Nele Sawallisch

FUGITIVE BORDERS

Black Canadian Cross-Border Literature at Mid-Nineteenth Century

[transcript] American Culture Studies

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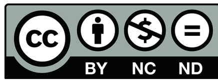

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Introduction

This book considers autobiographical writing by Black authors in Canada West (roughly, today's Ontario)[1] between 1850 and 1861 to explore Black autobiographies as acts of textual community building that contributes to the emergence of a Black North America across national borders.[2] In doing so, *Fugitive Borders* answers a long-standing call in disciplines such as literary history and historiography to view Black Canada and Black Canadian history in transnational terms. At the same time, the book builds on the resurgent interest in the slave narrative and autobiographies by Black authors, and turns its scope to the neglected literary history of Black people in nineteenth-century Canada and the "fluid frontier" of the North American borderland. *Fugitive Borders* focuses on an original archive of heretofore underinvestigated texts that demonstrate the importance of cross-border movements for community building in a formative socio-historical period for Black people in North America.

The autobiographical testimony by former slaves from the United States constitutes a form of life writing which cannot simply be subsumed under the prevalent terminological umbrella of the slave narrative. Instead, the four autobiographies considered here are an expression of the explorative creativity and originality of Black authors who use the slave narrative template to express complex, often ambivalent, attitudes towards their migratory and racial experiences. At the same time, their writing illustrates how authors wrote about

1 Upper Canada and Lower Canada existed from 1791 until 1841, when the Act of Union created the Province of Canada, which was subsequently divided into Canada East (roughly today's southern Quebec) and Canada West (roughly today's Ontario). The Province of Canada ceased to exist upon Confederation in 1867.

2 I am not the first to use this term. See, for example, Candy Gunther Brown and her analysis of religious periodicals in "Religious Periodicals and Their Textual Communities."

their intricate lives in unique ways that transcended ready-made genre categories as insufficient matrices of expression. Since authors crossed the border between Canada West and the northern United States multiple times, *Fugitive Borders* shows how the autobiographies reflect their status as versatile abolitionists, activists, businesspersons and clergymen. The autobiographies under scrutiny here, i.e. *A Narrative of Thomas Smallwood, (Coloured Man)* from 1851; the *Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro* by Samuel Ringgold Ward (1855); the *Narrative of the Life and Sufferings of Rev. Richard Warren, (A Fugitive Slave)* (1856); and Austin Steward's *Twenty-Two Years A Slave and Forty Years a Freeman* (1857), must be readily inserted into what scholars have termed the "fluid frontier" (see ch. 1) between the two countries since they continuously negotiate forms of cross-border community belonging.

This book offers to view the concept of a Black community as a focal point for the idea of a Black North America. The authors appear to be invested in this idea and contribute to shaping this Black North America through their autobiographical writing. In this process, this book contends, the concept of "nation" plays only a subordinate role. Instead, the dominance of "community" finds expression in what is here labeled the shaping of "genealogies", to which each author recurs individually through his text and into which he inscribes himself. Seen as a whole, this results in a process of community building through narratives which, in the context of emerging national discourses before Canada's Confederation in 1867, offers alternatives to a hegemonic national narrative of the white settler nation.

In recent years, Black Canadian Studies has become institutionalized as an academic field after long being relegated to the margins within Canadian Studies. To this day, only very few chairs and programs in Black Canadian Studies exist. Results of this process are, for example, the formation of the Black Canadian Studies Association in 2009 and the recently established Black Studies minor at Dalhousie University in Halifax, one of the provinces with the longest-standing history of a Black community in the country. So far, however, works of history and historiography have shaped the development of the field, even as it has performed its own transnational turn.

Few if any cross-border literary studies exist on this seminal, culturally formative moment in Black North American culture. As one of the few exceptions, literary scholar and writer George Elliott Clarke established the notion of "Africadia" (for Black Atlantic Canada) in the early 2000s and has continuously drawn attention to the *literary* output by African Canadians since the eighteenth century. Yet, it was not until 2015 that Winfried Siemerling's seminal *The Black Atlantic Reconsidered* attempted to offer a holistic view on Black literature in

Canada from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century, including Anglophone and Francophone literatures, as well as the "time-spaces" of Canada and the Caribbean. Despite Siemerling's long chapter on the nineteenth century, there are practically no (case) studies dedicated to Black Canadian literature of this time. The reasons for this oversight are manifold: the archive is still too often dismissed as "un-Canadian" or "American", causing it to fall under CanLit's academic radar. If such texts do appear, they are often treated as historical sources with which literary scholars have not concerned themselves. This has happened to nearly all four autobiographies that are presented here.

Fugitive Borders addresses this gap. It builds on the existing historical and historiographical studies to provide a literary analysis of this original corpus of Black writing. It contains pioneering work by focusing on four relatively unknown autobiographies, including Richard Warren's overlooked narrative. An analysis of less publicized texts extends the Canadian literary canon and challenges the dominant paradigm of the North American slave narrative; moreover, it continues to problematize Canada's self-image as the Promised Land for Black refugees. It is crucial that we consider literature shaped by the dynamics of the mid-nineteenth century, which affected Black people irrespective of national borders: the unrest, tension, and fear created by the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, the comings and goings across the border by fugitives, conductors, free Blacks, the debates on integration and separation, etc., all position Canada (West) not at the margin but at the heart of a transatlantic abolitionism and Black nationalist discourses. This project sets out from the assumption that the literary output, particularly life writing of the period, reveals this position. Finally, an analysis of these texts contributes to a differentiated understanding of the border zone between Canada West and the United States and how this "fugitive border" was marked by the category of race (see ch. 1).

Chapter 2 on Richard Warren's brief autobiographical sketch from 1856 functions as an entryway into such an understanding. This unknown text, supposed to test the economical ground for a longer, more elaborate narrative, overtly picks up on the myth of the Canadian Promised Land. Warren incorporates it into a geography imbued with religious mysticism, but also leaves gaps that hide troubles in the Methodist Church that would cast a more differentiated light on the alleged Canaan. Nevertheless, Warren's *Narrative* represents a bottom-up insight into black community work as a traveling preacher in Canada West, the organization of the Black Methodist church in the province, as well as its cross-border network. Therefore, it functions as a part of the genealogy that is made up of written (Methodist) church history.

Thomas Smallwood had his *Narrative* published in 1851. His groundbreaking text, explored in detail in chapter 3, addresses a number of topics that occupied the black community at the time. Hence, his manifesto is also a claim to leadership. Smallwood inserts himself into a radical political genealogy by basing his cross-border allegiance on African American leader David Walker. At the same time, his text is exemplary in foregrounding the consequences of the conflicted relationships between Smallwood and the black community, particularly in the United States, visible through his numerous border crossings.

Samuel Ringgold Ward's complex narrative reflects a multilayered identity as an international globetrotter, intellectual, journalist, and abolitionist (see ch. 4). Composed at the end of his tour through Great Britain in 1855, the so-called *Autobiography* highlights the complicated relations to Canada and Britain, which oscillate between realizations of Black British subjecthood and experiences of fierce racism. This truly border-crossing text demonstrates how Ward must balance wide-spread representations of slavery in the United States with his impressions of discrimination in Canada West and the British Isles, which he nevertheless sees as the flourishing ground for his genealogy of heroic fugitives and "the modern Negro" (214).

Finally, Austin Steward's *Twenty-Two Years* (1857), usually only valued for its description of the allegedly failed all-black Wilberforce settlement, actually presents one of the most elaborate texts of the period. Chapter 5 demonstrates how it offers a mosaic of black life in slavery and freedom in the United States and Canada West, and how this remarkable literary montage of slave narrative, novel, and travel account can hardly be pinned down to one genre. Steward's life is emblematic for so many individuals of the nineteenth century in that his experience in Canada West was temporary but significant. His narrative, among many other things, is a strong reminder that black autobiographical writing does not simply recount one individual's story. Steward highlights the importance of ordinary family and community members, and by including their stories within his own, creates a genealogy of meaningful individuals in order to make sense of Wilberforce.

A final reflection has the four narratives speak to each other more directly, tracing correspondences between the authors of one generation of black leaders who wrote different texts but shared similar concerns. Their textual community building in the nineteenth century underlines that it is as crucial as ever to acknowledge the important work of calling for a genealogy that still matters today.

1. Fugitive Borders

This book contributes to the literary branch of Black Canadian studies. As such, it works at the interdisciplinary juncture of history, literature, and literary history. Although Black Canadian studies have been flourishing over the past decades, especially, work in history and historiography has dominated the field (see below). Much remains to be explored in Black Canadian literature; in particular, the literary output of the nineteenth century has garnered hardly any attention. Yet, despite the absence of Canada as a nation-state, or maybe precisely because of that, it is necessary and relevant to delve into lesser known texts today. Such attention can nuance our understanding of the British North American-U.S. border, its racial dimension, and the community-based textual production that shaped it. Therefore, this book gives full recognition to an original sample of multilayered life narratives that have received little or no regard from literary scholars in Canada. This has to with the fact that they have been partly regarded as historical sources, and also because the label "slave narrative" has made them "an exotic species of Americana" (Clarke, "'No Hearsay'" 7), which prevented them from entering the canon of British North American literature before Confederation in 1867. The choice of texts continues to challenge the literary canon of both Canadian literature written by minority authors and that of North American slave narratives. Accordingly, the attention this book dedicates to these four narratives participates, on the one hand, in putting Canada West on the map of abolitionism, anti-slavery activism, and black community building before 1867, and discussions of North American slave narratives and black life writing by former slaves, on the other.

Fugitive Borders utilizes and transcends life writing scholarship in investigating the consequences of the authors' multiple literary and biographical cross-border trajectories between Canada West and the United States (and sometimes other places) as reflected in their narratives. The potential of this cross-border literature unfolds precisely through these trajectories, turning the by now

theorized "fluid frontier" (see below) equally into a realm of literary experimentation and innovation that exceeds the confines of the slave narrative genre. In order to further illustrate the concept of the fluid frontier, this book provides the necessary case studies that so far have lacked in scholarship. It offers close readings of an initial archive that expand Paul Gilroy's idea of the "Black Atlantic" (1993) and fulfill what Siemerling demands in his recent monograph (2015): Clarke has sharply criticized Gilroy's work for perpetuating "the blunt irrelevance of Canada to most gestures of diasporic inclusiveness" ("Embarkation" 8). Siemerling, too, sees Canada involved in important "black diasporic contexts" and calls on Canadian studies' "role [...] in related transnational fields, where it can offer occasions of critical self-reflection and opportunities for renewal" (4-5). To do so, this book relies on recent developments in Black Canadian studies that have turned to a transnational and explicitly cross-border understanding of Black Canadian history. This understanding has been adapted by noteworthy literary scholars as well and will be applied to the sample of nineteenth-century autobiographical writing under scrutiny here. The analyses will show that these texts are part of a transnational archive because they represent accounts of transnational, cross-border individuals who negotiate borders, personhood, and community.

Before devoting the necessary space to these narratives, this chapter will provide a short overview of the historical frame for the sample texts. It will briefly look at the development of Black Canadian studies as a relatively young academic field in flux by outlining which historiographical works have influenced its recent focus on transnationalism. Finally, it will show how the literary branch of Black Canadian studies has evolved on the basis of the 'transnational turn' by discussing the work of George Elliott Clarke (2005), Nancy Kang (2005), Alyssa MacLean (2010), and Winfried Siemerling (2015). These scholars have laid the foundations for Black Canadian cross-border literary studies of the nineteenth-century and thus represent the references with and against which the present book was written.

1.1 WRITING THE PROMISED LAND AND BLACK NORTH AMERICA IN THE 1850s

The narratives in this book by Thomas Smallwood, Austin Steward, Samuel Ringgold Ward, and Richard Warren were published in the 1850s, when "Canada"

did not yet exist as a nation-state.[1] At the same time, the concept of "nation" is important in these texts and among Black immigrants in Canada West, particularly when they claim royal British subjecthood, as much as the rights and privileges attached to it, based on the idea of a protective British *nation*.[2] As their activism at mid-century shows, Blacks were discussing forms of (political) participation in Canada West, a possible Canadian nation-state, and even projects of a separate black nation elsewhere.[3] Notwithstanding, refugees and immigrants joined highly

1 The narratives that figure in this work were written by four different men, a fact that might easily invite criticism. Male voices and experiences have long dominated the discourse on slavery, in writing the slave narrative as well as other forms of life writing. This is not to say that women's testimonies do not exist in the case of Canada (West). On the contrary, one of the most vocal and prolific writers of the mid-1850s in Canada West was Mary Ann Shadd Cary (1823-1893), but she was never enslaved and did not leave a personal narrative nor other forms of personal life writing such as a diary, autobiography, or memoir. One might argue, though, that the numerous editorials in her journal *The Provincial Freeman* (1854-1857) and her famous *Plea for Emigration* (1852) constitute a form of life writing, as they represent her personal intervention in the debates on how to shape the present and future of the black population in North America. This would certainly deserve a separate thesis, and both Afua Cooper (2000) and Jane Rhodes (1993; 1998) discuss Shadd's different writings and opinions. Other shorter narratives by women exist, such as The *History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave* (1831), compiled, as Siemerling explains, with considerable help from British expatriate writer Susanna Moodie (71). Sophia Pooley's account of her enslavement by First Nations in Canada in Benjamin Drew's *The Refugee* (1856), or Lavina Wormeny's "Narrative," which appeared in the *Montreal Gazette* in 1861, are unique renderings of women's experiences under slavery (Wormeny's testimonial was reprinted in Frank Mackey's *Black Then* 162-66). These examples, however, are so different in format, time frame, authorship, and context from the four single-authored life narratives selected for this book that they were left out of the present analysis, although they invite future work.

2 The complexity of this term is shown in the fact that the authors mainly fail to give a clear understanding of what "nation" means. Smallwood, for example, repeatedly refers to Britain's "best national freedom" that is available for Blacks, without, however, giving a clear explanation of the term as, for example, political or ideological (44).

3 An important example is the North American Convention in Toronto (see below). Martin R. Delany's *Condition* (1852) is probably the most prominent example of early black nationalism, discussing the necessity of moving back to Africa. Delany briefly lived in Chatham, Canada West, and would later invite Mary Ann Shadd Cary to recruit Black soldiers during the Civil War (see Shadd, Stanford).

diverse, long-standing black communities in Canada West; a fact that is often neglected. Indeed, Robin W. Winks observes that black people "have lived in Canada for nearly as long as in the United States," certainly as long as 1628, when the first known black boy, Olivier Le Jeune, was brought to New France from Madagascar by the Kirke brothers (*History* ix).

With black history in Canada reaching back to the seventeenth century, it would thus be a blatant misrepresentation to ignore an indigenous blackness in the various provinces, as Clarke has described it, and to overemphasize the influx of U.S.-American refugees.[4] On the other hand, to say that the great numbers of fugitive arrivers did not raise concern among black (and white) Canadians who had been in the province for decades or centuries is wrong, too. Winks explains that "[p]rejudice rose as the number of [black fugitive slaves] rose [in British North America]; earlier [black] arrivals anticipated this and hoped to forestall discrimination by slowing the threatening flood to a trickle. The result was a division in [black] ranks, exacerbated by sectarian controversies, that [confirmed the whites in some of their prejudices on the inability to organize effectively]" (*History* 143). The sample texts in this book exemplify the transnational, cross-border experience of many black individuals at mid-nineteenth century, such as the intra-continental mobility of Smallwood, Steward, and Warren, or the inter-continental, transatlantic migrations of Ward. Their trajectories also intersect with this context of varying national allegiances, establishing new or integrating into preexisting communities, and conflicts in such communities.

It is, however, not fruitful to use terms such as "nation" or "national identity" in discussions of black cross-border life writing of the 1850s, chiefly due their anachronism and terminological imprecision.[5] It is obvious, nevertheless, that

4 Clarke's original scholarship on Black Canada includes his analysis of "Africadia," a term he coined to describe the longstanding presence of people of African descent in the Maritimes, particularly in his home province of Nova Scotia (see particularly his *Fire on the Water* anthology in 2 volumes [1991; 1992]).

5 The argument between George Elliott Clarke and Rinaldo Walcott, which erupted at the end of the 1990s, proved to be a pivotal moment for Black Canadian studies in which "nation" and "diaspora" figured as central topoi. In the debate on the black Canadian literary canon and cultural nationalism, Clarke's and Walcott's respective approaches to Black Canadian (literary) studies have been described to reflect a roots—routes paradigm (see Chariandy 541). Clarke's argument has shaped the 'roots' approach which opposes what Karina Vernon describes as "Paul Gilroy's diasporic black Atlantic model" (23). Instead, he focuses on "unearth[ing]" and presenting an indigenous black Canadian archive (Chariandy 541). Walcott's 'routes' school of thought, on the contrary, emphasizes a Canadian "'diaspora sensibility'," chiding Clarke's focus on the

Blacks established allegiances to the British monarchy as a *nation*, for example, mostly to denigrate the United States as a Republic corrupted by slavery. Consider, for instance, Ward's letter to white colonizationist Benjamin Coates from October 1852, in which he assesses the likelihood of Canada's annexation by the United States. He holds that Blacks would never voluntarily give up "the genial sweets of true British freedom" in favor of a "a nation who violate their solemn Declaration of Independence" (*BAP* 240).[6] These "genial sweets", which are part and parcel of Canada (West)'s portrayal as the Promised Land for fugitive slaves, were ambiguous at best. As the sample texts show, Canada West rarely ever went undisputed as the earthly Paradise. In fact, Ward was well aware of this, and also gained fame for his severe criticism of prevalent racism and prejudice in the province as "second-handed imitations" of "Yankeeism" (*BAP* 226). Therefore, this book suggests that the four autobiographies here share an underlying strategy that, ultimately, redirects attention away from the seemingly dominant "nation" to elaborate an alternative narrative that, nevertheless, offers a kind of allegiance and a sense of belonging.

More accurately, all establish a form of genealogy, and in doing so, inscribe themselves in different black lineages, literary and intellectual traditions, whose upholding and remembering creates a narrative of pride and strength of black communities that resisted undoing by slavery or racial prejudice.[7] The authors show how being part of a genealogy and thus, heritage and belonging to a

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nation (Vernon 28). As David Chariandy explains, Walcott intends to underline "the transnational migrations and identifications of Black Canadians of *all* historical periods" (541; original emphasis). Echoing the reaction of many scholars after the debate, Vernon and Chariandy have pointed out that "'sid[ing]'" with one or the other view is unfruitful (Vernon 29). This book follows Chariandy's explanation that this binary is unable to encompass the "full variety and creativity" of the archive, criticism, and scholarship (541). There is, in fact, a common ground for both approaches, namely their attack of the fact that "Canada [...] has for centuries been *imagined* as a site beyond the evils of racism specifically directed to Blacks" (542, original emphasis).

6 I will use *BAP* to refer to the *Black Abolitionist Papers* (vol. II, Canada, 1830-1865).

7 The term might evoke Nietzsche's *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (1887) and its extensive influence on Michel Foucault, particularly in *Discipline and Punish* (1975). However, for Foucault, "genealogy" serves as a historical method that relieved the previous approach of "archeology of knowledge" (Gutting). More precisely, "the point of a genealogical analysis is to show that a given system of thought [...] was the result of contingent turns of history, not the outcome of rationally inevitable trends" (Gutting). This is not the approach of this book, in which "genealogy" stands for lineage, or tradition, to which the authors under discussion hark back.

community, in a way, is possible through writing, even when external circumstances such as enslavement, discrimination, and prejudice counter these attempts. Each author, although writing an autobiographical narrative, opens a textual space to insert the stories (in a broad sense of the term) of others, creating a textual fiber that emphasizes the importance of the black community across borders. Warren (1812-?) unconsciously places himself in the line of those who had romanticized Canada West as a safe haven for black fugitives, but more importantly even into a religious genealogy of Methodist writing and church history in Canada. Smallwood (1801-?), for example, uses a radical, intellectual, activist genealogy by relying on David Walker and his *Appeal* (1829) to claim a position as both an activist and leader in Canada West's black community. Ward (1817-c.1866) creates a genealogy of heroic individuals to underline the future of Blacks as "modern negro[es]" on British soil (Ward 106). Last, Austin Steward (1793-1869) creates a bottom-up genealogy not of failed settlement experiments but of meaningful individual lives—transmitted through stories—that constitute a community.

The narratives of these four authors belong to the vast archive of Black Canadian literature that comprises a plethora of textual forms for the nineteenth century alone, as the work by Clarke and Siemerling has proven, including petitions, letters, newspapers, speeches, minutes, reports, interviews, travel accounts, court documents, and registers. Although the literary output by black people in British North America had been significant before 1850, the focus of this book lies on the particular decade from 1850 to 1861. Mainly, this decision wants to draw attention to a "watershed" in North American history that had dramatic effects on British North American-U.S. relations, Canada West's role in the black freedom struggle, and consequently, the production of black life narratives (Cooper, "Doing Battle" 17). The passage of the Fugitive Slave Law (FSL) in 1850 shaped the following ten years, the pace of which accelerated fiercely only to climax in the U.S. Civil War in 1861. Both dates have become significant markers, too, for British North America and its black population.

The FSL, passed as part of the Compromise of 1850, sparked outrage and a wave of fear amongst free Blacks and abolitionists alike. Their responses to the provisions of the law have become widely known for seeing the North turned into a 'hunting ground', since it obliged "all good citizens [...] to aid and assist in [its] prompt and efficient execution," including citizens of the North in a nominally free territory (sec.5).[8] Given its regulations, the FSL did pose an imminent and,

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8 Accordingly, Samuel Ringgold Ward, in the 1852 letter to American Colonization Society member Benjamin Coates, sharply refuses "the subjection of Canada to the Fugitive Slave Law, for the purpose of making one free province a park to hunt human

above all, arbitrary threat to the security of black bodies and black mobility. It changed the dynamics in North America in that Blacks could no longer consider the northern states to be secure, which forced a high number of them to flee to Canada.[9] For many individuals, this escape represented their second uprooting, having formerly fled slavery in the South to settle in a supposedly free North. Subsequently, contemporary historiography made out an exodus to Canada in the first years of the 1850s that was accentuated through a number of highly publicized fugitive slave rescue cases. Although Michael Wayne's important article "The Black Population of Canada West on the Eve of the American Civil War" (1995) has done much to relativize the "[exaggerated] size of the black population in general" as well as the number of fugitives (466), the perceived mass migration tested the relations between Canada, Great Britain, and the United States. At the same time, it helped create the lore around British and Canadian steadfastness against U.S. extradition requests: Canada across the border was easily cast as a safe haven for fugitives and a stronghold against the 'slave Republic'. It is this myth that has dominated the Canadian national narrative way into the twentieth century.

Even though Wayne and others have also pointed to the parallel return movement of Blacks to the United States at the outbreak of the Civil War, it is clear that the FSL changed the life for black people in the North and had a considerable influence on the black community in British North America. The sample texts discussed in this book are thus taken from a period when the creation of the myth of Canada as the Promised Land was well under way. They show how black authors were caught up in this myth-making, both supporting and subverting it, as Clarke explains: authors "denounced American slavery, but, simultaneously, supported the creation of a Canadian nationalist, anti-Americanism that [...] also legitimized the repression of the reality and history of Euro-Canadian racialism" ("'No Hearsay'" 23).

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deer in" (*BAP* 239-40). Stanley W. Campbell's study *The Slave Catchers: Enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, 1850-1865* (1970) remains a standard reference work on the provisions and executions of the law. Roman Zorn's article "Criminal Extradition Menaces the Canadian Haven for Fugitive Slaves, 1841-1861" (1957) is still authoritative on the consequences of the FSL, fugitive slave cases, and U.S. extradition requests of fugitives. More recently, historian Gordon S. Barker has given a critical re-reading of Anthony Burns's return to the South in 1854 (2010), one of the most famous fugitive slave cases. Barker has also argued, in 2013, that fugitive slave cases should be considered part of the legacy of the American Revolution.

9 Of course, the North's conflicted relationship to race and discriminatory laws is taken into account here.

Although by 1850, Blacks in Canada had constituted a long-standing presence in the country, the 1850s went on to show the extent of black involvement in abolitionism and anti-slavery work in Canada West. Marking the province as a crucial spot in the anti-slavery struggle, Henry Bibb called for a North American Convention, which assembled in Toronto in September 1851, notably *not* in Boston or Philadelphia, as a direct reaction to the passing of the FSL. Fifty-three delegates, as C. Peter Ripley explains, "condemned slavery, endorsed Canadian immigration [...], praised British government, and outlined a plan for black uplift based on temperance, agriculture, skilled trades, and accumulated wealth" (*BAP* 149). This programmatic meeting shaped the discussions for the years to come. They found discursive outlet in the numerous publications by Blacks in Canada West, mainly the two newspapers *The Voice of the Fugitive* (1851-1853), edited by Henry Bibb, and *The Provincial Freeman* (1854-1857), edited by Mary Ann Shadd Cary (and Ward, initially).

Aside from the political events outlined above, the 1850s are a signature decade also in literary respects, as black authors continued to intervene in autobiographical and fictional writing. The common scholarly periodization of the antebellum slave narrative sees its golden age between the 1830s and 1860s (see Starling 1). Indeed, Moses Roper (1838), Lewis and Milton Clarke (1846), Henry Bibb, and Josiah Henson (both 1849) all published their slave narratives before 1850, and all of them have specific relevance for Canada. They are also a part of Clarke's list of Canadian slave narratives (see "'No Hearsay'" 16-17). The 1850s saw yet an increase in the popularity—and the necessity—of literature that catered to abolitionism's goal to appeal to the moral opposition to slavery and the requests of their audience. Black authors like Smallwood, Steward, Ward and Warren demonstrated, however, that they did not depend entirely on the phenomenon of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852 to further fuel the distribution of their narratives.

They show that our tendency to subsume nineteenth-century autobiographical life writing under the cloak of the "slave narrative", the conventional label used to talk about the literary production at this time, is insufficient.[10] Nicole Aljoe has recognized, already for the eighteenth century, the "fundamental diversity" (4) of "the" slave narrative and its circulation throughout the Black Atlantic, "both physically and symbolically" (2). In her introduction, Aljoe, too, asks for an extension of the genre label to include the many accounts that we subsume under

10 James Olney's classic article "'I Was Born': Slave Narratives, Their Status as Autobiography and as Literature" (originally from 1984) has notoriously outlined the "Master Plan," a series of plot elements, that slave narratives allegedly follow (153). This book repudiates Olney's claim and follows recent scholarship on the genre that has moved away from such restrictive views.

the term today (see 7). If we accept her observation, we must recognize the instability of the term "slave narrative" even in the nineteenth century.[11] Instead, it is more productive to use a concept like "life narratives," following Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson's more general terminology inclusive of both slave narratives and autobiography as self-referential writing, without making judgments on historical veracity, authenticity, and authorship—terms of great relevance in the discussions of the slave narrative (3).[12] I do advocate here the assumption that it is necessary to look at the texts in terms of their relation to Canada (West), but that it is also increasingly difficult to maintain categories of "slave narrative", "U.S.-American slave narrative" or "Canadian slave narrative". The texts in question invite us to reevaluate the importance of a canon based purely on national discourses, at the same time as they ask us to reconsider conceptions of a genre that allegedly "introduce[s] a tension between an 'I'-centered model of the exceptional individual and a narrative model centered in events that either objectify or subordinate the 'I' to communal discourses of identity" (Smith and Watson 104). The four narratives included in this book challenge what we understand as "slave narratives" by building on the genre's popularity and impact, on the one hand, experimenting with expectations and expanding its conventional limits, on the other, to meet the need to express complex life stories in a challenging time period in a dynamic region.

1.2 TRANSNATIONALIZING BLACK CANADIAN STUDIES

In the past few decades, Black Canadian studies has entered a new phase that seeks to reposition Black Canada more forcefully in relation to other countries of the diaspora, and to reconfigure its geographical areas by reading them as transnational and cross-border spaces in which Blacks operated in the nineteenth century. In his 2015 monograph *The Black Atlantic Reconsidered*, Siemerling reiterates his call to situate Canada in a transnational dialogue, something which

11 This argument is also reflected in the latest *Oxford Handbook of the American Slave Narrative* (ed. John Ernest, 2014), which demonstrates the multi-faceted state of the art with regard to how scholars approach the genre, from the questions of authorial and editorial practices to the materiality of texts and their diasporic distribution.

12 I am aware of the discussions on the use of the slave narrative as viable historical source, such as it was led amongst historians. John W. Blassingame's "Using the Testimony of Ex-Slaves" (originally 1975) gives an excellent review of the process of accepting slave testimony as sources and is itself a well-known case in point in this debate (esp. 78-79).

he has labored to do himself in the past with numerous publications on "new" hemispheric North American Studies.[13] Black history in the nineteenth century is particularly apt to cross geographical and political boundaries of the nation, the nation-state, the country or even the continent, but Siemerling is not the first to recognize this potential for Black Canadian studies. In fact, there has been a trend, notably among scholars of history and historiography, to "transnationalize" the field.

In view of the rich Black Canadian archive, a transnational focus has been especially fruitful in scholarship on Canada West. Afua Cooper's article "The Fluid Frontier" (2000) prepared the ground by highlighting the significance of the "Detroit River Region" for Black history, a geopolitical area connecting, rather than separating, Canada West and the United States. In doing so, Cooper also made readers reconsider the movements of black people, many of whom were fugitives at the time, not just from one country to the other, but most importantly, crisscrossing between them. This pattern of movement has given a new meaning to this borderland, which Cooper calls "fluid," both for the significance of the waterway that marks this "frontier" as well as the identities that are being "negotiated in border zones," as Cooper claims (131). In the article, she sketches the history of the region, with Detroit's shifting status as French and American settlement to the different groups of Black people arriving in Canada from free Blacks to Black Loyalists. Through her focus on Henry Bibb, one of the best known individuals and Black Canadian leaders of the 1850s, Cooper is able to read his life and work on both sides of the border as part of a transnational, cross-border network of abolition, suggesting a conscious use of the border zone by black people who "manipulated it in their 'search for a place ' [...] where they could live fully as humans" (130).

Cooper's article has proven crucial for Black Canadian studies in several respects. Other scholars like Harvey Amani Whitfield have resonated with it in important ways (see below), and their discussion of how identity is negotiated and cross-border ties are maintained in other geographical locales in Canada, for example, suggest a much larger transnational trend than what could be confined to one border zone. Additionally, Cooper's reading begins to question a fundamental category of the political, namely the entity of the nation-state, which also constitutes one of McKittrick and Wood's basic concerns (see below). This book attempts to reinforce these notions: autobiographical narratives of fugitive slaves from the mid-nineteenth century prove to be testimonies of cross-border

13 Siemerling has explored these branches in *The New North American Studies. Culture, Writing, and the Politics of Re/Cognition* (2005) and *Canada and Its Americas. Transnational Navigations*, with Sara Phillips Casteel (2010).

individuals and their respective lives. They can illustrate the complexity of the border both as a very real and fix entity that might decide between enslaved and free as well as the border's significance, its appropriation, and the use of that border zone by and for black people.

In 2006, Whitfield's *Blacks on the Border* (2006) offered a highly relevant and innovative approach, harking back to Cooper's idea of the fluid frontier. His analysis of the merging of the Refugee Blacks who came to Nova Scotia, especially after the War of 1812, into one community of Blacks in British North America is founded on a transnational angle. The region between British North America and the United States becomes a space for Whitfield in which the border assumes a twofold function. On the one hand, it represents a separating line between a slaveholding nation and the concomitant oppression of African Americans; on the other hand, however, it offers a possibility for a complex negotiation of the black self-concept as a combination of "emancipation, migration, and memory" (2). The process of an emergence of an African Canadian identity, for Whitfield, is played out in "contest[ation]" with the U.S.-American homeland, from which these Refugees were not easily severed (2). This book takes Whitfield's theses to initiate a dialogue with subsequent work done in literary studies in order to establish parallels to the situation of fugitive slaves in mid-nineteenth-century by looking at their literary testimony.

One year later, in 2007, Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods's *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place* again foregrounded Canada's part within "overlapping diaspora spaces" like the United States, Britain, Africa, and the Caribbean, and thus, within a geographic network (8). Race and geography become enmeshed in the contributions to their collection to show that "[i]nserting black geographies into our worldview and our understanding of spatial liberation and other emancipatory strategies can perhaps move us away from territoriality" (5). In questioning the dominance of the nation and the nation-state in an understanding of (black) citizenship, the authors attempt to "forg[e] cross-national and outer-national global rights for black subjects" (8). This notion is particularly important for the four narratives that figure in this book, as they, too, make us reconsider the relative importance of the nation(-state) in a personal quest for freedom.

More particularly, McKittrick's re-reading of the Underground Railroad is particularly instructive in the context of the narratives assembled here. She first recognizes that the Underground Railroad (UGRR) is an "embedded *North American* historical narrative," rather than a national one, resituating it in different national historio-geographies (101; added emphasis). In fact, she explains that the UGRR is a "contested" geography and one that different parties of different races

have been trying to "map and therefore know," implying a symbolic control and taking possession that accompany the term "knowledge" (99). She posits this attempt to map and know against the inherently secretive nature of the UGRR that operated successfully precisely because it resisted the forces that wanted to make it known and visible for the longest time in order to not endanger fugitives and activists. For McKittrick, this secretiveness becomes "a radical spatial act, an explicit reconfiguration of white supremacy and a socio-spatial resistance" (100). The narratives discussed here illustrate the struggle with the insider organization of the UGRR, its secret geographies, and the journey into a, mostly unknown, country precisely when we usually associate liberty with "seeable territoriality" (101).

Two additional case studies by German scholar Heike Paul illustrate fruitful overlaps with the concerns of this book. Her essay "Out of Chatham: Abolitionism on the Canadian Frontier" (2011) presents a case study of this town in today's Ontario as a diasporic abolitionist locus with transnational ties (165). Chatham is also to be read as part of Cooper's "fluid frontier" situated close to Lake Ontario. What is more, Paul is also clearly following a transnational theoretical approach inspired, above all, by border studies, and is therefore of importance for the present work. Her chapter in the collection on *Pirates, Drifters, Fugitives: Figures of Mobility in the US and Beyond* (Paul, Ganser, and Gerund 2012) continues the work of the previous article in acknowledging the importance of recognizing an abolitionism "'out of Canada'" as a condition to focus on black agency (264). Paul goes on to investigate the figure of the fugitive slave as a "foundational figure" in the black Canadian imaginary (263). Here, she picks up on McKittrick's approach of 'diaspora geographies' and points out the fugitive's particular mobility that "entails the formation of 'alternative geographies'" (263). Paul focuses on Josiah Henson, the by now commodified 'star' of Black Canadian history, problematizes the relationship between the individual Henson as a fugitive from U.S. slavery, and the collective, Henson being taken as the representative fugitive who, moreover, contributed to his own myth-making (260-63). The four autobiographies by Smallwood, Steward, Ward and Warren also speak to this conflicted relationship and are published as these foundational myths play out "at a time when Canada did not yet exist as a confederation, let alone as a modern nation" (263).

The first collection dedicated to a solid theorization of the transnational conception of this borderland between the United States and Canada West, is presented in Karolyn Smardz Frost and Veta Tucker's most recent edition *A Fluid Frontier: Slavery, Resistance, and the Underground Railroad in the Detroit River Borderland* (2016). The collection is a synthesis of work triggered by reflections

such as Cooper's and Nora Faire's, and presents the state of the art in the reconceptualization of this area as a "boundary and passageway" for Black people throughout several centuries (3). They show that "this transnational region" has a long history of contested borders (5), indeed, and that the border, therefore, has always been fugitive, in some sense (see, especially, Smith Tucker's contribution). The authors also expressly recognize the "transnational abolitionist thought and activism" as a core trait of the region (5), something that this book strongly supports as well. However, when the editors state that they are attempting to fill a "lacuna in the historical record" of this region (5), they do so mainly from the perspectives of historians, historical curators, or archaeologists, taking their inspiration from Underground Railroad and border studies (see 8). This book, therefore, wants to close another "lacuna" that such projects leave yet open, namely, reinforcing what literary studies bring to the analysis in recognizing literature, particularly autobiographical writing, as a major vector of expression, necessary for the exchange and negotiation of ideas that shape this "fluid frontier".

1.3 TOWARDS CROSS-BORDER BLACK LITERARY STUDIES

This book departs in part from the observation that the 'transnational turn' in Black Canadian studies as outlined above has been taken up by only a few literary scholars of, roughly, the last decade. In particular, the work by Clarke, Nancy Kang, Alyssa MacLean, and Siemerling has contributed to shaping the field of Black Canadian literary studies by both claiming a place for Black writing in Canada and situating it in transnational, cross-border frameworks. Although all of them look at nineteenth-century literature, the four autobiographies here go unnoticed or receive little attention in their discussions, even though these narratives adapt or challenge their theoretical lenses in important ways.

George Elliott Clarke's seminal publication of "'This is No Hearsay': Reading the Canadian Slave Narratives" (2005) represents groundbreaking work. His piece has been crucial as an overture to conceptualizing a Canadian slave narrative tradition and for addressing several critical vistas that are important to consider in the discussion. With his article, he does not only proclaim the sheer existence of a "Canadian" slave narrative, he also positions it as a genre of "Victorian-era Canadian literature (1837-1901)" and "anchored in a Victorian temperament" (7; 29). This recognition, he implies, will counter the view of this body of texts as a "species of Americana" that is misplaced in a Canadian canon as "always exilic, always exotic" (7; 14). Clarke criticizes both the U.S. scholarly monopoly on the

slave narrative (see 9) as well as a Canadian scholarly outsourcing of its analysis on the grounds of being "American and alien" (11). It is important to note that while Clarke has been criticized himself for clinging to his cultural nationalism, into which such a positioning of the slave narrative would fit (see above), he does offer venues to transnationalize the genre. The slave narrative cannot be enclosed within "one *national* literary tradition," he notes, but touches on several, such as Anglo-African and British writing (11; added emphasis). He finally also calls to find a "continental continuity between these [different] 'national' expressions [which include the African American tradition]" (31). This latter conclusion, especially, has been explored subsequently by scholars such as Kang, MacLean, and Siemerling under the terminology of cross-border writing.

Clarke also offers several analytical perspectives in presenting the genre. Some of the common features of these narratives Clarke points out reiterate assessments by scholars of the African American slave narrative; other characteristics, however, mark them as distinctly "Canadian". For example, he calls the texts a "literature of propaganda that attacks [...] pro-slavery arguments" and recognizes a "formulaic rhetoric [that] scores these texts" ("'No Hearsay'" 18; 20). Both observations have been familiar arguments in scholarly discussions of African American slave narratives.[14] Clarke, however, also points out that these texts help create an "*imagined* superiority" of an allegedly free Canada towards the United States, turning Canada into "the *true* land of opportunity" for black fugitives (25, 26; original emphases). In this land, Clarke reminds us, Blacks were active in various ways, as reflected in the "casual historiography" of their "mainstream settler, pioneer, and travel narratives" which, in fact, turns them into "builders of Canada West" (27). While he thus underlines the position of these slave narratives as Victorian *and* foundational writing of early British North America, he also acknowledges its heterogeneous nature. Yet, Clarke sticks to the label of the "slave narrative", which, as this book argues, is ultimately too restrictive when we consider the panorama of terms that Clarke himself has invoked to describe nineteenth-century writing (see above).

