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Social contract theory, African American slave narratives, and the reconstruction of early modern conceptions of political freedom

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Social Contract Theory, African American Slave Narratives, and the Reconstruction of Early Modern Conceptions of Political Freedom

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Introduction

> "Negroes are to be regarded as a race of children who remain immersed in their state of uninterested *naïveté*. They are sold, and let themselves be sold, without any reflection on the rights or wrongs of the matter. The Higher which they feel they do not hold fast to, it is only a fugitive thought. This Higher they transfer to the first stone they come across, thus making it their fetish and they throw this fetish away if it fails to help them. Good-natured and harmless when at peace, they can become suddenly enraged and then commit the most frightful cruelties. They cannot be denied a capacity for education; not only have they, here and there, adopted Christianity with the greatest gratitude after a long spiritual servitude, but in Haiti they have even formed a State on Christian principles. But they do not show an inherent striving for culture. In their native country the most shocking despotism prevails. There they do not attain to the feeling of human personality, their mentality is quite dormant, remaining sunk within itself and making no progress, and thus corresponding to the compact, differenceless mass of the African continent…It is in the Caucasian race that mind first attains to absolute unity with itself. Here for the first time mind enters into complete opposition to the life of Nature, apprehends itself in its absolute self-dependence, wrests itself free from the fluctuation between one extreme and the other, achieves *self*-determination, self-development, and in doing so creates world history[1]"

From the depths of the dark ages, Europe in the twelfth century had marked the beginning of a new era. After centuries of creative and intellectual stasis the European continent was reinvigorated by the spoils of the crusades. Much of the secular knowledge dispersed during the dark ages, both within and out of Europe, found its way into Middle Eastern Islamic libraries. The rediscovery of these texts and ideas ushered in an era known as the Renaissance or the Early Modern Period. Whether argued to be a bridge from antiquity to modernity or a lamentation of classical times, the Renaissance was fueled by the art, culture, and thought of the ancient Mediterranean empires. Questions of self-mastery and piety from Socrates, political efficacy from Plato and Aristotle, and Scientific advances from Avicenna and Geber, are only a few of the

[1] Hegel, G.W.F. *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*. Trans. William Wallace. Oxford University Press: New York, 2003. §393 (zusatz) 43-44

dominant catalysts for what would become known as early modern political thought. Simultaneous to the reclamation of these antiquated troves of knowledge was the eventual decline in the political authority of the Church and the resurrection of secular state authority. In this jumbled pot of circumstances writers such as Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke set out to theorize, as did Plato and Aristotle before them, the locus of political authority. Predicated on classical concerns such as self-mastery and piety, these thinkers developed a common method for their inquiries known as the social contract. Breaking from the ideas of the dark ages that piety and continuity were the linchpins of the state, or more properly kingdom in those times, the social contract theorists posited that states can be theorized, even if only hypothetically, as artificially constructed by men. If the state is artificial then the central question of politics is no longer how do we properly ask God to help us defeat our foes? Or, how do we protect the royal lineage so they can continue to guide us? The primary questions for political philosophy became who had power? How did they get it? And, should they have it? These concerns were intensified in the western world after the works of Jean Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, and G.W.F. Hegel. From this moment on it became sacrosanct in political philosophy to address these central questions before making any claims tangential or otherwise.

Given the admitted artificiality of the social contract projects, this dissertation aims to engage the curious absorption of terms, institutional relationships, and ideal body politics created by the traditional social contract theorists into a larger nexus of a claimed natural humanity generally, and a presumed universality of European identity specifically from the renaissance into modernity. This claim is not new or controversial; there are

well documented critiques and praises of social contract theory on this issue of hegemony represented principally in modernity by Carole Pateman's *The Sexual Contract*, Charles Mills' *The Racial Contract*, and Emmanuel Eze's *Race and the Enlightenment*. I, like Pateman, Mills, and Eze, am primarily concerned with the way in which modern political philosophy as a discipline has deployed terms such as equality, justice, and most importantly, freedom; terms born from the renaissance and allowed to pass into modernity relatively unchanged leaving one to question the degree to which they were actually questioned, confronted, or challenged.

While the texts critiquing social contract theory as a method are innumerable, honest attempts to challenge modernity's appropriation of the terms and ideas coined and erected within social contract theory's principle texts are much harder to find. Of the few political philosophic texts written on these central political terms in an effort to challenge and engage them, the vast majority question not the definition and validity of the terms but rather their application to certain identities, circumstances, and political constructs. Hence most attempts to redefine these central terms end in a recapitulation of one of the canonic early modern claims given by one of the social contract theorists as valid. My problem with this practice is that if political philosophy as a discipline claims to search for political efficacy in human societies, then inquiry into the concern that the claims and theories of the discipline are not representative of a reasonable collection of human challenges and concerns ought to be investigated more seriously in antiquity and modernity. While critical work and thought has been applied to expanding the reach of the western argument for the nature of the human subject, this attempt is fundamentally limited by the experiences and history of the culture that has produced it. As such,

language becomes a limit in itself that cannot be overcome without a fresh perspective from an external observer in history as constructed by classic political philosophy. This dissertation will begin from the position that the term "freedom" and the necessarily related terms, "justice" and "equality" are not free standing, logically-deduced terms, and that they, to quote Marx from *the Critique of the Gothe Programme*, have the potential to, "pass over in silence the conditions that alone give them meaning[2]" even in cases of critically examined uses.

It is my belief that the concept of "freedom" as articulated in modernity by political philosophers is laden with the classic European concerns of antiquity and as such transforms rather than vindicates identity when applied to non-westerners. Those whose identities are not incorporated into what the west would qualify as a rational human being are fundamentally viewed as different, exceptional, and most times deficient when viewed through the lens of modern freedom. That may explain why the American government so easily finds subjugated, un-free people all over the globe to defend and set free at a moment's notice. Thus what we consider liberalism, or the practice of treating freedom as the principle end of the state, is predicated upon a subject that, rather than being universal as is claimed, is actually specified and may or may not actually represent the whole of the body politic. Thus the freedom created from modern liberalism is, in theory and in praxis, necessarily supportive of certain centralized identities and repugnant to others. Although it is my claim that liberalism and the modern concept of freedom lack universal applicability, both can be engaged, critiqued, and expanded from within the annals of western history. To do this we must first

[2] Tucker, Robert C. ed. *The Marx- Engels* Reader. 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978. p.526

understand that the predominant notions of freedom from antiquity, foundational for the rise of liberalism, were created by Europeans in response to European classic concerns found in European societies. These notions of freedom were later taken up by modern political philosophy through the conduit of Hegel, Kant, and universal history, condensed and normalized via liberalism, and advanced in modernity as a fundamental yearning of the human condition. This appropriation was performed without concern as to whether or not the thinkers of the early modern period endeavored to take the perspectives and ideas of other cultures into true philosophic consideration.

Of the charter cultural groups of America, and by extension the modern west, African Americans were among those not included in the dominant group imbued with hegemonic power. Fully western, yet artificially constructed as different, African Americans have a rich written history that stretches back approximately 300 years and some remnants of an oral history that stretches further. As W.E.B. Dubois masterfully articulates in *the Souls of Black Folk,* to be Black in America is to possess a two-ness:

> "After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, -a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,- an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideas in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder…In this merging he wishes neither of the two older selves to be lost…He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face."[3]

In the desire to retain this double-consciousness or two-ness, many Black writers write not only to articulate themselves to the world but to also critique the force that prevents

[3] Dubois, W.E.B.. *The Souls of Black Folk.* New York: Vintage Books, 1990. p. 8-9

them from being accepted as equals. The western assertion of Black as the other prevents Blackness from being incorporated into western norms. The Blackness barred from the inclusion in the West I refer to is not some metaphysical mystical or majestic power, but rather an empirical legacy of struggle and a recorded history of responses to trauma, victories won, challenges conquered, and most impressive of all, the only entire racial culture created from scratch in modernity. Because of their proximity to the locus of modern western power, the writings of vindication, freedom, and inclusion written by African Americans and their brethren throughout the Diaspora are informed and knowledgeable critiques of the shortcomings of western, supposedly universal, ideas. The very existence of African Americans, as Du Bois articulated, is pro/anti-American from Colin Powell to Ice-T. African American history is littered with legendary patriots who died honorably for their country as well as merciless angry individuals who laid down their lives in sedition attempts. Despite the vast chasm between these two extremes, the two are unified by a common obsession of Black America with the acquisition of freedom and political right *within* the American political structure.

Among these Black literary critiques of America, I have found a particular genre to be useful in understanding the shortcomings of the early modern thinkers as well as the expansion of the positive and useful aspects of their theories. Written primarily between the 18th and 19th centuries, African American slave narratives were thematically created for the sole purpose of discussing freedom as it pertains to African slaves in America. Comparing the texts of social contract theory with African American slave narrative I will demonstrate the manner in which African American slave narratives contain critical

ideas concerning freedom and the rational citizen that when read back into social contract theory can be used to overcome the modern critiques of renaissance political philosophy.

Within the slave narratives, African Americans articulate their communal desire for political inclusion and mass social acceptance in a foreign land in which they are considered chattel. Blacks, both literally and literarily argued for the right to be free, equal, and to have access to just treatment under the law within a society that will not allow it. As such I will argue in this dissertation that African American slave narratives are proper political philosophic texts filled with claims concerning freedom, servitude, law, and the proper relation of the political subject to the seat of sovereignty. When read as political philosophic texts, the slave narratives written by African Americans are thematically analogous and philosophically contemporary to early modern social contract texts. This analogy is the result of the ostracism experienced by African slaves who achieved freedom via legitimate and illegitimate means. The slave narratives are progressions from a constructed extra-political space to marginalized inclusion into the greater US political sphere. When a slave manages to get to Canada or Great Britain where slavery is abolished, or when they get their slave papers in the US they pass in these narratives from a faux-state of nature on the boat in the middle of the Atlantic, in the servant's chambers of a northern mansion, or on the plantation in the south into civilized society[4]. This transformation and accompanying conversation that is intertwined with it is reminiscent of the strategy implemented by the social contract

[4] The irony of this all is that this transformation is artificial. Slaves existed within the colonial body politic in a negative fashion. They were accounted for by the sovereign power of the law through a slew of prohibition laws mandating what Blacks and Whites could and could not do sexually and also through fugitive slave legislation that delineated a legitimate free Black from an escaped piece of property. A farce of statues governing their status as unique citizens making up a whole 3/5th of a human being existed as well. Nevertheless despite their full immersion in the body politic they were, and in some cases remain, rhetorically constructed as resting outside of the purview of the law and accounted within it as anything other than property.

theorists in their movement from a state of nature to the discussion of an idealized body politic. This dissertation explores this common strategy by looking at the structural and thematic similarities between African American slave narratives and social contract treatises in an effort to ultimately show the political philosophic value of African American slave narratives to arguments for freedom, servitude, liberalism, and sovereign responsibility both historically and in modernity.

To discuss the relationship between the two genres I will use Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean Jacques Rousseau as representatives of social contract theory and Henry Bibb, Harriet Jacobs, and Frederick Douglass as my exemplars of African American slave narratives. Each genre presents potent arguments concerning the nature of freedom in the narrative form. The slave narratives, as per their title, are complete narratives. The social contract texts, though not traditionally recognized as proper narratives, do however exhibit a narrative structure. Insofar as social contract texts all draw their claims and inferences from their hypothetical foundations known as states of nature, I argue that these texts can be said to be deduced from, and thus reliant upon, the narrative form. My dissertation will commence with a discussion of narratology, specifically the theories of Tzvetan Todorov. I will then discuss social contract theory, the historical impetus for this genre, as well as its political philosophic goals. From that point I will give exegetical readings of John Locke's state of nature found in "*The Second Treatises of Government*", Thomas Hobbes' state of nature found in "*The Leviathan*", and Jean Jacques Rousseau's state of nature found in "*The Social Contract*", "*The Discourses*", and "*Emile*". I will relate each thinker's state of nature to their over-all work in order to demonstrate the foundational status of each to the larger works of which

they are a part. I will include a narrative analysis of the themes, paradigms, and patterns that I have found to be emblematic of the genre's discussion of freedom.

From that section, I will move on to a discussion of African American slave narratives. Following the same method I will discuss Transatlantic Slavery and its affect on Africa, America, Europe and their inhabitants. I will also talk about the birth of slave literature in the U.S. and its relationship to abolitionist movements in the United States. I will then give exegetical readings of Harriet Jacobs' "*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*", Henry Bibb's "*Narrative of the Life Adventures of Henry Bibb: An American Slave*", and Frederick Douglass' "*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass"*. I will also give a discussion of the themes, paradigms, and patterns I have found in the slave narratives' attempts to define and discuss freedom. I will then compare and contrast the merits and strengths of each genre's themes, paradigms, and patterns in terms of their ability to coexist and be receptive to identity variance in a necessarily diverse world. The reclamation of previously excluded identities in the purview a notion of freedom rooted in the early modern period broadly construed would be considered evidence that early modernity can in fact answer the modern critiques of Pateman, Mills, and Eze with the critical caveat that the period is inclusive of texts and ideas once considered extra-philosophical. By arriving at a space that is inclusive of the history, trials, and concerns of more identities and social groups, this dissertation will have brought the canonical political philosophic term freedom closer to being worthy of the label universal. To paraphrase Todorov, we will have passed from a state of ignorance to a state of lesser ignorance, regarding a conceptual definition for freedom.

Methodology: Todorov and Narratology

Again, my argument is that each philosophic argument for freedom is derived from a narrative. More than a stylistic choice, the utilization of the narrative form is strategic and systematic. In order to examine, compare, and contrast the systemic usage of form, trope, metaphor, and theme within these "freedom narratives[5]" I turn to narratology as my methodology. Narratology, though a literary method, has philosophic import because of its attention to structure and form. Narratology aims to answer not just whether or not a text is successful at appealing to a reader; it also probes into questions of how the text achieves an affect on the reader through careful analysis of the rhetorical progression of ideas, concepts, and circumstances within a narrative. Originating in antiquity with Aristotle and begun in earnest with Vladimir Propp in the 1920's, narratology was not coined as a term and introduced into the academic mainstream until Tzvetan Todorov's *Grammaire du Décaméron* in 1969. Despite the many investigations of narratology since its coinage, I feel that the method developed by Tzvetan Todorov to compare, contrast, and analyze narratives is the most effective for my chosen texts of study. There have been theorists after Todorov, most noted are Mieke Bal, Gerald Prince, and Percy Lubbock. If we look at Gerald Prince's *Narratology* he defines narrative as "the representation of at least two real or fictive events or situations in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes or entails the other.[6]" In Bal's *Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* we find that he defines narrative as derived from a fibula which he defines as "a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or

[5] I define "freedom narrative" as a text written in a narrative structure that utilizes the classic tropes of the biblical fall, the imperiled sympathetic hero, and redemption via endurance and virtue to express the merits of a specified individual or group which serve as exemplars of larger groups for whom the narrative is intended construct, reform, challenge, or change the political rights of.

[6] Prince, Gerald. *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative*. New York: Mouton Publishers, 1982. p.4

experienced by actors.[7]" Whether it is Prince, Bal, Greimas, Propp, the analysis of narrative seems to hinge on the carryover of meaning across disjoined literary time; the essence of a narrative, and what separates one narrative from another, is the manner in which this feat is achieved. The plot is what makes a narrative. From the beginning, Todorov made this point.

Todorov is a Franco-Bulgarian literary theorist, author, and philosopher. He is widely considered as one of the founding contributors of Narrotalogy. In autumn of 1971 Todorov wrote an essay entitled *The 2 Principles of Narrative* wherein he raises the question of whether narratives possess some inherent necessary structure that can be interpreted, analyzed, and categorized.[8] In the essay he begins with a story of Ricciardo Minutolo and his love for Filippelo's wife Catella from the *Decameron*[9]. In the story Ricciardo deviously contrives a plot to get himself in bed with Catella. The whole story is relatively short, 26 printed dual columned lines to be exact. From the story Todorov asks two simple questions. The first is the question of whether this is a narrative, which he answers himself admitting that anyone would recognize the story as a narrative. The second question however is a little more difficult and proves to be the subject of the essay: what makes the story a narrative? Todorov differentiates between a non-narrative story, or what he calls a description, and a narrative proper. A merely descriptive piece is temporally continuous in nature for Todorov, while a proper narrative is comprised of a discontinuous structure: "Both description and narrative presuppose temporality that differs in nature. The initial description was certainly situated in time, but this time was

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[7] Bal, Mieke. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985. p.5

[8] Todorov, Tzvetan *The 2 Principles of Narrative.* Diacritics Vol. 1, No. 1 Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971, pp. 36-44 (hereafter referenced as Todorov, *Diacritics*)

[9] A collection of novelas written by 14th century Italian author and poet Giovanni Boccaccio.

continuous; whereas the changes, characteristic of narrative, cut time into discontinuous unities; the time of events."[10] Interpreting narrative as discontinuous unities is an idea Todorov takes from Vladimir Propp, who argues that all narratives follow certain pre-determined routes of transformation. The status of possessing transformative moments is definitive of narrative. Propp argues that there are thirty-one possible methods of transformation[i]. All thirty-one of the functions are seen as independent and equally important to the narrative. "'If we read consecutively through the list of functions, we see that no function excludes another. They all belong to the same pivot, and not to several pivot points.' The functions follow from one another and do not resemble one another."[11]

In his discussion of narrative, Todorov evokes Propp's analysis of *The Swan-geese*. The story involves a little girl and her attempts to retrieve her little brother who was taken by the swan-geese after she neglected her charge to care for him. Along the tale she seeks help and council from different figures and eventually manages to reclaim her brother, elude his captives, and finds her way back home. Within the story, Propp manages to find twenty-seven distinct components of the story, eighteen of which exhibit one way or another, the thirty-one functions he identified as characteristic of narratives. The other nine are descriptions, transitions, or other necessary literary components of a story. Seemingly validated, Todorov questions Propp's argument that the thirty-one elements of narrative are all independent and of equal statute. During his telling of the tale that Propp utilized, Todorov states that he intentionally omitted several of the

[10] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 38
[11] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 38

functions of the tale. His claim is that despite the omissions of several functions the tale still persists and retains its narrative quality:

> Let's try an experiment. When I told you this tale, I omitted a few of the initial functions: for example, the parents had forbidden the daughter to go away from the house, the daughter had preferred to go off to play, etc. The tale was no less a narrative, was fundamentally identical to itself. I could omit certain functions without causing a notable modification of the tale.[12]

This leads Todorov to argue that there must be some type of hierarchical order to the thirty-one functions, for they cannot all maintain the same value to the story if some can be omitted while others cannot:

> On the other hand, if I [Todorov] had not said that a boy and a girl lived peacefully in their house; or that the geese kidnapped the boy; or that the girl went after him, etc., the tale would no longer have existed, or else it would have been another tale.[13]

With the claim that Propp's functions are not all of equal importance, Todorov addresses the way in which one can rank or at least differentiate the significance of one instance of a function to a story. He argues that despite the alterations each function brings, only the functions that accompany a disjunct in succession are fundamental to the differentiation between a narrative and a linear/ temporally successive story, or what Todorov calls descriptions. *The disjoining of succession, subsequent subtraction of certain unnecessary details, followed by the recombination into a causal relationship across disjoined time, is what creates narrative for Todorov.* Transformations occur when a subject moves from one setting of a narrative to another without a linear, temporal continuum within the structure of the narrative. Something happens, or changes at the very least, to make another reality possible. Not satisfied Todorov inquires into the

[12] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 38
[13] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 39

nature of transformations. "What then is nature of these transformations?... The passage from A to non-A is in some sense the paradigm of all change. But this exceptional status still should not go so far as to cover up the existence of other transformations-and we shall see that they are numerous."[14] Todorov then makes a fundamental distinction in narrative structure between "interdiction transformation" where a negative obligation is imposed and "intentional transformation" where an intention is actualized.

Of these two basic forms of transformation, the first, interdiction, allows for only a transformation of the subject from the positive or negative form to its antithesis. This transformation for Todorov is reserved for the simplest kinds of narratives and is called mythological. The second transformation is more complex requiring an accompaniment to the predicate of the transformation: "A qualitative difference separates the first type of transformation from the second. In the first case, we observe the modification of a basic predicate, which was taken in its positive or negative form, with or without a modal component. In the second case, the initial predicate is accompanied by a second one, so that paradoxically, 'to plan' or 'to learn' designates an autonomous action, yet, at the same time, can never appear by itself: one always plans for another action."[15] For the second type of narrative transformation our knowledge of the effect of the transformation, or the possible consequences of a transformation, remains unforeseen until another point in time. The decision to plan an action is necessarily intertwined not only with the performing of a pre-decided task but also the degree in which one endeavors or is successful. These types of transformations are for Todorov gnoseological. Quickly qualifying Todorov states that his goal is not to separate all

[14] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 39
[15] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 40

narratives into mythological and gnoseological. These two modes of transformation are not exclusive. Utilizing the *Swane-geese* as an example, Todorov demonstrates how both modes of transition are found within the text; however, there is a greater prevalence of one over the other. He states that a good analysis of a narrative seeks not to find exclusive use of one or the other method or transition, but rather the predominance of one over the other.

Looking closely at gnoseological transformation, Todorov analyzes *The Quest for the Grail*. A distinct mark of a gnoseological transformation is precluded with an anti-climactic ending. Somewhere in the outset of the narrative the end is revealed. "A work like *The Quest for the Grail* usually prefaces the sequences which relate material events with others, in which the same events are evoked through predictions. There is [however] a distinctive feature to these suppositional transformations: the characters always carry them out, and even perceive them as a moral imperative."[16] From the outset events, relationships, and endeavors are related to the reader leaving little question as to the fate of the various characters. Gawain, a character in *The Quest for the Grail* recollects during a battle after he is smitten by Galahad, "Thus is confirmed the Utterance that I heard on the day of Pentecost, concerning the sword which I struck. It was announced to me that before long I should receive a terrible blow from it, and it is this very sword with which this knight has just struck me. The deed has indeed occurred just as it was foretold to me."[17] This prior knowledge and its realization is only the prelude to the transformation. After the deed is done comes a reassessment of prior assumptions. The revealing of fates and events sparks a slew of assumption cleansing realizations

[16] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 40
[17] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 40

concerning the characters, their motives, and reactions. These assumptions come into question after the manifestation of the event. "The events of the beginning are evoked again but this time we see them from the vantage point of truth and not from that of deceitful appearance."[18] The draw or allure of the text is thus transformed from the question "what will happen next?" to "why did this happen?". "From the start we know perfectly well what will happen, who will find the Grail, who will be punished and why. Our interest derives from an entirely different question…'what is the Grail?'"[19]. The end of gnoseological transformation is more than the mere understanding of a change in state where character "a" and character "b" had trouble and by the end they have managed to resolve that trouble that we find in a mythological narrative. Rather the change occurs in our understanding of a particular concept, object, or idea.

Take the traditional story of *Little Red Riding Hood* for example. Little Red finds herself in a quandary. We know that she is headed toward danger because we are told the fate of the grandmother before Little Red gets on her way. We also know that her salvation from her soon to be fate is at hand because the woodsman is not far away. At the resolution of the text, Little Red's state has been transformed from an endangered child to one who is safe again yet we knew that would happen. The story is less about Little Red's change in state and more about the thematic questions one can derive from this scenario such as the safety of innocents. We are left to question the morality of leaving an elderly woman in the middle of a wolf-infested forest alone and compounding that with allowing our children to travel through said forest unaccompanied. These discussions, as does the meaning of the Grail, leave us with more questions than answers.

[18] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 40
[19] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 40

By the end "we are not sure of possessing *the* truth; rather, we have passed from our initial ignorance to a lesser ignorance."[20]

In the later pages of the essay Todorov identified an example of a third type of narrative organization: ideological. The transformation within the ideological narrative is neither a change of state, nor one of a change in understanding, but rather the relating of multiple occurrences and happenings to a universal rule, concept, or idea. "Independent actions, carried out by different characters and in various circumstances, reveal their kinship, serving to illustrate or exemplify a common ideology."[21] Comparing the events and exploits of the characters, Todorov extracts rules from Pierre Choderlos's *Les Liasons dangereuses* and Benjamin Constant's *Adolphe*: "one desires what one does not have, one flees from what one does have. Consequently, obstacles reinforce desire, and any assistance weakens it." and "Since one person's happiness always means the unhappiness of the other, it is not possible to base one's life upon the search for contentment. But one can organize it around the requirement that he cause as little pain as possible."[22] These extrapolations become rational guidelines that can be read back into the text to facilitate more understanding, as is the case in university classes worldwide, or they can be utilized to tease out even higher order rules upon which the previous ones were founded. Todorov admits in the essay that this list of narrative form is not exhaustive. The goal is not to define or categorize all narratives; rather his intention is to provide a paradigm for how narratives ought to be categorized. The preeminence of one form of transformation or another gives us a better understanding of

[20] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 41
[21] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 43
[22] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 43

the intent of the author and allows us to group like themes, ideas, and narratives in a more useful manner.

Using Todorov's methodology, I will search for transformations, themes, and ideas in my analysis of the social contract theories and slave narratives I have chosen. From the relationships, or lack thereof, that I find, I will be in a position to understand the functionality (transitions within) each text on its own whereby I can then compare each individual text to its classical genre (social contract or slave narrative). Ultimately, I will be in a position to draw relationships or contrasts, where appropriate, between individual texts and the classical genres as a whole on the topics of freedom, liberalism, and the rational political subject.

Part One: Social Contract Theory

Introduction

Social contract theory is a term utilized to identify a collection of political philosophic arguments that attempt to locate legitimate political authority within a hypothetical thought experiment. The hypothetical thought experiment, or method of social contract theory, has come to be known as the tradition's trademark characteristic. Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau are arguably the tradition's most recognized figures. A classic social contract text begins from what is labeled the "state of nature." The state of nature is a hypothetical, pre-political space devoid of positive law or governance. Within this hypothetical space, the social contractarian engages the reader in a discussion regarding man's *natural* characteristics, desires, and habits. Based on an assessment of natural man, the social contractarian deduces the hypothetical result of humanity acting according to its nature outside of governance and positive law. The result of all hypothetical states of nature is always problematic. Whether it is the inability to procure and secure sustenance or the inability to defend one's own person, every state of nature eventually arrives at a moment where the ability of individuals to preserve themselves adequately is threatened. This problem is resolved through the awakening of reason which drives human beings toward contracting into an organized society as a means of protecting themselves from the common problems of need, want, or violence. In other words, the political space becomes humanity's only solution for the tri-partied problem of need, want, and violence and for this reason humanity's very ability to preserve itself becomes intimately intertwined with governance and positive law. Though there are exceptions to this classical method, most notably

John Rawls, (although it could be argued that Rawls' "veil of ignorance," is yet another hypothetical state of nature from which a narrative of justice follows), all contracts have three primary components; 1. a hypothetical pre-political scenario which questions man's primal nature and desires in said scenario, 2. a rational decision to contract into society for one's self-preservation of behalf of individual actors[23], and 3. the erection of a body politic which is constituted to preserve humanity's natural state of freedom against structured premeditated attacks (Rousseau and Locke), or to provide security from irrational random violence (Hobbes), each deduced as inevitable from the common plight and needs of the individual compactors into the social compact.

Though the progression of a social contract argument ultimately ends in the formation of an intricate governing structure, I am not interested here in an analysis of these resulting governing bodies. To my mind, the real work of the social contract comes in the state of nature and in the moment of compacting into governance. The body politic that gets constructed is merely the logical end of the analysis of natural man and the decision to participate in the process of compacting into society. In other words, I am interested in questioning the hypothetical state of nature: Why was man constructed or said to exist in *this way* as opposed to *that way* naturally? Why was *this* sequence of events posited as possible as opposed to *these* possible events? What grants any of the hypothetical scenarios and their resulting deductions their objectivity, or at least a reasonable amount of determination from objective notions or experiences? The answer I

[23] Though for all of the social contract theorists a moment when all of humanity, or each member of a given society for that matter, gathered together and voted to create society never occurred. This moment is fictionalized based on the tacit agreement of men throughout the history of a given society. Because a society persists, this fictionalized agreement is renewed daily in each action that reaffirms the existence and continuity of the same society. Nevertheless, the narrative is still advanced as an event in an effort to add rhetorically to its supposed universality.

advance is that while it is the case that the authors of the aforementioned social contracts founded their states of nature in what they perceived to be universalized experiences and ideas, they utilized the latitude granted by the hypothetical status of the state of nature to convey arguments for the centrality of certain key concepts to a governing structure free from the burden of historical accuracy. Locke was free to discuss property without the pressure to discuss chattel slavery or the working poor. Hobbes felt he would be free to discuss absolute sovereignty without the burden of rebuttals from historians of tyrannical societies or the claims of the parliamentarians voicing their displeasure with the royalists and monarchs (though that did not go quite as well as he had hoped). Rousseau could go on about the merits of the general will without explaining how it could deal with the avalanche of examples of extraordinarily polarized societies where moderation or the subtracting of the extremes would upset nearly everyone. Within the hypothetical parameters of the state of nature, the thinkers were free to immerse themselves in political concepts free from the force objective retorts could pose to their person/ state making projects.

Seemingly tyrannical in nature, the theories developed by social contract theorists have been demonized by some contemporary political theorists as overt self-serving attempts to manipulate history. While I will not enter that debate here, I can state that it appears clear that Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau each wrote in response to what they perceived as grave threats to society posed by the sovereign body or the citizen's rejection of sovereign authority. Hobbes wrote in response to what he saw as the cause for the continued rebellions of the British 17th century, namely the lack of recognition of sovereign authority on behalf of the citizens. Locke wrote in response to what he

considered to be unjust usurpation of rights to property by the crown which required a rethinking of the citizen's right to property. Rousseau wrote in response to what he claimed was a decline in morals which led to a decline in civility and rule of law that could only be corrected through a tempering of sovereign power that makes it more responsive to the general population. Each thinker devised his theories out of a desire to correct what they perceived to be larger evils in society. While the methods, language, and conclusions may be debated, I do believe that history exonerates a large portion of their respective work as being something much more than self-interested attempts to exert their views on the larger society.

Critics of the social contract methodology, the most noted of which is David Hume, launch the bulk of their attacks at both the state of nature and the resulting obligation human beings have to a given body politic. Despite the fact that Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau all clearly acknowledge that their articulations of man in his *natural* state is ahistorical, some still feel the need to argue the moot point that somehow that the project's ahistoricity invalidates any philosophical worth or objective practicality these social contract arguments could have. To that point I would challenge one to explain why it is logically necessary to attach an attempt to link the origin of governance to reason and fundamental human needs to a specific historic occurrence? What is lost in rooting the theoretical link between reason and governance in a theoretical construction of mans needs and desires as opposed to the specific articulation of needs and desires by some actual individual or group? What insight is gained from the claims of a historian regarding the nature, needs, and habits gleaned from the relating of stories and facts of events past that could not be conceptualized through ones experience of observing

individuals from a distance by a philosopher? I see very little difference concerning what one can know of man's nature between a contractarian's hypothetical state of nature and history as related by a historian. Both, as articulations of history and recorded experience are equally useful, but are also equally insufficient in their articulation of man's universal experience. The limitations placed on one also plague the other. The only difference is a supposed fidélité historians are presumed to have towards historical accuracy that philosophers may or may not possess; an assumption which is questionable at best.

Another major issue philosophers have taken with state of nature arguments is the construction of the arguments themselves. Many find logical flaws in the claims of the various states of nature, for instance Hume in *Of Liberty and Necessity*. In the text Hume systematically attacks Hobbes' method and claims. Because the remainders of the social contracts are predicated on the claims made in the states of nature, any argument that successfully damages the hypothetical thought experiments necessarily invalidates the resulting deductions and political theories that rest upon them. I would like to discuss this problem at length. I feel that this *flaw* in the social contract results from a misreading of the text. When reading philosophy traditionally we search for premises and conclusions all supported by facts and experiences and determine whether the train of logic satisfies our reasonable sensibilities. Clearly, the hypothetical states of nature cannot be validated through objective facts and experiences. Rousseau is clear on this point. Thus, it is my argument that the states of nature advanced by all three thinkers are more properly read as narratives. Rather than serving as the first few premises of connecting syllogisms, the ideas and claims in the states of nature are the preconditions for the arguments that follow, and as such, do not always fit neatly into the linear

arguments for government that follow despite the fact that the obvious logical ties and relationships abound between the two. This disjunction is the result of the social contract method of a conjectural history. While I stated that the formation of the conjectural histories of the social contract theorists differ very little from the construction of historical truths advanced by historians, one cannot overlook the fact that each thinker carefully notes the artificiality of the exercise, although when each leaves the respective state of nature, there is no further mention of artificiality, but instead each thinker argues for ethical and political claims and imperatives.

The difference between the hypothetical state of nature and the appeal to rational argument for subsequent ethical and political claims is to my mind evidence that the respective authors held themselves to two different burdens of proof. The first, that is the state of nature, because of its artificiality, is not rigorously argued for, while the later, because of its rational derivation and logical consistency is more strict. If this is the case one cannot expect logical consistency to arise from claims that even the authors admit ought to be held to a less rigorous burden of proof. In other words, for all the similitude and carry-over of terms, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau recognized the separation between the state of nature claims and the arguments that follow.

Aside from the difference in the burden of proof each is to be subjected to, there is also a difference of form between the original positing of the state of nature and the constitution of the political space that ensues. Todorov, in his discussion of Propp's functions in *The 2 Principles of Narrative* claims that a narrative is a linear story in which the succession has been disjoined and certain unnecessary details have been subtracted; the remainder is then recombined into a causal relationship across disjoined time. In their

articulations of the state of nature, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau each depict humanity in a pre-political space as systematically enduring circumstances en route to the eventual awakening of reason which leads to the eventual entrance into civilized society. When each scenario is pieced together, a narrative depicting man's march to society is outlined. Each circumstance is seen as an incremental step in a causal chain that explains the origin of governmental authority. There is a fundamental disjunction between the time of the state of nature claims and the temporality of all that follows; this difference reveals the dependence of the idealized body political claims on the preceding state of nature arguments. The key to this difference is the recognition of rhetoric advanced in narrative form.

CHAPTER ONE: HOBBES' STATE OF NATURE READ AS A NARRATIVE

Hobbes, in *The Leviathan*, unfolds his state of nature in chapter XIII entitled "Of the Naturall Condition of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity, and Misery". In this chapter we find man, containing the ontology described in the twelve preceding chapters, set in a space where he is without an obvious advantage over his counterparts in society. So our main character, "man," is placed in the first scene, "a pre-political space," and faced with his first circumstance; the duty to preserve himself in spite of competition from others against whom he has no distinct advantage. Hobbes makes it clear that the equity described in individuals at the outset of chapter XIII is considered "setting aside the arts grounded upon words, and especially that skill of proceeding upon generall, and infallible rules, called Science; which very few have, and but in few things; as being not a native faculty, born with us; nor attained, (as Prudence,) while we look after somewhat els."[24] Science for Hobbes is "attayned by Industry; first in apt imposing of Names; and secondly by getting a good and orderly Method in proceeding from the Elements, which are Names, to Assertions made by Connexion of one of them to another; and so to Syllogismes, which are the Connexions of one assertion to another, till we come to a knowledge of all the Consequences of names appertaining to the subject in hand."[25] Science, derived from reason[26], requires a specific measure of leisure and safety. One cannot develop methods and connections, assert or opine in any reliable fashion without a reasonable amount of security and time. Hence the need and want of the pre-political

[24] Hobbes, Thomas, *Hobbes: Leviathan*. Edited by Richard Tuck, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. p.87 (hereafter referenced as Hobbes)
[25] Hobbes, 35
[26] "Reason, in this sense, is nothing but *Reckoning* (that is Adding and Subtracting) of the Consequences of generall names agreed upon, for the *marking* and *signifying* of our thoughts; I say *marking* them, when we reckon by ourselves; and *signifying*, when we demonstrate, or approve our reckonings to other men." Hobbes, 32

space man finds itself in eclipses its ability to produce science in masse. This is due to reason's connection to appetite and aversion for Hobbes. Ratiocination, or thought, as a voluntary motion competes with other impulses that affect the body. The drive to categorize or signify competes with food, thirst, and sex in order to be the final internal motion of the imagination resulting in will or eventually, action. In a space where individuals have want or need, many of these base desires typically win out over the drive for science resulting in diminished scientific aptitude. Put another way, where people have want and need they do not have much time to sit and worry about the problems of the world or about chemical properties of new substances. Thus, absent the plenty produced by organized industry in society, there is need and want in Hobbes' hypothetical, pre-political space resulting in the lack of scientific knowledge he speaks of, further resulting in the equality prudence, "which equall time, equally bestowes on all men, in those things they equally apply themselves unto,"[27] grants.

The realization of one's equality with others is what drives the lineal story line. "From this equality of ability, ariseth equality of hope in the attaining of our Ends. And therefore if any two men desire the same thing which neverthelesse they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their End, endeavor to destroy or subdue one another."[28] So in our scene we see a constant cycle arise where objects, land, and resources are being quarreled over, and these quarrels are escalating into full blown fights between men. It is at this juncture that we have our evidence of the fact that this is a narrative. We have gone from man originating in a pre-political space then recognizing their competition with other equally capable humans to moving forward linearly to

[27] Hobbes, 87
[28] Hobbes, 87

repeated attempts at acquiring the same objects. It is at this point in the text that we have a sequence of the disjuncts in the temporal flow of the story that Todorov claimed was indicative of a narrative. Hobbes explains that in the event that one manages to labor and create convenience via farming or building that when their enterprise is finished they can expect to be forced to defend that resource. In the event that the invaders are successful, they too can expect to defend their newly acquired resources from another invader. Now given the outset of the story, human beings, in the desire of nearly any object, would have had to out-do all the others. So let's say a person wanted to plant crops. This person would have had to will over all the others who coveted the same land, seeds, and water source. Here Hobbes has already assumed this has happened. A person has already performed the requisite labor to acquire the rudiments of production, not to mention the efforts and time put into acquiring farming skill in the first place. We then fast forward past the actual labor to the circumstance that the person will face once the labor is finished and the crop has been harvested.

So our farmer has learned to farm, sought land, acquired land, acquired or developed tools, seeds, and a water source, tilled, planted, watered, irrigated, weeded, and eventually harvested the crops. This three to five month period, more likely much longer, is skipped in the story. We skip straight to the realization that the farmer must now defend the literal fruits of his or her labor. At this point in the story we are faced with another temporal jump. The actual defense is not even discussed. We skip straight to the part where someone has successfully defeated the farmer and now possesses the fruits of the labor. The time which must have transpired before someone successfully dispossessed the farmer of his or her property, is not recounted. The narrative takes up

only the actual battle itself. Imbued with true Spartan vigor, he or she may have held out for decades in an epic fashion; nevertheless, however long it took, it is all left out. We just skip to the invader's realization that she too must defend the property as well. It is here that we resume a linear story where the invader makes the realization that she is as vulnerable as the person just dispossessed.

We have gone from the natural human being recognizing its equality in a linear fashion to the natural human being recognizing that it must fight to procure property, and then jump to an individual who, amidst this chaos, successfully acquires the prerequisites of some type of production. We then skip to the end of that production, advancing to then realization that the fruits of one's labor must be defended; and then we jump to the eventual loss of the fruits. Ultimately we have our invader making a similar realization that he or she too must defend the spoils of his invasion from another and becomes fearful for his or her life. To recount this in a diagram:

Scene 1
Original Human >>>Recognition of equality>>>Battles for acquisition of property
Time Disunity
Scene 2
One who has successfully acquired the prerequisites of production>>>Production begins
Time Disunity
Scene 3
Production is finished>>>Attack is anticipated
Time Disunity
Scene 4
Battle for defense of fruits of labor has been lost>>>Invader anticipates attack>>>Invader becomes fearful of death

For Hobbes it is the realization of the fear of a sudden and violent death that awakens reason and drives the individual out of the state of nature, it is important that we realize the claim that is made here. Hobbes is not claiming that death conceptually should be feared. Rather, it is prudent for an individual to not choose to enter into a state of death

by acting in ways that would provoke violence from others and possibly cause death prematurely. We are to take from the state of nature not an argument that people should fear death, but rather the claim that people do fear a violent and premature death when they are in their right mind. This, for Hobbes, is something that people already do. It is not an "ought to", as much as it is an observation of behavior. Hobbes justifies this observation clearly when he reasons:

> "It may seem strange to some man, that has not well weighed these things; that Nature should thus dissociate, and render men apt to invade, and destroy one another: and he may therefore, not trusting to this Inference, made from the Passions, desire perhaps to have the same confirmed by Experience. Let him therefore consider with himselfe, when taking a journey, he armes himself, and seeks to go well accompanied; when going to sleep, he locks his dores; when even in his house he locks his chests; and when he knows there bee Lawes, and Publike Officers, armed, to revenge all injuries shall bee done him; what opinion he has of his fellow subjects[?]…Does he not there as much accuse mankind by his actions, as I do by my words?[29]"

The state of nature can be seen as the opening claim of a linear argument as Hobbes states in his introduction. Hobbes advances a positive claim that man's passions demonstrate a nature that is necessarily violent which is directly linked to his argument for sovereign power and the creation of a state predicated on the prevention of civil war based on the reader's willingness to "Nosce teipsum: Read thy self.[30]"

While this may seem to contradict my chosen method of reading the states of nature arguments as distinct from the body politic arguments that follow it, in fact, it does not. The "man" found in the outset of the *Leviathan* does not operate in the same fashion as "man" from chapter 17 forward. There we find "The finall Cause, End, or Designe of men, in the introduction of that restraint upon themselves, in the foresight of their own

[29] Hobbes, 89
[30] Hobbes, 10

preservation, and of a more contented life thereby; that is to say, of getting themselves out from that miserable condition of Warre, which is necessarily consequent (*as hath been shewn*) to the naturall Passions of men, when there is no visible power to keep them in awe, and tye them by feare of punishment to the performance of their Covenants, and observation of those Lawes of Nature *set down in the fourteenth and fifteenth Chapters*[31]." This is clearly a summary of the preceding chapters evidenced by the italicized portions. From this juncture on man is no longer being investigated. Man is now a known entity. This is evident from the same claim stated two different ways in chapters 13 and 17 respectively. "So that *in* the nature of man, *we find* three principall causes of quarrel. First, Competition; Secondly, Diffidence; Thirdly, Glory,[32]" and "men are continually in competition for Honour and Dignity…and consequently amongst men there ariseth on that ground, Envy and Hatred, and finally Warre.[33]" The first quote from chapter 13 is investigative; we are proving that this is the case in the nature of man. This proof is found via corroboration from the shared experience of the author and reader. To get to this shared experience Hobbes admittedly uses what he defines himself as the relation of a historical circumstance that may never have been true of the entire world yet his understanding of America gives him confidence that he may be more correct than not. This is the conditional move that I referred to earlier. It is a lowering of the burden of proof. While Hobbes has no empirical evidence he is confident that he has rhetorically created within the literary imagination of the reader a picture sufficient enough to be granted the status of truth.

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[31] Hobbes, 117 (emphases mine)
[32] Hobbes, 88
[33] Hobbes, 119

The first fifteen chapters *of Leviathan* are full of conditional statements which root man in this conditional tale of the all-important Chapter 13. While there may be a powerful rhetorical pull to these claims, they are in fact tied to what Hobbes admits is a possible false claim. Nevertheless in chapter 17 he moves from his argument against the reduction of humans to the level of animal social ability to making the positive assertion that man is that which he conjectured mankind to be. The conditional label is removed and from chapter 17 on Hobbes operates as if the reader has accepted the literary rhetorical link he has created in chapter 13. Thus, it is my argument that the founding of the fear of a violent death at the root of man's nature is predicated upon a separate argument that Hobbes himself asks to be held to a different standard than the rest of his text.

