SEXUAL STEALING

BY

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TEMPORARY CULTURE

SEXUAL STEALING AND THE GOTHIC

When the Gothic novel first appealed to the English reading public, critics called it "the terrorist novel." It gashed the genteel tenor of the literary world. Of the terrorist novel's four main inventors — William Beckford, Matthew "Monk" Lewis, Horace Walpole, and Ann Radcliffe— two, Beckford and Lewis, owned major sugar plantations in Jamaica. Both men engaged in relationships with members of their own sex, then a capital offense under British law, and both men came of families that had owned slaves for generations..

In Lewis' *The Monk* (1796) and Beckford's *Vathek* (1784), one can see the authors struggling to come to terms with their double predicament in different narrative disguises. Beckford uses the new genre of the oriental tale to embody his fascination with and fear of black (and Indian) power and magic, while Lewis sets his tale in two societies, the monastery and the convent, as closed-off from the world and as hierarchical as the plantation. There extremes of sexual exploitation, torture, and murder take place, which are finally revealed as instances of incest and matricide. Lewis has reason to be obsessed with this subject, for the best portrait of him suggests that he, like many Creole Britons (notably Elizabeth Barrett Browning), had some African ancestry himself.

Since the Gothic novel has its roots in Jamaica, the scene not only of the most brutal chattel slavery but also of the most continuous and successful slave rebellions (the Maroon Wars), these origins seem to be worthy of more attention than they have received. Nor is the transposing of the scene from plantation to convent a far-fetched one. The Church of England had large holdings in Jamaica, and its slaves were bizarrely branded with the word *Society*.

Lewis and Beckford both succeeded to ownership of huge estates in Jamaica when their fathers died. Both fathers were very powerful men. Beckford's, born in Jamaica and long resident there, had twice held the office

of Lord Mayor of London. He was the only man in government to oppose the King over corruption. Lewis' father was British Deputy Secretary of War during the American Revolution. Both men presented impossible role models for their sons, who, after writing seminal fictions in their late teens and publishing them in their early twenties, went on to devote their lives to the creation of alternative realities, Beckford in the building of his fantastical architectural project at Fonthill, and Lewis upon the stage, where he authored many Gothic melodramas and contributed greatly to the development of stage machinery for elaborate extravaganzas that foreshadow modern spectaculars and film.

In the most famous of his plays, *The Castle Spectre*, the African character Hassan so eloquently describes the psychological state of a person taken from his country and sold into slavery that Lewis was widely perceived as supporting the San Domingo (Haitian) Revolution. This was an almost unthinkably radical position for a member of Parliament, which he was.

But Lewis, upon the death of his father, abandoned the stage for sugar and went to Jamaica to look into his holdings there. For the era, he was the most liberal of slave-owners and vastly unpopular with his neighbors for many of his initiatives. He made two trips, dying on the second return voyage of yellow fever contracted on the island. He left a posthumously published account, *Journal of a West Indian Proprietor*, by far his best piece of writing.

Horace Walpole, though not a plantation owner, was, like Lewis, homosexual and closely involved with the exercise of extreme power through his relationship with his father, one of the most important men of the day. Robert Walpole, England's first prime minister, was de facto ruler of the land, a politician so famous for his flexible ethical standards that he was immortalized by Henry Fielding as Jonathan Wild, the eponymous hero of the novel of that name, ostensibly based on the life of a famous thief who, like Balzac's Vautrin, turned his knowledge of the underworld to advantage by becoming Chief of Police.

Theft and hypocrisy are Jonathan Wild's trademarks: he presides over an empire of safe houses where thieves take stolen goods to warehouse

them before they can be resold. Just so did Robert Walpole, as head of the government that sponsored and condoned the activities of the Royal African Company and its competitors, oversee the African Service, whose officers staffed Cape Coast Castle, the largest of the European-built castle-forts along the Gold Coast. To Cape Coast Castle and two other castles (Christiansborg operated by the Danes and Elmina by the Dutch) as well as the twenty-odd lesser forts of the same nature, kidnapped Africans were brought from the interior to languish briefly in pits before passing through a "door of no return" into the holds of slave ships.

Although Horace Walpole wrote tirelessly to vindicate his father's political legacy, he was highly critical of slavery and the rationalizations supporting it long before abolition became a popular issue. His famously witty letters contain many passages testifying to his unorthodox sympathies in this regard. *The Castle of Otranto* is an allegory of political retribution. The book opens as a huge helmet with black plumes plummets into the castle courtyard, crushing the ruler's son. A prophecy, that the dynasty will pass from the present line "when the owner of the castle grows too large to inhabit it," revives with the fall of the giant helmet. The anxious ruler, feeling the necessity for another son, determines to impregnate his dead son's fiancée. He threatens the peasant who speaks truth to power and when the peasant escapes, proclaims him a dangerous necromancer.

The tyrannical government and remote setting of the castle, the immense helmet and the significantly black marble statue of the good ruler to which it turns out to belong, suggest a vision of just rule restored by the victims of oppression themselves. The peasant brings the unwelcome piece of news about the origins of the helmet, secures the love of the dead prince's fiancée, is revealed to be related to the ruler commemorated in the black marble statue, and finally, at the moment he is about to be beheaded by the tyrant, is recognized from a scar on his neck as the tyrant's son. Walpole's sentiments regarding colonialism were of a piece with his feelings about slavery: "Europe has no other title to America except force and murder, which are rather the executive parts of government than a right."

Like Beckford, Walpole used his wealth to build a fantastic Gothic castle, Strawberry Hill, in which the tension between privilege and victimization was turned into art.

