CHAPTER 2

Foundations: Defoe and Equiano

Novels about the daily lives of everyday people became foundational in how modern subjects used reading and writing prose as an aesthetic resource in constructing an individual identity.[1] This rested to no small degree on the representation of "authentic" emotionality. Rather than reduce this form of "familial feeling" to descriptions of domesticity, I have argued in the introduction that the emergence of Britishness and the English novel is entangled in processes of transnational demarcation. Modernity itself is the product of how subjectivity is narrated as individual interiority, a process which, while making some subjects more familiar, also dehumanises Others. The writings of Daniel Defoe and Olaudah Equiano share a recourse to formal realism which is foundational for establishing such a feeling of familiarity with "ordinary" literary characters and their contact with others/Others. As has been outlined in relation to Ian Watt's seminal 1957 *The Rise of the Novel*, in which he positions *Robinson Crusoe* famously as the "first" novel, the aesthetics of formal realism are characterised by detailed description of psychological interiority and are connected to the rise of Protestant religiosity, a belief in the emerging modern market economy and the so-called *homo economicus*. Supplementing Watt's account, in which he stresses the myth of the solitary self-made man, I argue that the rise of formal realism is better understood when we contrast Defoe's infatuation with the adventure of unchallenged agency with Equiano's struggles for mutual recognition. Accordingly, in this chapter, I want to propose a transatlantic entangled

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view on how the foundational tone of creating familiarity/familiality is established. In other words, by reading the fictional white Englishman's narrated self-reflexivity of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* together with Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*,[2] the first substantial believable self-representation of a Black (British) life,[3] as part of an entangled claim to modernity, it becomes apparent that the insular adventures of Crusoe lack realistic representations of interpersonal interaction and that the life story of the formerly enslaved Equiano[4] is, in fact, much more representative of how intersubjective recognition establishes commonality.[5]

We can also understand their accounts as entangled because, in line with my earlier explanations, this tone of modern subjectivity is deeply enmeshed in the realities of colonialism and the history of race and slavery which both texts address extensively. In Defoe's 1719 novel, slavery, while not completely racialised, is never really questioned, as opposed to Equiano's autobiography, published in the year of the French Revolution 1789, which serves as a central document in the abolitionist campaign. It is exactly within this period of seventy years between them that Englishness as a national identity is consolidated, while slavery as the supposedly natural economic order of things is disputed, albeit not yet abolished.[6] Both national identity formation and the debate on slavery are thus not coincidental in the rise of the novel genre. Accordingly, I will address aesthetic convergences and divergences in the foundational tone of the two narratives.

Both texts are characterised by an interrogation of the heroes' moral decisions as well as a general temporal framework of retrospectively assessing one's life. But, despite this structural similarity, the consequences are radically different. Defoe in solipsistic colonial fashion makes the exotic familiar. While depicting a modern self-reflexive mind, it is rendered as fantastically omnipotent and exclusively English. Here the claim to individuality comes in the guise of self-aggrandisement. Equiano, in turn, claims Britishness as more expansive, a feeling of belonging that caters to a conception of inclusivity. Both thus use the foundational aesthetics of prose writing to offer forms of identification but achieve different ends regarding familial feeling. In *The Antinomies of Realism*, Fredric Jameson explains, "What we call realism will thus come into being in the symbiosis of this pure form of storytelling with impulses of scenic elaboration, description and above all affective investment" (2013: 11). What Jameson describes here as "affective investment" can be easily associated with what

I have been calling "familial feeling" and this is where the actual family does play a role in the texts after all.

While both protagonists develop an emotive claim to Britishness, the representation of feelings remains somewhat stifled. For Crusoe, the flight from familial obligations is part of the narrative appeal of his adventurous account. For Equiano, in turn, claiming emotionality in relation to his lost African family is instrumental in the process of being recognised as human. Moreover, their constructions of masculinity are spatially distinct. While Equiano's "oceanic" identity is mostly formed in movement on the sea, Crusoe's "insular" version seems to fend off any form of Otherness. Hence, whilst aesthetically their projects of claiming subjectivity are entangled via their recourse to formal realism, their "affective investment" differs quite radically. If we take Bakhtin's model of dialogicity, the inclusion of different voices or viewpoints (which we could understand as yet another aspect of entanglement), into consideration, which I will as an additional tool to revise Watt's understanding of the emerging genre of the novel in this chapter, then Equiano's text surely is more dialogic or "novelistic".

But picking up from my initially voiced critique of the idea of "writing back" to the canon, I also want to caution against a simple reversal of which text should be considered the "first" true novel. By emphasising entangled tonalities, I want to disturb or queer the order and the locations from which British familiarity was constructed to provincialise the national account of how the English novel rose to fame. As the current debates in eighteenth-century studies show, it is much more useful to pluralise rather than assume exceptional foundations of "modern" forms of writing.

Insular Masculinity: Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*

The foundational tone of modernity to a large degree rests on the believability of a unique life story and is initially less dependent on a clear demarcation between factual versus fictional writing. On publication, *Robinson Crusoe* was advertised as a travelogue in the preface in the following terms: "The editor believes the thing to be a just history of fact; neither is there any appearance of fiction in it" (RC 3). Fiction here is still associated with dishonesty and unseemly personal vanity, which the religious instructive account is to avoid by all means. Whether contemporaries believed the

autobiographical fiction of the work is secondary for its role in establishing formal realism, or "credible prose narratives", as Gallagher (2006: 339) calls it. The believability of this "private man's adventures" (RC 3) as paradoxically both particular and universal means that it transcended the need to be factual for it to be believable. The novel functions as an allegory for a new form of middle-class identity with everyman Robinson Crusoe coming across as a person who could have actually lived. Formal realism is established via detailed descriptions of daily routines, surroundings, and contemplation that were also regarded as educational.[7] Crusoe's self-reflexive musings mainly revolve around his "original sin" (RC 154) of disobeying his father and around religious introspection on providence.[8] Nevertheless, the text is also appealing because of its adventurous encounters with Otherness. Crusoe thus in many ways is also part of the construction of a modern English subject that is increasingly understood as racially (and nationally) distinct from non-white Others. At the same time, Crusoe's relation to other people closer to home and especially his family remains surprisingly anti-social and unfeeling.

In his study on narrative and domestic relations in the British novel, Christopher Flint argues convincingly, "For Defoe, the urge to define character required family background, but the desire to fantasize about the unbounded potential of the individual demanded a suppression of familial discourse" (1998: 119). Characteristically then while the family background of the protagonist is established in the beginning of the narrative, he quickly escapes the confines of his original home. Not being content with the "middle station of life" (RC 6) and due to his limited prospects as the third son, Robinson Crusoe sets off to his well-known ill-fated adventures on his own. Against his father's advice and without his consent, the eighteen-year-old leaves home and does not learn a trade. This causes his mother, in one of the few instances that she is mentioned at all in the text, "great passion" (RC 8). Fleeing from parental expectations, it is specifically travelling and transcultural contact that abets the transformation of Robinson Kreutznaer, whose father is a German immigrant from Bremen after all, to become the English entrepreneur Robinson Crusoe. Before elaborating on what Flint succinctly has called "the visible absence of the family" (1998: 119), I will therefore trace the status of race and slavery in *Robinson Crusoe*, which have traditionally been at the forefront of postcolonial readings of the novel, and discuss these topics in relation to the often assumed modern dialogicity of the text that I want to contest.

The legacy of feudalism, fittingly described as "the life of slavery for daily bread" (RC 6), is still palpable at the beginning of Crusoe's narrative and even though the emerging capitalist middle-class, or middle ranks to be more precise, can consolidate a new comfortable life in England, this is not enough for young Crusoe, which is where demarcations between self and Other gain prominence. Precisely the extent to which this eighteenth-century imagination of seventeenth-century[9] colonial Others translates into a language of race is still under scrutiny. I follow Roxann Wheeler's findings in her comprehensive study, *The Complexion of Race*, where she speaks of "residual proto-racial ideologies" (2000: 9) that are articulated through and with other contemporary markers of difference that include Christianity, civility, and rank (Wheeler 2000: 7). This in turn helps account for the, again in Wheeler's terms, "situated multiplicity" (2000: 45) of race at the time. Accordingly, while I use the term race[10] in relation to an eighteenth-century source, I do so in what Jeffrey Cohen calls a deliberately "untimely" (2000: 2) manner. Race is thus deployed as a heuristic category, precisely to challenge those postcolonial readings that all too quickly read racialised literary characters such as Friday (but also Othello and Oroonoko) within a framework of scientific racism and the biologised black and white binary.[11] Bearing in mind such a heuristic understanding of race as emerging in a web of multiple meanings, we can, following Defoe's plot, I believe assert that English national identity is gradually racialised as white in *Robinson Crusoe* through manifold demarcations: from Muslimness in North Africa and the Blackness of the West Africans, to the nudity of the natives, and the "barbarity" of the cannibals in the Caribbean. But, Englishness is also consolidated as benevolent against the so-called "'black legend' of Spanish cruelty" in inner-European national colonial rivalries (Boulukos 2008: 14; Wood 2002: 5; cf. RC 136). Hence, while race is not considered a biological given yet, that does not amount to the absence of racialising colour-codings.

What is more, in the early eighteenth century, not only race, but also slavery[12] is still a category of multiplicity. Boulukos explains that "[u]ntil at least the mid-eighteenth century the terms 'slave' and 'servant' could still be used interchangeably for English indentured servants and African slaves in metropolitan discourse, and likely also in the colonies" (2008: 119). Enslaved by Corsairs in Morocco on his third voyage,[13] Crusoe muses about missing a British "fellow-slave" to plan his escape: there was "no *Englishman*, *Irishman*, or *Scotsman*" (RC 18), which shows the relative regularity of white men from the British Isles being taken captive.

These first two years of isolation in North Africa, in which he pleases himself "with the imagination", foreshadow his later insular fate. Eventually Crusoe meets the young boy Xury. In contrast to the Moroccan Muslims, who are referred to as "Moors", Xury is labelled a "*Maresco*" (RC 18), which denotes Spanish, that is European, Muslims at the time. The Spanish were perceived, as mentioned, if not as Black, then definitely as Black*er* than the English. Wheeler argues, "The category of the slave is not exclusively reserved for Africans, nor is it represented as a permanent state for either Crusoe or Xury" (1995: 834). While initially sharing the same fate, Crusoe can finally escape captivity and takes the young boy with him on condition that he serve him from then on (cf. RC 20–21). Despite being European, Xury's non-Christianness makes him a legitimate item of exchange in Crusoe's capitalist ventures in which religion, nationality, and racialising discourses are entangled. He sells Xury to the Portuguese Captain for sixty Pieces of Eight, twenty less than he gets for his boat. But, there is a marked temporal difference to chattel slavery as Xury's servitude is finite should he convert to Christianity after ten years.[14] Crusoe, despite being implicated in the already quite institutionalised transatlantic trade,[15] constantly highlights the singularity of his endeavours which is of course also a literary strategy of establishing individuality. In the logic of the narrative, this is not an established global framework of seafaring, trade, and slavery, but rather, Crusoe's unique (life) journey in finding his identity (and eventually repenting his filial sins). This is also connected to the descriptions of landscape that Anja Schwarz reads as part of a strangely anachronistic temporality of re-enacting discovery, as a claiming of "virgin" land after the fact: "In rendering this landscape devoid of Europeans, Defoe curiously disavows slavery (which nevertheless significantly shapes other elements of his story) in order to enact, in these early scenes, the beginning of a European history of discovery" (2008: 129). In this way, the novel itself narrates the co-existence of forms of race-independent indentured servitude and the rise of the transatlantic plantation economy which increasingly racialises slavery.[16] Free again, Crusoe is subsequently taken to Brazil and immediately invests in a sugar plantation actively seeking African enslaved labour. Finally, shipwrecked on the supposedly uninhabited Caribbean island on the mission to buy more slaves, Crusoe lives self-sufficiently for more than twenty-five years before meeting another human being again.