For Hobbes this rational fear of a violent death at the hands of another becomes the foundation upon which the state derives its laws, its purpose, and its end. Rewritten in a positive fashion, Hobbes' primary goal both for philosophy, and all other human endeavors, is the creation of the commodious life which is made possible through removing all causes of preventable violent death with laws that promote civility, and scientific advances that promote safety, comfort, and convenience. "The end scope of philosophy is, that we make use to our benefit of effects formerly seen; or that, by application of bodies to one another, we may produce the like effects of those we conceive in our mind, as far forth as matter, strength, and industry, will permit, for the commodity of human life[34]." The commodious life is one full of leisure and material possessions. To create such a lifestyle there would have to be a lasting peace between

[34] Molesworth, W. ed. *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury Vol. I*. London, 1839-45 p. 7 (Hereafter reference as De Corpore)

men to grant leisure as well as industry to create and maintain material possessions. Understanding Hobbes' ideal state as one with industry providing commodity and peace providing leisure, Hobbes argues that the greatest avoidable threat to such a state of life is civil war. "All such calamities as may be avoided by human industry, arise from war, but chiefly from civil war; for from this proceed slaughter, solitude, and the want of all things"[35]. The fear of violent death at the hand of another for Hobbes is actualized most fully in civil war. In such a state man is reduced to a war of all against all and is in the most danger of being disposed of his life. Civil war for Hobbes was very avoidable and occurs only as a result of the ignorance of the relationship between the lack of sovereign protection and the possibility for the random violent deaths of many. Thus for Hobbes it became imperative to suppress any and all cases of civil war if his state of commodious life was to ever be realized.

Civil war is nothing but other than individuals who find themselves in the position of no allegiance to the sovereign. With no recognized sovereign, individuals willingly break their covenants with one another, resulting in heinous acts being rendered permissible through force creating the possibility of random violent death at the hands of another. Though it is wholly possible that a civil war may produce no bloodshed, for example, the Glorious Revolution, yet for Hobbes this is far from the point. For Hobbes, "Warre, consisteth not in Battell onely, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the Will to contend by Battell is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of Time, is to be considered in the nature of Warre; as it is in the nature of Weather. For as the nature of Foule weather, lyeth not in a shower or two of rain, but in the inclination thereto of many dayes together: So the nature of War, consisteth not in actual fighting;

[35] De Corpore, 8

but in the known disposition thereto.[36]" The fear of civil war, like the fear of a violent death, was equally as vexing in the threat of its realization. Hobbes wanted to not only put an end to the seemingly never ending civil wars of the British 17th century, but also to dissolve the inclination to civil war and absolve men from its ever happening again. The rudiments of all civil war lay in any action of the ignorant that undermines sovereign authority and leads to the erosion or destruction of the obligations citizens have to obey the sovereign. Writing during the harsh reality of the English civil war, Hobbes sought to argue for the justification of sovereign authority that would prevent individuals from thinking it wise to create the possibility for civil war through acts of sedition. Rather than beginning with simply positing a sovereign and deducing the benefits enjoyed by a state as a result of having a sovereign, Hobbes begins with the notion that civil war is avoidable. To suffer unnecessarily is irrational so the practice of civil war must also be irrational. It became important for Hobbes to explore the process of reason and determine where in their reasoning the authors of civil war went wrong in their ratiocination. During this search for the origins of ignorance Hobbes is lead to the development of an ontology and subsequently a state that if followed would result in the commodious life. The search for the origins of ignorance and an explication of correct ratiocination occurs in *De Corpore*. Hobbes' argument for the legitimacy of sovereign authority occurs in *Leviathan* and *De Cive*. The arguments posed for sovereign authority in *Leviathan* and *De Cive* are all founded on and made possible by the ontology created by Hobbes in *De Corpore*.

The rational directs man towards self-preservation and the fear of death in the state of nature. This fear is assuaged only through the mitigation of the causes of death

[36] Hobbes, 88

through rational acts. The development of peace through the choice to not quarrel and covet one another's lives and possessions and the promotion of comfort and convenience to ensure health and happiness are the ends of reason and thus become the chief end of the state. The state, for Hobbes, is erected to provide sovereign authority which, through force, defends those who chose to live peacefully and develop the means by which a commodious life can be had against those who chose to renounce reason and live by force alone, as evidenced by their lack of care for their self preservation in their challenging sovereign power against which they can never prevail. Each law and statute in Hobbes' body politic, as well as the absolute nature of the sovereign, has as its end and purpose, the prevention of the causes of civil war, which for Hobbes leads to inevitable premature death. The notion that civil war and death are synonymous can be derived directly from Hobbes' state of nature. Human subsistence and sustenance require quarrels that result in the continuous threat of violence up to and including death. This relationship is established in the state of nature narrative. If one does not enter into the Hobbsean argument for his idea of legitimate government authority that begins in chapter XIV with speak of contracts and continues in chapter XVI with the rudiments of sovereign power, with the idea that human existence without safeguards against the irrational behavior of some will lead to a constant fear of death, the whole argument ceases to work. Sovereign power cannot be *enacted* without the war of all against all. The sovereign's seemingly extreme absolute power is accepted by the ignorant masses only because it is meant to balance out a perceived extreme threat to the lives of those in the state. Without the extreme threat, it would be equally irrational to, for no justifiable reason, relinquish so much authority and power to one when he or she could be equally

as, if not more useful, with a limited amount of power and authority for those without access to scientific knowledge. For the sovereign, absolute power in praxis, not theory, comes only as the result of the rhetorical fear of death. If there were no fear of death, there would be in practice no absolute sovereign in Hobbes's thinking. Thus the state of nature, though it never systematically argues the claim that a violent death should be rationally feared and as such should serve as the basis for governance, provokes the reader[37] to conflate the human condition, death and war, and rhetorically places the same reader in the opinion that states of war are always the result of man's fear of a violent death. To which Hobbes so willingly adds the rest: If man's chief concern is the fear of death then why would he reject a sovereign absolute power which can protect man from a preventable death caused by those without reason?

It may be argued that the fear of death is distinct from the war of all against all thought experiment. Following Hobbes' abject loathing of scholastics, we must root our claims in defensible statements and sound judgment. For Hobbes, the claim that there are three causes of quarrel is self-evident and defensible. From the three causes of quarrel one can deduce the possibility of the war of all against all without the narrative leading to a B-line straight from the beginning of chapter XIII to chapter XVII skipping all of the ontology of chapters I-XII using chapters XIV-XVI as a logical preamble. Going further even within the causes of quarrel one can reduce all three to the final one: glory. Vain-glory is sufficient to cause the other two as well as create the war of all against all resulting in a fear of death leading to the need for a society that bottles vain-glory with a power that can over-awe it. Fear of death is still the order of the day yet it can be rationally deduced without the narrative departure. Despite the concession of that truth,

[37] The reader who may be apt to think rebellion against the state is a wise course of action.

we are still left with the fact that Hobbes felt it necessary to exude chapters, not pages, but chapters, to set up and deploy this mini-narrative; why? Why would such a rabid analytic waste his time with this narrative? The answer is because he felt, though in his own logic would mean that he knew, that such a claim would be insufficient on its own.

While the logical, Hobbes argues, is always enough, ironically, the precondition for the production of knowledge (society) requires a concession that rhetoric is needed to persuade the body politic into the "correct" way of thinking. In this analysis we get a fresh understanding of chapter XIII. Rather than being a chapter of claims and arguments, chapter XIII is a rhetorical link between chapters I-XII and XIV through the end of he text. It rhetorically answers the question: why? Because of the nature of the material it is crucial that these individuals participate in sovereign rule in order for Hobbes' vision to work, thus those who remain unconvinced by reason must be persuaded. Hence, we resort to rhetoric for the ignorant, which by his admission is the majority. We're not speaking of the illiterate or downtrodden which are traditionally associated with ignorance, but rather the more etymologically fidel rendition of the term: one who simply does not know as most dictionaries would concur to which we will expound for Hobbes's sake, one who has not become a practitioner of gubernatorial science. The reason Hobbes included the narrative is simply because he felt he needed to convince those who would not adhere or be persuaded by the blunt, as he thought factual, claim that there are there causes of quarrel that result in an inevitable fear of death. While logical necessity is defined by syllogistic relevance, I present Hobbes' rhetorical plea in chapter XIII as necessary to his overall argument despite its debatable necessity to Hobbes' greater syllogistic argument. Because Hobbes' claims that the required societal

adherence/ acceptance by the vast majority as essential, Hobbes utilized the narrative to promote a rational imperative to ensure this acceptance thereby proving my previous claim that the narrative was essential. We find that despite the claim that the three causes of quarrel are sufficient, that the narrative is nevertheless still just as necessary in Hobbes' root claims thereby rendering Hobbes's position that if man's chief concern is the fear of death then why would he reject a sovereign absolute power which can protect man from a preventable death caused by those without reason?, still viable.

CHAPTER TWO: LOCKE'S STATE OF NATURE READ AS A NARRATIVE

Of the three social contractarians I discuss, Locke's state of nature is arguably the longest and most detailed. Whereas Hobbes' state of nature is contained primarily in one chapter and Rousseau's can be compounded in piece-meal fashion through paragraphs and sections of three different texts, Locke's state of nature is found complete, succinct, clearly explicated in chapters one through six of "The Second Treatise" in *Two Treatises of Government."* Unlike Hobbes' state of nature which was set up by ontological arguments found in chapters 1-12 of *The Leviathan* and throughout *De Cive*, Locke's state of nature was placed at the outset of his original argument which began in the second of the *Two Treatises*. Writing against royalist Sir Robert Filmer, Locke launched a scathing critique of Filmer's defense of the Divine Right of Kings in the *First Treatise*. Philosophically satisfied that he had utterly dismantled Filmer's point, Locke set his sights on replacing, rather than revamping Filmer's views of legitimate governmental authority. *The Second Treatise,* and with it Locke's state of nature, begins with a summary of the *First Treatise.* Filmer advanced that the Divine Right of Kings gave monarchs, in the case of Filmer and Locke the English Monarchy, absolute dominion over the earth. This legitimacy came as a result of a promise made to Adam by God in the Bible. Quoting Filmer in *Patriarcha*, "'Adam' says [Filmer], 'being Commanded to Multiply and People the Earth and to subdue it, and having Dominion given him over all Creatures, was thereby the Monarch of the whole World, none of his Posterity had any Right to possess anything but by his Grant or Permission, or by Succession from him.[38]" Thus Adam's status as first created, and the charge given to him by God in Genesis 1:24-

[38] Locke, John. *Locke: Two Treatises of Government*. Edited by Peter Laslett. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. p.152 (Hereafter referenced as Locke)

31 to fill the earth and subdue it and the provisions granted to him by God in verse 29-30, "[29]Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. [30] And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food. And it was so,[39]" were the basis of Adam's legitimacy as sovereign over the world. From these two Biblical references Filmer deduced that God, void an actual mention of property, granted the beasts and plants of the earth to Adam as property, not merely for use. It is the supposed property right granted to Adam by God that is an adequate justification for a conception of the Divine Right of Kings and the basis for Monarchical power for Filmer. Those who can trace their lineage to the direct unblemished family line of Adam most directly ought to be considered divinely selected to rule. This is quite different from other conceptions of the Divine Right of Kings where divine selection is usually the result of a show of God's providence in a favorable battle outcome or the concession of a religious leader i.e. Matthew 22:20-21 Where Christians are commanded to acknowledge God's order to respect earthly authority; "Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.[40]" Filmer placed legitimacy in lineage which is provable and continuous only insofar as the legacy of the lineage is maintained and is uncorrupted via marriage or the lack of a healthy, suitable heir. It is this concept of legacy and lineage as the basis for governmental authority granted by God that Locke attacks unsympathetically in the *First Treatise.*

[39] Genesis 1:29
[40] Matthew 22:21

Locke begins his state of nature with a summary of the *First Treatise* and its unrelenting attack on the Divine Right of Kings with the blunt statement "It having been shewn in the foregoing Discourse, That *Adam* had not either by natural Right of Fatherhood, or by positive Donation from God, any such Authority over his Children, or Dominion over the World as is pretended."[41] This statement he defends with four points. The first point of defense is found within the statement itself. Locke claims that nowhere does God actually grant Adam "dominion over the world." Here Locke is not renouncing Adam's lordship over his family and children because he clearly supports a version of that both throughout the *First Treatise* and in chapter six of the *Second Treatise*. Nor is Locke renouncing the clear Biblical statement from God in Genesis where God gives Adam the beasts of the field and greens of the earth for his sustenance. Locke, in a round about way, argues an etymological distinction between give and dominion. Locke discusses at length the claims made by God to Adam and Noah as well as the distinctions in subordination between Adam, his children, Eve, and the things of the world (animals, plants, and land). Under girding Locke's appeals that God did not grant Adam exclusive property rights is the need to determine what God meant in Genesis 1:24-31 when he stated that he "gave" to Adam the things of the Earth for his subsistence.

To give is a verb that signifies the transfer of an object from one party to another. For instance I can give you my coat or give you my sandwich. *Colloquially* speaking, to give is to renounce ownership which is why if I gave you my sandwich and made the statement: "I am giving this to you," I would probably not expect it back. Properly speaking this is not the case. *Grammatically,* to give merely means to transfer an object yet the transfer of ownership or property rights is another matter altogether. Let's look at

[41] Locke, 267

the sandwich example once more. Though I may give you a sandwich, the transfer of ownership requires another act. The affirmation that comes with my verbalized statement: "I am giving you this sandwich" is requisite for a belief that I am granting ownership. Without the corroboration of affirmation, the typical response would be a question, "are you giving this to me?" or "can I have this?" despite the fact that you indeed already physically posses the sandwich. Now yes, God did tell Adam that the beasts of the field and greens of the earth were being given to him, but this was the first act. Jesus had not yet been born so there was no Christian God in the flesh to literally give, by hand, anything to Adam. The other two members of the trinity, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, according to the faith of which both Filmer and Locke ascribe, cannot come into contact with the material world imbued with sin because of their purity[42] thus they perform tasks through speech acts i.e. God created existence out of the void by speaking it into existence…"God Said" and it was. Thus God's statement was tantamount to God handing the world to Adam. This handing over was not however the transfer of ownership but one of stewardship. To be a steward, or stigweard, properly speaking is to be a guardian of *another's* property. The world, for Locke, still belonged to God. He was just giving it, or transferring it, to Adam to manage and watch over it. This would account for the other tasks given to Adam: to multiply and populate, to name the beasts and plants, to till and nurture the earth. If God gave ownership over the world, Adam could do whatever he wanted with it. This was not so. God gave specific

[42] This point specifically delineates between the Father and the Holy Spirit's inability to come into contact with mater and their ability to come into contact with sin. Mater in and of itself is not relegated as sinful in the Bible therefore there is nothing that prevents its contact with Father and the Holy Spirit. Despite the fact that Adam had yet to sin thus he was pure and enjoyed fellowship with God, the serpent was in the garden thus sin was present. Though God is said in the Bible to have fellowshipped with Adam in the garden, the presence of sin in their midst would have necessarily prevented the Father from interacting fully with the world and Adam except via a method that did not require contact i.e. miracles or speech.

instructions to Adam, one of which he, through his spouse, violated and was punished in perpetuity for transgressing namely, the eating of the fruit from the forbidden tree of knowledge.

Adam as a stigweard is juxtaposed against Filmer's desire to interpret God's gift as granting dominion over the earth. Dominion or dominium means to have legitimate ownership of, lordship over, sovereign right to. In order for God's statements in Genesis to be interpreted as God's desire to transfer ownership of the world over to Adam, then the term give would have to be read as the transfer of power. God does use the word "dominate" referring to Adam's dominion over animals. This dominion however is more complicated than it seems. Because man was made in God's image, man was granted a higher station on earth. Given reason, man was to till, harvest, and nurture the world. In order to do so he had to lord over that which he had to manipulate for the greater good. In order for man to obey God's commandment to be a good steward of the earth, he had to be granted dominion over the things in the earth in order to manipulate them as he saw fit for the greater glory of God. In return God acknowledges that Adam has as his payment or reward, nourishment that is to come from the plants of the earth and beasts of the field. This nourishment at the time was given to Adam and Eve not exclusively, but since they were the sole beneficiaries in existence, they by default received the entirety of God's gift on behalf of the humans that were to come; the ones they were commanded to create. Locke explains to us that Adam's lordship over all things was merely by default and was in fact temporary, and that ownership of the earth, plants, and beasts belonged to the human condition rather than Adam singularly.

To add one more convincing argument that Adam did not receive a property in the earth from God we look to another translation of the Bible. In the Hebrew Bible Adam is commanded by God to "till ('abad) and keep (shamar) the garden. These words are better translated, "to serve" and "to guard." These two Hebrew words are only used together elsewhere in Scripture to describe the duties of the Levites. In Numbers 3:7-8 and Numbers 8:26 the Lord gives the Levites the authority to minister in the tabernacle.[43]" We find that the Garden of Eden is set up by God as a temple in which Adam and Eve were to worship God through their acts. The land, animals, and the bounty that was Eden was holy and meant for Adam to guard and keep clean for God as all temples are to be presented spotless for the glory of God. The Garden belonged to Adam in the same sense a church belongs to a pastor or a chapel belongs to a priest, they are to serve as stewards and to tend to the church or chapel. They do not possess a property in the temples; rather the temples belong to God whom they serve through the maintenance of the temples as an act of reverence. We see again that Adam could not have possessed a property in the world as Filmer professed.

The last three of the four defenses of Locke's summary of the *First Treatise* all have to do with the functional problems of legitimacy derived from lineage. Locke rhetorically grants Filmer his base claim hypothetically that God grated Adam ownership over the world. Filmer's argument still would not work for Locke because,

> "if [God] had [given ownership of the world to Adam], his Heirs, yet, had not right to it. That if his Heirs had, there being no Law of Nature nor positive Law of God that determines, which is the Right Heir in all cases that may arise, the Right of Succession, and consequently of bearing Rule, could not have been certainly determined. That if even that had been determined, yet the knowledge of which is the Eldest Line of *Adam's* Posterity, being so long since utterly lost,

[43] Brian Pizzalato, "Adam: High Priest of Humanity." http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resource.php?n=703

> that in the Races of Mankind and Families of the World, there remains not to one above another, the least pretence to be the Eldest House, and to have the Right of Inheritance.[44]"

Even if Filmer were able to convince Locke that God's giving of the animals and plants to Adam over which he had dominion established Adam's property in them, there is certainly no reference in the Bible concerning the transfer of property from Adam to his heirs. God clearly, in other parts of the Bible, as is the case for Abraham, does state when his will is to span generations in perpetuity. No such promise is made to Adam beyond his curse to till and toil the land and for Eve to suffer in childbirth and its reverberations throughout mankind. Thus we cannot assume that because Adam may have been granted the right to the beasts and plants of the world that said promise also was given to his heirs in perpetuity. Granting Filmer's position rhetorically again, even if there were a promise made to Adam's heirs; there would be no way to delineate between his heirs. We once again could not assume God would have wanted a patriarchic line or matriarchic line, or maybe rule had nothing to do with family at all and could be passed via some oligarchic or meritocratic means. There are an infinite number of ways in which the order of people eligible to legitimately rule may be determined between members of a certain lineal line. Locke states that there is no clear determination that God, if he had in fact granted Adam and his heirs ownership over the world, would have wanted one right of succession over the other. As if that were not enough, Locke finally concludes his counterargument against Filmer with one last rhetorical concession. Even if God had granted ownership of the world to Adam, and the ownership was also given to his lineage in perpetuity, and there was some legitimate right of succession that could be

[44] Locke, 267

agreed upon as being Biblically based, there are no means by which we can determine who the Eldest heirs of Adam are. Even if a determination of right of succession were to be determined it would certainly have to take into account the proximity of certain members of Adam's heirs to the source of the family lineal line. In short, there's no way of telling who is older in terms of what Locke labels "nearness of blood.[45]" Here Locke catches Filmer in a contradiction. If lineage and rights of succession are paternal then it would be imperative to determine who among the lineage is closest, though Locke did not have the word at the time I believe he would have used genetically, to the ruling patriarch Adam. Because all of mankind is descended from Adam, the only ranking of lineage and proximity to Adam could be a genetic one. Whose blood is least tainted via time or other spontaneous means by which generational likeness may diminish over time and generations? is the question that would then have to be answered. With this Locke rests his claims having felt he successfully argued against any conceivable retort for rule legitimated by the Divine Right of Kings. It is here that Locke's hypothetical project begins. The rant against Filmer, though not hypothetical, was a critical piece of Locke's state of nature.

Unlike Hobbes whose state of nature is succinct within itself, and could do without the ontological chapters that precede it, Locke's state of nature is moot without the demolition of the Divine Right of Kings. More importantly, the impetus of the very question of legitimate governmental authority is at stake as well. For Hobbes, the ongoing civil wars were cause enough to ask are we, as Englanders, doing the right thing? Are we endangering ourselves more by constantly engaging in these civil wars which seem to cause more problems than they solve? Hobbes' questioning of legitimate

[45] Locke, 220

governmental authority came directly out of a pressing concern for the country and the safety and well being of his countrymen at the time. Locke's questioning governmental legitimacy however had less to do with the safety of his countrymen from war or harm and more to do with the security of property rights and their affect on civility in general. Locke felt that if people could be secure in the relationship between their labor and the production of a commodious life then civil wars would cease to be a problem. Thus Locke could not just reference fear from harm and the desire to be safe as the cause and end of government. He wanted not only to provide security, but also structure certain possibilities within a new governmental structure. Locke's end desire, the bolstering of property rights for the laboring man, could not work in a structure where a monarch had absolute right to all property and the fruits of the labor of all. Hence he had to first get rid of the Divine Right of Kings to create a void in which he could erect something anew. After feeling satisfied that he has eradicated logical belief in any legitimate governance that relied on the absolute authority of the strong or divinely selected, Locke states that he "must of necessity find out another rise of Government, another Original of Political Power, and another way of designing and knowing the Persons that have it, then what Sir *Robert* F. hath taught us.[46]" He makes clear that we are seeking an understanding of power as distinct from other power relationships i.e. wife-husband, parent-child, master-servant, etc... Though seemingly a mere definition, Locke foreshadows the result of his state of nature at the end of chapter 1. Rather that investigating man's nature and seeing what we come up with, Locke already tells us what we are going to find. He is so sure that he defines political power outright at the end of chapter 1. The hypothetical state of nature that is to follow serves more as a justification for a subjective definition, so when

[46] Locke, 268

we enter chapter 7, we are rhetorically prepared to take the normatively of his definition of political power as objective and begin his argument proper with as little resistance or skepticism as possible.

In the next chapter aptly titled, "Of the State of Nature," Locke begins his thought experiment yet he begins in an intentionally ambiguous way. This ambiguity will continue throughout his state of nature. He states that we are going to derive political power from its "original". Locke intentionally blurs the line between the hypothetical thought experiment and the relation of objective claims. Ideally the end result as I stated will be the move from a subjective definition of political power, to the legitimate, objective goal of his argued state beginning in chapter 7. The state of nature is a state of freedom and equality. Holding true to his non-committal ways Locke readily establishes a way around this supposed equality by acknowledging that we are equal, "unless the Lord and Master of them all, should by manifest Declaration of his Will set one above another, and confer on him by an evident and clear appointment an undoubted Right to Dominion and Sovereignty.[47]" In a desire to distance himself from Hobbes, Locke insists upon a distinction between liberty and license. Locke repeatedly reduced Hobbes' *Leviathan* and other political discourses to two words: force and violence. Locke's reading of Hobbes is that mankind in the state of nature is devoid of reason and despite reason's eventual awakening during the beginnings of the desire for civility; Hobbes' state becomes nothing more than the acceptance of legitimated violence. The sovereign for Locke is nothing more than a bully, who through force has beaten his subjects into submission and acceptance. This, for Locke, is a farce of reason for Hobbes' sovereign becomes the tyrannical equivalent of a divinely entitled monarch and thus equally

[47] Locke, 269

destructive to the assurances in the guarantee laborers have to the fruits of their labor which Locke clearly states is critical to the formation of any rational state. To get around this, Locke ascribes that reason is not something that has to be discovered or turned on so to speak for humanity. It exists in the state of nature. The problem is that not many chose to utilize their capacities for reason.

"The *State of Nature* has a Law of Nature to govern it, which obliges every one: And Reason, which is the Law, teaches all Mankind who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his Life, Health, Liberty, or Posessions.[48]" This law of nature is the reason that "thought [the state of nature] be a *State of Liberty,* yet it is *not a State of License*[49]". This is the primary difference between Hobbes and Locke. The war of all against all is not an issue for Locke because man conceives of license in the state of nature. The limits of mine and thine, the rudiments for property, are already conceptualized and known. Property, for Locke, is not seen as an artificial right created by man. It is as central to the human condition as health and liberty, property's just defense however is another matter which requires positive law. From this belief we are to see man's capacity in the state of nature to be made aware and mindful of the property and well being of themselves and others. It is here that Locke explains that man also is conscious of transgression and punishment. This follows rationally from the belief that man in the state of nature is capable of being aware and mindful of property.

Self preservation charges me to protect my body and life from any attack. I can also stretch self preservation arguments to justify my avenging the theft of the means for

[48] Locke, 271
[49] Locke, 270

my sustenance because of the threat my being deprived of those materials may cause me. Locke however goes two steps further. Man in the state of nature recognizes that property is an essential part of the human condition and as such must be defended. If one felt permitted to deprive one or many of their property, how long will it be before this person tried to deprive me of my property and life if they saw fit? This reasoning is the basis for Locke's claim that "every Man hath a Right to punish the Offender, and be Executioner of the Law of Nature.[50]" Any threat to the property of others is a threat to my property and thus I am obligated to defend the property of others as my own. Further, because I respect property rights, I understand that despite my assistance, the offended still has the unique right of reparation. This is important.

On the surface Locke seems to be setting up some notion that humans have some base moral sentiment that obliges them to help others but this is not the case. From the outset, the central relation being established in the state of nature is that between individuals and their property. The extent to which the other matters to me is the defense of my own right to obtain and maintain property. I help you because I am fearful that the same may happen to me. The next step towards civility echoes more of the same. After clearly acknowledging that criminality is an apparent sign of the willingness to place one's own desires before the need to respect others as taught by reason, thus justifying the need for the rational to detain and if necessary destroy the criminal for their own protection, Locke turns to a problem of self-interest. Recognizing that the state of nature as hypothetically constructed is reliant upon individuals' care of themselves and desire to defend their own life and rights, and consequently those of other rational people for their own benefit, up to and including death, Locke realizes that such a disposition would lead

[50] Locke, 272

to a perversion of justice. Logic would lead men to eradicate their numbers of anyone with any inclination towards criminality. Such a disposition would contradict the key Christian principles of forgiveness and transformation. Though criminals are said to have "declared War against all Mankind, and therefore may be destroyed as a *Lyon* or a *Tyger*,…By the same reason, may a Man in the State of Nature *punish the lesser breaches* of that Law. It will perhaps be demanded, with death? [Locke answers], Each Transgression may be *punished* to that *degree*, and with so much *Severity* as will suffice to make it an ill bargain to the Offender, give him cause to repent, and terrifie others from doing the like.[51]" In short, punishments doled out must fit the severity of the crimes committed. The only way to ensure this is to make sure that punishments are not determined by those who have a stake in the transgression. In order for property to be established and justly defended, there arises a need for judges among people endowed with property. This would prevent the innocent from themselves, transgressing against another because of their irrational, yet completely understandable, emotional tie to their pain felt as a result of the transgression. Judges are the means by which men can obtain and maintain property without feeling the need to resort to violence or the extermination of criminals great and small. Property acquisition and maintenance become "rationally" deduced as the logical end of the human condition and its just defense the primary need of mankind.

Skipping chapter four for now we find ourselves at the beginning of chapter five, though knee deep in the state of nature, still lacking any evidence of narrative structure. The narrative begins in chapter five. We have been conditioned to understand the subject Locke is working with in chapter five. Man, free and equal (except in cases where God

[51] Locke, 274-275

has made it obvious that some are better than others and thus entitled to more), though endowed with the luxury of consulting reason and living the commodious life, does not seem to always do so. As such, man, realizing his obligation to preserve himself and others, takes care to punish those who quit reason and transgress against others via the violation of the person or property of another. To preserve justice in a world where self preservation is protected legitimately by the death of a transgressor, man determines that it would be best if people were not judges in their own cases and that impartial judges handle the determination of punishments for transgressions. Before we get to men, Locke goes back to man. Reiterating once more his disagreement with Filmer, Locke brings up Adam and God's granting Adam the world not for his dominion but rather for his stewardship. Thus this begins our narrative. We conceive of Adam and Eve, endowed with the same freedom, equality, and base recognition of property rights in the Garden of Eden with the charges given to them by God to populate, till, and nurture the earth. This scene is stated negatively. In § 25 Locke claims that it is clear that God gave the world to man in common yet he realizes that this brings up a conundrum. Unless Adam, or anyone else, has a God given property in the world, how is it that anyone comes to possess a property in anything if everyone is an equal steward of the earth not possessing any part of it? How is it that man can simultaneously honor his charge from God to preserve himself yet not partake of the means of his sustenance which are all around him for fear of unjustly robbing mankind, and establishing a property in an object in which he has no right above anyone else? It is here that Locke vows to press forward and demonstrate "how Men might come to have a property in several parts of that which God gave to Mankind in common, and that without any express Compact of all the

Commoners.[52]" Locke, in order to achieve his end, has to begin from the premise that God gave the world to Adam to be a steward of the earth. We are supposed to have that thought at the end of the section. It is also the only logical way § 26 could begin. God did not create all men simultaneously according to the Bible which Locke has repeatedly referenced. God created Adam first so in order for § 26 to begin with claims about the purpose of man's stewardship of the earth already presupposes that Adam and Eve did their jobs already.

Adam and Eve must have already populated the earth and faithfully tilled and nourished the earth in such a way that it can produce for more than just them two thus creating the possibility for there to be a "men" and "mankind" to start § 26 with. This is our first time disunity. We have progressed in time from Adam and Eve to a world already populated. This place we find is a hunter gatherer world where labor and self subsistence are man's primary wants and needs. This is a space where God's charge for humanity to be stewards of the earth is already understood and the labor of people and others are respected. "Thus this Law of reason makes the Deer, that *Indian's* who hath killed it; 'tis allowed to be his goods who hath bestowed his labour upon it, though before, it was the common right of every one.[53]" It is here that Locke brings up for the first time a notion that will be integral to the rest of his narrative, "the common of mankind." The size, nature, and right to "the common of mankind" are what drive Locke's narrative, his state of nature, and ultimately the direction of his conception of the state. The lessons learned by the hunter gatherers of the meaning of labor as the mixture of one's hands with an object in the state of nature, the conceptual understanding of mine

[52] Locke, 286
[53] Locke, 289

from thine, and their legitimated right to acquire and establish property for their base preservation insofar as they do not keep things past the point that the spoil, all push mankind toward the second time disunity.

"But the *chief matter of Property* being now not the Fruits of the Earth, and the Beasts that subsist on it, but the *Earth it self*; as that which takes in and carries with it all the rest: I think it is plain, that *Property* in that too is acquired as the former. *As much Land* as a Man Tills, Plants, Improves, Cultivates, and can use the Product of, so much is his *Property*.[54]" Now man has learned to cultivate and establish settlements on the earth. This is evidenced by Locke's discussion of "inclosure from the common" as the means by which a property in land is established. The hunter gatherer period of human development that lasted approximately 2.5 million years during the Paleolithic period. Presuming that Locke did not relate 2.5 million years of human history in six sections we can assume that he had to skip a few years. § 32 begins at the dawn of the Mesolithic period where man discovers sustained agriculture. Rather than mere gathering or sporadic, poorly planned, protection of certain desirable crops that owe the majority of their being to nature as opposed to human labor, the Mesolithic period was the beginning of conscientious attempts to repeatedly grow certain crops in the same plot, or range of plots by human beings along with the domestication of the first animals. This was the beginning of husbandry. As man began to populate and "acquire" land, the land remaining "in common" was becoming scarce. This scarcity had, since hunter gatherer times during the Paleolithic period, been dealt with the utilization of Locke's notion of the non-spoilage proviso. Men could gather and nourish themselves as long as they only took that which was necessary for their survival and did not allow their provisions to

[54] Locke, 290

spoil in their possessions. As certain population centers grew, the places that bore high yields of edible plants, fruits, and vegetables became highly sought after. Popular trees, bushes, herds, and rivers were over picked by hunters and gatherers. Finding less available "in nature" to forage, mankind was forced to develop the means by which it could provide for itself in a more reliable fashion. The development of settlements, farms, and pastures made it possible for men to provide for themselves in one sedentary spot and to no longer be subject to the haphazard production of nature. To maintain civility and prevent the usurpation of labor, man had to find a way to demarcate between mine and thine in a way that would be both clear to others and not require literal consumption, adorning, or stowing other types of property did. Other types of property could be handled, carried, or moved to a secure position. Locke placed these actions under the same act: "removing an object from the state of nature." If an apple was on a tree one can climb the tree and remove the tree from its natural state. If one needed an axe or hammer they could remove a femur from a large animal. If one required raiment they could skin a deer or bear. All these acts require an individual to remove an object out of the state that it naturally rests. Apples only grow on trees, femurs are found within bodies, hides are affixed to animals. In order to acquire these objects they must be removed from their current positions and taken elsewhere to be utilized. Land acquisition however does not quite work the same way. Men could not grab an acre of land, place it one their backs, and take it home to use it. There had to be developed another way by which a property could be established in a tract of land. "*As much Land* as a Man Tills, Plants, Improves, Cultivates, and can use the Product of, so much is his *Property*. He by his Labour does, as it were, inclose it from the Common.[55]" Man acquired property in a

[55] Locke, 290-291

tract of land through his labor; by mixing his hands with the soil and enclosing the area he labored upon in some recognizable fashion via a fence or markers of some sort. Locke argued that insofar as individuals labored, acquired land, and respected the demarcations of others, there was enough in the world that no one would be injured by the acquisition of property. Because of the non-spoilage proviso, men were restricted by their labor. No man's labor could till and consume the entire world, thus men could only establish valid properties in small plots of land.

"This [Locke] boldly [affirmed], That the same *Rule of Propriety*, (*viz.*) that every Man should have as much as he could make use of, would hold still in the World, without straitning any body since there is Land enough in the World to suffice double the Inhabitants had not the *Invention of Money*, and the tacit Agreement of Men to put a value on it, introduced (by Consent) larger Possessions and a Right to them.[56]" While the Mesolithic period lasted from approximately 10,000 BC until 5,000 BC, the use of money predated this era. However, I would argue that §36 still would be considered a time disunity in the narrative story line. Locke points to the invention of money as a moment of change in property dealings in §36, yet he is more specific in §37. "This is certain, That in the beginning, before the desire of having more than Men needed, had altered the intrinsick value of things, which depends only on their usefulness to the Life of Man; or [Men] had *agreed, that a little piece of yellow Metal*, which would keep without wasting or decay, should be worth a great piece of Flesh, or a whole heap of Corn.[57]" Locke makes it clear that he is not speaking of the use of red ochre or wampum, he is speaking about gold. Also, Locke is not referring to money as a placeholder in a larger barter

[56] Locke, 293
[57] Locke, 294

system; rather, Locke is referencing the beginning of the use of money as a commodity. Commodity money, as opposed to representative money, has value in itself. Representative money, true to its name, merely represents an object exchanged and a promise of payment to come. In short, representative money is an I.O.U. Commodity money has within itself recognized value. There is no repayment expected. We know that Locke is referencing commodity money from the first of out last two aforementioned quotes. Locke states, "there is Land enough in the World to suffice double the Inhabitants had not the *Invention of Money*, and the tacit Agreement of Men to put a value on it, introduced (by Consent) larger Possessions and a Right to them.[58]" "The *Invention of Money*, and the tacit Agreement of Men to put a value on it" is the key part of the quote. It is the moment that men decided to place value in the money rather than the object exchanged that, for Locke, changed everything.

This is a third time disunity. As I stated, though the use of money existed concurrently to the Mesolithic period and thus seems to be a possible setting for Locke's visualizations in sections 36 and 37, it is more likely that the period he is referring to is the rise of Mesopotamia and the beginning of commodity money which occurred around 3000 BC. Mesopotamia was established during the Neolithic period approximately 2000 years after the end of the Mesolithic period. This would necessitate a gap in Locke's narrative. We've jumped from the Mesolithic period and sped through its 5000 years to highlight key moments: the erection of settlements and farms, the domestication of animals, and the beginnings of trade. Now we find ourselves 2000 years into the Neolithic period at the birth of commodity money. Along with commodities, man has

[58] Locke, 293

also developed two other concepts that would empower or plague, depending on your perspective, mankind from that moment forward. We go back to our key quote, "the *Invention of Money*, and the tacit Agreement of Men to put a value on it, introduced (by Consent) larger Possessions and a Right to them." Money, we find, had introduced both excess and wealth. Locke recognized the controversial nature of this statement, hence the insertion of "by consent" in parenthesis. He foreshadows here a justification that, though it will be required later in chapter 5, has already been provided for in chapter 4. So "larger possessions" are not only a desire, but a right, not because of the advent of money, but because of the transformation of money into a commodity from a representation of a commodity.

Until now the non-spoilage proviso has made it possible for all to survive, or as Locke states, for the world to provide for twice the inhabitants. However, Locke tells us that this too changes after money. No more will the earth suffice for twice the inhabitants. The key to this is the caveat waste. One could not hoard apples because his finite nature, namely the finite size of his stomach, would prevent him from eating an infinite number of apples daily such that one could deplete the resources that could possibly sustain many. In short, men have limits to what they can consume and thus, because of the non-spoilage proviso, have a necessary limit to what they can gather or acquire because without consumption, objects (apples, bananas, land, trees, water) would spoil or be otherwise wasted in their possession rendering them to be found in violation of the non-spoilage proviso and warranting punishment for their transgression against mankind. Money however, more importantly metal money, does not spoil. If individuals decided to use steaks as commodities or grapes then the non-spoilage proviso would still

hold and excess would not be permissible. That, unfortunately is not what happened, individuals "had *agreed, that a little piece of yellow Metal*, which would keep without wasting or decay, should be worth a great piece of Flesh, or a whole heap of Corn.[59]" Because gold cannot spoil, man is entitled to hoard it. This introduced the legitimate acquisition of more than one could consume in land and resources. As long as one could trade that which is acquired and of a nature that it may spoil, or continually utilize and improve and use that which is gained in the form of land, before it grows stagnant, rots, or goes for a prolonged period of time without being labored upon, they could not be held in violation of the non-spoilage proviso. This takes Locke into his fourth time disunity.

"And thus, without supposing any private Dominion, and property in *Adam*, over all the World, exclusive of all other Men, which can no way be proved, nor any ones Property be made out from it; but supposing the *World* given as it was to the Children of Men *in common*, we see how *labour* could make Men distinct titles to several parcels of it, for their private uses; wherein there could be no doubt of Right, no room for quarrel.[60]" Here Locke does not merely restate what we found in section §32, that man, through his labor, is entitled to land. Locke includes the key word "several" in the claim. Man, prior to money, when the non-spoilage proviso was in force, was entitled to only that which he could consume and was limited by his finitude. Now we find that man can acquire several tracts of land, more than he can consume or utilize, and there is "no room for doubt or quarrel." This is a time disunity. We move from Mesopotamia around approximately 3000 BC to the dawn of the Early Modern period in the 15th century. Evidence of this is found in the litany of Locke's justifications for the addition of value to

[59] Locke, 294
[60] Locke, 296

land via labor in sections 41 through 48. A key theme in those sections was America. Made visible to the west in the late 15th century, America or the Americas for Locke was both a hypothetical symbol and an objective. Here is where Locke once again blurs the thought experiment and objective reality. "Thus in the beginning all the World was *America*, and more so than it is now; for no such thing as *Money* was any where known.[61]" According to many of his contemporaries, America was a savage place devoid of civility and reason. However, America served as pseudo objective proof of Locke's state of nature. The America in the imagination of 15th century Europe was exactly what Locke wanted to capitalize on, hence the time disunity. The claims of value, labor, and property Locke advanced in sections 41-48 are meant to juxtapose Early Modern Europe to their conceptions of what America was at that moment in their historical imagination. Thus our narrative of mankind's movement into what Locke would consider civilized society has fast forwarded from Mesopotamia in 3000 BC to Locke's modernity in the 16th and 17th centuries, a span of well over 4000 years.

At the end of Locke's narrative we find three crucial points. First that wealth, excess, and the exclusive possession of land, water, and other provisions of life are rights which are legitimated through labor. Some consider this a justification for colonialism. Intended or not, colonialism does follow from Locke's narrative. It becomes rational for men to acquire and utilize under used land and vacant (whether the land is actually vacant or just assumed to be) for the betterment of all mankind. Second, that we have yet, in the 17th century, reached what Locke would consider civility, for property rights are not adequately protected in a monarchical rule where possessions can be commandeered ad

[61] Locke, 301

hoc with no recourse for opposition because it is ordained by God himself. Lastly, that all this is established in reason itself and as such is objective, just, and unalterable hence, "it is plain, that Men have agreed to disproportionate and unequal Possession of the Earth.[62]" This is where chapter 4 plays such an important role. In chapter 4 Locke makes a distinction between slavery and drudgery. Slavery is the legitimate taking of one's life who has willingly quit nature through their renouncing of reason as demonstrated by their actions. One who has their lives taken in this fashion could be made to perform any task without the right to claim they have been transgressed against because their actions have caused their body and life to no longer be considered their own. Drudgery is something entirely different. Drudgery is the willing choice to contract into labor, whatever the labor may be, during a time of hardship or extreme need in order to receive alleviation from some burden or the desire to participate in some irrational form of masochism for no apparent reason. The principle difference between the two is ownership over one's life. In slavery, one's master is owner of their life and as such has the right not only to dictate the will and actions of the slave but to also kill the slave if she saw fit to do so. In cases of drudgery, the person who decided to contract into a relationship of drudgery still retains ownership over their life. Though the terms of a given contract may require hideous, strenuous, or excessively demeaning work, the executor of the contract has no legitimate power over the life of the laborer which can include death. This means that in cases where those, who by circumstance find themselves under the burden of a contract they do not enjoy, cannot lay claim to being enslaved or mal treated because of their choice to enter into their troubled situation. In short, those who do not have things cannot justifiably cry out to those who do when they

[62] Locke, 302

find themselves being exploited by those who own the means of production. Having rationalized the origin of inequality, Locke concludes his narrative. We see that our narrative proceeds as follows:

Scene 1 (Dawn of Time)
Adam and Eve >>>Ejected from Garden of Eden and charged to toil and populate the earth>>>Adam and Eve perform their charge
Time Disunity
Scene 2 (Paleolithic Period)
Mankind has now populated the earth>>>Men provide for their own subsistence through the acquisition of property>>>Free and equal, men learn to respect property and detest those who do not
Time Disunity
Scene 3 (Mesolithic Period)
Certain areas of the world are overpopulated>>>Man deduces that husbandry is superior to hunting and gathering>>>Man learns land acquisition rights
Time Disunity
Scene 4 (Mesopotamia: Neolithic Period)
Men decide to place commodity value on money>>>Men introduce wealth and excess>>>Non-spoilage proviso is rendered moot
Time Disunity
Scene 5 (Early Modern Europe)
Man is still learning to subdue and utilize the earth to its maximum efficiency>>>Colonialism and the dissolution of a Monarchy legitimated through the Divine Right of Kings is seen as a practice legitimated by reason and practical need

Locke's state of nature does not end however with the completion of his narrative and flow into his argument for an effective state like Hobbes' does. Locke adds one last buffer between the reader and his actual syllogistic philosophic argument for a body politic. Chapter 6 or "Paternal Power" is where Locke explicates the roles and duties of members of the family unit as they relate to state and fatherly authority. Aside from the obvious work one would expect to be done in a chapter entitled "Paternal Power" (a discussion of what mom, dad, and baby are supposed to do in relation to the law and the father's authority he has over his family), Locke additionally does something much more interesting. So his ideas concerning property, freedom, and individualism do not descend

into some property or culture relativism where no one is obliged to anyone but themselves, Locke tries to recover continuity across generations in nation and culture without resorting to patriarchic lineal obligations of son's to carry on the father's legacy. He does this by arguing that the though the father must respect the individual rights of the child and allow them to follow their own paths, acquire their own property, and achieve their own wealth, the father's right to the fruits of his labor must be respected also. After a father provides for the children up to adulthood, his possessions, wealth, and means are all his own. He has the right to do with them as he pleases. If he offers his estate to his children with conditions he in no way imposes on their freedoms. By tying land to an obligation to a state, and consequently to the ideas of that state, Locke manages to create the means by which culture, and nationality can be redeemed without the tyranny of lineage. Likewise, the father has a means by which his legacy can be cemented for posterity through the continuation of his acquisitions and holdings by his progeny; all this without infringing upon the rights and freedoms of his children or others. Locke locates the continuity of culture and nation, between the freedom of individuals and their relationship to the legacies of which they are a part.