Ann Radcliffe, née Ward, author of the latest of the early gothic novels, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), was effectively abandoned by her parents early in life and farmed out to a series of relatives who happened to be among the radical elite of the time. Although information is scarce on her early childhood, she may have resided with her activist great-uncle Dr. John Jebb, a Dissenting Unitarian who failed to win the professorship in Arabic at Cambridge because of his perceived zeal for civil and religious liberties. From age seven to twelve she lived with her uncle Richard Bentley, the partner of Josiah Wedgwood, of Bentley and Wedgwood pottery fame. Their great firm produced and popularized the medallion of a slave kneeling beneath the legend "Am I not a man and a brother?" which became an emblem of the anti-slavery movement. It was reproduced on brooches, cufflinks, hatpins, and other fashion accessories, becoming, in effect, the first political "button." Bentley's daughter Sukey, Ann Ward's only childhood friend, eventually married Robert Darwin and became the mother of Charles. For her part, Ann married William Radcliffe, a lawyer turned parliamentary reporter, translator, and editor. It was during the long nights when he sat in on the endless debates regarding the French and Haitian revolutions that Ann Radcliffe began to write her books.

William Radcliffe was his wife's literary partner as well as her staunchest supporter. That Ann wrote so extensively on property as the true object of desire, at a time when a slave, in Hegel's formulation, was "consciousness in the form of thinghood," may be as much a reaction to William's translations of French newspapers and pamphlets as it was to her understanding of women's legal predicament at this time. Ann Radcliffe's heroine is orphaned and abducted to an isolated castle where she is locked up by her uncle to be given to the political henchman of his choice. The object of desire seems less her sexual person than her identity as inheritor and holder of sexualized property. Person as property is conflated with woman as the

legal road to (male) ownership and inheritance. Until the late nineteenth century women in England had no legal financial existence apart from their husbands. Emily, Radcliffe's protagonist, has not only her inheritance but her actual wedding stolen from her. "Woman as vehicle of property transfer" stands in for "chattel" in a text where the word *plantation* is repeated surprisingly often, given that the characters never leave the European mainland.

Throughout Radcliffe's writing heterosexual relations, whether positive or negative, are oddly abstract, while the relations between women seem rooted in more genuine affect, and on this basis Rictor Norton makes a persuasive case for an unacknowledged preference on Radcliffe's part for women.

The genre of Gothic has been characterized in many ways, but I wish to re-establish the tie to its early epithet "terrorist literature," as I believe this tells us something about its central position not only in American literature but in American policy, foreign and domestic. Recall our incursions into Mexico, Vietnam, Cambodia, Iraq, Haiti and Guatemala, to name just a few. As for the United States' internal policy, one need look no further than our treatment of the Native Americans, which the Quakers of Brown's Philadelphia strenuously opposed. Here the roots of Gothic writing are not merely deep but congenital. Over the last sixty years, Gothic has dominated the mainstream, but in the novels of Charles Brockden Brown it announces itself as the first strong heartbeat of our national literature.

A Quaker and feminist, and our first significant professional novelist, Brown had read Godwin, Lewis, Walpole, Beckford, and Radcliffe. In a turn away from fiction he planned a history of slavery using the records of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society. His debut book, *Alcuin* (1798), is a dialogue directly inspired by Mary Wollstonecraft, dealing with broader opportunities for women and the merits of divorce. Since it was first published, all the way up till the digitization of library holdings, *Alcuin* has been almost unobtainable.

Brown's better-known works, Gothic novels that use American milieux, contain the first homosexual character in American fiction (*The Memoirs of Stephen Calvert*), the first depiction of settlers in conflict with Native Ameri-

cans (*Edgar Huntley, or Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker*), the first description of a slave-owner's mixed race family and the child abuse therein (*Stephen Calvert*), and the first religious visionary who commits serial murder (*Wieland, or The Transformation*). The novels also include depictions of intense homosocial relationships (*Ormond, or The Secret Witness*), the ravages of epidemic disease (*Arthur Mervyn, or Memoirs of the Year 1793*), and the disastrous consequences of good intentions pursued by blinkered protagonists (*seriatim*).

Brown's writing influenced Poe, Cooper, Hawthorne, Margaret Fuller, and the British Mary Shelley, and through them, much of America's greatest writing. This is the Gothic novel that fathered the quintessential horror that permeates our national literature. It is the ancestor of the horror genre in fiction, graphic novels, and film.

What that Gothic horror most deeply consists in may be glimpsed in Brown's life when, at the age of six, on September 11, 1777, the future novelist saw his father arrested on the order of John Adams' Committee on Spies. Elijah Brown and twenty-five other Quakers, all pacifists, were borne through the city in open wagons on their way to exile in Virginia, then the frontier. Members of the sect, which had started the abolition movement in Britain, they now found their own rights under habeas corpus suspended. Detained without charge and never brought to trial, the group was released a year and a half later, with no explanation, apology, or redress. Brown went on to unleash, in his work, the spirits of many other such social victims. If some of them lacked demonic power, they at least recaptured on some plane of action the freedom whose loss is the essential Gothic emotion.

Structurally, gothic narratives are organized around "sexual stealing." "Sexual stealing" can take many forms, but it always involves the illegal appropriation of a highly libidinized object: a person's liberty, sexual consent, virginity, life, a sacred object, or a work of art. The stealing is performed by the powerful and is unacknowledged as stealing, indeed proclaimed as legal or honorable: the victim rises up as daemon to avenge the outrage. This is the only narrative solution in a world where justice does not function to protect people.