Gradual self-reflexivity and insularity are characteristic of these early passages set on the island, in which Crusoe begins to "consider seriously

[his] condition" (RC 53). The time on the island follows a peculiar form of narrated temporality. On the one hand, there is the distinctive realistic description of routine and detail and, on the other hand, there are massive accelerations and temporal compressions when years and years in story-time are summed up in only a few words of narrative discourse. Compare the following short paragraph that describes how Crusoe fortifies his abode that appears as if it were one ongoing action, but, in fact, covers a period of more than a year:

> I have already described my habitation, which was a tent under the side of a rock, surrounded with a strong pale of posts and cables, but I might now rather call it a wall, for I rais'd a kind of wall up against it of turfs, about two foot thick on the out-side, and after some time, I think it was a year and a half, I rais'd rafters from it leaning to the rock, and thatch'd or cover'd it with boughs of trees, and such things as I could get to keep out the rain, which I found at some times of the year very violent. (RC 55)

While he minutely details the exact thickness of the wall, the period of one and a half years is a rough guess. The timeline in the novel seems so confusing at times that it does not come as a surprise that the title of the book specifies the actual period of twenty-eight years spent on the island as this is not immediately apparent from reading the described actions.[17] The long periods of Crusoe's solitude, of course, additionally pose one of the greatest challenges in linguistically representing individuality since there is no interpersonal interaction. It is the ritualistic performance of tasks as well as the world-making function of writing (in the form of a text within a text) that fills this void. Dating his sojourn in his journal, Crusoe can increasingly consult with his own thoughts and by extension the readers are invited into this represented interiority as "I poor miserable *Robinson Crusoe*" (RC 57) reflects upon his fate and his relationship to God. The temporal orientation of the novel thus functions both retrospectively, the whole account is a recollection of the mature self of his sinful youthful (mis)conduct, and, at the same time, it is prospective in its narrative expectation of evermore things to do, apprehensions, and adventures. Steadily, Crusoe manages to "tame" the landscape, to grow crops, and finally to find a first companion:

> I saw abundance of parrots, and fain I would have caught one, if possible, to have kept it to be tame, and taught it to speak to me. I did, after some pains

> taking, catch a young parrot, for I knock'd it down with a stick, and having recover'd it, I brought it home; but it was some years before I could make him speak: However, at last I taught him to call me by name very familiarly [...]. (RC 87)

This episode not only narrates the violence in domesticating the animal that needs to be "knock'd down", it again includes a large time lapse of "some years" that is in fact also a prolepsis as Crusoe specifies that he is currently only in his third year on the island shortly afterwards (cf. RC 91). In Crusoe's summary at this point, the ordeal of teaching the bird appears as one swift operation from capture to familiarity, which is accomplished only years later. As a result of these educational efforts, communication on the island is no longer confined to the written page of the journal, but is now enhanced by the sonic dimension of words being said back to him with names taking on a special significance: "I diverted myself with talking to my parrot, and teaching him to speak, and I quickly learn'd him to know his own name, and at last to speak it out pretty loud POLL, which was the first word I ever heard spoken in the island by any mouth but my own" (RC 95). While the written discourse of the journal functions as a means of self-reflection, the spoken word of the parrot has no apparent content other than to reflect what Crusoe would like to hear. Later Friday fulfils a similar role, but in contrast to the animal, he is granted some influence on Crusoe's identity formation, albeit often in narrator summary rather than in direct speech. This is crucial in relation to the idea of dialogicity that I will come back to.

For the time being and in the absence of a human companion, Crusoe becomes his own externalised object of entertainment: "I spent whole hours, I may say whole days, in representing to myself in the most lively colours, how I must have acted, if I had got nothing out of the ship" (RC 104). This vivid speculation of an individual mind on different possible futures, which reads almost like an anticipation of audio-visual media, can be understood as a comment on the increasing relevance of literature as a new form of pleasurable and exciting speculation. It is not only religious introspection, but reflection on an average individual's actions, that characterise the novelty of prose fiction at the time and which Crusoe's reflections mirror. Finally, after long periods of solitude, Crusoe is confronted with the presence of another human being in the shocking sighting of the footprint fifteen years after he landed on the island. Consequently, but long before the actual appearance of the natives on his shore only three

years later, Crusoe becomes prospectively preoccupied by apprehensions about the assumed cannibals[18] close by (cf. RC 99). In this context, his parrot Poll plays a crucial role once more when it startles and wakes him in calling out his shortened name: "*Robin*, *Robin*, *Robin Crusoe*, poor *Robin Crusoe*, where are you *Robin Crusoe*? [...] [E]ven though I knew it was the parrot, and that indeed it could be no body else, it was a good while before I could compose myself" (RC 113–114). In contrast to Friday, who must address Crusoe as "Master", the parrot is taught to repeat the (shortened) proper name, one characteristic of the new novel form after all. The appellation is qualified in the animal's repetition of Crusoe's own bemoaning of his sorry state by the constant addition of the adjective "poor" to his name. This marker can obviously also be read in relation to Crusoe's role as a self-made man.

Famously described by Watt as a *homo economicus*, Crusoe becomes the hero of "economic individualism" (Watt 2000 [1957]: 62). Despite his reflections on his lack of use for money on the island, he tellingly takes the coins he finds on the ship anyway (cf. RC 47). To overcome his lonesome fate, "poor" Robinson not only has to leave the island, he must also accumulate wealth. When the Portuguese Captain, who generously took care of his plantation, quite unrealistically happily hands over the financial gains after such a long period, Crusoe decides to sell the plantation to a considerable profit in the end (cf. RC 238–239). Accordingly, Overton (1992: 4) links the construction of the self to the making of a fortune in the narrative. But before this felicitous turn of events, Crusoe literally must "find himself" with the bird relentlessly calling on him, "Where are you? Where have you been? How come you here?" (RC 113). Eric Jager emphasises an effect of self-alienation in response to the parrot's address in this scene:

> Hearing his own words unexpectedly repeated back to him by the parrot [...], Crusoe becomes more of an other to himself than he really wants to be: to read the words "poor miserable Robinson Crusoe" in his journal is self-composing, but to hear the words "poor Robin Crusoe" spoken unexpectedly by another is not. Crusoe's "othered" voice frightens and threatens him much like the sign of the other by which he is shortly thereafter "surpriz'd"—the human footprint. (1988: 326–327)

Consequently, the presence of someone else to whom he must relate becomes increasingly menacing. Any form of sociality is not the longed-for deliverance from his loneliness: as an isolated white man in this region,

he fears the Otherness of those surrounding him. The mentioned fateful sighting of the footprint (cf. RC 122) causes him to feel like a "frighted hare", his "fright" keeps him from sleeping, apprehension and fancy take over his thoughts, and he is "embarrass'd with [his] own frightful ideas" (RC 122). Rather than efficiently manage his surroundings as before, he now must cope with his inner unsettlement.

Fancies and reflections become a means to mimic reality, much like the novel itself becomes an entertaining vessel to describe supposedly mundane events and speculate about the not quite so ordinary. After spotting the cannibals from afar, Crusoe has a dream which foreshadows his acquiring a servant (cf. RC 157).[19] And accordingly, upon finally saving a man native to the islands from the cannibals who visit from the neighbouring shore for their gruesome rituals, the man supposedly willingly submits to Crusoe: he "laid his head upon the ground, and taking me by the foot, set my foot upon his head; this, it seems, was in token for swearing to be my slave for ever" (RC 161). Crusoe's approach to land and people is similar. He first "turns the *terra nullius* of his island into private property" (Schwarz 2008: 138) and in the same logic claims the native as "his man". This comprises an acculturation to English normative conceptions in both cases. While Crusoe has lost his family of origin, he can magically accommodate and translate the alien surrounding and people into terms that are immediately familiar (to him and his readers), for example, by calling his different abodes on the island by epithets such as "country-house" and "sea-coast-house" (RC 82). Flint elucidates, "The point of these designations is, of course, familiarity; Crusoe reacts almost immediately to a hostile and desolate environment as if he had only to transform it into an English estate in order to survive" (1998: 126). Friday, too, is quickly turned into an object of both subjugation and instruction in the familiar modes of Christianity and enlightened education. In stark contrast to Xury's temporally limited services, it also appears to be evident that Friday is permanently bound to him.

Initially, not sharing a language, it is the body of the native that is read as communicating submission unambiguously. The initial quoted ritualistic subjection of bowing down in front of the Englishman is repeated once more in the text:

> At last he lays his head flat upon the ground, close to my foot, and sets my other foot upon his head, as he had done before; and after this, made all the signs to me of subjection, servitude, and submission imaginable, to let me

> know, how he would serve me as long as he liv'd; I understood him in many things, and let him know, I was very well pleas'd with him; in a little time I began to speak to him, and teach him to speak to me; and first, I made him know his name should be *Friday*, which was the day I sav'd his life; I call'd him so for the memory of the time; I likewise taught him to say *Master*, and then let him know that was to be my name [...]. (RC 162–163)

In the hyperbolic alliteration of "subjection, servitude, and submission" Crusoe reads into the described gesture indefinite service—despite the still common eighteenth-century system of temporary servitude that he himself had experienced earlier. This once more points to the strange narration of temporality in the novel, the lifelong submission is communicated and settled in the split-second of the native laying down, while it takes "a little time" to translate this into the language of *Master* and *Friday*. Thus strikingly, submission precedes the actual means to communicate in a shared language. Moreover, Yahav (2008: 43) highlights the differential narration of duration before and after Crusoe meets Friday regarding the uneven distribution of relatively little discourse time dealing with the first unaccompanied twenty-five years on the island in contrast to the final three years in which they "liv'd there together perfectly and compleately happy" (RC 174). However, while the second scene of subjection describes the adoption of the title "Master" by Crusoe and the seemingly random naming of the Carib by the day of the week that marks their encounter, "for the memory of the time", and which can be connected to Crusoe's earlier adoption of a calendar to bring temporal order and routine into his otherwise frightening and potentially infinite insular life, it is in the earlier scene that Friday is called a "slave" explicitly for the first and only time in the novel. Mostly he is referred to as "my man" and a "servant" (RC 220) and there is now a debate between eighteenth-century and postcolonial scholars about the status of Friday's subjugation in relation to the master-slave dialectic. Before going into more detail, it is instructive to revisit the famous description of Friday's appearance, which I will quote at some length because of its significance for an understanding of the mentioned emergence of racialised difference:

> He was a comely handsome fellow, perfectly well made, with straight strong limbs, not too large; tall and well shap'd, and, as I reckon, about twenty six years of age. He had a very good countenance, not a fierce and surly aspect, but seem'd to have something very manly in his face, and yet he had all the

> sweetness and softness of an *European* in his countenance too, especially when he smil'd. His hair was long and black, not curl'd like wool; his forehead very high, and large, and a great vivacity and sparkling sharpness in his eyes. The colour of his skin was not quite black, but very tawny; and yet not of an ugly yellow nauseous tawny, as the *Brasilians*, and *Virginians*, and other natives of *America* are; but of a bright kind of a dun olive colour, that had in it something very agreeable, tho' not very easy to describe. His face was round and plump; his nose small, not flat like the Negroes, a very good mouth, thin lips, and his fine teeth well set, and white as ivory. (RC 162)

This well-known passage, in essence, emphatically states that Friday is different in every possible way from a racialised derogative understanding of Blackness that is reserved for the term "Negroe": he has straight hair, lighter olive-coloured skin,[20] and a small nose; and the fact that the opposite attributes are considered to be negative attests to emerging racist classifications, which increasingly frame Blackness as aesthetically displeasing and intellectually inferior.[21] Like Behn's (2003 [1688]) Oroonoko, his features are even favourably compared to those of a European. In the Americas, there is a spectrum of non-whiteness including the "tawny" complexion of the "*Brasilians*, and *Virginians*, and other natives". This also shows that slavery is not yet linked to an idea of hereditary chattel slavery based on race as a fixed category. Both Friday's skin colour, which is "not very easy to describe", and his masculinity, wavering between manliness and softness, cannot be classified in a straightforward binary manner, thus, linking racial ambiguity to a certain degree of gender trouble. Nonetheless, there is a clear hierarchy from darker to lighter complexions.