Locke establishes, by the outset of his argument for a legitimate body politic in chapter 7 aptly titled "Of Political or Civil Society," a seemingly objective relation between property and the purpose of the state so that true political power, if you accept his claims, can be seen as nothing other than, "a Right of making Laws with Penalties of Death, and consequently all less Penalties, for the Regulating and Preserving of Property, and of employing the force of the Community, in the Execution of such Laws, and in the defense of the Common-wealth from Foreign Injury, and all this only for the Publick

Good,[63]" as he clearly states at the end of chapter 1. This desire for an unrestrained, yet protected, right to property is further carried into posterity in chapter 6 where Locke outlines the right of fathers to legitimately oblige their progeny to furthering their works via the offer of wealth through land. Locke utilizes reason as a guide to subdue culture, history, the state, individual freedom, and rationality itself to the centrality of property as a good. The recognition of, and submission to, property as a good in itself and as the only legitimate desire for the rational man, is the end of reason, the mark of civility, and the purpose of the state for Locke.

[63] Locke, 268

CHAPTER THREE: ROUSSEAU'S STATE OF NATURE READ AS A NARRATIVE

> "I want to inquire whether in the civil order there can be some legitimate and sure rule of administration, taking men as they are, and the laws as they can be: In this inquiry I shall try always to combine what right permits with what interest prescribes, so that justice and utility may not be disjoined [64]"

Jean Jacques Rousseau, like Hobbes and Locke, set out in his treatise on the social contract entitled *Of the Social Contract or Principles of Political Right*[65] to search for a legitimate origin to political authority. However, unlike Hobbes and Locke who each locate the strength, power, and force of the state at its head or ruling center (the sovereign or legislative body), Rousseau determined that the power of governance lies in the people of a given state. Though Rousseau does agree that there must be a sole executor of legislated and governmental authority, the power of that seat does not reside with that individual or group but rather in the will of those who are to be governed. Rousseau's concept of "The General Will," though not originally his because conceptions of democratic principles existed long before his social contract, was fashioned as a form of political power as opposed to a facet or enemy of it. Though Rousseau's *Social Contract* makes no explicit mention of a state of nature as it relates to some primordial origin of society, he does however still utilize and benefit from the use of the a hypothetical origin of man. This origin is found in its most complete form in the *On the Origin of Inequality*[66]. In the *Second Discourse* Rousseau delves deeper into a relationship he

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[64] Rousseau, Jean Jacques. *Du Contrat Social*. Paris: Garnier Frères, 1962 p.235 (Hereafter referenced as Garnier Frères): "Je veux chercher si, dans l'ordre civil, il peut y avoir quelque règle d'administration légitime et sure, en prenant les homes tells qu'ils sont, et les lois telles qu'elles peuvent être. Je tâcherai d'allier toujours, dans cette recherché, ce que le droit permet avec ce que l'intérêt prescript, afin que la justice et l'utilité ne se trouvent point divisées."

[65] *Politique: Du Contrat Social ou Principes du Droit Politique*

[66] *Discours: Sur cette question propose par l'académie de Dijon: Quelle est l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les homes et si elle est autorisée par la loi naturelle?*

uncovered in the *First Discours*e. Ruminating on whether or not humanity has actually progressed morally as a result of the advancements made in the arts and sciences, Rousseau determined that man has in fact been corrupted of the good in its nature by the so called advances found in society: "Before Art had fashioned our manners and taught our passions to speak in ready-made terms, our morals were rustic but natural; and differences in conduct conveyed differences of character at first glance. Human nature was, at bottom, no better, but men found their security in how easily they saw through one another, and this advantage, to the value of which we are no longer sensible, spared them a good many vices.[67]" This led Rousseau to inquire into the root of what he perceived to be the driving force behind the loss of rustic values: the origin of inequality and the desire for wealth and excess. The *Second Discourse* is a complete conjectural history of how man came into such an unequal state for which Rousseau's *Social Contract* is the prescription. Rousseau clearly admits his project at the end of Part I of the *Second Discourse* where he states:

> "I admit that since the events I have to describe could have occurred in several ways, I can choose between them only on the basis of conjectures; but not only do such conjectures become reasons when they are the most probable that can be derived from the nature of things and the only means available to discover the truth, it also does not follow that the consequences I want to deduce from mine will therefore be conjectural since, on the principles I have just established, no other system could be formed that would not give me the same results and from which I could not draw the same conclusions.[68]"

From this we can deduce that he intends to construct a hypothetical origin of man from which he can erect *les vérités* that will enable him later construct his social contract upon

[67] Gourevitch, Victor ed. *Rousseau: The Discourses and other early political writings*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001. pp.7-8 (Hereafter referenced as Rousseau DEP)
[68] Rousseau DEP, 159

seemingly objective grounds. He also explains his intent to perform this task in a narrative fashion:

> "This [utilization of a conjectural history] will exempt me from expanding my reflection about how the lapse of time makes up for slight likelihood of events; about the astonishing power of very slight causes when they act without cease; about the impossibility, on the other hand, being in a position to attach to them the certainty of facts; about how, when two facts given as real are to be connected by a sequence of intermediate facts that are unknown or believed to be so, it is up to history, if available, to provide the facts that connect them; about how, in the absence of history, it is up to Philosophy to ascertain similar facts that might connect them.[69]"

In an almost verbatim anticipation of Todorov's definition of narrative, Rousseau explains how his depiction of his conjectural history will necessarily contain time disunities that omit minute historical details which, if included, would have provided a more consistent and complete linear story. He, being concerned with a much larger project, will not concern himself with explaining every little occurrence and connection because his concern is not the relation of a complete story rather, it is the highlighting of historical moments through the use of *narrative form* in order to get certain concepts off the ground for later philosophic use.

We can begin our narrative analysis of Rousseau's state of nature at the outset of Part II of the *Second Discourse.* Rousseau begins Part II with the blunt claim that society begins with property and the respect by others of one's property rights: "The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, to whom it occurred to say *this is mine*, and found people sufficiently simple to believe him, was the true founder of civil society."[70] Here Rousseau references Pascal in *Pensées,* "295: Mine, thine.--"This dog is mine," said those poor children; "that is my place in the sun." Here is the beginning and the image of

[69] Rousseau DEP, 159-160
[70] Garnier Frères, 66. "Le premier qui ayant enclose un terrain s'avisa de dire: *Ceci est à moi*, et trouva des gens assez simples pour le croire, fut le vrai fondateur de la société civile."

the usurpation of all the earth.[71]" The moment a person distinguished a tract a land they occupied from others, and found enough people to both believe and respect the enclosure, Rousseau claims that civil society had begun. This simple fact for Rousseau, however, was generations in the making, "much progress had to have been made, industry and enlightenment acquired, transmitted, and increased from one age to the next, before this last stage of the State of Nature was reached. Let us then take up the thread earlier, and try to fit this slow succession of events and of knowledge together from a single point of view, and in their most natural order.[72]" Like Locke, Rousseau begins his state of nature with a foreshadowing of its ultimate culmination in property. Unlike Hobbes who feels bodily integrity or safety pushes men towards the sovereign, Rousseau and Locke feel that concerns over property and the mutual respect of property concerns natural man and serves as its catalyst towards civilized society. The rest of Rousseau's state of nature, as was the case for Locke, becomes an attempt to move a subjective claim to objectivity. The only difference is that Rousseau admitted at the outset what he was up to.

We find our subject, man, in its first setting, occupying a bountiful earth in which all the provisions necessary for his survival are provided. Though Rousseau makes no mention of reason, natural man demonstrates little planning or thought in his actions; thus one can believe that reason, if it was accessible, as was the case for Locke's natural man, was rarely, if ever, consulted. Rousseau concerns himself more with the base animal drive of this natural human being. Each human being was lead by his base needs and he or she followed their basic drives for life sustaining resources wherever they led him or her with no meditation or restraint in the matter. "Hunger, other appetites causing him by

[71] Pascal, Pensées 1re partie, art. IX, § 53. "Ce chien est à moi, disoient ces pauvres enfants; c'est là ma place au soleil: voilà le commencement et l'image de 'usurpation de toute la terre."
[72] Rousseau DEP, 161

turns to experience different ways of existing, there was one that prompted him to perpetuate his species, and this blind inclination, devoid of any sentiment of the heart, produced only an animal act.[73]" There were no relations, even between parents and children for after the act of conceiving man and woman ceased to care for one another. The father vacates all responsibility. The mother never develops the mythic inseparable tie to the child she carries. The survival of a child from birth to an age when they can fend for themselves is presumed to be a matter of chance as Rousseau extends natural indifference to the mother's relationship to the child, thereby raising the question of just why a mother would care enough to allow the child to tag along with her for even a few years. Ironically Rousseau suggests it is the child who may not have natural indifference; although he does not develop the insight, he suggests that the child uses language in order to communicate and plead with an otherwise indifferent and speechless mother[74].

This natural indifference existed only for a time because the bitter realities of existence soon forced Rousseau's natural man to face new challenges to ensure its survival.

> "Such was the condition of nascent man; such was the life of an animal at first restricted to pure sensations…but difficulties soon presented themselves; it became necessary to learn to overcome them: the height of the Trees which prevented him from reaching their fruits, the ferociousness of the animals that threatened his very life, everything obliged him to attend to bodily exercise; he had to become agile, run fast, fight vigorously. The natural weapons, branches and stones, were soon at hand. He learned to overcome the obstacles of Nature, fight other animals when necessary, contend even with men for his subsistence, or make up for what had to be yielded to the stronger.[75]"

[73] Garnier Frères, 67. "La faim, d'autres appétits, lui faisant éprouver tour à tour diverses manières d'exister, il y en eut une qui l'invita à perpétuer son espèce; et penchant aveugle, dépourvu de tout sentiment du cœur, ne produisoit qu'un acte purement animal."
[74] Rousseau DEP, 145
[75] Rousseau DEP, 161-162

This turn of events is evidence of the first disunity in the storyline. We are led to this by the two phrases “such was,” and “at first.” Both phrases are indicators of elapsed time. We have moved from a period when man is led by base desire to a period where these desires or needs are now threatened by the environment in which man finds himself. Other examples used by Rousseau give us further indication of elapsed time. He claims that trees have grown and animals now threaten mankind. We can assume that since these are new developments, humans earlier occupied a space of nascent bushes and docile animals. The growth of trees and creation of vicious animals would have taken time, although Rousseau does not seem aware of this. We jump immediately into a period where man has already learned to deal with its change in fate as evidenced by the use of pluperfect and past tense in the phrases, “he had to become,” and “he learned.” Man has already become, learned, and still remains adapted to these changes. The use of the pluperfect is short lived as Rousseau jumps immediately into yet another time disunity in the next paragraph.

By the next paragraph mankind has developed the use of tools, discovered fire, fashioned clothing, and began to eat cooked meat as opposed to raw flesh. Though morality and recognition of other human beings as warranting trust and help by virtue of their being a member of the same species has not developed, man is no longer guided by need and begins to delineate between what one needs and what one ought to do to preserve one’s life. This new development allows human beings to form herds and mutual hunting expeditions. Trust was required, albeit only while the objective was still unfulfilled. “Taught by experience that love of well-being is the sole spring of human actions, he was in a position to distinguish between the rare occasions when common

interest should make him count on help of his kind, and the even rarer occasions when competition should make him suspicious of them.[76]" Mutual distrust leads to a proverbial honor amongst thieves where though no party was above usurping the spoils, each refrained out of fear of being reprimanded or punished by the entire group. This, in a Kantian manner, means that they have no real sense of duty, rather they are obliged by fear and desire for the end yet to be realized i.e. the venison that was to come.

Rousseau takes note to mention that though mankind had at this time began to develop rudimentary herds and relationships, they had not developed language. "It is easy to understand that such dealings did not require a language much more refined than that of Crows or of Monkeys, which troop together in approximately the same way. Some inarticulate cries, many gestures, and a few imitative noises must, for a long time, have made up the universal Language.[77]" Reason is clearly being referenced at this point in Rousseau's state of nature because decisions are being made to facilitate humanity's well being and convenience, although it has yet to lead to the production of lasting concepts and thoughts that would require the creation of language. Reason at this stage of human development is instrumental, utilized more as a problem solving tool by man. Despite advances man was still "scarcely profiting from the gifts Nature offered [him].[78]"

Rousseau transitions into the next time disunity by reminding the reader that he is covering a vast amount of historical topography in a short amount of time: "I cover multitudes of Centuries in a flash, forced by time running out, the abundance of things I have to say, and the almost imperceptible progress of the beginnings; for the more slowly

[76] Rousseau DEP, 163
[77] Rousseau DEP, 163
[78] Rousseau DEP, 161

events succeeded one another, the more quickly can they be described.[79]" Accounting for a vast, yet smooth transition from savagery to the fashioning of societies grants Rousseau the luxury he spoke of at the end of Part I of skipping details en route to larger claims. We are reminded that this is in fact a narrative account of the happenings experienced by natural man. This leads to the next time disunity; the construction of the family unit which develops out of the inhabiting of sedentary camps:

> The more the mind became enlightened, the more industry was perfected. Soon ceasing to fall asleep underneath the first tree or to withdraw into Caves, they found they could use hard, sharp stones as hatchets to cut wood, dig in the ground, and make huts of branches which it later occurred to them to daub with clay and mud. This was the period of a first revolution which brought about the establishment and the differentiation of families, and introduced a sort of property.[80]

If we delineate between this moment in the narrative and the previous one, we find that Rousseau is distinguishing between the Paleolithic and Mesolithic periods. Evidence of this is found in his descriptions of each moment in history. The hallmark of the Paleolithic age is the use of tools and the formation of hunter gather groups. The move from that period is marked by the rise of agriculture and the development of a sedentary lifestyle that only husbandry can provide. Rousseau clearly defines the previous section as Paleolithic, "On seashores and Riverbanks [men] invented line and hook; and became fishermen and Fish-eaters. In forests they made bows and arrows, and became Hunters and Warriors.[81]"

Evidence of our next time disunity, a description of the Mesolithic period though not explicitly stated until later, is foreshadowed in two places. Because Rousseau is more

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[79] Garnier Frères, 69 "Je parcours comme un trait des multitudes de siècles, forcé par le temps qui s'écoule, par l'abondance des choses que j'ai à dire et par le progrès presque insensible des commencements; car plus les événements étoient lents à se succéder, plus ils sont prompts à décrire."
[80] Rousseau DEP, 164
[81] Rousseau DEP, 165

concerned with the rise of sexual tension, jealousy, shame, envy, and both conjugal and paternal love, he waits to outline the material conditions of mankind during this period, focusing initially on its moral maturation. He speaks about the affect of the material conditions man resides in on the passions and desires of mankind:

> "In this new state, with a simple and solitary life, very limited needs, and the implements they had invented to provide for them, men enjoyed a great deal of leisure which they had used to acquire several sorts of conveniences unknown to their Fathers; and this was the first yoke which, without thinking of it, they imposed on themselves, and the first source of evils they prepared for their Descendants; for not only did they, in this way, continue to weaken body and mind, but since these conveniences, by becoming habitual, had almost entirely ceased to be enjoyable, and at the same time had degenerated into true needs, it became much more cruel to be deprived of them than to possess them was sweet, and men were unhappy to lose them without being happy to possess them.[82]"

In order to understand how this quote points to the Mesolithic period we must first unpack it. Rousseau here is drawing from the *First Discourse* where he outlines how the conveniences derived from the arts and sciences have made men slaves to convenience itself. Natural man labored continually. As a result he had firsthand knowledge of his food source, his surroundings; he was tremendously physically fit and agile, acutely aware of pressing dangers, and was fully capable of surviving in almost any situation. As reason impressed man to develop more and more tools to utilize for his convenience, man lost natural capabilities with each advance. With hunting in groups man began to rely on others rather than himself alone. This diminished man's acute sense of danger, his ability to focus on a given hunting target, his physical strength, endurance, and agility because all the burden of the hunt was split between many people. The decrease in demands on the body led to a weakening of abilities. Rousseau speaks of the burden of a sedentary lifestyle as a "yoke" on the physical capabilities of mankind. He echoes this sentiment

[82] Rousseau DEP, 164-165

six paragraphs later where he describes the unequal burden placed on some as a result of interdependent labor: "as soon as it was found to be useful for one to have provisions for two, equality disappeared, property appeared, work became necessary, and the vast forests changed into smiling Fields that had to be watered with the sweat of men, and where slavery and misery were soon seen to sprout and grow together with the harvests.[83]" At this point Rousseau finally discusses these material conditions and states that this transformation is due to the rise in agriculture and advanced metallurgy which are the two principle hallmarks of the later Mesolithic period.

I want to distinguish between Rousseau's relating of the narrative of mankind's move from the state of nature and his explanation of the narrative. Paragraphs 20-24 of Part II clearly show that Rousseau was conceiving of the rise in agriculture in the time disunity that Rousseau references in the weakening of mankind's capacity to provide for themselves as individuals and their developed and increasing reliance on convenience. The time disunity, however, is not due to the rise in agriculture, but to the change in the passions and desires of men. This is important because it allows Rousseau to distinguish himself from Locke. Though Locke and Rousseau up until this point relate pretty much the same narrative, Rousseau does not want to syllogistically tie himself to Locke's conclusion. Locke ultimately ends up rationalizing inequality and claiming that it is the product of the advancements made by reason progressing towards the ideal of mankind's preservation of itself. Rousseau wants to deny the claim of progress and that reason drives men towards convenience. This desire not to follow Locke's lead is evident in the next time disunity.

"Things could have remained equal if talents had been equal and if, for

[83] Rousseau DEP, 167

> example, the use of iron and the consumption of foods had always been exactly balanced; but this proportion, which nothing maintained, was soon upset; the stronger did more work; the more skillful used his work to better advantage; the more ingenious found ways to reduce his labor; the Plowman had greater need of iron, or the smith need of wheat, and by working equally, the one earned much while the other had trouble staying alive…Thus, as the most powerful or the most miserable claimed, on the basis of their strength or of their needs, a kind of right to another person's goods, equivalent, according to them, to the right of property, the breakdown of equality was followed by the most frightful disorder: thus the usurpations of the rich, the Banditry of the Poor, the unbridled passions of all, stifling natural pity and the still weak voice of justice, made men greedy, ambitious, and wicked. A perpetual conflict arose between the right of the stronger and the right of the first occupant, which only led to fights and murders. Nascent Society gave way to the most horrible state of war: Humankind, debased and devastated, no longer able to turn back or to renounce its wretched acquisitions, and working only to its shame by the abuse of the faculties that do it honor, brought itself to the brink of ruin.[84]"

Like Locke, the rise in agriculture brought with it recognition of property in land which led to the development of productivity, economy, money, and trade. These four necessarily for Locke led to a natural inequality sustained by man's tacit agreement to agree to property rights and commodity money. For Rousseau, this was not the case. Property, money, and the resultant inequality led man to "horrible state" where man would be put in "a place of ruin." Mankind at the rise of inequality is not at peace. Even Locke recognizes this which is why he carefully makes the distinction between slavery and drudgery in chapter 4 of "The Second Treatise of Government" to alleviate the seemingly just cries of those who labor more yet have less despite the fact that Locke touts labor as possessing some awesome power to create wealth.

The primary difference between Rousseau and Locke is that Locke claims that all tacitly accept their fates and enter into a state of competition where all are aware of the circumstances; they chose to labor in hopes of the opportunity to one day become wealthy through their diligence. For Rousseau, the masses are duped into believing that

[84] Rousseau DEP, 169-172

the unfair circumstances in which the few possess and consume more than the many is not the real issue. The pressing issue facing mankind gets reworked as safety and opportunity to make one's self secure through the development of wealth. "Lacking valid reasons to justify and sufficient strength to defend himself; easily crushing an individual, but himself crushed by troops of bandits; alone against all, and unable, because of their mutual jealousies, to unite with his equals…at last conceived the most well-considered project ever to enter the human mind; to use even his attacker's forces in his favor, to make his adversaries his defenders, to instill in them other maxims and give them different instructions, as favorable to himself as natural Right was contrary to him.[85]" In a fashion that would make Marx proud, Rousseau relates the confounding of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie. Promising advancement and protection, the bourgeoisie manipulates the proletariat. Like crabs in a barrel, each seeking its own liberation, security, and freedom, the proletariat keeps watch on one another alleviating the bourgeoisie of the task. Every time a crab almost makes it out of the barrel, a fellow member of the proletariat pulls it back in because of some desire or naive belief that it will be rewarded by the bourgeoisie. In the end, hollow and empty promises sufficiently protect the bourgeoisie from the overwhelming majority of the proletariat: "All ran toward their chains in the belief that they were securing their own freedom; for while they had enough reason to sense the advantages of a political establishment, they had not enough experience to foresee its dangers; those most capable of anticipating the abuses were precisely those who counted on profiting from them, and even the wise saw that they had to make up their mind to sacrifice one part of their freedom to preserve the

[85] Rousseau DEP, 172-173

other, as a wounded man has his arm cut off to save the rest of his body.[86]" Submission to positive laws is utilized by the wealthy to normalize relations between those with wealth and those without it in a manner that is massively advantageous to the wealthy. This is the rise of civilized society for Rousseau and the end of Rousseau's historical narrative.

We find that Rousseau's state of nature can be depicted as such:

Scene 1 (The Dawn of Time; Eden)
Original Man >>>Led by Passions>>>Provided for wholly by nature
Time Disunity
Scene 2
Nature presents challenges to man in the form of tall trees and ferocious animals>>>Man develops rudimentary weapons and acquires advanced faculties to overcome nature's challenges
Time Disunity
Scene 3 (Paleolithic Period)
Man develops tools>>>Man Discovers Fire and begins to eat cooked meat>>>Man begins to hunt in packs and associate with one another for mutual benefit
Time Disunity
Scene 4 (Mesolithic Period)
Man becomes sedentary>>>Jealousy and envy develop among men>>>Men find themselves burdened by "the first yoke" which led men towards the diminishing of their faculties
Time Disunity
Scene 5 (Post-Mesopotamian Society)
Agriculture and production led to property and inequality>>>Inequality leads to the dissatisfaction of the poor>>>The poor are placated by promises from the wealthy in exchange for their protection of the wealthy>>>The body politic is established to fashion laws to ensure the protection of the wealthy from the poor

Unlike Hobbes and Locke whose state of nature narrative and their relating of an ideal body politic are contained as one coherent narrative in the same text, Rousseau's is not. Locke and Hobbes' respective descriptions of the state of nature come within treatises intended to culminate in the relation of a conception of the ideal form of legitimate governmental authority. Rousseau's state of nature is found within a discourse intended

[86] Rousseau DEP, 173

to investigate the origin of inequality in man. The *Second Discourse* does not lead directly to Rousseau's *Social Contract.* To fully understand the force of the rhetorical impact of the state of nature in the *Second Discourse* has on *The Social Contract,* we must look at Rousseau's *Emile.*

In *Emile*, itself a narrative, Rousseau discusses the proper way to educate a child into what he considers to be a civil human being. Written concurrently with *The Social Contract*, many of Rousseau's ideas between the two texts are interdependent. Before one can move from Rousseau's state of nature as found in the *Second Discourse* to his ideal body politic as found in *Du Contrat Social* one must answer a critical question: why, if people tacitly submit to it, is the state erected at the end of the state of nature insufficient in creating civilized men? Put another way, why is Locke's conclusion of his conjectural history wrong? This question is answered in *Emile*.

Without relating the whole of the narrative we can locate the answer to our question in three terms; conscience, pity, and empathy. Despite the crucial role sexual awakening plays in the creation of a rational adult, the making of a citizen requires basic provisions for one to utilize reason to adequately respect and provide for themselves and to allow others to do the same. The problem we find as related in the entirety of the *First Discourse*, the end of the state of nature in the *Second Discourse*, as well as the issue at the outset of *The Social Contract*, is that of society's weakening of natural man and making him dependent on the very conveniences that supposedly should bring him happiness: "Men enjoyed a great deal of leisure which they had used to acquire several sorts of conveniences unknown to their Fathers; and this was the first yoke which, without thinking of it, they imposed on themselves, and the first source of evils they

prepared for their Descendants; for not only did they, in this way, continue to weaken body and mind, but since these conveniences, by becoming habitual, had almost entirely ceased to be enjoyable, and at the same time had degenerated into true needs, it became much more cruel to be deprived of them than to possess them was sweet, and men were unhappy to lose them without being happy to possess them.[87]" The conundrum was that men had become dependent on these conveniences so a "return to nature" was not in the least bit practical on some grand social level. The only solution for Rousseau was a gradual reclamation of what was lost, hence, the desire to begin with the children and educate them into the ways of natural man.

The principle antagonism we find between society and nature is expressed by Rousseau as that between *amour propre* and *amour de soi*. Both terms mean love of self, however, the nuanced difference is for Rousseau crucial. *Amour de soi* is likened more to self-preservation. All creatures are directed in their nature to seek their own preservation through the acquisition of the means of their subsistence. *Amour propre* is self-regard wherein one's self is intertwined with others and where we measure ourselves in relationship to others. This type of self love for Rousseau leads to the development of everything that is evil in society. *Amour propre* creates competition and crushes compassion. Men become preoccupied with lifting themselves above all others so that they might be justly esteemed above all others. This is the answer to our question: why, if people tacitly submit to it, is the state erected at the end of the state of nature insufficient in creating civilized men? The answer is because such a society leads to competition, hatred, jealousy, and ruin. When inequality is seen as a state where individuals are obsessed with property acquisition, the only logical result is a society

[87] Rousseau DEP, 164-165

where commodities flow back in forth in a ceaseless competition, normalized by positive laws, and all desire to usurp all, and none can rest out of fear they might lose ground to their fellow citizens. Here Rousseau implicitly points out the irony in Locke's position. While Locke admonishes Hobbes for his relating of the war of all against all in his state of nature, Locke's own articulation of the ideal body politic is nothing more than a proverbial capital war of all against all where the stakes are just as high as in Hobbes' state of nature. Man in such a state can never truly be his own creation and as such becomes created by society itself. Rousseau states: "If one had only to listen to the inclinations and follow where they lead, the job would soon be done. But there are so many contradictions between the rights of nature and our social laws that one must constantly twist and turn in order to reconcile them. One must use a great deal of art to prevent social man from being totally artificial.[88]" Such a society for Rousseau is not ideal, especially when man would have been better off in the state of nature where he was self-reliant and not weakened by dependence on others and convenience.

The alternative to such a society for Rousseau lies in a reawakening of natural man through the proper education of the *amour du soi*. Self preservation can be productive of morality and virtue when combined with the sentiments of pity and empathy and guided by conscience. Men, though endowed with a sense of self-preservation that urges them to seek their own sustenance, are for Rousseau also led by conscience. Like reason for Locke, conscience is always present; it just has to be heeded. "There is in the depths of souls, then, an innate principle of justice and virtue according to which, in spite of our own maxims, we judge our actions and those of others as good or

[88] Rousseau, Jean Jacques. *Emile or On Education*. Introduction, Translation, and Notes by Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 1979. p. 317 (Hereafter referenced as Rousseau *Emile*)

bad. It is to this principle that I give the name *conscience.*[89]" "Conscious is the voice of the soul…Too often reason deceives us. We have acquired only too much right to challenge it. But conscious never deceives; it is man's true guide. It is to the soul what instinct is to the body; he who follows conscience obeys nature and does not fear being led astray.[90]" The pangs of conscience are sufficient to guide human beings in a moral direction. Despite its strength, human beings still need to adhere to the sentiments of pity and empathy for conscience to be effective. "It is man's weakness which makes him sociable; it is our common miseries which turn our hearts to humanity; we would owe humanity nothing if we were not men. Every attachment is a sign of insufficiency. If each of us had no need of others, he would hardly think of uniting himself with them.[91]"

Amour propre leads men to find happiness through favorable comparison to others. This leads to the desire to be "in the first position," as Rousseau states. *Amour de soi* leads men to their conscience which in turn leads men outside of themselves towards others not for comparison, but for service. To have pity on another is to recognize the shortcomings, flaws, and needs of another. "To become sensitive and pitying, [one] must know that there are beings like him who suffer what he has suffered, who feel the pains he has felt, and that there are others whom he ought to conceive of as able to feel them too. In fact, how do we let ourselves be moved by pity if not by transporting ourselves outside of ourselves and identifying with the suffering of another, by leaving, as it were, our own being to take on its being?[92]" Rousseau describes here the capacity for empathy. Empathy, distinct from sympathy, is the act of placing one's self in another's shoes so to

[89] Rousseau *Emile*, 289
[90] Rousseau *Emile*, 286-287
[91] Rousseau *Emile*, 221
[92] Rousseau *Emile*, 222-223

speak; it is to fully emulate another in the experience of pain or disquiet. Whereas sympathy causes one to have a sense of sadness at the fact that another suffers, empathy requires one to feel through the imagination what another is experiencing as if they are going through the experience with the afflicted party: "Thus, no one becomes sensitive until his imagination is animated and begins to transport him out of himself.[93]" When individuals possess the capacities of pity and empathy, they are capable of following their conscience wherever it may lead them. Empathy and pity will restrain men from usurping power and resources to the degree that they cause pain and suffering to others because to hurt another would cause them pain. Thus self-preservation is intimately tied together with the care of others thereby completing our transformation from *amour propre*, or the care of status and power, to *amour de soi*, the care of one's intimate relations to others.

Rousseau believes that the corruption found in society outlined in the *First* and *Second Discourses* and *The Social Contract* is curable through a reversion in society to a more primitive state where man is lead by *amour de soi*.

> "Dear Emile, I am very glad to hear a man's speeches come from your mouth and to see a man's sentiments in your heart…I knew that when you looked at our institutions from close up, you would hardly gain a confidence in them which they do not merit. One aspires in vain to liberty under the safeguard of the laws. Laws! Where are the laws, and where are they respected? Everywhere you have seen only individual interest and man's passions reigning under this name. But the eternal laws of nature and order do exist. For the wise man, they take the place of positive law. They are written in the depth of his heart by conscience and reason. It is to these that he ought to enslave himself in order to be free. The only slave is the man who does evil, for he always does it in spite of himself. Freedom is found in no form of government; it is in the heart of the free man. He takes it with him everywhere. The vile man takes his servitude everywhere. The latter would be a slave in Geneva, the former a free man in Paris.[94]"

[93] Rousseau *Emile*, 223
[94] Rousseau *Emile*, 473

It is here that we can see the culmination of Rousseau's state of nature. We cannot enter into civilized society until there is a social transformation where mankind is led by *amour de soi* as opposed to *amour propre.* Rousseau's *First Discourse* set up and answered the question: "Are men benefited by the arts and sciences or corrupted?" To which Rousseau answered resoundingly that men are thoroughly corrupted by the conveniences offered to society. He explains in *The Second Discourse* that men are stripped of their capacities to be self-sufficient as a result of convenience thereby making them dependent on one another. Because mankind's nature is to be independent, men seek self-sufficiency in dependency which leads to societal competition and the enslaving of the many by those with power and means. Society becomes a cesspool of manipulation, contriving, and jockeying for the position of the master of the many. Rousseau demonstrates in *Emile* that the truly enlightened man is self sufficient and utilizes conscience as his guide to rise above the societal competition that promises freedom but grants only chains. It is only then that we can enter into Rousseau's *The Social Contract* where he outlines his ideal body politic. Far from serving as a salve to the ills of humanity, Rousseau's body politic is made possible only through the acceptance of his assessment of his contemporary society and his claim that conscience's directing us toward pity and empathy for others would not lead to our being duped, taken advantage of, and destroyed.

For these reasons it is clear why Rousseau had to defend himself against Hobbes and Locke in the outset of his Social Contract. The first several chapters of Rousseau's *Social Contract* are meant to simultaneously summarize and remind the reader of the evils uncovered in the *Discourses* and renounce the prevailing theories levied by Grotius,

Hobbes, and Locke, thereby rhetorically setting up the reader to accept the general will as objectively necessary. If body politics are erected on positive laws which do not have conscience as their sole origin, i.e. the states advanced by Hobbes and Locke, they lead men necessarily to a corrupt *amour propre* which, among other things, legitimates slavery. A recovery of the *amour de soi*, a concept created within tensions from his own conjectural historical narrative, is the only means by which we can escape such an enslaved position. Ultimately a body politic erected on the conscience of mankind rather than the will of a man, or group of men, is the only solution. The general will becomes objectively deduced as rationally necessary.

We see that the movement of Rousseau's narrative in his social contract provides the conceptual grounds upon which his entire body politic is theorized upon. The general will is rendered necessary through an understanding of man's need to regain primordial independence. This independence is a completely artificial creation that arises out of Rousseau's conjectural history. Thus, the necessity of the general will is rooted in artifice.

CHAPTER FOUR: A COMPARISON OF THE NARRATIVE CONVENTIONS FOUND IN THE SOCIAL CONTRACT STATES OF NATURE

Each social contract thinker set out to derive from a conjectural history a concept of an ideal body politic. The ideal body politic each thinker deduced can be adequately substituted for that which can provide the maximum amount of allowable freedom for individuals. Thus what it means to be rational and free for each thinker can be adequately found through the concessions made and refused at the outset of their body politics and the end of their states of nature. That which man could not live without, and was willing to sacrifice his rights and freedoms for in order to gain security in, can be seen as what man requires to be considered free for each thinker. Governance is erected on the promise of the protection of life and liberty. The motivation out of each state of nature grants us insight into what mankind wanted government to protect, revealing what mankind determines is a prerequisite to a state of freedom. Before jumping to the conditions of freedom for each thinker I want to address the process by which Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau rhetorically utilized similar references and conventions in order to draw the reader to an apex that would transform a subjective narrative claim to an objective philosophical premise at the outset of their arguments for an ideal body politic.

All three narratives utilized the notion of a fall from grace. Christians, all three, the urge to mimic the Biblical fall of man must have been socially and personally great, not to mention rhetorically both effective and necessary. In a world that was global, however one that also lacked the sense of a world community or humankind that we take for granted in modernity, the early moderns had to find a way to get their readership to think on a grand species wide scale. Also, though there were acute political freedoms of speech, it would have been literal suicide to launch a scathing attack against one's own

country, its principles, and God. Rather than fight status quo, whether by faith or coercion, Locke, Rousseau, and Hobbes embraced religious metaphors, examples, and justifications. God and the Bible served as both a common starting point for all intended readers and as a place to hide from critique and accusations. Though the former worked masterfully, the later equally failed miserably. Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau each found themselves persecuted despite their repeated attempts within their works to ground their claims in readings of accepted Biblical principles. Nevertheless, their choice of convention was not made in vain. The choice of the fall as a means by which they drew their readers into their narratives worked masterfully. Knowledge of Adam and Eve's fall from grace, which Locke used literally, and the resultant suffering that followed, rhetorically placed the reader in an ideal position to be chastised for their iniquities by the claims about humanity's shortcomings that would follow. This, original position, is one where man is free and equal. Though both Rousseau and Locke add to this freedom an understanding of license, this license does not serve as a restriction because there is no acting concept of politically determined property that could negate natural man's acting justly on his own liberty insofar as they do not bodily injure another. The mention of license in the original position for Rousseau and Locke served more as a philosophical seed that bore fruit later in the argument, mainly, allowing them to separate themselves from Hobbes. More importantly to strengthen the Biblical reference, these original positions are ones in which man's every need is provided for by nature. They are relative Gardens of Eden. From this position, following the Biblical narrative found in Genesis, man is forced to toil and labor for his sustenance. Though this step is a point of departure for Locke and Rousseau from Hobbes, the relation of the Biblical narrative by this point

in each narrative, has already performed its rhetorical duty. The utilization of "the fall" in each state of nature serves a dual role. First, the fall is meant to set up the states of nature as narratives with gnoseological transformations. Simultaneously the fall is a part of a greater ideological transformation that is contrived between the state of nature narratives and the ideal body politics that rise out of them.

Gnoseological transformation, Todorov explains, are narratives that begin with an anticlimactic and lead the reader conceptually from a greater to a lesser ignorance. The transformation comes not in the resolution of the character's issue in the narrative, rather, the transformation occurs in the reader's understanding of a given idea or concept. "The events of the beginning [in a gnoseological transformation] are evoked again [in the end] but this time we see them from the vantage point of truth and not from that of deceitful appearance."[95] The fall serves both as the anticlimactic and that which is made clear at the end of the states of nature. We begin each state of nature with a reference to a free and equal state in which God provides lavishly. This allusion to the Biblical fall and the redemption of man through his denial of his passions and utilization of reason to grasp that which is truly good and justifiably desirable gives us our anticlimactic. We already know goods things do not last and that there is redemption in man's flawed nature. Even from children's tales, the readers of the treatise would have anticipated a break from a tranquil beginning and some redemption to come in the form of a return to the rational where the good and just triumphs over evil and irrational. The fall is also referenced at the end of each state of nature as a transition into the arguments for an ideal body politic. We are reminded of how far humanity had come to get to the point in which the mere acceptance of one basic tenant can provide lasting peace; much like the Biblical

[95] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 40

redemption requires the acceptance of Christ as one's savior to ensure one's place in heaven where one is granted life everlasting.

Our passing from greater to lesser ignorance is shown through the revealing of our non-adherence to the requisites of true society to the knowledge of what we lack. The arguments for the ideal body politics advanced by each thinker become the means by which we can utilize this knowledge for our greater good. So we end each state of nature, not with a return to normalcy, rather, in gnoseological fashion, we end with more questions than answers that the arguments for civilized states that follow each state of nature provide. This is why I continually referred to the states of nature as rhetorical, because their purpose is to place the reader in a position to ask the ideal question that the argument to follow is more than capable of answering. The presumed objectivity of the principles, and the body politics that emulate them, are derived from the ease in which the two fit together for the reader. The states based on the need for safety, the centrality of property and competition, and the sovereignty of the individual all become the pre-accepted answers for a questions that have yet to be raised, but are raised due to the concerns manufactured in the states of nature of the three thinkers. How can I be safe in a war of all against all? How can I best be protected and aided in an inevitable competition for capital and property? How can we free ourselves of the moral, physical, and spiritual weaknesses our desires for convenience have caused us? These questions complete the gnoseological transformations found in the state of nature narratives and lead to the ideological transformations found only through its pairing with the arguments for the specific ideal body politic for which is was created. Ideological transformations entail the relating of multiple ideas to a centralized concept. "Independent actions,

carried out by different characters and in various circumstances, reveal their kinship, serving to illustrate or exemplify a common ideology."[96] The rational fleeing of one's self destruction at any cost, the centrality of property accumulation and protection, and the merits of self-sufficiency over dependency all become centralized ideas upon which the states of nature and body politics both point to for Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau respectively. Because both the state of nature narratives and the syllogistic arguments that follow corroborate the same concept or idea, the seeming subjective nature of said idea becomes transformed into a valid objective claim that is rationally supported. As I stated earlier, the state of nature narratives are not so much a part of the syllogistic arguments for ideal states as much as they set the tone, preparing the reader to ask the right question that the argument to follow is more than capable of answering in the interest of transforming the subjective particular claim into an objective universalized idea.

Another similitude between the three narratives is the theme of property and possessions leading necessarily to inequality and competition. This convention of the rise of inequality serves several functions. First it reinforces a shared origin of all persons. If the goal is to create ideas and principles that oblige the entirety of society people must think of themselves as equal even in their difference. As Hobbes states, all have an equal hope in attaining that which they desire. Despite obvious inequalities, the readers must believe that their advantageous or at the other end of the spectrum, seemingly Godly forsaken position, does not grant them cause to opt out of the argument. All are complicit in the historical evils and eventual transcendence of mankind to the construction of an idealized state. Secondly, the rise in inequality completes the fall.

[96] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 43

Man, robbed of his equality and most of their freedoms, are placed in the peril of living life in a permanent non-free state. Even those with means as Hobbes states, are in like danger of being dispossessed and reduced to a state of being non-free. All are required to identify with this circumstance of being fallen as it is a necessary condition of the state of man in much the same way Christianity dictates that we are all sinners because of the fall. Lastly, inequality is inextricably tied to labor so that even when humanity is redeemed in the ideal body politic, labor becomes a requirement of all men for which abstaining is punished naturally by poverty. Welfare is never an issue for these idealized states outside of those who do not possess the capacity for labor (children, the elderly, and the mentally incapacitated). Even in an idealized state, inequality is made possible and is justified by nature such that those who are impoverished can launch no accusations against those who, through their labor, subdue more than others. Rather than restricting the wealthy, the poor are encouraged to labor more. The body politic is seen as being responsible for the means by which people can labor, acquire, and subsist, rather than the promise of provisions and sustenance. The *pursuit of happiness* is all that is promised.

Another common convention is the promotion of the idea of reason as being productive, but not necessarily good or evil. Rousseau explains this best with his idea of perfectibility. Perfectibility is "the faculty of perfecting oneself…this distinctive and almost unlimited faculty, is the source of all man's miseries,…it is the faculty which by dint of time, draws him out of that original condition in which he would spend tranquil and innocent days,…the faculty which, over centuries, causing his enlightenment and his errors, his vices and his virtues to bloom, [and] eventually makes him his own and

Nature's tyrant.[97]" Rousseau points to the freedom in reasoning. Our capacity to create and act can be used either to our advantage or our detriment. Each narrative seeks to retain freedom, for it is freedom that gives mankind the capacity to be otherwise. The possibility to change is rooted in the freedom of reason and thought. If we can think otherwise, we can chose to act otherwise, thereby create a new reality for ourselves that would be the result of our rational choice to act in a certain fashion. With this claim, the resulting arguments become less a question of how can we do this? To what kind of state ought we to create? This is also explains why outside of the narrative, each state of nature was also accompanied by an argument meant to clear philosophical space so to speak. Each state of nature narrative was paired with arguments against prevailing beliefs about legitimate government authority to which the claims of reason's misuse in the state of nature narrative could be loosely compared to. Hobbes does this well in his plea to his readers concerning the day to day precautions they take in securing their belongings. Hobbes challenges the reader to think, if you find that the government you ascribe to possesses legitimate authority and is fashioned in a way that provides for your safety, why then do you lock your doors, and chests in your home? The reader is forced to question the legitimacy of the way things are and is further convinced that things can be better despite one's presumed comfort. We become capable of recognizing that despite the believed fact that our current state was rationally created, as to was natural man following reason in the state of nature, and that there exists a better way of being. Locke, Rousseau, and Hobbes opened up gradations of difference within the rational so that the reader could see themselves as rational, yet lacking a rationally constructed

[97] Rousseau DEP, 141

government. This rhetorical stroking of the reader's ego tells them that it is not your fault that things are this way, and I can show you how it can be better.