NOTES

PART ONE

p.10: George Robertson, "A View in the island of Jamaica, of the Spring-head of Roaring River on the estate of William Beckford Esqr.," London, 1778.

In the late eighteenth century some of the wealthier Jamaican planters brought artists over from Europe so that they could paint "picturesque" views of the plantations. William Beckford of Somerley (1744–99), author of *A Descriptive Account of the Island of Jamaica* and the cousin of William Beckford, author of *Vathek,* commissioned George Robertson (1748–88) to produce a series of views of his estates. Robertson closely modeled them on the landscapes of Poussin and Claude Lorrain. Beckford of Somerley's belief that Jamaica was more naturally picturesque than Italy conveniently served his proslavery agenda, by sinking the harsh realities of slave life and labor into lush scenes of nature whose idyllic associations obscured abuse and privation.

p.13: "Mandingo Slave Traders and Coffle," Senegal, 1780s. From *L'Afrique, ou histoire, moeurs, usages et coutume*s des africains: le Sénégal by René Claude Geoffroy de Villeneuve, 1814.

René Claude Geoffroy de Villeneuve spent two years in Senegal and wrote about what he saw there in the book that contains this illustration. The artist responsible for this image is unknown, but it closely follows De Villeneuve's description:

> Every year the Mandingo traders, called slatées or Sarakole [Sarakule, Sarracolet, etc.] Negroes, after having sold slaves in exchange for European goods, leave with necessary goods for the interior, toward Bambara country. The Mandingo slatées often carry with them iron bolts of 15 to 18 inches long . . . . They cut pieces of a heavy wood, around 5 or 6 feet long, forked at one end so that the forked end can fit around the slave's neck. The two ends of the forked branch are drilled/pierced so as to permit the iron bolt, held at one end by a head, and fixed to the other end by a flexible iron blade [which passes] through a hole in the bolt . . . . When all the slaves are run through in this fashion and the traders want to start the march to the coast, they arrange the captives in a single file. One of the traders puts himself at the head of the line, loading on his shoulder the handle of the forked branch of the first black; each slave carries on his shoulder the handle of the forked branch of the person behind him. . . . During the entire route, the fork is never removed from the slaves' necks, and at the arrival point, as at the departure, the traders take great care to check if the iron bolts are in good working

condition. It is thus that five or six armed traders, without fear, can succeed in conveying coffles of 50 slaves, and even more, from the interior to the European coastal factory. . . .

(Villeneuve, vol. 4, pp. 39-43; Translation by Jerome Handler and Michael Tuite.)

p.15: "A Surinam Planter in His Morning Dress," an engraving by William Blake from a drawing by John Gabriel Stedman for his "*Narrative, of a Five Years Expedition against the revolted Negroes of Surinam. . . from the year 1772, to 1777* (London, 1796).

William Blake (1757–1827), poet, artist and engraver, grew up in London and witnessed the beginnings of the campaign for abolition of the slave trade. He was part of the circle of writers and radical thinkers that gathered around the publisher Joseph Johnson. His poem "The Little Black Boy" in *Songs of Innocence* (1789) shows his commitment to abolition by that date, but his deeper involvement arose during his work on Stedman's *Narrative*. Of the eighty plates based on Stedman's now mostly lost drawings, Blake produced sixteen. The book took years to realize, and during that time Blake and Stedman became friends. It is thought that Blake had Stedman and his enslaved lover Joanna in mind when he made the frontispiece to *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1793). The image shows three people: Oothon, the daughter of Albion, chained to her husband Bromion, a rapist and brutal slave-owner, and Oothon's despairing lover Theotormon, who tries and fails to gain her liberty.

p.16: Thomas Thistlewood (1721–1786), the son of an English tenant farmer, emigrated to Jamaica in 1750. Starting as an overseer, he worked his way up to become the owner of a substantial estate ("Paradise") and 34 slaves. He kept two diaries, one recording meteorological events and the other personal matters, including details about his sexual life and the business of running an estate. He treated his slaves barbarously, and the punishments he inflicted were unusually brutal even by the standards of the time. However his deep interest in botanical and horticultural matters led to his creation of a garden at "Paradise" that was famous among aficionados.

Thistlewood was largely self-educated, and this diary passage shows him recommending a manual of seduction written by the poetaster John Armstrong and published in 1736. Louis Crompton notes that the poem inveighs against "unnatural pleasures," the more evil for supposedly being of non-British origin. Thistlewood misattributes *Joseph Andrews* to Sarah Fielding, Henry's sister. She was a novelist responsible for the first novel in English written expressly for children, among other books. Novels at that time were often published anonymously, particularly if the author was female.

p.18: Little is known about the artist William Berryman ("*La Duchesse*," Jamaica c. 1808) other than that he lived in Jamaica from 1808–16, making a series of drawings and

watercolors that he planned to turn into a profitable series of engravings. His early death put a stop to this project and his artwork disappeared, only to be recently discovered in an album acquired by the Library of Congress.

p.21: Gabriel Bien-Aimé is a Haitian sculptor who works in the traditional métier of recycling iron or steel oil-drums to create figures from the Vodoun pantheon. He was born in 1951 in the village of Croix-des- Bouquets, where Georges Liautaud (1899–1991), artist and houngan (voodoo priest), pioneered this practice.

p.22: "sonnet to . . . away!" Many of the people trafficked into slavery were Muslim.

