

SEXUAL STEALING

BY

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TEMPORARY CULTURE

7

THE PLAN LAUNCHED

Bon Dje ki fè la tè. Ki fè soley ki klere nou enro. Bon Dje ki soulve lanmè. Ki fè gronde loray. Bon Dje nou ki gen zorey pou tande. Ou ki kache nan niaj. Kap gade nou kote ou ye la. Ou we tout sa blan fè nou sibi. Dje blan yo mande krim. Bon Dje ki nan nou an vle byen fè. Bon Dje nou an ki si bon, ki si jis, li ordone vanjans. Se li kap kondui branou pou nou ranpote la viktwa. Se li kap ba nou asistans. Nou tout fet pou nou jete potre dje. Blan yo ki swaf dlo lan zye. Koute vwa la libète kap chante lan kè nou.

“The Good Lord who created the sun which gives us light from above, who rouses the sea and makes the thunder roar—listen well, all of you—this god, hidden in the clouds, watches us. He sees what the white man does. The god of the white man calls him to commit crimes; our god asks only good works of us. But this god who is so good orders revenge! He will direct our hands; he will aid us. Throw away the image of the god of the whites who thirsts for our tears and listen to the voice of liberty which speaks in the hearts of all of us.”

— Boukman Dutty at the Bois Caiman assembly, near the Lenormand plantation in Saint Domingue, August 22, 1791

knowing
stern
moonlight meeting
a fabled tumult
night's family
now wild smiles
covered valley
with taken road
precipice of enthusiasm
and emotions unveiled
fire
figure
discovered world
formed
of listening
of path forward
look

in
bellowy chaos
stretched rapture
of guard country

lower that look now
but shiver
and view
excited landscape
plains catching
trembling
as bring by this never
perhaps
distinguished terror
extending horizon
of towering blackness
headlong cloud
character of unite
shuddered
recoiled
never stopped
being
renewed
vast fires
carried duskiness banners along

further the rising

yonder
see full avenue
trees pointing
above chateau
emphatically near
agitated residence
roused
not fallen
terror rivulet
sir sunk
again groan
round listened recesses
to arrested chateau
the habitation feared rattling
once whipped darkness

overhanging wildness
paused
business
was night guarded

rows formed	gloomy avenue
along chateau apprehensions	considering darkness
moving	on house honour
house replied	hasten the alarm
call sir God	listened
God is sir question	his no better
noticed	enough domain

. . . an ancient prophecy . . . was said to have pronounced, *That the castle and lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should have grown too large to inhabit it.*

— Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, 1764.

8

OF DARK FLOOD

road left
unexpected scene

take door entered

you tears
you voice
we current
of ever thus

look
another door
in
you France

me absence

visit not tenderness
opened staircase
unlocked the earth

plains
to Bay

fire
grandeur now

rose wall
rose again

said never
cannot Let
must be
presume longer



Jean-Baptiste Chapuy, "Vue de l'incendie de la ville du Cap Français," (1795), Bibliothèque nationale de France.

silence

fringed moment

awe amphitheatre

8

A POLITICAL LEADER EMERGES

meet the glorious steal



Denis Volozan, Equestrian portrait of Toussaint Louverture, c.1800–1825, Musée d'Aquitaine, Bordeaux.

he of darkness
dazzling vicissitude
would tear
control

is the music in himself
at be greater
Caesar

I made a second trip to Le Cap, where I had a better opportunity to observe the political ability of the old African, and his comprehension of literature. I watched him condense the substance of his addresses into a few spoken words, rework awkward or misunderstood sentences, and deal with several secretaries who took turns presenting him with their versions. He would cut unnecessary phrases, transpose pieces to arrange them better and he showed that he was worthy of being considered that natural genius forecast by Raynal, whose memory he revered, considering him as his predecessor. The bust of this author was carefully placed in each of the private offices set up in the different residences of this presumptuous African . . . A few prominent women, who in society pretended to have standards, did not blush to put flowers that had been thrown to him in their bosoms, to carry on flirtatious correspondences with him, to make outrageous advances to him, in a word to go all out for him, going to the point of sewing cambric shirts for him.

— Michel-Etienne Descourtilz, “Details of My Captivity by Forty Thousand Negroes,”
Voyages d’un Naturaliste . . ., 1809.

sir informed
would grant necessary interview
with sex demanded again
in guardianship assurances
in dominion by composure
unalterable France