Interestingly, Crusoe, in turn, is described as "white"[22] mostly from Friday's point of view, for instance, when Friday reports of the Spanish who are "white bearded men" like Crusoe:

> He told me, that […] *W.* from their country, there dwelt white bearded men, like me, and pointed to my great whiskers, which I mention'd before; and that they had kill'd *much mans*, that was his word; by all which I understood, he meant the *Spaniards*, whose cruelties in *America* had been spread over the whole countries, and was remember'd by all the nations from father to son. (RC 170)

Lighter skin colour and beardedness then are considered signs of Europeanness and uncontested masculinity. Friday construes a similarity

between Crusoe and the Spanish on account of their looks, but Crusoe immediately distinguishes his English identity from the cruel "Black" Spanish. So, while to a certain degree, Friday's views are incorporated into the narrative, they are almost always conveyed through Crusoe's speech, except for the supposedly amusing emphasis on the faulty "much mans", which "was his word", and is quickly corrected by his "Master". Whereas the Spanish and the English could indeed be conflated as looking the same from a non-European point of view, the discursive construction of a racially unifying white identity is undermined by an emphasis on national distinction and Spanish barbarity. In other words, colour-codings of Friday as darker and naturally inferior to the lighter Englishman are considered a given in the logic of the text, but race is not yet ossified, and it seems that throughout the story, Crusoe's nationality and his religion are the most important identity forming elements, especially in relation to other Europeans. Hence, the debate about Friday's status as a "grateful slave" (cf. Boulukos 2008) in *Robinson Crusoe* I believe needs to be sutured to reflections on racial multiplicity. On a metatextual level, one can also relate the master-slave debate to the notion of dialogicity and how Crusoe's relationship to Friday affects his self-understanding. Critical opinion, as stated, is divided: while postcolonial scholars like Peter Hulme stress the muting of the native voice and Friday's status as a slave,[23] others, like John Richetti and Daniel Carey (cf. 2009: 121), highlight reciprocity. Richetti identifies the modernity of the novel specifically in Crusoe's lengthy reflections on cannibalism which he reads as "pure dialogism" (2000: 344) in the Bakhtinian sense.

Following Mikhail Bakhtin's influential framing of novelisation, the novel, in contrast to the monologic world-view of the epic, is polyphonic. Different voices, for example, the speech of the narrator and the characters, are in a dialogic relationship, embodying different world views in different registers. More precisely, Bakhtin juxtaposes "intention of the character" with "intention of the author" (1994: 324) in a way that might not yet fully match a poststructuralist decentring of meaning but is still relevant for an understanding of modern dialogicity. Significantly, Bakhtin concedes, even individual utterances by characters are considered double-voiced, or "internally dialogized" (1994: 324) in themselves. He associates this not only with a comedic or parodic debunking of meaning, but with a more fundamental self-reflexiveness of language in the novel. In this logic, the foundational tone of modernity in novelistic discourse then

is expressed by a subject who is in dialogue with itself. And indeed, this correlates directly with Defoe's depiction of Robinson Crusoe.

In the process of travelling, Crusoe recognises the tension between similarity and difference, which can also quickly change as in his relationship to Xury who is first understood as similar and then hierarchically marked as different (not only through religion, but also age). Even before the mentioned first encounter with Friday, it is the often-discussed and for Richetti central passage on cannibalism that exemplifies Crusoe's capacity for dialogue. While at first it is outright disgust that he feels when he speculates about the anthropophagic natives, Crusoe slowly interrogates his own truth and becomes much more relative in his opinions: "I began with cooler and calmer thoughts to consider what it was I was going to engage in. What authority or call I had, to pretend to be judge and executioner upon these men as criminals, whom Heaven had thought fit for so many ages to suffer unpunish'd […]." Consequently, he rethinks his initial plan to attack the invaders and wonders

> what right I had to engage in the quarrel of that blood, which they shed promiscuously one upon another. I debated this very often with my self thus; how do I know what God himself judges in this particular case; […]. They do not know it to be an offence, and then commit it in defiance of divine justice, as we do in almost all the sins we commit. They think it no more a crime to kill a captive taken in war, than we do to kill an ox; nor to eat human flesh, than we do to eat mutton. (RC 135)

Crusoe (frequently) debates with himself and comes to the realisation that he cannot adopt the position of the judge of these men if God himself does not punish them and apparently in their moral universe, a form of cannibalism is permissible. Following this introspection, Crusoe, Richetti argues,

> not only thinks but dramatizes the conditions of thought, narrates the function of thinking within his personal development, and defines himself as a mind making its way through a series of positions, each of which has a distinct validity and personal rightness for him at different points in his experience. Or in Bakhtin's terms we might want to say that he locates his personality at the intersection of competing explanations, rational, emotional, historical, political, of cannibalism, with his own personal situation as the lone European inhabitant of the island. (2000: 341)

From this he concludes that "Crusoe's reflections are cross-cultural, for him a revelation of tolerant relativity" (Richetti 2000: 342). While I share Richetti's classification of Crusoe as self-reflexive about his status as a European and Christian in a foreign setting, I would draw a different conclusion. His self-interrogation does not necessarily amount to "tolerant relativity" since his morally superior position is never really questioned; he simply learns humility in the sense that he relegates the authority to judge the cannibals to *his* God, he accepts that it is not for him to judge in relation to the higher divine power.

Later, with regard to *his* subjects on *his* island, he is more than happy to assume the position of the uncontested monarch and ruler. Richetti, in fact, too, admits that in the novel we find a "dialogue with himself" about how to come to terms with cultural alterity (2000: 344). Literally, Crusoe "debates with himself". Moreover, shortly after his display of moral tolerance towards the cannibals, Crusoe immediately contrasts his insight once more with the backward "conduct of the *Spaniards* in all their barbarities practis'd in *America*" (RC 136). The abhorrence against these barbarous Europeans, as which Protestant Crusoe marks the Catholics recurrently, is also clearly then a new form of inner-European and Christian distinction, that differentiates in colour-coded language the "whiter" Europeans of the North from the "Blacker" ones in the South. In Defoe's writing we can identify a new form of foundational self-reflexivity that challenges the position of an individual in relation to his God *and* that faces cultural alterity. However, this cultural alterity for the most part functions as a form of gratuitous obstacle that Crusoe, clearly an adventurer more than an ethnographer, simply needs to bring under his control.

Therefore, in Crusoe's relationship to Friday, true dialogicity is more difficult to assert: As mentioned, Crusoe uses language mainly to teach Friday to obey his orders and except for some short direct quotes of Friday's characteristic faulty English interspersed in Crusoe's summaries of Friday's actions, there is very little direct speech[24] except in a central dialogue again on the role of cannibalism. This passage, almost like a short playtext within the novel, assigns the characters their speaking roles as "Master" and "Friday":

> *Master*, Well, *Friday*, and what does your nation do with the men they take, do they carry them away, and eat them, as these did?
> *Friday*, Yes, my nation eat man's too, eat all up.
> *Master*, Where do they carry them?

> *Friday*, Go to other place where they think.
> *Master*, Do they come hither?
> *Friday*, Yes, yes, they come hither; come other else place.
> *Master*, Have you been here with them?
> *Friday*, Yes, I have been here; [points to the N. W. side of the island, which it seems was their side.]
> By this I understood, that my man *Friday* had formerly been among the savages, who us'd to come on shore on the farther part of the island, on the same man eating occasions that he was now brought for; and some time after, when I took the courage to carry him to that side, [...] he presently knew the place, and told me, he was there once when they eat up twenty men, two women, and one child; he could not tell twenty in *English*; but he numbered them by laying so many stones on a row, and pointing to me to tell them over. (RC 169)

As throughout the novel, there is never autonomy of Friday's speech, it cannot stand for itself or be regarded as communicating meaning without the focalizer and interlocutor Crusoe, who translates for the reader, "by this I understood" what *his* man means.

Friday's limited capabilities in mastering the complexities of the English language are underlined by his lacking ability to name the number twenty. Nonetheless, in what follows, Friday, in fact, teaches Crusoe about the locality, how to best use a canoe to reach the other island, and so on. But rather than establish some sort of equal footing between the two men, Crusoe also decides that Friday needs to be instructed in the one true religion. And while Jager (1988: 328) emphasises that it is Friday's interrogations in the process of conversion that make Crusoe a better Christian, Friday's interiority continues to be externally focalized by Crusoe in variations of the mentioned formulations such as "I found he meant" (RC 170). In the entire novel, there is a clear hierarchy at work; Friday readily accepts both Crusoe's intellectual superiority as his master as well as the pre-eminence of the Christian God over his "*Benamuckee*" (RC 171). This finally brings me back to the critical debate about Friday's contested status as a slave.

Carey stresses Friday's agency in voluntarily submitting to Crusoe and urges critics to grant predominance to the text itself. But, as there is no internal focalization, Carey, I would argue, to a certain degree here falls prey to the solipsistic perspective of the text, limiting epistemic authority to Crusoe's interpretation of Friday who is reduced to a mirroring function and what Hulme calls the fiction of voluntary servitude:[25]

> Friday is certainly a slave inasmuch as he has no will of his own; and Crusoe, unwilling as he may be ever to call Friday "slave", has no qualms about adopting the other half of the dialectic […]. Yet within the fiction the term "slave" can be avoided because Friday's servitude is voluntary, not forced. (Hulme 1992: 205)

Hulme convincingly associates the text with the unrealistic wish-fulfilment of the romance rather than the realism of the truly modern novel thus emphasising the hybridity of *Robinson Crusoe* as still wavering between older and newer forms of narrative fiction. On the one hand, Crusoe is a believable hero who reflects his position and needs to come to the eventual acceptance of the will of God. Friday, on the other hand, is granted no such narrative space that would suggest a "reflective" position of submitting to Robinson Crusoe. The narrative logic of wish-fulfilment characteristic of adventure writing is here combined with the more pious Protestant spiritual autobiography.

This generic hybridity of the novel is also evident in the lack of representation of familial feeling. The unrealistically unchallenged master-slave dialectic in some ways becomes a substitute for the patriarchal family that is so central in later novel writing. In relation to Friday, Crusoe adopts the position of the father. As Carey acknowledges, "The patriarchal self-conception consolidates a stratified social order composed of masters and servants tied by familial bonds" (Carey 2009: 121; cf. also Flint 1998: 137). While there is very little emotive attachment to family from start to finish in the novel, slavery is described in familiar terminologies of familial care, in considering Xury and Friday surrogate sons with Crusoe's "near magical ability to induce filial gratitude without really deserving it" (Flint 1998: 128). But Friday, in his willing submission cannot only be linked to the position of child/servant, he is also constantly effeminised and pushed in the symbolic position of spouse, as Flint remarks, "he is providentially sent to Crusoe as Eve is to Adam" (1998: 142). While Martin Green briefly mentions the "strong (though innocent) erotic coloring" (1980: 76) of Friday, there is a more convenient sublimation of sexuality into business throughout the narrative. Quoting 1 John 2:16, Crusoe first states, "I was removed from all the wickedness of the world here: I had neither the *lust of the flesh*, *the lust of the eye, or the pride of life*" (RC 102). But he then concedes that there were indeed a few items he wished for: "I had no room for desire, except it was of things which I had not" (RC 103) and the "trifles" that he specifies are the things that money cannot

buy him on the island such as seed for specific plants. Procreation is expressed as agriculture and desire is channelled into Crusoe's male Godly acts of creation on the island. All of Crusoe's transactions, be they with other people, who never show resistance, or monetary accumulation, in the end appear unrealistically felicitous and gratuitous to fully qualify as realistic novelistic discourse. Tellingly, the text, unlike Austen's and later Dickens's fiction, does not end in domestic closure of the marriage plot, but in the desire for ever more adventure (cf. Flint 1998: 143).

In the final pages of the novel, back in England, Crusoe quickly goes from having "no family" (RC 239) to taking care of two of his nephews to finally founding his own family.

> In the mean time, I in part settled myself here; for first of all I marry'd, and that not either to my disadvantage or dissatisfaction, and had three children, two sons and one daughter: But my wife dying, and my nephew coming home with good success from a voyage to *Spain*, my inclination to go abroad, and his importunity prevailed, and engag'd me to go in his ship, as a private trader to the *East Indies*: This was in the year 1694. (RC 240)

Again, this time in a truly queer form of temporality, heterosexual procreation is limited to two sentences in the entire novel and no emotional attachment, except in the awkward double negative of "not either to my disadvantage or dissatisfaction", is narrated. The more than convenient death of the nameless wife and the inconsequential existence of his equally nameless children simply provide the opportunity for a continuation of the plot in the even more episodic structure of *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. These are advertised in the final passages of the book and were published quickly following the enormous success of the first instalment.[26]

In conclusion, the novel consolidates Crusoe as a free and, in comparison to various colonial and European Others, increasingly white English subject that is characterised by a new form of dialogic self-reflexivity, but not yet disturbed by a "(post)colonial" talking back or familial obligations. This early eighteenth-century "story of adventure, as Defoe tells it, is always built around an isolated individual, who leads subordinates against alien opponents" (Green 1980: 84). Crusoe might be the first psychological hero of the novel, but he is not yet truly a social subject.[27] While, as Defoe has demonstrated in his famous satirical poem "The True-Born Englishman" (1701), Englishness can incorporate many immigrant

elements, Scottish, Danish, and in Crusoe's case even German, it is only by leaving the British Isles that this identity is consolidated as superior to the colonised Others. So, in short, Friday's agency becomes unimaginable in a text that grants him no interiority: in toto, he functions like his predecessor the parrot. Some of the things he says might startle Crusoe and provoke contemplation, but it is also clear that a more radical challenge to this romanticised assumption of the master-slave dialectic is not imaginable. This again must be linked to David Hume's mocking of Francis Williams's poetry in a footnote to his essay "Of National Characters" as "slender accomplishments, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly" (Hume 1987 [1742]: 208), as mentioned in the previous chapter.[28] The non-white man Friday, too, can only mimic familiarity and, tellingly, while the taming of the animal is built on force, the subordination of the Carib magically can do without. In this vein, Crusoe's story is not yet reflexive of the structural violence of the transatlantic slave trade.[29] Nevertheless, I want to suggest that aesthetically Defoe's text, which predates the abolitionist debate after all, can be read as entangled with the forms of writing that did eventually contest this fantasy of compliant mimicry. In the second half of the eighteenth century the first Black writers joined the ranks of writing subjects and this included writing in the foundational tone of providing believable interiority via the adoption of formal realism.