p.27: Lady Maria Nugent (1771–1834) was born Maria Skinner to a prominent New Jersey family who were Loyalists during the War for Independence. After the war, they moved to Britain where Maria met and married Field Marshal Sir George Nugent, later Governor of Jamaica. During her husband's governorship, from 1801 to 1805, Maria Nugent kept a diary that provides a rich picture of an aristocratic lady's adjustment to the island's life during a politically critical period. Though she felt sympathy for the slaves, and even expressed guarded admiration for Toussaint L'Ouverture, she was not an abolitionist. Her political conservatism notwithstanding, she was appalled by the majority of plantation owners and sugar itself became for her the stuff of nightmare.

p.36: John Gabriel Stedman (1744–1797) was a soldier of Scots-Dutch parentage, author of *Narrative of a five years expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam, in Guiana on the Wild Coast of South-America, from the year 1772 to the year 1777,* a best-seller and key text in the abolitionist cause. Stedman went to Surinam as part of a force sent by the Dutch to quell the marauding bands of maroons who attacked and raided the colony's plantations and forts. During his time there, he kept a diary and made drawings of the unusual, and often horrifying, things he saw. Back in Europe, he used the diary to write the *Narrative*. Joseph Johnson, the radical publisher of Wollstonecraft, Franklin and Paine, acquired the ms. and commissioned William Blake and other artists to prepare and engrave plates from Stedman's drawings. Beautiful as the edition was, it was so riddled with unauthorized revisions that Stedman almost disowned it. The published text concentrated on the abuses of power that Stedman witnessed, as well as on his relationship with Joanna, a slave by whom he had a son and whom he tried unsuccessfully to rescue from her condition.

Stedman made it known that he was not an abolitionist, but in his stunningly dramatic account he seems to have perceived more than his rational mind could assimilate to his principles. He portrays a strangely beautiful and atrociously unjust world that impressed his many readers with their first real sense of the type of human interactions the slave trade really involved.

p.41: For a brief discussion of Matthew Lewis' *The Monk, 1796,* see "Sexual Stealing and the Gothic," pp.158–62.

p.48: Francisco Goya, "No hay quien nos desate? (Can't Anyone Untie Us?)" Plate 75 of *Los Caprichos*, 1799.

The *Caprichos* were published on February 6, Ash Wednesday, 1799, at the end of the last Carnival of the 18th century. Goya arranged for the set of prints to be sold, not by a bookseller, as was the usual practice, but from an apothecary (drugstore) that advertised itself as a purveyor of "perfumes and strong waters." Goya loved puns and the wordplay of the Baroque Conceptists, and the entire event of publication is an elaborate construction of clues. The name of the acid used in etching and aquatint is aquafortis. The apothecary was located in the ground floor of Goya's own house, at No. 1, Disenchantment Street (Calle del Desengano, no. 1). The set of prints was priced at 320 reales, the cost of one ounce of gold. And that year, Ash Wednesday fell between lunar months, when the moon was invisible and was thought to have turned its back upon the earth.

Many of the images in the series, including Plate 75, exhibit a wheel-like, centrifugal structure and the carnivalesque theme of a world turned upside down. But Plate 75 is probably one of the least enigmatic. The owl appears in many of the plates, a presence of unspeakable evils. Here it wears a pair of spectacles of the type then often seen on the noses of high-ranking ecclesiastics. Goya wrote a little commentary on each of the prints, and the one on Plate 75 reads:

"A man and a woman are tied together. They are trying with all their might to free themselves and are calling for help. If I am not mistaken, they are two people who were forced to marry."

p.51: Much of what is known about Leonora Sansay comes from passages in the diaries of her lover Aaron Burr. She was born Leonora Hassell to a Philadelphia innkeeper around 1780. The inn was right across from the State House, and probably where she met the various prominent men with whom her name was associated. In 1800, perhaps in an effort to disentangle himself, Burr persuaded her to marry Louis Sansay, a refugee plantation owner from Saint Domingue. When the slaves rose up and the revolution took hold, Sansay sold his estate to Toussaint L'Ouverture and fled. Though Leonora married Sansay, she did not give up her relationship with Aaron Burr. When in 1802 Napoleon's troops landed in Saint Domingue with the object of regaining the island and restoring slavery, Sansay saw a chance of recovering his plantation. He talked his wife into accompanying him. Burr assured Leonora the island would be taken within three weeks, but a year later the Sansays were still in Saint Domingue, where Leonora assuaged her feelings of entrapment by writing *Secret History*. The following year, their mission having failed, they were forced to flee to Cuba. The Burr/Sansay/Sansay triangle features largely in *Secret History* and in

Laura, its sequel. The book did not sell, the marriage failed, and by 1812 the author was running a factory for the manufacture of artificial flowers. But there was more in the interim to Leonora's story. She had solicited Burr to act as her literary agent and he, in turn, used her to carry messages as he planned the expedition for which he was put on trial for treason and which became known as the Burr Conspiracy.

p.52: For a brief discussion of the novels of Charles Brockden Brown, see "Sexual Stealing and the Gothic," pp.158–62.

p.66: The slaves had enormous pharmacological knowledge of plants and animals, some of it brought from Africa, and more added in the New World. Poison was perhaps the slaves' major weapon, often used in conjunction with the religious sorcery and charms of Obeah, the folk magic of the African diaspora. The tropical *Mimosa Pudica,* also called Sensitive Plant and Sleeping Plant, from its habit of shriveling and drooping when touched, is toxic when consumed. Matthew Lewis recorded that the most popular poisons in his region of Jamaica were corrosive sublimate, manioc root, the arsenic bean and alligator's liver and gall. Packets of poison came to be called makandals, after the guerrilla leader and houngan Makandal (see following note).

p.68: Assam was a young slave woman who was arrested for poisoning her master's slaves. She was among those caught up in the dragnet of arrests that followed the capture of the extraordinary maroon leader Francois Mackandal. Mackandal (immortalized in literature by Alejo Carpentier in *The Kingdom of This World*) planned and organized the first massive slave revolt whose aim was political: the end of slavery and white domination. Assam seems to have been one of Makandal's many agents. During her trial she named fifty accomplices and confessed to having poisoned three of her master's children. (Fick)

p.72: This Akan drum was made of sub-Saharan woods and deer hide in the Ghana region of Africa between 1700 and 1745. An agent of Hans Sloane, scouting for Native American and African objects in America, found it in Virginia. It is thought to be the oldest African-American object in the British Museum.