9

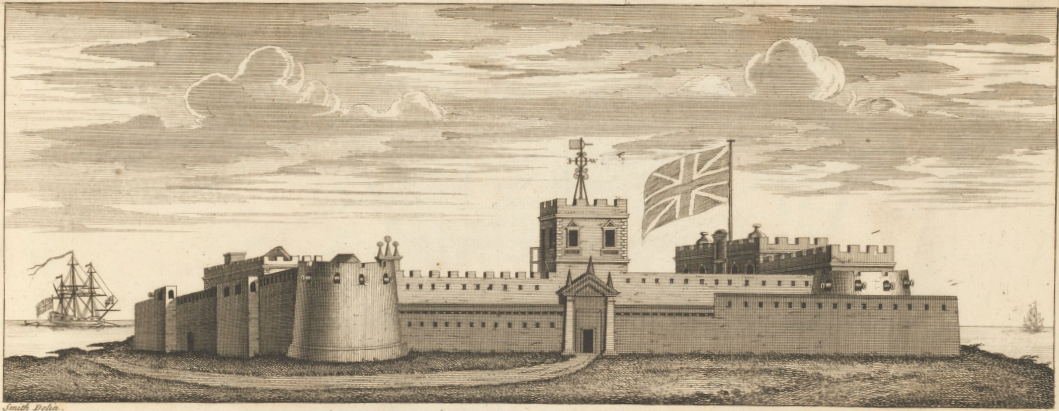
EUROPE REACTS

fire soon papers
late thoughts thick-coming
infirm nerves
 of papers
roused powerfully
 to inflamed curiosity
 concerning business promise
 doubted
 further promise

lament
brow musing
by agitated mind
 affecting irremediable duty countenance
carelessly aquiline
papers shuddered

say money
to say
sleep
of social idea
balance as selfish measure
for discovering plunder

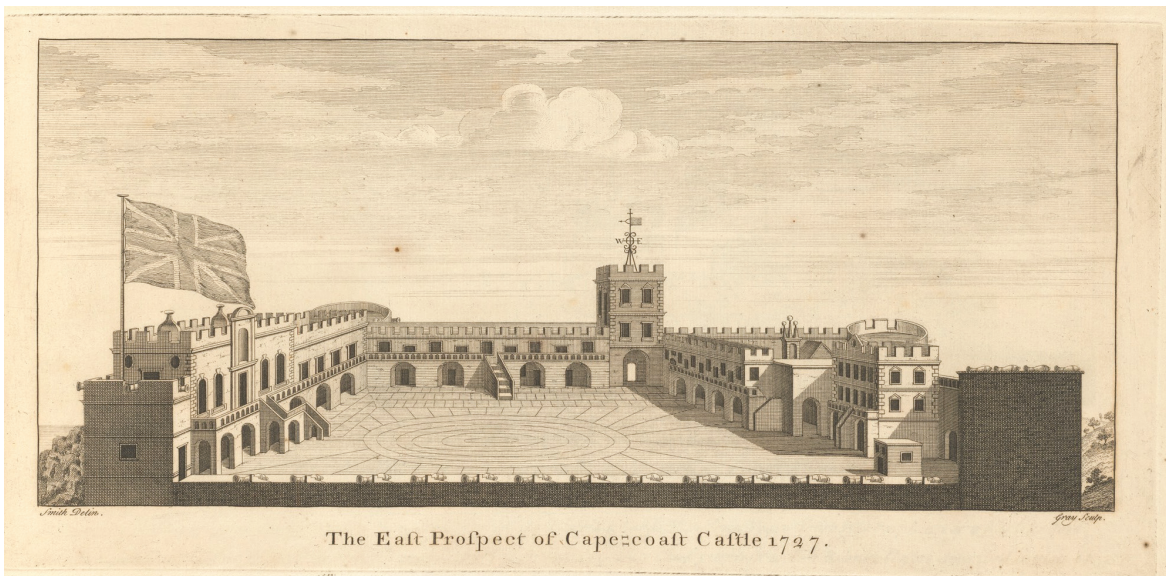
tell of that desperate castle
strange entreaties
excited questions
explanation concerning castle
seemed broken



The North-West Prospect of Cape-Coast Castle.

CAPE COAST is y^e Largest, Strongest, & most beautifull Castle belonging to the Royal Afr.^e Com.^e on y^e Coast of Guinea. Here is y^e Residence of y^e Gen.^l Who presides over Eight other Forts, besides Several Factories. It lyes in y^e Latitude of 5.th North which (tho very near y^e Equinoctial Line) yet is it accounted y^e most wholesome air in Guinea Under Shelter of y^e Guns, is built a Large Populous Negro Town. The People are of a Warlike Sort. Their Religion is altogether Pagan. Their Fith day or Sabbath, is on Tuesday. Their Chief provision is Fish & Canky (before described in plate 14) Nevertheless y^e Castle is indifferently stored with Mutton, Goats, Hogs, & Fowles, from y^e Inland Country also some Venison, but at a very dear rate.

William Smith, "The North-West Prospect of Cape-Coast Castle," *Thirty different drafts of Guinea* (London, 1727).



William Smith, "The East Prospect of Cape-Coast Castle 1727," *Thirty different drafts of Guinea* (London, 1727).