We can begin to see what each thinker individually, and the tradition as a group view to be the prerequisites of freedom. Hobbes argues man in the state of nature is faced with the constant threat of physical violence. Despite any attempt to abstain from this threat, man will still be vexed by the sheer possibility of having to endure some episode of violence. Freedom for Hobbes has to be defined abstractly because he admittedly has no concept of free will. "By this it is manifest, that not onely actions that have their beginning from Covetousnesse, Ambition, Lust, or other Appetites to the thing propounded; but also those that have their beginning from Aversion, or Feare of those consequences that follow the omission, are *voluntary* actions.[98]" Though individual act is materialistic in nature for Hobbes, and as such is determined, he claims that determination makes choice and actions in the world no less binding or full of responsibility. The determined nature of act or will no less robs man of his presumed sense of choice than does God's knowledge of eternity make his creation of a person responsible for the choices of that person. As God sits outside of time, and men within, the choices made by men are active with respect to the perspective of mankind yet are fully known and determined from the perspective of God. Hobbes' notion of determination and freedom works the same way. Men, though determined, from a perspective of objective reality, from the perspective of man's cognition, choice and will exist and as such so to does the belief of free will, despite the fact it does not exist objectively. This allows Hobbes to make the ontological claim that there is no free will, while simultaneously claiming that man has both choices and responsibilities to himself

[98] Hobbes, 45

and others in social interactions and state forming. Higher order ratiocination shows man the relationship between the objective circumstances one interacts with and the determined nature of our reason and wills. Hence it becomes rational to seek peace and comfort and flee war and violence. We become what we are confronted with consistently. If man is to tend to his preservation and seek reason, man must "seek peace and follow it." We can conclude that above all, freedom for Hobbes is freedom from violent death, and ignorance which comes through order and predictability. Hobbes' fear of the unknown, or the possibility of being acted upon by an irrational circumstance, is equal to his fear of death; hence the need for the sovereign. Absolute sovereign power is constant, dependable, and predictable. The relation between the citizen and the sovereign for Hobbes is meant to mimic the relation between Christians and Christ. Through faith in Christ men are relieved of their worries because they rest in the promise that God will protect them insofar as they live a Christ-like life. The sovereign is expected to protect citizens insofar as they respect the laws of the state. Freedom for Hobbes is a freedom from death and irrationality, and a freedom to act within the limitations of the law to secure any desire of the heart that does not conflict with the interest of the sovereign. To be assured of life, and to be made certain there will be no whimsical alterations to what is right, just, and true that were not rationally necessary for one's survival, is true freedom for man according to Hobbes. "A FREE-MAN, *is he that in those things, which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindered to doe what he has a will to.*..But as men, for the atteyning of peace, and conservation of themselves thereby, have made an Artificiall Man, which we call a Common-wealth; so also have they made Artificiall Chains, called *Civill* Lawes, which they themselves, by mutuall convenants, have

fastened at one end, to the lips of the Man, or Assembly, to whom they have given the Sovereigne Power; and the other end to their own Ears…The Liberty of a Subject, lyeth therefore only in those things, which in regulating their actions, the Sovereign hath praetermitted: such as is the Liberty to buy, and sell, and otherwise contract with one another; to choose their own aboad, their own diet, their own trade of life, and institute their children as the themselves think fit; & the like.[99]" Thus a political subject for Hobbes must be guaranteed by the sovereign above all the keeping of contracts through force if necessary. Through the keeping of contracts, individuals in the body politic have the maximum liberty possible to act and remain free from the possibility of a violent death at the hands of another.

Locke is much more distinct and straight forward in his discussion of freedom. Property is clearly the end of reason and governance for Locke. We need it for both the sustaining and preservation of our lives. The accumulation of wealth is also seen as rational for to provide for one's subsistence for a day is good, put to provide for one's subsistence in perpetuity is better. Thus, man's right to preserve himself is inextricably tied to his right to acquire and retain property. Regardless of Locke's motivations, whether it be a reasoned deduction or a political argument against the historical circumstance he was in, the right man has to do what he wills with the property he owns is inalienable to a state of freedom for him. He goes as far as unite the physical body with one's property. The acquisition of property for Locke entails the mixing of one's hands with an object or tract of land. This "mixing of one's hands with" causes the land or object to "hath by this labour something annexed to it, that excludes the common right of Men. For this *Labour* being the unquestionable Property of the Labourer, no Man but

[99] Hobbes,146-148

he can have a right to what this is once joyned to.[100]" Property as such, literally contains a metaphysical piece of the laborer within it. This piece of the laborer that is within the property grants the laborer the right to act "as if" the property is a component of her body such that it is "Lawful to *kill a Thief*, who has not in the least hurt him, nor declared any design upon his Life, any further then by use of Force, so to get him in his Power as to take away his Money, or what he pleases from him: because using force, where he has no Right, to get me into his Power, let his pretence be what it will, I have no reason to suppose, that he, who would *take away my Liberty*, would not when he had me in his Power, take away everything else.[101]" Locke draws and analogy between the protections of one's life with the right to do what one wills with their property. To subdue my property to your will is equivalent to threatening my very life and is punishable with maximum force. My liberty or freedom is not just my bodily integrity, or my right to act free from the fear of violence like Hobbes, it is also my right to do what I will with the property I own; this right in inalienable to man. Locke clearly relates political responsibility to submission to a state that accepts both personal freedoms and individual property rights. In Chapter 16 entitled "Of Conquest," Locke discusses the attempted origin of governance through force. He argues that not only can a man not be forced to submit to a government but property cannot be commandeered where one does not submit to such governance that possesses such a right. "Every Man is born with a double Right: *First, A Right of Freedom to his Person*, which no other Man has a Power over, but the free Disposal lies in himself. *Secondly, A Right*, before any other Man, to *inherit*, with his Brethren, his Father's Goods. By the first of these, a Man is *naturally free* from

[100] Locke, 288
[101] Locke, 280

subjection to any Government, though he be born in a place under its Jurisdiction…By the second, the *Inhabitants* of any Countrey, who are descended, and derive a Title to their Estates from those, who are subdued, and had a Government forced upon them against their free contests, *retain a Right to the Possession of their Ancestors,* though they consent not freely to the Government, whose hard Conditions were by force imposed on the Possessors of that Country." Here we see that a man's person and their rights to property are inseparable. Government is valid insofar as they respect both the person and the possessions of that person. Freedom is seen as the right most certainly to life, and basic liberties, but above all the right to acquire and dispose of one's property as one wills. "For *Liberty* is to be free from restraint and violence from others which cannot be, where there is no Law: But Freedom is not, as we are told, *A Liberty for every Man to do what he lists:* But a *Liberty* to dispose, and order, as he lists, his Person, Actions, Possessions, and his whole Property within the Allowance of those Laws under which he is; and therein not to be subject to the arbitrary Will of another, but freely follow his own.[102]"

"For freedom is like the solid and hearty foods or the full-bodied wines fit to feed and fortify robust temperaments used to them, but which overwhelm, ruin and intoxicate weak and delicate ones that are not up to them. Once Peoples are accustomed to Masters, they can no longer do without them. If they attempt to shake off the yoke, they move all the farther away from freedom because, as they mistake unbridled license for freedom, which is its very opposite, their revolutions almost always deliver them up to seducers

[102] Locke, 306

who only increase their chains.[103]" For Rousseau, freedom can only come after the realization of amour de soi. As articulated throughout his writings, most notably in the *First Discourse* man has developed a fallen nature through a farce of society and has yet to be redeemed. The movement into so called society advanced by political philosophy of the time, principally Hobbes, had only weakened mankind's moral sensibilities and integrity.

The body politics constructed by Locke and Hobbes provide man with chains rather than freedom according to Rousseau. If to be free is to not only have safety and property rights but to also have no hindrances placed upon the actions of your will within the limits of the law, what happens when the law or the material circumstances of society constrain one's will to that of another? There is no freedom in such an existence. This is the life that a society not led by conscience offers for Rousseau. A society driven by convenience brings luxury, leisure, and most importantly status however, the very things that have made life easier have enslaved men to their use and thus also made us slaves to those who produce and have skills in them. So too is the laborer made slave to the owner of property. Unskilled at providing for his own provision he is forced to labor for coin to exchange for food. Man in modernity is a slave to convenience and the producers of convenience and as such is not free. Society becomes a space where people trade their integrity for convenience in order to acquire honor and status and are willing to do, say, or give anything for more.

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[103] Garnier Frères, 27. "Car il en est de la liberté comme de ces aliments solides et succulents, ou de ces vins généreux, propres à des nourrir et fortifier les tempéraments robustes qui en ont l'habitude, mais qui accablent, ruinent et enivrent les foibles et délicats qui n'y sont point faits. Les peuples, une fois accoutumés à des maîtres, ne sont plus en état de s'en passer. S'ils tentent de secouer le joug, ils s'éloignent d'autant plus de la liberté, que, prenant pour elle une licence effrénée qui lui est opposée, leurs révolutions les livrent presque toujours à des séducteurs qui ne font qu'aggraver leurs chaînes."

Law and the state, rather than being predicated on truth and justice are rooted in order are maintenance of the status quo. Constructed not by reason, the very laws themselves Rousseau finds often contradict one another thus Rousseau proclaims that, "one aspires in vain to liberty under the safeguard of the laws. Laws! Where are the laws, and where are they respected? Everywhere you have seen only individual interest and man's passions reigning under this name. But the eternal laws of nature and order do exist. For the wise man, they take the place of positive law. They are written in the depth of his heart by conscience and reason. It is to these that he ought to enslave himself in order to be free. The only slave is the man who does evil, for he always does it in spite of himself. Freedom is found in no form of government; it is in the heart of the free man.[104]" The awakening of amour de soi allows man to revert to a state of moral self-sufficiency where he is less apt to be drawn into a false society by promises of honor due to his accumulation of conveniences because he is secure in his self-worth. When men are no longer reliant on others for recognition of their worth they find no rational desire to submit themselves to the wills or control of others. They are free to define themselves for themselves.

A society where amour de soi was awakened would create a circumstance were individuals could, without injury to others, truly act the wills of their heart in objective reality absent hindrances insofar as the desires do not restrict the liberties of others. Combined with Rousseau's notion of the general will where laws are understood as the result of the will of the people, the only limit to mankind's freedom would be imposed by man himself and not material circumstance like Locke, or fear as is the case in Hobbes.

[104] Rousseau *Emile*, 473

Freedom is truly seen as originating in "the heart of the free man,[105]" as related to him by conscience and reason and fashioned into the just and necessary limits of his will in society. Freedom is the enacting of one's will in the world restricted only by the self-imposed limits of the general will, which itself is only a manifestation of man's conscience and reason such that freedom is seen as only being restrained by reason and conscience. "Who, then, is the virtuous man? It is he who knows how to conquer his affections; for then he follows his reason and his conscience; he does his duty; he keeps himself in order, and nothing can make him deviate from it. Up to now you were only apparently free. You had only the precarious freedom of a slave to whom nothing has been commanded. Now be really free. Learn to become your own master. Command your heart, Emile, and you will be virtuous.[106]"

Central to the notions of freedom expressed by all three thinkers are reason, safety, and most notably property. We find that the central concern of governmental legitimacy and the possibility for freedom for the social contract genre of political philosophy can be narrowed due to questions of preserving self-agency in the preservation of one's life and the preserving of property. Only Rousseau goes one step further and includes the need for a moral imperative in society, yet this need for moral sentiments still, at base, serves the interest of an equal distribution of right to agency and basic property holding requisite for one's self-sufficient preserving of themselves. Though this definition works for those endowed with rights to property, and the means to gain it through legitimate means, does this mean that we are incapable of defining our freedom outside of our relationship to property and agency directed towards the

[105] Rousseau *Emile*, 473
[106] Rousseau *Emile*, 444-445

preservation of my life? Am I not more than my safety and property? Are material holdings that I am free to dispose of and the comfort of physical security, enough to be considered free? To answer these questions I will investigate freedom from another perspective. I will investigate the African American slave narratives of Henry Bibb, Harriet Jacobs, and Frederick Douglass to determine whether or not the concept of freedom found in the social contract tradition adequately expresses what those writers, and the tradition they are a part of, yearned for when they sought to escape the perils of slavery and gain what they considered to be the freedom they deserved as human beings.

PART TWO African American Slave Narratives

Introduction

> "The fabric of tradition in Afro-American literature is woven from slave narratives and Negro spirituals, the earliest and most significant forms of oral and written literature created by blacks during slavery. Not only did the spirituals identify the slave's peculiar syncretistic religion, sharing features of Protestant Christianity and traditional African religions, but they became an almost secretive code for the slave's critique of the plantation system and for his search for freedom in *this* world. Similarly, the narratives identified the slave's autobiographical and communal history as well as his active campaign against the "peculiar institution." Both forms of cultural expression from the slave community create a vision of history, an assessment of the human condition, and a heroic fugitive character unlike any other in American literature.[107]"

African American slave narratives are the expressed written accounts of the first hand experiences of African slaves in the Americas who were forced into chattel slavery from the 15th to 19th centuries. Before discussing the objectives and ends of these narratives we must first gain historical context and make an important etymological distinction. Slavery is defined as "The condition or fact of being entirely subject to, or under the domination of, some power or influence.[108]" Within this definition are two dominant historical models of slavery: Greco-roman and chattel. Greco-roman, despite its name, is a model that is descriptive of the majority of historical instances of slavery in civilized cultures. Slavery was seen as the voluntary giving up of one's life as a result of the committing of a crime with a known penalty of death or the unsuccessful engaging in war against a state and subsequently having been taken captive by that same state. An act to deprive one of life by force is repaid with the offender's surrendering of their life to

[107] Dixon, Melvin. "Singing Swords: The Literary Legacy of Slavery." The Slave's Narrative. Eds. Charles T. Davis and Henry Louis Gates Jr. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. 298.
[108] "slavery, *n.*" The Oxford English Dictionary. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press. 4 Apr. 2000 <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00181778>.

those he transgressed against. This submission however in most cases was merely symbolic for the transgressed, rather than losing their life, usually ended up a day laborer. In a rational exchange of needs, the master tended to the slave's basic needs in exchange for their prolonged life and service. In this exchange the offender, though possibly despised and abused, was nevertheless still seen as a human being entitled to a base margin of respect and reciprocity. In most cultures slaves still retained rights to marry, to honor their chosen God, and to learn to read and write. Quite frequently slave populations within a generation or two were assimilated into the greater society they served becoming full-fledged citizens of those lands most notably evidenced in the rise of the Roman and Chinese Empires. Despite the proper relation between master and slave, namely the possession of the right of death the master held over the slave, there was a respect due to the slave as a human being. Chattel slaves were different. Chattel, or property, slavery was one exclusively experienced by Africans brought to the Americas in antiquity[109]. Chattel slavery is the circumstance where slaves are equated metaphysically with property. The ontological existence of the person is reduced to its most base form. Men, women, and children, rather than seen as human beings with inalienable rights, endowed with reason and expressible sentiments that base human sympathies should respond to, were viewed as collections of muscles, bones, and sinews that respond to auditory commands. They were nurtured insofar as the components of their being, their physical bodies, needed edification through food and water and their minds needed programming to perform tasks efficiently. Chattel slaves because of their automotive faculties had a use value similar to cattle and other livestock. As such, the

[109] No longer is this circumstance the exclusive experience of African American slaves. The sex traffic in our modernized society also ontologically equates primarily young women, but also young men, with property whose use is only found in their ability to give sexual gratification.

chattel slaves were seen as devoid of the capacity for reason, emotion, or love, thus making the most horrible of atrocities permissible. From the realities of the slave ships, to the development of grotesque tools to manipulate and punish them, to the unrepentant ripping of their known familial bonds, to the repeated violent abuse of their very bodies, chattel slaves were dispossessed of their humanity and reduced, at best, to the level of useful animals.

The origin of chattel slavery starts in 1441 when the first slaves were brought to Portugal from Mauritania. Portugal in the midst of a renaissance period, in the 15th century attempted to capitalize off recent military successes against the Muslims in northern Africa. With the rest of Europe locked in several wars and quarrels, Portugal set out to expand its empire south into Africa. Ignorant of the size, population, and inhabitants of the land, Portugal decided to "explore" the African continent. Hopeful that the continent would be sparsely populated with Muslims they could execute, and a path to Asia they could forge either by land or by sea, Portugal sent expeditions south into the proverbial unknown. The initial expeditions brought back both news and cargo that would damn the entire continent of African for centuries and bring Europe and the west, wealth in perpetuity. It was discovered that the southern cape of Africa is more than manageable to navigate around and Asia in fact was not that far. Also, the continent of Africa was populated with a myriad of people that have a wealth of useful slaves that can be bought at a fair price. Portugal quickly recognized the economic opportunity and desired to send droves of merchants to purchase slaves from African tribes. First King Alfonso required a right or patronage or "jus patronatus" from the pope as this right could only be designated by the pope as per its designation in the Epistolae decretales as "ius

spirituali annexum." Pope Nicholas V wrote in the papal bull Romanus Pontifex (January 8, 1455) which reinforced the initial sentiment reflected in the papal bull Dum Diversas (June 18, 1452)[ii] which in turn influenced King Alfonso V of Portugal's support of the expanded slave trade. I quote the text at length:

> "Nicholas, bishop, servant of the servants of God. For a perpetual remembrance. The Roman pontiff, successor of the key-bearer of the heavenly kingdom d vicar of Jesus Christ, contemplating with a father's mind all the several climes of the world and the characteristics of all the nations dwelling in them and seeking and desiring the salvation of all, wholesomely ordains and disposes upon careful deliberation those things which he sees will be agreeable to the Divine Majesty and by which he may bring the sheep entrusted to him by God into the single divine fold, and may acquire for them the reward of eternal felicity, and obtain pardon for their souls. This we believe will more certainly come to pass, through the aid of the Lord, if we bestow suitable favors and special graces on those Catholic kings and princes, who, like athletes and intrepid champions of the Christian faith, as we know by the evidence of facts, not only restrain the savage excesses of the Saracens and of other infidels, enemies of the Christian name, but also for the defense and increase of the faith vanquish them and their kingdoms and habitations, though situated in the remotest parts unknown to us, and subject them to their own temporal dominion, sparing no labor and expense, in order that those kings and princes, relieved of all obstacles, may be the more animated to the prosecution of so salutary and laudable a work.[110]"

The papal bulls, recognizing both the economic opportunities and moral concerns made the prolonged and excessive use of African slaves not only permissible in the eyes of God, but transformed the practice of trading African slaves into an institutional goal of

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[110] Davenport, Frances Gardiner ed. 1917. *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and Its Dependencies to 1684*. Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington. p. 12. "Nicolaus episcopus, servus servorum Dei. Ad perpetuam rei memoriam. Romanus pontifex, regni celestis clavigeri successor et vicarius Jhesu Christi, cuncta mundi climata omniumque nationum in illis degentium qualitates patema consideratione discutiens, ac salutem querens et appetens singulorum, ilia propensa deliberatione salubriter ordinat et disponit que grata Divine Majestati fore conspicit et per que oves sibi divinitus creditas ad unicum ovile dominicum reducat, et acquirat eis felicitatis eterne premium, ac veniam impetret animabus; que eo certius auctore Domino provenire credimus, si condignis favoribus et specialibus gratiis eos Catholicos prosequamur reges et principes, quos, veluti Christiane fidei athletas et intrepidos pugiles, non modo Saracenorum ceterorumque infidelium Christiani nominis inimicorum feritatem reprimere, sed etiam ipsos eorumque regna ac loca, etiam in longissimis nobisque incognitis partibus consistentia, pro defensione et augmento fidei hujusmodi debellare, suoque temporali dominio subdere, nullis parcendo laboribus et expensis facti evidentia cognoscimus, ut reges et principes ipsi, sublatis quibusvis dispendiis, ad tarn saluberrimum tamque laudabile prosequendum opus peramplius animentur."

conversion and extermination of infidels. Soon the tremendous influx of slaves made the *Mercado de Escravos* the official birthplace of the European colonialism and Transatlantic Slavery that would come in the succeeding centuries. Rather that Greco-roman slavery where the captives would be "civilized" into the ways of the Europeans they were reduced ontologically because of their disbelief in a Christian God to objects that could be used and extinguished with no moral consequence to be paid. This was the birth of colonialism; the bizarre and peculiar practice of "civilizing" non-western, non-Caucasian peoples through force in the claimed interest of religious sanctification and progress towards civility, but the practiced interest of economic gain and the production of commodious living for the Caucasian citizens of the western empires.

By the time Christopher Columbus "discovered" the Americas, the African slave trade was already a staple in European society. With Europe's population increasing exponentially as well trade between Europe, Asia, and Africa higher than it had ever been, Europeans began racing for new sources of income and faster trade routes. These desires led to the "discovery" of the Americas. From the outset attempts to colonize the Americas were for the production of new sources of income. Though many independent missions had other initiatives that sound better in songs and on pamphlets, the majority of settlements in the Americas were state sanctioned attempts to produce cash cows for the crowns of Europe. Each nation in Europe sent bevies of expeditions to the Americas with the intention of creating a permanent settlement from which production in the region could begin. Though the 16th century was full of failed colonization attempts in the Americas, the 17th century brought with it sustained settlements and population increases.

During the 17th century the European powers (England, Portugal, Spain, France, and the Netherlands) each sought to expand their colonies through an influx of laborers. Most came in the form of indentured servants from Europe and Africa while there were also among the population permanent slaves as well. By the end of the 17th and early 18th centuries tensions between the French traders, English farmers, and Spanish lords and missionaries changed the landscape of the Americas forever. As populations increased, workforces increased and correspondingly so too did the yields from the investments made by the European monarchies. Desiring more profit each power sought expansion in the new world. This desire led to clashes and confrontations that continued well into the 19th century yet out of the quarrels came three distinct territories: the indigenous and Spanish to the south, the British and indigenous in central North America, and the French and indigenous in the north. The relationship that would spawn the United States of America and the experiences of African Americans that would be recounted in African American slave narratives came from the unique relationship between the British and the indigenous peoples in the central region of the North American continent.

Like other empires in the new world the British sought wealth and productivity from its colonies. Tobacco and cotton had proven to be profitable crops yet their production was labor intensive. Lacking the manpower to increase productivity and failed attempts to subdue the native peoples into captivity left the British wanting for labor. The British turned to the African slave market to procure laborers to increase the profitability of their plantations. Unlike the slave trades of other countries, the British slave trade and productivity of its plantations quickly surpassed all others. Soon after slaves flooded into the British American colonies, the questions of the morality or

prudence of the practice of slavery was socially questioned. Despite the increase in productivity and exponential gains in quality of life, the British, determined that the Africans were too valuable a commodity to be freed. Unlike the Portuguese, the Protestant British could not rely on the papal bulls to justify their decisions. They turned to positive law, a move that would become common in the soon to form United States, to normalize their desired behavior. The slave codes of 1705 passed in the colony of Virginia were the first to establish Blacks as uniquely non-qualified for naturalization into free citizens as they were classified as heretical non-human beings and were to be considered as property in the eyes of the law.

From this period on in history, the "peculiar institution" in the United States had unofficially begun. Later decades brought exponential increases in profits, slaves, productivity, and laws to normalize and constrain the system and maintain status quo. By the 19th century slavery was a normalized, prized institution of the United States and the producer of her great wealth and opulence enjoyed throughout modernity. Though freemen in the newly formed United States by the outset of the 19th century were enjoying an unrivaled period of convenience and decadence, their neurosis for capital, class, and convenience led to the vile increase in slaves and labor. Concurrent to the rise of decadence was the descent into monstrosity experienced on the plantations of the United States. As generations of slaves grew less and less estranged and more acclimated to their maters and one another, the social ignorance of African slaves that both had been and remained the unseen hand in slavery began to lose its grip. As African slaves developed common languages and traditions, many were also learning the ways of their masters. Most important of all cultural developments was the ability to read and write

English. By the 19th century African American Slaves had gained the ability to communicate their suffering. Though to first official slave narrative, Britton Hammond's *A Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings, and Surprizing Deliverance of Briton Hammon, a Negro Man (1760),* and a precious few others were written in the late 18th century, the quintessential narrative form which would become paradigmatic of the African American slave narrative tradition appeared first in Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* in 1814.

The African American slave narrative became a vehicle which African slaves in America could voice their displeasure with their position in society. Lacking positive legal rights and standing as an equal as a human being on an ontological level, the only recourse of the African slaves was through the demonstration of their rationality. Writing for African American slaves was more than a record for posterity or mere story telling. The relation of the tales found in African American salve narratives were also both undeniable demonstrations of reason and humanity, qualities Blacks were supposed to be ontologically without, and socio-political arguments meant to urge those with means and influence to aid the suffering slaves in removing the chains of their oppression. The writers were expressing the fundamental desire of a community of slaves to be free, an act that had never occurred in recorded history. The oppressed were confronting their oppressors literarily. As such, the narratives that result cannot be read as mere stories meant to relate a tale of events. The texts are arguments for freedom. Within the choices to relate or to hide certain experiences are claims regarding morality, economy, and political right. In an effort to continue my efforts to investigate the manner in which

political philosophy's traditional conceptualization of freedom may be enriched I will analyze the slave narratives of Henry Bibb, Harriet Jacobs, and Frederick Douglass. I will explicate the manner in which the narrative storyline for each text expounds a fundamental claim regarding the nature of freedom as a concept and a greater desire for the reader to recognize the need slaves have of its social materialization in slave communities. I will begin with *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave*.

CHAPTER FIVE: FREDERICK DOUGLASS AND THE WRITTEN WORD

> "Very soon after I went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Auld, she very kindly commenced to teach me the A B C. After I had learned this, she assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters. Just at this point of my progress, Mr. Auld forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further, telling her, among other things, that it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read. To use his own words, further, he said, "If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master- to do what he is told to do. Learning would *spoil* the best nigger in the world. Now," said he, "if you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever be unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented and unhappy.[111]"

Frederick Douglass was an ex slave who threw off the shackles of his subjugation and became arguably one of the first and most important spokesmen for an entire oppressed people. Born in Maryland in 1818, Douglass was a slave from birth. Facing the same evils afflicting his brethren in bondage, Douglass endured all the facets of southern American plantation slavery. The seasoning process was not lost on him. Seemingly destined to be an average run of the mill slave, Douglass received a gift in the form of education. With his newly honed capacity Douglass was able to maneuver himself to freedom. A diamond in the rough, Douglass, rather than simply escaping to freedom and rescinding into obscurity, grew ever bold and visible in his desire to see slavery abolished in the American south. His determination took him from the Wye House Plantation to Washington D.C. with many stops along the way. Douglass over the course of his life became an accomplished orator, writer, politician, and most notably abolitionist. Of the many accomplishments, texts, awards, accolades, and speeches given and received by

[111] Gates, Henry Jr. ed. *The Classic Slave Narratives*. New York: First Mentor Printing, 1987. pp. 274-275 (Hereafter referenced as Douglass)

Douglass, few of his works were as critical and timely as his publication *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave.*

Published in 1845, Douglass' narrative, though not the first slave narrative, nor the paradigm setter, became the gold standard for African American slave narratives in particular, and Black literature in general during the 19th century. Douglass masterfully relates the tale of his bondage and his escape to freedom. Like all slave narratives, Douglass' story contains the usual progression from the plantation to a state of liberty however, there is a concurrent progression in Douglass' text that I would like to illuminate and discuss. Unlike my analysis of the state of nature arguments in the social contract texts, Douglass' narrative, along with Jacobs' and Bibb's, are self professed narratives. Rather than proceed in the manner of the preceding section by rendering the text apart into each example of a time disunity, I will be grouping the chapters of the slave narratives into larger paradigms that can be considered epochs in the life of the author. As Todorov claimed, not all sections of a given narrative are critical. Though every section of the slave narratives has biographical merit, not all are equally persuasive and significant in the authors' auxiliary goal of making a claim for liberty which, the explication thereof is my central concern. Douglass' narrative can be broken into four major sections: an introduction to slavery I-IV, his education V-VII, his awakening VIII-X, and his liberation XI.

After having his prose validated by white men William Lloyd Garrison, a well-known publisher and abolitionist, and Wendell Phillips, an accomplished lawyer and also fellow abolitionist, Douglass begins his narrative "I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot county, Maryland. I have

no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it;[112]" a seemingly innocent admission in itself, the claim that he did not know his real age, but is emblematic of something far larger. He continues, "By the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant.[113]" Though the first segment of the text, chapters 1-4, are indeed about painting a vivid picture of plantation slavery in the mind of the reader, behind the setting is also the theme of ignorance. Douglass labels the plantation tradition of one in which the laborers, namely the slaves, are kept in intentional ignorance of their circumstance and matters of the world to be sure, but more importantly of slaves are prohibited from knowing themselves. This claim should strike a chord in those knowledgeable of philosophic pursuits for γνῶθι σεαυτόν or to know thyself is considered the height of human reason. How one could ever be true to thine self without knowledge of themselves is a mystery I am sure Shakespeare would have difficulty unraveling. Douglass posits the slave as one who must find themselves by themselves. Douglass by "an early age" had already been deprived knowledge of his birth and his father, and separated from his mother. This space of ignorance was Douglass' original position.

It is important to note that despite setting up his original position as one where he was purposefully made ignorant of his own origins, Douglass spitefully contradicts his own circumstance by demonstrating his rational prowess. He does this by demonstrating his grasp of slavery as an institution; his claim to know that it is the wish of most masters to keep their slaves ignorant shows that he understands that the method through which

[112] Douglass, 255
[113] Douglass, 255

slaves remain in bondage is the master's control of knowledge. Also, he was able to eventually deduce his age at 17 by hearing his master approximate his birth year. Neither feat is amazing out of context, but for a being that is claimed to be without rational faculties, such deductions should be incapable without assistance from someone with an education. Douglass demonstrates that though he begins his text with an admission that he too was once in the state of ignorance that his once fellow slaves remained in, he was able to eventually grasp the knowledge that was systematically kept from him since birth. The first paragraph is meant to depict Douglass as a *rational man from whom knowledge he had the capacity to retain was kept*, as opposed to a feeble, humble slave who knew nothing and was happy to just be alive.

> "I have often been awakened at the dawn of day by the most heart-rending shrieks of an own aunt of mine, whom he used to tie up to a joist, and whip upon her naked back till she was literally covered with blood. No words, no tears, no prayers, from his glory victim, seemed to move his iron heart from its bloody purpose. The louder she screamed, the harder he whipped; and where the blood ran fastest, there he whipped longest. He would whip her to make her scream, and whip her to make her hush; and not until overcome by fatigue, would he cease to swing the blood-clotted cowskin. I remember the first time I ever witnessed this horrible exhibition. I was quite a child, but I well remember it. I never shall forget it whilst I remember any thing. It was the first of a long series of such outrages, of which I was doomed to be a witness and participant. It struck me with awful force. It was the blood-stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery, through which I was about to pass. It was a most terrible spectacle. I wish I could commit to paper the feelings with which I beheld it.[114]"

Douglass' initiation into slavery was, as was the case for most authors of slave narratives, bloody, violent, and lasting. This process was intentional by southern slave masters. The process of seasoning required young slaves to be taught obedience and fear in order to keep them docile and servile. It is easy to get literarily moved by the vivid nature of the prose and the craft in which Douglass articulates his view while he ironically states that

[114] Douglass, 258

he wished he had the words to do so. One can get bogged down in the discussions of the natures of his two masters and the beatings and horror stories but underneath it all Douglass is making claims for a progression of his understanding. The "blood-stained gate" he passed through was the beginning of his education. Though I consider the first four chapters to be centered on Douglass' articulation of his state of ignorance, he did not lack an education in his early years. Douglass learned how to be a slave. He learned about a code of ethics between slaves, "The slaveholders have been known to send in spies among their slaves, to ascertain their views and feelings in regard to their condition. The frequency of this has had the effect to establish among the slaves a maxim, that a still tongue makes a wise head. They suppress the truth rather than take the consequences of telling it, and in doing so prove themselves a part of the human family.[115]" He also learned a perverse pride slaves had in their condition, "they seemed to think that the greatness of their masters was transferable to themselves. It was considered as being bad enough to be a slave; but to be a poor man's slave was deemed a disgrace indeed![116]"

These forms of "knowledge" Douglass hardly counts as an education. They were the products and facilitators of his servitude. Even his recognition of the sorrow songs, as powerful as they are emotional, remain simply that; emotional. The sorrow songs stir the soul and communicate suffering, "every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains," but nevertheless in all their beauty they were ineffective because most masters and other whites had, "no flesh in [their] obdurate heart[s].[117]" Communicability of one's ideas and sentiments was important to Douglass. Even at the ushering into the slave culture, the want he relates is not deliverance but want

[115] Douglass, 266
[116] Douglass, 267
[117] Douglass, 263

of the means to preserve his sentiments in words; "It was the blood-stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery, through which I was about to pass. It was a most terrible spectacle. I wish I could commit to paper the feelings with which I beheld it.[118]" By the end of chapter 4 Douglass succeeded in articulating a clear picture of the nature of plantation life, giving "some description of it, and of slavery as it there existed." Young, fully inculcated into the slave culture, yet thirsty for a means by which he could express and preserve his thoughts and feelings.

This, for means of consistency, would be the first time disunity. Douglass was sent to Baltimore to live with Captain Thomas Auld. This was critical to him because "it is possible, and even quite probable, that but for the mere circumstance of being removed from that plantation to Baltimore, [he] should have [then], instead of being [there] seated by [his] own table, in the enjoyment of writing [his] Narrative, been confined in the galling chains of slavery.[119]" Douglass' move to Baltimore brought him into contact with Mrs. Auld who would teach him the rudiments of reading and writing. This was the first step towards knowledge and understanding for Douglass. Had he not realized the magnitude of her gift, it was quickly and callously reinforced by Mr. Auld's insistence that Mrs. Auld cease instructing Douglass for not only was it unlawful but furthermore it was dangerous because his value as a slave was contingent on his naïveté. Mr. Auld's words "sank deep into [Douglass'] heart, stirred up sentiments within that lay slumbering, and called into existence an entirely new train of thought. It was a new a special revelation, explaining dark and mysterious things, which [his] youthful understanding had struggled, but struggled in vain. [He] now understood what had been to [him] a most

[118] Douglass, 258
[119] Douglass, 273

perplexing difficulty- to wit, the white man's power enslave the black man. It was a grad achievement, and [he] prized it highly. From that moment, [he] understood the pathway from slavery to freedom.[120]" Naturally the text as autobiographical is reflective in nature. Douglass' knowledge of the relationship between his literacy and his freedom is mostly hindsight. Nevertheless he is very clear in that it is literacy that is the doorway to freedom. The ability to learn and communicate with others for Douglass is critical in acquiring freedom. For our purposes this is only half our concern for the recognition of freedom's importance is only a step towards realizing the manner in which freedom enables men to move closer to a sense of self-completion as a human being. This transformation had yet to occur for Douglass hence the beginning of his education led to an insatiable desire for the self-assurance only literacy could bring for through literacy Douglass gained the ability to, rather than rely on others, to teach himself new ideas and truths as he saw fit.

Once Douglass had a taste of literacy he ached for more. When Mr. Auld forbade Mrs. Auld against instructing Douglass, she complied and no longer taught him so he had to find instruction elsewhere. Douglass retroactively determined himself to be around 12 when he decided to compensate for his loss of Mrs. Auld through what he labeled as "various stratagems." While performing his tasks as an errand boy Douglass utilized the privilege his master enjoyed over his neighbors to his advantage. Recognizing that the children along his route could be coerced with the fresh bread that was readily available at his master's house, Douglass used portions of bread as payment in exchange for daily lessons from several school age boys. The "bread [he] used to bestow upon the little hungry urchins, who, in return, would give [him] that more valuable bread of

[120] Douglass, 275

knowledge.[121]" The more Douglass learned to read and write, the more he read and wrote. This was the key to the next time disunity in the epochs of Douglass' life.

"I was now about twelve years old, and the thought of being *a slave for life* began to bear heavily upon my heart. Just about this time, I got hold of a book entitled "The Colombian Orator." Every opportunity I got, I used to read this book.[122]" Here we begin to see Douglass move from recognizing freedom as desirable and knowledge as being central to those who are free, to an actual act of one's free will and self-determination. Though Douglass clearly in his narrative and other writings and speeches labels the entire process of growing from illiteracy into literacy as being transformative of his life yet I would claim that en route to his freedom, his first free acts were not his literal first steps on New York soil. Douglass was free when "I got a hold of a book," and "every opportunity I got, I used to read this book." This was the beginning of self agency in the making of one's self. Douglass decided to read and decide if what he read was true or not true. The ideas he took from the *Colombian Orator* would shape his life. The importance is not the ideas of freedom and morality he found in the text, rather, it was the fact that *he chose to read and chose to believe the ideas in the text without manipulation*. With this act of choice "the silver trump of freedom had aroused [his] soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever.[123]" Abolition, freedom, escape, freedom were words that would burden him until their full realization in the years to come every day of his life.

Literacy had brought about not only the desire for freedom, but the resolve to act in Douglass. This new period of boldness and contriving is the next epoch in Douglass'

[121] Douglass, 278
[122] Douglass, 278
[123] Douglass, 279

life. The "captive freeman" as Douglass now was, one conscious of their unjust captivity aching to be free, as Mr. Auld said years ago, brought Douglass little to no happiness. "Behold! That very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish…it opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out…I preferred the condition of the meanest reptile to my own.[124]" Douglass "often found [himself] regretting [his] own existence, and wishing [himself] dead; and but for the hope of being free, [He had] no doubt but that [he] should have killed [himself], or done something for which [he] should have been killed.[125]" Chapters 8-10 depict Douglass' response to his desire for freedom which manifests itself into a plan to procure his freedom along with a myriad of new realizations and perspectives. Because of his acquisition of literacy, Douglass now understood more that the average slave. Overheard conversations, once gibberish, were now full of both useful and hurtful information. This was demonstrated clearly in the beginning of chapter VIII. When Douglass' old master died he was sent back to Colonel Lloyd's Plantation to be valued. He realized not only by visual and context clues but also through knowledge of words the actual proceedings of which he was a part; the equating of human life with animals. "I saw then more clearly than ever the brutalizing effects of slavery upon both slave and slaveholder.[126]" Though Douglass depicts the difference between himself and his fellow slaves as one of seasoning and physical conditioning, the active process of resisting one's acceptance to a fate they know is naturally not theirs demonstrates that Douglass' differences are far more than a more kind and modest master. His education and literacy allowed him to

[124] Douglass, 279
[125] Douglass, 279
[126] Douglass, 282

reflect upon his position in such a manner that prevented the ordeal of the valuation from breaking his soul. Fear rose in his heart at the open callous acts of violence, but it never allowed him to become one with the possibility of being ontologically a slave for whom freedom is not an inalienable right.

Another example of Douglass' new perspective occurred shortly after the valuation. After returning to Baltimore, an argument between his masters resulted in Douglass' being informed that he was to leave and would never be allowed to return to Baltimore. More evidence that literacy meant more than his physical circumstance, he lamented not being transferred where he would me certainly be treated more harshly and forced to labor more, his primary concern was his inability to continue his lessons. Literacy was his life's primary want. Nevertheless, Douglass in hindsight realized his missed opportunity. He regretted never having made an attempt to escape while in Baltimore for his chances at success were markedly greater in the city than in the country. Despite his vigor and determination to be free, he lacked the perspective to think and act in a manner that would procure his freedom. The desire to be free rose negatively from the horrors of the plantation, the means to become free came from the literacy he acquired in Baltimore, yet both were worthless without the courage and conviction that came from the world perspective and self-esteem that only an adequate degree of literacy and knowledge could provide. While in Baltimore, though he was acquiring literacy, he had yet to reflect on ideas, concepts, and life. This reflection did not occur until he read the *Colombian Orator*; nevertheless, his "determination to run away was again revived. [He] resolved to wait only so long as the offering of a favorable opportunity. When that

came, [he] was to be determined off.[127]" Gaining knowledge of the route both from his destination to Baltimore and recognizing the direction of a ferry off to Philadelphia gave Douglass hope of later devising a plan of escape.

Chapter IX is interesting when juxtaposed against the first four chapters. First off, Douglass took note to mention that he "had now reached a period in [his] life when [he] can give dates.[128]" This was no little accomplishment for it underscored the progression of his literacy, understanding, and proverbial entrance into history which for many philosophers is made possible only through reason. In all four chapters Douglass is describing his circumstances, masters, and their mannerisms, and demeanors. There is a difference between his articulation of his maters in the beginning of the text and his description of Captain Auld. In the first four chapters Douglass took care to relate happenings and dispositions. Master did this and master did that, sometimes he would this, and sometimes he would that, one time I remember this or that happening. Douglass' tone in chapter IX was different. Though he still related happenings, he also began relating a coded argument against religious hypocrisy whose target could easily been any of the non-abolitionists reading his manuscript.

> "In August 1832, my master attended a Methodist camp-meeting held in the Bay-side, Talbot county, and there experienced religion. I indulged a faint hope that his conversion would lead him to emancipate his slaves, and that, if he did not do this, it would, at any rate, make him more kind and humane. I was disappointed in both these respects. It neither made him be humane to his slaves, nor to emancipate them. If it had any effect on his character, it made him more cruel and hateful in all his ways; for I believe him to have been a much worse man after his conversion than before. Prior to his conversion, he relied upon his own depravity to shield and sustain him in his savage barbarity; but after his conversion, he found religious sanction and support for his slaveholding cruelty. He made the greatest pretentions to piety. His house was the house of prayer. He prayed morning, noon, and night. He very soon distinguished himself among his brethren, and was soon made a class-leader and exhorter. His activity in

[127] Douglass, 285
[128] Douglass, 285

> revivals was great, and he proved himself an instrument in the hands of the church in converting many souls. His house was the preacher's home. They used to take great pleasure in coming there to put up; for while he starved us, he stuffed them.[129]"

Douglass was levying a claim not only at his master but at religious proponents of slavery in general. The first four chapters were more a relation of the horrid circumstances slaves found themselves in where chapter nine was an argument that God and religion were insufficient in transforming the hearts of slave masters. Despite the repeated appeals to human charity and love, Douglass realized that slavery had in fact corrupted the masters far more than he thought. Still believing in "the power of truth over the conscience of even a slaveholder,[130]" Douglass realized that the "truth" would require far more than religion or Biblical claims. This I believe was the origin of Douglass' lifelong commitment legal reform and oral debates as opposed to relying only on religious convictions alone for the conversion of new believers in the abolitionists' cause. That Douglass' concerns where now the degree to which men exemplified the ideologies they professed rather than just which master was more lenient, and who got beat, and how hard, demonstrates the progression of his rational concerns. Douglass had clearly moved from concerns only of self-preservation to contemplations on truth and the consistency of one's acts with their professed claims. The rudiments of literacy had bloomed into both the contemplation and articulation of universal concepts like justice, fairness, and equality. These notions, rather than remaining in the gut as emotional urges that something is just not right, have matured into a capacity to analyze the actions of others. Both the knowledge of these concepts and the application of them to his natural condition

[129] Douglass, 287
[130] Douglass, 278

enabled him in chapter X to confront Mr. Covey and to realize the transformation of his consciousness into that of a free man.