In terms of a methodology, Clarke provides two important insights this book will engage. First, he backs his theoretical claims with a concrete list of narratives that were written during Queen Victoria's reign (see 16-17). It includes eighteen narratives published between 1838 and 1901, with an astonishing number—"almost half" (17)—published in Canada; a forceful reminder of the importance of these texts for Canadian literary history. To Clarke's list, which contains three

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14 I am referring to authoritative studies of the slave narrative by Andrews, Olney, and Starling, for example. Recent scholarship is moving beyond such assessments, however (see above).

narratives discussed in this work (those by Smallwood, Steward, and Ward), this book adds Richard Warren's brief autobiographical sketch, also published in Canada (1856). While the present intervention can only offer a glimpse into mid-nineteenth-century life writing, it nevertheless seeks to provide an interpretive avenue discernible in all of them. This attempt entails a re-problematization of Clarke's second methodological proposition that suggests dividing Canadian 'slave narratives' into several periods. Relegated to a footnote, his outline is tentative, yet demands further scrutiny. Clarke first divides the textual production from its beginnings to 1833, when narratives "treat[ed] slavery in colonial Canada;" next, from 1783-1815, in which period he subsumes "'exodus' narratives" around Black Loyalists and the refugees of the War of 1812; and last, from the 1830s to 1861, the golden age of the "'Canaan' narratives" by and about fugitive slaves and the Underground Railroad, "mainly [in] southern Ontario" (18n19).

Clarke's propositions evidence the problems of periodization of literary canons. The second time frame appears to be a subcategory of colonial narratives, which leaves a vast time span open for consideration, suggesting at least some kind of homogeneity in context and content. The third period, which concerns this book first and foremost, coincides with the "boom years" of the (African American) slave narrative in general, as postulated by Marion Wilson Starling in her foundational *The Slave Narrative* in 1981 (1). Using the label "Canaan narratives" for the entire antebellum period, primarily a time span important in U.S.-American history, is then neither apt to cover thirty years of black Canadian literary production nor capture the complexity of genres and topics this production represents and addresses. With a focus on the period of the 1850s, post-Fugitive Slave Law, which directly influenced black Canadian history as well, this book shows that the narratives published in the lead-up to the U.S. Civil War are not simple "Canaan narratives", although glorifications of Canada as a free, liberated British stronghold figure, too, in these texts. They do not, however, conjure up a mere Canadian haven or Promised Land as much as offer differentiated, mostly ambiguous, visions of this place north of the U.S. border, while incorporating a vast array of other—equally important—topics, from civil rights, emigration/nationalism, to, most crucially, the creation of community within and without the dominance of the "foundational figure" of the fugitive (see Paul). The term "Canaan narrative" also suggests a monodirectional, teleological view that underestimates the cross-border literary status of these narratives, and their authors' crisscrossing between Canada and the United States.

In the same year as Clarke's introduction to Canadian slave narratives, then doctoral candidate Nancy Kang published an article that should be recognized as

equally foundational to the theorizing of Black Canadian literature of the nineteenth century, but which has remained somewhat under the radar in scholarship. In fact, "'As If I Had Entered a Paradise': Fugitive Slave Narratives and Cross-Border Literary History" foregrounds a 'transnational turn' in the interpretation of what she, too, calls 'slave narratives'. In doing so, she substantially broadens Clarke's proposals. Her initial focus is the significance of the action of passing and the slave pass as "a site of rebellion for slaves" through textual appropriation (433). Benjamin Drew's collected interviews in *The Refugee* (1856) represent the occasion for Kang to introduce and elaborate on a transnational interpretive framework for these individuals' "transnational 'passing[s]'" and geopolitical border crossings (435). Recognizing the mobility of escaped slaves and their "multi-directional migration[s]" as a reality of a veritable "cross-border experience," Kang opens the literary assessment of 'slave narratives' with implications on the genre itself (443). On the one hand, Kang calls these texts "*North American* slave narrative[s]," which both comprises the various movements of these people on the continent and implies their complex, "ambivalent" national allegiances (443; 448). On the other hand, she additionally terms this body of texts "cross-border" to reinforce this idea (433). Kang's terminological and conceptual re-examination of black fugitive writing climaxes in her "trope of the borderless text," which she understands as an "African Canadian adjunct" to Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s, "talking book" and which she defines as a "model of supranational literary collaboration" (435). For the considerations in this book, it is important to note that Kang insists she does not employ this term "to *negate* borders" but instead, "to *dilate* them beyond their supposed station as geographically or phenomenologically fixed points" (445-46, original emphasis).

Kang's piece, therefore, is significant for providing a toolbox for the study of black life writing at mid-nineteenth century. Drew's collection of short interviews from various locales in Canada West offers a glimpse into the complex worlds of fugitives and certainly calls for an investigation that transcends national boundaries. More importantly, though, Kang's apparatus can and must be partly applied to longer forms of autobiographical life writing that was largely untouched by white abolitionist editorial practices, as in the case of Drew. The sample texts here were written, too, by cross-border individuals that embodied "multi-directional migrations" and who inserted themselves into a North American writing practice and a transnational web of textual production and dissemination. However, while I consider Kang's thoughts crucial for Black Canadian literary studies, reflecting the transnational turn that scholars in history and cultural studies were establishing, her concept of the borderless text seems yet somewhat

inadequate. Although she admits that it seems “contradictory” to speak of ‘borderlessness’ in a cross-border framework, she claims that we must understand the border in its shifting significance “as recognizable marker of difference” and its ability “to define separate communities” (444). She claims that the collection by Drew exemplified no unitary definition or delineation of the act of crossing (see 444). What this book shows, moreover, is that the border never quite disappears for escaped slaves, and that instead of “dilating” it, it might be more apt to speak of an at least temporary permeability.[15] The autobiographies here emphasize the ambiguous—somewhat elusive, or *fugitive*—meaning of the border for the authors, and yet show how much the borderland was shaped by black individuals and their writing.

In her unpublished dissertation of 2010, Alyssa MacLean considers the influx of fugitive slaves into Canada as one of two large population movements in North America next to the deportation of French Acadians to the American South. Her work is clearly anchored in transnational American studies. While she adopts and critically relies on Nancy Kang for some of her basic conceptualizations, for example the use of pass/passing/passage, she also expands the critical inventory to analyze the texts by black fugitives (see MacLean 194). Where Kang had focused on the borderless text, MacLean introduces the “Lake Erie Passage” as a black Canadian trope in this writing (iii). Her primary point of reference is the United States and therefore, she interprets the two population movements across the border according to how they influence discussions in the United States during the American Renaissance (see iii). Consequently, her work also illuminates views of Canada in the nineteenth-century United States. Canada becomes a means to challenge understandings of “American[ness]” and, ultimately, “the definition and consolidation of the idea of a US nation” (14; 17). In this way, MacLean claims that “African-American slaves who crossed Lake Erie exposed the formation of ideas of race in *both* countries” (270; original emphasis). She also adopts Cooper’s model of the fluid frontier, which she casts as a zone of “interaction and knowledge production” that, moreover, opened the possibility of a “potential citizen[ship]” for black fugitives (43-45; she takes this term from Mark Simpson). This book, too, attempts to illuminate the consequences of Black writing for the Canadian context: the four sample texts show the significance of cross-border migration for Canada (West) before Confederation. The narratives show that in

15 See also Smardz Frost and Smith Tucker’s rationale for employing the term “transnationalism” in their work: “The Detroit River borderland merits a transnational designation because it was a highly permeable boundary long before the more formalized organization of the clandestine system of escape known as the Underground Railroad came into being” (10; added emphasis).

the mid-nineteenth century, Blacks demonstrated great activism and skill in claiming forms of citizenship and subjecthood that were far from being only "potential" or "imagined," in Benedict Anderson's terms (1983), but instead proved a concrete, accessible goal, that could be attained if not without hindrance. Blacks assumed agency in trying to realize their project of becoming participants in Canadian society and were vocal in the discussions on what this participation could look like. In this way, they challenged the hegemonic narrative of Canada as a white settler nation.

Two aspects of MacLean's topos of the "Lake Erie Passage" are crucial in our context. On the one hand, she relies on the 'real' geographic border zone, separating the United States from Canada West through the Great Lakes. On the other hand, the literary representations of this zone and the crossing of the lake into Canada become, for MacLean, a literary Canadian trope, which she traces to a variety of genres from the 1840s to the 1860s, including "slave songs, abolitionist poems, pamphlets, novels, newspaper articles and slave narratives" (163). This time period purposefully coincides both with the golden age of the slave narrative, on which she bases her analyses, and with Clarke's "Canaan narratives". MacLean takes the narratives of William Wells Brown, Lewis G. Clarke, and Josiah Henson, mainly, to exemplify the potential of Lake Erie as a "narrative of political emancipation, a process of personal transformation, and a site of literary convergence" (163). MacLean explains that Lake Erie as a site was described as both fluid and fix: while some authors "downplayed [its] relevance," others did represent "the border in very fixed ways," emphasizing the power of "transformation" that its crossing operated on their shift from bond- to freeman (195-96).

Despite the valid recognition of Lake Erie's significance, MacLean's interpretation and application to literary examples seem restrictive and too selective overall. The idea of "transformation" is particularly misleading in this respect. It is true to point out that some depictions of the arrival on Canadian soil after having crossed Lake Erie give the impression of unimaginable joy and express the feeling of being overwhelmed at the prospect of a new life.[16] We

16 Josiah Henson gives indeed a paradigmatic account of his emotional arrival on Canadian soil in his *Life of Josiah Henson* (1849): "When I got on the Canada side, on the morning of the 28th of October, 1830, my first impulse was to throw myself on the ground, and giving way to the riotous exultation of my feelings, to execute sundry antics which excited the astonishment of those who were looking on. A gentleman of the neighborhood, Colonel Warren, who happened to be present, thought I was in a fit, and as he inquired what was the matter with the poor fellow, I jumped up and told him I was free" (58-59).

should, however, refrain from easily deducing a "sudden[...]" change in identity, status of citizenship, or national allegiance altogether (170). MacLean herself identifies Lake Erie and the border zone as one of constant negotiation (see 194), and the reality for Blacks trying to establish themselves in Canada proved much more complex to assume the immediate cut of ties with the United States, as Whitfield has shown. The mere fact of a "multidirectional migration" should caution us against such ready-made assumptions (Kang 450). What is more, Lake Erie was neither the only waterway that slaves crossed, if we consider Lake Ontario as well, nor the only *route*, keeping in mind that many slaves crossed into Canada on land on ways that remain unknown to us today (see McKittrick).

The intrinsic nature of waterways invites us to consider the potential dangers a crossing of Lake Erie implied, without necessarily having recourse to Harriet Beecher Stowe's fictionalized drama around Eliza in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). Lakes and rivers might "enabl[e] the reunification of destroyed families," but they might also harm or separate them (MacLean 235). Similarly, Lake Erie is not a space that carries universally acknowledged positive connotations. While this trope works for the narratives MacLean analyzes in her work, there are significant exceptions to the rule. Austin Steward's narrative (1857), for example, opens up a different perspective on Lake Erie. His frustration at his attempts to establish a black settlement in Canada West is cruelly heightened when, on the return to Rochester, NY, via Lake Erie, one of his daughters catches "a *violent* cold" (Steward 293; added emphasis) from which she does not recover. The death of his daughter as a result of re-crossing Lake Erie into the United States marks a significant personal setback and influences his assessment of his years in Canada West. Therefore, the introduction of the Lake Erie Passage as a trope particular to black Canadian writing cannot be applied universally.

Most recently, Winfried Siemerling has made a substantial intervention in Black Canadian literary studies with the publication of *The Black Atlantic Reconsidered* (2015), which created considerable attention for the field. Conceived more as a handbook for teachers and students, it covers two vast literary and cultural "time-spaces" (3): black writing in Canada and the Caribbean. As a direct commentary of Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* (1993), Siemerling sets out on a remarkable feat to extend Gilroy's "map" (30). As a champion of hemispheric and transnational studies, Siemerling continues to emphasize this approach for black Canadian writing (see 4-5), reminding his readers that literary production, even before the nineteenth century, "relate[d] Canada to black Atlantic, North American, and hemispheric contexts" (67). Therefore, he, too, employs terms such as "transnational texts" (88, when referring to slave narratives between 1834 and 1850), "transnational" century (128-29, when referring to black

Canada in the nineteenth century), and "border-crosser" (95, when referring to individuals such as Harriet Tubman or Henry and Mary Bibb).

In line with this perspective on Black Canadian literature, Siemerling situates the heart of his work, a chapter on the 'long' Black Canadian nineteenth century, between a focus on events in Canada (West) and their wider significance for the black diaspora and transnational cooperation. His ambitious work is remarkable in presenting a wide panorama of Black Canadian and Caribbean literatures, but can therefore not offer close readings and detailed analyses of individual works. It is here that the present book intervenes. Yet, Siemerling presents at least two major assets to a re-evaluation of the nineteenth century. First, he reassesses the figure and impact of writer Susanna Moodie (1803-1885), the white author originally from England, who has made her way into the Canadian canon through her pioneer writing in the colony of the 1830s. Her famous *Roughing it in the Bush* appeared in 1852, the same year as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. He outlines her later work in abolitionism as the editor of slave narratives and investigates how slavery, blackness, and racism figure in her own writing (71-87). This constitutes an interesting parallel to Siemerling's focus on a second female figure, Mary Ann Shadd Cary (1823-1893). Given the relative scarcity of scholarly work in view of her outstanding position in the black community of the 1850s, Siemerling is right in pointing out Shadd Cary as a "transformative figure in her own time" and a female leader who "express[ed] values that are later emphasized by Marcus Garvey or Malcolm X" (99, 101).

What is more, Siemerling underlines the crucial importance of the antebellum era for black and fugitive slave literature, particularly in Canada West, which for him comprises "the heart of black Canadian writing" (67). He succeeds in clustering people, settlement ventures, events, and texts so as to create a complex mosaic. This effort, no less, to establish order in the nineteenth century also comprises an attempt at dividing the literary production into periods. This attempt, however, lacks rigor. He clearly identifies and discusses the period of slave narratives from 1834 to 1850, whose authors, he claims, must be considered as "authors of Canadian migrant and settler narratives and autobiographies, and [...] as [...] nation-builders" (87). This latter assertion, as much as the example narratives, mirrors assessments by Clarke. However, Siemerling goes on to propose another possible term to structure and conceptualize the decade before the U.S. Civil War and the lead-up to Canadian Confederation. Introducing the phrase "Black Canadian Renaissance" (97) for what seems to be the period after the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, he explains that the influx of a substantial amount of an elite of "highly motivated freedom-seekers" propelled a significant "textual and cultural production" (98). These freedom-seekers, a term first used by Daniel G.

Hill in 1981, include Smallwood, Steward, and Ward, and, among others, Delany, Drew, Loguen, or Shadd.

Siemerling wants his term to be situated at a critical distance from its namesake, F.O. Mathiessen's *American Renaissance* (1941), which had been reserved for "a specific group of male white writers of the United States" (98). For Siemerling, an adaptation to Canada signifies "a nineteenth-century effervescence of black writing and testimony that was transnational but written and rooted in Canada" (98). He also speaks of a "Second Black Canadian Renaissance" by which he refers to a renewed interest in the literature as of the 1960s (6-8). While I agree with the need to signal this extraordinary literary production on Canadian soil, particularly during the 1850s, Siemerling's terminology is slightly misleading. First, it is not entirely clear whether the term refers only to the 1850s or comprises a larger time period, given that he had set a first important genre epoch from 1834 to 1850. Also, we must ask ourselves whether Black Canadian literary and historical studies should continue to predicate its terms and conditions upon terminology coined for developments in the United States, or whether, from a transnational approach that so many scholars are now favoring, it might be allowed to stray from the path. "Renaissance"—even when designating the 1850s—suggests that there had been some kind of prior break or interruption, which would be inaccurate. As Clarke suggests, the Black Canadian archive is vast and reaches back to the very first black people who arrived on Canadian soil as slaves, but "these records [...] exist in newspaper articles and trial documents [and other media, but not necessarily in books]" (Clarke, "'No Hearsay'" 17). The period following the 1830s, and especially the 1850s, marks a considerable flourishment of this archive, but neither its rediscovery nor its incipience.

In sum, the theoretical and methodological approaches of these scholars inform the present book in one way or another. *Fugitive Borders* views the British North American-U.S. border separating Canada West from the Northern United States as a contact zone of negotiations, a "fluid frontier" in the sense that other scholars have suggested and convincingly argued. Yet, the border still holds significance as separating slavery and freedom, even if former slaves become border-crossing individuals, sometimes spending a "substantial" period of their lives in Canada (Siemerling 119). Black autobiographical writing of the 1850s border zone demonstrates that black people were living, working, cooperating *with* and *despite* the border, which makes "cross-border text" the more appropriate term than "transnational" or either national labels. The more than ambiguous national allegiances of former slaves to either Canada or Britain, and seemingly against the United States, as they emerge in the narratives discussed here, prove that a sudden

"cross-border liberation of formerly American, now ostensibly Canadian, ex-slaves" is illusory (Kang 435). As MacLean contends, "the debate about whether to consider Black cross-border writing as Canadian or American seems profoundly limiting" (260). Crossing the border did not automatically turn fugitives into Canadian citizens or British subjects.

As autobiographical writing in this book demonstrates, the border remained a contentious, fugitive presence for the negotiation of black identity, allegiance, and life in freedom. Nevertheless, it seems that the crucial point of reference for black individuals at the time were the free black communities which persisted on both sides of the border. While these communities were neither homogeneous nor unambiguous, they functioned as sources of identification and orientation, as entities to mediate how Blacks wanted to live in freedom and what options on a spectrum from integration to separation and emigration were available to them. In a white hostile environment, one they had faced in the United States and that they encountered all too often in Canada West, Blacks looked to the community as a central anchor beyond the nation-state. As this book hopes to show, individuals who engaged in cross-border life writing reflected this in their continued emphasis on community and their establishment of various kinds of genealogies. Notwithstanding, this observation does not preclude these individuals to be part of a "continental [literary] continuity" (Clarke, "'No Hearsay'" 31).

2. Religion

Narrative of the Life and Sufferings of Rev. Richard Warren, (A Fugitive Slave.) (1856)

There is little information available on Richard Warren. His *Narrative* having gone undetected by scholarship, one must plough through city directories, marriage and death records, and religious convention minutes to trace him.[1] He was born a slave in North Carolina, according to his own record, on December 1, 1812 (Warren 7). Shortly after his escape to freedom in 1845, he married Lucinda "Lucy" Robertson from Windsor, Canada West, in Detroit, on September 10, 1847. From the marriage record, it emerges that the pair was most likely married by John Mifflin Brown (1817-1893), influential African Methodist Episcopal (AME) bishop and serving minister in Detroit from 1844-1847 (see Glazier 642). In 1851, the small Warren family figures in the census taken at Chatham, Canada West, with Richard, aged 40, now serving as "Minister" and living with his wife Lucy and two-year-old son James William, who was born in Canada West ("Census"). The couple very possibly had more children, and might have moved back to Detroit by the early 1860s, in line with Warren's appointments as a traveling Methodist preacher.[2]

As is true for Thomas Smallwood (see ch. 3) and other black leaders and community members, the picture of Warren becomes clearer by consulting the records of local (religious) conventions. At the beginning of August 1847, roughly a month before his wedding, Warren was present at the Drummondville

1 I am indebted to Guylaine Pétrin for sharing with me bits of information on Warren that she herself stumbled upon in her many hours of meticulous research spent looking at the infamous 'miscellaneous' boxes in archives or unlabeled digitized documents on websites.

2 Pétrin expressed these likely assumptions in a private e-mail.

Convention. About two and a half weeks later, he joined the Eighth Annual Conference of the AME Church for Canada in Hamilton. In the minutes of the Hamilton conference, Warren is listed among those "Preachers…admitted on trial" and is presented "for Deacon's orders" (*Minutes* 2; 4). In Drummondville, he met Josiah Henson and Thomas Smallwood, with whom he sat on the Business and Finance Committees (*Report* 6).[3] The Dawn Settlement under Josiah Henson was being critically discussed at Drummondville, and years later, in late August 1855, Warren and Henson would likely have met again at the Dawn Convention, when the "friends of the British American Institute" gathered amidst the heightening crisis around control of Henson's settlement ("Minutes" 82).[4] On that occasion, Warren was elected to the Executive Committee of fifteen responsible to file a court trial against "the original Trustees of the British American Institute, and their Assigns, for non-performance of their duty" ("Minutes" 82).

Such involvement mirrors the importance of Warren's *Narrative of the Life and Sufferings*, despite its brevity and somewhat elusive nature, in presenting a bottom-up image of life for Blacks in Canada West before Confederation. The *Narrative* merits our critical attention, this chapter maintains, in several respects: For one, having been printed in Hamilton in 1856 makes it one of those narratives that were actually, according to George Elliott Clarke, "written or spoken and transcribed—and sometimes published—in Canada" instead of the United States or Great Britain ("'No Hearsay'" 14). Warren emerges as devout, diligent, and dutiful, serving the Methodist church readily for many years as an itinerant preacher who was employed in various communities in Canada West. His

3 Henson was a fugitive slave, originally from Maryland, and became one of the most famous black inhabitants in Canada West. A Methodist preacher like Richard Warren, Henson published an autobiography in 1849 with several subsequent editions. Once Harriet Beecher Stowe acknowledged to have met him, Henson became quickly enmeshed in the hype created by *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and was called the inspiration for the book and the living Uncle Tom (see Winks, *History* 184-95 for a critical discussion of this myth). Henson escaped to Upper Canada with his family in 1830 and co-founded the Dawn settlement for black fugitives along with its central institution, the British American Institute, a manual labor school. As Jane and William Pease explain, Henson was the "patriarch" of the settlement, and although this position was acknowledged for many years, he was also at the center of "[m]uch of the tension [...] generated by conflicts between Henson, as spiritual and symbolic leader, and the official administrators" (Pease and Pease, "Henson"). Dawn disbanded after 1868, and Henson lost his function as a leader.

4 Ripley clarifies that this summer meeting in 1855 marks the beginning of a "protracted court battle for the control of Dawn" (*BAP* 106n2).

narrative provides insight into his common life and work; in particular, his short travelogue and account of AME conferences shed light on the organization of the church and how it provided for its parishioners. At the same time, we see him cross paths with numerous church representatives, leaders, and black community members. Instead of being one of the more prominent leaders, such as Henry Bibb (1815-1854), Josiah Henson (1789-1883), or even Samuel Ringgold Ward (1817-c.1866), Warren represents the individual who found his place in Canada West, at least temporarily, and who "composed from their spiritual journeys crucial documents of black life, hope, and [community life]" (Brooks and Mabry 88). *The Narrative* illustrates, in short, the "shaping" role of the Black church in community life on *both* sides of the British North American-U.S. border, its "the networks of evangelical Methodism" (84) that would, eventually, also influence black writing (see 77).

What is more, the *Narrative* engages most obviously the stereotypical image of Canada (West) as an earthly paradise and a Promised Land for fugitives from slavery. Differing markedly in form and content from the other texts in this book, this "brief sketch" of Warren's life follows more obviously the genres of the spiritual autobiography and the slave narrative, among others (Warren 7). Its brevity and the seemingly idealizing portrayal of Canada should not detract, however, from the force and the "very interesting" character of the work and its potential to yield a "useful [longer] narrative" that Warren's advocates promise in their letters of recommendation prefacing the text (3). Warren's *Narrative* is an apt entry into this book, because summarizing it merely as a classic example of what Clarke has termed the antebellum Canadian "Canaan" narratives disregards its inherent complexities, such as the underlying trouble in the Canadian paradise and a genre variability that combines various established textual traditions, both oral and written, to accommodate more than the "spiritual realism" of arriving on Canadian shores (Clarke, "Church Narrative" 49). In this way, Warren's sketch is a fitting start to contemplate how black authors at mid-nineteenth century experimented with genres to create examples of multilayered, multifaceted autobiographical writing.

More precisely, this chapter contends that the *Narrative of the Life and Sufferings* inscribes itself into a religious genealogy that extends to both black authors and their use of a plethora of "religious" genres in texts that touch both sides of the border. While it does not represent an African-Canadian "church narrative" proper as per Clarke's definition (Clarke, "Church Narrative" 46), it connects this idiosyncratic genre to adaptations of the spiritual autobiography, or a religious slave narrative, as another "example[…] of African-Canadian *folk* creativity" (Clarke, "Church Narrative" 222n5; original emphasis). Most

importantly, Warren's text shows that this church writing was not confined to Nova Scotia, but can be traced in Canada West as well. This chapter will look at three specific aspects in more detail. First, it will show how, despite its brevity, Warren creates an eclectic textual mix combining the slave narrative, spiritual autobiography, and other religious genres. Second, while it might appear that Warren contributes mainly to the idealization of Canada as the Promised Land for black fugitives, I will show how Canada is instrumentalized as part of a religious cross-border geography that encompasses Warren's travels as an itinerant preacher and his true self-actualization as a fee black man of the church. His arrival on free soil figures as a conflation of his visions of the paradisiac afterlife with Canada, which does not only signify physical but spiritual freedom. This idealization, however, also glosses over the more disruptive sides of the so-called Promised Land. Finally, I will contextualize Warren and his narrative more precisely within the trajectories of a Methodist church writing genealogy at mid-nineteenth century, which represents a form of textual community building.

2.1 WARREN'S RELIGIOUS SLAVE NARRATIVE

Warren's *Narrative* is a highly religious text, literally and figuratively set under the auspices of the American, and particularly the African, Methodist Episcopal Church: It was printed at the *Christian Advocate*'s office, the publication organ of the Methodist Church on King Street in Hamilton, Canada West.[5] From the start, it also appears as a *religious* slave narrative. Warren's title, for instance, is not merely a variation of popular slave narratives; rather, "Narrative of the Life and Sufferings of Rev. Richard Warren, (A Fugitive Slave), Written By Himself" does in fact foreshadow the emphasis on Warren's actual spiritual crises and martyr-like "sufferings" in slavery and freedom. Where Austin Steward would later have the support of fellow businessmen and politicians for his recommendatory letters, Warren's clearly reflect his work in Hamilton as "Pastor" of the "Colored Methodist Episcopal Church […] between John and Catharine Streets" (*Hamilton Directory* 9). David Inglis of the Free Church, James Elliott and Ephraim B. Harper of the Wesleyan Methodist Churches, and William McClure of the New Connexion (sic) Methodist Church make up Warren's listed "Recommendations"

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5 The *Christian Advocate* advertised in Hamilton's *Directory* of 1856, where it gives the office's address on King Street (52). Warren's narrative indicates that the "Book and Job Office" (1) was on John Street, adjacent to King's.

(9; 117). They are joined by the two editors and book agents of the *Christian Advocate*, Gideon Shepard and Samuel Morrison (8).

The prefatory letters also give different indications of the Narrative's genre. Harper, Shepard, and Morrison focus on the usefulness of the narrative for enlightening "the cruelty and odiousness of Southern slavery" and for illuminating Warren's struggles "in connection with [the institution]," which aligns it with an anti-slavery project (Warren 3). Elliott and Inglis, on the contrary, seem to recognize a different layer of the text. For Inglis, the text represents the "graphic picture of [Warren's] trials and religious experience" and Elliott asserts that "the providence and grace of God have sustained him" in the period of "perplexity and trial" (3). Suggesting the "rhetorical message of the Christian faith [which] promises freedom, liberation, and deliverance from bondage," these words by Warren's advocates also situate his text more firmly as a form of spiritual autobiography (Pierce 93).

Navigating between genres, the *Narrative* also contains those structural elements that would have made it instantly identifiable as a slave narrative both by publishers and a prospective reading public: the "Recommendations" are followed by the "Preface", and the body of the narrative is appended with a "Letter to my master". A more detailed look at the "Preface" seems to confirm the author's aspiration to emulate other examples of the slave narrative. After all, the *Narrative* was published in the "boom years" of the genre, from the 1830s-1860s (Starling 1). After having obtained external authentication through his (white) colleagues in office, Warren claims to write only because of "the earnest solicitation of a number of friends" and promises a simple tale written "in a plain, unvarnished style." Warren suggests he does not write fiction but fact, and wishes his audience to understand his honest intentions free from "pretension to literary ability" ("Preface"). Although he outwardly fulfills the humbleness expected of the author, Warren in fact goes on to rewrite several elements of the classic slave narrative in the following, and adapts the spiritual autobiography to create a sense of empowerment and regain narrative control over his life.

The beginning is a case in point, as it continues the tension between genre conventions and a more individualistic conception of his story. Far from using the typical "I was born" to "attest to the real existence of a narrator" in the midst of an often absent genealogy, Warren not only furnishes his exact birthday but precisely his familial lineage (Olney 155). The pillars of his earliest childhood life are present in the first couple of lines: his parents, both slaves of one "Mr. John Warren" from Gates County, North Carolina, and "two children besides [himself]" (Warren 7). Interestingly, what Warren seems to forgo is his inherited position as a slave of John Warren. Similar to other authors in this book, he does identify his

parents as "slaves" and "property"—but these are terms that describe him only by implication. That young Richard is a slave as well is irrefutable, as the consequences of this status are played out when John Warren moves to a different state, Tennessee, taking his 'possessions', including Richard and his family, with him (7). Warren as a narrator still does not call himself slave, however, although the horrors of his condition strike readers in the first paragraph: the family of five is "sent to the slave mart…and hired out to the highest bidder" after John Warren's death shortly after settling in Tennessee (7). In this first paragraph, crucial for any narrative, Warren is almost entirely concerned with the collective "we" instead of the individual "I", prioritizing the black family over the white master and even his own fate: despite the underlying presence of the owner, his own family, and the "great majority of slave families" with whom they come to share a terrible lot, are the center of the narrative's opening (7). This instance illustrates Davis and Gates, Jr.'s, statement that the "descriptive 'eye' was put into service as a literary form to posit both the individual 'I' of the black author, as well as the collective 'I' of the race" (Davis and Gates, Jr. xxvi). It also serves as a powerful redefinition and rewriting of a familiar structural beginning.

The ensuing auction scene that sees each family member sold to a different master could easily be read as a rendition to satisfy the commodification of Warren's narrative and to generate sales amongst a sensationalist readership.[6] Yet, the author uses this instance of loss and pain to create a powerful moment of conversation between individual and collective stories. As each family member is forced to go with a new 'master,' Warren attempts to put into words the emotional havoc of the scene, although it seems "not possible" (7). The fate of one family, his own, provides an example to illustrate the trope of the loving 'slave mother' and her children. Using a scene of family separation as one of the most essential and emotionally challenging elements of a slave narrative might be ascribed to testing ground with a potentially white readership. The exposition of the cruel system of slavery would resonate strongly with readers, a fact of which Warren surely would have been aware. He compares a slave mother's deep affection for her children directly to any white mother's as of the "same" nature (7). Naturally, the suffering caused by their separation is forced on the reader, first by implicit identification, and second by the allusion to "feelings that can be better imagined than described" (7). Warren has understood the narratological force of such a scene, and addresses the alluring paradox of speaking the unspeakable. At the same time, this scene has allowed him to introduce the motif of suffering, which will guide his narrative in the following.

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6 Warren and his five advocates explain that the publication is meant to lay the basis for a longer text possibly to be published "should this edition meet with a ready sale" (3).

Shortly after Richard is taken away by his new ‘owner’, one James Patton, readers encounter another identifiable trope, the violent master. Patton fits any description of a “cruel, hard-hearted” sadist who indulges in the brutal beatings of the child Richard “until the blood would stream down [his] body” (7-8). Avoiding an even more detailed description of physical punishment, however, Warren spends only the necessary minimum of sentences on the pitiless owner, instead diverting the focus from this character by introducing two other essential aspects in the narrative. For one, Patton is set against the increasing importance of religion in young Richard’s life by turning the enslavement under the former into a time of trial and suffering. In line with the spiritual autobiography’s focus on crises, religion and faith become a sustaining and uplifting force for young Richard (see Pierce 93), and a leitmotif in his narrative. What is more, religion becomes associated explicitly with the maternal. As Warren explains, his mother, whom he is allowed to see only “two or three times during the year,” was not only a “pious woman” herself but also “instruct[ed]” her son in religious matters (8). The memories of these religious lessons, Warren recalls, are “sweet to [his] mind to this day,” representing not merely the rare moments of comfort and relief for the young boy, but casting religion’s impact on him as sustaining through his mother’s “counsels” (8). Through his narrative, Warren is able to reclaim these memories and repossess them. The brief passage creates an instance of intimate togetherness in this mother-child relationship which, narratologically, surpasses the separation and violence enforced by Patton.[7]

Additionally, the brief pause in the narration created by the retrospect on his mother highlights the contrast to Richard’s life as a young man growing up in slavery as a ‘moveable good’ and his later freedom. On each New Year’s Day, “[he] was put upon the block and hired out,” either to the person of the previous year or a new master (8).[8] Warren describes this procedure went on “for twenty years,” way into his early adulthood, bringing him into contact with a wide variety of white owners and a spectrum of possible treatments, mostly feeling, however, treated “worse [...] than [their] dumb animals” (8). The circumstance of being constantly “driven about” against his will creates the sense of unsettledness and lack of stability (8). His mother’s comforting lessons, as the rest of his family, have now vanished from the narrative. At the same time, this forced nomadic way of life represents a red thread in Warren’s life and marks a stark contrast to his

7 The figure of the mother is also of particular importance in the narrative by Samuel R. Ward (see ch. 4).

8 Warren’s text here serves as a form of historical source and testimonial. New Year’s Day appears in a bulk of other narrative’s as the most dreaded day for slaves and the occasion when they were auctioned off and sold to new ‘masters’.

later profession as itinerant Methodist preacher. As a young man, he finds himself subjected to the brutal effects of slavery that required him to be moved about, while as a freeman, he is able to choose his profession and life style. He will later be able to recast mobility as an essential marker of his life and rid himself of the slave status altogether.

While the first part of Warren's narrative, centered on his early biography, family, and religion, functions to both work with and against the slave narrative and the spiritual autobiography, the subsequent focus on acquiring literacy, linked to religious instruction and his own sense of agency, do much the same. In this way, Warren uses his time of being hired out actively to pursue his education, as did Frederick Douglass. Against the legal and socio-political background that provided for severe punishments of literate slaves, Warren describes that he acquired reading and writing while he was "with a Mr. Jonathan Pope" for three years between 1826 and 1829 (8). He speaks favorably of Pope's daughter who "took great interest in [his] welfare," taking care of Warren physically by attending to the wounds left by beatings, but also intellectually by catering to his desire for religious instruction (8). Significantly, it is again a woman who manages to soothe Warren with religion *au sense large*.

Warren casts Pope's daughter as her father's "great favorite," which explains her willingness to undergo the considerable risk of being detected in helping him (9). To console him when he is "unable to leave [his] miserable cabin," she brings the Bible to him and reads from "that blessed book" (9). Unlike with his mother, however, the Bible does not simply convey the word of God and inspire him to lead a Christian life, but also sparks Warren's wish to be further educated. In fact, he relies on Pope's daughter for "instruction," but emphasizes that she commences to teach him "at [his] request," which subtly introduces his own agency in this critical step in his life (9). Moreover, the daughter's role is restricted to what seems to have been only an initial phase in his learning. She disappears quite abruptly from the text, and Warren, as if empowered by the first steps towards literacy, uses his will to learn instilled in him by the Bible lessons to "fle[e] to the woods after receiving a flogging" to pursue his studies by himself (9). Literacy as a key topos in slave narratives has now become a means of defiance for Warren: "I would take my spelling book along with me, and then I would set my mind to work to master some word, feeling that I had accomplished great things if I could in one day learn to spell one or two words" (9).

If education encompasses both literacy and religious literacy for Warren—meaning the study and understanding of the Bible—it is essential as a precondition for his religious conversion moment. In fact, Warren's sense of empowerment and accomplishment from studying by himself in religious contemplation are soon

tested. His marriage "to a slave named Eliza" in 1832 can only provide brief sustenance. Warren is fond of Eliza as she is "a true and devoted Christian," but has to bear her being sold south two years later (9). Additionally, he is forced to witness the auctioning off of both his brother and sister to different states. The combination of these events leads Warren into a serious emotional and spiritual crisis as he threatens to break under the weight of suffering he is made to endure. He describes the loneliness and emotions that "possess [his] soul," marking him as the severely tried individual critical to the spiritual autobiography (10). Slowly, Warren finds comfort in the words of a hymn: "I could say, 'The Lord giveth,,' (sic) but in this instance I could not say 'The Lord taketh away.' [...] 'Yet how can I doubt my Saviour's protection, [...] O let me with patience receive his correction'" (10). Religion finally comes to provide solace again in this time of utmost anxiety. This realization prompts Warren to join the Methodist Church, which marks an incisive moment and the instance of his religious conversion: "[I] found the Saviour precious to my soul [and] experienced the forgiveness of my sins" (10). What is more, Warren now understands the earthly power of the master over the slave's body, whereas the soul is responsible to God and otherwise free (see 10). This critical moment, too, is one of empowerment induced by religion. Religion, too, has by now become the structuring device of his story as well as the *Narrative*.

Soon after he becomes a member of the Methodist Church, Warren hears the "call[...] to the Gospel," completing his initiation into his vocational and professional life (11). For the *Narrative*, this underlines a more confident turn to the spiritual autobiography and even other religious genres. The firm identification of his own will and choice allows Warren to assume intellectual control over his status as a slave. While other slave narrative authors have taken the acquiring of literacy as the first step towards both physical and mental self-emancipation, Warren connects literacy also to a religious conversion moment that becomes the actual focus of his liberation.[9] More precisely, he describes that the status as a slave keeps him from executing his true calling and vocation as a minister (see 11). Slavery, therefore, not only becomes an imposition on his preaching, entailing "much opposition and trouble" but, in fact, an interference with God's pre-ordained plan for him (11). Accordingly, Warren depicts the dangerous and tiresome preaching to fellow bondswomen and –men on various farms, a duty that he pursues for an astonishing eighteen years. The 'peculiar institution' continuously infringes on his work through severe punishments and threats (see

9 This argument has been most famously made in the case of Frederick Douglass and his 1845 *Narrative*, but is true for a diverse range of narratives from Olaudah Equiano to Harriet Jacobs to the narratives in this book.