Thus, while there are many parallels between Crusoe's adventures and Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*, there are also crucial differences in how modernity and Britishness can be claimed by these different protagonists. Both Equiano and Crusoe accept God as their ruler but change their destinies by not sticking to their initially allotted fate, which is a marker of their status as modern men and a characteristic of novelistic discourse—thus altering the script of modernity. But the family is far less dispensable for Equiano. While not taking up a lot of narrative space either, the severed family ties are not voluntary and do not result in narrative indulgence of free-floating individuality. During his tales of adventure and fancy that might seem akin to Crusoe, Equiano seeks familiarity with rather than dominance over the subjects he meets. His foundational tone is always in conversation with how others might perceive his actions, especially his assumed audience. But this does not mean that the text is pure flattery of white sensitivities. Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* can also be considered the first piece of writing that reflects about the otherness of white slaveholders from a Black point of view. Reading Defoe's and Equiano's texts as entangled accounts of foundational modernity, I will posit that rather

than dismiss Equiano as imitative of Defoe's novelistic style, the account of the former slave, characterised by constant negotiation, is, in fact, the more realistic depiction of a modern mercantile man. While Defoe settles for an insular version of English masculinity that largely rests on phantasmatic wish-fulfilment, Equiano provides a more believable account of a form of oceanic Britishness that benefits the ex-slave and the self-conception of the British as progressive and is thus truly dialogical.

Oceanic Britishness: Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative*

Generically Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by Himself* combines elements of the autobiography, the spiritual autobiography, and the genre of the apologia. The text, published first by subscription in 1789, can also be understood as a captivity narrative, travel book, or adventure story. As Aravamudan argues, "Equiano's work suggests both religious and secular consequences and, like slave narrative, refers back to a picaresque origin" (1999: 235). Especially its categorisation as a predecessor to the nineteenth-century slave narrative by Gates has cemented the *Narrative*'s status as one of the most prominent pieces of early Black literature. It is also the most successful of the early Black Atlantic publications discussed in this book, with nine published editions and translations into Dutch, German, and Russian during Equiano's lifetime. Equiano is also the only of the four Black writers who can claim an intimate personal familiarity with the state of enslavement (Sancho was taken to England as a servant from a young age; Wedderburn's slave-owning father secured his freedom, and Seacole was already born a freewoman). More than the epistolary form of Sancho's writing and Wedderburn's pamphlet, Equiano (and Seacole after him) publishes a narrative that clearly already belongs to the realm of novelistic discourse. As Thomas Doherty argues, "The successful formula for a newly emergent literary form—the novel—proved readily adaptable to the novelistic dimensions of Equiano's life: a calibrated balance between piety and pathos, orthodox sentiment and wild adventure" (1997: 575).[30]

According to Equiano's own account, whose veracity has come under scrutiny,[31] he was kidnapped with his sister into slavery at the age of eleven, taken to Barbados and after a few days transported to Virginia. There he is

bought by a planter and then sold to Michael Henry Pascal, a lieutenant in the British Royal Navy who names him Gustavus Vassa after the Swedish king and takes him to England. Once there, Pascal breaks his promise to set him free and sells him into slavery once more to the West Indies in 1762 after serving in the Seven Years' War. Equiano eventually buys his freedom and travels more widely before settling in England for good. Subsequently, Equiano becomes the most prominent and professional Black spokesperson for abolition in Britain and tours widely with his "interesting" narrative. Douglas Anderson speculates about the different dimensions of the titular adjective, which not only refers to economic interest, but also to a moral dimension. "Equiano undertakes to be 'interesting' in the larger 'interest' of humanity, to assert a subjective claim in the service of objective ends" (2004: 442). In contrast to Crusoe's individualised "strange and surprising adventures", Equiano demands the right to be acknowledged as a writing subject on behalf of other Africans. At the same time, his claim is also a more fundamental challenge to the social status quo in the transatlantic world. Against Defoe's insular masculinity, with which his narrative shares several parallels, such as the simultaneous prospective and retrospective temporal orientation as I will show, Equiano could be read as laying the foundation for an oceanic version of Britishness. Hence his narrative is situated more overtly in the realm of the political discourse of the time with his subscription list including many dignitaries used as moral support for the abolitionist cause. In 1792, the first attempt to pass an abolition bill in parliament fails because of the protest by the British planter lobby. Equiano dies in 1797 after he had retired to some wealth resulting from his writing in 1794 even before the slave trade was eventually abolished in Britain in 1807.

In Equiano's writing the paradoxical convergence of slavery and modernity that I outlined in the introduction becomes tangible. The *Interesting Narrative* displays strategies of "becoming modern", which Gates describes as a "movement from slave-object to author-subject" (1988: 157), mostly through the reference to shared Christianity but also in an appeal to feeling. However, Aravamudan contests a false equation of literacy solely with "the 'West'" (1999: 272) and emphasises that "the colonized subject" is both an "object of representation and agent of resistance" (1999: 4). Equiano's writing then should not be truncated as imitative of a Crusoe figure or a "mimic" Englishman. As I argue throughout this study, understanding literary texts from the centre and the margins as entangled shows a much more complex reciprocity between feelings of

familiarity in constructing Britishness inside and outside of Britain. Equiano can claim Britishness because it is at this historical juncture that Britishness for the first time becomes imaginable as inclusive of subjects who are not yet citizens. Ever since the 1772 Somerset case, while slavery was not yet abolished in the colonies, it was marked as incompatible with English law and hence turned England to a preferred destination of Black subjects and a common reference point in their writing. But while chattel slavery was still in place, this claim of narrative authority remained paradoxical. Analysing the trope of personification in sentimental slave narratives, Festa contends that this mode of representation tries "to make a man through a literary form that is written by a person legally constituted as a thing" (2006: 134). Following Festa, such redundant personification dehumanises those it supposedly confers subjectivity to because their status as human is never taken for granted. However, in contrast, for example, to the mentioned sentimentalised image of the kneeling slave on the Wedgwood medallion, Equiano's text provides many moments of agency and a much more foundational tonality of modernity than that of sentimentality alone. As in all eight authors discussed in this study, it is a specific national construction of British enlightenment, rather than a more global humanism, that is evoked in claims for inclusion which makes Equiano's imaginative belonging to Britain a successful literary project in the (transatlantic) public sphere. Despite the initial readings of his narrative as part of the African American tradition, it is no coincidence that his autobiography was not very successful with contemporary audiences in the United States (cf. Caldwell 1999: 280; Doherty 1997: 580).[32]

Nevertheless, in my analysis I do not simply want to "claim" Equiano for a specific national literary canon. Obviously, he is a subject that has crossed many waters and national borders. Consequently, in the past twenty years, Equiano has been linked to a plethora of critical concepts in the vocabulary of postcolonial and critical race theory, such as the trickster (cf. Bozeman 2003: 61; Doyle 2008: 198) and hybridity (Bozeman 2003: 61); he has been called a mimic man (Plasa 2000), referring to Homi Bhabha's famous dictum that mimicry of hegemonic norms by the colonised is simultaneously resemblance and menace (Bhabha 1994: 123), as well as a creole (cf. Thomas 2000: 227–228). Without granting predominance of one label over the other in the following, I want to probe how we can describe Equiano's ambivalent adoption and critique of Britishness focusing more on the tonality of his tale than on his positionality, hence highlighting the hybridity of his prose (rather than his identity) in the

Bakhtinian sense of combining different genres or mixing different languages (cf. Bakhtin 1994: 287, 358–359). Linking him to the discussion of the foundational introspection of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, I understand his narrative as promoting an oceanic Britishness in contrast to the more "insular" version of Englishness that Defoe's novel seems to adhere to. Already in 1987 Hortense Spillers speaks of the "oceanic" state of unbelonging that the enslaved experienced. She writes:

> Those African persons in "Middle Passage" were literally suspended in the "oceanic," if we think of the latter in its Freudian orientation as an analogy for undifferentiated identity: removed from the indigenous land and culture, and not-yet "American" either, these captive persons, without names that their captors would recognize, were in movement across the Atlantic, but they were also *nowhere* at all. (1987: 72)

In contrast to a Freudian psychoanalytical understanding of "oceanic" as undifferentiated identity, I want to argue that in Equiano's writing there is also a specific "wider" or oceanic imagination of what could be considered British. That is, on the one hand, a chance to claim familiarity/subjectivity of the formerly enslaved, and, on the other hand, it already points in the direction of the new global imperialism that is built on geographical expansion rather than enslaved labour. Incorporating subjects like Equiano (and later Seacole) as part of this project of global Britishness bolsters colonial expansion and the conception of a supposedly humane, gentlemanly, and "fair" British imperialism during the nineteenth century. But preceding these developments into which Seacole is embroiled, Equiano uses eighteenth-century literary strategies, including but not limited to sentimental pathos, to provide exactly what Defoe's text could not deliver, a form of focalization that communicates insights from the inside and the outside. Hence oceanic Britishness does not only refer to his position as an African in Europe; like the insularity of Defoe's literary discourse, it points to the literary diversity of his prose. In contrast to what Richetti calls Defoe's "dialogue with himself", but also using Bakhtin's terminology, Gates has prominently argued that the "black tradition is double-voiced" (1988: xxv, 110). In such an understanding, Equiano is foundational of a modern form of narrative text, not only because he is self-reflexive; his account is modern, because it is sceptical of a univocal cultural identity and can encompass a whole range of literary registers. This multiplicity then is characteristic of his writing that indeed is more than simply

imitative. What is more, in comparison to other early Black writing, his narrative is a much more detailed account of the events of his life and individual episodes, whether they be factual or indeed fictional. He also demonstrates a retrospective awareness of how his personality developed. This renders him akin to realist fiction writers, as Ogude believes: "In Equiano, credibility becomes an aspect of character rather than of the tale" (1982: 36). Believing in his life story implies revelling in the accomplishments of a Black self-made man.

Beginning with conventionalised repudiations of personal vanity and an acknowledgement of "the mercies of Providence" (IN 31), Equiano opens his narrative with descriptions of African customs in his supposed homeland of the Eboe province in the kingdom of Benin on the Guinea Coast, located in what is present-day Nigeria. Given Equiano's young age at the time of his supposed enslavement, these initial episodes are nowadays largely believed to be drawn from texts like William Snelgrave's (1734) *A New Account of Some Parts of Guinea and the Slave Trade*, Anthony Benezet's (1771) *Some Historical Account of Guinea* (which Equiano references explicitly in his notes) as well as from oral accounts of other slaves (cf. Boulukos 2007; Bozeman 2003; Carretta 2005: 234; Ogude 1982).[33] Trying to describe African customs in familiar terms, he "makes explicit the oddity of what is familiarly 'European' as seen from the point of view he draws beyond the geography and customs of Europe" (Barrett 2014: 53). He, for example, compares African cultural practices like circumcision favourably to those of the ancient Jews (cf. IN 41). While the rites and rituals of Africans might seem alien to Europeans, Equiano, using the first-person plural pronoun "we" in this section, emphasises that "his people" rely on old traditions that are potentially compatible with those of his readers. Wheeler posits, this "comparison attempts to use Jews as a bridge between Africans and Europeans" (2000: 262). Additionally, Equiano highlights cleanliness and faithfulness and explains that slavery in Africa is often a penalty for adultery (cf. IN 33). Thus, he contrasts African forms of enslavement, belonging to the realm of morally justified punishment (after all, his father, a respected chief or elder in his community, also owned slaves), with the unacceptable European economic exploitation of Africans. This chapter, relying, as mentioned, largely on borrowed accounts shows an affinity between Equiano's narrative and travel writing and ethnography that uses realist descriptions to humanise Africans.