In 1832 Douglass had difficulty submitting to the life of a productive slave. As a result his master, recognizing the degree to which his other masters had "spoiled" him, sent his away to a known "nigger breaker" and respected church leader named Mr. Covey. Though Douglass had through his education ignited the passions of freedom in his soul, his experiences at Mr. Covey's succeeded in extinguishing them. "Mr. Covey succeeded in breaking me. I was broken in body, soul, and spirit. My natural elasticity was crushed, my intellect languished, the disposition to read departed, the cheerful spark that lingered about my eye died; the dark night of slavery closed in upon me; and behold a man transformed into a brute![131]" Disheartened, Douglass devolved to the life of a field Negro. His experiences with Mr. Covey had exacerbated him such that he sought freedom not within his own agency but from without. He sought help in mere compliance; that did not work. He sought help from Master Thomas; he would not help. To the contrary, Master Thomas threatened Douglass with a beating of his own if he did not go back to Mr. Covey and finish his year of service. After fleeing a sure beating on his return to Covey's Douglass, while biding time in the woods ran into a slave named Sandy Jenkins whom Douglass considered an advisor. After hearing Douglass' plight, Sandy suggested that he go back to Mr. Covey but to also he "must go with him into another part of the woods, where there was a certain *root*, which, if [he] would take some of it with [him], carrying it *always on [his] right side*, would render it impossible for Mr. Covey, or any other white man, to whip [him].[132]" Initially skeptical Douglass relented,

[131] Douglass, 293
[132] Douglass, 297

took the root, and went back to Mr. Covey. The root seemed to work at first. When Douglass got back he was not whipped and was merely instructed to finish a few tasks. At this juncture in the story Douglass is eventually threatened with a beating which he resists and accomplishes the feat of impressing Mr. Covey to cease beating him thus restoring a margin of dignity in his manhood. Though this is both critical and transformative in the text I would argue that more important to the physical retaliation is the rational brokenness that Douglass experienced before his decision to fight. Douglass explained after experiencing unusual kindness from Mr. Covey, "Now, this singular conduct of Mr. Covey really made me begin to think that there was something in the *root* which Sandy had given me; and had it been on any other day than Sunday, I could have attributed the conduct to no other cause than the influence of that root; and as it was, I was half inclined to think the *root* to be something more than I at first had taken it to be.[133]" Though Douglass admits earlier in the chapter that Mr. Covey had succeeded in breaking him, the truth was that he hadn't. Douglass still retained a certain amount of pride which allowed him to have the audacity to attempt to seek refuge in Master Thomas. Though he was becoming pessimistic and agreeable, Douglass had not yet reverted to a mere conciliatory field Negro until he began to believe in the root. The root represented all that he aspired to leave behind when he learned the importance of book learning and the power it had over slaves. Folk wisdom or slave knowledge, though effective in maintaining a margin of sanity in slaves, merely kept the slaves docile and agreeable to their own enslavement; the idea that a root would keep him safe, thus permitting him to just do his job peacefully was such a placation. Like the sorrow songs, the false pride slaves had in their master's wealth, the honor of comradery among slaves,

[133] Douglass, 297

the root gave the slaves a placating peace that enabled them to forgo their own agency and natural right to fight for their freedom. The return to a state of ignorance he had not been in since a child was a breaking point for Douglass which I believe, gave him the resolve to fight despite the fact Douglass claims to not know the origin of this sentiment. After the fight with Mr. Covey Douglass states,

> "This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave. I rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. It recalled the departed self confidence, and inspired me again with a determination to be free. The gratification afforded by the triumph was a full compensation for whatever else might follow, even death itself. He only can understand the deep satisfaction which I experienced, who has himself repelled by force the bloody arm of slavery, I felt as I never felt before. It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom. My long-crushed spirit rose, cowardice departed, bold defiance took its place; and I now resolved that, however long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when I could be a slave in fact. I did not hesitate to let it be known of me, that the white man who expected to succeed in whipping me, must also succeed in killing me. From this time I was never again what might be called fairly whipped, though I remained a slave four years afterwards. I had several fights, but was never whipped.[134]"

Those interpreting this quote may afford too much attention to the phrase "repelled *by force* the bloody arm of slavery," yet I claim that the entire quote Douglass is referring more to the resurrection of his being guided by reason rather than traditional folk wisdom. He states in three places verbs with the prefix "re": rekindled, revived, and recalled. He also used the adverb again. All four terms point to a return to a previous state. Nowhere in the narrative does Douglass mention the use of force so this return the he speaks of could not be referring to his use of force. Rather the expiring embers of freedom were the same embers ignited by his acquisition of literacy. The force used in repelling slavery I do not believe was merely his physical arm but his choice to believe

[134] Douglass 298-299

his own worth whatever the cost[135]. Be believed himself free despite the attempts of other slaves to render him docile through their folk wisdom, despite his masters who tried to beat him into submission, despite his own physical and mental doggedness, Douglass' spirit persevered to *think* itself free thus making the agency of a physical struggle of defense possible. The "feeling that he never felt before" was the resolve to accept death before reverting back to a state of docility which only ignorance of his worth as a human being could bring. Thus without being physically free, underscoring once again that the repulsion of the bloody arm of slavery was not necessarily corporeal in nature, Douglass was free. Free in mind, free in spirit, free in his ability to learn and construct his world view and his destiny on his own. This transformation leads to the final time disunity in the narrative and Douglass' eventual physical escape from bondage.

In the final stages of chapter 10 Douglass related a failed attempt at gaining freedom which finally came to fruition in chapter 11. Despite the ordeals he experienced in these pages, the effect on Douglass' narrative with respect to his claims of what Christian America could and should do to bring liberty to the slaves in bondage these experiences had is marginal. Though one could note that during the failed escape the primary concern of those in custody was not their physical captivity or possible punishment but the possession of the written notes which points to the claim that the possession of knowledge is dangerous, there is one other notable exception. While staying with Mr. Freeland, Douglass was able to keep a Sabbath school where he was permitted to instruct other slaves in letters and in Christ. "I look back to those Sundays with an amount of pleasure not to be expressed. They were great days to my soul. The

[135] One must also remember the fervor with which Douglass pursued literacy. Douglass was denied further education and he decided to take it through the coercion of the white children along his route. The force Douglass refers to in throwing off the bloody arm of slavery could also refer back to this as well.

work of instructing my dear fellow-slaves was the sweetest engagement with which I was ever blessed…Every moment they spent in that school, they were liable to be taken up, and given thirty-nine lashes. They came because they wished to learn. Their minds had been starved by their cruel masters. They had been shut up in mental darkness. I taught them, because it was the delight of my soul to be doing something that looked like bettering the condition of my race…And I have the happiness to know, that several of those who came to Sabbath school learned how to read; and one, at least, is now free through my agency.[136]" Here Douglass makes it clear that the path to freedom is not the physical beating down of one's master but through the enlightenment that comes from literacy and the self-agency it provides. The power of literacy is so potent that once gained, it can spread to others as he explains.

We find that the narrative, though an explicit story of the exploits of one individual, contains a claim supported through the life experiences of the protagonist. Literacy is crucial to freedom. Without literacy, one is forced to accept the truths and ideas that are handed to him, or to forge baseless beliefs to assuage man's mind's desire to be fed information. The culmination of Douglass redemption and escape from bondage came not when he was physically free or safe to walk about New York as he saw fit, nor was it when he came under control of his finances. Douglass' freedom came from the self-affirmation made possible through his own agency that was awakened through the ideas and truths he acquired via reading. Douglass was free the moment he accepted death over the acceptance that his station in life was to be determined by another who would give him the truths he needed to know about himself. We are brought back to the beginning of the text. Douglass, though intentionally made ignorant of

[136] Douglass, 304

himself, his age, his father, estranged from his mother and a sense of self and purpose in life, finds himself and defines himself for himself which finally in the end gives him something worth dying for. It seems fitting that Douglass in his text would quote Patrick Henry while plotting his escape, "In coming to a fixed determination to run away, we did more than Patrick Henry, when he resolved upon liberty or death. With us it was a doubtful liberty at most, and almost certain death if we failed. For my part, I should prefer death to hopeless bondage.[137]"

[137] Douglass, 306

CHAPTER SIX: HENRY BIBB AND THE NARRATIVE OF LOVE AND THE SANCTITY OF THE FAMILY UNIT

> "When I offered myself for matrimony, we mutually engaged ourselves to each other, to marry in one year…we had the happiness to be joined in holy wedlock. Not in slave-holding style, which is a mere farce, without the sanction of law or gospel; but in accordance with the laws of God and our country. My beloved wife is a bosom friend, a help-meet, a loving companion in all the social, moral, and religious relations of life. She is to me what a poor slave's wife can never be to her husband while in the condition of a slave; for she can not be true to her husband contrary to the will of her master. She can be neither pure nor virtuous, contrary to the will of her master. She dare not refuse to be reduced to a state of adultery at the will of her master; from the fact that the slaveholding law, customs, and teachings are all against the poor slaves.
>
> I presume there are no class of people in the United States who so highly appreciate the legality of marriage as those persons who have been held and treated as property.[138]"

Born into slavery in Shelby County Kentucky, Henry Bibb eventually escaped the physical conditions of slavery for good in January of 1842. Though Bibb never became a politician and diplomat like Douglass, he nevertheless became every bit the abolitionist establishing the first Black newspaper in Canada: "Voice of the Fugitive." After the futility of rescuing his family from the grips of slavery, Bibb turned is sights to the overall plight of slavery itself. The forum of the "Voice of the Fugitive," was indispensable as it gave ex-slaves a platform from which they could simultaneously voice their opinions and demonstrate contrary evidence of their supposed lack of morality, rationality, and literacy.

"Flogged up" in Shelby County Kentucky, Bibb resoundingly experienced similar plights to other slaves who also wrote narratives. Experiencing loneliness and emptiness almost since birth, Bibb was a quintessential slave. "I can truly say, that I drank deeply of the bitter cup of suffering and woe. I have been dragged down to the lowest depths of

[138] Bibb, Henry. *The Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb An American Slave*. Introduction by Charles J. Heglar. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001. pp. 191-192 (Hereafter referenced as Bibb)

human degradation and wretchedness, by Slaveholders.[139]" Bibb, like most other mulattos, possessed memories of his mother, yet never knew his father. Though he was told his father was James Bibb by his mother, he never met him or discovered any corroborating evidence that he could use to confirm the claim. Sheltered initially from the hardships of slavery, Bibb was sent out to be useful the moment his age permitted. Around the age of 8 he was already providing for the education of his playmates.

Borrowing paradigmatically from Douglass, Bibb too uses cynicism and irony to challenge slavery and the logic of its justification by slave owners. Bibb states that, "Reader, believe me when I say, that no tongue, nor pen ever has or can express the horrors of American Slavery. Consequently I despair in finding language to express adequately the deep feeling of my soul, as I contemplate the past history of my life.[140]" Though an obvious attempt to elevate the reader's conscious far beyond the limits of the definitions of the words on the page, the statement also serves ironically as a contradiction in that despite the admitted futile attempts, the author, in this case Henry Bibb, is actually achieving that which he claims is not possible. The ramifications of this only serve to solidify the abolitionist message of the text. First, it protects the idea of slavery as an inexplicable horror, which requires immediate action, rather than the mere relation of a tale, which, though unfortunate, has little to no reverberations that require action on the part of the reader absent their preexisting empathy or sympathy. Second, the practice of the writing of that which is presumed indescribable through writing enables the ex-slave authors to demonstrate their literary prowess through the practice of achieving that which is admittedly thought to be unachievable. Insofar as the text

[139] Bibb, 13-14
[140] Bibb, 15

succeeds in painting a picture of American Slavery in the reader and summoning emotions that may lead towards abolitionist attempts, the text achieves the professed impossible. In so doing, the text becomes demonstrative of more than the demonstration of the literacy of the ex-slave authors; this act is an illustration of the *mastery* of the English language by those who were presumed to be incapable of merely attaining proficiency in it. Further, as an affront to those who continue to strive to keep slaves ignorant, Bibb, like Douglass, explains the futility of such an enterprise. "Although I have suffered much from the lash, and for want of food and raiment; I confess that it has been no disadvantage to be passed through the hands of so many families, as the only source of information that I had to enlighten my mind, consisted in what I could see and hear from others. Slaves were not allowed books, pen, ink, or paper, to improve their minds. But it seems to me now, that I was particularly observing, and apt to retain what came under my observation. But more especially, all that I heard about liberty and freedom to the slaves, I never forget. Among other good trades I learned the art of running away to perfection. I made a regular business of it, and never gave it up until I had broken the bands of slavery.[141]" Though Bibb did not acquire literacy at an early age, he nevertheless picked up an equally valuable nugget of knowledge: the ability to escape. This demonstrated that despite the attempts of slave owners to keep the slaves ignorant and docile, they were irreversibly, undeniably human and would not merely rest in servitude. Each interaction with slaves brought them one-step closer to freedom regardless of its nature. Abolition was posited conceptually as an inevitability.

Though his narrative in many was paradigmatic, Bibb departed from most slave narratives in a unique fashion. Most narratives, like Douglass', utilized the outset of the

[141] Bibb, 15

narrative to capture the reader emotionally with tales of horrid actions by supposed Christian men. Beatings, floggings, mutilations were commonplace both in reality and in the depiction of that reality in the narratives of those who lived through those experiences. Much of the pain, trauma, and ironically hope, and initiative to free one's self came as the result of the brutality expressed at the very beginnings of the lives of the ex-slave authors. This was not the case for Bibb. Bibb, though he gives his analysis of the conditions faced by slaves in the American south, he does not dwell on vivid imagery and stymie in the violent early years of his introduction to the peculiar institution of slavery. This is because Bibb was neither shaped nor solely motivated through the fear of being eternally subjected to his heinous condition of servitude. His courtship to his wife would define his character and ambitions, and eventually become the condition for his eventual permanent freedom. It is here that we can interject a time disunity into Bibb's life. Distinct from his early years, Bibb's courtship, eventual marriage, and the trails he faced trying to defend his family make up the second epoch of his life and our first time disunity within the narrative.

"To think that after I had determined to carry out the great idea which his so universally and practically acknowledged among all the civilized nations of the earth, that I would be free or die, I suffered myself to be turned aside by the fascinating charms of a female, who gradually won my attention from an object so high as that of liberty; and an object which I held paramount to all others…when I had arrived at the age of eighteen, which was in the year of 1833, it was my lot to be introduced to the favor of a mulatto slave girl named Malinda.[142]" To say that Bibb fell in love would be a massive understatement. Bibb was wholly enraptured with his wife. So much so, that as he states

[142] Bibb, 33

in more than one place in the narrative, the thought of being with her rivaled, and sometimes almost replaced, his desire for liberty. The beginning of Chapter III serves as more of an ode to his wife to be. Yet, in the midst of his happiness, the reality of his circumstance burdened his joy. "But oh! that I had only then been enabled to have seen as I do now, or to have read the following slave code[iii], which is but a stereotyped law of American slavery. It would have saved me I think from having to lament that I was a husband and am the father of slaves who are still left to linger out their days in hopeless bondage.[143]" Bibb ruminates, on the vexing quandaries a civil, rational, Christian man, husband, father, wife, mother, woman, child, and slave all face when navigating these identities concurrently. Despite the typical hurdles all men and women face when endeavoring to forge a marriage, i.e. parental disapproval, other suitors, relationship spats, and child rearing, Bibb communicates that slave marital unions face additional daunting challenges.

First and foremost of the challenges slave unions face is their not being recognized by the state and their masters; "marriage among American slaves, is disregarded by the laws of this country. It is counted a mere temporary matter; it is a union which may be continued or broken off, with or without the consent of a slaveholder, whether he is a priest or libertine…A slave marrying according to law is a thing unknown in the history of American Slavery…Licentious white men, can and do enter in at night or day the lodging places of slaves; break up the bonds of affection in families; destroy all their domestic and social union for life; and the laws of the country afford them no protection.[144]" Despite their faith and even at times their willingness to

[143] Bibb, 35
[144] Bibb, 38

remain conciliatory to their masters, slaves were refused the right to marry and to maintain a sanctified home. The former is of little consequence because slaves devised all types of ceremonies and rituals that in their eyes united man and woman as husband and wife without the jurisdiction of American law. The latter however was overwhelmingly problematic, especially for Christians for whom chastity was a Godly commandment and repeated adultery was sin. More than liberty, slave owners and those they permitted, had the license to violate repeatedly the unifying bonds of slave marriages primarily and most frequently though the violent act of rape or the equally abhorrent coerced willful intercourse. Husbands and wives were each prey to the sexual whims of their masters, forced to fall into sin and disgrace their marriage repeatedly. The dissolution of chastity within the marriage created distrust and in many cases disgust between husband and wife especially in Christian marriages. Slave unions were faced with the burden of "sharing" the bodies of their spouses against their will with those whom they loathed and despised on a regular basis.

The second challenge slave marriages faced above and beyond state recognized unions was the inability to reliably protect, console, and support one another in other non-sexual circumstances. Any marriage councilor or relationship expert would concur that trust is the centerpiece of any relationship. Without trust, humans have difficulty fully relying on one another. Husbands and wives by traditional Christian doctrines, are supposed to be best friends, the primary companions of one another, marital partners are confidants par excellence. Aside from the sexual brutality committed against slave marriages, the typical trademark experiences of slavery also had a unique toll on the trust in a marriage. Whippings, floggings, beatings, brandings, and other medieval tortuous

practices were commonplace and married individuals were not spared in the least. These occurrences however did more than damage the individual psyches of those afflicted, the trust between husbands and wives were tarnished with each occurrence. The husband's inability to "save and protect" his wife from the brutal whip, or a wife's being prevented from soothing the wounds of a fresh flogging of her husband undermined the basic trust and faith each needed to have in one another to build a stable Christian union. Husbands and wives are supposed to help, protect, and nurture one another. These basic tasks were made impossible for the members of slave unions. Along with a lack of trust and faith on behalf of one spouse, there was paired an equally damaging depression and self-abasing on behalf of the other.

> "With my new residence I confess that I was much dissatisfied. Not that Gatewood was a more cruel master than my former owner- not that I was opposed to living with Malinda, who was then the centre and object of my affections- but to live where I must be eye witness to her insults, scourgings and abuses, such are common to be inflicted upon salves, was more than I could bear. If my wife must be exposed to the insults and licentious passions of the wicked slave-drivers and overseers; if she must bear the stripes of the lash laid on by an unmerciful tyrant; if this is to be done with impunity, which is frequently done by slaveholders and their abettors, Heaven forbid that I should be compelled to witness the sight.[145]"

The third, and perhaps most trying of the three challenges to a slave union is the bearing and rearing of children. A complex problem, bearing children is considered by most a blessed occasion for a married couple. This however was not often the case for slave unions. As per the first unique challenge to slave unions I outlined above, chastity was almost non-existent in slave unions. As the master, his family, and his minions helped themselves to both husband and wife alike, slaves were almost powerless against the sin of adultery. A biological consequence of fornication naturally resulted in bastardized

[145] Bibb, 42

children. Many children reared by slave mothers were the result of rape and forced intercourse. This fact created an almost instant doubt in the mind of any slave husband whose wife was with child. Quite often slave husbands had to simply deal with the fact that their wives were impregnated by any number of white men who had legitimated access to her body by virtue of her being a slave. As if this difficulty were not enough, even in the cases where a slave husband and wife procreated a child willingly, the task of being a caring, nurturing, and protective parent was more than a notion. As was the challenge for husbands and wives to care and nurture one another despite the antagonism of the slave master, the task of doing the same for children was increasingly difficult. Having inherently more value due to their docility, ability to be coerced, and their youth, slave children were prized by slave owners. As such, slave children were quickly seasoned and watched carefully by slave breakers and owners. Any number of heinous acts were committed against them daily in an effort to get them to "know their place." Against this, slave parents had little to no defense. The health and well-being of their children was out of their control. Most slave parents had no appeal to anyone but to God concerning the fate of their most precious children.

> "[My] dear little daughter was called Mary Frances…there was no one to take care of poor little Frances, while her mother was toiling in the field. She was left at the house to creep under the feet of an unmerciful old mistress, whom I have known to slap with her hand the face of little Frances, for crying after her mother, until her little face was left black and blue. I recollect that Malinda and myself came from the field one summer's day at noon, and poor little Frances came creeping to her mother smiling, but with large tear drops standing in her dear little eyes, sobbing and trying to tell her mother that she had been abused, but not able to utter a word. Her little face was bruised black with the whole print of Mrs. Gatewood's hand. This print was plainly to be seen for eight days after it was done. But oh! This darling child was a slave; born of a slave mother. Who can imagine what could be the feelings of a father and mother, when looking upon their infant child whipped and tortured with impunity, and they placed in a

> situation where they could afford it no protection. But we were all claimed and held as property; the father and mother were slaves![146]"

Above these circumstances, as if he high probability that the child was not biologically procreated in the union, and the near impossibility of protecting the child from injury and abuse were not enough, the children of slaves were removed from their biological parents quickly and almost without exception. Slave parents more often than not were well aware that they most likely would rear a child to a pre-pubescent age and never see that child again. Nevertheless most slave parents cherished their children and held fast to the unlikely hope that they could live to see their children grow free and succeed in life where they failed, as impractical a dream it may have been.

These three burdens were the unique plight of slaves who wished to be married. This gives credence to Bibb's claim that the union of marriage was far more sacred and important to slaves than freedmen for the simple fact that it took more of a sacrifice and more endurance to remain bound husband and wife as a slave than it did free men and women. Though admittedly ignorant of the full obligation he was committing himself to, Bibb, fully infatuated with Malinda, chose to get married and subject himself to the aforementioned trials and tribulations. The next few years of his life would be spent attempting to mitigate that which was intentionally created to be incommensurable. As a slave Bibb was intended to be solitary, docile, and dependant. As a husband and father Bibb endeavored to be unified with his family, aggressive in their defense, and independent is his ability to provide and care for their well-being. Needless to say, Bibb could not do both simultaneously. In an effort to both follow his conscience and be reverent to his God, Bibb sought to rid himself of the hindrances to his most important

[146] Bibb, 43

role; that of a husband and father. Bibb made multiple attempts to escape, most of which were successful. Each time he returned to rescue his family and without exception, he was recaptured.

Seemingly insatiable in his attempts, Bibb by chapter 13 had found himself subject to a most disagreeable master. The Deacon, as he was called, had decided to sell Bibb after sparing his life and not killing him after his latest attempt to run away from the Deacon's farm. After a successful sale, Bibb's reputation, which preceded him, as a runaway worked to his advantage as he convinced his new gambling owners that their intent to resell him would be more successful if they managed to procure his wife and child, as he would be less likely to runaway knowing they were safe with him. Though he did not know at that time, this would be the last time he ever would see his wife and child again. Unique in comparison to the myriad other attempts at freeing his family, the experience of trying to buy his family makes up the third epoch and second time disunity of Bibb's narrative. While traveling from Texas to Indian Territory west of the Mississippi Bibb had convinced his owners to attempt to purchase his wife and child from the Deacon. Upon arrival, the agitated Deacon proved to be anything but conciliatory in the trade. In a dramatic scene, Bibb's wife clung to her husband sobbing and begging as his new masters pleaded the Deacon to sell. "Such appeals made no impression on the unfeeling Deacon's heart. While he was storming with abusive language, and even using the glory lash with hellish vengeance to separate husband and wife…[Bibb's masters] told him that they would give a thousand dollars for [his] wife and child, or anything in reason. But no! he sooner would see me to the devil than indulge or gratify [him] after [his] having run away from him; and if they did not remove

[Bibb] from his presence very soon, [the Deacon] said he would make them suffer for it.[147]" While this scene transpired Bibb's wife continually pleaded as did his daughter Frances look on as their pleas fell on deaf ears until, "when [Malinda] saw there was no help for [she and Bibb] and that [they] should soon be separated forever, in the name of Deacon Whitfield, and American Slavery to meet no more as husband and wife, parent and child—the last and loudest appeal was made on [their] knees. [They] appealed to God of Justice and to the sacred ties of humanity; but this was all in vain. The louder [they] preyed the harder he whipped, amid the most heart-rendering shrieks from the poor slave mother and child, as little Frances stood by, sobbing at the abuse inflicted on her mother.[148]" As traumatic as the experience was, all the drama was to no avail, as the Deacon simply would not sell Bibb's family and they were forced to leave empty handed. Bibb lived up to his word that if the sportsmen attempted to gain his family he would agree to be sold and act accordingly to help to sale go smoothly.

Chapters 14-17 of the narrative make up the fourth epoch in Bibb's life and come after the third time disunity. Bibb was sold to a Native American who eventually died giving Bibb the opportunity to take his leave and escape to the north. As many read slave narratives as entertainment, literarily the height of the action, the supposed transformation is the most important part of the story. Thus it would seem awkward in a text on freedom, during an explication of a slave narrative, one would make the claim that the moment of the final physical release from bondage was of a lesser consequence than what was to follow but that is my claim. Though Bibb relates the tail of his physical escape from bondage in chapters 14-17, like Douglass, this was not his escape from the

[147] Bibb. 146-147
[148] Bibb, 147

mental chains of slavery. Douglass was able to procure his freedom in his reclamation of his manhood through the replenishing of his self-worth that gave him the desire to fight. The rock bottom of beginning to believe the use-value of the root motivated Douglass to reclaim his recognition of a man worthy of freedom and endowed with the means to procure it. Bibb, like Douglass, was ambivalent to his physical bondage as enchained or not, his perception of his self-worth and status as a man, or free man resided in his ability to free his wife and child from bondage. Despite however many times Bibb reached a "free state," he never regarded himself as free because his wife and child were still in bondage. Thus, he returned to attempt to free them time and time again. In chapter 17 Bibb finds himself in Detroit affiliated with an abolitionist group and lecturing of his experiences. Despite the grotesque charade, he endured during his last attempt to free his family Bibb still possessed hope that he would one day succeed in removing them from slavery. We find that Bibb, despite his free status once again is willing to risk his liberty in the pursuit of his family's freedom. "In view of the failure to hear anything of my wife, many of my best friends advised me to get married again, if I could find a suitable person. They regarded my former wife as dead to me, and all had been done that could be. But I was not yet satisfied myself, to give up. I wanted to know certainly what had become of her. So in the winter of 1845, I resolved to go back to Kentucky, my native state, to see if I could hear anything from my family.[149]"

Bibb's findings that winter would make up the fourth time disunity and fifth epoch of his life. Once in Kentucky Bibb found out that his wife had become the willful concubine of her master. It is this moment that Bibb, unfortunately, became free of his marital bonds and free from servitude to forge a new life.

[149] Bibb, 188

> "No sooner had I landed in Madison, than I learned, on inquiry, and from good authority, that my wife was living in a state of adultery with her master, and had been for the last three years. This message she sent back to Kentucky, to her mother and friends. She spoke of the time and manner of our separation by Deacon Whitfield, my being taken off by the Southern black legs, to where she knew not; and that she had finally given me up. The child was still with her. Whitfield had sold her to this man for the above purposes at a high price, and she was better used than ordinary slaves. This was a death blow to all my hopes and pleasant plans…From that time I gave her up into the hands of an all-wise Providence. As she was then living with another man, I could no longer regard her as my wife. After all the sacrifices, sufferings, and risks which I had run, striving to rescue her from the grasp of slavery; every prospect and hope was cut off. She has ever since been regarded as theoretically and practically dead to me as a wife, for she was living in a state of adultery, according to the law of God and man.[150]"

To say the least, Bibb was disappointed. Even more poignant, upon hearing the news that Malinda related herself, Bibb still required further corroboration and convincing from his mother to cease his attempts to be united with his wife and child. Upon resigning himself to his position, Bibb acknowledged his circumstance and decided to move on. "In view of all the facts and circumstances connected with this matter, I deem further comments and explanations unnecessary on my part. Finding myself thus isolated in this peculiarly unnatural state, I resolved, in 1846, to spend my days in traveling, to advance the anti-slavery cause. I spent the summer in Michigan, but in the subsequent fall I took a trip to New England, where I spent the winter. And there I found a kind reception wherever I traveled among the friends of freedom. While traveling about in this way among strangers, I was sometimes sick, with no permanent home, or bosom friend to sympathise or take that care of me which an affectionate friend would. So I conceived the idea that it would be better for me to change my position, provided I should find a suitable person.[151]" With this Bibb eventually marries again and moves on with his life,

[150] Bibb, 188-189
[151] Bibb, 190

concluding his narrative with a few closing remarks and recollections to close his narrative.

At first glance, this seems like just a mere romance novel with an unhappy ending. I argue that Bibb's love and loss is a claim for his ontological dependence on his wife and child for his recognition of himself as free. Like Douglass who was free despite his physical chains in his education, literacy, and self worth, Bibb was in a state of slavery despite his lack of chains because of his inability to free his wife and child and reconcile himself to them. This portrait of one's ontological dependence on their family is Biblical in nature and stands in contrast to the stratified depiction of the family found in European political philosophic texts prior to the 20th century. In traditional European, and then American, depictions of the family the father was presented as a master under which the wife and children had supporting roles. As found in chapter 6 of *The Two Treatise of Governent* by Locke, chapter XX of the *Leviathan* by Hobbes, and the entirety of Emile by Rousseau, the family was discussed primarily as its use value to the creation of the free man who was the father or the rearing and eventual freedom of a male heir. The family was intended to serve and support the free man yet he existed complete and autonomous to it. The family was a source of support and obligation yet it was fundamentally external to the ontological being of the freeman. A man could be free while his wife was enslaved. A man could consider himself free while his child was incarcerated. In exceptional instances, most notably in Hobbes' chapter XX, women can be conceptually posited as head of households yet in still, the family remains depicted as a power struggle between autonomous individuals rather than as a cohesive, ontologically interdependent unit. For Bibb, this was not the case. His existence had become

dependent on his wife and child. He could not consider himself a free man while his wife and child were in bondage. This belief has roots in his Christian faith as evidenced by the eventual dissolution of the marriage.

> "[18]And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. [19]And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. [20]And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. [21]And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; [22]And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. [23]And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. [24]Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. [25]And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.[152]"

Christianity tells us that God, when he constructed man, endeavored to find him a help meet. One who would not only serve, submit to, and aid Adam in his tasks, but to be a companion, nurturer, and most importantly, metaphysically bond to him in a fashion that would make them (husband and wife) one flesh before the eyes of God. "One flesh," as the scripture states Bibb took literally. To him, being in a state where he lacked chains or whips, he still considered himself bonded to the commitment he made to protect, nurture, and provide for his wife and child; his very being depended on their freedom. This is very different from the manner in which political philosophy during the early modern period forth depicted the marital union. Rather than Bibb being an isolated individual who seemed to have contacts to people to whom had befallen a terrible condition, he looked in the mirror and saw a half-slave. Half-in, half-out, Bibb saw the struggles, travails, and sufferings of his wife and child as his own because they were, as God

[152] Genesis 2:18-25

commanded one flesh, ontologically one person before God. Therefore no matter what luxury or opulence Bibb found himself in, he was still a slave because his better half was still in bondage. Hence his repeated attempts, not just to free his wife and child from servitude, but to make himself whole through their freedom. For Bibb, his status as a free-man was Biblically, ontologically, and metaphysically tied to the delivering of his wife and child from slavery. Further evidence of the Biblical basis of Bibb's recognition of his own freedom is seen through the dissolution of his marriage. In an innumerable amount of places, the Holy Bible labels both fornication and adultery as a sin. Because all sin is accounted turning away from God, those who sin willfully are considered Blasphemers who take God's name in vain. Bibb's wife "had finally given [him] up. The child was still with her. Whitfield had sold her to this man for the above purposes at a high price, and she was better used than ordinary slaves…She has ever since been regarded as theoretically and practically dead to [Bibb] as a wife, for she was living in a state of adultery, according to the law of God and man.[153]" The willingness of his wife to submit to the whims of her master was the equivalent of willful sin. Bibb's wife, in his eyes and according to the Christian doctrine, should have preferred death to her conceding to her status as a concubine. It is only sin that breaks his bond of marriage, not distance, not will, not hope, nor, material circumstance. This would explain why Bibb makes such a big deal about his second marriage being forged by law and in God's commandment. In scripture, that which is bound by God is protected by God. Bibb, possibly to protect his frail emotions relegated his first marriage to something God had not wrought, and his second to a union which was forged in Christ. This provided him closure for the past and hope for the future but most applicable to my claims, the unions

[153] Bibb, 189

were both based in Biblical reverence in which Bibb constructed his identity as ontologically dependent on his bond with his wife and their co-dependent child.

CHAPTER SEVEN: HARRIET JACOBS AND THE NARRATIVE OF WOMEN AND CHASTITY

> "During the first years of service in Dr. Flint's family, I was accustomed to share some indulgences with the children of my mistress. Though this seemed to me no more than right, I was grateful for it, and tried to merit the kindness by the faithful discharge of my duties. But now entered on my fifteenth year-a sad epoch in the life of a slave girl. My master began to whisper foul words in my ear. Young as I was, I could not remain ignorant of their import. I tried to treat them with indifference or contempt. The master's age, my extreme youth, and the fear that his conduct would be reported to my grandmother, made him bear this treatment for many months. He was a crafty man, and resorted to many means to accomplish his purposes…He tried his utmost to corrupt the pure principles my grandmother had instilled. He peopled my young mind with unclean images, such as only a vile monster could think of. I was compelled to live under the same roof with him- where I saw a man forty years my senior daily violating the most sacred commandments of nature. He told me I was his property; that I must be subject to his will in all things. My soul revolted against the tyranny. But where could I turn for protection? No matter whether the slave girl be as black as ebony or as fair as her mistress. In either case, there is no shadow of law to protect her from insult, from violence, or even from death; all these are inflicted by friends who bear the shape of men.[154]"

Harriet Jacobs[155] in an effort to add her "testimony to that of abler pens to convince the people of the Free States what Slavery really is" wrote *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* under the pen name Linda Brent. Privileged as much as a slave could consider themselves, Jacobs enjoyed a mild introduction to slavery until her she was eventually relinquished to Margaret Horniblow's five year old niece, and by default her father, Dr. James Norcom. A lifetime of enduring the lust and manipulations of men forged the life that Jacob shared in her narrative. Resisted and condemned by slave masters and their mistresses alike for her brutal honesty, Jacobs' narrative depicted life as an enslaved woman with all of its unspoken and often neglected vicissitudes. Though she

[154] Yellin, Jean Fagan. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000. p. 27 (Hereafter referenced as Jacobs)

[155] Jacobs wrote her text under the pen name Linda Brent. Also, throughout the text, the characters also are given pseudo-names. Extensive research done by Jean Fagan Yellin uncovered Jacobs' true identity as well as those of the characters in her narrative. This text will use the actual names of the characters uncovered by Yellin as opposed to the pseudo-names given by Jacobs.

had her fair share of speaking engagements and published letters and essays, Jacobs' abolitionist works were more grassroots in nature. Every bit as important to the cause, Jacobs participated in fundraisers, food drives, and medical shelters as well as many other events of this type. Ever ready to add her voice to abolitionist affairs, she penned letters, solicited funds and supplies, and drummed up support on behalf of many small organizations and concerned citizen groups aimed at the eventual dismantling of the slave culture of 19th century America.

A slave narrative by definition, Jacobs ironically spends the majority of her narrative outside of the direct authority of her master. Nevertheless, like Douglass and Bibb, her status as a slave was more than her legal designation as such or her actual physical bondage. As Douglass' chains where in his mind preventing the rise of his manhood and reason, and Bibb's chains were more a barrier that prevented him from being reconciled with his family outside of the boundaries of bondage, Jacobs' chains prevented her from conceptualizing herself beyond her sexuality. Harriet Jacobs, as was the case for women in bondage, was a sex object first, and a working slave second, and a human being never. Jacobs' spent the entire narrative trying to escape the pursuit of those who would reduce her to sexual servitude and though she was driven to use the same sexual wiles to manufacture aspects of her escape, it was Jacobs' wit and fortitude that eventually gained her freedom. Jacobs in her narrative relates many details of her life and experiences of which six main periods of her life construct what I would consider an argument for a unique requirement of freedom. Chapters 1-4 make up her introduction to slavery. Chapters 5-10 depict her involuntary and voluntary sexual awakening. 11-16 are the chapters where Jacobs encounters life as a slave mother in

bondage. Chapters 17-29 lay out the details of her impressive seven year confinement in her grandmother's attic. 30-40 are the chapters where Jacobs' continues to elude Dr. Norcom upon leaving the attic; and they lead to chapter 41 where Jacobs finally finds liberty. This path through the text illuminates Jacobs' insistence not only on her freedom from bondage and her care for her children, additionally it demonstrates Jacobs' insistence on her right to develop a worth as a woman independent from her sexual use value to men. *SHE* wanted to build a home for her children, not just care for them, and she was not going to wait around for Samuel Tredwell Sawyer, or any other man, to do it.

For an American slave in the 19th century, Jacobs was born into relative luxury. Born a slave in 1813 in Edenton North Carolina Jacobs, by her own admission, "never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed away.[156]" Due to the skill of her father and the luck of her mother and grandmother to have a descent mistresses, Jacobs had escaped much of the horrid, early images that plagued most common slaves in the plantation south. Nevertheless her fortunes changed by the age of six when her mother died. Left in the care of her grandmother's mistress she was put to more intensive labor but still nothing close to the degradation experienced by the majority of other American slaves at the time. "No toilsome or disagreeable duties were imposed upon me. My mistress was so kind to me that I was always glad to do her bidding, and proud to labor for her as much as my young years would permit…Those were happy days- too happy to last. The slave child had no thought for the morrow; but there came that blight, which too surely waits on every human being born to be a chattel.[157]" Around age 12 Jacobs' mistress died. Brief hopes that the bond her former mistress, she, her mother, and

[156] Jacobs, 5
[157] Jacobs, 7

grandmother shared would result in her being freed were dashed when her former mistress' will was read. She had been bequeathed to the daughter of her mistress' sister. Even before Jacobs had knew the totality of the calamity that had just descended upon her, she was adequately traumatized by the fact she had been sold.

> "My mistress had taught me the precepts of God's word: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.' But I was her slave, and I suppose she did not recognize me as her neighbor. I would give much to blot out from my memory that one great wrong…I try to think with less bitterness of this act of injustice…I bless her memory…Notwithstanding my grandmother's long and faithful service to her owners, not one of her children escaped the auction block. These God-breathing machines are no more, in the sight of their masters, than the cotton they plant, or the horses they tend.[158]"

If there remained any glimpse of freedom, any semblance of humane treatment, or feeling of self-mastery Jacobs may have fooled herself into keeping from her sheltered childhood it was shattered at the reading of her mistress' will. Jacobs was fully introduced to the annals of slavery and the depths to which those who were a part of it would sink to maintain status quo.

Jacobs was sent to stay with the sister of her former mistress and her husband, Dr. James Norcom. Unlike her former mistress, the Norcoms were typical owners who treated their slaves like the chattel their social status dictated they were. "Mrs. [Norcom], like many southern women was totally deficient in energy. She had not strength to superintend her household affairs; but her nerves were so strong, that she could sit easily in her chair and see a woman whipped, till blood trickled from every stroke of the lash. She was a member of the church; but partaking of the Lord's supper did not seem to put her in a Christian frame of mind. If dinner was not served at the exact time on that particular Sunday, she would station herself in the kitchen, and wait till it was dished, and

[158] Jacobs, 8

then spit in all the kettles and pans that had been used for cooking. She did this to prevent the cook and her children from eking out their meagre fare with the remains of the gravy and other scrapings…Dr. [Norcom] was an epicure. The cook never sent a dinner to his table without fear and trembling; for if there happened to be a dish not to his liking, he would either order her whipped, or compel her to eat every mouthful in his presence. The poor, hungry creature might not of objected to eating it; but she did object to having her master cram it down her throat till she choked.[159]" This was a new life for Jacobs. To make matters worse she was quickly initiated into her fate with the death of her father. Miserable, distraught, and in need of consoling, Jacobs had one meager request: to visit her dead father who was but under a mile away. The need flowers for an upcoming dinner party required Jacobs' time and attention preventing her from seeing her father. Jacobs was able to gain more insight to the manner in which her worth, or lack thereof, was constituted.

From this juncture in her life throughout the first four chapters, Jacobs' narrative read like a paradigmatic childhood awakening into slavery. It had just come much later in life for Jacobs. Whippings, floggings, and harsh treatment were the norm. Notably at the end of each chapter (one through four) is a scene of a mother struggling to get her children out of slavery in one form or another. In chapter one Jacobs' grandmother had hoped the death of her mistress would provide for the freedom of her children and grandchildren but this was not the case, they were all sold on the auction block despite her years of faithful service. At the end of chapter two is the story of a poor woman whose child was dying which led her to exclaim, "The baby is dead, thank God; and I

[159] Jacobs, 12

hope my poor child will soon be in heaven too,[160]" while being mocked by Mrs. Norcom in her pain and loss. Chapter three concludes with a woman who had hopes that having seven children would guarantee that she could keep one or two, hoping that they all could not possibly sell. This woman was sadly mistaken. The master auctioned off all of her children leaving her distraught, empty, and broken. Finally chapter four ended on a slightly better note with Jacobs' grandmother's son Joseph successfully escaping to New York. Despite the happiness her last remaining son Mark Ramsey was still in bondage and she still endeavored to labor for his freedom. Each ending highlights a different reality for slave women. Whether respected, diligent lifetime workers, grassroots abolitionists, or disregarded chattel, all slave women were subject to lose their children to servitude, the auction block, or death with little to no ability to stop it. No law would protect them, no man could save them, and no beneficence could be expected of those who enslaved them. As would be discovered latter in the narrative, slave women were empowered and protected by their own agency only. Those who rolled over and conciliatorily accepted their condition were used and lost their precious children, while those who acted proactively stood a chance to protect their seeds with their own hands.

It is apropos that the next epoch of her life was foreshadowed by her recognition of the importance of the right to protect children for slave mothers. The first time disunity brings us to the next phase of Jacobs' life: sexual awakening and eventually motherhood. Now fifteen, Jacobs had entered into what she referred to as "a sad epoch in the life of a slave girl." Now more mature emotionally and physically, her de facto master, Dr. Norcom began to lust after her sexually. Only a child, Jacobs was subject to innuendo and innuendo, advance after advance with little ability to resist without fear of

[160] Jacobs, 13

being reprimanded. Only sheer wit and cunning enabled her to strategically prevent her from being merely raped in broad daylight in what was supposed to be both her home and workplace. Ironically Jacobs demonstrated a clear grasp of her status as chattel and that the advances she received from Dr. Norcom were the result of his power, hormones, and unchecked social legitimacy gone mad. It was common for slaves to endure the ridiculous desires, demands, and expectations of members of the supposed higher class, namely white men. What troubled and surprised Jacobs most was not the behavior of Dr. Norcom, rather it was the actions, or lack thereof, of Mrs. Norcom. "The mistress, who ought to protect the helpless victim, has no other feelings towards her but those of jealousy and rage…I [explained what occurred between the master and I] as she ordered. As I went on with my account her color changed frequently, she wept, and sometimes groaned. She spoke in tomes so sad, that I was touched by her grief. The tears came to my eyes; but I was soon convinced that her emotions arose from anger and wounded pride. She felt that her marriage vows were desecrated, her dignity insulted; but she had no compassion for the poor victim of her husband's perfidy. She pitied herself as a martyr; but she was incapable of feeling for the condition of shame and misery in which her unfortunate, helpless slave was placed.[161]" Beyond the sheer amazement that she had to endure the mistress' misplaced anger and hostility Jacobs' emotions tell another story.