11), but Warren already emerges as deeply committed to his community and, in the face of adversity, to his version of a "[religious] anti-slavery life" that Samuel R. Ward would later proclaim (Ball).[10]

Substantiating his spiritual emancipation from slavery, on the one hand, and an openness to include other religious genres, on the other, is, for example, the letter in Warren's Appendix. The "Letter to my master in Tennessee" from August 1855 (23) is an example of a well-established element of the slave narrative, outwardly providing structural closure to the text, but it is also a demonstration of Warren's ability to adapt the familiar to his own purposes. In the beginning, his letter reproduces the polite tone and polished style of address, yet also the stinging sarcasm reserved to attack the former master. Through the letter, Warren eventually performs a role reversal and regains control over his written life. The letter displays the intellectual capacities, the degree of literacy, and, most importantly, the moral triumph over the so-called master by using common-sense logical exposition of arguments. Typically, Warren begins with an act of defiance—"I am still in the land of the living"—and asserts that he has not once regretted his decision to leave Tennessee and the sphere of influence of the master (24).

This conscious seizing of control of defying the owners' monopoly over the slave's mind, body, and mobility is heightened by the portrait of life under slavery which prompted Warren's escape. Revisiting the daily routines on the plantation expose the master as cruel and inhuman, as someone who "prevented me, by force, from praying [...] you stripped my clothes from my back and made me receive one hundred lashes for holding a religious meeting" (24). Warren's tone markedly shifts to a more graphic description of the punishments he endured while trying to exercise his religious freedom, a dramatic heightening of tension which is released in his conclusion that "it [is] not strange that ideas of liberty and freedom would cross my brain" (24). In a powerful rhetoric twist, Warren has his former master

10 A vividly graphic depiction of a secret hush-harbor meeting that is interrupted by the patrol illustrates the reality of these threats. One of the few instances that could be ascribed to an openly abolitionist discourse, the rhetoric of this passage serves to illustrate the outrageous conflict—the sinfulness—between the practice of religion and the practice of slavery. Portraying the slave community of worshippers as beset by the patrol also allows Warren to position himself as a martyr-like figure, insisting that "the fear of privation, suffering, and cruelty [...] did not deter [him] from performing [his] duty" (12). That he still associates these years partly with "many [...] happy seasons" in which he felt confirmed in his work by "the divine presence [of God] towards [him]," might relate to his understanding of religious work not only as soothing but also subversive (11).

understand that he no longer relies on the latter's "responsibility to God you assumed on my behalf" (24). Instead, Warren asserts his physical, intellectual, and now literal emancipation from the master, assuming his own agency in disengaging from the master: "I have relieved you from [this responsibility to God] [...] and you may rest assured I shall not give you an opportunity of again subjecting me to your horrid cruelties" (24-25).

Continuing the full role reversal is Warren's assertion that he the former master lacks core qualities of a respected member of society, pledging allegiance only to God. Aside from casting him as in- or anti-humane for his behavior as a slave owner, the former master now also becomes anti-religious. Warren sees no signs of repentance or self-inspection in him, or the necessary will to improve morally and lead a decent life according to Christian doctrine. Using a strategy similar to Austin Steward (see ch. 5), Warren instrumentalizes the old master as a negative foil to highlight his own priorities in life, and underlines that he is now in the superior position to engage with him. The most ironic passage of the letter plays with this notion of acquired superiority in the common "invitation" to the former master to Canadian soil, and in this case, to Hamilton. "I assure you, should you do so, I would receive you courteously, and try to render your visit agreeable and comfortable"—a projected version of an encounter among equals and a poignant reminder of, finally, the former masters' societal inaptitude (25-26).

Finally, the closing hymn "When Shall We All Meet Again" (27) reveals the motif underlying the narrative's overall form and shows Warren's ability of adaptation. In fact, the end of Warren's letter, read against the succession of the hymn, rather than cementing a simple emulation of the slave narrative, suggests that readers have actually participated in a church service. The letter indicates the end of a sermon by asking "that [the master] can enjoy [God's] presence *for ever and ever*," leaving out only an "Amen" (26; added emphasis). The hymn is reminiscent of the closing hymn of a service, played before or as the congregation leaves the church, rather than a biting farewell to the former master. This quasi-performative character also recasts Warren's *Narrative* in the confessional mode of "public and private acts of self-examination and self-expression" (Imbarrato 408) that shares qualities of the sermon in its more exhortative parts. The religious framing also identifies the *Narrative* as the work of a Methodist itinerant preacher who combines well-established and sought-after genres such as the slave narrative and the spiritual autobiography with genres closer to home and his daily work, such as the sermon and the hymn. Religion as the structuring device of his narrative's experimentations is also the lens through which he casts his escape and arrival in Canada West.

2.2 CANADA WEST'S RELIGIOUS GEOGRAPHY

Having established his "[conversion] from seeker to convert" (Imbarrato 407), as well as his suffering "during […] years of privation [and] toil [under slavery]," Warren describes that thoughts of liberating himself had often occupied his mind (12). He explains that while he was certain he could only be free through escape, it took him years to devise a precise plan and wait for the right moment. Eventually, Warren casts the occasion of his escape in less than haphazard circumstances. His escape becomes a providential event, incorporating the transition from slavery to freedom, from the South to Detroit and then Canada West into the religious trajectory of the *Narrative*. In this way, he interprets an unexpected and short reunion with his wife and child, after a separation of no less than eight years, as a divine answer to his prayers and a sign of God's mercy towards "all his creatures" (13). Only through the meeting with his wife, essentially a God-given occasion, does he come by "some important information which would enable [him] to escape to a free land" (13).

The scene of the short reunion leads up to the climax of Warren's narrative, his physical escape from slavery, and gains quasi-mystical qualities due to its secretive, vague, and elliptical character. Warren does not tell readers what kind of information he receives from his wife, possibly to protect her. What is more, the execution of his plan is delayed by three more years. Only then can he make use of the knowledge she provided him with and slip away via the "depot of the underground railway" (13). Warren's metaphorical use of the "*light* which [his] wife held in her hand" (13; original emphasis) as the key to his escape connects the "basic formula of the conversion narrative" (Brooks and Mabry 88) with the popular epistemology of the Underground Railroad.[11] On the one hand, the light can be read as a symbol of illumination and gaining knowledge; on the other hand, it might represent the North Star showing the fugitive the way to freedom, in line with Katherine McKittrick's statement on imagining the Underground Railroad that "liberty is [...] coupled with seeable territoriality" ("Freedom" 101). Warren's continuous use of the term "free land" and "land of freedom" follows this pattern (Warren 13). Instead of a more politically-connoted "country," the term "land" allows Warren to both remain imprecise in order to not give away the "merciful conductor" who helped him along the way and to map his version of the Promised Land in religious terms: "I was speedily brought to the land of freedom," he

11 Brooks and Mabry point out that the early conversion narrative and the spiritual autobiography as inspirations for the slave narrative in the nineteenth century were steeped in a Black Protestantism (see especially 88).

describes, "to the land where the oppressed and down-trodden sons of Africa can find a resting place" (13). This echoes the verse in Job that Warren had quoted only a few paragraphs before about a place "[where] the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest" (Job 3.17).

The only evidence Warren reveals about the escape as such is his safe arrival in the city of Detroit. This scene is pivotal in several respects. First, it opens up yet again the narrative's outlook and genre from religious slave narrative with a telos, focusing on conversion and liberation, to an account of a life dedicated to religious work that includes several more literary-religious genres, namely the church record, the sermon, and the travelogue. Second, it transcends other slave narratives in crossing the border not merely into free territory, but into a different country. In doing so, Warren's text inserts itself in the canon of Clarke's "Canadian slave narratives" (see "'No Hearsay'"), which contain an 'arrival scene' reflecting the emotionality and the 'shock' of freedom.[12] Nevertheless, Warren reworks such a staple scene for his purpose: his arrival is not that of the weary slave reaching free soil, but that of the pilgrim who has been led by God's grace. He attributes his safe landing in Detroit to God who has guided him "through dark and angry waters" (Warren 13). Therefore, the moment of arrival also signifies a spiritual climax. He casts his liberation as that of an unworthy "sinner" who has been led on the path to "salvation" (13; 14). Warren is overwhelmed at God's grace to have bestowed freedom on him; the retrospect of his lives past and present at the same time produces feelings of "excite[ment] and [...]joy" (13). Warren here fuses physical and spiritual liberation: if other authors from Olaudah Equiano to Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass emphasize the importance of literacy as fundamental in intellectual and mental emancipation, Warren's conversion fulfills the same purpose. Religious instruction, together with the image of God's providence provided sustenance in slavery and eventually, helped to overcome his status mentally and, finally, physically. In the subsequent paragraphs, Warren will also map this conflation onto a religious geography of Canada as the Promised Land, as "that soil consecrated to freedom" (24).

In order to understand this operation, it is important to consider that the immediate arrival in Detroit as a confirmation and recompense of faith is followed immediately by a picture of the afterlife. Warren here envisions the entrance through God's "iron gate" and the reunion with lost friends, family members, and those he had helped convert to religion while working as a preacher amongst other slaves (14). Using the dichotomy between darkness and light, Warren's vision of

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12 See, for example, Josiah Henson's description of his landing in Canada in his *Life of Josiah Henson* from 1849, that I reference in chapter 1 (n16).

(t)his form of heaven is cast explicitly as anything *non*-slavery. The absence of control over one's own body and life, paired with the brutal and brutalizing regime of slavery, are rejected by such formulations as "there is no [...]" or "where [...] is no more" and replaced by notions of unity, togetherness, and joy (14; 15). Warren's vision finally takes the form of a sermon praising the prospects of a hereafter and reminding readers to lead a righteous life. Specifically, Warren's plea "may the remainder of our life be so spent that [...]" (15) enhances Pierce's observation that the "spiritual autobiography represents a behavioral guide and an instrument of moral leadership" (93). The language of this dream-like vision, while forming the basis for Warren's subsequent interpretation of Canada West as heaven on earth, can also be read as an instance of rewriting, as it refutes the past infringements of slavery and helps regain control over his life and his story.

The elative tone and message of the vision, delivered as a sermon, lead over to an instance of anti-slavery discourse in Warren's narrative. His use of the dichotomy between light and darkness helps to emphasize his ideal of an afterlife, but as a comment opposing free soil and slave soil, it also serves to refute prevalent proslavery arguments. At the same time, the opposition between the two will help readers identify the association of Canada to the afterlife and as the Promised Land later on. In this way, Warren's portray of an afterlife as "that land [where] we can sing and shout the praises" is the obvious refutation of the 'slavery-as-positive-good'-argument which postulates that slaves were actually "better off and more contented in the South" (15). From the position of freedom, Warren bluntly discards such statements as "not [bearing] the semblance of truth" (15). He spells out very clearly the gaping contradiction of any pro-slavery argumentation, which is, he implies, ignorant of reality, and expounds that "slaves cannot be contented and happy, because they are SLAVES. They have not the control of their own will, desires, or ways [...]" (15; original emphasis). This lack of control amounts to no less than an existential crisis for the bondsman or –woman and marks, according to Warren's explanation, "[a] most essential point" in the contrast between slavery and freedom (16).

Consequently, Warren also presents himself as an astute mediator between an audience that needs to be instructed about the characteristics of slavery from the point of view of an ex-slave. As an author, he is aware of the necessity to overcome the epistemological *décalage* between his experience and that of a (white) readership, as is obvious in his acknowledgment that "[t]he man who says that the condition of the slave with his master is preferable to that of being his own master does not understand the first principles of liberty" (16). What is more, Warren assumes authority both as a (secular) witness of the institution and a sufferer in slavery and freedom, which will render him worthy of God's grace. He admits that

liberty does not come without a cost, as the escape is often marked by periods of "hunger, [...] without a shelter [...], and with but scanty clothing during the severity of a northern winter" (16). However, he emphasizes, even the abstract idea of freedom in the sense of self-determination "more than compensated [him] for the sufferings and privations [he] endured" (16).

After this ellipsis, Warren returns to his arrival scene in the city of Detroit (see 13). It is now that Canada West figures within reach for the first time; it partakes immediately in the joy of reaching Detroit and of the religious significance of the moment. Warren proudly recalls "beh[olding] the soil of Canada" just across the shore, relegating Detroit to the mere starting point of a more symbolic journey that makes him part of the "fluid frontier" between Canada West and the United States (16). Moreover, the sight of Canada West triggers Warren's realization that there, "the slaveholder and his blood-hounds cannot come—a partial fulfillment, as readers now recall, of his vision of heaven and the afterlife (16). Significantly, this observation also makes Warren "burst out in songs of praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God," alluding to the arrival in Canada West as a godly sign (16).

As a consequence, Warren does not spend more time in illustrating the practical arrangements of finding assistance in Detroit or reaching Canada West, but focuses on beginning his religious work on free soil as part of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Canada West becomes the occasion for Warren to "labor in the vineyard of the Lord, and [reap] a rich harvest of souls" (25). Indeed, the country becomes that vineyard itself, which Warren opposes neatly to the cotton fields of slavery, in which work and harvest were meant to enrich another man. J.H. Thomas licenses him to preach in Detroit, and a few weeks after, he tells his readers he has moved on "for my mission to Canada" (17). This missionary work is directed specifically at Black Methodists. Although his transition into living the life as a preacher—and consequently, his border crossing into a different country— is wrapped in only a few sentences, it marks a significant point in the narrative. From now on, he focuses entirely on his professional life in Canada West. In turn, he casts the province as the place where he is finally able to exercise what he perceives to be his true vocation, whereas under slavery, as he had pointed out, his status as a slave had kept him from fulfilling God's calling (see above). Similarly to Mary and Henry Bibb, Warren sees Canada West as his personal mission field, which takes precedence over the mere fact of it representing free territory.[13]

13 In a letter to Gerrit Smith, Mary Bibb uses the same metaphor to describe the necessity to perform work in the province of Canada West: "There are hundreds of Slaves coming here daily. My husband & self consider this the field for us at present" (*BAP* 108).

From a structural point of view, the move to Canada West initiates Warren's travel journal that he had announced to be incorporated in his narrative (see 17). After a few weeks of work in Detroit, he travels to Chatham, Canada West, for ten days. Barely arrived, Warren begins *in medias res* by alluding to the turmoil the local community is undergoing, "caused by a difference about the question of Slavery" (17). Interestingly, Warren ascribes this unrest to a self-proclaimed "Missionary from the True Wesleyans in the States" challenging the Methodists on their alleged stance as pro-slavery (17). Warren's fierce defense of his church against "misrepresentation and deceit" reveals the danger this U.S. 'emissary' represents by luring "large numbers away from the Church" and the congregation (17). Warren's descriptions also reveal that this obvious struggle was neither "confined to Chatham" nor to the Methodist church, and how the political debates between pro- and anti-slavery factions played out in the religious sector (17). Warren only hints at the fact that the zealots were successfully bringing discord to several other communities, but quickly moves on, as if uncomfortable with the state of the art in Chatham (see 18).

In fact, Warren witnessed part of a substantial controversy. Winks clarifies that "[t]he churches of Canada were not in agreement on how to deal with the fugitives or with the problem of slavery" (*History* 219). Donald G. Simpson asserts that churches were established quickly after black fugitives had arrived in Canada West, but that "most worship was done on a segregated basis" (22). He goes on to explain that the Methodist New Connexion in Canada West was the "equivalent of the True Wesleyans in the United States and…decidedly anti-slavery [but that…] the Wesleyan Methodists [...] did not take a stand on the issue" (24). As Simpson shows, the *Provincial Freeman* (1854-1857), for example, one of the black newspapers in Canada West, discussed this issue vehemently in the first half of the 1850s and called out, for example, the Canadian Wesleyan Methodists for not taking a stand against slavery (see 24-25).

While the question of slavery was contentious between the branches of one denomination in Canada West and the United States, a storm was brewing within the AME itself that Warren leaves unmentioned. Indeed, Warren published his narrative in 1856, the same year that saw the end of the AME Church and its remodeling as the "BME", the British Methodist Episcopal Church (see Simpson 49-50; Payne 361-92). Simpson interprets this decision primarily as a way to leave the "embarrass[ing]" position for the AME church in Canada West to be structurally part of "an American Division" (48). A separation, he suggests, would enable members also to express their allegiances to Britain (48-49). Bishop Daniel A. Payne, remembering the motion of 1854 and its putting into practice in 1856 in his *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, explains that there had

been "an absolute need" for a separation, but that the suggestion, brought forth by Benjamin Stewart first sounded "like a clap of thunder in a clear sky" (322). Payne underlines the momentous change that a separation announced, and reports the substantial and controversial debate it caused at the General Conference of 1856 in Chatham (see Payne, ch. XXIX). Warren's narrative, with a "Preface" signed in May, would have seen the light only a few months before this incisive step, and it seems that the accompanying turmoil figures as a subtext. While the unrest allows Warren to justify the necessity of his work in Canada West, it also relativizes the idealized image of a peaceful "mission".

Therefore, it seems, Warren is hurrying to provide more positive and encouraging examples of religious congregations in Canada West. Via London, Ontario, he arrives in Hamilton at the end of November. As he travels through the different towns and villages, he connects with the church representatives *sur place* and begins to establish his professional and personal network. For example, Noah C.W. Cannon and J. Taylor in London still seem to face "differences…among our people," but the state of the community in Hamilton is "more healthy" (18).[14] Hamilton marks an incisive stop for Warren as he spends the first holiday season and New Year's as a free man in Canada West. He takes his time to praise the province as a haven that fosters self-esteem and humanity, where he feels "esteemed as a man among men" (18). He indulges in the common comparison to the slavery-ridden United States in a brief verse centering on the images of the (British) lion welcoming the fugitive and the claw- and therefore powerless (American) eagle (see 18).

Warren suspends the narration to elaborate on this praise of Canada West in an idealized accolade that brings the connection to his initial scene of the afterlife full circle (see above) by turning Canada into a 'heaven on earth': he describes unmolested religious worship and the wholeness of families, foregrounding essential traits such as togetherness, union, and harmony. Warren uses familiar images of domesticity to underline a blissful communion under "our own vine and fig-tree" and around the "family altar" (18).[15] In turn, evoking the notions of freedom, self-determination, and security serves to construct the passage as an

14 Cannon and—very likely—Jeremiah Taylor were both itinerant preachers in the AME Church in Canada, like Warren. Both appear frequently in Payne's *History*, which allows tracing their appointments and involvements in the church. For example, Payne mentions that Cannon was not only a preacher but also an aspiring author, having penned several books (Payne 102; 160).

15 Likely a paraphrase of Micah 4.4: "Each of them will sit under his vine And under his fig tree, With no one to make them afraid, For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken."

explicit *ex negativo* foil of the southern United States. In Canada West, he seems to find precisely what the South had denied him and his fellow-bondsmen—the place is marked by the absence of harassment, fear, slave-traders, the lash, and chastisement (18-19). Instead, Canada West becomes the place where it is allowed to "[make] a great noise" freely and undisturbedly, representing the "prayer and praise" of the adult community as well as the "voices of the little ones" (18, 19). With all connotations attached to the regaining and finding one's voice, Canada West is cast as the realm where one also regains one's identity as a self-determined Christian. This enforcement of the earthly Canaan and the Promised Land seems yet awkwardly situated as a digression from Warren's travelogue, as if to overemphasize these positive qualities in the face of a brewing storm of disunion.

As Warren moves on to St. Catharines, an important "distribution center for many of the fugitives who [arrived in the 1830s and 1840s]," his impression of community work in town are still imbued with the tone of the previous passage (Simpson 195). He praises the visible "unity, and prosperity" as a proof of successful "labors of both pastor and people" (Warren 19). All the while, St. Catharines had a reputation for bad race relations and a significant amount of prejudice against black people. For instance, when Samuel R. Ward visited the town, he was relieved that "the prejudice against our people, (sic) was not so strong, so prevalent nor so unprovoked as we had thought, from what we had heard" (*BAP* 257). It is difficult to image that Warren should not have been aware of this.[16] Instead, Warren reports similar successes for the communities in Niagara, St. David's, Drummondville, Chippewa, all of which he passes on his way to Buffalo. In mentioning these diverse places, Warren also functions as a chronicler of the expanding black churches in Canada West, and thus comes much closer to the "church historian" who combines "community genealogy[,…] folk theology and transcribed oral history" (Clarke, "Church Narrative" 46): "At all these places I found our people had organized themselves into Churches, and were striving to do good to [...] their brethren who had escaped from bondage" (Warren 19). Warren's visible mobility from settlement to settlement, together with his positive observations, creates a dynamic within the narrative that emanates from vivid local black communities in motion as they organize their community life through the institution of the church.[17] As Simpson puts it, "the church occupied

16 The proceedings of an "Indignation Meeting" of Blacks in town (1854) attests to discrimination that black people had to undergo (see *BAP* doc. 47). The meeting was called in reaction to exclusion of black citizens from public coaches and two hotels.

17 Warren's travelogue interlocks with a number of accounts from the 1830s onward, by both black and white abolitionists touring Canada West and investigating the status of black communities in the province. Such accounts exist by Benjamin Lundy (1832),

a key position in helping blacks adjust to the demands of the Canadian society," one of the crucial tasks being, for example, the assistance to incoming fugitive slaves (21).

As Warren describes his journey to Buffalo, his narrative contributes to illuminating "nineteenth-century Canada [as a] transnational[...] border zone [...] that generated numerous border-crossing stories" (Siemerling 129). Warren almost casually mentions what is *de facto* a border crossing back into the United States, where he describes the revival under Rev. Wires that is taking place as he arrives (see 19). Warren joins Wires in conducting the meeting and the conversion of believers, which helps to show that the church network still spanned across borders and that Warren as itinerant preacher navigated within a space primarily determined by his work for the church. From Buffalo, he returns to St. Catharines in Canada West for the Quarterly Meeting of Alexander Helmsley at the beginning of March, only to cross back into Buffalo to substitute for the local preacher (see 19). Warren narrates all of these trajectories within the brief span of one paragraph of his cross-border travelogue, and it seems that the frontier here is indeed fluid in the sense that it does not seem to represent any obstacle for Warren and his work. His tone is affirmative and positive ("The meeting [in St. Catharines] was a good one"; "I received an invitation to go back to Buffalo," 19), although he does not mention any further details about his mode of travel, the speed or even the circumstances in which moves.

The impression of an entirely "fluid" frontier, however, is more complex. In fact, Warren had made a point of establishing a very concrete ideological as well as political border between the United States and Canada West only just before he related the first move back to Buffalo. Although as an author, he is more concerned with reproducing his travelogue, it seems contradictory that he should travel back and forth so easily and unreservedly between two opposite political—and in view of the turmoil within the church, not least spiritual—entities. As Warren re-crosses into Amherstburg, Canada West, he attends the celebrations for August 1, "the Anniversary of the Emancipation of Slaves in the West Indies" (20). Warren is a witness of the "great deal of enthusiasm" on the part of the black community, for whom this day had become the symbolic anti-Fourth-of-July and the day of celebrating freedom (20). At the same time, this is also an opportunity for Warren to reject proslavery arguments and proves to his readers that black people are well

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Samuel R. Ward (1853) Benjamin Drew (1856), William Wells Brown (1861), or Samuel Gridley Howe (1863). Although the reports are seldom critical in the sense that they tend to idealize Canada West and the freedom it offers, they do record, as Siemerling claims, "black economic and emotional geographies" (121). The genre figures in more detail in chapter 4.

able to “appreciate the blessings of freedom” (20). He connects his assertion to a sharp side remark on the United States which denied them “the birthright of every son and daughter of Adam” (20). Warren takes up the polemic binary opposition between the United States and Great Britain, calling the latter the only one who has guaranteed freedom to Blacks “on the *American* continent” (20; added emphasis). The border thus signals yet a palpable difference between the slave Republic and Canada West as a stand-in for the Empire.

When the Ohio conference appoints him to Ypsilanti, Michigan, Warren for the first time gently refuses the decision. He underlines that “[his] desire was to go to Canada” (21). Following Noah Cannon’s suggestion, Warren becomes an official “Travelling Preacher in the A.M.E. Church *in Canada*,” starting out in the Amherstburg Circuit (21; added emphasis). Consequently, the latter part of his travelogue lists the various Methodist conferences in the province, together with Warren’s various appointments, detailing his salary, and the number of conversions he was able to perform. The focus is now on distilling his work efforts, such as his successful increase of community membership in the Chatham Circuit, where he is appointed by the Toronto Conference in 1850, and where he notes “an increase during the year of 120 members” by 1851 (22). Warren also gradually progresses in the church hierarchy. At the annual conference at Hamilton in August 1847, he is made a deacon by Bishop Quinn (21). At London in 1851, Warren is “recognized” as an Elder (22). The first half of the 1850s, following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, sees Warren appointed to all major towns and settlements in Canada West boasting a considerable share of black inhabitants, among which are Chatham, St. Catharines (1852), Peel (probably 1853), and Toronto (1854), together with the Circuits of Amherstburg, Windsor, and Dawn.[18] Having reached the actual time of his writing, Warren indicates to be stationed in Hamilton, but also mentions his “ill health” (23). Indeed, although he has established himself as a diligent and dedicated preacher, he does reveal to be laboring under difficult conditions: he performs his duty to all his communities on foot, and “travelled [one] year [...] over 1200 miles,” visiting each of the communities “once in every month” and preaching “every Sabbath” (21).

In sum, the travelogue reflects best Warren’s participation in the bottom-up organization of black communities in Canada West in the 1840s and the first half of the 1850s. Warren’s concluding paragraph, a recapitulation of his time in Canada West and an evaluation of his life as a “Christian Minister,” highlights these years as “the happiest in [his] life” (23). He casts Canada West as the place

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18 For a detailed account of these accounts, see Winks. For a particular focus on education in Canada West and its various black communities, see Simpson.

of his professional accomplishments characterized by the "kindest of treatment, not only from people of my own color, but from *nearly all*" (23; added emphasis). He closes also by evoking the religious frame of his Canadian enterprise, whose success was crowned by God's help (23). In this way, Warren also comments on his "anti-slavery life" (Erica Ball), a life dedicated to his community and his work that, by preaching the gospel to his fellow-slaves and continuing the mission in freedom, deserves to be seen as a form of anti-slavery activism.

At the same time that he is thus reflecting on his vocation as a Christian travelling minister, he also relies on the image of the downtrodden, illiterate fugitive: "I have had much to contend with, being unlettered and unlearned" (23). While this ignores his claim "written by himself" and the episode of acquiring literacy as a young man, his statement also brings to a close the use of classic slave narrative elements. The 'downtrodden fugitive' in Canada as a staple character seems to resonate with the narrative's other attempts to conform to the genre (see above). However, it might signal, too, that Warren expresses belonging to the black community of fugitives and believers who have somehow succeeded in Canada West where "[t]he Lord has done much for my people" (23). In this way, his final words return to the image of the Promised Land and the afterlife that Warren had connected to the province: he inscribes his wish to lead a 'proper' life as a Christian on earth to assure a "home in Heaven" into his chosen ground, Canada West (23).

2.3 GENEALOGIES

Looking at Warren's *Narrative of the Life and Sufferings* as a whole, this final section seeks to place it in a genealogy of black (Methodist) church writing, and to open the dialogue with what Clarke has called the "church narrative" as an original "contribution the African-Canadian literary canon" ("Church Narrative 46). Consider, for one, how Warren places himself within the network of black Methodist preachers in Canada West and the Northern United States who helped shape the church's community work. If Warren's travelogue at first glance seems repetitive and appears as a sequence of matter-of-fact descriptive paragraphs, readers gain insight into the appointment and service structure of the black Methodist church: for example, when Warren returns to Detroit, where he is appointed to by the Ohio Conference as a substitute for Rev. Thomas, he reports both who succeeded Thomas at Detroit (Rev. Edward Davis) and that Rev. Brown was to be the "School Teacher at the same place" (20). Warren also chronicles the various annual conferences, which constituted core organizational meetings of the

church, providing his point of view and showing where he fit in within this organizational structure. Giving names, places, functions, salaries, is one way for Warren to establish and inscribe himself in a church tradition, when other narrators such as Austin Steward focused more on genealogies of meaningful individuals or, as in Smallwood's case, political activist genealogies. It is also Warren's way of contributing to community building via texts, which all of the authors in this book pursue in different ways.

In doing so, Warren reproduces elements of a church record, a church narrative as "[the] histor[y] of [one] specific church[…]" (Clarke, "Church Narrative" 46), that he embeds in the larger structure of his *Narrative*. This record evokes a black (Methodist) church history and historiography. The travelogue, in fact, reflects Clarke's "casual historiography" and is a forerunner of what would later span into full-fledged histories, such as Bishop Daniel Payne's *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (1891) and Peter McKerrow's *A Brief History of the Coloured Baptists of Nova Scotia* (1895) (Clarke, "'No Hearsay'" 37). This historiography, however, is of value "as *literature*" (Clarke, "Church Narrative" 46; original emphasis), and Warren's narrative is proof of a literary imaginary that is able to incorporate it. Writing an autobiographical narrative in the 1850s, Warren has a plethora of genres available to accommodate his multifaceted experience. Most importantly, the *Narrative* captures precisely the "'grassroots'", bottom-up story of Clarke's church narratives (47), not a top-down, elitist interpretation. This makes Warren unique among the texts in this book. Although he dwells extensively on the myth of the Promised Land, which the following chapters work with and against, his narrative produces precisely one of the "folk creations" that Clarke insists need to be included in a black Canadian literary canon and that deserve our critical attention (Clarke, "Church Narrative" 57).

If this chapter argues that Warren's *Narrative* is, however, not solely and properly a church narrative in Clarke's terms, it means that we can meaningfully extend this genre, temporally and geographically, through the lens of this particular text. In terms of space, we can clearly connect Clarke's work on the church narratives of maritime Nova Scotia, or Africadia, to Warren's *Narrative,* which covers Canada West, or communities in today's Ontario. Temporally, Warren continues the early black (Methodist, Baptist) religious writings from the eighteenth century that took the forms of the spiritual autobiography and the slave narrative. Clarke, in the "Primer of African-Canadian Literature" (2002), Siemerling (2015), and others draw attention to the accounts that emerged in Nova Scotia at the end of the eighteenth century. If we look at the narratives by Methodist minister John Marrant (1785), Baptist Loyalist David George (1793), and Loyalist preacher Boston King (1798) as "related to important aspects of black

Nova Scotian culture of the period [and revelatory of] the lives and thoughts of these ministers [...] in their daily work in Nova Scotia" (Siemerling 53), we must recognize the overlap with Warren, who nevertheless lived and wrote in decades later and in a different province.

Marrant's *Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings*, *An Account of the Life of Mr. David George,* and *Memoirs of the Life of Boston King*, are noteworthy accounts that have been acknowledged for their play with genre, for they are captivity narratives, spiritual autobiographies, early transatlantic texts of conversion, migration, and testimonies of "energetic ministries" (Brooks and Mabry 85). Here, Warren figures as an important echo, adapting various genres to his particular needs. While the accounts of the eighteenth century relate mission and community building efforts in Africa, Warren is involved in such efforts in Canada West. Signs of continuing a tradition firmly established in early Nova Scotia also appear when we look at Warren in relation to the figure of Baptist minister Richard Preston (1791 or 1792—1861), founding father of the African Baptist Association of Nova Scotia and the African Abolition Society, who has emerged as their "First Saint" through the various church narratives that exist for communities in Nova Scotia (Clarke, "Church Narrative" 53).

Though none such "hagiography" has been bestowed on Warren (53), a couple of aspects seem to connect the two figures. For example, Clarke observes that all narratives stress "the godly working of fate" in Preston's life (53). For Warren's narrative persona, too, God's providence is a driving force that is instrumental in his liberation, but also in his work. In particular, it is important to observe the focus of the church historians on the episode of Preston's chance reunion with his mother, on free soil in Nova Scotia (hence his choice of name, Preston), not least as a divine intervention. The "'miraculous maternal reunion" (54) is reminiscent of Warren's insistence on the importance of his mother as a religious mentor who instilled in him an interest in religion and its sustaining power. She represents the "pious woman" who begins to transfer this interest to her son during their rare meetings (Warren 8). Later, the decisive piece of information for his escape would come to him from his wife, another sign of God's mercy towards the believer. Most powerfully, though, Preston and Warren, contemporaries no less, come together as itinerant preachers, involved in community organization "as sleeves rolled-up, 'hands-on'" figures who had risen from slavery to free men of the church (Clarke, "Church Narrative" 55).

Reflecting on Clarke's assessment of the Nova Scotian church narrative and its leading figures, we might think of a kind of genealogy from early Black Atlantic writers such as John Marrant—the "immediate Afro-Christian literary antecedent" of Preston's story (53)—, Boston King, and David George, to literary

imaginations that bring forth figures like Richard Preston in Nova Scotia, and individuals like Richard Warren who labored for the black churches and communities in different provinces of the fluid frontier. To this, we should add the imaginations of Walker and Smallwood who have identified founder and activist Richard Allen as a major part of a black (Methodist) church heritage. Such genealogies pay tribute to the literary, imaginative, spiritual, as well as community-based work of such figures. Even if Warren's *Narrative* is not a well-rounded text and remains inconclusive on the subcurrent troubles it only partly addresses, it elucidates "[t]he beauty of the African-Canadian and Africadian church narratives […, i.e.] the desires of ex-slaves to enjoy four L's (sic): Liberty, Literacy, Land, and 'Ligion" (56).

3. Radicalism

A Narrative of Thomas Smallwood (Coloured Man) (1851)

Thomas Smallwood was born into slavery in 1801 in Maryland. Free at around the age of 30, he became one of the founders of the Underground Railroad in Washington, D.C., together with abolitionist Charles T. Torrey (1813-1846). They organized and maintained activities in the city in what Stanley Harrold has called a "biracial" and "radical community of action," before he settled in Canada West in 1843 with his wife and five children (65, 93).[1] From then on, he led a restless cross-border life marked by his activity in and for the black community in Canada West and the United States. As such, Smallwood became involved in the political work that was put into place by Blacks in Canada West including, for example, conventions, debates, petitions, and the publication of newspapers. In spite of this involvement, Smallwood has sunk into oblivion until recently, with (historical and literary) scholarship having focused instead on other towering leaders such as Henry and Mary Bibb, Mary Ann Shadd Cary, or Samuel Ringgold Ward, for example. It seems true that Smallwood was a relatively difficult character with a certain disregard for authority, which brought him into conflict with several such leading figures.[2] By the same token, this constitutes one of his foremost qualities, i.e. the will to speak his mind in different public settings such as in court, in church, and at meetings. It seems that Smallwood aspired to a position among these leaders, both through his constant engagement for and in the black

1 Harrold's chapter on the Underground Railroad in Washington, D.C., is in fact largely based on information contained in Smallwood's narrative. A report by Hilary Russell is informative on Smallwood's family: He married his wife Elizabeth Anderson in 1836, and all their five children—Thomas, Catharine, Susan, William, and Celestine—were apparently born free (Russell, nn 56, 57, Part V.a, n.pag.).

2 For example, Almonte mentions that Smallwood was one of the shareholders who sued the *Provincial Freeman* (see 11).

communities in the United States and Canada West and, most fiercely, through his *Narrative* of 1851, which engages in urgent debates of his time.

If Smallwood appears to have been no easy character, he also remains a somewhat elusive figure. Consequently, the issue of how to approach Smallwood begins with the question of where to trace him. According to Richard Almonte, editor of the 2000 edition of Smallwood's narrative who has done crucial work in unearthing him from the archive, only very few written sources remain to give a voice to Smallwood. More precisely, he claims that only five "published sources" are available: the *Narrative* itself (1851), the *Report* of the convention at Drummondville (1847), irregular mentions in the *Toronto City Directory* after 1846, a reference in Mary Ann Shadd Cary's biography, and the appearance in Davis and Gates, Jr.'s, *The Slave's Narrative* (9). To this brief list, we might add William Andrews's major study *To Tell a Free Story* (1986), although the comments in scholarly analyses are hardly illuminating Smallwood's life, given the very brief mention these books make of him at all. Instead, the rich source collection in the *Black Abolitionist Papers* hold other documents that reveal Smallwood's involvement in Canada West's black community (see below).

From these extant sources, it is possible to locate Smallwood and his writing more precisely in the context of Canada West during the 1850s. The *Narrative* was published for the author in Toronto in 1851, which speaks to an astute understanding of the significant time period. Publishing in Toronto constitutes a bold statement in itself, since most narratives were printed in U.S.-American cities, or even in Great Britain to appeal to a transatlantic anti-slavery readership. Instead, Smallwood, unlike Samuel Ringgold Ward, for instance, inserts himself in a North American context and addresses a principally black readership on the continent. In fact, the events before and shortly after the passing of the Fugitive Slave Law (FSL) in 1850 were calling for immediate discursive action on the part of the Black community and its leaders, and Smallwood's *Narrative* directly participates in these discussions.

Consider, for example, how the *Narrative* stands in dialogue with Smallwood's hands-on involvement in Canada West's black community. It is crucial that it was published only a few months before the North American Convention, a cross-border effort in black organization, which took place in Toronto's famous St. Lawrence Hall from September 9-11, 1851. Smallwood's son (also called Thomas) was in attendance. The convention, organized by Henry Bibb as an immediate reaction to the FSL, marked a "watershed in […] Black Canadian history," according to historian Afua Cooper ("Doing Battle" 17). Delegates called for immediate emancipation, supported agriculture, rejected African colonization, recommended other Blacks to immigrate to Canada, and

proclaimed loyalty to the British government (see *BAP* 149-69). As this chapter demonstrates, all of these were topics that Smallwood had addressed in his *Narrative* only months before.

Smallwood's continuous engagement in meetings and conventions in Canada West also shows in the Drummondville Convention of 1847. There, he sat on the committees on business and finance, and had led the opposition against Josiah Henson of the British American Institute at Dawn on charges of mismanagement and fraud.[3] Finally, Smallwood's committed participation in shaping the lives of Black people is solidified by his involvement, together with his son and other leaders, in composing the "Address to the Colored Citizens of Canada" in April of 1863. Composed shortly after Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, it constitutes a telling comment of the contradictory feelings the U.S. Civil War prompted in Blacks in Canada (*BAP* 513-14). The document is a clear endorsement of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the prospects it might hold for still enslaved Blacks in the United States, while at the same time, it expresses loyalty to the Queen and Great Britain's 'freedom' bestowed upon her "loyal subjects" (*BAP* 514). Smallwood was thus at the forefront of the convention movement and the self-organization of Black people in British North America.

