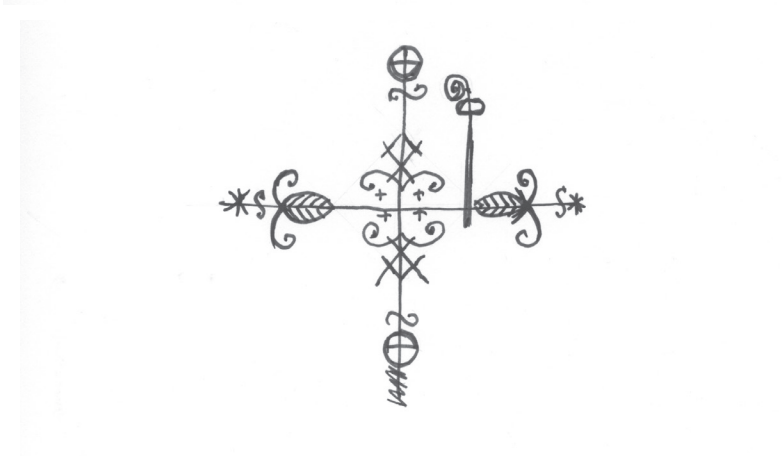
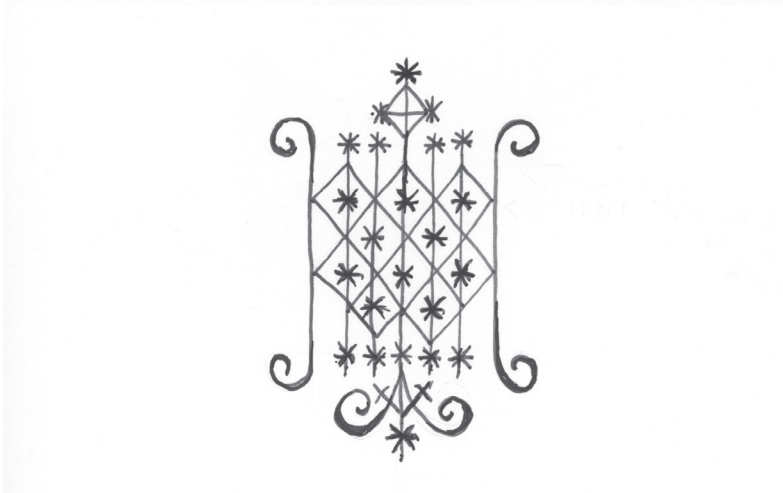
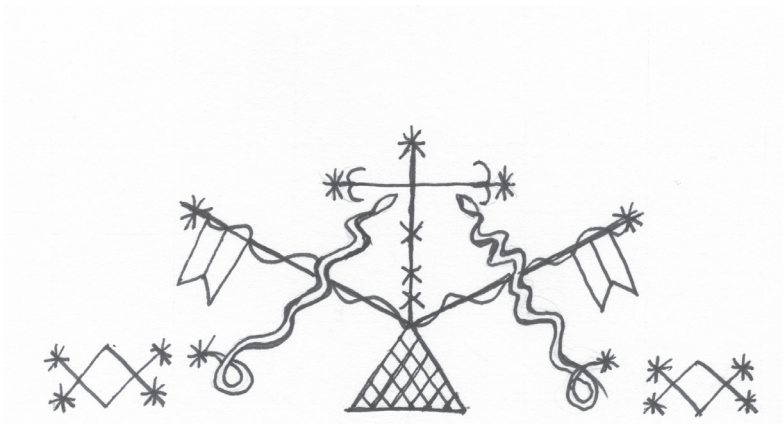
Closely hid from the most penetrating eye, by the thick foliage of interwoven trees, stood the small sequestered hut of the Obiah-practitioner, Bashra, wrinkled and deformed. Snails drew their slimy train upon his shrivelled feet, and lizards and vipers filled the air of his hut with foul uncleanness.

His dwelling was the receptacle of robbers, and he gave them Obi, to protect them from the wounds of their assailants.

It was here that fugitive negroes ran, to revenge themselves on those that did them any injury . . .

— William Earle, *Obi, or, The History of Threë-Fingered Jack. In A Series of Letters From a Resident in Jamaica to His Friend in England.* London, 1800.

necessary savage
 two pigs
 with mud
 roof haunted
 with anxious drawing
 of other much strange
 knowing



Veves of Damballah, Legba and Ogoun, Vodoun Loa.

so come further
charm with
 sir venture
repeat
 venture
fancy spells
sir *not* thought
 ridiculous contagion
courage

23

THE SEARCH

stranger offered civility

said slowly

he do saunter for business

be coming a way like

as road to sea-shore

country stranger

mentioned town search

owners lamented

ramble No motive

failed gratitude

surprise

search hereabout

try pointing there

look again

with more dogs

along prospect traveled

inform the neighbouring lower country

kindness received did fail

so I

Monsieur

determined

refusal and trouble

hear midnight in soul
good unnecessary
to troublesome peace of mind
discretion master
and watered splendour screened

piled scorch'd

barrenness
and living hanging
 that canvass
 almost projecting arms



Blake Sculp^d

A Negro hung alive by the Ribs to a Gallows.

William Blake, "A Negro hung by the Ribs to a Gallows," in J.G. Stedman, *Narrative of a five years' expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*, 1796.

remorse sensation

increased odious excuse

resentment

abruptly guilt

what justice

PLANTER RATIONALIZATIONS

The planters of this island have been very unjustly stigmatized with an accusation of treating their Negroes with barbarity. Some alledge, that these slave-holders (as they are pleased to call them, in contempt) are lawless bashaws, West-India tyrants, inhuman oppressors, bloody inquisitors, and a long, &c. of such pretty names. The planter, in reply to these bitter invectives, will think it sufficient to urge, in the first place, that *he* did not make them slaves, but succeeded to the inheritance of their services in the same manner as an English 'squire succeeds to the estate of his ancestors; and that, as to his Africans, he buys their services from those who have all along pretended a very good right to sell; that it cannot be for his interest to treat his Negroes in the manner represented; but that it is to use them well, and preserve their vigour and existence as long as he is able.

— Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica* (1774).

why believe assurance of tell
sliding knot
of suppress eloquently
when the groan
pronouncing doubt
alighted
the bank trembled
in disengaged answer
in assurances
leaving subject
to that indisposition of bleeding
with afterwards
sometimes instruments pause

AN EXEMPLARY BETRAYAL

I hold the Treaty signed by Major General Walpole on the one part, Col. Montague James, the Chief of the Maroons on the other part & ratified by me absolutely as nothing.

— Governor Balcarres, Letter to the Duke of Portland, [undated, January 1796].

promise

considered respect insignificant

obstacle since evident

to uneasiness dismissal

wrong

inclinations trusted

to unattended gardens

conscious stealing was triumph

and indignation gratification

insolence by words sir
will revenge the misled
endeavouring in language
such contempt
some return
 not terrified of declaring
 write
take the side
that neglect never discernment
 but choice
 contempt
seeming comparative
to deceiver
whose pride and fortunes
were occasion to bear
exasperated mind
that education by despise
but own
every sorrow forced