Equiano's kidnapping, detailed in the second chapter, is then a significant shift in perspective. Told from the point of view of the young

character-focalizer, it provides an immediacy that is more characteristic of adventure writing à la Defoe. Passing several stations, Equiano encounters those "depraved" Africans that sell their countrymen to the Europeans.

> I came at length to a country, the inhabitants of which differed from us in all those particulars. I was very much struck with this difference, especially when I came among a people who did not circumcise, and eat without washing their hands. They cooked also in iron pots, and had European cutlasses and cross bows, which were unknown to us, and fought with their fists amongst themselves. Their women were not so modest as ours, for they eat, and drank, and slept with their men. (IN 53–54)

Strikingly, it is as if these people, located closer to the ocean, have been infected by "Europeanness"; the lack of hygiene (no washing of hands, no circumcision), and their European cooking habits, seem intimately linked to a propensity for violence and sexual immodesty in "their women".

The young Equiano finally sees the sea for the first time, but the open water is immediately linked to the sight of the slave-ship, which filled him "with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror" (IN 55). In contrast to Crusoe's youthful and defiant boarding of his first ship that signals independence, Equiano's first journey is the traumatic loss of autonomy. While Crusoe leaves his family to gain freedom, Equiano's severing of family ties amounts to the forfeiture of sovereignty. Gilroy famously identifies the ship as a novel chronotope "to rethink modernity via the history of the black Atlantic and the African diaspora into the Western hemisphere" (1993: 17). In this endeavour, he emphasises the need to focus on "routes" instead of on the more prominent homonym "roots" in describing African modernity as the "journey from slave ship to citizenship" (1993: 31). It is movement rather than fixed "blood" relation to the soil that becomes characteristic of this diasporic framing of modernity that follows the traumatic loss of lineage. The ship as a chronotope, emblematic of the interrelation of space-time according to Bakhtin (1994: 84), for Equiano thus signifies both the loss and eventual reclaiming of identity. Accordingly, William Boelhower argues that the ship is the point of connection between enslavement and eventual freedom, "the ship stands for the principle of reversibility itself" (2004: 30). This reversibility is the logical starting point of a narrative that reflects the eventual subject status of the narrating I. As in most autodiegetic narratives, the split between experiencing character-focalizer and retrospective narrator-focalizer is

linked to age,[34] as was also apparent in *Robinson Crusoe*. But in Equiano's case this also includes his newly acquired freedom which is the precondition for him to tell his story in the first place: "[b]alancing two simultaneous perspectives throughout, the freedman Equiano has become portrays the slave he once was" (Lowe 2009: 104). In relation to the imagery of the ship on water, it is of significance that the freeman Equiano eventually assumes the title of captain. While he mentions several times that he cannot swim (cf. e.g. IN 120), he finally learns to steer a boat himself (IN 144). The once deadly threat of the water can be overcome in commanding the vessel that stands in relation to his regained autonomy.[35]

Similar to *Robinson Crusoe* then, defiance of initial adversities and a growing self-consciousness of his moral weaknesses make the narration of his development particularly novelistic in tone. But as mentioned, there are also significant differences between the freeman Crusoe and the ex-slave Equiano. The coloniser Crusoe leaves one island to settle on another, and while his adventurous tale also relies heavily on ships and travelling, these ships are almost always connected to the hazards of storm and shipwreck. While both men must accept God as their heavenly master, Crusoe claims the land of the island literally as his property. In contrast, Equiano's fate remains tied to the slippery sphere of the waters. For him, possession first and foremost means possession of his own person.

As in Cugoano's writing before and in Wedderburn's after him, slavery is intimately tied to the term "horror" which appears multiple times in his report of his abduction (cf. IN 50, 53, 55, 58). The actual description then of the inside of the slave ship during the middle passage becomes *the* literary topos par excellence to convey this horror and generate sympathy in the readership. Thus, Equiano's text to a certain degree adheres to conventionalised sentimental tropes that are also characteristic of (white) abolitionist writing. But in contrast to popular abolitionist poems such as "The Dying Negro" (1775 [1773]) by John Bicknell and Thomas Days, he can claim the authenticating perspective of first-hand experience narrated in longer prose which makes his account stand out. Equiano's autobiography is characterised then by several modes of doubling, the mentioned temporal split between younger and older self that is typical of autodiegetic narratives in general, the added element of the liberated subject contemplating his earlier status as chattel, and, finally, the perspective that Du Bois later famously described as "double-consciousness", "this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (2008

[1903]: 8). Thus, the division between the different narrating Is is enhanced by the fact that Equiano is aware of a judging white audience, the implied narratees of his account. These various splits then inform the tone of Equiano's text that, on the one hand, adheres to foundational principles of narrating modern subjectivity and, on the other hand, delves into a plethora of different genres, ranging from the mentioned religious and adventure formulas to eighteenth-century sentimentalism.[36]

When the young Equiano is forced to enter the slave ship, he is overcome with terror and faints (IN 55). While swooning and fainting are ubiquitous in sentimentalist texts like Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (2009 [1771]), Equiano does more than trying to evoke the tearful pity of his (white) readership. In his first impressions he also offers quite realistic detailed descriptions of the sensory and olfactory disorientation as well as the objects, such as tubs and chains, that surround him, and which are used to aggrieve the captives. This is characteristic of the hybrid tone of his prose, wavering between modern self-making and sentimental affection.

> The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers. This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable. […] In this situation I expected every hour to share the fate of my companions, some of whom were almost daily brought upon deck at the point of death, which I began to hope would soon put an end to my miseries. (IN 58)

Immediately, the ship is constructed as a site that removes him and the other Africans on board from the realm of the human. Each individual human morphs into the mass that is the slave cargo, visualised so forcefully in the depiction of the bodies crammed into the Liverpool slave ship *Brookes*. In the bird's eye view of the image, widely used by abolitionists to evoke sympathy, the black figures become legible only as small black blots separated by the tiniest bit of white blank space which, Festa argues, "does

not attribute feeling or thought to the figure of the slave; it unveils the brutal treatment of persons as chattel by obliging the reader to enter fully into the barbaric logic of the trade" (2006: 183).[37] This lacking autonomy in Equiano's account is translated as the resort to suicide, which Gilroy describes as the most radical form of agency that a slave had access to. Some of the men jump overboard trying to kill themselves and one of them is retrieved and severely punished for "attempting to prefer death to slavery" (IN 59).[38] This almost absurd formulation highlights the status of slavery as a form of "social death", which, as Orlando Patterson has famously outlined already in 1982, does not kill the body of the enslaved that is exploited as workforce, but severs the communal ties as a form of "natal alienation" to conditions that provide the bare minimum for survival (cf. 1982: 5–10, 38). Real death appears the preferable alternative in this light, although an alternative that one can only "attempt to prefer". The young Equiano himself hopes for death in this "wretched situation".

In order to escape this bleak fate, Equiano adopts two strategies that paradoxically include the disavowal of European depravity and the adoption of enlightenment ideals. He fends off dehumanisation by turning the tables and emphasises that the slaveholders themselves are inhumane and given their treatment of men, women, and children cannot be called Christians. If the Europeans would truly adopt the ideals that they promoted, they could no longer support the unjust system of slavery. He rejects the assumption that Africans are less than human, and, at the same time, he is willing to concede to the "apparent inferiority of an African". Equiano thus tries to establish "likeness" with his readers despite superficial differences that are conceived as a temporal lag. If African customs can be compared to (ancient) Jewishness, their complexion can also be linked to the "dark" Spaniards.

> Surely the minds of the Spaniards did not change with their complexions! Are there not causes enough to which the apparent inferiority of an African may be ascribed, without limiting the goodness of God […]. Might it not naturally be ascribed to their situation? When they come among Europeans, they are ignorant of their language, religion, manners, and customs. Are any pains taken to teach them these? Are they treated as men? Does not slavery itself depress the mind, and extinguish all its fire, and every noble sentiment? But, above all, what advantages do not a refined people possess over those who are rude and uncultivated? Let the polished and haughty European recollect that *his* ancestors were once, like the Africans, uncivilized, and even

> barbarous. Did Nature make *them* inferior to their sons? and should *they too* have been made slaves? Every rational mind answers, No. Let such reflections as these melt the pride of their superiority into sympathy for the wants and miseries of their sable brethren, and compel them to acknowledge, that understanding is not confined to feature or colour. (IN 45)

Equiano here is repeating established sentimental tropes of abolition, appealing to the ability to learn and he proves an "African capacity" to adopt those enlightenment ideals that he recognises as beneficial in hindsight. He de-essentialises the situations of Africans and via reference to sympathy, in the enlightenment philosophy of fellow-feeling, asks Europeans to imagine themselves in the slave's position. It is the condition of slavery that "depress[es] the mind, and extinguish[es] all its fire, and every noble sentiment", not the lacking natural capability of Africans or their darker skin. With more intimacy to European ideals of education, they too could aspire to similarity, clearly alluding to the "man and brother" ideal of fraternity without challenging the current "civilisational superiority".

Accordingly, the young Equiano shows a great interest in learning and self-improvement. Like Crusoe, he is absorbed in all things to do with navigation. His first "surprise" are the flying fish and later he mentions the quadrant that instils his "surprise", "curiosity", and "wonder" (IN 59), and while magic seems the first explanation for young "uncultured" Equiano, it also marks him as a rational observer who will learn about the science of seafaring eventually. One more likeness to Defoe is the noted combination of empirical description and constant apprehensions that Equiano attributes to his initial fear of white people, comparable to Crusoe's premonitions regarding the cannibals. This form of reversal has been noted also in relation to Equiano's framing of slavery as a form of white cannibalism (cf. IN 55, 60, 65).[39] Hence, after his initial reservations about white culture, Equiano is fascinated with reading, with religion, and with all things that he now perceives as advantageous. Travelling during the Seven Years' War becomes a way to engage with new things, people, and cultures and learn more about naval matters (cf. IN 70). It is the homosocial bonding with the other sailors and Richard "Dick" Baker particularly during this military episode of his life that facilitates his identification with the Western lifestyle. In this narrative framing, Equiano can criticise white depravity, but he never entirely dismisses what elements of modernity he (and possibly his readers) aspire to. True Christians would

not enslave other people, progressive capitalists would invest in Africa rather than drain it of its workforce.

Despite the various described ruptures in terms of temporal orientation of the text, Equiano is the single focalizer who offers multiple routes of identification, emphasising different aspects of his identity. The presumably white Others, who read the text, need to engage with Equiano. Hazel Carby calls this a strategy of "mutual non-recognition" (2009: 632). Accordingly, she reads Equiano's text almost as a utopian, postcolonial identity before the fact:

> Equiano speaks as a composite subject, a subject inhabiting multiple differences, as African, as black, as British, as Christian, as a diasporic and transnational citizen of the world, and in the process offers his readers the possibility of imagining a more complex cultural and national identity for themselves. (Carby 2009: 634–635)

In contrast to Carby, I would be slightly less optimistic in the readers' capacity to empathise with Equiano's multiplicity. The narrative follows a specific pattern of spiritual development, with his baptism to become a member of the Church of England in 1759 and his spiritual awakening and conversion to Methodism in 1774 (cf. Carretta 2010: 81) that is initiated by his "heart-felt relief in reading my bible at home" (IN 178) rather than in church. The retrospective orientation of the text always assures the reader that Equiano is now more like than different from them. So, unlike Carby I would not read this as a dismissal of national identity in favour of a utopian cosmopolitanism, but rather as a sign of an imagination of Britishness as inclusive. The Britishness of Equiano's readership is not challenged but can incorporate Otherness in ways that profit its self-understanding rather than unsettle it. This form of inclusivity time and again becomes the marker of a national exceptionalism when compared to other European colonial powers and the United States. But it also seems to offer subjects like Equiano a narrative space to claim a distinct Black British identity—often in disavowal of an (US-)American identity that still seems too strongly engrained in the horrors of chattel slavery.[40]

In England, he starts to feel more like a paid servant than a slave:

> It was now between three and four years since I first came to England, a great part of which I had spent at sea; so that I became inured to that service, and began to consider myself as happily situated; for my master treated

> me always extremely well; and my attachment and gratitude to him were very great. From the various scenes I had beheld on ship-board, I soon grew a stranger to terror of every kind, and was, in that respect at least, almost an Englishman. (IN 77)

Equiano constructs a vicinity to *modern* Englishness (he is almost an Englishman) which distances him from the Atlantic horrors of slavery that did not grant him agency.[41] He masters the language "tolerably well" and is no longer afraid of Europeans, he even calls the English "new countrymen", a title formerly reserved for Africans (IN 77). However, what follows is his famous declaration of aspiring to their superior status, "to resemble them", to "imitate their manners" (IN 78). Therefore, rather than link him to the later American slave narrative as many critics in the wake of Gates's reading have done, Tanya Caldwell emphasises Equiano's distinct affective relation to Britishness, which she reads as a sign of assimilation (1999: 280).[42] However, instead of trying to establish whether Equiano's attachment to Britishness should be read simply as political conservatism, I want to relate this affective orientation of the text to the retrospective temporality in the narrative framework that Gates has highlighted. Thereby I follow the more recent "postcolonial" debate on Equiano that emphasises the paradoxes and ambivalences in Equiano's attachment to England that cannot be reduced to assimilation.