This chapter argues that Smallwood's *Narrative* constitutes a political-ideological manifesto that underlines his claim to black leadership. More precisely, this claim is based on an intellectual allegiance to David Walker and his *Appeal in Four Articles* of 1829, whom he makes out as one of the "great men" of the age (Smallwood vii). By inserting Walker as a powerful role model in his *Narrative* and fashioning himself as the living example of Walker's claims, this chapter contends, Smallwood becomes part of the process of creating a black, cross-border, radical intellectual genealogy. This chapter will therefore look at how Smallwood stands as one example of how black authors in the nineteenth century, by experimenting with autobiographical formats and textual hybridity, actively inserted themselves in, and influentially shaped, contemporary political debates and black life writing.

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3 On the committee of finance, he was joined by Richard Warren, whom I discuss in chapter 2 (see *Report* 6). The *Report of the Convention* shows that Smallwood, partly together with Noah Cannon, proposed two important resolutions to be debated against Henson and the agents of the British American Institute: "Resolved,–That if the monies, clothing, and other articles contributed in the United States and Great Britain had been equitably and judiciously divided, our condition would have been greatly better than it now is. […] Resolved,–That this Convention is satisfied that frauds have been committed upon the people of colour in Canada, in regard to monies, clothing, and other articles sent from the United States and elsewhere" (8).

The chapter will start out by looking at how scholars have struggled to categorize Smallwood as an author who, though he plays with and exceeds the slave narrative, still presents a piece of life writing that follows a personal agenda. In this respect, Smallwood's preface is unique among the texts of the time and will receive a close analysis for introducing his core motifs and concerns. Smallwood demonstrates his impressive versatility in a biracial, abolitionist, intellectual canon that lays the foundation for his leadership aspirations. In the following, the focus on his disillusionment with the African Colonization Society (ACS), his work as an Underground Railroad organizer, and his troubled relationship with the black community are all aspects that contribute to rehabilitating his reputation and construct his persona as an aspiring leader. Subsequently, the removal to Canada initiates Smallwood's cross-border life and work, but it is far from ending his troubled relationship to the United States. In fact, the more he idealizes Canada and Great Britain as the best option for Black resettlement, the stronger his anti-Americanism becomes. In the end, however, both Canada and the United States remain only ambiguous elements in Smallwood's ideology. Finally, the chapter looks more closely at the conversation Smallwood establishes with David Walker. There are several obvious overlaps with Walker as a kind of intellectual ancestor to whose radicalism Smallwood subscribes. More precisely, he reproduces attempts to begin a black intellectual genealogy that includes Walker. He works toward (re-)establishing Walker's importance for the struggle against slavery roughly twenty years after the latter's mysterious and untimely death, while at the same time establishing himself as part of this struggle and the line of "great men."

3.1 PLACE-ING BLACK LIFE WRITING IN THE 1850S

Smallwood is a challenging author. His often erratic style, in addition to the formal experimentations with this autobiographical text, has confused scholars who, consequently, have struggled with the question of where to place him and his text. It has only been most recently that Smallwood's narrative has gained some critical recognition in the work of Winfried Siemerling (2015) and Sandrine Ferré-Rode (2013). Indeed, Almonte published the only scholarly edition of the text in 2000, a reprint of the 1851 original. His introduction offers a few interesting approaches to the *Narrative*. To him, Smallwood is an adventure hero, a "picaro," and a self-made man (15). As a narrator, Almonte sees Smallwood dealing with two main rhetorical concerns: his strife for authenticity and the will to insert himself in a literary tradition (see 14). However, he seems at a loss to assign a conceptual 'place' to Smallwood's text. He admits that Smallwood's narrative is "a Canadian

book," taking into account both the narrative's place of publication (Toronto) and what he calls Smallwood's "contradictory" relation to his adopted home (16, 18).

This argument, though, clashes with Almonte's observation that Smallwood's narrative "is firmly rooted" in what he calls "an American literary genre, the slave narrative" (16).[4] Following George Elliott Clarke's argumentation, on the other hand, there is no doubt that Smallwood is not only a Canadian narrative but should also be considered part of Canadian Victorian literature (see Clarke, Review 272). Siemerling has gone a step further in claiming Smallwood as a part of what he establishes as the "Black Canadian Renaissance," on par with the "textual and cultural production" by recognized leading figures in the community such as Ward, Loguen, Steward, and Shadd (98). Yet Siemerling, too, offers no further analysis or reading of the Narrative.

Finally, Ferré-Rode's analysis is crucial as it links Smallwood, in accordance with Clarke, to "other agents of Black protest" such as William Wells Brown, Frederick Douglass, Henry Highland Garnet, and David Walker ("Black Voice" 31). She does not elaborate on this connection, however, and thus does not recover it as a crucial site for Smallwood to establish his own voice in relation to a genealogy of protest which he creates, affirms, and inserts himself into through the underlying presence of David Walker in his narrative. In fact, Walker is basically the only other voice Smallwood admits in his text, which then is not only a radical re-thinking of a classic form (the slave narrative), but also in itself a radical expression of dominant topics of debate in the middle of the nineteenth century. Siemerling, therefore, is right in placing Smallwood among his list of "the most important abolitionists of Canada West and the northeastern United States" (96). A closer look at the *Narrative* is crucial, however, to understand Smallwood's idiosyncratic approach to an autobiographical form in a tradition of protest for his claim to leadership and to become part not only of a "literary tradition," as Almonte claims, but a radical, cross-border intellectual genealogy.

Given Smallwood's involvements in the political work of the black community and his references to current affairs, it is likely that he was aware of the popularity of the slave narrative by 1851. Indeed, the appearance of a few familiar elements in the *Narrative* indicates a sense of the genre, its inherent potential, and might represent strategic choices to attract prospective readers and align the *Narrative* with successful precursors. The title seems conspicuous enough already and contains all necessary pieces of information the avid reader of

4 Clarke has pointed out in his review of the 2000 edition that Almonte is incorrect in stating that Smallwood's was the only narrative published in Canada (see 271). In his own article on Canadian slave narratives of 2005, Clarke lists numerous examples of Canadian-published texts (see "'No Hearsay'" 16-17).

(anti-)slavery literature would expect: "A Narrative of Thomas Smallwood, (Coloured Man:) Giving an Account of his Birth–the Period he was held in Slavery–His Release–and Removal to Canada, etc. Together with an Account of the Underground Railroad. Written by Himself" includes the references to genre, a brief survey of the major life stations from slavery to the "removal" to Canada West, a report of the Underground Railroad, peaking in the assertion of authorship (ii). Smallwood could have been fairly assured to find a receptive audience for this kind of work, as Almonte suggests (see 9-10). What is more, the structure of the book reveals a preface and an appendix; elements which, although not exclusive to slave narratives, fulfilled the particular purpose of authenticating the author within the genre. While Almonte has called the title choice "misleading," I argue that Smallwood's *Narrative* strays from the path of genre expectations held towards the slave narrative to adapt it to a different set of needs that authors did no longer find aptly represented by the traditional genre (9).

A unique feature of the *Narrative* is the absence of any introductory letters. Neither do we find letters of recommendations in the "Appendix," usually another conspicuous place for such material (see Ferré-Rode, "Black Voice" 27). The fact that Smallwood begins immediately with his own preface represents a bold statement of confidence while at the same time it sets the tone for the narrative to follow. At one instance in the preface, Smallwood explicitly uses conventional language typical of slave narratives, claiming that he is the author of this "simple narrative of unvarnished facts" (viii-ix). However, Smallwood uses the conventional humble authorial self-description to assert his voice and his own authority: "This little work, with the exception of the quotations and a portion of the matter in the preface, is wholly original, […] interspersed with such comments as I conceived to be necessary" (viii-ix). In defiance of any contemporary genre exigencies, Smallwood declares himself the "sole custodian of the truth," as Ferré-Rode has called it ("Black Voice" 28). She also rightly explains that Smallwood manages to ascertain his voice ubiquitously in the text (see 29), while shutting out *other* authenticating voices, making him equally the sole authority of the text to follow.

Smallwood's opening of the narrative's main part has been noted as highly untypical and "unfit" to match the genre conventions (Ferré-Rode, "Black Voice" 26). Almonte notes, for example, that "only one or two pages can rightly be said to deal with biographical matters," reducing Smallwood's life as a slave to "one paragraph" (Almonte 9-10). Although the first paragraph begins with the classic "I was born," there is no "a slave" or "on the plantation of." Rather, Smallwood gives the precise date of birth, "the 22nd day of Feb., 1801," immediately followed by the prospects of freedom: "I was recorded to be set free at the age of thirty, in

the clerk's office of [the] county" (13). What Almonte has called "defamiliarizing the experience of slavery […] by not naming it" leaves no doubt about what Smallwood perceives to be his rightful status (10).

The "master", one Rev. J. B. Ferguson, who had come by Thomas and his sister through his wife and her children, is rhetorically repurposed by Smallwood as the mere executor of his manumission process. Smallwood does mention that Ferguson "was no friend of slavery," either, and that he and his sister "served" until the ages of 30 and 25, respectively, "so as to work out what he had paid for [them]" (13). Other than the details of this legal act of being freed, Smallwood wastes no time on a more extensive biographical account. He finds it rather "needless […] to go into a detail of the vicissitudes [of] that period" and instead, sums up a few major events (13): he hired himself out at about twenty-five, got married at about twenty-nine, and had children thereafter. The teleological focus of this extremely brief glimpse into his early life and adulthood remains "the expiration of my servitude" (13). Linguistically, too, this first paragraph is crucial for the deferral that Almonte sees at work (see Almonte 10). Although he uses the familiar vocabulary of slavery, such as "to serve," "to be bequeathed to" or "to hire oneself out to," Smallwood never calls himself "slave." The years of bondage are referred to simply as "that period" (13), and through this strategy of deferral, Smallwood emerges out of this first paragraph not only debt-free, but free *tout court*.

Smallwood's subsequent address of his literacy, however, seems abrupt in the narrative and like a concession to include crucial tropes of the slave narrative rather than the coherent suite of his story. He describes that despite the lack of institutionalized schooling available to himself, his owner Ferguson and his wife taught him the basics of the alphabet and how to spell "in two syllables" (14). Smallwood uses this fact for a searing commentary both on the prejudiced whites of his Maryland County and the system of slavery that has produced an "abyss of intellectual darkness" for black people (14). Smallwood describes how his abilities to spell and write turned him into a "walking curiosity in the village" and how he had to perform for white audiences "to spell baker and cider, to their great surprise, (which were the first two words in the two syllables of Webster's Spelling Book)" (14). Smallwood has more respect for John McLeod and his family, with whom he lives as one of several black "hired help[s]," and whose children also continue Smallwood's education (14). Incidentally, McLeod is "a Scotch gentleman," a remark that subtly foreshadows what Smallwood later claims as British freedom (see below) in the midst of a slaveholding community (14).

As Smallwood leaves the years of his enslavement to be concerned with the two decades in freedom prior to the publication of the *Narrative* in 1851, it is

worth noticing how scholars have responded to this altogether unique beginning of a black autobiography. Taking Smallwood's beginning as the most prominent example, Almonte claims in fact that the appropriation of the slave narrative genre is Smallwood's main rhetorical objective that he pursues, not least, "for his own ends" (13). Rightly so, Almonte does not see Smallwood concerned with the much-expected "biographical matters," which Smallwood 'neglects' in favor of a more extensive account of his work on the Underground Railroad (9). While other critics will link this to a moment of self-assertion at the hand of Smallwood (see Ferré-Rode), Almonte seemingly cannot shake a certain feeling of unease at how bluntly Smallwood defies chronology. "Luckily," he writes, "the *Narrative* does contain some of the dates most vital in formulating a basic [outline] of Smallwood's life" (10).

In his concise review of Almonte's edition, Clarke reiterates his stance that African Canadian slave narratives "adapt" the strategies of their U.S.-American counterparts (Review 271). In this way, Smallwood stands as an example for this kind of adaptation, even experimentation, in that he uses certain elements of the slave narrative to embed them in a larger project. Therefore, he transcends the actual genre of the slave narrative, which has become limiting and restrictive to highly mobile, free black activists and leaders. Ferré-Rode agrees with Almonte that Smallwood's text confronts readers and presents an atypical beginning, but follows Clarke in claiming the necessity to define the slave narrative as a more pervasive genre in which Smallwood introduces different "nuances" ("Black Voice" 32). I would call these nuances different needs and desires that black authors expressed by using an established, very successful genre in which they introduced different *sujets* and formal elements. Almonte's struggles to "place [the] book" reside precisely in his difficulties to reconcile the *Narrative* as "a Canadian book" to the 'American' slave narrative genre (16, 18). Accepting Smallwood in the canon of Clarke's "Canadian slave narratives" (see "'No Hearsay'"), and following the more recent approaches of Nancy Kang (2005), Alyssa MacLean (2010), and Winfried Siemerling (2015) (see introduction), Smallwood can be read as part of black cross-border literature of the nineteenth century that explores the possibilities of life writing.

3.2 OVERTURE: ESTABLISHING THE EXTRAORDINARY

The preface presents a carefully composed overture that is unique among black life writing of the 1850s. Comprising about one fourth of the total *Narrative*, there can be no doubt this opening section is of particular importance. Indeed, the

preface reads as a synthesis of the narrative's key topics. Whereas the main body of the narrative is more episodic and follows a basic storyline, even if somewhat incoherent, the three discernable parts of the preface deliver a more pragmatic outline of Smallwood's concerns. It begins by creating a sense of urgency that centers on the depravity of the system of slavery and the United States as the place where it still thrives, and establishes the opposition to freedom in the British Empire. This is logically followed by Smallwood's relationship to Canada West as one place where this British freedom is played out. Finally, he offers two example cases of men worthy of support and admiration: white abolitionist George Thompson, and black abolitionist David Walker. They are made out as "great men" and later in the *Narrative*, lay the foundations for Smallwood's concern to establish a genealogy of great black men. Smallwood emphasizes the image of Walker and his position as a leader and martyr, in order to be able to focus on fashioning himself as the living example of Walker's claims in the main part of the *Narrative*.

The preface opens with a memorable first sentence—"We live in stirring times!" (iii)—that immediately creates the sense of immediacy that permeates much of the *Narrative*. This singular era, Smallwood suggests, manifests itself in the lives and work of a number of great men. Overall, the preface references a mosaic of no less than twenty-nine writers, politicians, and some of their most representative works from all ages. They are carefully elected to span both ancient Greek mythologies and the Bible, the old and the new worlds, literature and politics. Smallwood's eclectic references do not only accentuate his own literacy and versatility in contemporary transatlantic anti-slavery discourses, they also reflect his use of a biracial abolitionist canon of leaders. Above all, they challenge readers to keep pace with this intellectual tour de force. His references to extraordinary figures of past and present history serve to illustrate, especially, the pressing question of this "age of epochs" and superlatives, i.e. the question of slavery (iii).

Smallwood's rhetoric mirrors the turmoil and rising tensions after the passing of the FSL in1850. Job-like, he introduces a well-known argument in anti-slavery discourse: God will and must soon awake from his "slumber" and free the enslaved from "the iron hoof of Southern despotism" (iii). John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) provides one of the logical anchors for Smallwood in what appears to be an underlying epistemological and spiritual crisis: how can God allow for the torments of slavery? Not only does Smallwood fashion himself as "the voice of Stentor" who calls God to keep his promise to look out for those in need of protection (iii) but he quotes a verse from Milton that seems to ascertain the upcoming godly intervention: "'Jehovah thundering out of Zion,/Thron'd between

the cherubim,' may yet rain fiery hail upon this wicked land" (iv). Smallwood draws on other, more notorious figures like Napoleon to substantiate the necessity of God's punishment of the 'slave Republic' by quoting the French Emperor's claim that "the slave trader is a pirate and a felon" and that "all men are born equal" (iv).[5]

Indeed, Smallwood elaborates the motif of sleep to stigmatize slave traders and slaveholders. He recovers "natures (sic) sweet restorer" from romantic poems such as Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* (1742-45) (iv), but shows how a peaceful sleep is at odds with the presence of slaveholders. Smallwood excludes them from the placid and restoring quality of sleep due to their 'original sin' of keeping human property and their lack of "conscience" (iv). A restless sleep, then, contrasts with the sleep of the dead who have deserved rest through their deeds in life: Smallwood's quote of English poet William Cowper (1731-1800) seems to prove the latter's "conscience," as the reference from his poem *The Task* (1785) clearly expresses an anti-slavery position: "No! dear as freedom is, and in my heart's/ Just estimation, prized above all price,/ I'd much rather be myself the slave/ And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him" (v). Cowper is often quoted in anti-slavery literature and is in line with Smallwood's superlative-laden language as one of the "most splended (sic) spirits" of the age (v).

From the impression of impending punishment for slavery in the United States, the second part of the preface goes on to use the preponderance of British poets, politicians, and anti-slavery activists to support the idea of "the flood of British freedom" (from William Wordsworth's "London, 1802," 1807) that stands in contrast to the corrupted New World. Smallwood here suggests a crucial reversal of images: he subverts the trope of the United States who reject the Old World for corruption and unfreedom by turning these negative attributes into characteristics of the New World. In this way, Smallwood introduces what will become the main argument for his allegiance to and support of Great Britain, i.e. the Empire's status as a convert from slavery. Like Samuel Ringgold Ward, he describes the "old climes of Europe" as formerly ruled by slavery, but as having overcome the evil,

5 While Almonte was unable to locate the source of this quote by Napoleon, it appears to stem from a 1798 "Proclamation, issued by Bonaparte, in the Arabic language, on his landing in Egypt," during the French Egyptian campaign (1798-1801). The quote follows a defense of the French Nation against the "contempt" and discredit at the hands of the ruling Beys, which Napoleon declares to defeat. In this context, the Proclamation, signed by Napoleon, reads: "People of Egypt! You will be told that I am come to destroy your religion: do not believe it [...]. Tell them that all men are equal before God. Wisdom, talents, and virtue, are the only things which make a difference between them" (*Copies* 180).

in the words of John Philpot Curran, due to "British law, which makes liberty commensurate with, and inseparable from, British soil" (v).[6] The idealization of Great Britain as free from slavery is heightened further by the contrast to Thomas Campbell's "Epigram" (1838), a powerful illustration of the Janus-faced United States whose flag, to the poet, is emblematic of the country's tension between "[t] he White Man's liberty [and the] Negroes' scars" (vi).

The idealization of Great Britain and now, Canada, reveals the "almost bombastic praise for Canadian/British 'liberty'" common in slave narratives, as Clarke has noted, which at the same time suppresses the past of slavery and "earlier accounts of white settler racism" ("'No Hearsay'" 18). It is crucial that the initial conceptualizations of Canada were marked by rumors that were often spread by slave owners to discourage runaways. Smallwood connects these "*strange* and *romantic* stories" to Shelley's "Revolt of Islam" (1818) (vi; added emphasis). The quote by Shelley speaks to a romanticized vision of Canada's nature—"Of that green land, cradled in the roar/ Of western waves and wildernesses" (vi)—but it should also be seen in the context of the poem's concern with (peaceful) revolution that sees the two protagonists rise up against the sultan in Constantinople. According to Mark Sandy, Shelley's poem as a "visionary romance embod[ies] an idealised re-imagining of how the French Revolution, in 1789, should have been conducted and contrast[s], strikingly, with the actuality of the bloody removal of monarchy" (Sandy). There is a parallel to the preface's strategy of idealizing Britain and Canada without facing slavery as a reality but only as a thing of the past which no longer informs the present. Given Smallwood's casting of Britain has having thrown off the shackles of slavery and his resolution that "a land of slaves shall ne'er be mine" (from Lord Byron's *Don Juan*, 1821), his decision to go to Canada gains importance perhaps more as an act of 'revolutionary', self-determined defiance than as the religious "pilgrimage" Smallwood ostensibly claims (vi).

The preface, then, is also a metaphorical commentary on Smallwood's geographical journeys. "Professor Longfellow['s]" "Indian Hunter" (1825), for example, describes the escape of slaves from the South, while remaining silent on Smallwood's own (vi). In doing so, he adapts and thereby appropriates the second-

6 John Philpot Curran (1750-1817) was an Irish lawyer and politician. The quote is taken from his defense of Archibald Hamilton Rowan before the court of King's Bench in January of 1794. According to James Kelly, the Hamilton Rowan case helped solidify Curran's renown and his abilities as a defense attorney. The speech, which was considered "a masterpiece of forensic pleading as well as contextual extenuation for which he was rightly applauded" (Kelly), is contained in Thomas Browne's collection *The British Cicero* (1810) (vol. 3, 215).

to-last stanza of the poem in which, instead of a beech, it is "[…] the cotton tree [that] shadow'd the misty lake," and instead of the hunter, "the slave was seen in the south no more" (vi). Describing his arrival in Toronto, Smallwood finds truth in Scottish national poet Robert Burns's (1759-1796) patriotic "Scots Wha Hae" (1793). Here, Smallwood operates the connection between liberty and a form of nationalism. "Wha sae base as be a slave/ Let him turn and flee" is not only part of Burns's song, which for a long time served as the Scottish national anthem (vii), but might also serve to underline an allegiance to Britain for offering "the best national freedom" and asylum for fugitive slaves (44) (a notion to which I shall return).

The previous idealization of Great Britain and Canada West contrasts starkly with Smallwood's personal experiences in Toronto, where he witnesses "prejudice equal to any thing I ever experienced in the south (sic)" and the animosity "against myself personally, held by people of my own colour" (vii). This impression, however, is necessary to transition to the third part of the preface, and to introduce some of the most pervasive themes of his narrative. For example, he is straightforward about using his narrative as a space to counter the attacks by his fellow Blacks in order to "clear up [his] character" (vii).[7] At the same time, Smallwood offers the first example of his many criticisms of the black community, portraying them as unquestioningly believing the discrediting rumors in circulation about him. As we shall see, herein lies a fundamental overlap with David Walker, who himself did not shy away from criticizing his fellow Blacks in his *Appeal*. The preface refuses to speak to the comfort zone of his readers, but rather, as Ferré-Rode had pointed out, challenges the notions of a homogeneous and harmonious black community. As a way of engaging with this "perverted" community, as Ferré-Rode calls it ("Black Voice" 31), Smallwood has understood the power of the word and of the slave narrative to "repel the thrusts of Slander," whose evil potential he takes from Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* (Smallwood vii). Smallwood wants to clear his public reputation through his own version of the truth and his innocent consciousness, which sets him off from the corrupted slaveholders. At the same time, the prefaces uses the connection between discredit and notoriety to position Smallwood in the ranks of black and white abolitionist leaders, since "[…] it has been the lot of great men to be slandered" (vii).

The experience of slandered character as a mark of great men allows Smallwood also to identify himself as a supporter of British abolitionists, specifically. Next to two of the movement's most prominent figures under attack, Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846) and William Wilberforce (1759-1833), the preface

7 Writing "to clear up [his] character, and do justice to humanity" resembles Austin Steward's later attempts to give his version of the Wilberforce colony (vii).

focuses on the case of George Thompson (1804-1878). This brief intervention illustrates the topicality, on the one hand, and the textual hybridity of Smallwood's *Narrative*, on the other. The preface in fact includes an "Address" to the abolitionist which lauds Thompson's work for the enslaved. It is likely that Smallwood refers to Thompson's visit to Toronto in May 1851 (the preface is signed for July 1851) where he gave "a lecture on the Evils of Slavery" for which he was severely criticized ("Speech" 1). The address comes in the form of a six-stanza poem of occasional verse, likely Smallwood's own writing, and breaks the preface's prose style. In line with the theme of great men, a quote by Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* sets the tone for this elegiac praise of the "second Wilberforce": "His life was gentle, and the elements so mixed in him, that NATURE might stand up and say to all the world—THIS WAS A MAN" (viii; original emphasis).

Such an endorsement of Thompson as such is not surprising. It marks, however, a departure from the classic scheme of the slave narrative, in which authentication must be white on black, and instead serves as an instance in which Smallwood powerfully endorses a fellow abolitionist based on several aspects that might have resonated with Smallwood himself. A closer look at Thompson's Toronto speech reveals, for one, that it represents an appeal of sorts as well: Thompson offers a strong anti-slavery statement and a call to action to a *Canadian* audience. The piece is remarkable not so much for its well-known abolitionist argumentative apparatus but for the sense of urgency and responsibility he evokes for Canadians to become involved in the discussions of the question of slavery. He explains that given the number of fugitives arriving after the FSL, Canadians have no choice but to interfere (see "Speech" 14). He also calls for an alliance with Britain as two countries "separated geographically and politically from the country where slavery reigns [, and therefore representing] the persons best able to form an unbiased and sound judgment on the question at issue" ("Speech" 13). In this sense, the speech is in line with the strong abolitionist message of Smallwood's *Narrative*, as well as its sense of supporting Britain and taking up the fight against slavery in Canada West.

Smallwood's actual focus in evoking a line of great, multiracial, slandered abolitionists, however, is David Walker. The famous anti-slavery activist becomes the center of the *Narrative's* crusade for authentication and authority as he defends him against the plagiarism scandal caused by Paola Brown.[8] Brown's recent

8 Paola Brown (c.1807- ?) came to Upper Canada in 1828, and is mostly remembered for assuming a leadership role in the black community in the flourishing town of Hamilton. He worked as a handyman and a town crier, and therefore was well-known to people. He gave his speech on the evils of slavery in February 1851, but after the census of

"Address intended to be delivered in the City Hall, Hamilton, February 7, 1851, on the Subject of Slavery" was nothing more, as Smallwood explains, than "a copy, almost verbatim, of a book known as 'Walker's Appeal,' written by a coloured man of that name [David Walker]" (ix). Brown's speech is indeed not merely a case of intellectual theft but a larger, "diabolical attempt […] to rob the *memory* of an estimable man" (ix; added emphasis). Smallwood does not only personally appraise Walker, but engages in restoring the text to its rightful author. At the same time, Smallwood attempts to recover awareness and respect for Walker. While the concern to maintain the memory of black individuals is one he shares, for example, with the chronicler Austin Steward, Smallwood is both technical and bold in his method: he reproduces, within his own preface, both the preface and the biographical sketch of David Walker as they were written by abolitionist minister Henry Highland Garnet (1815-1882) "and published with the second edition of the book referred to in 1848" (ix). Reprinting Garnet's interpretation of Walker's life and his impact on the history of Black people dismantles Brown's plagiarism while, at the same time, it echoes Garnet in (re)creating the myth of David Walker and institutes Smallwood's radical intellectual genealogy into which the *Narrative* inscribes him.

3.3 UNDERGROUND RAILROAD WORK AND CONFLICTED COMMUNITIES

A major focus of Smallwood's narrative lies on the period of his life as a freeman before he left the United States for Canada West. This time is consumed by the work with fugitive slaves as a co-founder of the Underground Railroad, but also by becoming the center of attention within inner-black unrest in the community of Washington, D.C. The description of his work, free from all romanticism that may surround the stories of the Underground Railroad, therefore serves Smallwood to address the attacks he faces and accuse what he terms "traitors" among his fellow Blacks. Credibility is crucial both in the hazardous work he is engaged in and as a black writer, and so he attempts to render his version of "the truth" in order to save his reputation (see Ferré-Rode 28). Consequently, it is not surprising that the creation of the local Underground Railroad should be prefaced by a moment of conversion to anti-slavery work.

1852, is untraceable in the records "and it has been alleged that he died a pauper" (Weaver).

It is unclear whether Smallwood joined the support for the American Colonization Society while he still lived with the McLeods.[9] Although he describes the temptations emanating from the Society's purported "object of […] the entire abolition of slavery in the United States," Smallwood quickly joins the severe criticism brought forth against the ACS by quasi-demonizing it into a fraudulent organization pretending to act in favor of the black population only to hide its true objective to rid the United States of free Blacks (15). In fact, he describes his disillusionment upon realizing that the colonization project in Liberia was meant to eliminate the potential danger of a free black population that would possibly "contaminate[…] the slave population with a spirit of freedom" (15). The *modus operandi* of the ACS, Smallwood claims, deliberately used aspiring and potential black leaders among the free population in order to use them for its purpose to "delude[…]" Blacks into emigrating to Africa (15). Smallwood admits that he was among those "to whom inducements were held out," implying they had identified him as a leader, but that he chose "a good conscience" over money and an involvement as a "merchant in the Liberia trade" (15).

In this way, the description of his long interest and subsequent break with the ACS is meant to clear his name and portray himself as unaffiliated with this society, as the organization was highly controversial in the "northern free black [community] and the growing abolitionist movement" (*BAP* 118n10). Blacks in Canada also opposed the ACS, as a letter by Henry Bibb from April 1851 shows. He states that securing land for fugitives in Canada "would be one of the greatest […] blessings […for] the people" as it would, among other things, distract them from "put[ting] a check the American Coloncieation Society (sic) or scheme" (*BAP* 115). Distancing himself clearly from the ACS allows Smallwood to insert himself and his political standpoint into the current debate on emigration, in which the ACS formed a ready target. Through this instance of self-fashioning, he now appears as a morally upright character who resists the ACS's temptation.[10] What is more, Smallwood situates his own work at the opposite end of the spectrum: working for and with fugitive slaves clashes not only with the efforts of the ACS

9 The American Colonization Society's (founded 1817) "primary goal [was to] remove […] free blacks from the United States, particularly to […] Liberia" (*BAP* 118n10). It became the focus of criticism both by the black community in the north and the abolitionists during the 1830s and 1840s. The Society only formally dissolved in 1964.

10 Austin Steward echoes this example when he resists the tempting offers held out to him by his enemy Benjamin Paul (see Steward 221-22).

but also with some of his former friends who had become "willing tools for [and profiteers of] the Colonisation Society" (16).[11]

Smallwood's opposition to the ACS quickly shifts from moral and personal to political reasons by linking the organization to the passing of the FSL. Ever since then, he claims, the efforts of the ACS have dramatically increased, while the law as such could only have come into being through "the influence of Northern Colonisationists […] who suck their riches from the South off from the sweat and blood of the African race" (17). Smallwood, albeit somewhat polemically, shows his ability to engage with current debates by outlining a strong political stance which mirrors a well-known contemporary abolitionist argument.

Nevertheless, the FSL is only one of several aggravating factors that directly affect his "extremely hazardous," yet highly efficient work with escaped slaves (17). Smallwood outlines how quickly he gained a reputation of helping escapees, calling himself successful in all but seven cases (17). However, he sees this work seriously impaired by slaveholders' schemes to sow "continual lack of confidence [, …] jealousy and envy" among the black population in order to prevent communal action and solidarity (17). Offering this insight into his first-hand experience, Smallwood insists that these schemes were to blame for failed assisted escapes, turning susceptible black people into the greatest obstacles for the emerging Underground Railroad under Smallwood's care (17).

A few years prior to the advent of the FSL, 1842 proved a seminal year for Smallwood's fugitive slave work as it marked the "appearance" of Charles T. Torrey in Washington, D.C. (18). Smallwood had been following the uproar around Torrey in Annapolis, where the latter had attended a slaveholders' convention, and was eager to meet him (18). The well-known abolitionist quickly becomes a major figure in Smallwood's professional life (see Harrold 66; 77). Not unlike that for Walker, he develops a deep veneration and personal admiration for "that most excellent and whole-souled Abolitionist" (18). Their first encounter seems to have begun *in medias res*.[12] Torrey must have placed great trust in the

11 Smallwood does not shy away from calling out two of these converts by name ("James Brown, and a Mr. McGill," 16).

12 It is crucial to note Smallwood's acknowledgment that the joint work with Torrey was only made possible by "the agency" of two women, the abolitionist's boarding lady and Smallwood's own wife, "who took washing out of the house in which [Torrey] then boarded; through her, I sought and obtained an interview with him" (Smallwood 18). What is more, Smallwood openly acknowledges the two women's paramount help in establishing fugitive support: "And be it spoken to the praise of the lady with whom he boarded, that she and my wife were the only assistance we had for some time in the execution of our plans" (18). Given that in many slave narratives, male authors are

man he just met, as Smallwood describes that already “[a]t our first interview [Torrey] informed me of a scheme he had in view, and requested my assistance, to which I readily assented” (18). From the *Narrative*, Torrey emerges as a restless, energetic, and even driven abolitionist, displaying traits that agree well with Smallwood’s own spirit and ambition.

The introduction of Torrey marks, too, the beginning of a shift in the narrative: Smallwood’s plot line becomes more erratic as the actual work on fugitive slave escapes also invites a number of digressions that can pose a challenge for readers. The first case in which he and Torrey become involved is a case in point. Smallwood, aware of the chance to collaborate with an already well-known abolitionist, and seeing the opportunity to solidify his standing in Washington, accepts the task of informing the mother of an enslaved family of the “scheme” to rescue them (18). The husband and father is away in the North, initially to collect money to meet the prize the owner had set for the family, but then resolves that the man “had already got more of their labour than he was justly entitled to […]. Besides, he was not in favour of paying slaveholders for any of their slaves that could be otherwise rescued from their grasp” (18). Smallwood here openly takes sides for the family; he calls on “proslavery apologists” and an implicit readership to reconsider their understanding of justice (18). Slaveholders, he describes, often enough feel offended that they should lose their slaves without recompense, but “remember that justice has two sides, or in other words, a black side as well as a white side” (19). Smallwood argues that the family, as well as enslaved women and men in general, have the right to escape as the logical consequence of having been forced to work without pay (19). Smallwood fashions slaveholders into both “aggressors” and “robbers […] of men” whom he then exposes to act against “their own language” as outlined in the Declaration of Independence (19). In doing so, he reveals himself to be a follower of David Walker who illuminates the latter arguments in his *Appeal* (see below).

Smallwood’s numerous episodes around his and Torrey’s Underground Railroad activities, whether failed or successful, are not simply a concession to the curiosity of his prospective readership. They turn the *Narrative* into a moral compass as well as a fascinating, detailed record of the manner of operating a branch of the Underground Railroad, which has become engrained in the anti-

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usually nearly silent on wives and other women, Smallwood’s remark is significant. Yet, his narrative, too, remains set within a context that disregards women and their activities.

slavery imaginary.[13] This information is valuable because it gives an insight into the execution of assisted escapes, while Smallwood needs to find the balance between providing enough information to make the experience palpable for his readers and not to put former escapees in danger. Many slave narrative or Underground Railroad authors, like Wilbur Siebert (1898) or Richard Warren, have therefore chosen to be silent and not give away places, names, or dates, or have kept these records in secret correspondence. However, in Smallwood, there is a sense of purpose, as it were, to these select pieces—"I proceed to place the reader in possession of the mode of travel, on the so-called underground railroad" (20)—and of authority coming from a credible expert.

It becomes evident that for each operation, Smallwood and Torrey have to rely on various people to care for, transport, and receive the fugitive(s) (see 20). Most importantly, Smallwood strips the "legend of the underground railroad" (Gara) of all its romanticism, as planned escapes emerge as most hazardous, pragmatic business transactions between the fugitives and Smallwood/Torrey, on the one hand, and between the two and their "teamsters," on the other (20). The latter determine each time anew the price at which they will risk their lives "in so dangerous an enterprise" (21). Not one of the operations seems the same, and depends upon various factors such as the number of fugitives, the teamster involved, or the season. A daring operation from the summer of 1842 illustrates the hazards and dangers for everyone involved in Underground Railroad work. This time, the two partners attempt to take a large group of fifteen people out of Washington. "[H]ow that could be accomplished was a question of considerable importance, it was next to impossibility to get a teamster to convey them at any price," explains Smallwood (21). Only with the help of a "confidential friend" do Smallwood and Torrey succeed in obtaining a wagon and horses for the undertaking (21). A time delay forces them to disperse the group throughout the city where they have to spend the night. The setback comes at a great cost the following morning, when chaos ensues at the set hour of departure upon learning that several of the group have "absconded" or "taken French leave" (22). The resulting general confusion is reflected in the narrative, as Smallwood digresses and becomes lost in following the strands of individual fugitives (see esp. bottom 22-23). From the successful escape of a mother and child to Toronto to the story of a desolate husband, Smallwood only returns to the initial group of fifteen fugitives after connecting the husband to family members within the group and thus returning to the present of the narrative (23).

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13 Larry Gara's authoritative *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (1961), while maintaining its importance for fugitives, has argued for a demystification of the network as thoroughly organized.

At the same time, Smallwood is increasingly narrowing the narratological focus on his own person. He becomes increasingly concerned with specific attacks on his character as a consequence of his fugitive work, and very consciously fashions himself into a virtuous and upright founder of a local Underground Railroad chapter which operates increasingly independently of the abolitionists (see 24-25). In the midst of the uproar that “feat[s]” like the above create among the slaveholders, Smallwood describes himself as continuously bold, active, well-organized, experienced and courageous, but also very clever, “defy[ing] detection, and sen[ding people] off in gangs; never less than a dozen” (24). Being called a traitor in his work is highly detrimental and dangerous, and thus, he spends quite some time refuting this epithet. While his enemies would like to impute to him to “have made [his] jack” with the large number of fugitives he was assisting at this period in time, he strongly objects the baseness, in his opinion, of giving in to the lures of money, instead insisting on his role to help and take care of ‘his’ fugitives (24). Smallwood sees himself as the one who takes action (and agency), who gets involved risking his own safety while providing for the fugitives as a good Samaritan when his accusers stand by passively. Consequently, Smallwood quickly becomes a well-known target of suspicion in the area making his absence from the city nearly impossible (see 25). Indeed, with Torrey being gone with the remainder of the fifteen fugitives in the North, “the burden and responsibility of consequences” rest on Smallwood’s shoulders for the time being (25). He even calls himself “the sole proprietor of the so-called Underground Railroad in that section” (25), standing in for its four founding members: “Torry (sic), myself, my wife, and the Lady with whom he boarded” (25).[14]

In contrast to Smallwood’s own virtuous behavior, the fugitive slave episodes are more and more directly concerned with traitor figures and perpetrators from within the black community. By insisting so much on this topos, Smallwood is able to subtly but actively construct himself as the living example and mouthpiece of David Walker, whose major concerns in the *Appeal* are in fact the issues of treason and disunity within the community (see below). One of the two representative traitor figures in Smallwood’s narrative is a man named George Lee. Smallwood does not hold back his disdain for Lee, both professionally and personally: Lee took money from fugitives, allegedly on Smallwood’s behalf, and “appropriate[ed] it to is (sic) own use” (25). What is more, Lee turns out to be a former fugitive whose wife and child had been previously rescued by Smallwood (see 26). Smallwood turns Lee into the protagonist of his pinnacle “piece of

14 Again, Smallwood recognizes, but does not elaborate on, the role of women and cites them on the same level as himself and Torrey as the founders of Washington’s Underground Railroad activities.

rascality" that Smallwood claims "wounded [his] feelings more severely than any thing (sic) that had ever happened to [him]" (26-27).