Besides providing music for dance and religious ceremonies, drumming was used by the slaves to send messages across the countryside. Before the 1791 uprising in Saint Domingue, the slaves drummed signals that allowed different groups to coordinate. When the white population understood this, those who continued slaveholders confiscated their slaves' drums. In the United States, the blacks responded by performing the forbidden percussion with their feet, thereby inventing tap dancing, America's first original dance form.

p.76: Zacharias Wagener, [Divination Ceremony], Brazil, c.1635.

Zacharias Wagener was a soldier, painter, writer and merchant who traveled over four continents as a member of the Dutch East India Company. Before he set out on his travels, he worked for one of the great map-makers, Willem Blaeu, one of whose lost maps appears in Vermeer's painting "Officer and Laughing Girl" (c. 1658). Wagener's first mission, in 1634, took him to New Holland (Dutch Brazil). During his seven-year stay, he kept a journal and painted 109 watercolors of the strange forms of life he encountered. The one reproduced here seems to depict a *calendu,* a ceremony involving possession by spirits of the ancestors.

> When the slaves have carried out their arduous duties for weeks on end, they are allowed to celebrate one Sunday as they please; in large numbers in certain places and with all manner of leaps, drums, and flutes, they dance from morning to night, all in a disorganized way, with men and women, young and old; meanwhile, the others drink a strong spirit made with sugar, which they call 'garapa'; they spend all day like that in a continuous dance . . .

Such *calendus*, more often called *calendas*, were a feature of plantation life throughout the Caribbean, and afforded the means for slaves to maintain alliances and share information across large distances.

p.79:

Eh! eh! Mbumba [rainbow spirit= serpent]
Tie up the BaFioti [a coastal slave-trading people]
Tie up the whites [i.e. Europeans]
Tie up the witches
Tie them.

A famous voodoo hymn, of Congolese origin, first recorded by Moreau de Saint-Méry. He witnessed an initiation ceremony where this hymn was chanted by the devotees to induct a new member into their group. The language is Kikongo. Carolyn Fick writes (in *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below*):

> . . . if, as Moreau de Saint-Méry observed, the incantation was used for the initiation of a neophyte, then it may pertinently involved the creation of a *nkisi* charm, whereby one symbolically 'ties up,' or gathers together, the enumerated powers by tying a string around the combined elements. Mbumba may be Mbumba Luangu, the rainbow serpent invoked in adoration in the coastal Kongo initiation society, Khimba. Bafioti, meaning 'coastal people,' more than likely referred the coastal Fioti, who were slave traders that hunted down and captured people of the Kongo interior to trade them as slaves to the Europeans, or the white man, the Mundele. The Fioti were thus feared and believed capable of using their powers, not the least of which was witchcraft. And so, the tying up of the *ndoki*, or

witches, may refer as much to these slave traders, the Fioti, as to any other person believed to be an evil spirit . . .

By the eve of the 1791 slave revolt in the North, in a changing context of war and armed slave rebellion, it may perhaps not be too presumptive to infer an even more literal connotation to the 'tying up' of the white man, as in the physical act of capturing and tying up the enemy, and thereby conquering those powers.

p.80: The Maroons were fugitive slaves who chose to risk the danger involved in escape for the chance to gain a free albeit precarious life in territory outside the white man's control. Sometimes they were succored by Native Americans, sometimes they subsisted alone, but often they banded together in ad hoc extended families that perpetuated a largely African way of life. The word derives from the Spanish *cimarrón,* the term in Hispaniola for domestic cattle that wandered off into the hills. Before slavery was abolished, communities of maroons were widespread throughout the Caribbean, the southern United States and South America. Today's maroon communities of Jamaica are descendants of the maroons against whom the British fought for a hundred years without being able to defeat them. They still live in the remote and independent territory accorded them by treaty in 1739.

In Haiti, the resistance which grew into the Revolution was fostered and engineered by maroon leaders and their communities in collaboration with those still enslaved. The maroons of Surinam against whom John Gabriel Stedman was sent to fight have numerous descendants in all the Guianas, who still suffer persecution to this day.

p.80: William Beckford was 22 years old, heir to the greatest fortune in Britain (deriving from Jamaican sugar plantations), and happily married, when, during a visit to the estate of a boy he had previously been infatuated with, he was discovered sexually engaged with that same boy, now 16. The head of the household, Lord Loughborough, was a bitter political opponent of Beckford's guardians, and he seized upon the incident to wreck Beckford's career and "good name." The continental countries had moderated their judicial ferocity against homosexuals in imitation of Pennsylvania's Quaker-inspired elimination of capital punishment for the "crime" of sodomy, but not so Britain, where it was considered more heinous than murder, the reasoning being that murder was merely an offense against man, whereas sodomy was "high treason against God." Beckford lost the seat he currently held in the House of Commons and also the peerage he would certainly have come to, had English society not shut its doors in his face. He took his loyal wife, whom he deeply loved, and little daughter abroad to Switzerland. There, the following spring, Lady Margaret died after giving birth to another girl. Beckford was devastated. Unable to go home, he wandered around Europe for the next twelve years, spending four years in Portugal, trying to gain credit with the court, partly in the hope that it would facilitate his rehabilitation in England. The scheme failed.