In his well-known discussion of the trope of the talking book, Gates (1988: 127–169) stresses the "difference between the narrator and this character of his (past) self, a difference marked through verb tense as the difference between object and subject" (1988: 157). But instead of reading this as a progression in the mastery of Western letters, to become an "Anglo-African" as Gates contends, I would accentuate the many contradictions that shape Equiano's narrative. Rather than assimilate to an idea of univocal subjectivity and the romance with the autonomous subject, Equiano's modernity is in many ways more "realistic". It highlights a conflicted attachment to identity based on nationality that can never be entirely successful but is still linked to the promise of inclusion. Formally, like any modern Bildungsroman, his narrative seems to trace different stages of development. However, the temporality seems somewhat odd at times. It often feels as if, similar to *Tristram Shandy*'s non-linear narration, Equiano is getting ahead of himself, which is an attribute of the "writing slave". The author Equiano describes how reading and writing is his greatest desire, which we know, in reading his account, he mastered

exceptionally well. Equiano's narrative aspiration is already fulfilled in the titular "written by himself". His narrative is based both on a retrospective account of *Bildung*, but also from the very beginning the prospective promise of freedom. What is more, there seems to be a specific conception of space-time related to this progression. Like many colonial subjects, Equiano becomes British extraterritorially, he travels more than he stays on the island. This can also be connected to his paradoxical adoption of capitalism which he embraces while he is legally still considered chattel, again a significant split between narrating and experiencing I.

On his journey towards becoming British, commerce and the Christian belief in providence are the generic prerequisites to become a self-made man or "his own man", and here is another often-noted parallel to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and the concept of the *homo economicus*.[43] But again, rather than read this simply as imitation or aspiring to the hegemonic ideal, Equiano's text, penned by the once unfree subject, also uncovers the paradoxes that are foundational of modernity's romance with freedom. On the one hand, Equiano accurately notes his monetary transactions (e.g. IN 166; cf. Sandiford 1988: 133) and recounts the history of inner-African slavery (IN 38–39). On the other hand, he is not much invested in becoming the proprietor of things but more fundamentally strives to become the owner of himself, a premise that for Equiano is the goal rather than the starting point of his picaresque adventures and thus disrupts the linearity of capitalism's romance with surplus value. The appeal of modernity's connection to capitalism for the ex-slave then is not so much accumulation, but the promise of manumission. Initially, as Aravamudan writes, "The commercial ideology of Equiano's African ventures resemble the earlier from that we have already encountered, that of Defoe's progressive Protestant mercantilism" (1999: 237) and Anderson claims that within the conventions of economic order he can even be read as "a mean sea-farer in pursuit of gain" (2004: 240).[44] However, in contrast to the magical accumulation of Crusoe's wealth in his absence, Equiano is cheated of his rightful earnings repeatedly and white men continuously try to steal from him (cf. e.g. IN 162, 170). Hence, the idea of the *homo economicus* is a much more contested and precarious ideal for Equiano. Gesa Mackenthun convincingly links this uncertainty to a more realistic literary style. While Defoe's narrative of wish-fulfilment still echoes the romance, Mackenthun calls Equiano a "real-life witness of the life at the other end of Robinson Crusoe's world of magical accumulation and possessive individualism" (2004: 28).[45] Because Equiano is the acting subject and the

object of sentimentality, he also disrupts the narrative logic of sentimentality.[46] In this way, Equiano's narrative wavers between sentimental pathos and realistic depiction of an identity position that is not hegemonic. It is this reliance on intersubjectivity that also indicates violent disavowal which is, in fact, the marker of true modernity. This is a characteristic which Defoe's account still lacks.

Through the unlikely adoption of the model of the imperial white mercantilist man, Equiano can eventually buy his own freedom, which once more points to the paradoxical temporality of manumission in the genre of the autobiography. In a matter of one day, his situation is reversed. Nonetheless, in this form of life writing, we know the narrator-focalizer to be free even before the character-focalizer can describe his legal freedom: "I who had been a slave in the morning, trembling at the will of another, now became my own master, and compleatly [sic] free" (IN 137). Festa associates this form of narration with paradoxical redundancy:

> to buy himself back, Equiano must be a subject already, but only manumission can make him into the subject able to execute the contract he has already performed in order to become that subject. The paradox of the manumission certificate—that one must be a man or woman to become one—is also the paradox of the autobiographical text, which calls into being the writing subject who must exist for there to be a text. (2006: 143)

Equiano's biggest gain then is not strictly monetary, but (cultural and actual) mobility as a sailor and a writer. The mentioned strategic adoption of a British identity then can also be linked to an economic world view of investing in a profitable and original idea of self rather than imitation. If slavery is connected to "social death", entering the English public sphere can be regarded as a form of reparation. In the economic language of capitalising on profits, Britain seems like the more susceptible literary audience, with his narrative, as mentioned, becoming literally much more successful on the British than the American market.

This literary accomplishment then, I argue, is connected to a display of familial feeling that, on the one hand, adheres to British sensibilities, and, on the other hand, can profit from the conception of a new form of oceanic Britishness that is imagined as inclusive of Otherness. The beginning abolitionist discourse provides a willing audience for Equiano. But this is only within the parameters of a more hesitant ameliorationist rather than straightforward abolitionist logic. Even worse than slavery in the United

States, it is the West Indies that are described as the quintessential counterpart to freedom that continues to pose a threat even for "free negroes". One of the reasons for the focus on this particular location of slavery seems to be connected to the ongoing British investment in the slave trade in the West Indies rather than the "lost colony" of the United States at the time. Unlike Seacole's and Dickens's later straightforward disdain for the lacking civility of the "Yankees", Equiano holds the West Indian planters in contempt for their moral colonial lag. Rather than contrast a US-American jingoism with British imperial civility, as Seacole and Dickens do in the mid-nineteenth century, Equiano still projects hope in a reformation of the colonies to mirror the enlightened ideals of the "mother country".

> These things opened my mind to a new scene of horror, to which I had been before a stranger. Hitherto I had thought only slavery dreadful; but the state of a free negro appeared to me now equally so at least, and in some respects even worse, for they live in constant alarm for their liberty, which is but nominal, for they are universally insulted and plundered without the possibility of redress; for such is the equity of the West Indian laws, that no free negro's evidence will be admitted in their courts of justice. In this situation, is it surprising that slaves, when mildly treated, should prefer even the misery of slavery to such a mockery of freedom? I was now completely disgusted with the West Indies, and thought I never should be entirely free until I had left them. (IN 122)

The West Indian "mockery of freedom" underlines the spatial dimension of slavery. Rather than read Equiano's journey as a linear progression from slavery to freedom in spatio-temporal terms, it is more a traversing of different geographies of un/freedom, which includes a travelling back and forth between his first sojourn in England, followed by a prolonged period of his life spent travelling all over the world and his final return. Set in a time even before the abolitionists could hope to outlaw the slave trade, Equiano's critique for the most part is directed at the inhumane slave *trade* rather than condemn all forms of enslavement straightforwardly. And it is specifically the geography of the West Indies that does not live up to the ideal of British freedom.

Equiano is happy to eventually leave "the American quarter of the globe" (IN 159) for "Old England", as is his preferred name for his adopted home (cf. IN 138, 161). The "New World" is corrupted and it is almost as if he must travel back to a supposedly purer state which queers

the idea of temporal/civilisational progress to a certain degree. Nevertheless, Equiano's supposed assimilation into Britishness is also met with obstacles. He continuously claims British civility to overcome supposed signifiers of division, the "impasse created by complexion when it functions as a sign of national identity and communal feeling" (Wheeler 2000: 269). There are episodes when, in the alleged naivety of the young character-focalizer, he tries to wash his Blackness off (cf. IN 69) or wears "white face" (cf. IN 180) when he unsuccessfully tries to help another Black man, John Annis, from being kidnapped into West Indian slavery (cf. Wheeler 2000: 274). Equiano becomes an advocate for the early Black community and more than any other of the early Black Atlantic writers associates with Black and white communities.

In this context, another often-noted element in claiming identity is the question of his proper name. In contrast to Poll the parrot who can only repeat what he has been taught and the externally focalized Friday whose identity is entirely bound to his "master's" act of naming, Equiano consciously reflects on the process of appellation. Throughout his story, Equiano changes names repeatedly, from his original name Olaudah Equiano, meaning "fortunate" or "favoured" (IN 41) that he takes up again in the publication of his narrative as his pen name, to Michael on the African ship, to Jacob in Virginia, which he initially favours over Gustavus Vassa (cf. IN 63–64), the grandiose title after the Swedish patriot king that Pascal gives him on his journey to England but which he at first refuses. Lindon Barret, in his posthumously published *Racial Blackness and the Discontinuity of Modernity*, speaks of a "disruptive binomalism" that is preserved in the title's "Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa", which, according to Barrett, "redacts the formative violence of the modern that the narrative recasts, subsequently and progressively" (2014: 49). Not settling for one name, Equiano, the narrated I, is as much present as Vassa, the narrating I (cf. Barrett 2014: 55). Moreover, Frank Kelleter argues that the "precarious status of authorial self-attribution is furthermore emphasized by Equiano's decision to append the term the African (probably meant to connote noble birth) to his European name: it is 'Gustavus Vassa, the African,' not 'Olaudah Equiano, the African'" (2004: 72). Time and again, Equiano's status is one that cannot be pinned down to one location, one name, or one identity. However, rather than read this solely as the dilemma of the extraordinary or hybrid subject, we could also interpret this as the foundational condition of modernity's self-reflexivity.

Understood in this way, it is again Equiano rather than Crusoe who is the epitome of realistic modernity.

Emotionally Equiano is drawn to the promise of inclusivity and repelled by the realities of inequality that are often embodied in relationships that are framed in familial terms. Because he feels increasingly like the white men he associates with, their betrayal is hard to fathom. Carretta, for instance, characterises Pascal, who had broken his promise to set Equiano free, as a "foster-father" and speaks of the "familial relationship he had with his fellow shipmates" (2010: 84). The ship once more stands for the loss of familial bonds, not only of his African family of origin, but also of his adoptive community of seafarers. Caldwell compares Equiano's longing for father figures in his masters to Crusoe's guilt towards his father (cf. 1999: 272). But while Crusoe can remake himself as the magical beloved and omnipotent father of Friday and his subjects on his island, Equiano is constantly struggling with the real-life tenuousness of emotional bonds that involve violence, loss, and failed intersubjective recognition.

Significantly, Equiano also recounts episodes of Black familiarity. When he talks about missing his sister, one person takes him to a young Black woman they assume must be his sister given the physical similarity. "Improbable as this story was", Equiano chooses to take the chance rather than dismiss the stereotypical conflation of "all Black people look alike"; Equiano himself "at first sight, […] really thought it was she" (IN 79–80). Later, on the Isle of Wight, he is smitten by "a black boy about my own size" who "caught hold of me in his arms as if I had been his brother, though we had never seen each other before" (IN 85). These incidents are interspersed into the episodic adventures of the picaro Equiano, who as quickly as he comes across these substitutional family members, like Crusoe, leaves again: "I longed to engage in new adventures, and to see fresh wonders" (IN 85). However, there is a distinct difference here in the tonality. Equiano not only expresses heart-felt familial feeling, he also manages to insert casually the presence of Africans in eighteenth-century Europe who bond with each other in forms that are not necessarily part of the abolitionist spectacle of Black suffering. These encounters are incidental, but I believe crucial in the formation of an identity that, in a possibly isolating situation, always seeks interpersonal contact. Equiano's tenderness and affection are linked to a construction of a form of masculinity that is both assertive and non-threatening.