The story centered on Lee is emblematic of the intricacies, even *intrigue*-acies, of several of Smallwood's episodes that underline how conflicted the black community in Washington appears through his eyes, but also how important the community was in the organization of fugitive escapes. Traitor figures posed direct threats to this work and were able to throw it off balance. In the episode, Lee crosses a morally acceptable line when he turns against his own half-brother and two of his friends. Lee's relative had given money to Smallwood to see to the escape of two of his friends, money which ends up in Lee's profligate hands on the false promise to "get them off," while making his half-brother believe the money is safely with Smallwood (26). Finally, Lee betrays the two fugitives to their 'masters' only to blame the deed on Smallwood (27). Lee's portrait as a man who is profit-driven and willingly betrays even friends and family would have made him a *persona non grata* in the eyes of an anti-slavery audience, as taking advantage of the situation of the neediest put him at the lowest echelon of the moral ladder. Calling out the traitor by name is therefore not simply an example of personal revenge on the part of Smallwood, but an act that will single out George Lee to the black community as well.

At the same time, Smallwood is able to confirm his image as the lone fighter who is beset by enemies and who attempts to maintain his reputation.[15] Extrapolating from Lee's example, Smallwood's frustration is unabated when he states that "there was not a coloured man to be found, about there, who thought enough about the condition of his race" and how to ameliorate it (28). He insinuates that not only were his opponents trying to profit from the underground railroad mechanisms that Smallwood had helped establish, but that they were actively trying to depose him by casting him as an "agent for the abolitionists" (28). By now in the *Narrative*, it has become an important objective to distance Smallwood from cooperating with abolitionists in general, a critical aside on the predominance of institutionalized (white) abolitionism in fugitive assistance. Smallwood compares the difference between himself and the latter group to "oil

15 It is crucial for Smallwood to distance himself as best he can from 'veritable traitors' like Lee. He therefore renders his ingenious scheme to bring all the parties involved in the "piece" together at his house and directly confront each other with their respective versions of the story (Smallwood 27-28). Although this scene is relatively short, Smallwood pulls the literal strings in a highly staged moral drama in the course of which the evildoer Lee gets what he deserves. His deeds being finally and "complete[ly]" exposed, his depravity still seems to increase as he admits to having defrauded even more refugee money than previously known (27-28).

[and] water," although, paradoxically, he joined forces with Torrey, a well-known radical abolitionist (28). At the same time, Smallwood uses this strategy again for his self-empowerment, as he asserts his position as an activist for fugitive slaves and "establisher of that underground railroad" who was not in need of any outside assistance (28).

The episode anchored in the traitor figure of Benjamin Lannum further substantiates Smallwood's position as a victim of vicious personal attacks at the heart of disunity within the black community.[16] This longish "remarkable piece of treachery" is particularly challenging for the reader due to its complex web of persons, places, days and sums of money involved (28). Despite the somewhat incoherent storytelling, the passage shows elements of the crime novel, in which Smallwood retraces the actions of the victims (the fugitives who are eventually betrayed), the perpetrator (Lannum), and the detective (Smallwood himself). At the end of the narrative, however, stands a curious stalemate: after Lannum has given away the fugitives to a slave trader, Smallwood is in danger of being identified (31). The fugitives, as Smallwood explains, "could not describe [him] to the slave catchers, for [he] was only with them in the dark, although they could call [his] name; [but] there were other Smallwoods in Washington" (31-32). At the same time, Smallwood knows that Lannum keeps purposefully silent on his part, partly "through policy," but equally because "he tried very hard to have [Smallwood] believe he was not guilty of the crime" (32). Smallwood himself, alluding to his delicate standing in the community, dares not speak out against Lannum publicly, either, for fear that he and other opponents would reveal his identity (see 32).

The Lannum incident therefore heightens Smallwood's "precarious" standing in the black community (32). He is left feeling "between two fires—[that of his] own colour [and the slaveholders']" (32). Smallwood employs direct and sometimes even harsh language regarding his fellow Blacks which, too, reminds of David Walker. The case of Lannum is one more proof for him that "that want of sympathy with each other that exists among us" is to blame (31)—a well-known abolitionist argument, but most prominently used by Walker, who blamed slaveholders for discouraging black people to form bonds of solidarity and mutual assistance amongst themselves (see Walker 31-32). Smallwood finds himself in a curiously paradoxical situation: on the one hand, he is deeply invested in the community by assisting fugitives; on the other hand, he feels antagonized and threatened by many of its members. At the same time, his controversial reputation within the black community stems from precisely this belligerent and outspoken

16 Russell identifies Lannum as Benjamin Lanham, "One of the founders of St. Paul AME Church" (Part V.a, n.pag.).

nature and cannot solely be attributed to the fact that people spread rumors about him. A telling example is his open dispute with Reverend Abraham Cole during "a leader's meeting" (32). As a consequence, Smallwood was severely discredited by Cole's friends (32).[17] Harrold explains that "Cole responded by expelling Smallwood from the [African Wesleyan Church]. Therefore Smallwood, like Torrey in regard to Garrison, was motivated to demonstrate his own superior bravery in comparison to Cole and other local black leaders" (Harrold 74-75). Smallwood's strong opinions and active claim to black leadership create considerable backlash for him, but also reveal the competition on this leadership level.

Ultimately, Smallwood insinuates that this atmosphere, which he describes as a "cloud of treachery," makes him leave Washington for Canada West (32). A few dense sentences construct a sense of acuteness and inevitability of emigrating north, after seeing that "through the treachery of some of my colour I could be of no further service to my poor slave brethren" (32). Unlike the other texts in this book, Smallwood links his decision to move to Canada West directly to the rift with Washington, D.C.'s, local black community—because in view of the attacks against his person, "Washington was no longer a place of safety for me" (32). This estrangement between himself and his peers is contrasted to the "resting place" Smallwood hopes to find north of the border (32). Not least, the transition to his new destination implicitly engages the contemporary emigration debates within the black community: Like David Walker and Frederick Douglass, Smallwood indirectly refuses destinations outside the North American continent as he is sure that "the place [to settle] could only be found in America" (32). His choice of "the British dominions," interestingly, does not simply follow idealizing, optimistic conceptions about Canada West "where the laws are equal, and know no difference between man and man on account of colour" (32). Instead, Smallwood casts his choice as individualistic and authoritative: in similar fashion to Samuel Ringgold Ward's later praise, he makes out the British dominions to correspond "to [his] satisfaction" (32).

3.4 THE BEST NATIONAL FREEDOM?

Smallwood's bold announcement to leave the United States for Canada West ushers in a new direction in the *Narrative*. His orientation northward entails the establishment of strong allegiances to Canada West and Great Britain, which

17 Harrold ascribes this "quarrel" to an inspiration from Walker's *Appeal* (74).

become idealized spaces and emigration destinations for Blacks. This should not mislead readers into thinking that Smallwood achieves to sever ties neatly with his life in the United States. On the contrary, he relies heavily on the often-used discursive dichotomy between Canada West and the United States as free from or corrupted by slavery, allowing him to flesh out his fierce anti-Americanism coupled with an equally strong anti-abolitionism. While his decision to leave conflict-ridden Washington, D.C., might indicate some form of quieting down, the opposite is true. The move north of the border merely marks the beginning of Smallwood's restless cross-border life as he continues his work for fugitive slaves. Constant comings and goings to and from the United States into Canada West also translate into a partly convoluted narrative. At the same time, the more Smallwood tries to plot these countries against each other ideologically, the more they appear two-faced and ambiguous. Ferré-Rode calls Canada a "hybrid space" in Smallwood's text and marks this hybridity as a possible "genuinely Canadian" feature of the narrative ("Black Voice" 34). This book attempts to reconfigure what she terms "hybridity" as "ambiguity" towards Canada West in the four texts under scrutiny, and this subchapter will show how Smallwood's *Narrative* eventually has no resolution to offer on the position British North America should hold for Black prospective settlers.

With not just the traditional one but several arrival scenes on Canadian soil, the *Narrative* underlines its unique status among black writing at mid-nineteenth century. Departing from Washington at the end of June, 1843, Smallwood's first arrival in Toronto on the "fourth day of July" is highly symbolic (Smallwood 33). Using the Underground Railroad now himself instead of assisting as a conductor, he travels quickly and hardly "stop[s] to hold any parley with Abolitionists or any one (sic) else" (33). Once he reaches Toronto, he instantly builds on the symbolic significance of the day by expounding "how different [his] feelings [were] that day to what they would have been had [he] been in the States" (33). Dwelling on the differences between experiencing this day in the United States and in Canada West, he captures the sense of alienation for black people who are confronted with U.S.-American "hypocritical demonstrations" of liberty (33), later epitomized by Frederick Douglass's iconic speech "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" (1852). Canada quickly becomes an ideal place, where Smallwood "first put [his] feet in a land of true freedom, and equal laws" (33). Smallwood here reinterprets the significance of the American national holiday and appropriates it at the same time. The day for him comes to signify a day of independence and self-liberation, but firmly tied to another country. In choosing Canada West consciously as his destination, he uses British North America for the purpose of casting himself as a

liberated man, while at the same time, relying on the binary opposition between the 'corrupted' States and a 'free' Canada.

Within the structure of the *Narrative*, too, his arrival forms a small climax, inserted between the series of Underground Railroad episodes and the several border crossings between Washington, D.C., and Toronto that follow. As if to highlight the scene particularly—no less a staple trope of the Canadian slave narrative—the passage gains singularity from being so abruptly cut off by Smallwood's return to Washington, D.C., to attend to business and "prepare to take leave of that mock metropolis of freedom, and sink of iniquity" (33). While this sudden move inaugurates his traveling back and forth across the border, it is clear that Smallwood is not able to easily leave behind his life in the States. In this way, his glorious arrival and emancipation in Canada West are set against a return to "have another contest with slaveholders, and treacherous coloured persons" (33). Rumors about Smallwood in Washington, D.C., have substantiated in his absence, and he traces them to two specific individuals in the city who suspect him of using his trip to take fugitives with him. These allegations in fact cause Smallwood's house to be surrounded and searched by the watch.

Two ensuing episodes illustrate Smallwood's complex narrative persona as well as his contaminated relationship to the community in D.C. The first shows Smallwood as literally beset by his enemies (see 33-34). Nevertheless, it gains humorous quality from Smallwood's free acknowledgment to the reader of having around thirteen people in his house at the time of the search "preparing to leave for Canada the next morning, and take a final leave of such beautiful scenes of republican freedom" (34). While thus confirming the rumors about him, he claims that it is not he who is supposed to take the fugitives away, but some of his "confidential friends" (34). While the captain of the watch addresses him sternly, the reader is made to understand that one woman was indeed kept in hiding in the house, and was secretly taken outside into the garden "by some females, who [...] concealed her in some corn" (34). Smallwood renders this whole nerve-wrecking scene in a hurry, joining sentences together without punctuation to create a sense of urgency, acuteness, and yet comic relief. Most importantly, tough, he asserts his superiority as a "picaro" who knows how to forego the traps set by his enemies, because he maintains control of the situation at all times, duping the representatives of the law.

Only shortly after his house was surrounded, he comes close to being arrested on the way of bringing his family to the steamboat to Baltimore on October 3, 1843. His old acquaintance George Lee has sent "an Irishman of the name of Kennedy" on his pursuit, ready to have Smallwood arrested by two accompanying constables on money charges (34). The constables let him go, however, explaining

that "they had no warrant to do it" (35). Smallwood recognizes the imminent danger for him in remaining in the city. Consequently, instead of returning to the auction of his belongings, as he had intended to do, he sees himself forced to hide in town and "[a]bout four o'clock the next morning [to] set out on foot, on a by-road, for Baltimore" (35). Yet again, he leaves Washington due to a looming threat, and in being forced to escape in secret, comes closer to appropriating the image of the fugitive.

As he reunites with his family in Baltimore, he admits that his wife is instrumental in the successful continuation of the family's journey to Canada West. As Smallwood explains, although she "had undergone much uneasiness on [his] account, notwithstanding she had sufficient presence of mind to make arrangements to remove the only obstacle that lay in the way" of their getting out of the city (35). While waiting for her husband to arrive, she has already looked for a "responsible person to enter bond" for the family in the person of Mr. Pitman (35-36).[18] Smallwood explains that black people were forced to provide a bondsman "in consequence of several instances of stage and steamboat proprietors being sued and mulct in for the value of slaves that were proved to have absconded on their conveyances" (35). Through the help of Mr. Pitman, the family is able to obtain a passage on a steamboat.

Smallwood's second journey to Canada West, therefore, is in the company of his family and marked by friendlier tides. Smallwood, using his extensive personal network, had provided for his wife and children in the case of being separated and, consequently, they are met with (financial) assistance upon their arrival in Albany. Identifying himself and his family now as "fugitives, falling in [the local abolitionists'] way," Smallwood singles out his helpers as "bright stars of benevolence" (36). Albany, however, fails to keep him. Smallwood categorically refuses to remain in the United States to establishes a business there, like Austin Steward had done in Rochester, but "pushe[s] on to Canada" (36). By this time, the narrative "we," which had included his family from Baltimore to Albany, reverts back to "I," focusing the narratological control, authority, and determination yet again on Smallwood. This second arrival in Toronto, in October 1843, is just as significant for him as the previous brief stop-over on July 4. He describes his self-confidence and determination in a dense statement:

"I pushed on for Canada, and arrived at Toronto, October 14, 1843, and settled in it, and I have never regretted one moment for having carried out my first intention, which was,

18 *Matchett's Baltimore Director for 1842* lists only one entry for "Pittman" (spelled with double "t"): Mr. Edward Pittman, from "Pittman & Philipps, dry goods merchants" (310).

inasmuch as I had to leave the metropolis of the United States, to seek freedom, from whose legislative halls freedom is proclaimed to all the world, except to the African race, I would seek it in no part of that inconsistent nation, because I was aware that there was no freedom for a coloured person within its limits." (36)

Smallwood's pledge of allegiance to Canada West is significant as much for its idealization as for his anti-Americanism, cast in noteworthy terms of "metropolis" and "inconsistent nation" (see below). Notably, his view of the United States contrasts with the idea of agriculturalism, which many leaders supported as an ideal occupation for black settlers in Canada. Consider, for example, the resolution of the business committee of the North American Convention at Toronto, in which Smallwood and his son participated: "3. Resolved, that we warmly recommend to colored settlers in Canada, to use all diligence in obtaining possession of uncultivated lands, for the laudable purpose of making themselves and their offspring independent tillers of a free soil" (*BAP* 152, original emphasis). Smallwood's terms equally evoke the negative connotations of urban life for black people as marked by discrimination, poor housing conditions, and overpopulation.[19] The epithet "inconsistent", in particular, opposes a perceived unstable and conflicted national identity of the United States to that of an idealized, reliable, British Empire, which Canada represents by extension, but which Smallwood himself will eventually fail to uphold.

Shortly after the arrival in Canada West, Smallwood demonstrates that moving across the border has not diminished his ambitions to be politically involved, to aspire to leadership, and to be active for fugitives from slavery in both his old and new "home" (39). Almost immediately after his second arrival, he re-crosses the border into the United States in order to collect money for a new fugitive slave rescue mission, but his comments on his frustrating experiences of fund-raising quickly turn into a significant 'cross-border' commentary on black leadership, the involvement of abolitionists, and one of the dominant issues for black people in exile, which Michael Hembree has called "the question of 'begging'" (314). Finding abolitionists in New York State slow to respond to his call for financial aid, Smallwood voices his anger about prioritizing their support for "a defunct institution, got up by a few designing persons in the name of coloured refugees in Canada, but in reality, I believe, to line their own pockets" (Smallwood 37). Smallwood might refer here to Henry Bibb's newly-founded Refugee Home Society (RHS) which labored to create a settlement for fugitives in Canada

19 Austin Steward comments on New York City in much the same way (see Steward 301; see ch. 5).

West.[20] His project quickly became a hotly-debated center of discussion on financial assistance, as its critics—notably Mary Ann Shadd Cary—condemned the RHS for its corruption and "keep[ing] up the begging system" (*BAP* 249).[21] Smallwood takes a clear anti-begging stance in this debate by aligning himself implicitly with Shadd Cary's argument that the wrongful collection of money for fugitives undermined their reputation and went against the fundamental principle of self-reliance and independence: "The coloured people, as a body, in Canada, will never appreciate the benevolence, if benevolence it may be called, of those who gave large sums of money and quantities of clothing in their name, and that against their will […]" (Smallwood 37). Speaking out against the RHS and one of the most important black leaders in Canada West (Henry Bibb), show that his straightforwardness and conflict with authority continue in his adopted country.

Smallwood's return to the United States provides several narrative strands and episodes, but outlines, most notably, the dramatic final separation from his friend Torrey, as a consequence of which he again becomes a fugitive trying to find his way back to safety. In Washington, D.C., Smallwood and Torrey prepare to realize their plan of taking "about fourteen" fugitives away at the same time (38). In the city, everything seems to have been well prepared by their friend John Bush, when their venture suddenly turns into a "catastrophe" as soon as the police who "had been made aware of our coming" surround the premises (38-39). Smallwood's style conveys the drama of the scene and its tense atmosphere. Feeling outnumbered by the police force and realizing "they are closing in on us," Smallwood tries to justify that he and Torrey "had to make speed in our own escape and leave the poor creatures to the mercy of the bloodhounds" (39). Trying to save themselves in the face of imminent danger, Torrey and Smallwood are separated. Smallwood remembers the traumatic experience: "After getting about a quarter of a mile from the place I heard the clanking of the chains, and shrieks of the poor souls, but we could afford them no help, they were in the claws of the lions" (39). After several similar episodes in the *Narrative* so far, Smallwood now fully assumes the role of a fugitive on the run, approximating him ever so closely to an essential trope of the slave narrative and, especially, the Canadian slave narrative. Having left his free papers in Toronto puts him in great danger, and he

20 The "Constitution and Bylaws" from 1852 can be found in the *Black Abolitionist Papers* (208-11). The foundation of the RHS is dated "in the spring of 1851" and thus only shortly predates Smallwood's *Narrative* (208). Bibb outlines the project in the larger frame of refugee settlement in Canada West in his June 18, 1851, editorial in his paper *Voice of the Fugitive* (see *BAP* 143-48).

21 Cooper has sharply criticized Shadd Cary's accusations of the RHS as "opportunistic and probably reflect[ive of] her jealousy of Bibb's popularity" ("Doing Battle" 23).

knows that if he was arrested now, "[he] should be lodged in gaol for a fugitive, and [his] case would be hazardous" (39).

Crossing Baltimore on his way north, Smallwood picks up the first issue of the *Sun* that comments on the tragic events from the previous weekend. He encloses the extract from the paper in his narrative in order to intervene in what he perceives to be a misrepresentation of events:

"Information having been received by the police of this city, that a negro fellow by the name of Thomas Smallwood, who had removed to Toronto, Canada, a few months ago, and a white man, arrived in this city on Thursday night, about eleven o'clock, with a team, for the purpose of taking away a number of slaves; a strict look out was kept, and on Friday night the waggon (sic) with the horses and a number of slaves were taken, but Smallwood is not yet captured." (40)[22]

While the brief report demonstrates that Smallwood has again outsmarted the police authorities in Washington, he does not fail to call out the racism of the press and becomes a defender of his version of the story. He criticizes the *Sun* for calling him out by name, whereas Torrey, on the other hand, "was not molested during his stay in Washington; being a white man they dared not publish him" (40). Besides, Smallwood explains that had the paper accused Torrey wrongfully or without substantial proof, "it would only have subjected them to legal action" (40). Bitterly, he concludes that since he was black, "it made no difference [to them]" (40).

Continuing on his return journey to Canada West, Smallwood openly embraces his role as a fugitive. His friend "G.," who accompanies him and another man, leads him "as he did fugitives from slavery, because [Smallwood] had been published as a fugitive from justice" (40). Traveling on the Underground Railroad, Smallwood is faced, too, with the dangers surrounding the network. They pass the house of a woman who had usually been a stopover for G. to hand over fugitives to the next, "friend P." (41). However, Smallwood and his company find that "she had turned traitress and had betrayed some into the hands of their owners" (41). Smallwood is certain she has given them away, because the house of P., where they have rested, is surrounded again by constables from a near-by village. This time, it is not a woman but Smallwood who has to sneak out of the house and hide. Only after much disorientation and bewilderment after his latest escape does Smallwood reach Pennsylvania. There, he is taken into the home of a black family,

22 This extracts appears in *The Daily Atlas* (Boston) from November 30, 1843, which the *Sun* might have copied. In the *Atlas*, the incident is reported under the key words "Running Slaves."

the Clarks, who provide for his well-being and advise him on how to continue to Philadelphia (see 42). His stop in that city is equally short, since he receives a note from Torrey telling him to leave immediately "for other parts of the North; [and] that the slaveholders were in hot pursuit of [him]" (43). This is the last contact in the narrative between the two men. Smallwood takes time to recount Torrey's arrest and death in jail in Baltimore, paying respect to his friend and partner. He does not want to leave, however, without two fugitive families Torrey and himself had sent along before. The last bit of traveling before reaching Toronto is especially strenuous for Smallwood: all are in want of money, so he finally sells his watch in Buffalo to finance their ship passage north (43).

The third and final safe arrival in Canada ends Smallwood's long, convoluted digression devoted to re-crossing the border into the United States (ranging from pages 36 to 43). As if to leave behind the strains and dangers linked to his return to the States, Smallwood uses the imaginary border to shift his narrative abruptly to an assessment of Canada as a destination for black people. This prepares the narrative's climax, which outlines Smallwood's position on the black community, Canada and Great Britain, and his anti-Americanism. As previous passages have shown, the latter is linked to his strong disapproval of the institutionalized abolition movement. Abolitionists "on the other side [in the States]," he claims, have substantially contributed to spreading "the most absurd stories" about Canada among fugitives, so that Smallwood, speaking from his experience, laments the "ignorance" in which black people have been kept with regard to the potential "advantages" that Canada could hold in store for them (43). He directly accuses abolitionists of deceiving fugitives by "promis[ing] them perfect freedom and safety in the Northen (sic) States" (43-44). On the other hand, Smallwood's anger is equally directed at those black people who return from Canada to the United States and contribute to the bad image of the country amongst potential immigrants (44). Smallwood's class bias shows when he calls these returners "worthless," "idle," and "lazy" for blaming their failure to establish themselves successfully on the country rather than on themselves (44). To him, they are at odds with the otherwise positive impression that black settlers have left in Canada as "an industrious and sober class of people"—that group of people Smallwood actively encourages to emigrate (44).[23]

23 Cooper has pointed out that "[a] class divide was definitely at work in the Black communities of Ontario at mid-century, and at its centre was hostility against newly escaped fugitives from some influential freeborn persons, or those long free" ("Doing Battle" 273). She emphasizes the importance of class as a factor in the analysis of Black Canadian life, as with the case of the delegates at the North American Convention in Toronto: "[The] position of the Convention revealed its class bias [and ignorance of

These emigrants can hope for what Smallwood terms “the best national freedom in the world [i.e., British freedom]” (44). With this vocabulary, he returns to a central idea of his preface (see v), while it remains unclear what he exactly understands by the concept of ‘national freedom’. Certainly, Smallwood subscribes to an idealized vision of Great Britain, and Canada West by association, as free ‘nations’—overriding their past practice of slavery, as Clarke has observed (see “‘No Hearsay’” 18). The abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire, effective in 1834, was lauded and drew a disproportionate amount of attention from many black leaders. Prominent figures like Samuel Ringgold Ward could make use of the association of Great Britain to freedom to promote emigration to Canada. Indeed, claiming that “the glorious empire of Britain” offers the pinnacle of national freedoms furnishes Smallwood with the rhetorical means to denounce the United States’ “passage of that iniquitous fugitive law” to contrast the two ‘nations’ (44-45).

Smallwood’s critique of abolitionism ties in here on a political level: he argues that abolitionists helped bring about the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850 by trying to discourage emigration. In his view, had all fugitives “accumulat[ed]” in Canada instead of the Northern States, slaveholders would not have wanted a law to begin with, “knowing that it could have no effect on any part of […] Britain” (45).[24] In turn, he declares the abolitionist stories portraying “Canada [as] one of the most frightful spots on the globe” not only prevented black emigration to a safe haven but kept prospective settlers from British freedom and citizenship, because “had [they] been encouraged, or even let alone, they would have gone to Canada at first, and be now secure in their persons and property as British subjects” (44).[25] Smallwood admits that Canada West as a destination involves more for him than simple settlement; in fact, he joins other leaders who advocate allegiance to Great

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Canadian racism]. The delegates positioned themselves as the ‘talented tenth’ who knew what was best for the race. They blamed the masses of Blacks as architects of their own misery” (178-79).

24 Smallwood here believes in the integrity of the British Empire, which was, however, tested time and again in numerous fugitive slave extradition cases between 1842 and 1861. Roman J. Zorn has written the classic article on “Criminal Extradition” in 1957. It spans the time between the Nelson Hackett and John Anderson cases. Canadian courts (sometimes with the help from London) often decided in favor of fugitives, which helped propel the myth of a safe haven (see Ripley 4).

25 Smallwood does not fail to point out that he, unlike many abolitionists who had neglected their responsibility toward fugitives, was conscious of the power slavery would develop and “warned [his] brethren in the States” (46).

Britain and encourage Blacks to become British subjects.[26] Finally, Smallwood traces this kind of anti-emigrationism on the part of abolitionists to, essentially, a type of "national prejudice" that he sees "ingrafted (sic) in their national compact," by which he likely, and in line with many other black leaders, refers to the Declaration of Independence (45).[27] Smallwood's own assessment of the long-term development of race relations in the United States is therefore radically dire. Peaceful coexistence on the level of equality is only a "vain hope" of some of the more naïve U.S.-American abolitionists (45).

These pessimistic assertions culminate in one final reckoning with the United States. Smallwood makes himself the judge of the "most hypocritical, guileful, and arrogant *nation*" that tries to stubbornly maintain, export, and convert others to the system of slavery (46, added emphasis). He points to his own experiences in claiming that "foreigners, who become slaveholders in the States (sic) are more cruel than the natives" (47). Here, Smallwood cites the examples of and Irishman and Scotchman who become cruel slaveholders in the South. The examples are strikingly savory, as both men originally come from the praised British Empire, a fact he fails to elaborate upon, but reveal themselves to be highly susceptible to slavery (see 47). Smallwood purposefully and effectively refuses the United States' attitude "to meddle with the affairs of others" while at the same time not accepting outside commentary on the institution of slavery (48). He makes clear that "[he] will give [his] opinion of the United States, caring not who may demur thereto, nor what may be said thereof" (48).

This bold self-assertion includes calling out a terrible community of knowledge between slaveholders and bondsmen, from which neither is able to escape. The truth about the brutal realities of slavery, he explains, can only be

26 The *BAP* alone offer numerous instances of evoking black loyalty to Great Britain. Ripley states, for example, that the Amherstburg Convention delegates, in 1853, "approved more than twenty-five resolutions, most of them concerning life in Canada—praising her Majesty's government, urging blacks to be loyal subjects and good citizens" (270).

27 The interpretation of the Declaration as officially instituting racism by assuring "that the African race should never ascend to an equality with the whites" was held by many black leaders (Smallwood 45). Other than Walker's *Appeal*, the "Address to the Colored Inhabitants of North America" by Henry Bibb, John T. Fisher, and James F. Tinsley reflects the same thinking (*BAP* 170-76). Referring to the Declaration of Independence as "their national text book," the authors decry the rift between the claims that "look[…] well on paper" and the "hypocrisy" they describe to black Americans (170). The document clearly foreshadows Douglass's speech "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" (1852).

known by “those who commit them, and the slaves themselves” (50). The consequences of this reality lead to a struggle for credibility that slaves and ex-slaves face in this community of knowledge (50). Remembering this struggle fuels Smallwood’s tone which becomes visibly more agitated and polemical. He outlines that Blacks, despite their enslavement, have contributed to winning independence for the United States, and have defended it even against the British (see 51). Smallwood establishes the black population as instrumental in building United States society and the economy, heightening the sense of outrage and shame at their present situation (52). Given the sustained status of Blacks in the South as non-persons, Smallwood is at a loss to explain why there are no rebellions and uprisings against white rule. His final verdict that “it is a disgrace for [Black people] to stay when they can get away” is another indicator of his conflicted relationship to the black community, while it is a telling commentary on the significance of escape as a form of open rebellion (52).

Smallwood’s visible alienation with both the United States and its inhabitants (white and black) results in the reiteration of an idealized version of Canada West as a powerful counterexample. The province, he explains, cannot be infiltrated by the lures of slavery emanating from the United States, because it is “an integral part of the glorious British empire” and, moreover, a country under God’s care (Smallwood 45). As such, Canada West becomes not just the “*true* land of opportunity,” as Clarke has observed (“‘No Hearsay’” 26; original emphasis). Additionally, it transforms into the true ‘nation under God’, “just and powerful [,…] pursu[ing] the just and righteous course” (Smallwood 45). Again, Smallwood expands the stereotypical image of Canada as a safe haven for fugitives by evoking its “best national freedom” that will be every immigrant’s recompense (52). In terms of the emigration debate within the black community, Smallwood has a clear position that focuses on “a land on the continent of America where [Blacks] can get to”—implying that he does not so much support other emigration destinations as North America, the rightful home for people of African descent (52). Smallwood casts Canada as a kind of Garden of Eden where Blacks can finally “prosper and multiply,” live industriously, and thereby gather their strengths and power to “become a terror to their enemies *on the other side*” (52, added emphasis). Smallwood speaks directly to the threats of annexation by the United States, “that much desired project, by some” (52), which was hotly debated in the Canadian provinces.[28] Like other black leaders, Smallwood envisions

28 Possible annexation of Canada by the United States represented a real threat to many Canadians and was debated in the press. However, not everybody was against it, as Canadian pro-annexation groups existed as well. Ripley mentions that “a serious annexation movement emerged in the Canadas in the late 1840s […]. The movement

Blacks fighting for Britain against the United States in the case of war (see 52). At the same time, his statement evokes the border between Canada and the United States as a powerful demarcation of black loyalties.

The short piece in the Appendix, "The conduct of the Coloured People, in Canada, impolitic", too, is an effort to preserve this idealized image of Canada through an *ex-negativo* definition of *un-American* habits and attitudes. Specifically, Smallwood addresses the question of separate religious black institutions. Smallwood and Samuel Ringgold Ward agree in this respect, both being of the opinion that this type of segregation must be avoided because it hinders the "moral and religious elevation" of Blacks in Canada West (59). In Smallwood's view, separate institutions contradict the image of equal laws and treatment in the country, and would only befit the United States where the churches discriminate against Blacks "as [the] State [does]" (59). Smallwood laments the "prejudice" that this unequal treatment within the denominations has engrained in his fellow Blacks and which has spurned their wish to worship in separate institutions (59). He therefore admonishes prospective emigrants "not to bring that spirit to this country; we want none of it here" (60). Smallwood's comment does not simply reflect his critical stance toward the black community, but also shifts the blame of being prejudiced against whites to them. This seems unfair in the light of the struggle around (de)segregated worship which continued on Canadian soil. As Donald Simpson points out, the response of white churches to the question of slavery was of "a great variety" and he cites the *Provincial Freeman*'s criticism of the Canadian Wesleyan Church's silence on slavery (23-24). The fight around desegregated worship is not only one of white versus black separate churches but also an intra-denominational one between Canadian and United States branches.

The most important facet of Canada and Great Britain's difference from the United States, an aspect Smallwood keeps returning to, is that they "are not slaveholders" and treat everybody equally which, in his logic, forbids upholding the system of separate worship (60). In an outspoken and strategic call for integration with the host society, Smallwood—late in the *Narrative*—outlines his vision for Black Canadian life:

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appealed primarily to embittered Conservatives and young French-Canadian nationalists and was particularly strong in Montreal […]" (*BAP* 241n2). In the city, the Annexation Association issued a manifesto advocating separation from Britain, which found wide support before, however, the movement ended in the wake of changing political conditions such as the passage of the FSL in 1850 (see 241n2).

> "It is our business to identify our interest with that of our white fellow citizens, and to form the most intimate relations with them of which our circumstances in life will admit. They have, under God, all the wealth, influence, and power. How dare we then, poor refugees, to say, as I understand some have said, that, 'they want nothing to do with the white people:' –the very people to whom they fly for freedom. We have neither learning, wealth, nor influence, at the present. It is to them, under God, that we owe our present freedom. With what grace, then, can we complain of prejudice against us, while we ourselves are the promoters thereof." (60)

What sounds like Smallwoodian realpolitik here in fact dramatically complicates race relations in Canada, especially when he supposes that fugitives seek shelter in Canada as a white man's country, and not because there are established black communities which organize assistance to the new arrivers. What is more, his idealized allegiance to Canada for the sake of denigrating the United States clearly conflicts with his own observations from the preface, where he had admitted prejudice in Canada was "equal to any thing [he] ever experienced in the south (sic)" (vii). With repeated paradoxes troubling a homogeneous view of British North America, Smallwood's view of Canada West's role is complex and does not offer a clear resolution within the *Narrative*.

His final paragraphs reflect an ultimately torn, conflicted, and ambiguous narrative persona. In his discussion of the black population's current condition, he solidifies his own class bias, his merciless stance towards his fellow Blacks, and therefore comes full circle with his allegiance to aspects of David Walker's criticism. From those black 'renegades' who had fought behind U.S. lines, he broadens his criticism to "the coloured men of the present generation" (55). He accuses his peers for lacking "energy [and] courage" to work towards change, instead "follow[ing] the white man, and that very far behind" (55). The call to action that Smallwood might take from David Walker seems to go unheard as his outlook on the future for the black population in the United States is bleak. In the only direct reference to David Walker in Smallwood's text, he chooses to cite Walker's radical opinion on Blacks in the United States who "are the most degraded, wretched, and abject set of beings that ever lived since the world began, and I pray God, that none like us ever may live again until time shall be no more" (qtd. in Smallwood 56).

The hierarchical difference Smallwood establishes between Blacks in the United States and Canada adds another layer to his vision of black people. The latter group he sees as the current pinnacle of "resolution" and "ambition" (55-56). Smallwood takes his visits to the Queen's Bush in the Canadian hinterland in 1843 and 1846 as a base to laud the pioneer spirit of these black settlers bearing the Canadian wilds, content with a simple, hard life (55). Like Samuel Ringgold

Ward, Smallwood exalts the Black yeoman idyll and contrasts it with the image of those Blacks who seek refuge in the city, in servant professions—"Their highest ambition is to be a good waiter, or barber, and then they are made" (56). The difference here between the class bias of some black leaders—who mostly did not live in the country permanently—and their (abstract) ideas for the general black population is obvious. Cooper has called the expectations "that both Black leaders and white abolitionists had for the refugees [...] very unfair" ("Doing Battle" 235-36). Smallwood is intent on severing all ties to his former homeland and his former community, but it is questionable whether his positions served him well in his adopted country.

3.5 RADICAL GENEALOGY: SMALLWOOD AND WALKER

Although Smallwood makes only two direct references to Walker at all—his inclusion of Walker's biographical sketch and introduction by Henry Highland Garnet in the preface and a brief quote towards the end of the *Narrative*—readers of the *Appeal* will recognize numerous overlaps between the two activists. This section therefore serves to show that David Walker's *Appeal* is a powerful subtext of Smallwood's *Narrative*, and the only outside voice he admits. In fact, I argue that Walker figures as an inspirational leader and ideological role model, whose legacy the *Narrative* attempts to uphold and continue. It resumes Walker's radical discourse, as Clarke has suggested (see Review 271), as well as supports Walker's claims with examples from Smallwood's personal experience. In doing so, the *Narrative* establishes a cross-border allegiance in which Smallwood fashions himself as the living example of Walker's account.

Walker's *Appeal* has become an iconic document of resistance to white supremacy and is known for shaping the discourse on black nationalism (see Thabiti Asukile's review of Sterling Stuckey's arguments, 16). It has been treated with scholarly superlatives as "probably one of the most controversial tracts written during the ante-bellum era in America" (Asukile 17). Even judging from the outrage the *Appeal* created after its publication, Walker fits well into the line of great men that Smallwood evokes in his preface, as well as to the sense of urgency that he creates. In fact, one could say that Smallwood takes the sense of living in extraordinary times from Walker, who stresses the feeling that the question of slavery is fast approaching its (violent) resolution, entailing judgment day for pro-slavery forces (see Walker 61). If Smallwood takes Walker as an example, he also adopts the latter's strategy of self-authentication to speak about

this extraordinary age: Walker bases his opinion—and the right to voice it—solely on his experience and as "the result of my observations" (11). Smallwood, too, repeatedly evokes his authority as a first-hand witness (see viii-ix). Walker, however, seems more focused overall in transmitting his authority to the page and his implied readership. His *Appeal* is carefully composed and straight-forward, as much as it is elaborate and emotional. While Smallwood certainly shares the emotionality, he is often more erratic and more polemical. He is driven, but also hastens through his numerous episodes without necessarily creating a coherent narrative, which can be challenging for readers. Nevertheless, if Walker openly calls his text an "Appeal," I argue that Smallwood's narrative is as much a call to action, a text that attempts to rouse his readers.

Smallwood begins by inserting Walker prominently in the preface. Using Garnet's 1848 edition of the *Appeal*, he includes Garnet's introduction and biographical sketch of Walker verbatim in his own narrative opening. In addition to being a powerful endorsement of Walker via Garnet, inserting Garnet's pieces also constitutes an intriguing instance of life writing within life writing. Garnet's biographical sketch is actually a condensed slave narrative and creates a powerful martyr figure that leaves readers with a vivid and energized picture of Walker, albeit only a "few materials can be gathered" regarding his life (qtd. in Smallwood x). Smallwood consequently continues Garnet's work in trying to preserve "the very high esteem which is entertained for the memory of DAVID WALKER (sic)" (ix). This includes a 'correct' and respectful treatment of the material at hand. Garnet establishes Walker as a crucial voice in the genealogy of anti-slavery activism, which, in turn, makes him one of Smallwood's great men: "The [*Appeal*] is valuable, because it was among the first, and was actually the boldest and most direct appeal in behalf of freedom, which was made in the early part of the Anti-Slavery Reformation" (ix). As the editor and Walker's advocate, Garnet claims a place for Walker in history and historiography as a hero of anti-slavery's earliest hour. This attempt to establish and continue a line of black anti-slavery fighters informs the narrative project in Smallwood's text.