p.85: Lady Craven, notorious for her sexual adventures, was a friend and collaborator of Beckford's. In 1782 their operetta "Pastoral" (music mostly by him, libretto by her) was lavishly produced with a cast of children whose aristocratic parents all turned out to see them. The event eased Beckford's entrance into London society. Lady Craven was one of a very few who remained friends with Beckford through all his travails and her *Memoirs* contain vivid anecdotes of his talent for mimicry.

p.86: William Earle, *Obi, or, The History of Three-Fingered Jack. In A Series of Letters From a Resident in Jamaica to His Friend in England.* London, 1800.

Earle's book is based upon the true story of a slave named Jack Mansong who in 1780 escaped into the Blue Mountains of Jamaica and there led a band of maroons in hundreds of attacks upon travellers. A bounty was put out for him with the additional incentive that any slave who could prove he had killed the outlaw would be freed. Early the next year he was shot by a slave who brought back Mansong's head and three-fingered hand in a bucket of rum.

Jack Mansong's exploits, already legendary, were elaborated and romanticized in print. The story was rewritten numerous times, in journalistic, fictional and dramatic form. A wildly popular pantomime adaptation of Earle's novella served as a vehicle for Charles Kemble and, later on, the great African-American actor Ira Aldridge.

p.87: According to the art historian Robert Farris Thompson, the *veve* is the quintessential Afro-American art form. It is a calligraphic diagram drawn on the ground, usually with corn meal, for a vodoun ceremony. Each of the *loas* (the deities or "mysteries" of Vodoun) has its own distinctive veve, which serves not only to summon, but to praise and embody, it. The *veves* shown here belong to Damballah, Ogun and Legba. Damballah syncretizes the Dahomean good serpent of the sky, Da, and the Ki-Kongo *ndamba*, or rainbow-spirit (see note to p.79). (*Ndamba* is homonymous with the expression "to sleep," that is, "to make ecstatic love"; thus the *veve* includes Damballah's serpent wife Ayida , the two of them intertwined around a palm tree.) The image evokes cosmic construction and "creative coolness." Ogún, or Papa Ogún, is associated with iron. He manifests himself in the cutting edge of the machete, and can come as a blacksmith, a warrior or a bonfire. Legba is the *loa* of the crossroads, who hovers over every decision and fate and the line dividing and joining the living and the dead. Legba has the character of a trickster.

The *houngan* (voodoo priest) draws the veves around the base of the house's central post (*poteau mitan*), arranging them along the arms of an implicit cross. This cross is not derived from Christianity but from cosmograms and ground drawings of the Kongo. The *poteau mitan* is the Vodoun variation of Jack's beanstalk and Yggdrasil, the world tree that connects heaven and earth. It is often painted with the rainbow serpent entwining it, and it is down this path, that the *loas* descend to the

beat of drums (each *loa* having its own specific rhythmic beat) to take possession of the dancing devotees, their "horses." As the dancers are "mounted," they incarnate the deities and lose their human identities. They circle the world tree, cosmic mysteries dancing and erasing the *veves* underfoot as they go.

p.93: Edward Long, author of *The History of Jamaica*, was descended from an officer in the army that had driven the Spanish from the island in 1655. His marriage to Mary Ballard Beckford, a relative of William Beckford and her father's only heiress, consolidated his status as a member of the island's first families. He had trained as a lawyer but ill health unfitted him for the bar. His *History*, written when the island was at its most secure and prosperous, was designed partly as a travel book (for which there was growing demand) and partly as a publicity and promotion. Long hoped it would attract more white settlers of means, and to this end he included the type of information that would interest a potential investor. Long's attitudes may be taken as typical of the majority of the master class at this period.

p.95: Governor Balcarres, Letter to the Duke of Portland, [undated, January 1796].

The Earl of Balcarres was responsible for the Second Maroon War, which erupted in response to his unjust and high-handed behavior. Relatively small matters of administration became the matter of rebellion because of Balcarres' refusal to treat the Maroons with respect, as his predecessor had done. He saw them as conspirators eager to emulate the overthrow of white power in Saint-Domingue, tools of French agents intent on destabilizing Jamaica. His high-handed tactics backfired, and he found himself faced with another war. About 300 maroons frustrated 1500 British troops under the command of General Walpole, and 3000 local militia for five months. Finally, Walpole decided to import blood-hounds, which were used by Cuban planters to track escaped slaves. This practice was prohibited by British law and Walpole hoped not to use it. In the event, the bloodhounds were never set loose, as the Maroons surrendered when they heard of the intent. Walpole then negotiated a peace whereby the Maroons promised to seek the King's pardon on the understanding that they would not be deported. Both sides signed a treaty on Dec.21, 1795. Balcarres gave the Maroons three days to surrender, an impossible condition, as Walpole realized, but which he succeeded in having extended for some months as the more distant maroons straggled out of the mountains. The government, however, refused to recognize the surrender of those who failed to meet the unrealistic deadline. Walpole protested but could accomplish nothing. He resigned his commission and returned to Britain to present his case in Parliament, with no better result. Balcarres had the Maroons rounded up and shipped to Nova Scotia, where their health gave way in the cold. After a while, the government relocated them to Sierra Leone, where their descendants are still to be found.