We find that Jacobs, through her frustration is suggesting something if not unheard of in the antebellum south, definitely unpopular; that African slave women were women who deserved to be championed in the same manner as White women by proponents of the meager women's movement of the time. If her mistress were at all concerned for the manner in which women were subject to the brutal whims and

[161] Jacobs, 33

advances of men and felt any solidarity with her as a woman she would at the very least not be angry at her for having to endure the burden of Dr. Norcom's innuendos. Jacobs' claim was a feminist call to arms for solidarity in which she was calling her mistress out for being a traitor. "I have not written my experiences in order to attract attention to myself; on the contrary, it would have been more pleasant to me to have been silent about my own history. Neither do I care to excite sympathy for my own sufferings. But I do earnestly desire to arouse the women of the North to a realizing sense of the condition of two millions of women at the South, still in bondage, suffering what I suffered, and most of them are far worse.[162]" Mrs. Norcom "possessed the key to her husband's character before I was born. She might have used this knowledge to counsel and to screen the young and the innocent among her slaves; but for them she had no sympathy. They were the objects of her constant superstition and malevolence.[163]" Jacobs illuminated the intersection between class and gender where seemingly universal and morally pure documents like "The Declaration of Independence" and "The Declaration of Sentiments" placed a double burden upon slave women. "Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women. Superadded to the burden common to all, *they* have wrongs, and sufferings, and mortifications peculiarly their own.[164]" To be Black and a woman was a unique burden more than either singularly. Included in the sufferings of each but excluded in the redemptive cries of each, Black women were left as outcasts and forced to champion their own cause for liberation and equal rights. Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, and others became glaring examples of warring souls whose dogged strength alone kept them from being torn asunder before Du Bois ever was penned his tern double

[162] Jacobs, 1
[163] Jacobs, 31
[164] Jacobs, 77

consciousness. Not worthy of being delivered from adultery, rape, and molestation by white women and their movement, and relegated to a "woman's place" as dependant and inferior by the larger abolitionist movement, the unique sufferings of Black women went unnoticed, unchallenged, most importantly, unaided.

> "Reader, I draw no imaginary pictures of southern homes. I am telling you the plain truth. Yet when victims make their escape from this wild beast of Slavery, northerners consent to act the part of bloodhounds, and hunt the poor fugitive back into his den, 'full of dead man's bones, and all uncleanness.' Nay, more, they are not only willing, but proud, to give their daughters in marriage to slaveholders. The poor girls have romantic notions of a sunny clime, and of flowering vines that all the year round shade a happy home. To what disappointments are they destined! The young wife soon learns that the husband in whose hands she has placed her happiness pays no regard to his marriage vows. Children of every shade of complexion play with her own fair babies, and too well she knows that they are born unto him of his own household. Jealousy and hatred enter the flowery home, and it is ravaged of its loveliness.[165]"

The burdens of slave women and slave men are obvious, but the tie between slave women and free women was uncharted territory. Jacobs uncovers the lewd and lascivious behavior of male slave masters yet more shockingly, she vocalizes the degree in which their mistresses are both conciliatory, and tacitly party, to the daily brutalization slave women endure. Rather than choosing to allow herself to be defined by her plight, Jacobs attempted to transcend her mistress' jealousy and misplaced anger.

This epoch of Jacobs' life still had much to teach her. She made the grave mistake of falling in love with a free colored carpenter. For both personal and business reasons Dr. Norcom fervently objected to the very idea of selling Jacobs. Though she had forged a bond with this man she realized that her station in life would prevent them from ever being free and happy together. Out of love she entreated him to leave her and to save himself by leaving for the free states. "I advised him to go to the Free States, where his tongue would not be tied, and where his intelligence would be of more avail to

[165] Jacobs, 36

him. He left me, still hoping the day would come when I could be bought. With me the lamp of hope had gone out. The dream of my girlhood was over. I felt lonely and desolate….After my lover went away, Dr. [Norcom] contrived a new plan. He seemed to have an idea that my fear of my mistress was his greatest obstacle…my master said he was going to build a house for me, and that he could do it with little trouble and expense…I vowed before my Maker that I would never enter it. I had rather toil on the plantation from dawn till dark; I had rather live and die in jail, that drag on, from day to day, through such a living death…I would do any thing, every thing, for the sake of defeating him. What *could* I do? I thought and thought, till I became desperate, and made a plunge into the abyss.[166]"

In perhaps the most philosophic chapter of the text, Jacobs in chapter ten relates her regrettable decision to intentionally give herself to Samuel Tredwell Sawyer with the intention of pitting him against Dr. Norcom in hopes that he could use his status as a white man to her advantage. If Swayer fell in love or impregnated her he, in her estimation, would seek to purchase her from Dr. Norcom thereby achieving her end of escaping Dr. Norcom's advances. In addition to explaining struggles of slave mothers in protecting their children, exposing the hypocrisy of southern mistresses, and the futility of choosing who she loves, Jacobs tackled another problem Black women faced. "He was an educated and eloquent gentleman; too eloquent, alas, for the poor slave girl who trusted in him. Of course I saw whither all this was tending. I knew the impassable gulf between us; but to be an object of interest to a man who is not married, and who is not her master, is agreeable to the pride and feelings of a slave, if her miserable situation has left her any pride or sentiment. It seems less degrading to give one's self, than to submit

[166] Jacobs, 42, 53

to compulsion. There is something akin to freedom in having a lover who has no control over you, except that which he gains by kindness and attachment. A master may treat you as rudely as he pleases, and you dare not speak; moreover, the wrong does not seem so great with an unmarried man, as with one who has a wife to be made unhappy. There may be sophistry in all this; but the condition of a slave confuses all principles of morality, and, in fact, renders the practice of them impossible.[167]" Aside from the choice to love whomever one chooses (which she shares with Bibb especially), the right to rear children (which she also shares with Bibb), and the solidarity she should share with her mistress as a woman, Jacobs relates the importance of the freedom to choose whom one submits their body to in sexual intercourse. Not to be confused with or conflated with the freedom to love, the right to submit sexually to a person of one's own choosing was a right that Jacobs chose to seize through sleeping with Sawyer. Jacobs understands that that her actions may seem unwarranted by many. "I knew what I did, and I did it with deliberate calculation. But, O, ye happy women, whose purity has been sheltered from childhood, who have been free to choose the objects of your affection, whose homes are protected by law, do not judge the poor desolate slave girl too severely!...I tried hard to preserve my self-respect; but I was struggling alone in the powerful grasp of the demon Slavery; and the monster proved too strong for me. I felt as if I was forsaken by God and man; as if all my efforts must be frustrated; and I became reckless in my despair.[168]" In this admission Jacobs proves ironically that she is aware of societal proprieties and that her actions by those standards are crass, yet she is also validated by her inalienable rights as a human being to do with her sexuality as she wills, and by those standards her actions

[167] Jacobs, 54-55
[168] Jacobs, 54

were reasonable because she did not commit adultery. In so doing she challenges not her morals but those of a society that would place her in the position to make such a choice. "O virtuous reader! You never knew what it is to be a slave; to be entirely unprotected by law or custom; to have the laws reduce you to the condition of chattel, entirely subject to the will of another. You never exhausted your ingenuity in avoiding the snares, and eluding the power of a hated tyrant; you never shuddered at the sound of his footsteps, and trembled within hearing of his voice. I know I did wrong. No one can feel it more sensibly that I do. The painful and humiliating memory will haunt me to my dying day. Still, in looking back, calmly, on the events of my life, I feel that the slave woman ought not to be judged by the same standard as others.[169]" She turns her seemingly immoral act into a critique of slavery and greater American social propriety

Her choice in actions had consequences. This is the second time disunity and third major epoch of Jacob's life. She bore two children and had ignited an indignant spite in Dr. Norcom. Feeling directly affronted by Jacobs' actions, Dr. Norcom became more determined to bend her to his will. Things however were different now. Jacobs had more than herself to think about. Her primary concern was no longer avoiding Dr. Norcom's advances. She was determined to at the very least free her children and save them from a life of perpetual servitude at whatever cost to herself. For Dr. Norcom, selling her was out of the question and he renewed his plan to build a house for her. When it became apparent that Jacobs would never relent, Dr. Norcom decided to pit her children against her. He offered her freedom for herself and her children if she just gave in and lived in a cottage he would get for her. Jacobs knew the price she would have to pay had she agreed to such an offer. Also, she was well aware that he was under no

[169] Jacobs, 56

obligation to fulfill his promise of freeing her and her children. His proposition had an alternative. If she rejected his offer she would be sent to Norcom's plantation where she would have to endure hard labor and her children would eventually share her fate; certain that his motives where mere trickery, Jacobs decided to take her chances and reject his offer. "Before the week expired, I heard that young Mr. [Norcom] was about to be married to a lady of his own stamp. I foresaw the position I should occupy in his establishment. I had once been sent to the plantation for punishment, and fear of the son had induced the father to recall me very soon. My mind was made up; I was resolved that I would foil my master and save my children, or I would perish in the attempt…On the decisive day the doctor came, and said he hoped I had made a wise choice. 'I am ready to go to the plantation, sir,' I replied…I had my secret hopes; but I must fight my battle alone. I had a woman's pride, and a mother's love for my children; and I resolved that out of the darkness of this hour a brighter dawn should rise for them. My master had power and law on his side; I had a determined will. There is might in each[170]" This might, eventually led to Jacobs' endeavoring to escape to freedom. Shortly after working on the plantation she was notified that her children were to follow her shortly. Rather than accepting her fate she decided to wield this might into agency.

The next time disunity and epoch of her life consisted in her escape from Dr. Norcom's home and eventual holding up in her grandmother's attic. After contriving her escape and eluding her would be recaptures, Jacobs managed to find a more permanent place to hide in a specially designed crawlspace in her grandmother's attic. While the physical feat of remaining in that space for seven years was in fact tremendous, Jacobs was far from just hiding in that space. Ever determined to fulfill her obligation as a

[170] Jacobs, 84-85

mother, Jacobs continued to pursue a permanent state of freedom for her children with her own hands. In the den, "I was left with my own thoughts- starless as the midnight darkness around me. My friends feared I should become a cripple for life; and I was so weary of my long imprisonment that, had it not been for the hope of serving my children, I should have been thankful to die; but for their sakes, I was willing to bear on.[171]" Though much is made of whether or not Jacobs could have physically endured such a stay, the pertinent aspect of this period in her life is characterized by her continued determination to free her children by her own hand and to retain her self-sovereignty not only in locomotion but more importantly in the submission of her body to another. "This continued darkness was oppressive. It seemed horrible to sit or lie in a cramped position day after day, without one gleam of light. Yet I would have chosen this, rather than my lot as a slave, though white people considered it an easy one; and it was so compared with the fate of others. I was never cruelly over-worked; I was never lacerated with the whip from head to foot; I was never beaten and bruised that I could not turn from one side to the other; I never had my heel-strings cut to prevent my running away; I was never chained to a log and forced to drag it about, while I toiled in the fields from morning till night; I was never branded with iron, or torn by bloodhounds. On the contrary, I had always been kindly treated, and tenderly cared for, until I came into the hands of Dr. [Norcom]. I had never wished for freedom till then. But though my life in slavery was comparatively devoid of hardships, God pity the woman who is compelled to lead such a life![172]" It is clear that Jacobs likened the specific trials faced by women, the constant advances and innuendos of men as well as the acting out of those accostings and

[171] Jacobs, 127
[172] Jacobs, 115

threats, to the more gory and gruesome, yet typical trials faced mostly by men in other relations of the hardships of slavery. It was Dr. Norcom's perversion that made Jacobs wish for freedom as much as any whip or lash could have. Even after enduring the seven years in the attic and procuring the courage to maneuver openly in public trying to secure a safe place for her and her children it became apparent that freedom for Jacobs was not merely being outside of the Norcom household and having the absence of external hindrances to her activities. The next epoch of her life became characterized by her brazen determination and cunning in her continued endeavors to gain sustainable freedom from Dr. Norcom.

"Before us lay the city of strangers. We looked at each other, and the eyes of both were moistened with tears. We had escaped from slavery, and we supposed ourselves to be safe from the hunters. But we were alone in the world, and we had left dear ties behind us; ties cruelly alone by the demon Slavery.[173]" Like Bibb, Jacobs was escaped but not free as evidenced by her claim that "In order to protect my children, it was necessary that I should own myself. I called myself free, and sometimes felt so; but I knew I was insecure.[174]" Jacobs knew that so long as Dr. Norcom drew breath he would attempt to reclaim his property. Year after year Dr. Norcom would make renewed attempts to reclaim Jacobs and her children. These attempts made her nervous because "though Dr. [Norcom] had received a large sum of money for [her children]. [Jacobs] knew the law would decide that [she] was his property, and would probably still give his daughter a claim to [her] children; but [Jacobs] regarded such laws as the regulations of

[173] Jacobs, 158
[174] Jacobs, 166

robbers, who had no rights that [she] was bound to respect.[175]" This clear denial of Dr. Norcom's legitimate rights leads one to question why Jacobs still did not consider herself free? I ironically turn to a social contract argument for a state of war. A period of war consists not in constant battle but in a period where conflict is reasonably anticipated. Locke likens illegitimate property exchanges, for instance theft, to a state of war. As is the case in a state of war each side remains in a defensive posture towards one another until the matter is resolved through the absolution of debt by one side or death. Jacobs is certain that Dr. Norcom would never acknowledge her freedom so regardless of how many legitimate legal transactions she makes Dr. Norcom would still consider her and her children his property so the absolution of debt is not a possibility. To borrow Locke's terms, Dr. Norcom has a design upon the life of Jacobs to be intimate with her and is determined to see it through. The only other was for Jacobs to find peace and be free of Dr. Norcom's advances is in his death which does end up happening.

Sadly Jacobs was mistaken that Dr. Norcom's death would bring about her liberation, for he ensured that his poisonous bite would span generations so that he could fulfill his wishes vicariously through is progeny. "His departure from this world did not diminish my danger. He had threatened my grandmother that his heirs should hold me in slavery after he was gone; that I never should be free so long as a child of his survived…The doctor died in embarrassed circumstances, and had little to will to his heirs, except such property as he was unable to grasp. I was well aware what I had to expect from the family of [Norcoms]; and my fears were confirmed by a letter from the south, warning me to be on my guard, because Mrs. [Norcom] openly declared that her

[175] Jacobs, 187

daughter could not afford to lose so valuable a slave as I was.[176]" This circumstance paved the way for Jacobs' final time disunity and last epoch of her narrative: her eventual freedom. Proud and stubborn, Jacobs rejected the idea that she was an object that could be bought and sold. Despite having the good fortune of eventually meeting and befriending the Willis' and even better, their willingness to buy Jacobs, she would have none of it. Recognizing her stubbornness, the Willis' decided to purchase Jacobs' freedom and to gain an agreement that her children would likewise be free from recapture. Mixed emotionally Jacobs was still mortified at the thought of being bought and sold again.

> "My brain reeled as I read these lines. A gentleman near me said, 'It's true; I have seen the bill of sale.' 'The bill of sale!' Those words struck me like a blow. So I was *sold* at last! A human being *sold* in the free city of New York! The bill of sale is on record, and future generations will learn from it that women were articles of traffic in New York, late in the nineteenth century of the Christian religion. It may hereafter prove a useful document to antiquaries, who are seeking to measure the progress of civilization in the United States. I well know the value of that bit of paper; but much as I love freedom, I do not like to look upon it. I am deeply grateful to the generous friends who procured it, but I despise the miscreant who demanded payment for what never rightfully belonged to him or his.[177]"

Despite this lamentation at her being bought, Jacobs still did not consider her mission achieved. Back when she reared children her motivations had shifted. Freeing herself of Dr. Norcom's advances was only one of her goals. Her primary objective was to provide a home where she and her children could live in freedom. Despite her admission that she and her children are free, she qualifies that statement with "the dream of my life is not yet realized. I do not sit with my children in a home of my own. I still long for a hearthstone of my own, however humble. I wish it for my children's sake far more than for my own. But God orders circumstances as to keep me with my friend Mrs. Bruce. Love duty,

[176] Jacobs, 196
[177] Jacobs, 200

gratitude, also bind me to her side.[178]" No longer obligated to serve those who treat her as chattel, Jacobs is still not fully matured into the self-sufficient woman she endeavored to be since slavery reared its ugly head in her life at age twelve. We find that though Jacobs endured much, her dignity never wavered, nor did her expectation that her power in her will would lead to her eventual release from Dr. Norcom's advances and the construction of a safe, free home for her children which has yet to come to pass.

[178] Jacobs, 201

CHAPTER EIGHT: A COMPARISON OF THE NARRATIVE CONVENTIONS FOUND IN THE SLAVE NARRATIVES

The quote by Hegel at the outset of this document underscores the feelings Europeans and Americans had towards African descended peoples from the 15th century well into modernity. "Negroes are to be regarded as a race of children who remain immersed in their state of uninterested *naïveté*. They are sold, and let themselves be sold, without any reflection on the rights or wrongs of the matter. The Higher which they feel they do not hold fast to, it is only a fugitive thought. This Higher they transfer to the first stone they come across, thus making it their fetish and they throw this fetish away if it fails to help them…they do not show an inherent striving for culture. In their native country the most shocking despotism prevails. There they do not attain to the feeling of human personality, their mentality is quite dormant, remaining sunk within itself and making no progress, and thus corresponding to the compact, differenceless mass of the African continent." Correspondingly, "it is [thought that] in the Caucasian race that mind first attains to absolute unity with itself. Here for the first time mind enters into complete opposition to the life of Nature, apprehends itself in its absolute self-dependence, wrests itself free from the fluctuation between one extreme and the other, achieves *self*-determination, self-development, and in doing so creates world history." African warlords as a source of material exchange traded an almost incalculable amount of slaves to European traders voyaging to the continent in search of everything from spices to gold. Different from their capitalistic brethren, the members of the African Diaspora that found their residence in the Americas were reduced to chattel and stripped of their status as human beings. Because Europeans thought themselves to be quintessentially human and thus rational, they had the legitimate right to determine that African descended peoples

could be used as chattel as evidenced in both the Papal Bulls *Dum Diversas* and the *Romanus Pontifex*. Ever reliant on opulence and convenience, the European descendants in the Americas grew ever dependant on the resources produced by the free labor of these non-humans and as a result compiled justification upon justification for the continuing of the use of African slaves as a primary means of social and individual wealth.

Recognizing that liberation could and would not come through Nat Turner like demonstrations of force, or through some overt demonstration of benevolence and the renouncing of the opulence slavery provided, abolitionists turned to former slaves in hopes that the chronicling of their tales and experiences would strike an emotional or rational chord in their readers and eventually build a groundswell of support for the eventual abolishment of slavery. Slave narratives were tools for abolitionists first, and accounts of experiences second. Because resources were scarce and the possibility for extreme punishment, banishment, or both very real, publishers of slave narratives aided ex-slaves, some of whom were masterful writers, others not so much, in the construction of narratives that would both effectively relate their unique experiences, while simultaneously serve the greater good of working towards the abolition of slavery. Aside from the obvious similarities, that all three narratives take place at least in part, in the U.S. plantation south, that all three take place in the 19th century, that all three authors are ex slaves who found their way to eventual freedom in the north, the narratives also have a shared intended purpose. As a result of the shared desire for abolition, African American slave narratives share a great many literary conventions and rhetorical strategies which were proven to be effective in the achieving the goal of the eradication of slavery. These conventions and rhetorical claims are deployed through the highlighting or omitting

certain aspects of the experiences authors lived experiences. In so doing, the narratives become calculated arguments intended to rhetorically leave the reader with very specific questions and thoughts all aimed at hopefully converting them into an eventual sympathizer for abolition. Of the shared conventions and rhetorical strategies deployed, three stick out as especially pertinent both to the immediate desire for abolition, and the more conceptual argument that the authors desired specific rights and liberties they should have been afforded as human beings: the case for Christian hypocrisy, slavery as a descent rather than a natural condition, and the requisite of the willingness to die in the attaining of one's liberty.

Due in part to the circumstances under which America was formed, as well as the history of the people who eventually populated it, the United States grew into a nation that was, and remains, a self-professed Christian nation. Though the U.S. is officially a space of religious toleration, the Christian population of the United States has enjoyed a democratic majority in all social and political spaces since its inception. During the 19th century, the U.S. was almost exclusively Christian; discounting the non-recognized religions of the Asian and African slaves and indentured servants. As a slave in the plantation south, many were converted to Christianity whether by rhetoric or by force. In a short period of time, hundreds of thousands of slaves were converted to Christianity. Hoping to benefit from the commandments to obey one's master and to respect authority, slave masters conditioned their slaves into the Christian religion in droves. Attracted by the escapist themes of Christianity, slaves held fast to its promises. Heaven, strength, deliverance, and in times of struggle, patience, perseverance, and hope are all hallmarks of the religion that provided its attraction to African American slaves. Christianity

commands that in order to attain the strength and power over suffering Christ can provide one must seek earnestly in all things to be Christ-like. Slave masters consistently touted their possession of wealth and decadence as evidence of their good favor with God. They saw themselves as living Christ-like lives through providing for the meager subsistence of what they considered lower life forms. Through acts of benevolence like using a soft leather whip instead of the cow-hide, giving their table scraps and pot scrapings to the field slaves for their dinner on special occasions, or smacking a child servant rather than punching them, the masters demonstrated their kind hearts and the love of Christ. They ministered to their slaves that their favor came from their adherence to the principles and ideas contained in "The Good Book," otherwise known as *The Holy Bible.* Seeking at minimal, the strength to carry on, slaves became enamored with the Bible. Little by little slaves learned, both on their own with what little literacy they had, or through the good will of those who could with a clearer conscience could call themselves Christians, more about the scriptures. Slaves' knowledge of the Bible grew beyond 2 Peter 2:18-24, "[18] Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. [19] For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. [20] For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults , ye shall take it patiently ? but if, when ye do well , and suffer for it, ye take it patiently , this is acceptable with God. [21] For even hereunto were ye called : because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: [22] Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: [23] Who, when he was reviled , reviled not again ; when he suffered , he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: [24] Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that

we , being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

As the slaves read they discovered many contradictions to the actions of their masters. Though the slaves and their masters could have continued on in a proverbial game of cat and mouse, quoting and misquoting scriptures, each accusing the other of being heretics, slaves eventually came across sections of the Bible like the gospel according to James.

> "[12] Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried , he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. [13] Let no man say when he is tempted , I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: [14] But every man is tempted , when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed . [15] Then when lust hath conceived , it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished , bringeth forth death. [16] Do not err , my beloved brethren. [17] Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. [18] Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. [19] Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear , slow to speak , slow to wrath: [20] For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. [21] Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. [22] But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. [23] For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: [24] For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way , and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was . [25] But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. [26] If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. [27] Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.[179]"

It had became evident to the slave population that their masters where hypocrites. Despite their knowledge of the word and their seemingly endless amounts of good works in their respective churches, the idea that God admonishes Christians was new for slaves. That one could speak the word, preach the word, act in discord with the word and be held liable was not preached to slaves. They were only fed the sections of the Bible that commanded reverence for earthly masters and reinforced the idea that God created

[179] James 1:12-27

hierarchies in the world which ought to be retained, for example, man's lordship and dominion over beasts. Jacobs wrote, "There is a great difference between Christianity and religion at the south. If a man goes to the communion table, and pays money into the treasury of the church, no matter if it be the price of blood, he is called religious. If a pastor has offspring by a woman not his wife, the church dismiss him, if she is a white woman; but if she is colored, it does not hinder his continuing to be their good shepherd…The conversion of the doctor [to the Episcopal Church], the day after he had been confirmed, certainly gave me no indication that he had 'renounced the devil and all his works.'…[He told me] 'You would do well to join the church, too, Linda.' 'There are sinners enough in it already,' rejoined I. 'If I could be allowed to live like a Christian, I should be glad.[180]' 'You can do what I require; and if you are faithful to me, you will be as virtuous as my wife,' he replied. I answered the Bible didn't say so. His voice became hoarse with rage. 'How dare you preach to me about you infernal Bible!' he exclaimed. 'What right have you, who are my negro, to talk to me about what you like, and what you wouldn't like? I am your master, and you shall obey me.' No wonder the saves sing,- *'Ole Satan's church is here below' Up to God's free church I hope to go.*[181]"

To be doers of the word and not just hearers of the word had further reaching implications than just designating the slave masters as hypocrites. The narratives were written not to slave masters of the south in hopes they would change their ways. The audience of the slave narratives was the liberals of the north; those who knew of the atrocities in the south but were able to still sleep at night comfortable that they were not a part of the suffering of others. Those who willingly ignored the pangs of their conscience

[180] Jacobs is referring to the Doctor's continuous adulterous advances towards her to which the Doctor ironically replies with one such innuendo.
[181] Jacobs, 74-75

yet still considered themselves both moral and holy. James chapter one was especially effective on these individuals. Though there exists a profound disjunction in character where one could pray to Jesus Christ, and save souls on Sunday morning, then have tea with the pastor at noon, then whip a defenseless teenager half to death before dinner, Bibb points out that in the scripture sin is regarded as having no gradations and those in the north who sit idle while these atrocities occur in God's eyes are every bit as liable. Bibb ends his text with an petition to Christians everywhere, yet in context primarily those in the north, "Having thus tried to show the best side of slavery that I can conceive of, the reader can exercise his own judgment in deciding whether a man can be a Bible Christian, and yet hold his Christian brethren as property, so that they may be sold at any time in market, as sheep or oxen, to pay his debts…Is this Christianity? Is it honest or right? Is it doing as we would be done by? Is it in accordance with the principles of humanity or justice? I believe slaveholding to be a sin against God and man under all circumstances. I have no sympathy with the person or persons who tolerate and support the system willingly and knowingly, morally, religiously, or politically.[182]" It is literarily apparent that this plea is to the north because slave culture in the south was so pervasive that it would be strange that one could live there and not be knowledgeable about such things as Bibb and other slave narratives illuminate. The question is what exactly is Bibb pleading for? It would be rhetorically moot to merely get the citizens of the north to admit slavery was wrong for their mere admission of slavery as a vile practice does not help the slaves in the least, for the northern freemen have no rule over the slave owners in the south that could force them to relinquish their rights to their own property at the whim of the northern freemen. The plea is made at the very end where Bibb states bluntly, "I

[182] Bibb, 203-204

have no sympathy with the person or persons who tolerate and support the system willingly and knowingly, morally, religiously, or politically.[183]" This statement is rhetorically masterful. The reader is now rendered morally culpable for the suffering of the slaves in the south through their mere completion of the text whether they want to be or not. The key word is "tolerate". As James 1 states, the tenants of the Bible require action. One cannot merely know what is right and not act upon in. To be aware of the suffering of others and to remain neutral when one has the means to alleviate the suffering makes the neutral party complicit in the transgression against the suffering party; even Locke would attest to this. To be clear Bibb is sure to specify that the Christians must mobilize morally in their own actions, religiously in the church, and politically in congress. These three areas of apathy are where those who are morally culpable must become active. Without claiming it outright Bibb is saying to northern free Christians that you cannot consider yourself a saved Christian if you are not acting on behalf of your enslaved brethren through soliciting change in social morals and laws.

Unifying themes found in Jacobs' hostility towards the unbridled hypocrisy of southern slave owners with Bibb's rhetorical plea, Douglass concludes his narrative doing both tasks simultaneously. Douglass draws a distinction between Christianity and religion (as do Bibb and Jacobs do as well in other places in their narratives). To Christianity Douglass lavishes praise and sincerity. American Christianity, mostly in the south, however is tainted with religion where people "play church" and do not live up to the same principles they preach. In the distinction Douglass is rhetorically careful to not say all American Christians or that hypocrisy only resides in the south. Douglass' rhetorical masterstroke comes from his inclusion of a poem. The poem, though great, is

[183] Bibb, 203-204

less important than its author; "I conclude these remarks by copying the following portrait of the religion of the south, which I soberly affirm is 'true to life,' and without caricature or the slightest exaggeration. It is said to have been drawn, several years before the present anti-slavery agitation began, by a northern Methodist preacher, who, while residing at the south, and an opportunity to see slaveholding morals, manners, and piety, with his own eyes. 'Shall I not visit for these things?' saith the Lord. Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?[184]" This quote does several things for Douglass. First it reestablishes the north-south piety split where the bulk of the heathens and hypocrites are seen as residing in the south, necessary for northern freemen to not feel offended. Second, it gives a paradigmatic example of what slave narrative authors hope to have happen; an "agitation" against slavery led by northern freemen who are endowed with rights and power that slaves and free Blacks do not possess. Third, it legitimates Douglass and other slave narrative author's assessment of the south by an individual rhetorically constructed as "objective." And lastly, it incorporates a "fire and brimstone" warning against those who would choose to remain apathetic. Douglass, like Bibb and Jacobs, did more than merely demonstrate the manner in which the slave masters were not acting in accordance with the moral principles of their professed religion. They utilized religion and the hypocrisy of the southern masters as a means to further promote their abolitionist goals through spurring northern freemen into abolitionist action with good old fashioned guilt.

The second similarity to all three narratives was the claim that, contrary to arguments of the time, slavery was not a natural condition for Blacks. Though Eugenics by the 19th century had moved from arguments of the non-human status of Africans and

[184] Douglass, 329

African descended peoples to claims of their sub-human status, there still existed a fervent belief that even if African descended peoples, Blacks in the United States, were to be considered human, they were still inferior intellectually and morally thereby suited only for menial physical labor, and other base physical needs like sex and child rearing. Arguments for the sub-human status of Blacks were almost too numerous to mention of which claims against the rationality of Blacks were most damaging. Due mostly to the enlightenment, reason had been philosophically positioned as the yardstick of civility. From Montesquieu to Kant, those who demonstrate reason also demonstrate their rights to be considered moral and thus to also have their rights as human beings respected. On this front Eugenicists worked overtime to demonstrate the lack of reason Blacks possessed which would supposedly justify their treatment as not possessing the hallmarks of human beings: freedom, equality, and self-sovereignty. The specifics of exactly how and why Blacks were not fully human were less important than their social construction as being such. Despite their academic designation, in the U.S. south, Blacks were absolutely non-human, in rare cases sub-human, at best unworthy of any inalienable rights and reduced, not by man but by nature, to the status of slavery and servitude for which they should feel fortunate. Otherwise they would be left on their own. Eerily the Roman claim that all roads led to Rome and that to suffer slavery in Rome was better than to be free elsewhere is recanted, this time by Americans. Douglass, Bibb, and Jacobs each contradict this belief that they are by nature un-free and ignorant of their natural rights. Each narrative begins with a period of ignorance, not of their humanity, but of the cruelties of slavery to which they are eventually initiated.

"I was born a slave; but I never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed away…When I was six years old, my mother died; and then, for the first time, I learned, by the talk around me, that I was a slave. My mother's mistress was the daughter of my grandmother's mistress…One her death-bed [she] promised that [my mother's] children should never suffer for anything; and during her lifetime she kept her word…I was told that my home was now to be with [my mother's] mistress; and I found it a happy one. No toilsome or disagreeable duties were imposed upon me. My mistress was so kind to me that I was always glad to do her bidding, and proud to labor for her as much as my young years would permit. I would sit by her side for hours, sewing diligently with a heart as free from care as that of any free-born white child. When she thought I was tired, she would send me out to run and jump; and away I bounded, to gather berries or flowers to decorate her room. Those were happy days- to happy to last. The slave child had no thought for the morrow; but there came that blight, which too surely waits on every human being born to be a chattel.[185]" Jacobs clearly states that she did not know she was a slave until her mother died. Before then she regarded her life as a happy one. Free and equal to other children, Jacobs before her mother died was like any other child. Even after she was made cognizant of her status as a slave she still did not regard herself as chattel. This admission beautifully demonstrates the stages of U.S. slavery. To be restrained and owned is but an aspect of American slavery. Chattel slavery is made complete when the soul of the captive is broken into submission. This phase for Jacobs never came though it was first attempted when she was eventually bequeathed into the Norcom household. Jacobs was besieged upon by the Doctor though she managed to hold on to her dignity and self-worth which eventually enabled her to escape. The idea

[185] Jacobs, 5-7

that Blacks were human endowed with a natural sense of their own freedom and equality was conceptually unacceptable because it would not allow slave masters and sympathizers to justify their actions while simultaneously touting their own virtues. For emphasis Jacobs makes it clear that she was a "human being born to be a chattel." She establishes her ontological status as human and her secondary quality as chattel. A slave is what she is socially constructed as, not what she is.

Bibb follows the same paradigm; "The first time I was separated from my mother, I was young and small. I knew nothing of my condition than as a slave. I was living with Mr. White whose wife died and left him a widower with one little girl, who was said to be the legitimate owner of my mother, and all her children. This girl was also my playmate when we were children. I was taken away from my mother, and hired out to labor for various persons, eight or ten years in succession; and all my wages were expended for the education of Harriet White, my playmate. It was then my sorrows and sufferings commenced. It was then I first commenced seeing and feeling that I was a wretched slave, compelled to work under the lash without wages, and often without clothes enough to hide my nakedness.[186]" Bibb, like Jacobs admits to being ignorant, not of his inalienable rights as a human being, but of his status as a slave. Also, like Jacobs, his knowledge was in two parts. First he understood that he had a master and must not be like other children. Second, the gross injustice that his inalienable rights would not be respected demonstrated his worth to those around him. The first stage, the reduction to servitude, for Jacobs and Bibb was tolerable; it was the second stage, the reduction to chattel, which was insufferable.

[186] Bibb, 14-15

Douglass, unlike Jacobs and Bibb, made no admissions of happiness or of his clear state in which he was unaware of his status as chattel. He does however suggest this fact negatively;

> "I have often been awakened at the dawn of day by the most heart-rending shrieks of an own aunt of mine, whom he used to tie up to a joist, and whip upon her naked back till she was literally covered with blood. No words, no tears, no prayers, from his glory victim, seemed to move his iron heart from its bloody purpose. The louder she screamed, the harder he whipped; and where the blood ran fastest, there he whipped longest. He would whip her to make her scream, and whip her to make her hush; and not until overcome by fatigue, would he cease to swing the blood-clotted cowskin. I remember the first time I ever witnessed this horrible exhibition. I was quite a child, but I well remember it. I never shall forget it whilst I remember any thing. It was the first of a long series of such outrages, of which I was doomed to be a witness and participant. It struck me with awful force. It was the blood-stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery, through which I was about to pass. It was a most terrible spectacle. I wish I could commit to paper the feelings with which I beheld it.[187]"

Douglass states that he was "about to pass" a "blood-stained gate" which was "the entrance to the hell of slavery. It takes little reduction to deduce that in order to enter into knowledge of something, one must have first been ignorant of it to begin with. Douglass must have experienced, for however short a period of time, a moment where he remembers not considering himself a slave or chattel. The inclusion of this admission of ignorance serves not to demonstrate the notion that Douglass, Bibb, or Jacobs lacked an obvious understanding of their circumstance. Rather, the admissions detailed a digression into slavery which, for the rational, demonstrates that they must not naturally be acclimated to slavery in the manner society projects them as being. Slavery is a learned circumstance for them, not an innate characteristic.

The third similarity between the three narratives is the fact that they all placed their lives on the line to gain their eventual freedom. On March 23, 1775 Patrick Henry delivered a speech to the Virginia Convention in hope of inspiring them to join the

[187] Douglass, 258

revolutionary war. Henry's speech culminated in a phrase that would come to define the eventual free state they were fighting for: "Give me liberty or give me death." A resounding reply to Henry's proclamation was "to arms!, to arms!" Freedom and liberty are, as I stated in my introduction, among, if not the, cardinal virtues of a rational society. Though death is permanent, the idea of a being created to be free living in an un-free state is perceived as worse than death. For an individual to have an understanding of their troubles combined with the knowledge that they were created for a higher purpose, adds more pain and misery to an already miserable circumstance. Ignorance, in this case, is truly bliss. The circumstances that had befallen the American colonies had reached levels of tyranny and slavery (ironically this perception would not be considered slavery but drudgery by Locke's standards, who would eventually become an indelible influence on the burgeoning U.S.). To be fiscally tyrannized by England was a fate worse than death and was worth the risk of death to prevent. The eventual American Revolution is hailed throughout history as a juncture in history where mankind demonstrated virtue in privileging right over safety, honor over fear. The United States boldly flaunts itself as a nation of freedom and points to this historical moment when the battle cry was exclaimed, "give me liberty, or give me death!" As a cornerstone of U.S. society, this exclamation has passed unchallenged into social memory as rational, necessary, and true. Despite its existence prior to 1775 as both a personal mission for many historical heroes, and status as a societal belief for other historical cultures, this notion has never defined a country or culture as much as it has the United States of America. To be American is to love and be willing to die for freedom. Aside from being socially acceptable, this notion is in modernity, and always has been in posterity, considered rational and necessary. The

entirety of social contract theory is predicated on the assumption that people would be willing to die for their freedom. The moment of contracting requires a relinquishing of rights which carries with it the risk that person 'A' will relinquish their rights (i.e. the right to punish, the right to kill, etc.) and no one else will leaving person 'A' extremely vulnerable to attack. The contracting into a body politic in social contract theory is also a "give me liberty, or give me death!" moment. Reduction tells us that if contracting into society is rationally prescribed, then its logical prerequisite must be also: the willingness to temporarily sacrifice one's safety for the acquisition of liberty. To take liberty at the risk of death is rational.

Douglass, Jacobs, and Bibb all in their narratives go through extraordinary lengths to acquire liberty at incalculable threats to their lives. With too many examples to numerate, I will focus on the circumstances that directly either made possible, or led to, the eventual permanent liberty of each author. For Douglass, the moment he recognized the root's lack of power he had a decision to make. Allow himself to once again be brutally beaten and possible killed or to stand and exhibit what he considered to be his God-given right to defend himself. He chose the latter.

> "This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave. I rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. It recalled the departed self confidence, and inspired me again with a determination to be free. The gratification afforded by the triumph was a full compensation for whatever else might follow, even death itself. He only can understand the deep satisfaction which I experienced, who has himself repelled by force the bloody arm of slavery, I felt as I never felt before. It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom. My long-crushed spirit rose, cowardice departed, bold defiance took its place; and I now resolved that, however long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when I could be a slave in fact. I did not hesitate to let it be known of me, that the white man who expected to succeed in whipping me, must also succeed in killing me. From this time I was never again what might be

> called fairly whipped, though I remained a slave four years afterwards. I had several fights, but was never whipped.[188]"

For the mere thought of striking his master Douglass could have been hung. For the act this fate was most certain. Nevertheless Douglass defended himself through force and luckily he lived to tell the tale. How many thousands of others did the same yet whose fate was much more grim we may never know. The fact remains though that Douglass took a risk and chose his freedom, his humanity, and his manhood over slavery and abuse. This bravado eventually flowed into his calculated escape. Without this risk of death Douglass would have remained broken by Mr. Covey and most likely would not have had the gall to chance an escape.

Bibb, much more so than Douglass, was a disagreeable slave through his tenure in the south. An escape artist, Bibb risked his life regularly not for the mere sake of his manhood but for the eventual freedom of his family. Though he was never successful, his demonstration of his choice of liberty over death was much more spiritual. Bibb regularly placed his life in mortal danger in attempts to steal his family away to the north. This tendency towards running away led to ire on behalf of his owners. With increased contempt, each of his masters held his family closer and closer in hopes that their suffering and danger would corral his gambling. To no avail Bibb kept trying. Eventually his reputation finally caught up with him when he finally procured a master mild enough to be tolerated and willing to keep his family together. In an epically tragic scene Bibb, his wife, and child were denied the opportunity to be together by a bitter owner who would not sell. After a frustrating acknowledgement that he would not be reunited permanently with his family Bibb established himself in the north but never

[188] Douglass, 298-299

forgot about his family. After a few years Bibb still held hopes that he would succeed in joining with his family for good. He was sadly mistaken. His wife has been taken in as a willing concubine to a slave master.

> "No sooner had I landed in Madison, than I learned, on inquiry, and from good authority, that my wife was living in a state of adultery with her master, and had been for the last three years. This message she sent back to Kentucky, to her mother and friends. She spoke of the time and manner of our separation by Deacon Whitfield, my being taken off by the Southern black legs, to where she knew not; and that she had finally given me up. The child was still with her. Whitfield had sold her to this man for the above purposes at a high price, and she was better used than ordinary slaves. This was a death blow to all my hopes and pleasant plans…From that time I gave her up into the hands of an all-wise Providence. As she was then living with another man, I could no longer regard her as my wife. After all the sacrifices, sufferings, and risks which I had run, striving to rescue her from the grasp of slavery; every prospect and hope was cut off. She has ever since been regarded as theoretically and practically dead to me as a wife, for she was living in a state of adultery, according to the law of God and man.[189]"

The decision to relinquish the living memory of his wife and child to his past was the equivalent of death to Bibb. "In view of all the facts and circumstances connected with this matter, I deem further comments and explanations unnecessary on my part. Finding myself thus isolated in this peculiarly unnatural state, I resolved, in 1846, to spend my days in traveling, to advance the anti-slavery cause. I spent the summer in Michigan, but in the subsequent fall I took a trip to New England, where I spent the winter. And there I found a kind reception wherever I traveled among the friends of freedom. While traveling about in this way among strangers, I was sometimes sick, with no permanent home, or bosom friend to sympathise or take that care of me which an affectionate friend would. [190] Though not physical, Bibb chose a spiritual or emotional death, at his mother's behest, over the continued threat to his liberty. Melancholy, hurt, and alone,

[189] Bibb, 188-189
[190] Bibb, 190

Bibb decided that it was better to be free than to continue to risk his liberty for what could now be deemed, an unworthy task.

Jacobs, like Bibb, was an unbroken soul who never yielded to pressures from her masters and challenged each when she felt her womanhood affronted. Also like Bibb, Jacobs consistently throughout the narrative risked her freedom for the sake of her family. Of all the risks to her physical safety, the most perilous of them all was her choice to trust an acquaintance and to apply for a nanny position without papers.

> "My greatest anxiety now was to obtain employment. My health was greatly improved, though my limbs continued to trouble me with swelling whenever I walked much. The greatest difficulty in my way was, that those who employed strangers required a recommendation; and in my peculiar position, I could, of course, obtain no certificates from the families I had so faithfully served. One day an acquaintance told me of a lady who wanted a nurse for her babe, and I immediately applied for the situation. The lady told me she preferred to have one who had been a mother, and accustomed to the care of infants. I told her I had nursed two babes of my own. She asked me many questions, but to my great relief, did not require a recommendation from my former employers. She told me she was an English woman, and that was a pleasant circumstance to me, because I had heard they had less prejudice against color than Americans entertained. It was agreed that we should try each other for a week. The trial proved satisfactory to both parties, and I was engaged for a month. The heavenly Father had been most merciful to me in leading me to this place.[191]"

Aside from the obvious danger of trusting an acquaintance, the risk Jacobs was running was two fold. First she could be caught attempting to gain employment without papers or recommendations and found out to be a fugitive slave and sent back to Dr. Norcom. The second risk Jacobs chanced was the possibility of gaining employment from one who would treat her as chattel and, with their legitimacy before the law, usurp her freedom and place her back into an enslaved status. She did not know Mrs. Willis, her requirements, or what kind of person she was. Her gamble did pay off as her friendship with Mrs. Willis led to her freedom being purchased later in the narrative by her widowed

[191] Jacobs, 168

husband's second wife. Her choice to risk being reduced to chattel once again which was both political and social death, led to her eventual acquisition of liberty.