Accordingly, Felicity Nussbaum describes Equiano as "a public hero, an independent spirit and adventurer, who possesses a reassuringly secure

masculinity, in its lack of brutal aggressiveness and apparent asexuality, does not arouse white male anxieties or feminine libido" (Nussbaum 2001: 62). She further stresses the importance of Black masculinity in the discourses on human rights that early feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1992 [1792]) also demand for women for the first time. The radical early 1790s, preceding the fears and political backlash sparked by the French and Haitian Revolutions, conceptually opened the possibility of an inclusive understanding of citizenship that could potentially extend to the formerly enslaved and women and which Equiano's 1789 publication already envisions. Nussbaum asserts,

> Equiano generically employs the masculine gender in a manner typical of the later eighteenth century references to the rights of man, to the rights of freemen, and to his countrymen. The plight of black women would seem to be subsumed within those of black men within those political arguments. (2001: 56)

As a route towards inclusion in a community of citizens, Equiano's sexuality needs to be downplayed textually (and Black women's position marginalised). His *Narrative* is characterised by omissions and the problematic relation to white femininity. While he lovingly talks about his African family of origin in the beginning, especially his mother and his sister, his white English wife, Susanna Cullen, is mentioned in one sentence only (cf. IN 235).[47] Thus, it is not the need for adventure, but rather for modesty in order not to offend religious and moral sensibilities of the British public that motivates the absence of his wife from the text, which at first glance might appear similar to Crusoe's omission of his family.

In the temporality of the narrative the past as a slave who has lost his African family is much more prominent than the present in which he starts a new English interracial family. Nussbaum links the prominence of the lost African family to the register of sentimentalism, whereby the Black woman "increasingly comes to represent the sentimental locus of what is irretrievably lost to the slave—freedom, love, family, and his native country" (2003: 192). While this is undoubtedly true, I believe it is equally relevant that Equiano at times is quite explicit in his condemnation of white sexualised violence directed at Black women in terms that cannot be reduced to the sentimental spectacle of Black suffering alone. In the sentimental logic of the family, slavery is of course the ultimate perversion of familial feeling. However, by offering descriptions and criticism of

European "savagery", the African "resituates the European observer as the observed" (Innes 2002: 41) and here again locality is important: While in relation to his British family, Equiano does not have to talk about sexuality, Britain's colonies are considered sites of sexual and moral misconduct—a representation that specifically affects mixed-race and Black women of Caribbean descent like Seacole who are readily seen as embodying a licentiousness that will lead white men astray. As a counterweight to such assumptions, Equiano recounts how Black men in St Kitts chose wives far away from their households so that they could not be punished by being forced to flog their own spouses (cf. IN 107). This form of dialogicity criticises white depravity and normalises Black familial feeling that is not spectacularised and linked to one extraordinary "noble savage" as in Behn's earlier *Oroonoko*.

Hence, despite the obvious delicacy in depicting a Black man's sexuality and in contrast to *Robinson Crusoe*, the interrelated discourses of race and sexuality are still quite central in Equiano's text. Equiano repeatedly highlights the double standards of white society—and here indeed the sympathies of the reader are directed to the plight of Others. This affects Black men especially who were either infantilised in the image of the non-threatening ornamental Black boy/page (cf. Nussbaum 2001: 57) or considered potential sexual aggressors. Equiano criticises that every Black man who looks at a white woman is treated as a rapist while at the same time the crass abuse of enslaved women by their white owners is tolerated (cf. IN 109, cf. Nussbaum 2003: 211). In this context, he provides the example of a "negro-man" who is "staked to the ground" "because he had been connected with a white woman who was a common prostitute" as opposed to the sailors who "gratify their brutal passion with females not ten years old" (IN 104). Equiano continues by offering various versions of the chiasmus of white depravity and Black nobility that is enhanced by the degrading of the "common prostitute". In contrast, by claiming the "virtue" of "an innocent African girl" who is brutalised by the white slavers and defending the wrongly accused Black man when "the temptation was offered by one of a different colour, though the most abandoned woman of her species" (IN 104) Equiano engages in a complex playing off of race, gender, class, and notions of sexual propriety.

Defoe sublimates Crusoe's sexuality into economy and Friday seems happily asexual. In contrast, Equiano not only mentions the sexual violence that Black women experience at the hands of white men, he simultaneously tries to delineate an original African modesty that repudiates

assumption of "wild animalistic" insatiable sexuality that Black women and men have been attributed with and normalises a mundane desire for familial feeling.[48] As a narrative of episodic testimonial to instances of white brutality, his account is both sentimental *and* realistic. Much like Crusoe, it does not really matter that we now know many of these examples are in fact taken from earlier abolitionist accounts. The fact that in the narrative he, a Black man, can attest to them, gives them a new form of moral credibility.

To recapitulate, sexual interracial relations obviously remain a sensitive topic in Equiano's account: we can notice a strategic downplaying of the marriage of Equiano to a white woman (which unlike in the United States was never illegal in Britain) but still an acknowledgement of interracial rape. The notion that the supposedly separate races "mix" is, of course, at the heart of many racist fears and could undermine the binary of Black and white altogether. Equiano also acknowledges the growing population of mixed-race children fathered by Europeans. Foreshadowing the demands to be accepted into the realm of the familiar that Robert Wedderburn later voices explicitly, Equiano asks, "Pray, reader, are these sons and daughters of the French planter less his children by being begotten on black women!" (IN 109). He also recounts how a white man and a free Black woman can only legally be married on the waters rather than in the church. The ocean here quite literally is constructed as a place of possibility for the "loving pair" (IN 119).[49]

The metaphorical sphere of familial belonging and the actual make-up of "multicultural societies" remain conflictingly intertwined, as becomes even more apparent in the recalcitrant mixed-race offspring's demands of inclusion into the national family, as does Robert Wedderburn in his later pamphlet and Mary Seacole in her more nationalist assumption of the role of the heroic "mother of the nation". In his earlier narrative, Equiano wavers between evoking a less threatening version of Christian commonality as depicted on the Wedgwood medallion, and more radical accusations against white depravity. As Rai puts it, "What one must affirm […] is the complicity between Equiano's deployment of abolitionist sympathy as resistant humanism and sympathy as good colonial policy. The one is not the exclusion of the other" (Rai 2002: 85).[50] Consequently, it is important to note that at the time such backing of colonial expansion and simultaneous advocacy for abolition was not uncommon at all.[51]

In scholars' contemporary (postcolonial) efforts to make sense of these ambivalences the unease seems to lie exactly with what comes across as

Equiano's simultaneous assimilation and resistance. Some, like Aravamudan, emphasise that he "writes himself centrally into the narrative of British nationalism" (1999: 238), while others, like Kelleter, highlight "the text's strategic correlation of Western universalism with a consciousness of cultural difference" (2004: 80). I have argued that Equiano's attempts of making himself familiar fundamentally resist a binary conception of cultural identities as well as a narrow version of political agency. In that respect, his writing is not only foundational of a claim to Black subjectivity, but of subjectivity that can be both oceanic and British in a form of "dialectical intertextuality with English-language narrative conventions" as Doyle (2008: 197) describes it. Crusoe crosses the Atlantic but remains steadfastly English in all his travels, Equiano, it seems, claims a Britishness that is shaped by his maritime connections. However, while this is often framed in a language of political progressiveness versus conservativism,[52] I have tried to explain this more in terms of scope and tonality. Defoe promotes a form of colonial expansion that rests on a narrow understanding of white English masculinity. Equiano, in turn, imagines a British inclusiveness that is welcoming of difference, but is not necessarily less invested in a form of imperial capitalism. Their stories are entangled, also aesthetically. While Black writing is often discussed as imitative, it is in fact the marginalised perspective of the ex-slave in his retrospective narrative that can be considered foundational of a more realistic description of intersubjectivity in English writing. It is also more enmeshed in familial feeling, characteristic of the later domestic novel.

But before turning to the sphere of post-abolition literature of the nineteenth century, I will provide a detour in the following chapter to the more sentimentalist eighteenth-century imaginations of Sterne and Sancho for whom slavery becomes an artful digression in their letters and fictional writing that, on the one hand, adheres to the most conventionalised form of eighteenth-century fiction, and, on the other hand, circumnavigates the pitfalls of this literary style in a much more playful tonality than Defoe and Equiano.

Notes

1. A much shorter earlier version of the reading of Defoe has been previously published and is reproduced with permission of transcript: Haschemi Yekani, Elahe. 2019. Transatlantic Postcolonial (T)Races in the Classroom: From Defoe's Desert Island to Larsen's Quicksand and Black-ish Suburbia.

In *Who Can Speak and Who is Heard/Hurt? Facing Problems of 'Race', Racism and Ethnic Diversity in the Humanities in Germany*, ed. Mahmoud Arghavan, Nicole Hirschfelder, Luvena Kopp, and Katharina Motyl, 315–336. Bielefeld: transcript. DOI: 10.14361/9783839441039-016. A much shorter earlier version of the reading of Equiano has been published previously and is reproduced with permission of De Gruyter: Haschemi Yekani, Elahe. 2016. Feeling Modern: Narratives of Slavery as Entangled Literary History. In *The Humanities between Global Integration and Cultural Diversity*, ed. Hans G. Kippenberg and Birgit Mersmann, 117–134. Berlin: De Gruyter. DOI: 10.1515/9783110452181-009.

2. In the following, quotes from the two primary sources *Robinson Crusoe* (Defoe 2003 [1719]) and *The Interesting Narrative* (Equiano 2003 [1789]) will be abbreviated as RC and IN respectively in all in-text citations.
3. For a discussion of its foundational status as "Black autobiography", cf. Costanzo (1987: 49–50).
4. Critical work that discusses the texts together often contrasts the racialised masculinities of Friday and Equiano rather than Crusoe and Equiano (cf. e.g. Gautier 2001).
5. Laura Doyle argues that "Equiano's story represents the historical experience of many (including in large part his own), and Crusoe's isolated life on an island does not" (2008: 191) contrasting Crusoe's individualism with Equiano's communalism. While my argument may appear similar, I wish to stress that Equiano is not simply representative of the enslaved as the historical subaltern, instead I suggest that his account is, in fact, closer to a realistic depiction of modern subjectivity in its constitutive dependency on intersubjective recognition. In this way, I also depart from Mallipeddi's assertion that "[w]hereas Crusoe achieves his freedom in isolation, in the absence—or more properly, the strategic suppression—of group […] association, Equiano makes his emotional attachments to the family and the nation, filiative and affiliative connections, the sine qua non of his self-realization" (2016: 205). He reads Equiano as promoting sentimentality "as a counterdiscourse of capitalist modernity" (2016: 9). In contrast to Mallipeddi who, in other words, argues that Equiano is the sentimental counter model to Defoe's realism, I highlight the entangled use of realist foundational tonalities that provide Equiano with the means to claim modern subjectivity in ways that the adventurous phantasmatic account of Defoe does not. In this understanding, Equiano's narrative if anything is "more" realistic than Defoe's, not less.
6. Despite the apparent thematic similarities between the seafaring adventures of the two protagonists, no other of the discussed literary couples are

temporally as far apart as Defoe and Equiano. Whereas Sterne and Sancho, situated in between the two authors discussed here first, resort to the popular mode of eighteenth-century sentimentalism, the aesthetics of both Defoe and Equiano is, on the surface, far less emotionally loaded, and more indebted to the empiricist mode of description, which is why I characterise their tone as foundational for the rise of the novel. In contrast to the private sphere of Sterne's and Sancho's letters, they also were more involved in the public realm of politics, with Defoe's many forays into journalism, publishing, and eventually espionage, and Equiano's later career as a public spokesperson for abolition and his engagement in the ill-fated Sierra Leone resettlement scheme.

7. This can be seen in the novel's afterlife in the shortened updated versions in children's and young adults' fiction to this day.
8. Helga Schwalm calls providence and deliverance the leitmotifs of the Puritan spiritual autobiography to which *Robinson Crusoe* generically is indebted (cf. 2007: 240–241).
9. This is the common reconstruction of the timeline: Crusoe is born in 1632. The plot starts when he is eighteen in 1650. One year later, he embarks on his first journey; he is shipwrecked in 1659 when he is twenty-seven (in the text it says twenty-six which does not add up). After twenty-eight years on the island, he leaves in 1686 and after travelling again to Lisbon to sell his Brazilian plantation, he returns to England in 1687 after thirty-five years of absence (cf. Alkon (1979: 69) for a discussion of temporal inconsistencies). Crusoe finally gets married and has three children but returns to travelling to the East Indies in 1694 (at the age of sixty-two) when his wife (conveniently) dies giving him the opportunity to return to his "colony" (RC 240). This is a foreshadowing of the plot of the second part, *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, which was published immediately following the first novel in 1719. This supposedly last part of Crusoe's tale, which ends in January 1705 with Crusoe's retirement at the age of seventy-two, is then followed by yet a third and final book which was published in 1720, called *Serious Reflections during the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*.
10. Cf. Wheeler's helpful explanation of the term "race" in eighteenth-century usage: "Until the very end of the century, variety, not race, was the scientific term of choice to designate different groups of people. […] In its most common usage, *race* simply meant a group. […] Conventionally, race meant family lineage, and it could apply generally to 'the race of man' (as distinct from animals); to a subgroup of people, such as the Irish race; or even to nonhuman objects, such as the vegetable race. Unlike today in Britain or the United States, race was not primarily a characteristic of minority populations. During the late eighteenth century, the word *race*

was used by some writers in recognizably incipient forms of its modern sense—denoting a fairly rigid separation among groups. At this time, skin color was the most typical way to differentiate 'races'" (2000: 31).