PART TWO

p.100: William Beckford's Fonthill Abbey, Wiltshire. "View of the West, and North Fronts" from John Rutter's *Delineations of Fonthill*, 1832.

In 1799 Beckford returned from his long exile on the Continent and started to build the folly of the age, Fonthill Abbey, an architectural amalgam of Portuguese Gothic and English monastic church, serving as shrine, showplace, home, refuge and tomb. Its enormous central tower fell down three times in 30 years. It housed the countless treasures of Beckford's collecting mania. He built it, and its surrounding six-mile long wall, largely in response to society's rejection, and in consequence it became the desire of "everyone who was anyone" to visit it. But the only two people that Beckford ever invited there were Lord Nelson and Emma Hamilton.

p.105: Lady Nugent was not alone in her anxiety about the situation in Jamaica in July 1803. General LeClerc, commander of Napoleon's army in Saint-Domingue, had succumbed to yellow fever the previous year, following many of his troops. France was evacuating the surviving settlers, but the British Navy had mounted a blockade of the islands to prevent an influx of French reinforcements. A few months after Nugent's journal entry, the last battle of the Saint-Domingue revolution would be fought near Cap Haitien, the rebels under Dessalines defeating the French under Viscount Rochambeau. On January 1, 1804 Dessalines declared Saint Domingue's independence and renamed it *Haiti*, an Arawak word meaning "mountainous land."

p.106: Boukman Dutty was the first leader of the Saint Domingue Revolution. He was headman on one of the larger plantations of the northern plain, and a coachman, which facilitated his contacts with slaves throughout the region. It seems that he got his name, Bookman in English, from the fact that he carried a book, probably a Koran, with him to Jamaica, his first place of servitude. He was literate, and being of the professional slave class, was able to follow political developments to some extent, through written sources, oral communication and overheard conversations. He was large, strong and charismatic. He was first owned by a Jamaican planter and then sold, for reasons unknown, to one of Saint Domingue. He became a voodoo priest and developed a huge network of contacts throughout the island. It is quite possible that he saw himself as a warrior marabout.

On the night of August 22, 1791 thousands of slaves gathered on a mountain in the forest above Le Cap. It was the beginning of the uprising. Boukman delivered instructions, led a voodoo ceremony, and exhorted the slaves with the speech on p. 113, which was remembered and repeated. Then, that same night, he and other leaders led their bands to attack the plantations, kill their owners, raise their slaves and set fire to the crops and buildings.

p.111: Miguel Lopez Lopez (?), "Dessalines fled the courage of the French while killing whites" in Louis Dubroca's. *Vida de J. J. Dessalines, gefe de los negros de Santo Domingo*, Mexico, 1806.

This image, possibly by the artist Miguel Lopez Lopez, appeared in a biography of Dessalines (Toussaint's successor) by Louis Dubroca (1757–1835). Dubroca was a writer, bookseller and teacher of oratory, rhetoric and diction in Paris, where he was commissioned by the Bonapartist government to write propaganda vilifying the Haitian Revolution. The French hoped that such crude and inflammatory accounts would incite counter-revolutionary action in the Caribbean.

p.112: The protagonist of Mary Shelley's seminal novel *Frankenstein* (1818) was figured by her as "a modern Prometheus." At the time of publication, when Abolition was still being debated in Parliament, the monster Frankenstein was widely identified with the insurgent black slave by anti-abolitionists.

p.117: For a brief discussion of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, see "Sexual Stealing and the Gothic," pp. 158–62.

p.121: Jean-Baptiste Chapuy, "Vue de l'incendie de la ville du Cap Francais, Arrivée le 21 juin 1793(1795). Peint d'après nature par J.L. Boquet ; Gravé par J.B. Chapuy

This famous print was engraved after a painting, now lost, by J.L. Boquet, a specialist in marine subjects. He was living in Saint-Domingue when the events rendered took place, and drew them from life. Another painting from his hand, also lost, of the pillage of Cap Francais in 1793, is known only from an unfinished proof.

p.123: Denis Volozan, Equestrian portrait of Toussaint Louverture, c.1800–1825, Musée d'Aquitaine, Bordeaux.

Denis Volozan (1765–1820), artist and teacher, was born in France and became a naturalized citizen in Philadelphia in 1799. and part of the French emigré community. His family seems to have owned property in Saint-Domingue. This portrait is closely related to the only image of Toussaint that has any evidence of authenticity, Nicolas Maurin's lithograph after a lost drawing. Toussaint himself had presented the drawing to a colonial official. Both Volozan's and Maurin's images closely correlate to Toussaint's facial features as described by some of those who met him.

p.124: Michel-Etienne Descourtilz (1775–1835) was a French doctor and naturalist who married into a wealthy creole family of Saint-Domingue. He traveled to the island in 1799 in hopes of regaining his wife's property, only to be taken captive by the forces of General Dessalines. Allowed to live so that he could be useful, Descourtilz spent the next four years tending to the wounded among Dessalines' troops. He

met Toussaint at the point when he was beginning to gain precedence over the other black leaders and witnessed the arrival of Napoleon's army under the command of General Leclerc. Besides recording his own experience with the vastly outnumbered but repeatedly victorious blacks, he wrote extensively about the natural phenomena of the island. It may be that his memoir of providing aid to the victorious enemy was couched among a plethora of scientific material in order to distract and evade Napoleon's censors. Modern commentators have found his book chaotic and badly written (which seems to mean that his style suffers from the period's romantic and theatrical diction), but agree that it contains many convincing portraits. Descourtilz also describes the blacks and people of mixed race who deplored Dessalines' agenda of retaliation by massacre, and tried to help the entrapped whites as best they could. It should be noted, however, that his use of that diction in descriptions of exotic atrocities often results in a type of prose that can only be called involuntary Gothic.