The choice to include the extensive description of Walker's life in this way seems strategic, too. Garnet's biographical sketch reinforces the image of the great man, but more importantly, prepares readers to recognize several parallels between Smallwood and Walker as the *Narrative* progresses: Garnet portrays Walker as "emphatically a self-made man" (qtd. in Smallwood x). Smallwood, too, builds on this ur-American topos, most forcefully perhaps through his leading position in Washington's Underground Railroad as a free Black man. Walker shares this engagement with fugitive slaves, which Garnet connects to Walker's private life, since he opened "his house [as] shelter" for refugees. Smallwood, in

turn, describes his pioneer Underground Railroad work as part of his private motivation, but very much in connection to his public persona (x). Most importantly, Garnet casts Walker as a hero assailed from many sides, and points out that he had no few "enemies" in the black community (xi). This aspect resonates strongly with Smallwood, who does not tarry to point to the many struggles he has experienced with some of his fellow Blacks. Through his *Narrative*, Smallwood not only fashions himself into an acolyte and fellow-activist of Walker but into the living example of Walker's tenets. Consequently, Smallwood becomes a powerful tool in Walker's spirit: Weighing in on facing his enemies, Garnet quotes Walker as having said "that he had nothing to fear from such a pack of coward blood-hounds; but if he did go [to Canada], he would hurl back such thunder across the great lakes, that would cause them to tremble in their strong holds" (xi). Smallwood uses his *Narrative* to "hurl back" his truth to his perceived enemies by inscribing himself in one line with one of the most prominent black personalities of the first third of the nineteenth century.

In following some of Walker's core arguments, Smallwood is at times even harsher in his judgments and language than Walker. Most obviously, Smallwood's obsession with treachery and disunion amongst the black community, which pervades the *Narrative*, echoes Walker's lament that "the colored people are now, in the United States of America, [disunited], [which is] the reason our natural enemies are enabled to keep their feet on our throats" (Walker 30). Walker is constantly concerned with exposing the state of white-induced "ignorance" (29), and appeals to overcome internal division in order to bring about the betterment and "higher attainments" for black people (41). His language is as incendiary as it is empowering, and driven by optimism with regard to the fact that although their situation seems helpless and dire now, Black people have the potential to move up with the help of God: "we can help ourselves; [...] if we lay aside abject servility, and be determined to act like men" (73-74). Smallwood, on the other hand, does much to reveal what he, too, perceives as self-inflicted harm of the black community, but overall seems to lack the optimism for fundamental change as his class bias often gets in the way. We have seen how he accuses "the coloured men of the present generation" of lacking "energy [and] courage" to overcome imitations of the white man (Smallwood 55). Real change for the community, in Smallwood's view, seems possible only in Canada, where the pioneers in the Queen's Bush stand as emblems of black achievements and abilities (see 55-56).

While Smallwood and Walker differ as to how and to what extent an improvement of the situation for black people can be brought about, both are firm in their rejection of colonization in the shape of the American Colonization Society, which they see striving to remove Blacks from North America. Walker

had already recognized colonization to be a crucial political topic by 1829. He speaks out very forcefully against the colonization "scheme" which he perceives as a foul deal to forcibly relocate Black people out of the way (56; 59). Smallwood casts himself as the living example of the "inducements" that supporters of colonization in Africa held out to Black people (Smallwood 15). Significantly, his conversion from working for the ACS to its avid opponent occurs in "about 1830" and thus, shortly after Walker's *Appeal* was first published (15). While Smallwood makes no direct connection to the possible influence of this tract, it is important to note that in his detailed description of the "wicked" operations of the organization, he seems to closely paraphrase Walker (15). For example, Smallwood's accusation that the ACS wanted nothing more than "the draining off the free coloured population from among the slave population by inducing them to emigrate to Africa" echoes Walker (15). In the *Appeal*, the latter had countered white colonizationists to "tell us now no more about colonization, for America is as much our country, as it is yours" (80). Smallwood extends this bold statement into "the place [to settle for black people] could only be found in America" (Smallwood 32). While it seems here that the signifier "America" means the United States for Walker, but "North America" (focusing on Canada) for Smallwood, this notion is complicated further as both establish their allegiances to Great Britain (see below).

The alleged black disunity and an open anti-colonization stance are tied to a fierce anti-Americanism in both authors. Aside from bitterly and sarcastically commenting on white treatment of Blacks in the United States, for example, Walker is instrumental in exposing the Declaration of Independence as hypocritical. He points out the importance of the document in the struggle of the young republic against Britain, in which process the "declaration [still] was a glorious document" (91). However, after he quotes the famous beginning of the Declaration, Walker extends an emotional call to white fellow citizens to recognize its inherent discrepancies: "See your declaration, Americans!! (sic) Do you understand your own language? […] Compare your own language above […] with your cruelties and murders inflicted by your cruel and unmerciful fathers on ourselves on our fathers and on us (sic)" (85-86). Walker's effective display of racism and oppression in the United States disenchants the ur-American document which, in turn, becomes an example of hypocritical white supremacy.

Smallwood meets Walker's radical assessment with at times more polemical accusations, culminating in his unforgiving statement that "[t]he United States is the most hypocritical, guileful, and arrogant nation on the face of the earth" (46). There is a difference to Walker's approach in the *Appeal*, which is directed also to a white citizenry in need of operating substantial changes and taking

consciousness of itself and of its promises to all Americans ("understand your own language" 85). This is not to say that Walker does not take on a radical stance towards whites. In fact, one of his key arguments is for Black people to unite and become aware of their potential *despite* white racism and prejudice and their being "natural enemies" to Blacks (71). Yet, it seems crucial that such potential and change is lived out by facing the "enemy" on the same soil. On the contrary, Smallwood's outlook on race relations in the United States seems more finalized. He declares that "the people of the United States will never voluntarily grant the African race among them freedom" (48). For him, the United States appears too corrupt to be saved, and he gives his allegiance to Great Britain and Canada instead.

Indeed, Smallwood seems to have been inspired by Walker in his use of terminology and the way he establishes these allegiances. The position of Great Britain and Canada therefore is conspicuous both in the *Appeal* and the *Narrative*. For example, Walker casts "the English" as "the best friends the colored people have upon earth" (53). Consequently, he somewhat belittles England's implication in the slave trade "notwithstanding [the fact that] they [i.e. Great Britain] have treated us a little cruel" (53). Walker is also the one who uses the term "nation" repeatedly in this context, as in the statement "as a nation, the English are our friends" (53). He calls for the support of England and openly demands an alliance when he proclaims that "[t]here is no intelligent *black man* who knows any thing (sic), but esteems a real English man" (53; original emphasis). Therefore, should it become necessary, England and "the hospitable shores of Canada" are the only acceptable emigration destinations next to Haiti (61).

Similarly, Smallwood offers his allegiances to Great Britain and Canada by lauding their "national freedom" (44). In his view, Blacks can find the 'true' freedom the United States withholds in British North America. Although he remains unclear on the exact meaning of the expression, one might see "nation" as another signifier that continues the opposition between the free, seemingly stable monarchy, and the slavery-ridden, unstable republic. In any case, Smallwood is not able to clearly shape his position towards Great Britain. Aside from neglecting Britain's former practice of slavery, like Walker, his brief mention of his experiences of racism and discrimination in Canada West modifies the image of the so-called 'haven' for fugitives. The nature of Great Britain and Canada West's stance toward black people remain ambiguous, and the *Narrative* offers no resolution on how to incorporate them in a vision of free black life.

Finally, the *Appeal* and the *Narrative* enter into direct conversation as they both establish a black intellectual activist genealogy. In this sense, Smallwood's adherence to Walker gains importance in that he inserts himself not simply in a

line of any great men but in the line of great *black* leaders. Walker begins to draw attention to a tradition of black leadership in his *Appeal* by concentrating on the Reverend Richard Allen (1760-1831), founder of the AME Church in Philadelphia, as an exemplary member of the black community and a fighter for the betterment of its condition. He writes Allen's homage as someone who prevailed despite much opposition from both white and black and who "has done more in a spiritual sense for his ignorant and wretched brethren than any other man of colour has, since the world began" (70). Walker's predictions for Allen's status in the annals of the history of black people is remarkable: one part of the liberation of Blacks from their current disparaging situation, Walker implies, will be the rise of black intellectuals and "historians" who will be responsible for writing black history including "the crimes of this nation to the then gazing world" (69). This process will include the rehabilitation of the reputation of Richard Allen who will then "stand on the pages of history among the greatest divines who have lived" (69). Walker's *Appeal* here is all the more performative, as it contributes to assuring Allen's place "in succeeding generations" (69).

There is, then, both a rhetorical and a formal continuity between the texts by Walker/Garnet and Smallwood in how they cast and inaugurate a genealogy of black leaders. There is, on the one hand, the textual hybridity that emerges from including life narratives within other life narratives as a form of homage and paying respect to an outstanding personality, and on the other hand, the rhetorical strategies that contribute to a self-determined authentication of leaders across borders and generations. Consider, for example, how Smallwood authenticates Walker as one of the great men of the black community and purposefully places him in the group of leaders. In this way, Smallwood restores authorship and respect to Walker in the preface of his narrative—defending him against Paola Brown's "diabolic" plagiarism (ix)—and points him out as "an estimable man" (ix). Both Richard Allen and David Walker are presented as martyr-like figures in the respective texts, struggling against opposition and braving personal and physical attacks. This imagery, finally, is also what Smallwood identifies with. He casts himself as assailed (personally and professionally) by white and black enemies and as prevailing over obstacles. The concern he demonstrates in recovering the *Appeal* and its importance to Walker, and supporting the latter's reputation, is the same he shows for his own reputation and standing. I have already discussed the use of Garnet's description of Walker in the preface, but it imports to point out again that it is Garnet who insists on the place that Walker will hold in the future histories of Blacks in America. He proclaims that "whatever name shall be placed first on the list of heroes, that of the author of the Appeal (sic) will not be second" (qtd. in Smallwood ix). Therefore, a genealogy emerges

in which Walker stands on the shoulders of Allen, and Garnet and Smallwood establish the standing of Walker.

This genealogy, however, does not exist in isolation. In 1851, when the *Narrative* was published, Black North America could look upon an impressive network of black leading men and women who had taken up Walker's torch and were working with fugitives, for the abolition of slavery, and for a self-determined future for Blacks on the continent. Although Smallwood's focus concentrates on Walker, the radical genealogy lived on in the leadership in Canada West, in editor-activists like Mary Ann Shadd Cary and Henry Bibb, and on the East Coast of the United States, where an elite network of individuals spanning Alexander Crummell, Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, Henry Highland Garnet, Samuel Ringgold Ward, and many others, was active. Many of them were border-crossing individuals like Smallwood himself—epitomized in Harriet Tubman's radical work with fugitives—and they were working for a black community regardless and in spite of borders. Although Smallwood never openly claims power as a successor of Walker, his *Narrative* clarifies that he is willing to engage in the debates on the future of the black community and thus, qualifies as a leader.

4. Heroism

Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro (1855)

His parents escaped with their three-year-old son Samuel from a plantation in Maryland in 1820. After they reached New Jersey and later, New York, Ward began a career as a teacher, pastor, journalist and political candidate for the Liberty Party. Not least, he became a well-known abolitionist and active public speaker, and quickly entered the league of Black leaders in the nineteenth century. He was renowned for his sharp rhetoric as an orator, and has been "ranked next to Frederick Douglass" (Winks, "Ward"). Ward has become part of the canon of African American oratory and anti-slavery discourse.[1] A "militant" supporter of abolition and the rights of black people, Ward later advocated the cause on an international platform in Great Britain (see Winks, "Ward"). His involvement in transatlantic anti-slavery work also reflects his international, cross-border life. From his birth as the son of two slaves in the United States to his death on Jamaica in roughly 1866, he lived and worked in numerous places in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. Ward was therefore even more widely traveled than the otherwise highly mobile figures of Smallwood, Steward, and Warren in this book.

However, despite being considered "ahead of his time" in his erudite assessment of a necessarily interracial abolitionism and the place of Canada in this work, scholars still consider him "an enigma" (Winks, "Ward") and an ambiguous figure (see Watson 104; 108). Representative of Ward's critical assessment by scholars, William Andrews, in his authoritative *To Tell a Free Story* (1986), sees in Ward a straightforward writer and speaker who dealt openly with racism in Great Britain and Canada, and opposed it to black superiority (see 198), but he

1 Philip S. Foner and Robert J. Branham, for example, include Ward's speech against the Fugitive Slave Law in their anthology on African American oratory, *Lift Every Voice* (1998; 217-19).

nevertheless calls Ward compromised in his relation to England's upper class (see 194). In terms of Ward's literary project, Andrews recognizes Ward as a "threshold figure" for literary history who asked questions ahead of his time (203), but who struggled to overcome the label of "fugitive" and "ex-fugitive," an attempt which necessarily failed due to the limits of a romantic ideal of an essential self (see 200-01).[2] As such, Andrews's final assessment of Ward, too, is torn between the two poles of his figure: On the one hand, Ward appears as the nostalgic romantic writer; on the other hand, Andrews ascribes to Ward the establishment of a Black progress genealogy as a "sustaining myth" for the black population (198). It will be part of the work of the present chapter to trace this tension in Ward, and to link the discursive strategies of what I call his heroic genealogy to an ultimately conflicted expression of Ward's allegiances to Great Britain that he needs to incorporate into his personal vision of the future for black people.

Ward also appears as a central reference in Erica Ball's 2012 study *To Live an Antislavery Life*. Ball argues convincingly that the idea of committing oneself to an anti-slavery life, together with the notion of "respectability," constituted the heart of the black middle-class' "personal politics" in the antebellum North (40). In her line of argument, Ward becomes a crucial figure in pointing out the possibilities that revolutionary anti-slavery lives offered young, aspiring free Blacks (see 4). Through his *Autobiography*, Ward becomes the representative black self-made man embodying the core value of self-improvement, an exemplary figure reminding free young Blacks of their duty and "the positive rewards" of engaging in the freedom struggle (3). Ball intersects with Andrews in pointing out how Ward consciously stylizes his experience into an "archetypal significance" for emulation (Andrews 198; see Ball 3), but does not subscribe to Andrews's idea of the romantic hero in perpetual search for an identity. In fact, Ball reads Ward as actively engaged in a discursive and ideological network which shaped a very clear and distinct identity for free Blacks, namely the self-made man and dutiful anti-slavery activist. The present chapter will take Ball's work on Ward's anti-slavery life one step further in linking it to the theoretical project of the *Autobiography*, which wraps the self-made man in the guise of the heroic fugitive and black gentlemanhood.

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2 Andrews describes how in the *Autobiography*, the fugitive becomes a heroic figure in the "recuperation and maturation of [his] essential self," which corresponds to "the romantic ideal of antebellum Afro-American narrative" (200). In Andrews's point of view, however, Ward has not "undergone the transforming self-restoration" he had hoped for (201).

Tim Watson's 2008 study *Caribbean Culture and British Fiction*, although published before Ball's, must be considered separately here because it offers the most elaborate and most critically engaging assessment of Ward to date. It also is the first study to situate Ward in a clearly international context by considering that his "transatlantic life" makes him a part of several Atlantic (literary) histories (12; see 110). At the same time, Watson is also the one to recognize that Ward remains hard to place geographically, and that "histories that use national frameworks" fail to describe him adequately (106). Where Andrews had highlighted Ward's establishment of the black progressive genealogy, Watson actually sees in his writings an expression of black conservatism (see 109) at the same time that they reflect Ward's "curious compound figure" of the "modern Negro" (106). In analyzing Ward's written output, Watson's focus lies primarily on Ward's final years after his arrival in Jamaica and his sharp dismissal of the Morant Bay rebellion in 1865.[3] Ward's pamphlet *Reflections upon the Gordon Rebellion* (1866), which he wrote as an intervention in favor of local government and against the black rebels, paints thus a very different picture from the *Autobiography*. The fundamental tension for Watson, therefore, lies in Ward's representation of black uplift and internationalism that can be articulated only from "within the framework of the British empire and Victorian respectability" (106). The present chapter concurs with Watson in seeing in Ward's apologetic attitude toward Great Britain, along with a classism regarding certain groups of black people, a possibly irreconcilable "dilemma" (111).

This chapter contributes to shedding more light on Ward's *Autobiography* as his major work and, consequently, highlights the different points of view articulated in it, while also considering Ward's involvement in two other geographical locales, Canada West and Great Britain. In fact, the *Autobiography*, ten years before the rebellion in Jamaica, reveals that insecurity and tension were very important topoi that marked Ward's life as well as the articulation of his theories. The text also reveals the struggles of a black elite author to straddle the claims for black subjecthood and allegiances to an imperial center. The elaborate

3 The Morant Bay Rebellion began on October 11, 1865, with a protest march led by Paul Bogle. Several of the participants in the march were subsequently killed by the militia, in return of which the situation escalated further, causing the death of several, mostly white, citizens. Governor Edward Eyre quickly declared martial law and in the following month, several hundred people were killed, often without trial. Bogle and other fellow insurgents were captured and executed. Watson explains that in Jamaica, the Rebellion "is firmly established as one of the most significant events in the period between emancipation in the 1830s and the rise of the nationalist and labour movements in the 1930s" (104-05).

Autobiography is reminiscent of Austin Steward's lengthy narrative of 1856, and is yet more obviously experimental and different in focus. This is partly due to Ward's different point of departure in writing his text which, too, sets him apart from the other authors of this book. He is becomes a fugitive as a toddler, when his parents escape with him from Maryland. With the shadowy vestiges of slavery still lingering about his early childhood, he nevertheless grows up as a free black man surrounded by his core family and as a part of an intellectual, activist black elite. The text is therefore marked not as a conventional slave narrative but an "autobiography," and still is labeled as the story of "a fugitive negro" in its title.

Most importantly, this chapter argues, the *Autobiography* embraces fluid genre boundaries and plays with a number of textual formats to accommodate a variety of lived experiences and potential futures for black people. Similar to Thomas Smallwood, Ward's text challenges genre conventions and expectations towards black antebellum writers. If his title already suggests that he will propose a different trajectory to recreate his journey from enslavement to freedom, a look at Ward's elaborate table of contents reveals the triad on which his life narrative is based. It is, in fact, autobiography, travel report, and *anti-slavery* narrative. With Erica Ball's study, we are able to understand that these three are inseparably intertwined for Ward, as they represent his religious anti-slavery life as a prism of these constitutive elements. In this way, Ward produces not merely the narrative of a traveling life but his traveling life narrative, using his writing to explore the possibilities of cross-border literature.

This chapter will keep Ward's original structure to take a closer look at what themes and topics tie these elements together. It will show how his concepts of religious anti-slavery, the black gentleman, and the black yeoman, as they emerge in the parts on autobiography and the United States, inform his complex allegiances to Canada West and Great Britain. It will also carve out Ward's genealogies of heroic fugitives and black intellectuals which constitute the heart of his text in the part on Canada and are anchored in a theoretical approach that connects the black gentleman, the suitability of Canada West for fugitives, and his allegiances to the imperial center. Finally, the chapter will suggest that his types of genealogy can be read as that form of alternative minority historiography that Ward himself deems necessary in an age on the brink of modernity. While the *Autobiography* remains, *in fine*, ambiguous on the stance he takes toward Great Britain and Canada as grounds to explore black progress in an environment still marked by discrimination and open racism, the life narrative also stands as an experiment to leave behind the confines of the slave narrative in order to reveal both literary-discursive as well as practical potentialities for modern Blacks in the nineteenth century.

4.1 WARD'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY: ALTERNATIVE BLACK LIFE WRITING

The opening part, Ward's actual autobiography, only spans the first four chapters of the whole narrative. Composed at the end of his tour in Great Britain in 1855 and just before setting sail to Jamaica, the rest of his narrative, twenty more chapters in total, are dedicated to Ward's "Anti-Slavery Labours" in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. In genre terms, Andrews considers "the narrative of travel and exploration" to be "a new form of first-person writing in Afro-American letters [...] [evolving] out of the European travel correspondence" (Andrews 170). While Andrews cites Frederick Douglass and William Wells Brown as the first of such "correspondents" (170-71), he fails to list Ward here as one of the most important and elaborate representatives. Indeed, Ward frames his life narrative explicitly as an "account of [his] travels" he was asked to produce and thus avoids the more typical slave narrative framework of the life and sufferings of an individual (Ward v).

The autobiographical beginning is crucial for the way it navigates between elements of the slave narrative and black autobiography. The first three chapters are central to embedding Ward in the history of his family and cover their escape and life after slavery. Chapter four already marks the transition to the following part of the *Autobiography*, which is dedicated to his travels and anti-slavery labors. Ward uses the beginning to create a first type of genealogy, that of family heritage, which foreshadows his genealogy of heroism in later parts of the narrative. At the same time, he lays the conceptual foundations for the black yeoman and the black gentleman that he will develop throughout. Fundamentally, however, Ward articulates these concepts as part of his process of transforming the slave narrative into black life writing. While the *Autobiography* acknowledges certain elements of the genre, possibly to appeal to a white British readership, it in fact offers an alternative life writing for Blacks who cannot (and do not want to) be reduced to a former status as "slave".

Ward's inclusion of a dedication and a preface are indicative of this transformation. Both elements might either be typical for the slave narrative's requirements to authenticate the black author or simply a staple of autobiographical writing at the time that speaks to the reputation of the author through a friend, business partner, or the like. Similar to Smallwood, Ward uses the dedication and the preface to operate an authentication 'in reverse' and lay claim to his own

authorship and writing. The letter of dedication to the Duchess of Sutherland,[4] for example, is a testimony to Ward's recently ended tour of Great Britain and of his connections to the English upper classes. While the Duchess becomes a stand-in for Great Britain as "the noblest of all lands," deeply invested in an anti-slavery sentiment "from the prince to the peasant," she is also a powerful figure who let Ward into her "circle of [...] influence" (iii). This not only created numerous opportunities for Ward to follow his anti-slavery mission (see iii) but also to form personal alliances. Despite the polite submissiveness of the letter, however, it should not be overlooked that it is the only prefatory letter in Ward's narrative and from his own *plume*. In similar ways to Smallwood, therefore, it is Ward who authenticates the Duchess as a philanthropist and reliable anti-slavery supporter.

The preface, too, appears to be a deferential introduction of his work to a prospective readership. Yet, it serves Ward to boldly assert himself as an author in control of his work. Usually, the accepted convention of introductory letters placed new publications under the patronage of a respected sponsor and presented the author as a humble scribe with self-professed mediocre talent. While this placed the origo of the work outside the author's hands and into that of the "coaxer," as Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson have called it (50),[5] leaving her/him with the mere process of writing, Ward operates an important twist on this motif by reappropriating his work immediately. Although he explains that friends and acquaintances urged him to write the Autobiography (see Ward v), Ward re-assumes authority and control through the actual process of writing. He is humble and downplays his writing abilities, but counters this with the double responsibility that prompted him to write at all: "As a Negro, I live and therefore write for my people; as a Man, I freely speak my mind upon whatever concerns

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4 Harriet Elizabeth Georgiana Leveson-Gower, duchess of Sutherland (1806–1868). The duchess is a highly interesting choice of patroness by Ward. She was a confidante of Queen Victoria and Mistress of the Robes at the court, while her sympathies for the anti-slavery cause were both well-known and mocked (see Reynolds). Her patronage of Harriet Beecher Stowe, and particularly her meeting at Stafford House in 1852, while not being "particularly important in bringing about the end of slavery," drew considerable attention for the movement (Reynolds). Absent, however, from Ward's letter—as from Reynold's biographical sketch—is the Duchess' family's involvement in the infamous Highland Clearances, which drew cringing criticism from Karl Marx. For a discussion on the allegations —justified or not—, see Richards (1970) and Pugh (1980).

5 Smith and Watson define the coaxer, or coercer, in the terms of Plummer as "any person or institution or set of cultural imperatives that solicits or provokes people to tell their stories" (50, Plummer qtd. 21).

me and my fellow men" (vii). In his version of 'double consciousness', Ward both outlines his indebtedness to the black population, which underlines the text's telos as an anti-slavery narrative, and anticipates another of his key concepts, black subjecthood, which he will develop as black gentlemanhood further on in the narrative.

What is more, the preface illustrates the fluid genre boundaries in his text. He admits that readers might wonder that he "freely made remarks upon other things than slavery, and compared [his] own [life] with those of other peoples. I did the former as a Man, the latter as a Negro" (vii). In fact, as a black author, his narrative is full of stories other than his own. Similarly to Austin Steward, for example, who also included family anecdotes and fugitive stories, Ward's text reflects the ties to other famous black abolitionists and leaders. At the same time, Ward is making the point that slavery as a dominant topic as well as a cruel reality does not define his being. Having been made a fugitive by his parents as they escaped from Maryland, he has known life only in freedom: "In what sense I am a fugitive, will appear on perusal of my personal and family history" (vii). Ward re-emphasizes black personhood through claiming a say and a voice in whatever he deems important. He therefore makes several suggestions in the preface about how his own *Autobiography* should be considered. Although Ward himself remains unclear on what exactly his text is genre-wise, he distances it from a literary piece, "for it is not written by a literary man" (vii). Offering this highly interesting comment on the status of autobiography between fact and fiction (see Smith and Watson 7-8), Ward also suggests several other terms to qualify his text, such as "some *account* of my travels," a prospective "*memorial* of my visit to England," and an "*embod[iment* of…] the opinions and arguments I had often employed to promote the work of emancipation" (Ward v-vi; all emphases added). In this way foreshadowing his combined text of travel and anti-slavery narrative, Ward embarks on rendering his autobiography as a basis.

After the dedication and the preface have marked Ward as a black gentleman of letters with connections to the English ruling classes, he begins the actual narrative by returning to his origins, which are dominated by a tension between ambiguity, insecurity, and his discursive strategies to counter these states retrospectively. Unlike many who were born into slavery, Ward is able to give the exact date of his birth—October 17, 1817—but does not indicate the location any more precisely than the "Eastern Shore" of Maryland (3). This important reversal of the slave-narrative pattern indicates that Ward is somewhat extraordinary. In fact, the beginning of his life is steeped in "secresy (sic) and mystery" (4) that, on the one hand, connect him to the marginalized slave author in the sense that it forecloses the detailed account that (white) readers would expect in an account of

a life: "Generous reader, will you therefore kindly forgive [...] if I do not tell you the name of my native town and county, and some interesting details of their geographical, agricultural, geological, and revolutionary history [...]" (4). On the other hand, however, the "mystery" of the circumstances of his birth only brings Ward closer to his core family and their shared experience of marginality.

Ward is only about three years old when his parents escape with him (see 3). Consequently, his parents are the actual fugitives he mentions in the title of his life narrative; they are yet between slavery and freedom, making him a fugitive by extension, while leaving their then only son and later, his brother, "quite ignorant of their birthplace, and of their condition" (3). Therefore, Ward offers no direct affirmation of his condition at birth, but rather hovers between confirmation (only the fifth sentence reads "I was born a slave") and doubt: "I never received direct evidence of [my condition as a slave], from either of my parents, until I was four-and-twenty years of age; and then my mother informed my wife, in my absence" (4). Ward is impacted by this state of suspicion, which also affects the birth of his brother in New Jersey. His parents, he explains, "suppose[d] (as is the general presumption) that to be born in a free State is to be born free, [and] readily allowed us to tell where my brother was born; but my birthplace I was neither permitted to tell nor to know" (4). The "general presumption," however, does not resolve the underlying threat the parents—including their son—faced as being in constant danger of arrest and recapture, even while the family lived in New Jersey and New York "for many years" (3).

Ward manages to counter-write, this tense suspicion with the detailed description of his family whose members function as the constant presences in his early childhood years. The elaborate portraits of his parents, as well as those of his brother and other escaped family members are strong arguments against the slave narrative's tragic absences of (paternal) origins. Similar to examples in Austin Steward's narrative, Ward is here engaged in creating a genealogy that not only provides these origins and a sense of stability and belonging but also creates a list of meaningful individuals that Ward will later connect to that of the heroic fugitive. Ward's father, for example, was very present into his adult life. What is remarkable is the time Ward spends in revealing to readers a very close father-son relationship as part homage, part obituary.[6] Ward's picture of his father is crucial not only for revealing the latter's royal African heritage but also for pointing to the (oral) "tradition [...] as poor slaves may maintain" and which has enabled this side of the family genealogy to be remembered despite the fact that it is generally

6 This resonates with Austin Steward's history of his African grandfather. He recounts how his grandfather was snatched from his mother in Africa and made to suffer the middle passage to be sold as a slave in America (Steward 336-37).

"rather difficult [to] trac[e]" one's ancestry under slavery (5). His father, thus, is not only part of royal African blood and a "straightforward Christian" with whom his son as an aspiring minister can freely converse about life and death (5). Most importantly, Ward sees his father as a representative of "the black gentleman": the pinnacle of the self-liberated former Christian slave who has educated himself and has led an exemplary life in freedom (5-6). Erica Ball's comment about the power of slave narratives and conduct literature "to create the framework for a middle-class ideal of black manhood[,] the black self-made man[,]" is particularly apt here (40). Ward therefore links the family genealogy to his key concept of the gentleman via the figure of his own "self-made" father as a role model, but he also authenticates the latter with as much detail as possible, inscribing him into the long list of memorable black individuals that slavery would otherwise swallow up.

Ward's portrait of his mother is equally important. Here, too, oral tradition "is [the] only authority for [his] maternal ancestry" (Ward 7). Ward's delineation of the maternal line reaches back to the great-grandmother, a white woman and daughter of an Irish slaveholder, "one of the largest [...] in Maryland" (8). On the plantation in Maryland, Anne Ward becomes the constant provider for her enslaved family, and her "sickly child" Samuel in particular, who profits from hiring herself out (14). As such, Ward also places her at the heart of the cruel market economy of slavery: according to the "the parties owning us," the mother's task is to care for the constantly sick boy in order to make him fit "for the market" (14-15). The attempt to reduce the mother's love for her child to "its value in dollars and cents" is counteracted by Ward's strategy to dehumanize the slaveholders into "parties," in line with his deferral of his slave status in the first chapter (15).

His mother also emerges as the fierce protector of her family. She speaks out against the continued mistreatment of her husband "in pretty strong language," which puts herself in great danger (15). Ward turns to free indirect discourse to develop a long mock-monolog that mimicks the slave owners' strategic assessment of the mother's "insolence" (15). Ward uses this strategy effectively. On the one hand, it allows him to dismantle the effect of slavery upon slaveholders: Anne Ward's act of open resistance poses a threat to the "very foundation of slavery" and the neighboring plantations, and she must therefore be silenced (16). On the other hand, Ward is able to stay in control of the scene by yet again refusing to let the slaveholders appear in person and have a voice of their own. At the same time, he ridicules them by alluding to the impressive stature of his mother—"she was strong enough to whip an ordinary-sized man; she had as much strength of will as of mind" (16)—which scares them enough to hold off a flogging. What is more, Ward uses this stand-off as an interesting comment on

gender expectations and the social restrictions on marriage. “Marriage must succumb to slavery,” but the story is not as easily told with Anne and William Ward (16). Anne is ten years his senior (see 7), she provides financially for the family, and by her outward appearance, is not the image of the slave wife in need of protection. Imbuing his mother with tasks and traits traditionally ascribed to men, Ward brilliantly insinuates how slavery forces the family to function differently from white norms, but also how these alternatives are lived by black families.

Finally, Ward’s mother becomes the trigger for the family’s escape. Although Anne’s sale due to her ‘insolent’ behavior is put off as long as Samuel is sick, Ward’s narrative tone is changing to the sentimental in order to describe his mother’s crisis as she ponders the threat of being separated from her family. Ward stylizes his mother into a model Christian woman, an equivalent to her husband, who yet values her “womanhood [and] her theology” over simple submission to slavery’s demands (19). Her convictions lead her to resist yet again—to “fully embody resistance to slavery,” as Ball phrases it (4)—and make her the driving force in the plan to escape. The decision is one of a mother and a leading woman: “She said it with energy; [...] [my father] hesitated; he was not a mother” (Ward 20). Ward is also free to admit that his own family—as an alternative to white standards—is only one example of “where the wife leads,” reinforcing the alternative family model under slavery and paying tribute to his mother as a challenge also to the cult of True Womanhood (20).

The chapter dedicated to the actual escape maintains the focus on family and reimagines the pivotal moment of escape not as a time of trial suffered by an individual but as an event that is suffered conjointly and that is unable to separate the family members. While it reinforces Anne Ward’s role as the acting subject, it also continues to reduce the slave owners to passive objects. The latter are made to bear the escape of their ‘property’ “submissively” (21), as Ward suggests, and as something outside of their control. Ward achieves to establish the greatest possible distance to the former owners by placing them outside the kind of oral tradition that he had established to sustain his own family, explaining that “information on these questionable topics [of how they reacted to the escape] was never conveyed to us in any definite, systematic form” (21).

Instead, Ward remains focused on his mother’s “palpitating heart” and on each step she takes off the plantation with her child (21), thus reverting to a sentimental description of the pivotal scene usually at the heart of every slave narrative. Since Ward himself can hardly remember the escape, but is aware of this “all-important journey,” he adopts omniscient narration to recreate his parents’ thoughts and their struggle (24). Ward switches to third-person singular to reflect upon himself as

"the burden [...] of a child" who nevertheless serves to strengthen the bonds between his parents during their "exodus" (23), or, "hegira" (20). The scene is crucial not because it partly caters to the typology of slave narratives but also in view of Ward's convictions as a Christian minister, since religion becomes a strong sustaining factor during the escape. Like Richard Warren, for whom religion was closely related to the maternal and memories of his mother, Ward sets his own few recollections of the escape against the background of his parents' faith in the "God of the oppressed," describing them as infused with "[his] earliest recollections of maternal tenderness and paternal care" (24). Consequently, Ward not only reinforces familial ties as a refusal of prevalent images on the slave family, he also originally recognizes the key function of the escape for the strengthening of the family unit, to the effect that "[he] would rather forget any facts of [his] childhood than those connected with [the journey]" (24).

The Wards successfully reach Greenwich, New Jersey, in 1820, but their initially peaceful life with friends, neighbors, and "schoolfellows" for Samuel, becomes increasingly fragile as the narrative returns to the topos of insecurity that has haunted the family before (26). His parents eventually decide to leave for New York City in August 1826 to avoid the "numerous and alarming" incidents of kidnappings in New Jersey (26). Ward's disillusionment with city life, however, is obvious. The evident contrast to rural Greenwich is marked by New York's large black population and the recent emancipation of slaves.[7] Even though his parents are able to connect with relations—we learn, for example, that Henry Highland Garnet is Ward's cousin (26)—Ward's picture of New York is dire. He quickly learns that a city cannot protect from kidnappings, and accuses the dependence of "the mercantile and [...] political [along with religious] classes to the slave system" (26). Yet, Ward manages to align his personal experience with the lot of many urban Blacks. Growing up as a teenager, this means both being poor and finding oneself in the dilemma between work and the need for education, as Ward describes: "Poverty compelled me to work, but inclination led me to study [...]" (28). Ward also identifies the rampant racism in the city, which he calls "Negro-hate," as an aggravating factor that weighs on black youth (28). Rhetorically, this outline of conditions becomes important as it serves to bolster Ward's critique of the double standards applied to the right of black people to voice their complaints. Given the omnipresence and ferocity of this type of racism, Ward explains that accusations at the hand of Blacks should not only be not

7 Austin Steward, too, laments in his narrative that black people tend to flock to the "crowded city" where "there is no escape from the crushing weight of prejudice" (167). He criticizes a tendency amongst the free population to "flock to cities" only to become "barbers and waiters" instead of independent businessmen (167).

surprising but are still relatively “mild” (29). Ward subscribes to the idea of a “peculiarly American spirit” as furthering this racism[8] and offers several examples of discrimination on the grounds of race from his own youth, the work place, and not least, from the church which he calls complicit with slavery (29).

By contrast, Ward shapes his parent’s house in Greenwich as the rural ideal, the place of “[his] earliest recollections,” and the first time he relates a sense of belonging to a specific place (27). Significantly, the descriptions of his childhood in Greenwich mirror his later support for an agricultural ideal and the black yeoman that he hoped to realize as a farmer in Jamaica, where he moved the year he published the *Autobiography*. Greenwich becomes the “most sacred spot of earth” because it is the site of his father’s garden and the place where he acquired literacy (27). Ward passes on the knowledge to read and write to his mother by reading the Bible to her. Despite this cherished scene between mother and son, Ward admits, almost bitterly, that the “love of books” has distracted him from a life dedicated to “the hoe” (27).

Despite this dire outlook for Ward, he finally becomes a clerk of Thomas L. Jennings (1791-1859) and David Ruggles (1810-1849), and thus enters into close contact with two of the leading members of the black community.[9] According to his biographer Ronald Burke, his early introduction to the circles of the black intelligentsia will be essential, too, in cementing Ward’s position as a respected leader by his peers (see 13; 33) Unlike the other authors discussed in this book, therefore, Ward’s background is distinctly more elitist. He also describes the year he begins to work for Jennings, 1833, as the year of his religious conversion (30). Coincidentally, 1833 marks also a pivotal year for the anti-slavery movement as the year the British Parliament passed the Slavery Abolition Act. With this subtle coincidence, Ward illustrates Erica Ball’s argument centered on women and men who epitomize the dedication to an anti-slavery life tied to his religious convictions. The description of his career further exemplifies the interconnection of his vocational religious life and his beginning anti-slavery labors. For example, about six months after he is licensed as a preacher in Poughkeepsie, he accepts a position as traveling agent of New York’s Anti-Slavery Society (31). He works in his first pastorate in South Butler, NY, from 1841-1843, before resuming “public

8 Ward also subscribes to the idea that it can be easily transferred to new immigrants to the United States. (see 29).

9 Both Jennings and Ruggles were freeborn African American abolitionists. Jennings held the first patent of an African American in the United States, for the precursor to dry-cleaning. Ruggles was a bookseller in New York City and defended Frederick Douglass in 1838 as a member of the New York Vigilance Committee (see Larsen; Manos).

and continuous anti-slavery labours, in connection with the Liberty Party," which adds another, decidedly political, layer to his commitment (32).

Aside from other eclectic educational interests and first editorial ventures, Ward announces his marriage and the birth of his first son in 1838 (31).[10] Despite the rapid succession of events in the final chapter of his autobiography, Ward pauses to note that at "twenty-one years and twelve days" of age, he had not only transitioned into adulthood but had now become "a family man" (31). Set against the background of his own family memories, his son's name (Samuel "the younger" 31) indicates that he is now ready to start a genealogy of his own. In fact, Ward here comes full circle at the end of his autobiographical section by renouncing the intellectual interests in favor of his father's representation of the black yeoman. In view of his imminent departure for Jamaica at the time of writing the *Autobiography*, he admits that "[...] at the age of eight-and-thirty I am glad to hasten back to what my father first taught me, and from what I never should have departed—the tilling of the soil, the use of the hoe" (34). Consequently, in what Andrews has described as making his own life experience an example for emulation (see Andrews 198), Ward gives young black men a piece of advice which is centered on finding and accepting a place of "duty" (34). With this, he illustrates Ball's observation that "African American writers characterized self-improvement, self-advancement, and the independence increasingly associated with a discrete set of middle-class occupations as a duty—a racial imperative for young African American men" (3).