The desire to chance death, albeit physical, social, political, spiritual, or emotional, for the mere possibility of attaining liberty demonstrated more that an extreme desire to be free on behalf of the authors. Socially constructed as rational, the choice of liberty over death demonstrated the reason of the authors. They showed their fundamental recognition of themselves as human endowed with the inalienable right of freedom. Ironically, they also showed their allegiance to the quintessential American social virtue thereby demonstrating their status as Americans. To die for their liberty as *their* political forefathers did during the revolution showed their humanity, their rationality, and their American world views.

Unlike the texts of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, the narratives of Douglass, Bibb, and Jacobs are self professed members of the same paradigm. While the social contract theorists were paradigmatically grouped post mortem by the philosophic discipline, the authors of the slave narratives shared an intended common end to their writing and thus argued different aspects of the same conceptual desire: freedom as it related specifically to African American slaves. Though each narrative expressed different concern regarding a component of freedom they lamented not having the most, collectively each added to the greater cause of abolition. As such, the narratives ought to be read as contributing to a greater narrative of abolition of which each individual slave narrative represents a corroboration of the larger concept of abolition. We recall that an ideological transformation entails the relating of multiple ideas to a centralized concept. "Independent actions, carried out by different characters and in various circumstances,

reveal their kinship, serving to illustrate or exemplify a common ideology."[192] If this is the case then the written cases for the abolition of slavery can be seen as a larger narrative of which individual slave narratives comprise the independent actions of different characters which serve to legitimate the centralized concept of abolition. Each author several times in their narratives admits this fact. "I have not written my experiences in order to attract attention to myself; on the contrary, it would have been more pleasant to me to have been silent about my own history. Neither do I care to excite sympathy for my own sufferings. But I do earnestly desire to arouse the women of the North to a realizing sense of the condition of two millions of women at the South, still in bondage, suffering what I suffered, and most of them are far worse. I want to add my testimony to that of abler pens to convince the people of the Free States what slavery really is. Only by experience can any one realize how deep, and dark, and foul is that pit of abominations.[193]" Bibb states, "It may be asked why I have written this work, when there has been so much already written and published of the same character from other fugitives? And, why publish it after having told it publicly all through New England and the Western States to multiplied thousands? My answer is, that in no place have I given orally the detail of my narrative; and some of the most interesting events of my life have never reached the public ear. Moreover, it was at the request of many friends of down-trodden humanity, that I have undertaken to write the following sketch, that light and truth might be spread on the sin and evils of slavery as far as possible. I also wanted to leave my humble testimony on record against this man-destroying system, to be read by

[192] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 43
[193] Jacobs, 1-2

succeeding generations when my body shall lie mouldering in the dust.[194]" In concurrent fashion Douglass concludes; "Sincerely and earnestly hoping that this little book may do something toward throwing light on the American slave system, and hastening the glad day of deliverance to the millions of my brethren in bonds- faithfully relying upon the power of truth, love, and justice, for success in my humble efforts- and solemnly pledging my self anew to the sacred cause,- I subscribe myself, Frederick Douglass.[195]" Each author clearly demonstrates their understanding that their works were to be a part of a greater whole. Each slave author contributed what they considered to be another chapter in a greater narrative of abolition, in which the central belief that slavery in the American south was morally wrong and should end would be transmitted to their northern readership.

Despite their fidelity to the greater abolitionist narrative, each author chose to illuminate their experiences and yearnings in the most authentic way possible. This resulted in varying descriptions of the shared plight of bondage suffered by those enslaved in the American south. For our purposes, if we consider the overall desire for abolition to be an argument for social and political freedom, then the gradations in concerns demonstrated by the authors of slave narratives must reflect varying perspectives on both the fundamental nature of the sufferings endured by American slaves as well as the prerequisites for the alleviation of those sufferings. From the choice of emphases placed on particular areas of their experiences as opposed to others coupled with the overall goal of the greater abolitionist narrative to rhetorically convince free-men in the north to detest slavery and mobilize against it, we can deduce that their narratives

[194] Bibb, 11
[195] Douglass, 331

contain what they perceive to be the most damming evidence against slavery, or, the egregious reluctance to permit the practice of inalienable rights of fellow human beings by southern society and northern proponents of slavery. In a negative fashion, the narratives argue what they consider to be necessary and prerequisite rights and privileges for a man or woman to consider themselves free through the demonstration of the ways in which these inalienable rights were systematically stripped away from them on a daily basis. Freedom as argued by the authors of the slave narratives is constructed as what they desired the most through their servitude. Aside from the blatantly obvious concerns of chains, whips, and other physical abuses slaves endured, the narratives provided northerners with a more nuanced understanding of the emotional, spiritual, and psychic trauma slaves endured. The notion that slaves thought freedom, as opposed to merely desired to run from pain was lost on "enlightened America," or "enlightened western society" for that matter. Nevertheless the authors of slave narratives endeavored to communicate this sentiment in their writing.

We read each narrative as containing an empirically derived claim for a specific component of freedom, necessary for any rational individual to consider themselves free human beings. Literarily speaking, we find the articulation of this claim at the transitional moment in each narrative where the protagonist finally "feels free." The distinction between feeling free, being free, and possessing no immediate impediments are three very important distinctions in slave narratives. The overall goal of abolition is for those in servitude to "be free." This includes the lack of physical impediments, validation and equal treatment of the eyes of the law, the equal return of social proprieties, and the acquisition of a myriad of other self-affirming licenses considered to

be inalienable to the human condition. To be free in society is not a guarantee of success and happiness; rather it is to have one's choices, opportunities, inalienable provisions, and most importantly ability to act, to be reasonably comparable to other members of society. Desiring this state and believing they could attain it in the north, many slaves stole away to the north when they realized that all they have accomplished was to remove the immediate threat to their volition. To regain the choice to come or go, the right to eat whatever food one can procure for themselves, the right to work or not work are but a few of the luxuries gained when slaves escaped. Unfortunately that was all the escaped slaves gained for though they no longer had to submit to the authority of their master due to their removing themselves from his proximity, they were still legally bound to servitude and still socially stigmatized. By running away they have managed to free themselves from the immediate threat of their master's random orders and edicts, yet they were still oppressed by the greater societal institution of slavery which still held sway in their lives. The authors of slave narratives all describe their desire to "be free," and their experiences while "on the run" where they were free only from the immediate will of their masters, yet they all reached a middle position where they were able to "feel free." Recognizing the challenges inhibiting abolition and the fight that has yet to be won, Douglass, Bibb, and Jacobs each aspired to attain what they individually perceived to be the bare minimum for them to consider themselves free masters of themselves. To feel free does not require one to actually "be free" in the sense that their political and social rights are validated. Rather, for ex-slaves, the feeling of freedom is the acquisition of what they perceived to be the greatest affront to their humanity. This acquisition exists concurrently with the knowledge that there is much more work to be done and rights to

be acquired yet it is a sweet small personal victory that gives them self-validation that their sacrifices were worthwhile. It could be said that it is precisely this personal victory, the acquisition of at least one freedom, one inalienable human right restored that makes their story worth telling. It is in this victory that the narrative becomes beneficial to the greater abolitionist narrative, which when piecemealed together, paints a complete conceptual picture of the prerequisites to freedom.

The point in the narratives where the authors "feel free" comprises the principle transition of each narrative. As per my aforementioned definitions, yet contrary to a large percentage of literary commentary on slave narratives, the moment where most authors of slave narrative "feel free" ironically is not necessarily when they escape. As I stated, the actual escape typically only produces an absence of an immediate threat yet still leaves the author under the greater social institution of slavery and still saddled with the psychological scars of their servitude if they were unable to exorcize them before their escape. Douglass' narrative is one such instance where the protagonist was able to exorcize his psychological trauma before his actual escape. Douglass, more so than Bibb and Jacobs, details the physical realities of southern slavery. He talks about the labor he was forced to endure and details the punishments that were inflicted upon him for a host of reasons. Throughout this seemingly obvious and pedestrian account is a simultaneously progressing tale of Douglass' harrowing acquisition, and utilization of the written word which elevates the narrative as a whole to another level. It is no mistake that Douglass begins his narrative with his thoughts on slaves and education, "I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it

is the wish of most masters to keep their slaves thus ignorant…The white children could tell their ages. I could not tell why I ought to be deprived of the same privilege…The nearest estimate I can give makes me now between twenty-seven and twenty eight years of age. I come to this, from hearing my master say, some time during 1835, I was about seventeen years old.[196]" Within the first page of the narrative Douglass had already foreshadowed his life; the recognition of his ignorance, his realization that this ignorance was systematically upheld along racial lines, and his eventual overcoming of systematic reduction through his own means.

Fortunate as he was to have received charity from Mrs. Auld, and even more so to have found a way to safely complete his lessons without her, Douglass' acquisition of the written word was only a means to the acquisition of a security he found in his self-sovereignty or manhood. Not to be confused with a blind, misogynistic, patriarchic self-righteousness, rather, the manhood Douglass lamented was one where his "long-crushed spirit rose, cowardice departed, bold defiance took its place; and [he could resolve] that, however long [he] might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when [he] could be a slave in fact. [He would not have to] hesitate to let it be known of [him], that the white man who expected to succeed in whipping, must also succeed in killing [him].[197]" The courage and conviction to defend one's perceived inalienable rights to the death was a lesson acquired only through literacy for Douglass. We find this through the juxtaposition of the systematic ignorance perpetuated by the slave masters, the superstitious ignorance perpetuated by the slaves and their roots, and the blessing of self-agency given through literacy. The fight against Mr. Covey was less about a physical

[196] Douglass, 225
[197] Douglass, 299

struggle and the freedom from physical violence as it was about the freedom to choose one's own fate granted only through the convictions developed by reading various texts and discerning the truth on one's own terms. To be free to be a man meant to have agency regarding far more than one's physical locomotion. It meant to have a say in what one perceives to be true or false, right or wrong, advantageous, or disadvantageous, in short, to determine one's epistemological relationship to the world and to not have it given to him by another. Through deciding that in that moment that his piece of mind, his bodily sanctity, and his perception of his relationship to Mr. Covey were worth dying for, Douglass reclaimed his world view as his own and thereby also, his fate as his own. From that moment as he stated, "[he could resolve] that, however long [he] might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when [he] could be a slave in fact. [198]" All this before he ever stepped foot on the northbound ferry that would take him to his eventual physical freedom.

Though the greater narrative adds to the ideological transformation which comes out of the slave narrative tradition, this moment within the narrative serves as more of a gnoseological transformation. We remember that gnoseological transformations are narratives that begin with an anticlimactic and lead the reader conceptually from a greater to a lesser ignorance. The transformation comes not in the resolution of the character's issue in the narrative, rather, the transformation occurs in the reader's understanding of a given idea or concept. "The events of the beginning [in a gnoseological transformation] are evoked again [in the end] but this time we see them from the vantage point of truth and not from that of deceitful appearance."[199] Douglass' transformation into a freeman

[198] Douglass, 299
[199] Todorov, *Diacritics*, 40

was gnoseological. The anti-climatic comes from the very fact that the text is a slave narrative. It takes little deduction to know that at some point he must have succeeded at reaching a sympathetic ear outside of the grasp of his tormentors thus we know throughout the narrative that all of his struggles will at the very least culminate in the telling of the narrative itself through a state of liberty, albeit possible that state may have been temporarily lived. So before the narrative starts we expect at the very least a south to north, slave to free movement that would eventually lead to the retelling of the story which is anti-climactic. The events that reoccur at the end of the text that merit a second look would be the character's ruminations about their sufferings and their ontological view of themselves and their fellow slaves. Are they merely complaining because they have work to do? Will they care about the fate of their brethren when they achieve freedom? Do they truly value humanity and freedom or do they just want an escape from harsh labor? Will they be savage and vindictive and seek violent retribution? All these questions are in the mind of the reader which get a second look at the narrative's end. While some of these questions get adequately addressed through the narrative, the more important part, and the intent of the author, is not to quell these concerns as much as it is to redirect the questions. For Douglass the reader is left questioning was Douglass right to fight back? Why was it wrong for him to be granted an education if we truly consider them harmless, irrational, and savage? If he did not understand the merits of education why was he able to distance himself from slave superstition and go to such great lengths to attain literacy when it was denied him? Lastly and most central, if he is not a rational man or human being why is he so adamantly concerned with education, justice, and self-agency; the hallmarks of the western free man? Leaving the reader with these questions,

combined with the Christian rhetoric also contained in the narrative, will ideally lead the reader to draw one conclusion; that Douglass, is demonstrably a rational human being, a man who was, and remains, in peril so long as the institution of slavery persists, and as his brother or sister in Christ I must do my best to help him and those like him. For Douglass, the demonstration of this manhood and his understanding of its link to literacy and truth seeking, is necessary for one to develop a sense of one's own freedom as well as to demonstrate it to others. "This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave. *I rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood*. It recalled the departed self confidence, and inspired me again with a determination to be free. The gratification afforded by the triumph was a full compensation for whatever else might follow, even death itself. He only can understand the deep satisfaction which I experienced, who has himself repelled by force the bloody arm of slavery, I felt as I never felt before. It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom.[200]"

Bibb' narrative was less triumphant and more tragic. Unlike Douglass, Bibb had never in his tenure as a slave been "broken". Not blessed to have a Mrs. Auld, Bibb was not formally taught during his youth. "[A]lthough I suffered much from the lash, and for want of food and raiment; I confess that it was no disadvantage to be passed through the hands of so many families, as the only source of information that I had to enlighten my mind, consisted in what I could see and hear from others…it seems to me now, that I was particularly observing, and apt to retain what came under my observation. But more especially, all that I heard about liberty and freedom to the slaves, I never forget. Among other good trades I learned the art of running away to perfection. I made a regular

[200] Douglass, 298-299 (emphasis mine)

business of it, and never gave it up, until I had broken the bands of slavery and landed myself safely in Canada, where I was regarded as a man, and not as a thing.[201]" This propensity to run away, and his skill at it, made Bibb's narrative one of the more unique slave narratives in the African American literary cannon. Bibb's unyielding spirit and tenacity against being broken came not from false bravado or some macho demeanor which enabled him to flaunt his masculinity in spite of the beatings and whippings he faced. Rather, his sincere and reverent humility before God gave him strength and self worth where others were left void. "The circumstances in which I was then placed[202], gave me a longing desire to be free. It kindled a fire of liberty within my breast which has never yet been quenched. This seemed to be a part of my nature; it was first revealed to me by the inevitable laws of nature's God. I could see that the All-wise Creator, had made me a free, moral, intelligent and accountable being; capable of knowing good and evil. And I believed then, as I believe now, that every man has a right to wages for his labor; a right to his own wife and children; a right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness; and a right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. But here, in the light of these truths, I was a slave, a prisoner for life; I could possess nothing, nor acquire anything but what must belong to my keeper.[203]"

Bibb's relationship with God instilled in him two truths; that he was a human being to whom was deserved basic inalienable rights, and that his natural condition was not that of servitude and that in order to fulfill his obligations as a man he must break the chains of slavery and free himself in order to live as God would have him to live. Bibb's preservation of his dignity and self-worth were an everyday act of reverence to God.

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[201] Bibb, 15-16
[202] Speaking of his early repeated attempts to run away from Mr. White's second wife.
[203] Bibb, 17

Likewise was his love for his eventual wife and kids. Taking heed to his Biblical charge to be the caretaker of his wife and child, Bibb's narrative is filled with repeated attempts of Bibb placing himself in jeopardy to steal his wife and child away to freedom in the north. In a twist, unlike Douglass who detailed the systematic denial of his manhood only to reclaim it later in the narrative, Bibb's story had no such fortunate turn of events. Upon repeated failed attempts to free his wife and children Bibb, upon another attempt to free his family, is informed that his wife had willingly succumb to her status as the concubine of her new master. This choice was made painfully evident in a message sent to his family from her. The moment of freedom for Bibb does not carry the jubilation of Douglass' who triumphed over the system. Rather, Bibb was made free through his loss of his family. In bitter ironic fashion, Bibb had no problems escaping the physical bonds of slavery for he did so frequently, he was a prisoner of the emotional grip of slavery. His duty to his God, his wife, and his child prevented him from going on about his life in freedom the several times he successfully made it to the north. Though free from immediate authority, crafty, and hard working enough to procure his freedom fiscally thereby gaining legal standing as free if he desired it, he was bound by his desire to live reverently to his God through the supporting of his family. Their state of legitimated servitude to his former master prevented his ability to be reverent to God. He had to go back, time, and time again. He could not "feel free" until they at the very least were, like him, free from the immediate authority of their bitter master. Though this never came to pass, Malinda's willful sin and befouling of their marital bed negated their union for though their "marriage was without license or sanction of law, [they] believed it to be honorable before God, and [their] bed undefiled.[204]"

[204] Bibb, 40-41

As painful as it may have been, his pious divorce to Malinda freed him from the burden of trying to save her and his child. It is one thing to try to save a loved one from a cruel system, it is another to try to risk one's own life for one who has chosen to renounce their God and choose worldly pleasures and heavenly consequences over patience and the risk of death. He felt his risks were not returned with equal risks on her part. To be fair, it could be argued that even if he had a legitimate claim against Malinda, he should have still returned for his child. In Bibb's defense he rationalizes to himself, "Poor unfortunate woman, I bring no charge of guilt against her, for I know not all the circumstances connected with the case. It is consistent with slavery, however, to suppose that she became reconciled to it, from the fact of her sending word back to her friends and relatives that she was much better treated than she had ever been before, and that she had also given me up. It is also reasonable to suppose that there might have been some kind of attachment formed by living together in this way for years; and it is quite probable that they have other children according to the law of nature, which would have a tendency to unite them stronger together.[205]" Bibb both harbors no anger towards Malinda for he knows that she may have endured any measure of evils that may have driven her to her choice. The union she forged he deduces most likely is strong and has produced siblings for his child. To take Frances out of a stable, at least as stable as a mixed family could be in the antebellum south, family would harm her more than help her. He was to be alone. Nevertheless Bibb lived his life in accordance with Romans 8:24-32:

> "[24]For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? [25]But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. [26]Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. [27]And he that

[205] Bibb, 189-190

> searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. [28]And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. [29]For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. [30]Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. [31]What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? [32]He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Since his youth Bib had proven his undeniable faith in God's promises. It seems strange that he would count the loss of Malinda anything other than God's will for it led to his eventual union with Miss Miles along with whom he "had the happiness to be joined in holy wedlock. Not in slave-holding style, which is a mere farce, without the sanction of law or gospel; but in accordance with the laws of God and our country. [His new] wife is a bosom friend, a help-meet, a loving companion in all the social, moral, and religious relations of life. She is to [him] what a poor slave's wife can never be to her husband while in the condition of a slave; for she can not be true to her husband contrary to the will of her master. She can be neither pure nor virtuous, contrary to the will of her master. She dare not refuse to be reduced to a state of adultery at the will of her master; from the fact that the slaveholding law, customs, and teachings are all against the poor slaves. [206]" Bibb's divorce led to his freedom to reverently follow God and to adequately protect his new family from the evils he perceived in the world. Bibb's gnoseological transformation resulted in the readers asking the questions: why couldn't he have been permitted to buy his wife and child? Why do slaves seek to join in God and state sanctioned unions despite their knowledge that they would eventually be torn apart? Can slaves really love? Do slaves truly possess such reverence for a Christian God that they

[206] Bibb, 191-192

would sacrifice their lives to live according to Christian principles? To which Bibb would desire that the reader answer he is a God fearing man who lived according Christian principles and was robbed of his first love and his first born unjustly, unrighteously, and unnecessarily because of the peculiar institution of slavery. Such an institution is a direct affront against God and his people and I as a follower of Christ must do something to help Bibb and people like him from suffering these atrocities. For Bibb, freedom entails the "right to wages for his labor; [the] right to [one's] own wife [or husband] and children; [the] right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness; and [the] right to worship God according to the dictates of [one's] own conscience.[207]" If pleasure is found in supporting one's family and money is but a means to their sustenance, Bibb's list can be reduced to God and family. Freedom for Bibb is the right to live righteously and to protect one's family.

Jacobs' narrative was a mélange of Douglass' and Bibb's. Clearly interested in securing her family's liberty like Bibb, Jacobs was also determined to preserve the boundaries of her womanhood and humanity like Douglass defended his manhood. Unfortunately for Jacobs her task was a little more daunting in that she bore the sufferings of being a Negro and enslaved but also the burden of being a woman interested in self-agency. Jacobs had grown determined to fashion a home for her and her children by her own hands. After her miscalculation and recognition that she would not be sold after rearing two children by another man, Jacobs realized that she was alone. Nevertheless, "The beautiful spring came, and when Nature resumes her loveliness, the human soul is apt to revive also. My drooping hopes came to life again with the flowers. I was dreaming of freedom again; more for my children's sake than my own. I planned

[207] Bibb, 17

and planned. Obstacles hit against plans. There seemed no way of overcoming them; and yet I hoped.[208]" This hope led to her eventual exciting cat and mouse game where she eluded Dr. Norcom for years, many of which she was imprisoned in an attic crawlspace of her grandmother's house. Like Bibb, though she eventually met kind northerners and attained freedom from the direct authority of Dr. Norcom she was still imperiled. Even when Dr. Norcom died she still had to burden for escaping the legal grasp of his heirs. Luckily she had her freedom purchased by Mrs. Willis to which she replied, "My brain reeled as I read these lines. A gentleman near me said 'it's true; I have seen the bill of sale.' 'The bill of sale!" Those words struck me like a blow. So I was *sold* at last! A human being *sold* in the free city of New York![209]" It may seem as if Jacobs from this period considers herself free for she refers to herself as free and talks about her father rejoicing in heaven and her grandmother living to see the day yet I contest that Jacobs at the end of the narrative still does not consider herself free. Despite the "bill of sale" Jacobs clearly stated in chapter thirty eight, she "knew the law would decide that [she] was his property, and would probably still give his daughter a claim to [her] children; but [Jacobs] regarded such laws as the regulations of robbers, who had no rights that [she] was bound to respect.[210]" To Jacobs the bill of sale legitimated nothing. It was the culmination of the hopes and prayers of her family members yet it did nothing to instill a spirit of liberty and security to her soul.

To further my claim that Jacobs had yet to taste what she would consider liberty I point to the second to last paragraph in the narrative.

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[208] Jacobs, 83
[209] Jacobs, 200
[210] Jacobs, 187

> "Reader, my story ends with freedom; not in the usual way, with marriage. I and my children are now free! We are as free from the power of slaveholders as are the white people of the north; and though that, according to my ideas, is not saying a great deal, it is a vast improvement in *my* condition. The dream of my life is not yet realized. I do not sit with my children in a home of my own. I still long for a hearthstone of my own, however humble. I wish for it for my children's sake far more than for my own. But God so orders circumstances as to keep me with my friend Mrs. Willis. Love, duty, gratitude, also bind me to her side. It is a privilege to serve her who pities my oppressed people, and who has bestowed the inestimable boon of freedom on me and my children.[211]"

In this paragraph I read two voices. The first acknowledges that the narrative ends in freedom and her appreciation to Mr. and Mrs. Willis hence her desire to serve them by choice. This voice completes a gnoseological transformation and allows the reader to ask: how can we as women stand by while other women endure these tragedies? Are women as docile and powerless as society says they are? Can I, as a woman, stand for my children and my inalienable rights as a human distinct from my husband should it be the case that neglect, abuse, and adultery cause me to do so? To which Jacobs would desire the women of the north to answer the women in bondage deserve our attention and our aid as do the slave mistresses of the south need our prayers and our council. Also I, as a woman, deserve to be respected and honored but also have the fortitude to fashion with my own hands my own destiny and my own fate without a man if need be. Though this reading fits nicely with the greater ideological transformation found in the abolitionist argument for liberation found in slave narratives overall, Jacobs still retains her tenacity that characterized her lifelong struggles to free herself in her family. Yes, she does state that she is as free as the whites in the north, but she adds two caveats. First, that she still did it alone for the narrative did not end in marriage so there was no knight in shining armor that saved her. Second, to say she is as free as a white in the

[211] Jacobs, 201

north was "not saying a great deal," despite it being "a vast improvement" in her condition. To label her state as an improvement connotes that it is not an end in itself, rather it is merely a step forward. This is why she clarifies by defining the missing component of her freedom; "the dream of my life is not yet realized. I do not sit with my children in a home of my own."

As Bibb sacrificed the greater part of his life traveling back and forth from the south to the north in hopes that one day he would free his family, so too did Jacobs suffer on a plantation, in swamps, in her grandmother's attic, and through countless other scenarios all in the hopes of procuring what she had for her children. As a child, despite her status as a slave, she had a home with her mother and father. "I was born a slave; but I never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed away… [My parents] lived together in a comfortable home; and, though we were all slaves, I was so fondly shielded from that I never dreamed I was a piece of merchandise, trusted to them for safe keeping, and liable to be demanded of them at any moment. I had one brother, [John], who was two years younger than myself- a bright, affectionate child. I also had a great treasure in my maternal grandmother, who was a remarkable woman in many respects…such were the unusually circumstances of my early childhood.[212]" Extremely fortunate as she admits, Jacobs was taught to value family at an early age. The model of her mother and grandmother, combined with the unusual piety of her first mistresses led to her to develop a keen sense of pride and capability in her womanhood. These early memories fused to create her drive to forge a stable, family centered life for her children. This reality had yet to come to pass despite the fact that she had removed her children from immediate harm at the hands of the Norcoms. Though, as not to sound greedy and materialistic she

[212] Jacobs, 5-6

qualifies her desire for a home as being for her children, not for her, and that she only wanted a modest home, nothing pretentious. This second voice in the paragraph results in a different set of gnoseological transformative questions that I believe were aimed at modernity rather than her 19th century readership: To what extent is she obligated to remain in service to the Willis family? Do freedom and familial obligations trump honor and appreciation? To what extent should northerners be taken to task for their conciliatory behavior? To which Jacobs would be bound to desire the reader to answer that her honor as a Christian woman would oblige her to fulfill her obligations to the Willis family and that it would damage her greater concern for overall abolition should she prove to be self-serving and ungrateful. Also she would hope that conciliatory northerners, especially women, be taken heavily to task for their apathy to a cause so worthy of attention. Regardless of which voice is read, freedom for Jacobs is clearly the desire for the realization of her self-agency yet not at the expense of her children, her honor, or her faith in Christ. Also for women to be empowered to protect and provide for themselves when necessary and to draw recognition to the unique challenges faced by women in bondage. Though the end of the narrative still finds her wanting for the political and economic self-sovereignty she desires for herself and her children, she remains hopeful and diligent in working towards that end.

Central to all three conceptions of freedom represented by the three slave narrative authors are the notions of family, God, and self-agency. Both Douglass and Jacobs express the need to construct one's own life plan and execute that plan free from systematized impediments. This includes the development of one's self-image, one's ownership over their selection of epistemological models to adhere to, and the freedom

from structured attacks on one's sense of self worth. Bibb and Jacobs share a fervent desire to be free to care for, love, and nurture their families as they choose. This includes the selection of a mate of one's own choosing, and the right to retain and provide for the sustenance of one's own children. In short, a right to love, be loved, and to defend those one loves from harm. Finally all three share a critical dependence on a faith in Christian principles. Each claim, argument, and lamentation assumes not only knowledge of Christian values but the possession of the hallmarks of the Christian faith: hope, love, charity, forgiveness, and a reverent fear of God without which there would be no motivation to action. Unlike Rousseau's dependence on empathy for charitable acts, the slave narrative authors sought to prove their humanity through their strivings thus necessitating charity from those who fear a Christian God who commands charity to the meek.[213] To be counted among the goats and to suffer a life eternal is a fate that the authors of the slave narratives hoped would spur the Christians of the north to action. Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau also borrowed heavily from scripture in the deployment of their claims. The usage of the Christian God and Bible were among but a few similarities between both social contract and slave narrative conceptions of freedom. In my concluding chapter I will analyze both genres' attempts to define freedom and its prerequisites to determine if the claims found in each could be bolstered through dialogue with one another.

[213] Matthew 25:31-46

CHAPTER NINE: ANTAGONISTIC JUXTAPOSITION AND CONCLUSION

I began from the position that through comparing the texts of social contract theorists with African American slave narratives I could expose the limits of the concept of freedom erected by the social contract theorists and accepted as foundational in modernity by political philosophy. I also claimed that I would, offer potential ways to expand these theories into something more universally applicable to other non-western human experiences both in posterity and modernity. I endeavored to ask the question: How can an atomistic notion of freedom that assumes a static (rational, self-aware, endowed with the God-given rights of freedom, equality, and just treatment under the law, convenience driven) individual be expanded by the addition of claims made by a subject whose sense of self preservation necessarily includes the preservation of others? Likewise how can that same atomistic individual's sense of freedom be impacted by one whose reason, sense of self, desires, and basic political rights (freedom, equality, justice) are either at the moment of formation or in the process of being re-created? We began our inquiry of freedom, liberalism, and subject formation in an analysis of social contract theory. Upon investigation, I determined that the paradigm, because of its methodological similitude, had a shared reliance on a distinct narrative structure. The state of nature narrative found at the outset of each treatise proved to adhere to narrative conventions. Further narrative analysis of the state of nature claims led to the unveiling of distinct similarities in the deployment of these assertions. All three used similar conventions to establish a gnoseological transformation which enabled the state of nature claims to bind with their greater claims for the legitimacy of a specific idealized state. The social contract authors utilized the fact that gnoseological transformative structures

begin with known claims and lead to specific directed questions which are evoked rhetorically in the reader. The idealized state which is proposed after each state of nature becomes the answer to a begged question. As I argued earlier in the first chapter on Todorov, the seeming circularity that arises as a result of the hypothetical thought experiment is systematically created by the relationship between the gnoseological transformative questions and their immediate answers in the construction of an idealized state which combine to create an ideological transformation that troubles many philosophy readers. The enlightenment political philosophers are often accused of utilizing themselves as idealized models of humanity to universalize their desired version of greater metaphysical concepts such as freedom, equality, and justice. I have found that to a certain degree this accusation is warranted as the supposed universal idealized state developed by each thinker is predicated upon a specific narrative articulation of freedom rather than a collection of empirically derived truths as is claimed by each author. However, rather than viewing this grounds to merely discount an entire tradition of philosophy, I argue that it is an opportunity to contribute to an actual conception of freedom that may be considered universal.

Emmanuel Eze in *On Reason* argues that it is erroneous to "excessively romanticize" terms for no concept functions independent of institutions, other concepts, or hegemonic forces. To think freedom or to explore its nature and prerequisites, necessarily requires an exploration of its contingent context. We find that freedom is best defined in context of the institutions and hegemonic relations it is derived out of. Though not articulated in its universal form, individual perspectives and claims of the nature of freedom placed within known contexts are ideal starting places to develop a conception

of freedom that could be closer to something that is truly universal. In this context we find that the claims regarding what freedom is, and is not, found in the social contract treatises, though not universal in themselves, are in fact ideal as foundational towards the development of a universal conception of freedom. Political philosophy over the past 300 to 350 years has in fact taken notions such as freedom from the enlightenment and has made few attempts to build upon them. A majority of the discipline has either taken freedom as defined by the enlightenment as rational and true, others have critiqued it as wholly erroneous and devoid of use. I argue that neither application is correct. Social contractarian conceptions of freedom have use only through their being taken for what they are: narratively derived claims of aspects of freedom's character and nature which cannot be taken as universal. Eze in *On* Reason argues that concepts such as reason can find status as universal only through antagonism with other views and perspectives. As Eze notes regarding his investigation of reason, "Displaying a variety of points of view is necessary because whatever anyone may think of it, what we mean when we refer to a person being rational in general, or having a reason for doing or believing something in particular, is not only complex but also, in more than the surface features, elusive, enigmatic, and mysterious. The processes of reasoning, like all processes of reflection or modes of consciousness, are not neatly laid out in a linear and determined way, as if the processes were highways or railroad tracks…What is reason? What do we mean when we ascribe rational qualities to others, for example when John says that Jill has a reason for acting such and such? What does it mean to say about yourself that, when you did such and such, you were acting rationally? These questions have been proposed and addressed by [diverse] disciplines…it is doubtful that that any single effort could

adequately capture everything in the field. For this reason, instead of attempting a quantitative and exhaustive treatment of my questions, I will focus on the qualitative and exploratory. My choice of method is, I believe, a virtue. The virtue derives from the nature of the subject matter: the characteristics of rationality itself. The nature of human rationality seems to require that the best way to define reason philosophically is demonstration. The demonstration will require amassing empirical or scientific evidence for the rational, and reflecting on this concept of evidentiality. It is only from such demonstrative acts that we can explore what is at stake in the activity itself. It is my task therefore to render explicit- by reflective, exploratory analysis- that which is already implicitly comprehended in rational action.[214]" My investigation of freedom is much the same as Eze's on reason. Freedom, like reason, is also enigmatic and elusive. My investigation is meant to be paradigmatic of how freedom as a concept could be pushed towards universality by giving an example of an antagonistic clash between two distinct spheres of freedom claims thus I too, have been better served performing a qualitative and exploratory, rather than quantitative inquiry into the concept of freedom. My method, like Eze's, was also demonstrative. Freedom, like reason, is a concept best demonstrated through practice and acts as opposed to stagnantly defined. One acts free, feels free, is free because they can perform act x, y, or z. Freedom is always tied to demonstration, act, and will. Thus my inquiry is centered on the depiction of freedom through permissible and legitimated actions. For Hobbes individuals are free from actions of others that would threaten their existence. For Locke individuals are free to acquire, expand, and defend their property holdings. For Rousseau individuals are free to

[214] Eze, Emmanuel Chuckwudi. *On Reason: Rationality in a World of Cultural Conflict and Racism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008 pp. xi-xii (Hereafter referenced as Eze)

live by the light of their own conscience. Outside of a shared claim that all are endowed with an inalienable right to self-preservation, these actions, or freedom from actions, comprise the nature of freedom for these thinkers.

The actions listed by the three social contract theorists as I claimed are not universal and could only become so through antagonisms with other claims of freedom's nature. For what I take to be clear reasons, I chose notions of freedom expressed by African American slaves in their autobiographical narratives to be juxtaposed against those found in the social contract treatises. Representative of the largest example of freedom narratives known to the western world, the authors of the three slave narratives I chose to examine each articulate a distinct claim regarding freedom's prerequisites. Like the social contract treatises, the slave narratives are presented in context with explicitly stated motivations and goals. Both genres, social contract and slave narrative, utilize narrative structure and the deployment of similar devices to defend different claims regarding what it means for one to be free.

In each genre God played an important role in their rhetorical arguments. For the social contract theorists God served as a point of origin upon which men reduced to their most base and their desires justified. The utilization of the fall enables the social contract thinkers legitimate their hypothetical claims of original man as empirical and actual. Likewise, the authors of the slave narratives used the Bible, and Godly scripture to legitimate their chastising of southern masters and to further prod northern apathetic readers into action. Relying on 1John:2-6, the authors of slave narratives challenged the spirituality of northern Christians: "[2]Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: [3]And every spirit that

confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. [4]Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. [5]They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. [6]We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." The veracity of the claims of the slave narrative authors was made evident only through the backdrop of Christian principles. Without God, slavery is just a business transaction where the hired help is trying to break their contract.

At first glance, it would appear that the idea of manhood professed by Douglass, and womanhood by Jacobs would be encompassed in the idea of self-preservation advanced by all three social contract thinkers. Despite their similarities, the self-sovereignty advanced by Douglass and Jacobs is very different from what Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau imagined. As property owning, white, men in the 16th and 17th centuries, the authors of the social contract treatises were primarily concerned with the accumulation of means and their right to basic self-defense from robbers. Civil war would be a period of extreme violence to them yet ironically, even in such a state, each would be regarded as a worthy enemy combatant deserving of the dignity of a descent burial should he be slain.

Douglass and Jacobs, and Bibb as well for that matter, were concerned with a host of concerns that the authors of the social contract treatise, could imagine, yet would never attribute to themselves as legitimate concerns. The first aspect of self-sovereignty Douglass and Jacobs desired that Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau never troubled

themselves about was the right to define one's own relationship to the world. For the authors of the social contract narratives, their minds, their ideas, and relationships towards the world were their own. Though others may disagree, they were entitled to develop whatever idiotic ideas they chose insofar as they did not harm another. The thoughts, dreams, wishes, cares, and concerns of slaves were carefully monitored by their masters. Their world view and self-perspective was carefully constructed during the seasoning process to ensure maximum allegiance to and fear for their masters. Douglass and Jacobs desired the control of their own thoughts and world views. Douglass articulates this concern the best during his joy at reading *The Colombian Orator* then subsequent angst at recognizing that Master Hugh's prediction came true.

> "In the same book, I met with one of Sheridan's mighty speeches on and in behalf of Catholic emancipation. These were choice documents to me. I read them over and over again with unabated interest. They gave tounge to interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had flashed through my mind…The reading of these documents enabled me to utter my thoughts, and to meet the arguments brought forward to sustain slavery; but while they relieved me of one difficulty, they brought on another even more painful than the one of which I was relieved. The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers…behold! That very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish.[215]"

Auxiliary to this claim is a different, introspective view of reason. Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau primarily concern themselves not with the moral consequences of one's rational decisions, rather, with reason's creative power, that is, of its ability to create thoughts and ideas that are constructive of one's persona in the world. Reason creates knowledge which advances the abilities and thus civility of the individual. Though certain thoughts are recognized as warranting caution, the most notable being

[215] Douglass, 278-279

sexual awakening in Rousseau, yet each idea is viewed in itself a necessary and capable of being utilized to one's advantage. Douglass, Jacobs, and Bibb demonstrate reason itself as containing both the rudiments of self-affirmation and misery. Best described as an introspective Rousseauean perfectablity, the authors of the slave narrative discuss reason's capacity to illuminate all, rather than choice, perceptions of the self. Seemingly a moot point, it is seen as critical when viewed from the lens of servitude. Recognition of one's position, not only as a slave, but moreover, one endowed with God-given privileges and rights that have been unjustly stripped, is the basis for an individual's desire to be free. We find that preceding the decision of each slave narrative author to escape was a two staged realization. The first stage was childhood recognition of their status as enslaved. The second stage was the recognition of their equality with those they served. Bibb for whom these feelings came early in life, articulates this claim best.

> "The first time I was separated from my mother, I was young and small. I knew nothing of my condition than as a slave. I was living with Mr. White whose wife died and left him a widower with one little girl, who was said to be the legitimate owner of my mother, and all her children. This girl was also my playmate when we were children. I was taken away from my mother, and hired out to labor for various persons, eight or ten years in succession; and all my wages were expended for the education of Harriet White, my playmate. It was then my sorrows and sufferings commenced. It was then I first commenced seeing and feeling that I was a wretched slave, compelled to work under the lash without wages, and often without clothes enough to hide my nakedness... Although I have suffered much from the lash, and for want of food and raiment; I confess that it has been no disadvantage to be passed through the hands of so many families, as the only source of information that I had to enlighten my mind, consisted in what I could see and hear from others. Slaves were not allowed books, pen, ink, nor paper, to improve their minds. But it seems to me now, that I was particularly observing, and apt to retain what came under my observation. But more especially, all that I heard about liberty and freedom to the slaves, I never forget. Among other good trades I learned the art of running away to perfection. I made a regular business of it, and never gave it up until I had broken the bands of slavery.[216]"

[216] Bibb, 14-15

After learning the inequality of his social position between he and his playmate, Bibb later acquired from others the self-affirmation that he was not a slave by nature but by artifice which inspired him to pursue his rightful position as a free man.

Bibb is exemplary of another primary difference between the self-sovereignty expressed the social contract thinkers and that expressed by the slave narrative authors: the right to an education. Education is something that is wholly assumed for Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. The acquisition of a proper understanding of the world and how one is to act in it is so presumed that Locke finds it just to warrant all criminals be treated a beasts due to their having quitted rationality. Ignorance is equated with immorality. "*For the Fundamental Law of Nature, Man being to be preserved*, as much as possible, when all cannot be preserv'd, the safety of the Innocent is to be preferred: And one may destroy a Man who makes War upon him, or has discovered an Enmity to his being, for the same Reason, that he may kill a *Wolf* or *Lyon*; because such Men are not under the ties of the Common Law of Reason, have no other Rule, but that of Force and Violence, and so may be treated as Beasts of Prey, those dangerous and noxious Creatures, that waill be sure to destroy him, whenever he falls into their power.[217]" Locke's assessment is spot on regarding those who are fully cognizant of social laws and proprieties and yet chose to act contrary to them, however it conceptually opens the door to the opposite assumption that those with no knowledge of laws and social proprieties would of necessity act in a criminal fashion. This logic was used throughout the antebellum south and reconstruction era. Fear that despite the possibility African diasporic peoples may have a propensity toward reason and civility, their lack of an understanding of American

[217] Locke, 278-279

social laws and practices warranted their selective treatment as threats to whites, whether slave or free, regardless of the absurdity of the circumstances. Slaves without a "proper education" were liable to commit the most horrible of atrocities. A proper education however was defined as the recognition and demonstration of the proper deference towards whites. This is demonstrated well by Jacobs. Despite her status as a slave, and the power and authority Mrs. Norcom held over her, Mrs. Norcom treated Jacobs with the utmost suspicion and distrust with regard to her dealings with Dr. Norcom, refusing to acknowledge, at least to Jacobs' knowledge, the possibility of her husband's culpability.

> "She handed me a Bible and said, 'Lay your hand on your heart, kiss this holy book, and swear before God that you tell me the truth.' I took the oath she required, and I did it with a clear conscience. 'You have taken God's holy word to testify your innocence,' said she. 'If you have deceived me, beware! Now take this stool, sit down, look me directly in the face, and tell me all that has passed between your master and you.' I did as she ordered. As I went on with my account her color changed frequently, she wept, and sometimes groaned…She felt that her marriage vows were desecrated, her dignity insulted; but she had no compassion for the poor victim of her husband's perfidy. She pitied herself as a martyr…I knew I had ignited a torch, and I expected to suffer for it afterwards…She now took me to sleep in a room adjoining her own. There I was and object of her especial care, though not of her especial comfort, for she spent many a sleepless night to watch over me. Sometimes I woke up, and found her bending over me. At other times she whispered in my ear, as though it was her husband who was speaking to me, and listened to hear what I would answer. If she startled me, on such occasions, she would glide stealthily away; and the next morning she would tell me I had been talking in my sleep, and ask who I was talking to. At last, I began to be fearful for my life. It had been often threatened; and you can imagine, better than I describe, what an unpleasant sensation it must produce to wake up in the dead of the night and find a jealous woman bending over you. Terrible as this experience was, I had fears that it would give place to one more terrible.[218]"

Regardless of the fact that Mrs. Norcom was knowledgeable of her husband's actions, the true culprit had to be Jacobs because it was in her "nature" to commit such

[218] Jacobs, 33-34

acts. Ironically, the only defense from being homogenized together with the immediate threat posed by the criminals of the day for slaves (and to a certain degree free Blacks) was the acquisition of that in which they were forbidden to have: literacy. More important than mere knowledge of a few truths and understanding of a few concepts, literacy gave one self-agency and mastery over their epistemological relationship to the world. Free to define and label one's experiences and ideas for themselves, a slave endowed with literacy was capable of undoing the psychological dependence created in slaves on their masters by the seasoning process. Douglass is legendary for his depiction of the power of literacy to transform an individual. Though his acquisition of his literary ability is well documented, the true significance of it is found in the affect it had on his world view, self esteem, and decision making. After being broken by Mr. Covey Douglass was saved from the ignorance of "the root" by the knowledge he acquired through reading. Book learning is useless without its application. Douglass applied his readings to his condition and it resulted in his not being capable of bending to the tyrannical rule of his illegitimate master. Now a "spoiled negro" Douglass' freedom or death was sure to come, and Mr. Covey knew it.