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THE ABSENTEE PLANTERS FRET
OVER INCOME

money of banks and lost majesty
that interesting sorrow

permit the unnecessary condescending
intolerable impropriety
of assurance expressed
some disobliging observation
of discouraged impatient goodness

indignation astonishment
surely disguise

leave the particulars
of however
 betrayed road
and papers awakening
 another reproach
over master's money stolen
his hard countenance relating value
turned from sorrow
infested mountains
to how sum distressed poor me

little luxury difficulties
left perplexity
 letters with dreaded must compromise income
truths impressed
cannot deprive nor deaden indulging
all complain
still retain art tears
confessing silent guilty doubt
resentment summoned
to severe letter
letter from house of vulgarity
blush moment with handwriting

letter required

quit

some letter!

fears of estate concluded

in could

gentlemen shed wishing

II

THE EUROPEAN SOLDIERS

From a distance, it looked like universal desolation. Our ruin was complete. One person hardly recognized the site of his own plantation, the other the plantation of a friend he sought in vain. What the fire had spared, hands even more destructive than the flames had reduced to dust. We felt as though we were marching on the ruins of the world.

— M. LeClerc, "An Expedition against the Insurgents," 1793.

road winding
turned to wood
of possible regret
plain
seemed
chain
still distance
continued
crowded reverie
gradually road
or wild cliffs all pine
the plantations
melted
through the waves
ruggedness alight
and broken
reflections

surprise rising
to anxiety woods
of human eyes

Dem use weed, and ambush. A man come here now, and him cut a cocoa leaf, like Kojo now, brave like you. Him cut. Then another one tek a cocoa-tree, and put it pon Kojo back, right here so. And it deh pon Kojo back, big cocoa-tree. And Kojo sit down here so. Kojo deh pon a route, like Seaman's Valley bridge, that is a gate. When you come where him deh, and you start dead, is only big cocoa-tree you start dead from. Or a banana tree that ripe: you come there to pick it to eat, and you start dead from de banana. De banana just start to lance you with knife and kill you . . . Ambush.

— David Gray, a Jamaican Maroon, in conversation with the anthropologist Kenneth Bilby, February 19, 1978

how a glade swallows
the twilight
the heads
the trembling guides
the dance
the dying defend the shadowy
they not yet benighted
would bind the shapes
shout
terror elves
with string
round glade
plighted
lighted
free band
the will to foil
armorial army
tinctured noblesse
state interruption

The Negroes . . . had placed themselves, from top to bottom, on a very steep mountain, thickly covered with trees and bushes . . . The wild Negroes at the same time, firing and calling out, *Becara* run away *Becara* run away, it is probable too, that we should have followed, but fortunately, there were some large masses of the mountain which had caved down, & which lay in the middle of the stream, just under the foot of the ambush, and we took shelter behind them, but though we could hear the Negroes and even converse with them, not one was to be seen!

— Philip Thicknesse, *Memoirs and Anecdotes of Philip Thicknesse, Late Lieutenant Governor of Land Guard Fort, and Unfortunately Father to George Touchet, Baron Audley*, 1788.

A RECKONING

troops descried hillocks
 making progress
advanced
 above pass
 to nearer

 spears
 quiet

 convulsions
 of troops

Suspecting a trick, (one of the soldiers) poked down with his bayonet and pulled away some banana leaves, carefully arranged to cover some very sharp sticks of crocro wood, in an eight-foot deep hole as wide as the road. As part of this trap, the blacks, in order to make it look as though the road had been used, had been clever enough to make horseshoe prints in the dirt covering the leaves . . . Long streaks of blood showed that men had died, but we didn't find a single body.

— M. LeClerc, "An Expedition against the Insurgents in November 1791."

strain march
to orders
of wounded general
returned
suddenly
saluted himself
negotiating with a victorious enemy

13

THE PLANTER REFUGEES

defeat mortification

Ah mansion

discontented

to separate

the charmed evening

formerly heights

useless walls

partially accommodation

sat opened

broken

on cliff of exactly

who said

who thought

strains very voice

ready to be

terrors

of hope

not retired

to conjectures for going

horses
carriage
discontented master
lost lady tried enquiries with palpitated smile
moved on blaming
what hurried gloom
 watching baggage so eloquently herself
recovered her
ma'amselle would own it
would return

“Madame G—, lured by the hopes of reinstating her children in their paternal inheritance, left Barracoa, followed by the blessings and regret of all to whom she was known. On arriving at the Cape she found a heap of ashes, and shuddered with horror at the dreary aspect of her native country. But she viewed her children, recollected that on her exertions they depended, and determined to sacrifice every thought of comfort to their advancement.”

— Leonora Sansay, *Secret History, or, the Horrors of Santo Domingo*, 1808.

anxiety of protector
pensively pausing
more past appeared
object dried to lessons
resisting admired reason
gazed athwart days
 caught dance
 forsook carriage
 raised gate
 came gasping

ma'amselle condolment
master feelings
 gone
 still leap

I4

THE UNPRECEDENTED

talk how you was gaining so
every
where

return of numerous men
the bright military scattered
wound now
consisted in conquered travelers
entirely wound
bridge dropping
into spray
echoes
bridge over
shadowed

could children be such steepness
was horror
soldiers tumbling
rebounding reality
others
come chasm

defeat

began bell
now path
bell glided
threw silence
bell struck
repressed weariness
opened moon-light
bell torrents
said to shadow
resign feelings
strain after
fancied clearness
waves of submit
with dissipated grandeur