4.2 UNITED STATES: RELIGIOUS ANTI-SLAVERY AND THE BLACK GENTLEMAN

With his autobiography completed, Ward's introduction to abolitionist work in the United States constitutes a programmatic part of his text that one could consider his anti-slavery narrative. Ward takes these years to cement his concept of a decidedly religious anti-slavery activism and to hone the idea of black gentlemanhood. His years in the United States, which culminate in his precipitated flight to Canada in 1851 after his engagement in the Jerry Henry fugitive rescue case, turn into an occasion for Ward to offer the theoretical foundations of his understanding as a black religious abolitionist and are, too, most illustrative of his

10 He briefly studies medicine and law, and engages in journalistic responsibilities as the "editor and proprietor" of two newspapers, the *True American and Religious Examiner* (1845-1848) and the *Impartial Citizen* (1849-1851).

abilities as a preacher and a speaker. In several instances, Ward seems to take to the pulpit to lecture on the conditions of his time, thereby offering a black perspective on abolitionist work. In doing so, Ward does not only insert black activists into white-dominated abolitionist circles but also, similar to Smallwood, reverses traditionally fix roles in becoming the one to authenticate the reliability of several white abolitionists and to call for more interracial cooperation. Alternating theoretical chapters with those focused on his practical career as an abolitionist, Ward carves out the *Gretchenfrage* for the United States at mid-nineteenth century as tied to both religion and slavery. At the same time, he positions Blacks as equal members of society who are supported by a longstanding genealogy of black intellectuals pursuing black progress. In the closing scenes of the Jerry rescue case, Jerry Henry becomes a protagonist who can be read as the epitome of Ward's theories and as the embodiment of the black gentleman, foreshadowing the concept of the heroic fugitive, which will occupy the part on Canada West.

If the part focusing on the United States is therefore shaped as a religious anti-slavery narrative, Ward first begins by turning the black gentleman into an expression of anti-slavery dedication. Ward sets out to prove successfully that life writing and anti-slavery report inform each other, and that his anti-slavery report is, too, a form of life writing. His opening words can be read in this vein: "It may be thought that the biographical portion of this volume is brief and summary; but it will be seen, as we proceed, that some points, deserving more attention, belong more properly to other parts of the work" (37). Ward's definition of "anti-slavery labours" (37), which forms the backdrop for his further discussions, clearly reads as a reflection of the ideal of the black gentleman and of the values of a black middle class. He understands anti-slavery work not simply as a political involvement but as a behavioral pattern as well as an expression of individual improvement. Anti-slavery labor, then, for Ward, is the occupation of the black gentleman, the sum of "upright demeanour, gentlemanly bearing, Christian character, social progress, and material prosperity, of every coloured man" (37).

Anti-slavery work consequently becomes a personal, clearly masculine, attitude and a lived agenda. It reflects a performativity of anti-slavery that engages the stereotyping racism in the United States which "den[ies the black man] his capacity for improvement or progress" (37). For Ward, the practice of an anti-slavery life encompasses more than an intellectual side. The strong focus of his understanding lies on the individual and the omnipresent key term of "cultivation" or self-improvement (42). Reiterating the importance of finding a "vocation," he embraces the professional black man as the embodiment of a concrete, everyday expression of anti-slavery (43). Black professionals, from doctors to mechanics,

are signs of "the cultivation of all the upward tendencies of the coloured man" and as such, living refusals of color prejudice (42). Ward himself comes full circle in asserting what for Erica Ball is the central quote of his text: "my labours must be anti-slavery labours, because mine must be an anti-slavery life" (43).

In tying anti-slavery life to black gentlemanhood, one other aspect is of importance in Ward's argument. Anti-slavery work as a necessity in the United States is cast primarily as an issue of class. Ward's focus remains on the United States as the *origo* of evil and the worst of situations for the black man of the present, pinning down his argument on a seeming innateness of American racism in a marked rhetorical synthesis: "this feeling is so universal that one almost regards 'American' and 'Negro-hater' as synonymous terms" (39). With the many expressions of discrimination in several realms of life, Ward makes sure to distinguish the United States from "the "middling and better classes of all Europe," who display a more courteous behavior to black people (40).[11] In contrast, he describes the "early American settlers…in many parts of America" to have been of "very low origin," derivative of the "lowest of the English population," and still imbued with great hostility toward the free black population in the North (40). Ward's impression of a deeply ingrained American prejudice reveals the importance of class and, possibly, social prestige. Although Ward details incidents of discrimination at the hand of British immigrants in the States, these adopted practices do not lead him to address an outright prevalence of racism in British society itself. Instead, these naturalized "Englishmen, Irishmen, and Scotchmen" become examples for a more severe degree of racism which Ward sees prevalent "by non-slaveholders, in non-slaveholding States" (39).

As Ward resumes his narrative, he returns to the events of the 1830s and 1840s that outline his practical involvement in abolitionist activities in New York. As a witness to such landmark events as the founding of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833 and the eventual split between William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879) and other members, Ward's main concerns lie in the attempt to reconcile his personal and his professional networks, the black community and white abolitionists, and to restore faith in and stability to New York's abolition movement.[12] Most importantly, he pushes the necessity of interracial cooperation.

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11 Ward lists numerous examples of discrimination that span several aspects of public life for Blacks, affecting public meetings, church worship, and the exclusion of active political participation (see 38).

12 William Lloyd Garrison co-founded the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833, but a schism occurred in 1839 due to fundamental differences between those that advocated immediate abolition and those in favor of a more gradual approach. Some members, led by Lewis Tappan (1788–1873), formed the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society

To illustrate this necessity, Ward takes it upon himself to promote the trustworthiness and moral uprighteousness of a string of white abolitionists, In fact, one chapter is almost entirely dedicated to the minute portraits of Gerrit Smith (1797-1874), Beriah Green (1795-1874), and William Goodell (1792-1878), whom Ward recommends to his fellow black brethren.[13] As a part of New York's organized abolition movement himself, Ward is able to portray these prominent representatives from a period before they gained national fame. At the same time, this reflects how Ward directs his own career amongst them.

Most importantly, Ward feels able to connect to them on the basis of a shared gentlemanhood. Ward talks at large about Smith, for example, with whom he would become involved in the Jerry rescue in 1851. He paints a heroic portrait of Smith as a "gentleman," uniting Smith's superior intellect and rhetorical capacity with his religious piety (54). It serves Ward as a defense of Smith against "his enemies during his short career in Congress," but also to form him into a personal role model in order to underline Smith's credibility (54). Listening to one of Smith's speeches in 1838 allows Ward to powerfully redeem Smith in the eyes of the black community and turn him into a truthful convert to the anti-slavery cause. Smith finally receives highest honors in Ward's final comparison to a British philanthropist as "the Shaftesbury of America" (58).[14] This positions Smith in one line with Ward's admiration of Great Britain in the anti-slavery effort, but also finalizes Smith's version of the 'from-rags-to-riches'-motif. Ward both authenticates and propagates this success story and endorses Smith through his position as a black community leader, anti-slavery advocate, and black gentleman.

Ward himself is formally initiated to the abolition movement in the wake of New York's first anti-abolition riots of 1834, which opened what has been called a "great 'riot year'" (Prince 1). Ward's biting account of what would become the severest riots in New York until the Civil War, extending way beyond what Ward is covering in his narrative, is initially still presented as an act of open resistance

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and the Liberty party in 1840. Ward was a candidate of the Liberty Party (see *BAP* 62; 189-90).

13 Smith and Goodell were founders of the Liberty party in 1840 and later co-founded the Radical Abolition party in 1855 (see *BAP* 423n2).

14 The reference is to Anthony Ashley-Cooper, 7th Earl of Shaftesbury, called Lord Shaftesbury (1801-1885). He is associated with labor and factory reforms in the 1830s, notably the Factory Act of 1833, whose outcomes Ward admires, but is also remembered as an "evangelical crusader in politics" and a philanthropist (Wolffe).

of the assembled Blacks to their white aggressors.[15] At first, this is an empowering scene for Ward who states that "The blacks were victors; every white man was driven from the place" (47). The scene is quickly reversed, however, when white reinforcement appears and violently attacks the remaining black men. Ward's initial triumph soon turns into disbelief when the authority, "the public watchman," arrests and locks up the black men instead of the white rioters, while the mob continues to damage Lewis Tappan's house (48).

After a first night in a prison cell, Ward and those arrested with him witness a farce of a hearing which reveals the pervasiveness of institutional racism in the judicial system. Ward is offended that he and his friends are treated the same as the regular prisoners and that, despite the fact that "none appeared against [them]" to bring forth charges, the magistrate sends them on to Bridewell prison (48). There, Ward is outraged at the "most filthy state [of] that cell" where he must stay with 'real' criminals (49). Their night in a prison cell is also a fight for their "innocence and [...] dignity" (49). The sense of violated propriety and respectability clashes again with Ward's description of both the New York magistrate, whom he describes as a "New York Dogberry" insulting Ward and his friends, and the lower-class diction of the watchman who arrested them without charge (48). The episode closes only when Ward's father pays to release Ward from prison. He reflects that this injustice "initiated me into the anti-slavery fraternity" (49). More than a somber rite of initiation, his imprisonment is a veritable transformative moment for Ward, in which he "[pledges] allegiance to the antislavery cause […] in that cell on the 7th of July, 1834" (48). In this sense, the scene bears resemblance to an instance of religious conversion. In addition to hearing the call of the gospel years before, Ward has now also heard the call to *do* anti-slavery.

These religious overtones in framing anti-slavery work lead Ward to a more theoretical section, a lecture on the fundamental *Gretchenfrage* that he observes to be dividing the United States. This central question casts the conflict between pro- and anti-slavery forces as centered on the parties' interpretation of the state and practice of religion in the United States. Aside from rhetorical mastery, Ward's analysis equally demonstrates his astute understanding of the American psyche around mid-nineteenth century. To begin with, the practice of slavery as a Christian nation is the fundamental difference, in Ward's view, that separates the United States from Great Britain. "People in England," Ward claims, cannot comprehend the "inexplicable mystery" that the United States represent to them

15 Linda Kerber observes that tensions in the city had been running high before the outbreaks in 1834. It was amidst this atmosphere that "hatred of abolitionists would become a password covering a multitude of political sins" (30).

by claiming "the Christian religion, and [...] republicanism [...] and yet hold[ing] slaves" (61). While this seems to indicate European superiority in the sense of having resolved this paradox in Great Britain years ago, Ward does remind readers of the long-standing opposition, in the Old World, to the abolition movement. Indeed, Ward draws transatlantic parallels between the two movements and the opposition they had to face. He compares the objections "in the British senate" to the well-known English abolitionists "Clarkson, Wilberforce, and Buxton" to the "same class of arguments" (62) brought forth "in the American senate *now*" against such figures as "Sumner, Wilson, Seward, Giddings" (61-62, original emphasis).[16]

Particularly in the United States, however, Ward sees the main reason for the stance against abolition among religious and benevolent societies as an effort to preserve "harmony" and avoid offending their slaveholding members (66-67). In addition to being submissive to the South, a well-known argument in abolitionist literature, Ward identifies an underlying "contempt" of black people as the motivation to oppose abolition—a point of criticism that is meant to resonate in both North and South (67). Slavery, he claims, is nothing else than the "buying, selling, the image of God and the members of Christ's body" (68). By describing slavery metaphorically as the violation of the religious body (community) of which black people are naturally a part, a pro-slavery stance must appear anti-religious as well as illogical. Most important is Ward's direct address of pro-slavery refusal to speak out on "sins which the Church and the Pulpit ought not and need not rebuke" (69). Ward seems to suggest that the purpose of abolitionism is also to remind people of their duty: the church is under the obligation, as Ward has his fictive abolitionists say, to "rebuke and to denounce the specific forms of iniquity," the contrary of which would otherwise be called the "most practical form of infidelity" (69-70).

Therefore, Ward exposes the true character of the conflict between pro- and anti-slavery proponents in the United States as transcending the question of freedom and equal rights for black people. It is far more an issue at the heart of the "nature of our religion," revolving around contrasting understandings and interpretations of "the honour of Christ, the purity of the Church, [and] the character of God" (70). Paired with a worrisome religious "influence of the American people [...] at home and abroad," Ward challenges the fundamentals of societal self-understanding. For Ward, explicating the conflict in this way proves also a means to impress upon readers, white and black, the significance and

16 Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton (1786–1845), Thomas Clarkson (1760–1846), and William Wilberforce (1759–1833), British abolitionists, founders of the British Anti-Slavery Society in 1823.

magnitude of the question of slavery that challenges each individual to reconsider her and his basic practices of faith. Ward then puts his finger on the wound of "the American pro-slavery Church" (71) by recalling the logical incommensurability, from his rhetorical point of view of as a speaker, of 'owning' those who should be fellow-worshippers (see 71). After having thus dissected a perverted religious understanding that he sees dominating in the United States, Ward's first central question and task for abolitionism then becomes "Whether that Church can be reformed or not" (72). For Ward, America at the crossroads is not merely a question of pro- or anti-slavery stances. For him as a religious abolitionist, it hinges around the place of religion in society: "shall religion, pure and undefiled, prevail in the land; or shall a corrupt, spurious, human system, dishonouring to God and oppressive to man, have the prevalence?" (72).

In addition to assigning abolitionism a task that is grounded in his understanding of the religious nature of anti-slavery, Ward also praises the abolitionists for having identified the core issue of American politics at this time. The two issues are related for Ward: "[T]he real political issue is, not whether the black man's slavery shall be perpetuated, but whether the freedom of any Americans can be permanent" (77). This reformulation of the core assertion of the Declaration of Independence mirrors Ward's astute understanding of the American political psyche.[17] Slavery, he explains, stands as a monument to the arbitrary application of rights, and the consequences are severe: "[The abolitionists] see that, if the principle be admitted that a black man may be legally, righteously enslaved, so may *any other man*; that slavery is altogether regardless of the colour of its victims [...]" (77; added emphasis). Therefore, the summary that Ward offers proves that in his interpretation, the question of slavery as it is manifest in the struggle of abolitionists against their opponents, will not only determine the "weal or woe of the American Church" but will decide on "the very existence, of the republic" (78). The issue of slavery therefore poses a question that touches the nation's political and religious self-understanding. It will have repercussions on basic and comprehensive "American rights"—"affecting all classes, [...] their best institutions, [...] all constitutional government" (78). Ward, writing between 1853 and 1855, has grasped the fundamental importance of the question of slavery, which would mark the decade of the 1850s as it accelerated toward the Civil War. His rhetoric also marks the climax of his theoretical outline of anti-slavery life as he understands it.

Ward's appointment to a pastorate in South Butler's Congregational Church in 1841 as a testing ground for his hypotheses is illustrative of how his religious

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17 I refer here to the famed assertion in the Declaration that "all men are created equal" and their rights "inalienable" and thus, permanent (Declaration).

vocation and his anti-slavery work are inseparably intertwined. At the same time, South Butler is indicative of the challenges Ward is facing as a black preacher in a white congregation, with equal responsibility to black community members: he becomes a representative black leader faced with the crucial task to create sustainable, livable, practicable leadership and activism in an environment of ever-increasing racial tensions. The pastorate reflects the great responsibility to encourage his fellow Blacks while finding himself enmeshed in a fight for acknowledgment and racial equality. While the episode condenses Ward's different struggles—religious, personal, and political—it still serves him to outline with equal force the bright future for black people, which ultimately shakes the foundations of white American self-understanding.

As Ward embarks on his pastorate in South Butler, he is aware of the fact that he becomes the "'new thing under the sun'" for bringing the only black family into an all-white congregation (80; Ecclesiastes 1:9). Being the black pastor of a white congregation is a matter of great responsibility to Ward, not simply in a professional sense of caring for the flock, but very consciously as an anti-slavery pastor who is also a representative of the black community. Ward knows that taking on the pastorate in South Butler makes him the target of scrutiny and possibly, criticism, with regard to both of these aspects. Again, the facets of his individual life are inseparably linked to the greater good of the black community and to his overarching goal to end slavery and discrimination. As he explains, his performance as a preacher in the pulpit will influence "the [whole] anti-slavery cause [… *just as*] the people of colour" (81; added emphasis). While the pressure on Ward to be judged as the representative of success or failure of an entire community is palpable, he is still optimistic about the chances his position holds. After all, his success could have a significant impact in empowering and motivating "young black [men…] to qualify [themselves] for a position of usefulness" (81).[18]

Moreover, Ward perceives his hands-on grassroots work as an opportunity to spread both the "gospel of Jesus" and the 'gospel' of abolitionism at the same time, like a missionary who also calls on the sense of "dut[y] of American citizens" to position themselves vis-à-vis both doctrines (82). At the same time, Ward's appointment among the South Butler congregation is filtered through an interesting commentary on the "peculiar character" of the South Butler congregation and their reactions to his preaching (82). In fact, his description of them as "my own people" reflects a sense of familiarity and professional appreciation that is yet met with a certain distance that Ward seems to be intent on

18 Erica Ball notes that African American leaders "offered virtuous political models and exemplary figures for elite and aspiring northern black readers to emulate" (2).

keeping as a narrator (82). Ward calls the small-town South Butlerites the “honest, straightforward, God-fearing descendants of New England Puritans” who are open to being instructed on the tenets of the Bible and venerate the authority of the preacher as a direct mediator of “God’s truth” (82). Yet, although the majority seems not to be interested at all in Ward’s skin color, “some might ridicule [him]” after all (83). Finally, he leaves open to interpretation how serious or frequent these incidents are, and rather focuses on his approach to preach anti-slavery in times of its high unpopularity by grounding it in biblical tenets and by placing the fight for abolition as a logical behavior.

Ward’s important position in South Butler also forces him to engage in an astute ethnography of preaching that reflects his double function as preaching abolitionist to two different congregations. When he speaks to his fellow Blacks, Ward approaches speaking from the pulpit with a sense of mission and responsibility: he intends to speak directly to “influence […] our character and our condition” (83). His function as a pastor exceeds the engagement with the Gospel, as Ward must grapple with the situation of black people in the area. Deprived from voting, as Ward explains, the “temptation to hate their white fellow-citizens” is not an abstract lure but a very real and “natural” threat (84). Ward openly identifies with his fellow Blacks in this regard; based on his personal experiences, he acknowledges that whites are deserving of this hatred for the mistreatment of black people. Ward’s (self-)restraint that he musters in order to not give into this rage might be surprising, but serves also to reinforce his core tenets: remembering Christ’s sacrifice and suffering for all, practicing his forgiveness toward whites, recalling the support of some whites in the anti-slavery struggle (see 85). While Ward sees precisely his own pastorate as “a sign of hope,” he tries to bridge the gap between a religious understanding of ‘temptation’ and the social reality of discrimination (85). He cautions his black congregation emphatically against the threat of giving in to the desire to hate their fellow white men because it will lead to damnation.

When addressing his white congregation, Ward does not deliver a simple sermon but knows that his preaching is inevitably linked to “pleading the cause of the blacks before the whites” (86). At the same time that Ward is performing his profession before an audience, he reveals that his performance is also an attempt to uphold his private “self-respect” and standing (86). Just as Ward outlines his project to claim “Justice [as…] every man’s birthright” for the black community, he fiercely condemns the quest for and the deliverance of pity, false sympathy, self-humiliation (86). Outlining the equality of black people to whites *in front of* whites constitutes an at times painful dilemma for Ward. As much as he wants to

avoid this “degrad[ing]” exposition of the obvious, he feels compelled to do it, and finally manages to turn it into a powerful outline of black progress.

In fact, Ward’s narrative drifts into a portrait of a “respectabl[e]” free black urban population, a segment of the populace which, as Ward seems to say, *right now*, is regrouping as a model citizenry of propriety, self-support, law-abidance (88). In line with his own definition of a black gentleman, Ward unfolds a long history of black people that has been ignored by whites, a fact that is in part responsible for the unequal treatment of Blacks in society (see 87-88). What is more, Ward rehabilitates another type of history, namely that of black civilization as made up of its scholars, scientists, philosophers, and intellectuals, which spans the ages from “the ancient Negro” to the “modern” (87). Ward does not fail to point out that the line of black ancient thinkers from “Cyprian, Augustine […to] Euclid, and Terence” long preceded origins of “the present Anglo-Saxon race” (87). Much like Smallwood had done in claiming allegiance to David Walker as a model black leader, Ward’s example figures for the contemporary black intellectual include the most well-known personalities and abolitionists of the day. For example, Ward inserts himself as “the schoolmate” and “the friend and associate of” such well-known black leading figures as H.H. Garnet, Alexander Crummell, Frederick Douglass, J. McCune Smith, and others (87).

His portrait of the history of Blacks through time is based on the view that intellectual progress is inseparable from class “progress” and moral integrity—a combination, Ward realizes, which is a thorn in the eyes of their “bitterest enemies” (90). The core problem, according to Ward, is then not simply the refusal of black intellectual capacity by whites, but the refusal to acknowledge the existence of the black educated gentleman along with the incapacity to admit the possibility of white inferiority (see 92). In turn, those instances in which it has been possible for “intelligent and prominent” black men to gain the friendship and respect of “the very best classes of Americans” are to be seen as the outcome of Ward’s personal motto “Do the thing you do in the best possible manner”, mirroring a continuous strife for perfection in order to make oneself indispensable in whatever profession one exercises (94-95).19 In Ward’s view, such an attitude combines honor and manliness and can be found naturally amongst the black community, showing to which degree the struggle for respectability as one pillar of anti-slavery was part, too, of a conservative, patriarchic value system (95-6).

Equipped with these prerequisites of model citizens, Ward’s final assessment of the condition of black people in the United States is far from desperate. That

19 To underline his motto, Ward quotes Alexander Pope’s (1688-1744) “Honour and fame from no distinction rise:/Act well your part—there all the honour lies” from the “Essay on Man” (1733-1734; Epistle IV).

they are now "in no hopeless circumstances" relies on the improvements that Ward sees as having taken place in previous decades, such as the self-organization of the black population through regular "State or a National Convention[s] of black men" (96). In fact, the improvements are such that Ward shifts his tone to finish the chapter in a strong speech of empowerment and optimism, from a point of view of progress and future-orientation. This portrait of black people in the United States shows Ward's acknowledged mastery of rhetoric, but what is more, his mastery of the American imaginary. Blacks, he says, are only at the beginning to develop their full potential, and the reason for this is that "They are Americans" (97). As such, Ward positions them at the heart of a shared American identity, body and soul, which underlines the undeniable claim to be recognized as humans, citizens, and equals: "they are well taught in the history of their native country; they know the avenues to, and springs of, the most important and characteristic feelings of the American heart" (97). The dilemma arises from an alienation from "what they know ought to be American principle" through discrimination, while at the same time, they are "connected socially, by choice and by force, with the subjects of the most cruel oppression on the face of the earth" (97). "The anti-slavery field of labour" as the most paradigmatic area in which this dilemma plays out is now in the hands of black anti-slavery leaders, as Ward explains: "Already has the anti-slavery advocacy, for all effective purposes, passed into their hands" (98). This is a tribute to the rise of black leadership, of which Ward is a part, and the authority Ward ascribes them within the organized anti-slavery movement, but also marks this movement as an integral part of black progress.

In a masterful last stroke that challenges and reverses the American myth of (white) progress and the rise to riches, Ward envisions a chiastic future development in the United States. Whites, endowed with all privileges and satisfied with base pursuits of "money and […] pleasure," will descent into lethargy (100). Black people, on the other hand, on the brink of developing their potential, will use their energy to rise from "their very midst" into "the real American character, its manliness, its enterprise, its love of liberty" (100). Teacher and student will reverse roles, and though Ward refuses the role of a prophet, he offers a state of the art that casts the black population not just as a force to be reckoned with, but as having the potential to outdo America's whites. [20] With such radical statements, as well as his own emphasis on black intellectual history,

20 In this way, Ward predicts black loyalty to the British Crown at a time when the debates on "annexation or conquest" of Canada West through U.S. troops are running high (220). It seems that the willingness to show their allegiance through arms, which would also be a direct fight to maintain their freedom, is part and parcel of "the onward progress of the Canadian Negro" (221).

it is obvious that Ward qualifies as a member of Smallwood's genealogy of radical intellectual leadership. He is both part of this leadership and instrumental in calling attention to it, as was his contemporary Smallwood. However, Ward's own focus lies more strongly on the element of the heroic as a link to his allegiances to the British Empire in the following part of the *Autobiography* on Canada West.

Despite the fact that progress and a bright future are in store for Blacks, Ward and his family witness the crumbling political atmosphere in the United States, which reaches a personal climax for Ward in October of 1851. He describes how the news of the Christiana Riot triggers their decision to leave the States, as it now seems utterly hopeless in their eyes for the country to be saved (see 116-17).[21] This feeling is paired with Ward's increasingly "embarrass[ing]" financial situation, as his anti-slavery lecturing does not "find bread and education for one's children" (117). Significantly, then, Ward casts the decision to move to Canada as a joint decision of his family, relying on the prospects of a peaceful life "in a free British country" (117).

However, putting their project into practice is delayed by what has become the classic fugitive slave rescue case of William "Jerry" Henry. Ward's involvement, along with other Liberty Party members and abolitionists, will ultimately force him to head to Canada in order to avoid arrest. At the same time, Ward's extended description serves as a form of testimony of what Monique Patenaude Roach has called "a quintessential example of the opposing forces of anti-slavery and racism in the heart of the Burned-over District" (135). She reads the rescue as a clear sign that "[t]he simplistic antislavery image of the Burned-over District during the antebellum years fails to encompass the region's dichotomy" (138). For Ward, the Jerry Rescue brings him face to face, for the first time, with the destabilizing force of slavery. Most importantly, William Henry becomes the epitome of a gentleman fugitive, whose individual heroism foreshadows Ward's theoretical outline of heroic fugitives.

Upon his return to Syracuse, where Ward then lives with his family, he learns that Jerry Henry is pursued under the Fugitive Slave Law (FSL) by his master/father (see Ward 117). He heads to prison with abolitionist Samuel J. May

21 The Christiana Riot occurred on September 11, 1851, when Southern slaveholder Edward Gorsuch and eight other men tried to arrest four fugitive slaves under the provisions of the FSL. William Parker, a fugitive slave himself, together with "a large group of armed black men and women," resisted the men. In the ensuing skirmish, Gorsuch was killed, and many others on both sides were wounded. Parker fled to Canada; no one was sentenced in the aftermath of the riot. One person, who was wrongly accused, was not found guilty, and the case became "fuel for the abolition movement" (Kopaczewski).

to meet "[a] poor Mulatto man" and for the first time that he can remember, finds himself face to face with "a chained slave" (117-18). Ward is visibly shaken, bewildered, yet fascinated by Henry, and although he identifies as a fugitive himself in the title of his autobiography, Ward's reaction is reminiscent of somewhat of a culture shock. Ward's fascination with Henry lies, partly, in the latter's status as a "mulatto", embodying not only the outrage of slavery's sexual exploits but the extremes of the FSL as such. Ward reverts to a heavily descriptive narrative tone to present the distressed Henry, turning the prison cell into the stage for Henry's pathos-laden lament and appeal to his defenders, which mark him as the exemplary heroic fugitive.

As such, he impresses Ward with his appeal of "fervid eloquence as I never heard before nor since from the lips of man, to break his chains, and give him that liberty which the Declaration of Independence assumed to be the birthright of every man" (118). Ward mediates Henry's monolog "as far as [he] can revive his sentences in [his] memory," turning Henry into a mouthpiece of his own ideal of virtuous citizenship (118). Henry's rhetoric mirrors the claim to equal rights and treatment, "because I am a man, and an American" (120). Therefore, while the actual rescue of Henry a few paragraphs on is the climax of the episode, Henry's emotional speech should be seen as the climax of Ward's part on his anti-slavery labors in the United States. Ward reduces the FSL's merciless claim to Henry as a fugitive to "a love of that liberty which we all declared to be every man's inalienable right," but also reveals Henry's complex ideological position in this drama (121). Henry figures as the embodiment of the contradictions inherent in the FSL as well as the system of U.S. slavery at large. Henry is an "American by birth" and yet, a slave (121); his father is white, yet Henry follows his mother's slave status; he is a Christian patriot, yet pursued for an alleged crime; he is rhetorically skilled and versed in American foundational documents, yet "arrested and held under a law made by 'Us the People'" (122).

Ward himself seems at a loss of how to react to Henry and his imprisonment when a large crowd begins to gather in front of the prison—"certainly five-and-twenty hundred of us, wild with excitement in behalf of our chained brother" (124)—demanding a speech from Ward. If Ward publicly endorses Henry's appeal to liberty, it also proves the aspect of performativity inherent in anti-slavery work: Ward acknowledges that Henry has proceeded according to a ritual that has earned him the right to be shielded and saved from the community: "I have heard a speech from Jerry. I feel for him, as for a brother; […] Yonder is my brother, in chains. Those chains press upon my limbs" (123). Henry has credibly confessed before the congregation, which grants him acceptance into a community of the

saved and the worthy-of-saving. At the same time, Henry has also taken his place as a worthy black gentleman.

Henry is eventually rescued by force during his court hearing and reaches Canada.[22] With his name appearing in the papers and Secretary of State Daniel Webster in pursuit of the participants, Ward fears for his life, and his plan to leave for Canada is no longer an option that can be put off. Consequently, he gives no details about his journey to Canada, only that he precedes his family for about "a month or two" (127). Significantly, the reunion there is cast in happy terms, immediately identifying himself and his family as "the most loyal and grateful of British subjects" (127). Ward also draws the parallel to Jerry Henry: from the narratological safety of Canada, Ward reveals Henry's (short) life in "Kingston, Canada" where he died in 1853 "a free man, by virtue of living in British soil" (127). Ward has now prepared the ground for the next part of his *Autobiography* to flesh out the ties between individuals like William Henry as heroic fugitives and Canada West (as a stand-in of Great Britain) as an apt destination for black emigrants turned towards the future.

4.3 CANADA WEST: A THEORY OF HEROIC FUGITIVES

Ward's chapters on his years in Canada West are marked by two larger strategies. First, as Ward enters the country, he rewrites a staple scene of many Canadian slave narratives. In fact, his arrival is set as a piece of travel writing and initiation story instead of the endpoint of a long, perilous journey of a fugitive. As the beginning of a new phase in his life, Ward sets about incorporating Canada West into his theoretical elaborations of a religious anti-slavery life. Struggling to reconcile this ambiguous place of both possibility and discrimination for black people, Ward nevertheless manages to include Canada as the suitable destination for black emigrants by linking it to the ideal of the black yeoman and, not least, to a feeling of patriotism for Great Britain that receives Blacks in the province. In a second move, Ward proposes his theory of the figure of the fugitive slave who finds a harbor in Canada West. Describing how the fugitive undergoes three interconnected phases that transform him from slave into freeman, Ward creates a genealogy of heroic individuals who are characterized by superior endurance and willpower. In turn, these idealized fugitives-turned-free settlers make for valuable new citizens of the province to the North, a fact that Ward outlines in his travel report through several black settlements in Canada West.

22 For detailed information about the unfolding of the rescue, see Patenaude Roach.

Ward's arrival on Canadian soil is laden with symbolic meaning. But although he was forced to escape to Canada in a hurry, Ward does not partake here in the typical fugitive story that climaxes in reaching free soil. There is no "scene…of nautical transit and transformation" into Canadian freedom as Alyssa MacLean would have it (iii). In fact, there is no information at all on how Ward made the journey other than the circumstantial necessity of going there. Rather, the voyage to Toronto constitutes one of several landscape descriptions, episodes of romantic travel writing that introduce his English reading audience to an iconic 'Canadian' season, the Indian summer. At the time of writing his *Autobiography*, Ward is still visibly impressed by the "St. Lawrence River scenery in October;" and he confesses that "[t]his is my third autumn in Europe; but never, in the British Isles, did I witness such splendour of landscape as that river presents, in autumn" (133).

In this way, Ward opposes the precipitated movements of a fugitive's escape to the slow-motion luxury of taking (narrative) time to revel in the beauty of his new home. In this sense, there is an important waterway in Ward's transition from the United States to Canada after all, as MacLean had postulated with regard to slave narratives, but instead of the dramatic Lake Erie Passage, it becomes a peaceful encounter with "the great watery highway to the ocean," the St. Lawrence River (135). The river serves to initiate Ward to Canada and introduce him to its most iconic scenic features. As the land- and waterscape unfolds before Ward, the St. Lawrence represents the harmonious interplay between natural beauty and the "continuance of navigation" and industry (133-34). Overwhelmed by the rich colors "of unspeakable beauty and of most imposing grandeur," Ward promotes the passage from Montreal to Kingston as the most "delightful" representation of the "picturesque in nature" in British North America (134-35).

If this presentation of Canada is unique in black autobiographical writing of the time, so is Ward's self-portrait as a new arriver in the new country. Indeed, Canada is not entirely strange to him, who had been to several places in Ontario before "as a mere visitor" (133). Although necessity and immediate threat force him to come to the country as the "fugitive negro" from his work's title, he presents this move as one of determination and inspired by a clear telos. Clearly distinct from the usual fugitive slave narrator, Ward claims that, paradoxically, "[he] made [his] entrée into Canada, as a resident and a fugitive," and underlines that he fully embraces the necessity of "[his] going as a settler" (133). An attribution as a "settler" and, even more importantly, a "resident", has him in full control of the decision to move there and shows his intentions in line with a larger project to establish allegiances to Great Britain.

The identification as resident-settler also represents a strong link to the ideal of the yeoman farmer, whose "industry and enterprise" he conjures up while

observing the cultivation along the banks of the St. Lawrence (135). The yeoman is a crucial motif for Ward, not only with regard to his own father but also in view of his own project of farming in Jamaica, which he is about to realize at the time of writing the *Autobiography*. Ward fleshes out the image of self-sufficient yeoman life, which conforms to a romantic middle-class ideal of what living off the land should look like: the way of cultivation that he observes along the St. Lawrence prove to Ward the underlying farmers' "industry and enterprise" (135). Ward admits that it is this process of cultivation in apparent harmony with nature that contributes strongly to the appeal of the place and "the beauty and interest of the scenery," implying the suitability of Canada as a place for newcomers (135). The description of "beautiful fields […]; neat […] elegant, farm houses, […] orchards and ornamental trees, and nice rustic gardens" even foreshadows Ward's tour through the black settlements of Canada West, which fit these descriptions and close the logical circle of black settlers as suitable Canadians (135).

It is no coincidence, therefore, that Ward connects this description of the yeoman farmer on Canadian soil to a strong feeling of nascent patriotism by which he demonstrates his allegiance to Great Britain. The St. Lawrence, for instance, is both "noble" and "majestic," and the right bank is "the British side," the one which attracts Ward most (135).[23] If we can speak of a transformation in Ward as he enters Canada, a feature which MacLean has established as an "iconic image in many abolitionist texts" (50), it is the sudden upsurge in what he describes as "a sort of patriotic feeling to which all my life before I had been a stranger" (135). Wrapped in powerful language, Ward's message is one for his English readers as it is one for his fellow Blacks: the "fellow feeling" with the Canadians is rooted, as he observes, in a blossoming sense of recognition and belonging (135). It is not clear whether he observes this new sensitivity mainly as the retrospective author or the protagonist of the *Autobiography*, but Canada here becomes the place for Ward "in a sense in which no country ever was before, my own, and those people my fellow citizens" (135). These few powerful phrases cement Canada's place

23 With "the right bank", Ward refers quite possibly to the British Conquest of Canada during the Seven Years' War, after the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759 and the surrender of Montreal in 1760. The Treaty of Paris regulated the British takeover of New France, expanding the British sphere of influence considerably in North America. This means that although the St. Lawrence runs through today's Quebec, which even at the time was French-dominated, the British takeover made the right side of the river "British", too. On the other hand, Ward is silent about the fact that the British also maintained and expanded the practice of slavery in the territories, which Marcel Trudel has discussed at length in his *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Canada français* (2009, originally 1960).

both as the official representative and stand-in for Great Britain—British North America—and the offer of the possibility of citizenship and belonging.[24]

After this two-day initiation into Canada, Ward arrives in Toronto where he immediately enters into contact with the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada. Ward quickly offers an important digression into why Canada needs to be put on the map of anti-slavery work, despite being "a free British colony" (137). This necessity is grounded, essentially, in Ward's understanding of the "fluid frontier" between Canada and the United States. Ward identifies this geographical proximity and the presence of "our very border" as a decisive factor (137) —either to produce corruption of Canadians, or possibly to exercise a "good influence" on Americans (138). This touches on Cooper's definition of the "malleable and porous" border zone as a "creator of new social, political, class, and other identities" ("Fluid" 131). Ward's description extends this definition in highlighting also the inherent dangers of such a border region for Blacks. Indeed, the adjoining United States invite "a vast amount of intercourse" and contact between the two countries, creating a border region characterized by "traffic", "travel", but also the potentially dangerous exchange of the ideology of slavery (138).

In an acid tone that has left behind his initial romanticism, Ward explains that the proximity to "the history of Northern pro-slaveryism" demands a firm stance on the part of Canadians in order to avoid possible moral corruption (137). One means to counter this influence is what Ward identifies as mandatory cross-border cooperation between abolitionists, whose bold presence in the border region offers strong, positive possibilities to counter the threat of slavery:

> "I felt, in living so near them [i.e. the abolitionist colleagues in the States], I was not entirely separated from them, though in another country, so far as political relations were concerned. I knew very well, and so did the society, that co-operation and sympathy with these benevolent men and women was an object well worthy of our labours." (139)

Important examples for Ward are the cooperation in fugitive assistance and the existence of the Underground Railroad, but also visiting each other's annual abolitionist meetings (139). Nevertheless, Ward portrays Canada's position in abolitionist efforts as distinct from that of the United States. Focusing on the

24 Ripley illustrates in the introduction to the *Black Abolitionist Papers* on Canada that "Canada's image as a haven developed from three conditions: the absence of slavery, protection from extradition, and the civil rights Canada offered to all its citizens regardless of color" (6). They add, however, that in reality, "if black political and legal rights were rarely questioned, black social equality was" (7).

"instant[…]" humanity-granting, "practical freedom" of Canada, which he calls "our country" now, the respective labors and joys "on one side of the line [and] on the other[…]" are parallel to 'consigning' people as "goods" in the United States, but receiving them as "men" in Canada (139).

However, Ward's most difficult task lies in making sense of Canada West's inherent ambiguity. The necessity of anti-slavery work there forces Ward to address "unwelcome facts" that reveal a darker side of the province (139). In what follows, listed by Ward as "1st, Pro-slavery feeling; and, 2nd, Negro-hate," he pursues the two topics for which he has become known, i.e. his open address of Canadian racism and discrimination (139).[25] It is crucial that Ward identifies prejudice against black people as an equally Canadian problem, namely that of "British-born subjects, who in Canada exhibit these two sentiments in a manner that no Yankee can excel" (140). A pro-slavery attitude, he explains, can be detected in several groups of people, such as former West-Indian planters, former U.S. slaveholders, and beneficiaries of the slave system such as slave-drivers. Just as dangerous, as Ward points out, are ignorant travelers in the South who "go […] through a country with both eyes wide open, and seeing nothing but just what they wish to see" (140-41), supporting the idea of slavery as 'a positive good'.[26] In Ward's promotional language, Canada might therefore not be a virgin land but certainly a "sacred soil [which is] polluted by the unholy tread of pro-slavery men" (142).