Another area where the authors of the slave narratives felt disenfranchised with regard to their self-preservation was in matters of the heart. The manner in which the authors of the slave narratives discussed their angst at the lack of control over their relationship affairs juxtaposed against the complete lack of in-depth discussion by the social contract authors demonstrates the difference of importance placed on the subject by each genre. The sole anomaly to this juxtaposition is Rousseau's discussion of Sophie in *Emile*. However I would claim that though in depth, Rousseau's lengthy discussion of

Emile's proper relationship to Sophie follows the same paradigm established by Hobbes and Locke in the social contract tradition. For the social contract theorists the family was a possession that came with duties. One who had a wife and children was obligated to care for them and nurture them. This care and nurturing was obligatory to the degree of preventing harm from befalling them. One was not obligated to provide for their wife and child beyond their base sustenance. Though it may be in the best interest of a man to do far more, no such action is obligated by natural laws. Furthermore, a man is complete in himself ontologically in mind and spirit. Individuals are responsible for their own thoughts, ideas, and actions. The man is to serve as an ideal model for the wife and child to follow yet they are individually responsible for themselves ultimately. The family is ruled by power relationships. The mother, the father, and the child each have their place. For Locke and Rousseau the father was the natural head of the household. Though taken from Christian scripture, this model was perverted by the social contract thinkers. The father rather than being beholden to his wife was lord over the property the family possessed. Because the end of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau was the construction of a body politic where property was individually owned, the family was discussed not in the interest of exploring moral relations between its members, rather to locate the origin of legitimate property rights.

> "The *Power*, then, *that Parents have* over their Children, arises from that Duty which is incumbent on them, to take care of their Off-spring, during the imperfect state of Childhood. To inform the Mind, and govern the Actions of their yet ignorant Nonage, till Reason shall take its place, and ease them of that Trouble, is what the Children want, and the Parents are bound to. For God having given Man an Understanding to direct his Actions, has allowed him a freedom of Will, and liberty of Acting, as properly belonging thereunto, within the bounds of that Law he is under. But whilst he is in an Estate, wherein he has not *Understanding* of his own to direct his *Will*, he is not to have any Will of his own to follow: He that

> *understands* from him, must *will* for him too; he must prescribe to his Will, and regulate his Actions; but when he comes to the Estate that made his *Father a Freeman,* the *Son is a Freeman too*.[219]"

The fundamental relation between father and son is one where the father provides for the son until he is capable of managing property on his own which becomes demonstrative of the awakening of his rational faculties and the demarcation of his deserving freedom from parental control. Men, women, and children are, even within the family unit, individuals first, responsible for themselves primarily. Contrary to this atomistic view of the family is the interdependence expressed in the narratives of Bibb and Jacobs. Jacobs submitted her entire life to her children. This submission was more than some obligation for their sustenance; it was more than concern of proper obedience due her from them, Jacobs' expressed *love* for her children. They were not just borders who were indebted to her for their existence. They were loved, care for, and their happiness and existence was important to Jacobs.

> "When my babe was born, they said it was premature. It weighed only four pounds; God let it live…As the months passed on, my boy improved in health. When he was a year old, they called him beautiful. The little vine was taking deep root in my existence, though its clinging fondness excited a mixture of love and pain. When I was most sorely oppressed I found a solace in his smiles. I loved to watch his infant slumbers; but always there was a dark cloud over my enjoyment. I could never forget that he was a slave. Sometimes I wished that he might die in infancy. God tried me. My darling became very ill. The bright eyes grew dull, and the little feet and hands were so icy cold that I thought death had already touched them. I had preyed for his death, but never so earnestly as I now prayed for his life; and my prayer was heard. Alas, what mockery is it for a slave mother to try o pray back her dying child to life! Death is better than slavery.[220]"

The wavering between her prayers for both the life and death of her child is demonstrative of how engaged Jacobs was in the life prospects of her child. Most parents

[219] Locke, 306-307
[220] Jacobs, 60-62

would attest that the loss of a child is an immeasurable pain to endure. That Jacobs would wish this pain on herself to spare her child a life of slavery demonstrates the degree to which Jacobs was willing to sacrifice for her child. It is in sacrifice that the authors of the slave narrative differed from the social contract thinkers. For the social contract thinkers self-preservation was the universal first law of nature. One must protect their life above all else for life is the property of God not the individual. As caretakers of our lives we are not at liberty to end it at a moment of our choosing. Reason, otherwise defined as living in accordance to our design, dictates that one preserve their lives at any cost. Sacrifice is contrary to this construction of reason. To sacrifice one's self is to act against the first law of nature and neglect one's proper care for themselves. Yet it seems that Jacobs' love for her children necessitated this level of commitment.

> "My mind was made up; I was resolved that I would foil my master and save my children, or I would perish in the attempt…On the decisive day the doctor came, and said he hoped I had made a wise choice. 'I am ready to go to the plantation, sir,' I replied…I had my secret hopes; but I must fight my battle alone. I had a woman's pride, and a mother's love for my children; and I resolved that out of the darkness of this hour a brighter dawn should rise for them. My master had power and law on his side; I had a determined will. There is might in each[221]"

The seven years she spent in the attic were extremely detrimental to her health yet she endured, not out of some desire to be lord over her children someday or to command obedience from them at a later date. Rather she sacrificed out of love plain and simple.

The same depth of commitment was demonstrated by Bibb time and time again. Extremely adept at escaping, Bibb could have escaped permanently to the north undetected seemingly whenever he wanted. Yet despite his frequent escapes he always returned to attempt to free his wife and child. Like Jacobs his obligation to his child was

[221] Jacobs, 84-85

a sacrificial one. His relationship to his wife, while also sacrificial, was so for different reasons. While his sacrifice for his child was born of their blood-bond, his relation to his wife was a spiritual one. Bibb attested his fervent belief in marriage as dictated in the Bible. In Genesis the scripture details that Eve was made from Adam's rib by God while he slept. Though this is descriptive of the origin of the first woman, it is also metaphoric of the relationship between husband and wife. In marriage husband and wife are to join together to become "one flesh" in the eyes of the Lord. This is meant to be literal as the reconstitution of Adam. Since "it is not good for man to be alone" man is made complete in his wife in Christian scripture. Bibb considered Malinda his "rib" or his completion and together they made "one flesh." As such his freedom would forever be incomplete until *he* was complete when *she* was reconstituted to him in the north. His repeated returns to the south to free his wife were both sacrificial in that he risked his life for her sake yet also self-preservative in that he was seeking to complete himself by freeing his "better half" literally, from bondage. Both Jacobs and Bibb did not consider themselves atomistic individuals. Jacobs children and Bibb's wife and child were ontologically part of the authors. Neither Jacobs nor Bibb could "feel free" without the freedom of their family. Their ontological perceptions of their selves were wholly interdependent with that of their family. Beyond their immediate family, all three authors recognized that despite their achieved status as free, they could not rest until the institution as a whole was destroyed. More than altruism, the abolitionists consistently placed themselves in danger to speak at conventions, protest, and lobby their cause in political offices. The allegiance each author showed to write and publish their narrative demonstrated the

degree to which they considered themselves as part of a whole as opposed to atomistic individuals.

Expounding on the idea of love, Jacobs and Bibb both give poignant commentary on the right to love who one desires. As love is sacrifice, so to is it willful submission to another. The power to choose who one submits to is a fundamental human right. Yet as was the case with education and the right to control one's perception of truth, the social contract thinkers simply took for granted the right to control who they loved and how they would submit and demonstrate that love.

> "Why does the slave ever love? Why allow the tendrils of the heart to twine around objects which may at any moment be wrenched away by the hand of violence? When separations come by the hand of death, the pious soul can bow in resignation, and say, 'Not my will, but thine be done, O Lord!' But when the ruthless hand of man strikes the blow, regardless of the misery he causes, it is hard to be submissive. I did not reason thus when I was a young girl. Youth will be youth. I loved, and I indulged the hope that the dark clouds around me would turn out a bright lining. I forgot that in the land of my birth the shadows are too dense for light to penetrate.[222]"

Not only did Jacobs have her first love forced away from her, she was led by her emotions to forge a superficial bond and willingly submit to a man she may otherwise have not performed such acts with. Yet in the willing submission Jacobs found a perverse pleasure that she was scorning her master who sought to control her right to choose. Bibb likewise was prohibited from being united with the only woman he professed to love, the woman whom he married. His entire narrative was one of love lost and the freedom he found in being relinquished of his obligation to love one he was prevented from providing for in a manner that would be demonstrative of his love.

[222] Jacobs, 37

Freedom Defined

Comparatively speaking, the aspects of freedom demonstrated, expressed, and lamented in the slave narratives were more introspective than those found in the social contract treatise. The right to love, to support and nurture a family, to be educated, to construct one's epistemological relationship to the world, to affirm one's self through self agency, are all introverted rights which have as their end the self. When I love another I am fulfilled in the acceptance of my overtures or support. Desire is only part of love. When my desire is accepted by my intended individual, not necessarily reciprocated, I am satiated. The same for supporting a family; when my family is safe due to my actions and support I am filled with purpose and meaning. Education, ownership of my epistemological relationship to the world, self-agency all seek to affirm and edify the self. The social contract thinkers' conceptions of freedom were oppositionally extroverted. One is free from others, has their property rights respected by others, and is free to follow their conscience without coercion from others. In an ironic twist, the atomistic, self assured social contract thinkers developed socially oriented notions of freedoms prerequisites. The slave narrative authors, though their actions, cares, and concerns are communal, they developed notions of freedom's prerequisites that serviced primarily the individual. A more full sense of freedom derived from these texts has to account for the concerns proposed by each of the thinkers. To satisfy these demands freedom would have to be defined as *a state where an individual is at liberty to think, feel, and act in any way that does not bring them into direct conflict with the inalienable rights of another. Inalienable rights are defined as the rights to self-preservation, bodily integrity, sovereignty over one's world view, spiritual fulfillment via friendship, family, or love, a*

rudimentary education that provides one with, at minimum, the ability to define and actualize a reasonable self-sustaining life plan.

Of note, my definition excludes property as an inalienable right. That is because each thinker without exception demonstrates that the perception of property as a right leads to violence, exclusion, and exploitation. Rousseau, Douglass, Bibb, and Jacobs show this explicitly while Hobbes and Locke simply accept it as a fact and try to compensate for it in their body politics. As Locke masterfully describes however, property must be acquired for the provision of self-preservation to be adhered to. I consider property to fall under the right to actualize a reasonable self-sustaining plan. The distinction is that property is not a right; only the ability to work and amass property ought to be considered inalienable to the point that is does not create conflict with others who wish to do likewise.

My definition of freedom is fairly classic yet is expanded through the inclusion of the African American slave narratives on five crucial points. First, the bar by which individuals are prohibited or restrained is not that one must not prevent another from practicing their rights rather the aim is to prevent conflict with others who wish to do likewise. The purpose of this is to close the loophole of the misery and strife caused by the wealth and excess of the few. Acts are only permissible to the degree that they can be universalized. This will necessarily impact the happiness and the acquisition of the convenient life yet, Rousseau has explained the trappings of wealth, convenience, and excess. My definition is by no means utilitarian. The second crucial point is that of bodily integrity. Individuals ought to be free not only from life threatening acts that would fall under self-preservation, but also little annoyances that erode one's self-esteem,

self-worth, or self-confidence. Individuals must be free from sexual harassment, bulling, stereotyping, prejudice, and all other undue, unwarranted, and biased singling out of individuals or factions to be the recipient of ridicule, annoyance, or other psychologically damaging activity. To prevent large scale institutions such as racism and chauvinism one must prevent its root cause which is the permissibility of these activities because they supposedly "don't hurt anyone."

The third crucial difference is that one must have sovereignty over their world view. Akin to free speech, I argue that it is imperative that people be given the right to think, feel, dream, and question against the norms of a prevailing society. I am not promoting relativism for simply because alternative views may be held by many, logical deduction and material circumstance will necessarily render one or a small portion of these competing ideas possible. The importance of this is the prevention of cultural hegemony specifically instances where the wills, desires, and actions of individuals, though not threatening or dangerous to others and fully able to be universalized, are rendered prohibited for no other reason than others disagreement i.e. sexual orientation. The fourth crucial point is the right to love and friendship. Individuals ought not to be institutionally denied the right to be affirmed and supported by those who choose to do so expressed in a way of their choosing. The decision to not love or to not be with another should occur at the level of individual choice rather than governance or other institutionalized legislation. The creation of a society requires psychologically balanced individuals who are free to be affirmed or supported by willing companions of their choosing. As Bibb suggests, the denial of the right to love leads to sedition and

lawlessness because the human drive to love has the strength to override allegiance to governance. A body politic interested in civility would do well to respect that fact.

Lastly, the fifth crucial expansion of a classic notion of freedom is the right to create and actualize a reasonable life plan. As American learned from the reconstruction south into the 60's, freedom is worthless without the material conditions to capitalize upon it. Jacobs and Douglass each express in their articulations of manhood and womanhood the need for self-sufficiency. The right to realize a skill, practice a skill, and utilize a skill to support one's subsistence is crucial to a lawful, functioning society. This right, like my claim regarding property, is not a right to one's desired life plan. It is merely a protection against the acquisition of one. If I provide a service and begin to acquire an income, I ought not to be dispossessed of this opportunity unless my actions cannot be universalized. The only barrier to my self-sufficiency should be my acquisition of a desirable and marketable skill that can be practiced without injury or harm to others.

The incorporation of these five crucial rights demonstrate how the inclusion of African American slave narratives in the political philosophic cannon would alter a notion of freedom originating in the early modern period. It is here where we can now utilize it to investigate whether or not broadly construing early modernity to include the African American slave narratives results in an articulation of the term freedom which would allow political philosophy to defend itself against the claims of exclusion levied by Pateman, Mills, and Eze.

New Definition of Freedom Applied

I sought in this text to both expose the limits of freedom as it is conceptually founded in the enlightenment period and to further demonstrate how its limits my be surpassed through its juxtaposition against conceptions of freedom found in African American slave narratives. I have found that the conceptions of freedom found in the social contract treatises are woefully blind to the yearnings of individuals. Wholly focused on social antagonisms, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau focused primarily on rendering individual interests to societal maxims. Because the construction of an ideal state was the end goal, each thinker derived a conception of freedom that would harmonize the rights and interests of the many under one universal maxim. If all lay down their rights to the property of others, all can enjoy the freedom that property ownership and its conveniences bring. If all give up the requisite freedoms demanded by the sovereign and follow him, they would be guaranteed to be free from mortal harm. If all submitted their complete freedom to the license permitted only through conscience all would enjoy absolute freedom. In such constructions the individual is homogenized. This homogenization is championed by a model; the rational, self-aware, endowed with the God-given rights of freedom, equality, and just treatment under the law, convenience driven, European descended, White male. As such, any body politic predicated on these conceptions of freedom find themselves constructed to provide for this representative of homogenized humanity. The resulting problem with this construction is well documented in modernity as much of the enlightenment has been relegated to posterity as an ignorant age gone by; which is strange because as it is simultaneously being shelved in the annals of history, it is also continually referenced as the foundation for modernity. This contradiction is wonderfully explored in *Race and the Enlightenment* by Emmanuel Eze,

the Racial Contract by Charles Mills, and *the Sexual Contract* by Carole Pateman. These texts outline the lengths in which the enlightenment has fallen short at recognizing certain identities as valid members of society whose rights and liberties ought to be respected. As convincing as these claims are, they can be mitigated if only a little through the synthesis of the conceptions of freedom found in the social contract treatise and the African American slave narratives.

Eze in *Race and the Enlightenment* compiled a collection of essays on race which are purported to be demonstrative of the racism of enlightenment philosophers. Meant to be academic more than sensational, Eze does a balanced job of demonstrating moments where enlightenment thinkers did utilize their hegemonic influence to define other groups of people as well as places where certain philosophers were genuinely misunderstood. Amidst the compilation Eze noted that "I am also confident that very quickly the reader will notice , in the seminal essays contained in this book, an astonishing level of what, to-day, we call "intertextuality." There is, so to speak, quite a promiscuous theoretical as well as stylistic dependence of one writer on another. For example, if we put aside the notorious dependence of most of these authors on popular travelogues of explorers (such as Captain Cook) and missionaries (such as Father Labat), and focus only on evidence from verifiable, specific, and technical scholarly inter-citations, we notice that Kant borrows historical perspectives from Buffon, but relies upon Hume for "proofs" of specific opinions about the Negro. Blumenbach, meanwhile, relies upon the authority of Kant…[223]" Eze identifies the degree in which the systematic reduction of non-Europeans to European epistemological hegemony was a massive, academy wide undertaking. The problem was a lack of recognition of the capacity and right of non-Europeans to define

[223] Eze, Emmanuel Chuckwudi. *Race and the Enlightenment*. Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1997 p. 6

themselves for themselves to others and to themselves. By reducing, as Locke and Hobbes do, the supposed other to that of an infidel, non-property owner, or one ignorant of the joy of modern conveniences, the enlightenment thinkers justify a claim made as to the reason of the non-Europeans which legitimates their being treated as objects to be defined rather than humans endowed with rights. If Locke and Hobbes were to consider Douglass' affirmation of his manhood and his right and desire to define himself for himself such reductions would not be possible. Thus we find that in order for a conception of freedom founded in the enlightenment to move past hegemonic control of the ontological defining of other non-European peoples it must at base consider the inalienable right all have to construct their own identities. Freedom in modernity necessitates a space where self-defined, and thereby self-affirmed, individuals are legitimated and protected from epistemological violence done by hegemonic majorities and accepted identities.

Carole Pateman in *the Sexual Contract* outlines the ways in which enlightenment thought has committed violence against women through the lack of full recognition of their rights as equals in society by men. Pateman outlines the manner in which the foundational concepts and resulting political structures developed by enlightenment thinkers are inherently patriarchic. The primary issue at hand is "that women's equal standing must be accepted as an expression of the freedom of women as *women*, and not treated as an indication that women can be just like men.[224]" While Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau in limited places acknowledge women and their contribution to society, their over utilization of father-son legacy references combined with the inherent pseudo-master-slave dialectic that is marriage creates a natural inheritance of power and

[224] Pateman, Carole. *The Sexual Contract.* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1988 p. 231

unbalanced gender relations in the favor of men. Corollary to the manner in which Douglass desired his right to affirm his manhood, Jacobs sought to affirm her womanhood to her slave masters as fundamentally human and to greater society as fundamentally equal. Cursed to suffer the dual bane of slavery and gender oppression, Jacobs as a Black woman sought to legitimate her right to self-agency and affirmation on both fronts. Inherent to a conception of freedom rooted in the enlightenment must be an unwavering recognition of gender equality. This call would require the rethinking of other facets of enlightenment conceived freedom like property rights as founded on labor which is measured qualitatively by a patriarchic standard. Labor and subsequently property and wages would have to be rethought to prevent gender imbalances. Also stringent rights to bodily integrity and the right to say "no" to unwanted advances must be upheld even across the sacrosanct barrier of marriage. Likewise, though not explicitly expressed in Pateman, all ought to be considered entitled to love and protect whomever they choose to cherish without external force or coercion. As both Bibb and Jacobs are left to lament greatly their in ability to simply fall in love and sustain a margin of protection and affection for a mate of their own choosing. For gender equality to foster freedom for all, all must possess the inalienable right of ownership of their passion and sexuality and the right to pursuit happiness through the works of their own labor to which they are due a fair wage equal to their peers of the opposite gender.

In *the Racial Contract* Charles Mills argues that "classic contractarianism" structurally maintains and reproduces "racial order, securing the privileges and advantages of the full white citizens and maintaining the subordination of nonwhites. Correspondingly, the "consent" expected of the white citizens is in part conceptualized as

a consent, whether explicit or tacit, to the racial order, to white supremacy, what could be called Whiteness. To the extent that those phenotypically/ genealogically/ culturally categorized as white fail to live up to the civic and political responsibilities of Whiteness, they are in dereliction of their duties as citizens. From the inception, then, race is in no way an "afterthought," a "deviation" from ostensibly raceless Western ideals, but rather than a central shaping constituent of those ideas.[225]" In short, the racial contract is an attempt to replace the hypothetical origins of social contracts with actual empirical material in an effort to force the tradition to be more responsive to the historical injustices caused by the ideas it has created. "In the tradition of oppositional materialist critique of hegemonic idealist social theory, the "Racial Contract" *recognizes the actuality of the world we live in*, relates the construction of ideals, and the *non*realization of these ideas, to the character of this world, to group interests and institutionalized structures, and points to what would be necessary for achieving them. Thus it unites description and prescription, fact and norm. Unlike the social contract, which is necessarily embarrassed by the actual histories f the polities in which it I propagated, the 'Racial Contract" *starts from* these uncomfortable realities. Thus it is not, like the social contract, continually forced to retreat into illusory idealizing abstraction, the never-never land of pure theory, but can move readily between the hypothetical and the actual, the subjunctive and the indicative, having no need to pretend things happened which did not, to evade and to elide and to skim over.[226]" The accusation that the social contract treatise inherently idealize a white, European, male hegemony is evident yet can be overcome through embracing the notions of freedom found in each of the slave narratives examined.

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[225] Mills, Charles W. *The Racial Contract.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999. p. 14 (Hereafter referenced as Mills)
[226] Mills, 129-130

Together the slave narratives express some central concerns of individuals that must be carefully balanced in the construction of a body politic. In order for a concept of freedom founded in the enlightenment to be more inclusive of non-European identities the right to love, to support and nurture a family, to be educated, to construct one's epistemological relationship to the world, to affirm one's self through self agency are all concerns of the individual that must be permitted without exception to all members of a given society.

Mills strikes a greater chord in our discussion on filing the gaps of social contratarianism. The end of this discourse is less about the details of how problems with social contract treatises may be remedied and more about the greater implications of such a remedy. Though Eze in *On Reason* sought to demystify reason through illuminating its nature by exploring acts of its demonstration, he discovered that its nature, like similar concepts, is in constant flux. If reason is that which is determined by culture and history, and culture and history are determined by the freedom as found in the will or choice, which in turn give rise to experience then reason, culture, history, and freedom must all be considered fluid practices as well. Because freedom is tied to culture, history, reason, and experience it reaches its fullness conceptually as it is considered in light of culture, history, reason, and experience. "It is not just the world but also our concepts of the world that are historically fated to diversity.[227]" Freedom is pressed toward the universal not through reducing it to a stagnant metaphysical truth, rather it is made whole through the inclusion of various cultures, histories, reasons, and experiences. As Mills critiques, each social contract treatise is incomplete in itself of necessity because it is the narrative reflection of one culture, one history, one reason, and one set of experiences which gives rise to the production of only one facet of freedom which cannot be considered universal.

[227] Eze, 22

Through antagonistic juxtaposition against the culture, history, reason, and experiences of multiple identities the concept of freedom is pushed towards universality. The more such a concept expands to encompass various identities, the more adequate it would become to serve as the empirical basis for a social contract project. With this we see that social contract theory is not a flawed thought experiment, rather, in its execution it can only put out what is put into it. The conception of freedom we have inherited in modernity is the conceptual result of the universilization of a rational, self-aware, endowed with the God-given rights of freedom, equality, and just treatment under the law, convenience driven, European white male identity. This identity has proven in theory and in actuality to foster inequality, ostracism, and strife in body politics constructed upon it.

As Eze argues, in order for a culture to construct their future they must submit to an understanding of their *collective* past and it is in the choice to do so that freedom becomes inventive of the universality that allows one to grasp freedom's nature.

> "Whereas some prefer to see [my claim that concepts about the world are fated to diversity] as a cognitive condition of error, darkness, and contradiction, I have aimed to theorize it as fateful conditions of diversity *in* reason. Whereas some think that this is a contradiction humans could overcome through a critical transcendental reduction of the projects of reason, I have chosen to celebrate the diversity in reason as the primary, generative condition of autonomy: the autonomy of the ethical and moral will. For the individual, autonomy constitutes the grounds of the ambiguous sense that experience is a site of fate, and for this reason a site of ethical struggle and of moral concern. This is a struggle and a work necessary not only to know the truths about natural and social worlds but also to morally achieve authenticity in identity- to become more nearly what one truly knows oneself as- in the contexts of, respectively, the natural constraints and the general morality that governs our relationships to nature and with others who, similarly, have embarked on the works of world- and self making. For a people- a tradition, a culture, a community, a nation, and the world- autonomy is the will to fashion in freedom a collective identity and a shared historical sense of purpose from which alone individuals or groups can creatively derive a sense of at-home-in-the-world, however fleeting. For humanity, as totality, autonomy is our conflicted will for a historically dependent liberation from a seeming faceless and anonymous nature. With these general considerations as background, the ordinary and the vernacular perspectives on reason that I seek to articulate can be

> interpreted as an insistence that *experience* and *history* are our only reliable indicies of the universal.[228]"

Freedom and its Artificial Construction

It is important to note that we began from the premise that despite the logical possibility that there may indeed be a metaphysical universal notion of freedom, history has demonstrated to us that there is in fact a secular concept of freedom that has been constructed, manipulated, and frequently altered throughout human history. Freedom as artifice as opposed to a metaphysical constant is wonderfully articulated by Orlando Paterson. Freedom, for Orlando Patterson in *Freedom: Vol. I* is argued as the supreme value of the western world, so much so that entire world and civil wars have been fought on behalf of the concept. From Rome to Spain, England to America, freedom has crept through every nook, cranny, and orifice of western society. It has been found at the base of the supporting buttress of society. Our western institutions from religion and trade to government and education are predicated on the promise of the maturation of the individual into the free man. Without it we are presumed to be naught. Or so we say. In *Freedom: Vol. I* Patterson points out an obvious yet historically forgotten assumption. Rarely if ever in academia, or the general public for that matter, has the pre-eminence of freedom been questioned? Surely its constitution, origin, and telos have been inquired into by the brightest minds of the west for centuries but few if any have genuinely questioned its status as granted by nature. To the contrary Patterson finds freedom to be a uniquely western export. Separated by time and space many cultures are strangely devoid of the western definition of freedom. Of particular note are Japan, China, and Korea. These nations, cultures, and each in their turn empires share a common lack of both a word and definition of the western concept of freedom. Not prepared to take the

[228] Eze, 22-23

early modern road out of the problem and merely grant the west superior intelligence, Patterson inquires into the possible reasons for history's silence on the notion of freedom in other cultures prior to western contact.

In his search Patterson states clearly that he aims to approach freedom as a value. Given the context of his writing one can deduce that this must be qualified to mean the social conception of freedom used politically and socially in the west from Greco-Roman times until modernity. To approach freedom as a value I take as contrary to some nature-granted status i.e. natural laws, intuition, or any other way that would preclude the possibility of freedom being at the very least fundamentally modified by men. A slew of questions emerge for Patterson once he questions the pre-eminence of freedom of which three stick out as important to my inquiry: How and why was freedom constructed as a social value, how and why did freedom get promoted to be the central value of western civilization, and why did this transformation occur first in the west? Patterson acknowledges that there has been some work done investigating the history of freedom as a concept, yet the question of freedom's peculiarity to the west as a central social value seems to be an overlooked chapter in history. Patterson points out that the historical moment that freedom ascended to the forefront was an often forgotten period of history between the decline of Greco-Athenian influence and early modernity. During this time there is tremendous influence by the Roman Empire, Christianity, Feudalism, and the European expansion of chattel slavery in African and the Americas on the western understanding of freedom, yet much of this influence goes unrecorded both in antiquity and modernity. Because of the lack of scholarship and inquiry into the term during this period of history, there is no prevailing historical explanation for the continuity of

freedom as a concept from the birth of Christ until the birth of the social contract and individual political subject in post-globalized Europe around the 16th and 17th centuries. Strangely enough though there are several philosophical theories, psychological complexes, and sociological paradigms predicated on the continuity of the term throughout this time period.

Addressing jointly why freedom emerged as in the west as opposed to anywhere else and how it was that freedom ascended from an ideal to a societal value, Patterson investigated three ancient civilizations each of which contained its own type of master-slave dialectic. The Imbangala, Toradja, and Egyptians each shared the characteristic of resisting the institutionalization of freedom. To be clear Patterson explains that his claim that freedom is unique to the west is not a claim that prior or contemporary civilizations lacked an understanding of the term. Rather Patterson argues that before Greece freedom was only understood negatively and as such "resisted its gestation and institutionalization"[229]. He continues; "some notion of freedom existed wherever slavery was found. To have a notion of something, however, or even for a segment of the population to want it, is not to make a value of it. A value emerges, is socially constructed, only when a critical mass of persons, or a powerful minority, shares it and, by persistently behaving in accordance with it, makes it normative. Slaves, by themselves, could never have their aspirations institutionalized, being despised nonmembers of their masters' communities."[230] During his research Patterson found that the assumption that a slave could both divine and choose to yearn for freedom through the negative creation of an understanding of freedom was simply not true. Counter

[229] Paterson, Orlando. *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture Volume I.* New York: Basic Books, 1991 p. 20 (Hereafter referenced as Paterson)
[230] Paterson, 41-42

intuitively it turned out that freedom created a desire to "fit back into" the community. The desire for individual freedom did not follow necessarily from servitude. There was some other component required to create what we now understand as individual freedom. Patterson located the missing component in post-Athenian Greece. Prior to the rise of the Athenian polis it was either not possible or simply not desirable in other civilizations for an individual to seek their own sustenance. Strength in numbers was a lesson learned early and learned well by human beings. With self-preservation as the continual end of our reason, safety in numbers was always preferable. In ancient Athens however with the creation of the agora, market place, and large-scale consumer mentality the possibility for one to create one's wealth and well being, independent of others, was created. In ancient Greece it had become possible for one to create self-sustaining wealth in perpetuity without brute physical conquest or royal inheritance.

Numismatists tell us that despite the fact that money itself existed in the form of red ochre as early as 100,000 years ago in Swaziland, and the notion of a national economic standard existed since the Code of Hammurabi in the 18th century B.C., the military dominance of Greece around the 6th century B.C., specifically in the Persian Wars, coupled with its ramped up silver production allowed the influence of Greek currency to spread over a massive consumer hub of the world in a way that had never existed prior. The influence of Athenian currency spread far beyond the agora throughout the Mediterranean region and with it so did the fiscal possibilities of merchants in the area. The ability to sustain one's self gave rise to the idea of the free individual. As Patterson said the slave was incapable of having his or her practices normalized so it was ironically within the freeman that the desire for freedom was born.

The endeavor to break free from the day-to-day rigors of labor, the reliance on trade and commerce, bound together with the base desire for comfort and convenience drove the 6th century Mediterranean merchant to desire a split from societal norms. The desire for special leniencies on taxes, permission to travel freely across borders, both the need and desire to learn different social norms for the advancement for business, along with other individual concessions brought with it gradations of difference from merchant to merchant. These desires Patterson tells us arose negatively from the freeman's perception of the slave. The desire to not become a slave drove men to "actively pursue"[231] that which prevents servitude. The accumulation of the hallmarks of a freeman: land, money, and power, became the prime desire of freemen[232]. As Patterson articulated "A value emerges, is socially constructed, only when a critical mass of persons, or a powerful minority, shares it and, by persistently behaving in accordance with it, makes it normative." The collective desires of merchants and their consumers combined with their economic influence was more than adequate to normalize the desire for individual concessions otherwise known and individual freedom[233].

One societal norm among many it was not long before freedom became the preeminent value of the west. A contemporary of Athenian Greece, Rome quickly grew into a state that Romulus and Remus would have been proud of. It was not long before

[231] Patterson, 42

[232] Two comments: first this is not to say that individuals did not previously desire these things rather they were transformed from a mere necessity of life to rationalized goal. The accumulation of wealth, land, and influence became rationalized for future comfort rather than pragmatic for present need. Second: It is easy to see how later western pundits of freedom, most notably the early modern thinkers, would later identify the accumulation of material wealth and influence with "natural freedom".

[233] Patterson cites as evidence for the existence of notions of individual freedom in 7th-5th century Greece research done into misogyny. Hesiod's inability to come to terms with his raving misogyny in *Homer* is agued as evidence that women had begun to assert on some level their rights to be individually respected both physically and emotionally. Though far from being a claim to full-fledged recognition of women as equals Hesiod's comments and actions are interpreted by Patterson as demonstrating that "women were not only asserting freedom as a value but acting freely; and men abhorred it." Paterson, Freedom Chapter 3.2 page 63

what started as a settlement in the 8th century B.C. had grown into a kingdom by the 6th century B.C. Larger ambitions in mind Rome separated its powers and transformed into a republic during the 6th century. With its republican march toward empire, Rome militarily and culturally began to absorb several states and settlements around the Mediterranean and within the European continent. Though victory after victory brought material wealth and riches, it also brought the dilution of traditional culture, decadence, and political scandal. Unlike Greece, the absorption of other settlements had a more profound effect on Roman culture. "In Roman Italy warfare, slavery, and imperial expansion wholly transformed the traditional communal structure. They alienated a substantial proportion of the freeborn from the land and from their communities."[234] With their old ways fleeting, the indigenous free Romans that spread out to strange lands via the imperial war machine found that they had more in common with their captives than they did with their spoiled brethren at home in Rome. Both the slave and the free, common, pre-Empire Roman citizen quickly realized their status as pawns for the comfort, convenience, and petty quarrels of Roman aristocrats and politicians. Though potent, the quiet alliance of the slave and freeborn common citizens of Rome sat underneath the massive political quarrels of the time. Rome's politicians were all jockeying for position in attempts to get more from what seemed like an endless flow of resources and power. Their greed would later turn out to be to the benefit of the masses that desired a path toward individual freedom and political recognition. After the tumult and chaos of the Roman Republic, Rome's transformation into an Empire brought with it the seeds for the ascension of freedom to its modern, preeminent status.

[234] Patterson, 227

From the outset of the Roman Empire "we find the sociologically bizarre situation in which a native population had been reduced to a small demographic minority by a population of servile ancestry; in which the vast majority of persons entitled to call themselves freeborn citizens were descended from slaves."[235] This marked the first time in human history that a collection of individuals who all valued individual freedom, most because of lived or lineal experience, were together in a state where they held influence. This fact was made more potent when taking into account the vastness of the Roman Empire. By ancient standards the empire was massive; as such was its influence. "Not only did all roads lead to Rome, but all important values held at the metropolitan center traveled out to the farthest corners of the Roman empire."[236] Though overturned later by the autocracy that would come with the Diocletian and be intensified with Constantine, the Principate was Octavian Caesar Augustus' attempt to mitigate the gap that had grown between Roman leadership and its people. Because of the fact that "freedmen formed the majority of the urban tribes and were the main source of support for the populares…. [and they] dominated the demonstrations and formed a majority of the collegia which were critical in the politics of the time,"[237] Caesar was forced to, at least for appearances, give the people a voice in government. This concession confirmed to the masses, at least rhetorically, that freedom was not only a value but moreover had become the pre-eminent value of the empire. The legacy of slavery within the lineage of the political majority may have been more potent than Caesar had calculated. With the authority and influence they now possessed, the political, slave-descended majority pushed the retention of a free status to the forefront of the state's culture. Rather than an individual enterprise,

[235] Patterson, 236
[236] Patterson, 236
[237] Patterson, 237

individual freedom and its retention became a statewide endeavor. As with the United States of America in modernity, Rome in antiquity and its commitment to individual freedom became so widely known that "some free persons may have willingly endured the temporary social death of slavery in order to experience later the sweet delights of being freed into Roman citizenship" for "thus a man of provincial birth having 'tasted Roman civilization at its fountain-head, albeit through slavery,' was 'better off than his countryman who was free-born but lived in an unprivileged part of the world.'"[238]
I take from Patterson's text the understanding of Freedom at the beginning of early modernity as being the preeminent value of the western world artificially constructed as a means to prevent one from becoming enslaved rationally, politically, economically, or physically. If this is true, then the only way to prevent hegemonic violence against individuals not included in the purview of the dominant group's perception of freedom is to include others in the prevailing dominant narrative. The practice of performing antagonistic juxtapositions to incorporate alternative narratives into the construction of fluid artificial terms like freedom ought to be the primary endeavor of political philosophers specifically and postmodernism generally.

This text has been a paradigmatic example of how freedom can be pushed towards its universal conception through the incorporation of the experiences and histories of identities previously written out of enlightenment political philosophy. Through expanding political philosophy's early modernity period to include African American slave narratives we find that the definition of freedom taken from that period is also expanded. Freedom as a state where an individual is at liberty to think, feel, and act in any way that does not bring them into direct conflict with the inalienable rights of

[238] Paterson, 236

another and inalienable rights are defined as the rights to self-preservation, bodily integrity, sovereignty over one's world view, spiritual fulfillment via friendship, family, or love, a rudimentary education that provides one with, at minimum, the ability to define and actualize a reasonable self-sustaining life plan provide for the inclusion of several identities within the norms of the cultural west. In praxis liberalism can be expanded to incorporate minoritized subjects and render itself less vulnerable to what stand now as valid and true modern and post-modern critiques. In political philosophy specifically, and philosophy generally, we have a duty in modernity and post-modernity to perform similar antagonistic juxtapositions of various world identities if our goal is as we claim: to be lovers of wisdom and to seek universal knowledge and understanding of truth.

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[i] © Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folk Tale*, p 25, **ISBN 0-292-78376-0**
After the initial situation is depicted, the tale takes the following sequence of 31 functions:

1. A member of a family leaves home (the hero is introduced);
2. An interdiction is addressed to the hero ('don't go there', 'don't do this');
3. The interdiction is violated (villain enters the tale);
4. The villain makes an attempt at reconnaissance (either villain tries to find the children/jewels etc; or intended victim questions the villain);
5. The villain gains information about the victim;
6. The villain attempts to deceive the victim to take possession of victim or victim's belongings (trickery; villain disguised, tries to win confidence of victim);
7. Victim taken in by deception, unwittingly helping the enemy;
8. Villain causes harm/injury to family member (by abduction, theft of magical agent, spoiling crops, plunders in other forms, causes a disappearance, expels someone, casts spell on someone, substitutes child etc, commits murder, imprisons/detains someone, threatens forced marriage, provides nightly torments); Alternatively, a member of family lacks something or desires something (magical potion etc);
9. Misfortune or lack is made known, (hero is dispatched, hears call for help etc/ alternative is that victimized hero is sent away, freed from imprisonment);
10. Seeker agrees to, or decides upon counter-action;
11. Hero leaves home;
12. Hero is tested, interrogated, attacked etc, preparing the way for his/her receiving magical agent or helper (donor);
13. Hero reacts to actions of future donor (withstands/fails the test, frees captive, reconciles disputants, performs service, uses adversary's powers against him);
14. Hero acquires use of a magical agent (directly transferred, located, purchased, prepared, spontaneously appears, eaten/drunk, help offered by other characters);
15. Hero is transferred, delivered or led to whereabouts of an object of the search;
16. Hero and villain join in direct combat;
17. Hero is branded (wounded/marked, receives ring or scarf);
18. Villain is defeated (killed in combat, defeated in contest, killed while asleep, banished);
19. Initial misfortune or lack is resolved (object of search distributed, spell broken, slain person revived, captive freed);
20. Hero returns;
21. Hero is pursued (pursuer tries to kill, eat, undermine the hero);
22. Hero is rescued from pursuit (obstacles delay pursuer, hero hides or is hidden, hero transforms unrecognizably, hero saved from attempt on his/her life);
23. Hero unrecognized, arrives home or in another country;
24. False hero presents unfounded claims;
25. Difficult task proposed to the hero (trial by ordeal, riddles, test of strength/endurance, other tasks);
26. Task is resolved;
27. Hero is recognized (by mark, brand, or thing given to him/her);
28. False hero or villain is exposed;
29. Hero is given a new appearance (is made whole, handsome, new garments etc);

30. Villain is punished;
31. Hero marries and ascends the throne (is rewarded/promoted).

[ii] Davenport, Frances Gardiner ed. 1917. *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and Its Dependencies to 1684*. Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington. p. 17. "The bull of June 18, 1452 (Nicholas V.). The provisions of this bull are as follows: "...Nos igitur considerantes, quod contra Catholicam fidem insurgentibus, Christianamque religionem extinguere molientibus, ea virtute, et alia constantia a Christi fidelibus est resistendum, ut fideles ipsi fidei ardore succensi virtutibusque pro posse succincti detestandum illorum propositum, non solum obice intentionis contraire impediant, si ex oppositione roboris iniquos conatus prohibeant, et Deo, cui militant, ipsis assistente, perfidorum substernant molimenta, nosque divino amore communiti, Christianorum charitate invitati, officiique pastoralis astricti debito, ea, quae fidei, pro qua Christus Deus noster sanguine effudit, integritatem, augmentumque respiciunt nobis fidelium animis vigorem, tuamque Regiam Magestatem in hujusmodi santissimo proposito confovere merito cupientes, tibi Sarracenos, et paganos, aliosque infideles, et Christi inimicos quoscunque, et ubicunque constitutos regna, ducatus, comiatatus, principatus aliaque domina, terras, loca, villas, castra, et quaecunque alia possessiones, bona mobilia et immobilia in quibuscunque rebus consistenia, et quocunque nomine censeantur, per eosdem Sarracenos, paganos, infideles, et Christi inimicos detenta, et possessa, ettiam cujuscunque seu quorumcunque regis, seu principis, aut regum, vel principum regna, ducatus, comitatus, principatus, aliaque domminia, terrae, loca, villae, castra, possessiones, et bona hujusmodi fuerint, invadendi, conquerendi, expugnandi, et subjugandi, illorumque personas in perpetuam servitutem redigendi, regna quoque, ducatus, comitatus, principatus, aliaque domina, possessiones, et bona hujusmodi, tibi et successoribus tuis Regibus Portugalliae, perpetuo applicandi, et appropriandi, ac in tuos, et eorundem successorum usus et utilitates convertendi plenam et liberam, auctoritate apostolic, tenore praesentium concedimus facultatem…" Jordão *Bullarium*, p. 22 (Jordão, Levy Maria. *Bullarium patronatus Portugalliae regum in ecclesiis Africae, Asiae atque Oceaniae : bullas, brevia, epistolas, decreta actaque Sanctae Sedis ab Alexandro III ad hoc usque tempus amplectens / curante Levy Maria Jordão*. Olisipone : Ex Typographia nationali, 1868-1879, p.22.) It would be noticed that this bull sanctions the enslaving of infidels."

[iii] "The laws of Kentucky, My native state, with Maryland and Virginia, which are said to be the mildest slave States in the Union, noted for their humanity, Christianity and democracy, declare that 'Any slave, for rambling in the night, or riding horseback without leave, or running away, may be punished by whipping, cropping and branding on the cheek, or otherwise, not rendering him unfit for labor.' 'Any slave convicted of petty larceny, murder, or willfully burning of dwelling houses, may be sentenced to have his right hand cut off; to be hanged in the usual manner, or the head severed from the body, the body divided into four quarters, and quarters stuck up in the most public place in the country, where such act was committed."- Bibb, 35