The Abbé Raynal (1713-96), to whom Descourtilz refers in the quoted passage, was a French priest who called for a revolution among slaves nine years before the taking of the Bastille. His *History of the East and West Indies* (parts of which seem to have been written by Diderot) was read by Toussaint, who recognized himself in this justly famous passage:

> If self-interest alone prevails with nations and their masters, there is another power. Nature speaks in louder tones than philosophy or self-interest. Already are there established two colonies of fugitive negroes, whom treaties and power protect from assault. Those lightnings announce the thunder. A courageous chief only is wanted. Where is he, that great man whom Nature owes to her vexed, oppressed and tormented children? Where is he? He will appear, doubt it not; he will come forth and raise the sacred standard of liberty. This venerable signal will gather around him the companions of his misfortune. More impetuous than the torrents, they will everywhere leave the indelible traces of their just resentment. Everywhere people will bless the name of the hero who shall have re-established the rights of the human race; everywhere will they raise trophies in his honour.

p.129–30: William Smith, "The North- West Prospect of Cape-Coast Castle," and "The East Prospect of Cape-coast Castle," from *Thirty Different Drafts of Guinea*, 1727.

Legend to "The North-West Prospect of Cape-Coast Castle": CAPE COAST is the Largest, Strongest, most beautifull Castle belonging to the Royal African Company on the Coast of Guinea. Here is the Residence of the Generall Who presides over Eight other Forts, besides Several Factories. It lyes in the Latitude of 5 [degrees] North which (tho very near the Equinoctial Line) yet is it accounted the most wholsome air in Guinea Under Shelter of the Guns is built a Large Populous Negro Town.

The People are of a Warlike sort. Their Religion is altogether Pagan. Their Fitish day or Sabbath, is on Tuesday. Their Chief provision is Fish & Canky (before described in plate 14). Nevertheless the Castle is indifferently stored with Mutton, Goats, Hogs, Fowles, from ye Inland Country also some Venison, but at a very dear Rate.

From the note on Canky, "a sort of bread made of Maize or Indian Corn rub'd between two stones to powder and mix'd with palm Wine which serves instead of yeast both for the Cankee and European Flower." William Smith was the Surveyor to the Royal African Company at whose behest these images were made.

For a brief discussion of Cape Coast Castle, see "Sexual Stealing and the Gothic," pp. 165-70.

p. 135: The author of the document "An Expedition Against the Insurgents" was a plantation owner of Limbé (and not to be confused with General Charles Emmanuel Leclerc, leader of the Napoleon's troops). M. Leclerc does not give his first name. In this document he confesses to feeling that the slaves should be emancipated but admits that he is too weak to participate in the struggle towards that end. His text is notable for its conflation of romantic and theatrical diction with sincere analysis of his emotional reactions to scenes of horror and atrocity. His is one of the very few accounts that deal with the specific sufferings of white women, at the hands not only of black insurgents but also white priests. His text serves as an important perspective in which to view Lewis' *The Monk*.

p.136: Anthropologists, Kenneth Bilby among them, have begun to use oral history as a source of historical information in analphabetic societies as more and more research shows that such histories are passed down through generations with a great deal of accuracy. For instance, coastal flooding in Australia in 5000 BCE has been accurately described in aboriginal myths. Bilby lived for a year with the descendants of Cudjoe (Kojo) and his band in their community, which still occupies its 18th century retreat in the Blue Mountains of Jamaica. Bilby learned from his informants some of the highly efficacious guerrilla techniques the slaves brought from Africa, where most of them had been warriors. These techniques were also used in Saint-Domingue (Haiti) by Toussaint's soldiers and were just as effective against Napoleon's army as they had been in Jamaica against the British.

Cudjoe, also known as Captain Cudjoe, (1680–1744) was the foremost leader of the Maroons during the First Maroon War. The British, since gaining the island from Spain in 1655, had never been able to bring it fully under their control. Slave uprisings on the plantations were frequent and increased the maroon population, which was divided into two groups, the one to the west, in the "cockpit country," known as the Windward Maroons, and the one to the east, led by Cudjoe, as the Leeward Maroons. All were skilled at exploiting the difficult terrain. Almost a hun-

dred years passed before the British admitted they could not defeat them. In 1739 Cudjoe seized the opportunity to propose a treaty with the enemy and, after negotiations, such a treaty was signed. The British guaranteed the Maroons, Windward and Leeward, their land and freedom. In exchange, the Maroons were expected to help capture escaped slaves and to defend the island from external threats. Abiding by this harsh bargain, the Maroons were instrumental in putting down the largest slave rebellion before the Haitian Revolution, a massive uprising in 1760 known as Tacky's War.

p.138: *Becara* or *buckra* is Jamaican slang for "white man." The word probably derives from *mbakara*, the word for master in the Efik-Ibibio languages of present day Nigeria.

Philip Thicknesse (1719-92) was a British author and eccentric who took part in the attempt to suppress insurgent activity in Jamaica. Later in life he became an "ornamental hermit."

p.149: After Charles Brockden Brown's novels failed to provide him with sufficient income to live on, he turned increasingly to journalistic writing and pamphleteering, although he did not give up the writing of fiction.

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