11. Carey (2009), for instance, criticises Hulme in this regard and emphasises a broader spectrum of servitude in the eighteenth century (cf. also Boulukos 2008: 76–77; Swaminathan and Beach 2013).
12. Cf. Hartman's elaborations on the history of slavery: "The very term 'slavery' derived from the word 'Slav,' because Eastern Europeans were the slaves of the medieval world. At the beginning of modernity, slavery declined in Europe as it expanded in Africa, although as late as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was still possible to purchase 'white' slaves—English, Spanish, and Portuguese captives in the Mediterranean ports of North Africa. […] It was not until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the line between the slave and the free separated Africans and Europeans and hardened into a color line" (2008: 5).
13. Hence, in many ways, like in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* ([1610–11] in Shakespeare 1998), it is in fact the Mediterranean rather than the Atlantic that is the first location of encounters with slavery and Otherness in the novel. Thus, the "Old" and "New World" are symbolically linked.
14. In this passage, Xury himself seems happy to consent to this transaction: "[H]e would give the boy an obligation to set him free in ten years, if he turn'd Christian; upon this, and *Xury* saying he was willing to go to him, I let the captain have him" (RC 29). I will come back to such ostensibly non-realist elements of the story that can be read as wish-fulfilment and that are repeated in Friday's consensual subjugation.
15. In fact, the plot of *Robinson Crusoe* coincides with massive European colonial expansion of the British, Dutch, and French during the mid-seventeenth-century sugar boom in the Caribbean which led to these "new" colonial powers increasingly supplanting Spanish and Portuguese dominance in the transatlantic trade in people and goods (cf. Barrett 2014: 22–26). It is therefore also no coincidence that the economic rivals from (Catholic) Southern Europe are delineated in the mentioned colour-coded derogative language at the time.
16. In response to the two opposing viewpoints in Eric Williams's *Capitalism & Slavery* (1994 [1944]) and Winthrop D. Jordan's *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812* from 1968, there is a continuing controversial debate in American studies whether slavery gave rise to racism, or racism to chattel slavery.
17. Erroneously, the title qualifies all twenty-eight years as solitary when, in fact, Friday joins Crusoe for the final three, which highlights the fact that Friday is not "fully" human.

18. Cf. Ellis (1996) for a discussion of the trope of cannibalism in *Robinson Crusoe* and texts modelled after it.
19. Overton also highlights the importance of dreams which eventually become true in both Crusoe's and Equiano's accounts (cf. 1992: 306).
20. For a discussion of the early modern meanings of different complexions in general and "olive-coloured" skin in particular, cf. Groebner (2004).
21. Despite the explicit characterisation in the text, there is a persistent "Africanization" (Wheeler 1995: 847) of Friday in the cultural imaginary. This trend shapes film adaptations of *Robinson Crusoe* to this day (for an explicit focus on filmic *Robinsonades*, cf. Mayer 2002). But it can already be witnessed in the eighteenth-century visual representations of Friday in book illustrations, which either follow said Africanisation, or, alternatively, resort to images closer to the myth of the "noble savage". This visual ambiguity of Friday also points to the complicated colonial constellation of the diminishing indigenous and the growing African enslaved populations in the Caribbean.
22. Wheeler emphasises that in addition to civility and religion, complexion becomes a marker of difference (cf. 2000: 260). The term "white" was used mostly in the colonies to describe all Europeans, as does Friday. Wheeler argues that the British at that time did not consider themselves a "white people", rather, "they believed themselves to be Christians or denizens of a civil society who possessed a white complexion" (2000: 272).
23. Postcolonial rewritings, like Derek Walcott's *Pantomime* (1980) and J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* (2007 [1986]), begin from a similar critique of the Friday character and offer creative re-arrangements of the power dynamics in the story.
24. Moreover, Friday's speech at times functions as an amusing interlude, which can be observed in the episode when they encounter a bear: "'O! O! O!' says *Friday*, three times, pointing to him; 'O Master; You give me te leave, me shakee te hand with him: Me make you good laugh.' I was surpris'd to see the fellow so pleas'd. 'You fool you,' says I, 'he will eat you up!'—'Eatee me up! Eatee me up!' says Friday, twice over again […]'" (RC 231). Here he comes across as an overzealous "buffoon" trying to please his master, which ties in with later stereotypical depictions of Black men in the Southern United States.
25. Bill Overton similarly speaks of "a narrative contrivance on Defoe's part which naturalises Friday's slavery" and turns him into "that unusual paradox, a willing slave" (1992: 303).
26. Alkon reads this as contributing to "temporal verisimilitude by implying a fictive future to succeed the narrated past and narrating present" (1979: 199).

27. Schwalm speaks of a "prioritisation of the economic drive for autonomy" (2007: 243, my translation) and later argues: "Crusoe's self-fashioning resembles autonomy that escalates into solipsism which needs to subjugate, or rather destroy the other or completely demarcate oneself of the other" (2007: 248, my translation).
28. Cf. White (2006: 110–111) for a discussion of the footnote in the context of abolition.
29. Both *Captain Singleton* (1810a [1720]) and *Colonel Jack* (1810b [1722]) also address the topic of slavery, but they do so in the plot-centred and episodic style of narration of the *Farther Adventures* rather than in the self-reflexive tone of *Robinson Crusoe*. Interestingly, in an episode of *Captain Singleton*, the protagonists come across a ship that has been taken over by 600 enslaved people who apparently killed the white slavers. On board the Quaker William Walter has much trouble restraining Singleton and his crew from avenging the white men and can only appease the pirates by suggesting that they would have acted the same, had they been "sold for slaves without their consent" (Defoe 1810a [1720]: 261). Here, in fact, the right to resist or Black agency is at least briefly imagined (before the pirates sell the people on the ship to their profit). What is more, the perished white men are described as barbarous French or Dutchmen who abused and raped women and children and thus bringing the wrath of the Black men upon them and implying that a civilised (implicitly English) manner might have prevented the mutiny altogether. For discussions of slavery in *Captain Singleton*, cf. Aravamudan (2013); Wheeler (2000: 90–136) and for *Colonel Jack*, cf. Boulukos (2008: 75–94).
30. Cathy N. Davidson speaks of the text's "novelistic emphasis on self-creation" (2006: 19).
31. I reconstruct his biography from the literary source here. Whether Equiano was born in 1745 in present-day Nigeria or, in fact, in South Carolina in the United States remains unclear to date.
32. Davidson in contrast maintains that Equiano should be considered the "Father of the American Novel" (2006: 25).
33. Lincoln Shlensky contends that Equiano's account is also a symptom of the "paradox of slave memory" (2007: 111) understood as communal trauma.
34. In addition to the split between the two voices of a younger experiencing Equiano and the present mature narrating Equiano, Gates (1988: 153) identifies the use of the trope of chiasmus as a chief rhetorical strategy in the text.
35. Collins comments on the contrast of the "apparent boundlessness of the seas and the very real shackles of the slave ship" (2006: 215).

36. Lowe, too, stresses that Equiano's text disrupts the autobiography as a form of "liberal progress" by employing "multivocality" and "temporal digression" (2015: 60).
37. Cf. Wood (2010) for a discussion how the image of the *Brookes* was exploited in the 2007 memorial events. He argues, "The very familiarity of the image appears to have given it a reassuring rather than a horrific affect" (2010: 169).
38. Suicide is referenced once more when Equiano describes how Africans try to kill themselves by jumping overboard or starving themselves, often being severely punished for these attempts to become masters of their own fates (cf. IN 107–108).
39. Carl Plasa calls this "figurative counter-appropriations" (2000: 15), by framing self-starvation, for instance, as the counter-model to being devoured by the white slavers (2000: 19). Moreover, Rice links the trope of cannibalism to economic exploitation, arguing that "slavery is a cannibalistic process, a form of economic cannibalism (or vampirism) that sucks the life-blood of the enslaved Africans" (2003: 133). Mark Stein discusses the genre of the Robinsonade in relation to the trope of cannibalism, which, he argues, Equiano adapts or "cannibalizes" to serve his needs (2004: 105; cf. also Shlensky 2007: 115). Sussman analyses how tropes of cannibalism and disgust at colonial commodities appeared in consumer protests against slavery (cf. 2000: 15).
40. Focusing on Equiano's depiction of Native Americans, Emily Donaldson Field argues that Equiano's identity construction is reliant on a triangulation of power relations between Native, African, and European (cf. 2009: 29). She posits, "In Equiano's *Narrative*, the Miskito Indians serve as placeholders of the category of the primitive, displaying for readers how far Equiano himself has moved beyond that earlier stage of development and staving off the possibility that he will regress" (2009: 25); cf. also Lowe (2015: 64).
41. The story of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, which was "related" rather than "written" by himself, similarly recounts the initial overwhelmingly positive affective investment into England: "I entertain'd a notion that if I could get to ENGLAND I should never more experience either cruelty or ingratitude [...]" (in Carretta 2004: 45).
42. Shlensky too emphasises Equiano's fear of lynching and reenslavement in the "wild American colonies" (2007: 120) but similarly struggles with Caldwell's reading that links Britishness exclusively to whiteness. Shlensky instead focuses more on religious conversion as a way to overcome past trauma (cf. 2007: 117).
43. According to Innes, Equiano becomes a "resourceful Crusoe figure" (2002: 41; cf. also Caldwell 1999: 270; Ogude 1982: 38) and Aravamudan

argues that Equiano "reinflect[s] in racial terms" (1999: 249) picaresque tropes of *Robinson Crusoe*.

44. Boulukos, for instance, discusses the supposed paradox of "Equiano's repeated desire for an 'English' identity, and his positive portrayal of slavery within Africa" (2007: 247; cf. also Boulukos 2008: 188).
45. Bernhard Klein similarly argues, "Equiano did not benefit from the entirely artificial setup devised by Defoe, because where Crusoe was an isolated individual living in a non-competitive world, with no one to threaten his possessions or lay claim to scarce commodities, Equiano had to prove his mercantile credentials in a complex social scenario that was as disadvantageous and hostile to him as was possible in the period" (2004: 104).
46. From time to time, there is a sort of transference of feeling in the narrative, for instance, when his benevolent master weeps on his behalf when he is abused in Georgia (cf. IN 129). Thus, Boulukos argues that the required display of gratitude to those who set him free is "coercive" rather than a "sentimental sensation" (2008: 192).
47. Wheeler points out that such marriages were a delicate subject in fiction because the Black husband becomes the proprietor of his white wife under English marriage laws which only recognised the body of the man in a marriage (cf. 2000: 283).
48. Equiano speaks of the "bashfulness" of the African women and praises their sexual chasteness (IN 38). Nussbaum (2001: 60) reads these initial descriptions of African chastity in the context of travel writing and understands notions of civilisation and gender order as intertwined.
49. Equiano campaigns for legal intermarriage in the colonies as a means to guard Black women from sexual exploitation (cf. Wheeler 2000: 285) and Aravamudan argues that Equiano prepares his readers by "discussing other successful interracial marriages" (1999: 284).
50. Aravamudan thus situates Equiano's text in the "neocolonial ethos of the abolitionist debates in the 1790s and 1800s" (1999: 237) and to support this argument discusses Equiano's involvement in the settlement project in Sierra Leone in greater detail.
51. Boulukos speaks of "anti-slavery colonialism" (2008: 179) in this context, foreshadowing nineteenth-century developments (cf. Wheeler 2000: 283).
52. Doyle for instance posits: "Equiano's 'awakening' from his shipwreck swoon into bold resistance and ethical leadership contrasts with Crusoe's awakening into slave trading and a narrative that veils exactly this African-Atlantic agency" (Doyle 2008: 195).

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