Given the open prejudice against black people, it becomes increasingly difficult for Ward to balance his impression of Canada. As with the case of the United States, Ward employs the lens of class again to offer an explanation. He observes that

> "[t]his [pro-slavery] feeling abounds most among the native Canadians, who, as a rule, are the lowest, the least educated, of all the white population. Like the same class in England, and like the ancestors of the Americans, they have not the training of gentlemen, [… and]

25 Ward details numerous examples mainly from three main areas of public life that are pervaded by discrimination: public transportation, services, and education. When Ward's family joins him in Canada West in 1851, they are discriminated against on board their ship by the Scottish captain, on the grounds that their presence inside the cabin "would be offensive to the passengers" (147). Ward addresses the issue of "Canadian Negro Hate", as he called it, even more prominently in other venues, most notably in letters published in Bibb's *Voice of the Fugitive* and his *Provincial Freeman* (see *BAP* 224-37).

26 This epithet figures programmatically in John C. Calhoun's (1782-1850) speech "Slavery a Positive Good" from 1837 (excerpts in Engler and Scheiding 586-87).

know but little, next to nothing, of what are liberal enlightened views and genteel behaviour." (143; added emphasis)

Class becomes the signifier to mark the non-gentleman and to create distance between those who maintain racism and Ward who has repeatedly proven to see himself as a black gentleman. Ward makes an important point in identifying such people as especially prone to "petty jealousy towards those coming into the country," particularly if they are black and/or upwardly mobile (144). The core problem, he explains, is the contentedness of these uneducated (Canadian) whites to "remain as they are," which demonstrates an apparently unbridgeable rift and diametrical opposition to the defining strife of black people of improvement through education and moral integrity (133). It is evident that Ward writes not only as a part of a black intelligentsia but also as a gentleman and connoisseur of English genteel society and its customs. Class then also becomes the signifier to mark the relationship to the "British gentleman". Ward essentializes a noble attitude as a British feature, thereby underlining his allegiance to Great Britain: "[T]he British gentleman is a gentleman everywhere [i.e., also in British North America], and under all circumstances" (150). Therefore, Ward finds reasons remain optimistic yet about Canada's race relations. Connecting class and a "strong British feeling" among various anti-slavery groups and organizations, Ward is able to incorporate Canada into his conceptions of interracial, religiously grounded anti-slavery work (153).

Ward's second major strategy of his part on Canada begins less as an elaboration on the "signs of betterment" of both the "better class" and "the other classes of my own people" (153), and neither as a fact-based rendition of the condition of black people in Canada. Instead, it should be viewed as the theorization of the figure of the fugitive within a three-phase framework from slave to freeman. Consequently, the escape from slavery is cast as a transformative process involving various roles the black individual adopts. The arrival on free soil forms an integral part of this process and not simply its endpoint. Similarly to Richard Warren's rhetoric of Canada as the place where the former bondsman can exercise his God-given calling, Ward's vision of Canada as a free, sacred soil is made to correspond to the needs of the ambitious fugitive. The triumphant freedom that it offers is the equivalent of the triumphant individuals who arrive on its shores. Entering into a dialogue with the other narratives discussed in this book, this part of the narrative sees the climax of Ward's underlying project to establish a genealogy of heroic fugitives who enjoy the fruits of their heroism in Canada and inspire pride and admiration.

In very programmatic language, Ward demonstrates that not only does Canada correspond to the ambitious fugitive, who will become the prospective settler, but that the reverse is very much true. With the number of incoming fugitives steadily growing, Ward also sees the share of 'good immigrants' increasing, as they are part "of the very best classes of the free blacks of both the Northern and the Southern States, who have cast in their lot among us" (154).[27] Ward sees many reasons why Canada is an attractive destination: promoting "impartial British liberty" as the utmost quality, along with practical considerations such as "the most pleasant and the most salubrious [climate] on the American continent," and the promises of "excellent" and "cheap" land (154-55). Canada emerges as the ideal spot for the prospective settler, and the black yeoman. Indeed, it invites "persevering labour" of "a vigorous people" (155-56)—everything the black settlers are willing to offer, according to Ward (see below). His language of the power of Providence and Manifest Destiny turns Canada, as George Elliott Clarke has put it, into "the *true* land of opportunity" ("'No Hearsay'" 26n36; original emphasis).

This idealization is due in part to the "design[…]" (155) of Providence, but also to the fact that it aligns itself with what appears to be a general mindset among the black settlers: future-orientated, seeking self-improvement and a place to realize these desires. The literal "manifest"-ation of a "restless and resistless desire for improvement" among a part of the black population seems to match them perfectly with the land to the North (156). In every way commendable and respected examples of citizens and settlers serve Ward to underline the "condition, prospects, progress, enterprise, manhood" furthered, as it were, on Canadian soil (156). Since fugitives mainly represent "young, single men," as Ward observes, they will be not simply a "most loyal, [but mainly a] most useful population" for Canada (151; 157).

Ward invites readers to consider the escape of the (s)elect few as an outstanding achievement, as only a "few comparatively" overcome the difficulties of the escape journey north (158). Like Smallwood, who had praised the black pioneer settlers in the Queen's Bush in 1843 (see Smallwood 55), Ward casts the

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27 Ward paves the way for his theory of the heroic fugitive by engaging the "facts." Although the census of Canada represents a rather unreliable source, as he explains, the black population in Canada is estimated at "some 35,000 to 40,000" of which he believes the "majority [to be] refugees from American slavery" (154). In the whole of the Province of Canada, Ward believes are not even "3,000 free-born coloured persons" (154). Asserting any secure number for black fugitives in the Canadas has proven futile, however. Historian Robin Winks already asserts that there can be no definite numbers in this respect for either fugitives or the black population (*History* 234-35).

fugitive to Canada as a superior individual (Ward 160). His own narrative having foregone a classic rendering of the fugitive's desperate arrival in Canada, Ward nevertheless offers an astute interpretation of the act of escape and its impact on the individual. He takes up this widespread trope of the poor fugitive and engages its supposed meaning as "sublimest sight in North America" (158). The "leap […] from a boat," Ward explains, is sublime for two reasons. On the one hand, it is evidence of a transformation "from a marketable chattel to a free man," which, in Ward's opinion, transcends even the sublime character of the iconic Canadian site of Niagara Falls not in the least as the marker of the important border of slavery and freedom (158). Instead, Ward operates a crucial shift in focus from the arrival in supposed freedom to the individual, the escapee, and the dangerous journey he (for Ward is talking about men, really) has survived. The sublime nature of escape, then, relies in the fact of "the consummation of long and fondly cherished hope" and, implicitly, the accomplishment of a carefully devised plan (158). Achieving freedom in the guise of "real true manhood" becomes the well-deserved recompense of "an effort of peaceful though energetic heroism" (158-59). This quality, along with the moral integrity of fugitives, makes them a "most welcome accession to our population" (159). Canada and the fugitives are made for one another.

Ward, however, does more than just propose the heroic fugitive as a prospective model citizen. At the same time, he urges readers to become aware of the fugitive and the process of escape as crucial steps in the becoming of the free black man. The text consciously draws attention to his choice of a "peculiar nomenclature" to describe the arrivers "as slaves, as fugitives, and as freemen"—three phases of a life he wants to see clearly differentiated for the particular qualities and circumstances that influence the individual (159). Ward's observation seems as obvious as it is essential: "The fugitive is different on the plantation from what he is flying. When he reaches Canada, he is no longer either a slave or a fugitive, but a freeman" (159). With this, Ward also challenges readers to reconsider labels and what we ascribe to them. When slave narratives 'stop at the border' to Canada (or any other 'free' destination, really), they fall short to consider the complexity of the individual, whose 'second' life in freedom has only just begun.

In focusing on the process of escape, the fugitive, as it were, becomes the sum of his overcome obstacles. Ward begins with stage one, the black man as slave on the plantation. There, Ward illustrates the totalitarian control and surveillance the slave is exposed to, while referencing also the psychological impact on so-called white 'masters'. While the slave faces "all manner of obstacles" to a potential escape, owners live in constant "fear of his running away" (160). Therefore, the

latter devises schemes to discourage his slaves from escaping to Canada as a place of "bad climate and worse customs," but Ward portrays the slave as undeterred "interpret[ors]" of these schemes (161). In delineating the slave's preparations for escape, Ward also criticizes the double standards applied to the assessment of a desire to freedom in the contemporary public mind. In what appears to be only a side remark, Ward clarifies that what "would be called bravery and fortitude in a white man" is decried in a black man as "stubbornness" (161). In fact, it becomes clear that it is this character trait that is at the core of a slave's ability to devise the act of escape under extraordinary circumstances. Once the plan is formed to run away, he must muster superior secrecy and good acting in the presence of the slave owner, to whom he has to appear "best satisfied with slavery" (162). Ward also makes clear that this planning stage already is a transformative one: "A man entrusted with a plan of importance grows with it," especially if it is a plan "of his own thoughts" (163). For Ward, the slave and soon-to-be-fugitive is already a "moral or physical hero" and has entered "that class" of special individuals characterized by their superior tenacity and will-power in the face of numerous obstacles and life-threatening danger (163).

By means of the genre of the runaway ad, which abounded in antebellum newspapers, Ward explores the mental and physical superiority of the fugitive. He claims that "slaves advertised as having run away […] are men and women of mark […] as a rule" (164-65). "[P]atience, fortitude, and perseverance" then become physically visible signature traits of the fugitive, whose romanticization comes full circle with a religious subtext when Ward chooses to speak of the "exodus" and the martyrdom that the fugitive undergoes (165). It is therefore a logical consequence for Ward to call the escape, phase two, a transformative and "improving" process that "purif[ies] and ennoble[s]," turning eventual liberty into a marker, in a sense, of nobility of the fugitive-turned freeman (165-66). This freeman-upon-arrival "is first, what the raw material of nature was; and, secondly, what the improving process of flight has made him" (166). The new freeman, in phase three, enters a reciprocal relationship with liberty, which is both the recompense of his labors and an attribute which he now "more highly […] appreciate[s]" due to his transformation (166).

Ward's examples to illustrate the superior fugitive are grounded in real events, on the one hand, and come mediated through a well-known intertext, on the other. In this way, the case of Madison Washington, leader of an insurrection on board the *Creole* in 1841, demonstrates how Washington displayed heroism in several instances.[28] Washington epitomizes the fugitive arriver in Canada, who is

28 Madison Washington was head cook on the *Creole*, which was on its way to bring 135 slaves to New Orleans. The revolt left "all of the […] slaves free in Nassau" (Weinauer

then recaptured trying to save his enslaved wife in Virginia, and finally leads a revolt on a ship that leads to his freedom and that of his fellow enslaved. Ward underlines that the two acts, rescue and revolt, are both signs of "heroism" and "noble manliness" (166). Along with Pompey Garrison and Ben Blacksmith, who serve as the two chief assistants in the revolt, Ward compares Washington to three well-known European freedom fighters, "Tell […], Mazzini […], and Kossuth […]" (167-68).[29] This interpretation of Washington aligns Ward with Frederick Douglass, whose fictionalized version of the revolt, *The Heroic Slave*, was published in 1852. Douglass, too, calls Washington a "heroic chief and deliverer" as well as an adherent to British freedom (239).[30] In his novella, Douglass has Washington write a letter after his safe arrival in "Windsor, Canada West," praising the safety under "the British lion" and "and atmosphere too pure for *slaves,* slave-hunters, or slave-holders" (205; original emphasis).

Thus, both Ward and Douglass describe Washington's transformation into a freeman. With a real-life-turned-fictional precedent for individual heroism, Ward makes a strong impression for his project of establishing a genealogy of such heroes that complements Smallwood's radical intellectuals. Mirroring Garnet's authentication of Walker, and Walker's of Allen, Douglass becomes enmeshed in two ways in Ward's genealogy: first, as an intellectual archetype with a public reputation as a hero in his own right and second, as a contributor to this tradition of heroes through his text. Ward himself emerges again as part of the black intellectual elite of the time, showing his indebtedness to Douglass as well as his astute sense of the need for an inspiring tradition in the view of black immigration to Canada. Douglass, he observes, "is just such a man as our new country needs—a lover of freedom, a loyal subject, an industrious man" (Ward 170).

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194). The case tested relations between the United States and Great Britain, but Britain eventually released the 'mutineers'. According to historian Howard Jones, the case deserves much more attention than it has received as a possible precursor of the Civil War: "Because the Creole revolt occurred in 1841, not 1861, it eventually took its place as a minor incident in antebellum history; yet its potentially explosive nature justifies more attention [because…] it constituted a microcosm of the ideas and actions of later years" (28-29).

29 Jones does not list Garrison but Blacksmith and two other men as helpers (Jones 30n7).

30 Indeed, Weinauer explains that contemporary testimony—white and black—"described[…] Washington as a man of restraint, humanity, and self-control—as the diametrical opposite of Nat Turner and, thus, an appealing figure around which to focus the public understanding of black resistance" (194).

However, aware of the fact that not every fugitive is "so fortunate [as Madison Washington]," Ward sets out to modify the former, bold assertion of representative heroic fugitives by presenting a more balanced picture of those who did not make it to the papers (170). His collection of eleven heterogeneous fugitive stories, like brief vignettes, are reminiscent of the inclusion of such stories in other narratives of this book, such as those of Thomas Smallwood and Austin Steward. They range from the story of an anonymous fugitive (170-71) to more publicized cases (181-82), from a few lines to a more extended account, and were either told to Ward directly (170) or to one of his friends like William McClure (176-77). In any case, Ward serves as the authenticator of these stories and, in many instances, gives additional information on the network of assistance that was in place for fugitives who arrived in Canada West, most notably by "Ladies' Society for the Aid of Destitute Fugitives" in Toronto (172).

At the same time that he authenticates these stories, Ward also (re-)creates them, demonstrating again that he masters the elements of classic slave narratives as well as other text formats, from scenes of hot pursuit of the fugitive who can only escape at the last moment, the betrayal of fugitives to slavecatchers, and the actual leap from the boat onto Canadian soil—including "three cheers for the British sovereign" (178-79). Eventually, then, the stories reflect instances of individual heroism and show how ordinary individuals react in extraordinary situations. Additionally, the stories invite us to reconsider Ward's genealogy of heroic fugitives. In fact, if Ward considers the protagonists here as examples of the "not so fortunate" (170)—some fugitives have to leave behind their families, for example, or arrive in Canada severely hurt by their former 'masters'—what position then remains for the 'heroic former slave'? It seems as though Ward opens up his genealogy to include the more bottom-up approach of presenting an array of individual stories that would otherwise go unnoticed, but yet represent the fate of ever so many fugitives from slavery. This then also suggests that the concept of 'heroism' can be extended to more people than just the Madison Washingtons.

This thought is complicated further by the presence of other 'heroes' that Ward seems to gloss over. For one, there is a heroic white ferryman in one of the stories who is portrayed to follow his moral conviction rather than the merciless doctrine of the slave owner. He has already taken the fugitive on board and is ready to take off with him when the owner appears, riding up to the river "upon a foaming steed," threatening to shoot the ferryman if he were not to stop, pressing the fugitive to menace the man himself, with a handspike (178). Contemplating his incumbent lot, Ward has the ferryman decide in favor of the fugitive, because "'I can't die but once; and if I die, I guess I would rather die doing right'" (178). His

decision leaves the former master "transfixed" and the boat reaches the other side (179). Another silent hero in Ward's stories is an anonymous wife who sacrifices the freedom of herself and her child so that her husband can get away. The couple plan their escape together and set out—"the wife was especially determined" (185)—but are let down by their party. Upon the return to their quarters, a dramatic scene ensues in which the wife tries to convince her husband to escape. She only succeeds to convince her husband "with a tenacity peculiar to the sex" (187). Eventually, her husband gives in, while she dramatically "sank upon the bed in the solitude of disconsolate sorrow," never to see him again (188). The wife as the tragic heroine makes an ultimate sacrifice, only to be left in her bed by Ward, without any more "tidings" or further acknowledgment of her deed (188). In this way, Ward's genealogy of heroes remains decidedly male. Despite the fact that she might well count as a heroine in this case, her reward of freedom is put off by Ward to the afterlife: "they shall be one again when they, and all those who oppressed them, shall stand before a common judgment-seat!" (188).

Finally, Ward renders an elaborate illustration of these unsung heroes who have undergone the final transformative phase in his theory from slave to freeman by inserting his travel report as the agent of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada to present to English readers the condition and the achievements of black people "*resident* in Canada *as freemen*" (189; added emphasis). It marks his final instance of spelling out the image of the black community in Canada West as one of value for the province's "industrial wealth" (192). Reflecting Ward's travels "in the settlements of the blacks, in Canada" in 1852 (193), this report speaks to other such examples which have become core sources for nineteenth-century Black Canadian life, notably Benjamin Lundy's "Diary" (1832), Benjamin Drew's *The Refugee* (1856), William Wells Brown's "The Colored People of Canada" (1861), and Samuel Gridley Howe's *The Refugees from Slavery in Canada West* (1864).[31] While Drew, Howe, and Lundy were white reformers and abolitionists, Wells Brown and Ward offered a black perspective on the various settlements that existed in Canada West. While scholars have discussed the motivation behind

31 Ward's travel report through Canada West first appeared as a report entitled "A Recent Tour" in the *Provincial Freeman* (March 24, 1853) and gave readers an overview of a "six-week, 565-mile tour through southwestern Canada West for the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada" during the winter of 1853 (rprt. in *BAP* 256-64). The account in the *Autobiography*, however, represents a different version altogether: it is much longer and gives different emphasis to the settlements than the report in the *Provincial Freeman*. The report in the *Autobiography* also allows Ward to elaborate on his stances on segregated settlement and worship.

these reports and the possible setbacks of such sources, they offer fascinating glimpses into black life in Canada West.[32]

In the *Autobiography*, Ward addresses a total of six settlements, although some only in passing. Moreover, he seems to have made a careful choice, spending much time to elaborate on Dawn, Chatham, and Buxton as highly successful, model settlements, while mentioning Hamilton and London only in passing. St. Catharines is left out completely, despite its importance as "a distribution center" for incoming fugitives as well as its discriminatory practices toward its "sizeable back community" (Simpson 195; 391-95). Similar to earlier descriptions by Lundy, for example, Ward's report draws a mainly positive and optimistic picture of black settlers in Canada West, despite some comments on the difficulties black settlements were facing in the province's predominantly white settler society.[33] He re-evokes their successes and efficiency as "labourers," "yeomen," "mechanics and artisans" (191-92), and demands that readers judge them equally to white settlers, because "the Canadian Negro […] bears himself equal to English, Irish, Scotch, Dutch, or French Canadians, although he has and they have not been slaves" (190).

Despite Ward's attempts to shape the settlements at Dawn, Chatham, and Buxton as examples that illustrate the success of free black settlers, they remain difficult to integrate in the idealistic vision of black progress in Canada. The Dawn settlement in Kent county, for example, had become well-known for its most famous inhabitant, "the honest, the venerable, the beloved Josiah Henson—'Father Henson,'" but even more so for the fierce conflict that erupted around allegations of mismanagement and a struggle to regain control (194). Ward undertakes great efforts to separate the conflict around Dawn's Manual Labour School from a more successful history seeing the change from the "unbroken, undisturbed forest" of the Canadian wild to "about 150 families in the neighbourhood" who boast of energy (194). In line with his vision for the possibilities for black people in Canada, Ward focuses on the potential of the geographical location of Dawn in the 'fluid frontier' "within water communication of Detroit" through the Sydenham River, predicting Dawn and its inhabitants to "flourish[…in] not many years hence" (196).

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32 Sandrine Ferré-Rode, for example, discusses Drew's precarious distance to his interviewees as part of her article "'They have tried the bitter and the sweet'" (2009).

33 Fred Landon has described Lundy's travel report to have been written "with a definite purpose, namely, that of presenting to the colored people of the United States a statement of the conditions of life in the British provinces" ("Diary" 110). For Ward's discussion of the Edwin Larwill attacks directed at the Buxton settlement, see below.

Ward's descriptions of the black community in Chatham are similarly fraught. He praises local community life and how the "cottages" reflect the nature of their inhabitants as good citizens in their "neatness, and more general (sic) good morals" (200). However, Ward observes that these good citizens live in what "might not unjustly be called a coloured village" within Chatham, and he admits that racism is nowhere more visibly powerful than in this town (199; 201). Finally, however, Chatham too is saved by Ward by emphasizing its crucial importance as a harbor of fugitive slaves and its proximity to the United States (see 203). Whether white Chathamites like it or not, Ward is aware that the presence of fugitives have shaped a history of the community there that "would form a most enchanting romance" (204).

In his assessment of the black settlements, the importance of class is obvious. What Ward laments about Dawn as a serious "defect[…]," for example, strikes a chord with Thomas Smallwood's narrative (196).[34] Ward, too, observes that Dawn's youth lack "energy and enterprise" as a feature of second-generation stupor and refusal to embrace the phrase he employs from Susanna "Moody (sic)"—"'Roughing it in the Bush'" (196-97).[35] Perhaps to ease his criticism in the eyes of his readers, Ward declares that in his function as a "black man" and author, he is taking very seriously his "right to complain," especially about those who he feels are "throw[ing] discredit upon our people" (197). Praising the Buxton settlement in Raleigh township as his favorite and most successful one also hinges on strict moral concepts Ward has for black settlers. Founded by the Presbyterian Minister William King, who went from slaveholder to liberator of his slaves (see 210), Ward subscribes to the narrative (later supported by historiography) that much of the settlement's success is based on King's leadership and his careful choice of settlers, who were obliged to possess "[c]ertain moral qualifications" in order to be allowed to buy land (211). While later historians such as Cooper, for example, have criticized King's "rule" and "paternalism" at Buxton ("Doing Battle" 252; 298), for Ward, this method poses no problem but is instead a "wise rule" (211). More so than in Dawn, Buxton boasts of no "immoral person[s]" and the settlers' attitude of "genial cheerfulness" and embrace of the joys of the yeoman life in "the fruits of their own toil" promise, for Ward, a most prosperous future (211-12).

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34 Ward's chidings recall Smallwood's tirade that "[t]he coloured men of the present generation are of no service to themselves, in the general, nor will they be to their posterity." Smallwood accuses his fellow Blacks to "lack energy" and the courage to stop seeing the white man as an example to emulate (55).

35 Ward makes an open connection to the famous Canadian pioneer author (1803-1885), whereas Austin Steward did not, although he uses the same phrase.

Therefore, Buxton becomes the pinnacle of the "model" settlement of black people in Canada West, not only in refuting "all that is said against [black people]" but also in offering a factual and adequate space for Ward's concept of "the modern Negro, the Negro of the nineteenth century" (214). Both in terms of organization and intellectual and religious life, Buxton is representative of what Blacks can achieve, in Ward's opinion, and it is all the more significant that he observes this accomplishment on Canadian soil, which positions the province uniquely in the North American struggle for black freedom. The fierce, racist opposition that King and Buxton were facing as it was being devised by such men as Edwin Larwill,[36] instead of being fleshed out as yet another reminder of the Canadian affiliation with discrimination, is turned into the positive development that has sprung from it: the change in race relations, which forced the presence of black settlers into a white-dominated space, as a powerful positive "moral influence" which created an opportunity for whites to familiarize themselves with their black neighbors (216). "These blacks are spoken of as good customers, good neighbours, good farmers, &c.," Ward explains, and summarizes that the black Buxtonites have come to represent "honour upon the liberty, the equality, the institutions, of Canada" like "no [other] subjects of the British Crown" (217).

Following this model of excellence, Ward calls on fellow Blacks to assume a self-confident understanding of themselves as the "other of Her Majesty's subjects" (205).[37] As a part of the "we of Canada", using the rights that are self-evidently provided by the province, Blacks should hasten for progress in order to "fit ourselves and our children for the responsibilities of free British citizens—responsibilities which are already ours, whether we be fit for them or not" (207). The final phase of his theory of heroic fugitives then foresees a strong black

36 Edwin Larwill settled in Chatham from England in 1841. He led the public opposition to King's planned settlement in 1849. Openly racist, he "antagonized the Conservative black voters of Kent County, who turned against him in [an election in] 1857" (*BAP* 231n1).

37 The transition to both this self-confidence and self-understanding is not easy, as becomes obvious to Ward when he returns to the attacks from Larwill on the establishment of the Buxton settlement. In view of Larwill's racist attacks, Ward states that "some of the black men of Chatham…are wanting in manliness. They do not bravely, manfully, stand up for themselves and their people as they should" (208). Making out Larwill as the representative of an originally white underclass "of low origin but aspiring tendencies" (208), Ward calls to oppose such "demagogue[s]" (208) through self-assertive confidence in "the self-respect of every black man" (209). It seems that confidence as a sign of manhood is the one missing link to make Chatham as successful for "our cause [of anti-slavery]" (209) as Buxton.

Canadian citizenry, which would do best to continue to show their "great loyalty" to Canada and the Crown, along with all the other indispensable characteristics that will make them not only indispensable but endow them with a "most important future" in the province (218-19).[38] The epitome of Ward's theory is therefore "the onward progress of the Canadian Negro" (221). In Ward's terms, the advancement of black people *as* Canadians will contribute to expose the horrors of American slavery (and, consequently, British freedom). This puts black Canadians at the center of anti-slavery work at the same time that it positions Canada as the *terra nova* that holds the possibilities for this progress to unfold.

4.4 GREAT BRITAIN: ALLEGIANCES OF THE MODERN BLACK GENTLEMAN AND ALTERNATIVE HISTORIOGRAPHY

Ward's theory of heroic fugitives in Canada culminated in his call to identify not simply as black Canadian citizens but black British subjects. Due to his overt allegiances as a black leader to Great Britain, Ward has been criticized as an empire apologist and as "bow[ing] to those he regarded as his British superiors" (Winks, "Ward"). The last part of his *Autobiography* actually sees him travel to Europe and tour the United Kingdom after one and a half years of work for the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada, in order to "plead on their behalf" on the other side of the Atlantic (Ward 227). As much as his work in England is centered on his relationships to nobility and elite anti-slavery circles, and as much as he emphasizes his loyalty and admiration for Great Britain, Ward's experience is still more complex. In fact, he outlines a long British history of slavery and anti-abolitionism which stands in contrast to the mighty empire that provides freedom to those who seek it. In order to uphold Britain's status as ally for aspiring free Blacks, therefore, Ward is compelled to redeem it rhetorically. This he achieves mostly through romanticized portraits of representative, worthy abolitionists, as well as through establishing modernity as a common feature that he sees unite both the nation and the black man of the nineteenth century. Ward's survey of black history and scholarship enforces their presence among the modern nations and

38 In this way, Ward predicts black loyalty as the debates on "annexation or conquest" of Canada through U.S. troops run high (220). Ward predicts a willingness to show black allegiance through arms, which eventually would also be a direct fight to maintain freedom.

calls for an alternative historiography that acknowledges the presence of minority histories within the larger frameworks of the nation.

Ward first travels to Liverpool, and this transatlantic voyage proves significant on several levels. For one, this marine border crossing has a profound personal impact on him. His "first voyage across the Atlantic" is at the same time his "first departure from [his] native *continent*" (227; added emphasis), marking both the United States and Canada as places of orientation, familiarity, and possibly home. At the beginning of this voyage, England lies ahead as a "strange land," causing Ward quite some "mental [dis]comfort" (227-28). Additionally, before embarking on the voyage, Ward is made to understand that on Captain Edward Cunard's ship, the "prevalent feelings in this country [i.e., the United States] in respect to coloured people" are brought to bear (229).[39] Ward identifies Cunard as a representative of the "Yankeefied Englishman" who submits to such attitudes by perverting what Ward had apparently assumed to be truly English virtues (230). Clearly, the "Yankeefied Englishman" and the "British Negro" are linked by opposition: the former representing a form of moral corruption, and the other, moral virtue and individual freedom at its best.

However, Cunard's behavior makes Ward reconsider the basis for and consequences of discrimination. First, he links Cunard's behavior to economic thinking: in the end, Cunard not merely gives in to a prevalent attitude of discrimination amongst his passengers but to financial considerations which reinterpret U.S.-American passengers as "frequent customers" and thus, as part of a market economy (233). Cunard as a stand-in businessman denies this status to black people, so Ward argues. Ward's logical consequence, therefore, is to call for his fellow Blacks to become businessmen themselves: "[t]hen I saw, that the chief, almost the only business of the Negro, is to be a man of business," he declares and adds more directly that "black men must seek wealth" (233-34). By inserting themselves in the structures of the market economy, black men will enhance their value as customers. According to Ward, this would entail enhancing the reputation of black businessmen to the same level as that of James McCune Smith, Henry Highland Garnet, "Frederic (sic)" Douglass and others, all of whom are already self-made men who "have, under God, produced themselves" (234-35). Ironically then, Ward indirectly proposes to subscribe to this widely accepted, ur-American, topos to counter discrimination and prejudice where it abounds so strongly.

Equally powerful is Ward's observation that discrimination as a business interest is opposed to "a British subject's rights, in [his] case," although "Her Majesty's Government retained so much control over that [ship] line" (232). He

39 For example, Ward was not allowed to eat with the white passengers on the grounds that they would complain (see 228-29).

reasons that his status as a subject does not end when he boards the ship in the Canadian port, but that on the contrary, "that what were my rights on British soil were my rights in a British ship" (232). Ward not only single-handedly establishes the same rights for black and white British subjects, which are "sacred," after all, but also claims indisputable protection by the British government (232).

Nevertheless, when the ship finally arrives in Liverpool, Ward's feelings are mixed. On the one hand, he feels the excitement of finally being in the—so-far only imagined— 'motherland', "the England of my former reading, and my ardent admiration" (236). At the same time, Ward points out that he is in a place of anti-emancipation agitation dating back a mere one or two generations when "Liverpool['s …] merchants, but sixty years before, had mobbed Clarkson for prying into and exposing the secret inhumanities of their slave trade" (236). Significantly, Ward is distancing himself from the experiences of the fugitive slaves and their emotional arrival on free soil. While the climax for the fugitive is the transformation into a free/man, Ward's waterway passage does not need to accomplish that. In fact, he admits that "[…] I always felt that; however wronged, maltreated, outraged—[I was] still, a man" (236). Ward's transformation is therefore that into a transatlantic traveler who is about to experience what of the things he feels he knows about Britain, particularly England, can actually be confirmed. Therefore, Ward's quest is not one for identity but one to find the familiar away from 'home'.

Ward's notes contain ruminations that link geography, an impression of familiarity, and a type of behavior to create a sense of belonging that harks back to his arrival in Canada. In fact, when Ward experiences "the beautiful twilight of this latitude" in England and, later, in Scotland, recognizes "this pleasing feature" as one "of a northern residence" we might draw a connection to his "northern residence" in Canada, which also possessed unique geographical features Ward had praised upon his arrival (240). Moreover, Ward does not feel quite so estranged in Britain, despite the "vast distance [he] had come, and the mighty space between [him] and those loved ones [at home]" (240). On the contrary, wandering through Liverpool, he is reminded of "some resemblance to Boston and the Bostonians" (241). After arriving in London, Ward is overwhelmed by the city's "innumerable things to show" in what appears an innumerable, illogical array of streets (243). After a while, however, he adapts and "[becomes], in this respect, a Londoner" (244). Most importantly, he recognizes English legacies in his home Toronto, which still bears similarities to the motherland: "in Canada, especially in Toronto, we are English in habits, manners, &c." (241).

Ward's first impressions of his work as anti-slavery lecturer at various meetings seem to demonstrate that there are many possibilities in England to

establish the necessary cooperation, both interracial and transatlantic, in anti-slavery activism. Finding reassurance in the fact that English audiences at anti-slavery meetings react in ways "to which [he] was not an entire stranger," Ward is introduced to many well-known figures (244). Ward shows his ability to connect quickly with important anti-slavery figures and supporters among English nobility, networking and establishing personal contacts that further his cause. Rev. James Sherman becomes especially important for Ward, who elevates him almost to a new father figure (247).[40] Ward's work in England sees a peak in June, 1853, at a meeting at Radley's Hotel, where Ward gives a speech in the presence of Lord Shaftesbury (249). Ward's humility at the surprising success of his mission in the name of the Canadian Anti-Slavery Society is connected to an idealized image of Britain, British anti-slavery, and Lord Shaftesbury as one of its most well-known philanthropists. Shaftesbury becomes a transatlantic figure of veneration in Ward's description, known even "in every cabin in Canada" (251).[41] To reinforce the links between such admirable figures of English abolitionism and the *dépendance* in Canada West, Ward casts his successful anti-slavery campaign, which has Ward travel from one society's committee meeting to the next, as a direct outcome of his residence in the British North American province: "Never, as an equal *brother man*, was I welcomed to the national platforms of any of them, until I became a resident of Canada" (253; added emphasis).

Most important for his project of transatlantic cooperation, however, is Ward's meeting with Charles Beecher (1815-1900) and Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) on their European tour. For Ward, the publication of Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) equals an "ordination of Divine Providence" and has a major impact—as Ward himself now witnesses—on his own target group, "the anti-slavery people of the aristocratic classes" (248-49). Ward contextualizes the novel also as a trigger for "An Affectionate and Christian Address of Many Thousands of Women of Great Britain and Ireland to Their Sisters the Women of the United States of America" , or the Stafford House Address (1852), a petition which stands as a powerful document to the implication of women in the British anti-slavery

40 Probably James Sherman (1796–1862), Congregational minister. According to his biographer, Sherman was known for his "ardent evangelistic preaching" and high number of successful conversions, which might have formed a common ground also with Ward (see Kaye).

41 Ward also paints two similarly romantic portraits of George Douglas Campbell, eighth Duke of Argyll (1823-1900), and James Bruce, eighth earl of Elgin and twelfth earl of Kincardine (1811–1863). Lord Elgin was governor-in-chief of British North America and viceroy of India, and agreed to lend his name to William King's Elgin settlement (see Checkland; Matthew).

cause. Significantly, Ward recognizes these events in terms of a transatlantic anti-slavery cooperation with "[t]he book from the one side of the Atlantic, the address from the other side," united in one cause (249).[42] Ward reminds his readers that this coincidence is responsible for fueling anti-slavery feeling and discussion in England on par only with "the agitation of the emancipation question in 1832" (250).

At the same time, however, Ward also awakens to a critical effect of being a black anti-slavery lecturer for white audiences. Much like his position as a black preacher to a white congregation in South Butler, he is aware that he represents to many the most direct link imaginable to the situation of slaves in the United States: "as my appearance anywhere, as I understood the matter, brought the slave to mind, I hope that, in that service, I did not mar the great chief object of my coming hither" (251). Ward exemplifies what scholars like Larry Gara (1965) have addressed as the consumption of "Professional Fugitives" by the audience. Ward realizes that many of the organizing charities and audiences "seemed to regard me as public property" (252). Yet, Ward does not let go of an idealized vision of Great Britain. Although his position as a representative quickly has him associated with the "begging issue," which occupied the black community in Canada, Ward does not elaborate on the dangerous reputation of being "a respectable successful beggar" for black fugitives in Canada (252). Instead, he glosses over this (certainly hurtful) epithet to underline his sense of fulfilling an important position in England, the sense of being cast "into a sphere of *active usefulness* which I had before never dared to covet" (252; added emphasis). It is, perhaps, part of his work to glorify England as the "summit" of civilization and "historic recollection," and as a part, thus, of a *Grand Tour* for Americans and Canadians (253). Just like Canada seems the perfect (geographical) location where black prospective settlers may put their aspirations into practice, England is appealing for being the compound of "a book, ancient, mediæval, and modern, in itself" (252).

Nevertheless, it is obvious that the present of British abolitionism and the past of British slavery are inextricably intertwined, resulting in the fact that Great Britain remains an ambiguous and complex model for Ward. Dedicating a substantial amount of his last part of the *Autobiography* to the discussion of the

42 Ward's grasp of the momentum created by the 1852 Address is in line with later scholarship. Evelyn L. Pugh, for example, offers a detailed account of the transatlantic discussions on slavery around the Address that involved Beecher Stowe, the Duchess of Sutherland, and the U.S. President's wife Julia Gardiner Tyler (1820-1889). Pugh calls the Address "the most massive antislavery petition ever assembled" and, at the same time, "one of the most spectacular manifestations of English admiration for Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*" (186).

empire's past involvement in slavery and the difficult beginnings for British abolitionism, Ward sets out to counter the opinions that after the official abolition of 1834, slavery no longer deserves a place on Britain's agenda and that it was relegated as an issue of "other nations" (290).[43] After all, Ward defines his anti-slavery work in the country through the refutation of these views (see 290). He reminds readers that the institution of slavery had long enjoyed success in the Empire, and evokes "horrible plantation scenes […], the barbarisms […], the atrocities […], the darkest, most guilty pages of British history" (291). He does not shy away from addressing the complexities of Britain in the eyes of black people before the reader by detailing its involvement in the institution at home and abroad. "[T]he whole weight of British influence was given to the furtherance of slavery in other countries," Ward explains, while at the same time, slavery became a socially accepted phenomenon in British society (292). "[A] great West India planter" in the periphery amused the center, and could be assured of "honour…, distin[ction…], position, patronage, and senatorial place" (292).[44]

A turning point in this last part of the *Autobiography*, however, sets in with Ward's astute analysis of the origin of much of this observable anti-black sentiment. This is precisely when Ward turns to the longstanding genealogy of

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43 Additionally, Ward offers a taxonomy of pro-slavery sentiment in contemporary England. Here, he distinguishes between the attitudes of "native" Englishmen and "exotics" pro-slavery supporters, i.e. non-natives, visitors, immigrants, travelers, etc. (256). Ward warns that this group "is certainly the most dangerous, and perhaps the most numerous, class of exotic pro-slavery men," because they try to appear to be of an anti-slavery disposition while in England, yet are known to be pro-slavery at home (257). Ward defines these representatives as "such colonists as are always seeking to make it appear that prejudice against Negroes is quite natural and unavoidable"—a mindset that allows Ward to write them out of the community of rational, enlightened individuals on the grounds of their contradiction to, one is tempted to say 'universally acknowledged', "historical truth" (259). Ironically, the example he discusses in detail is Thomas Chandler Haliburton (1796-1865), a Nova Scotian judge and author. Clarke has discussed racism in Haliburton in, for example, "White Niggers, Black Slaves" (1994).

44 Interestingly, the same observations have later been made by Trudel for the time of slavery in New France, where slavery continued and flourished after the British take-over in 1760. In fact, it was only then that the enslavement of black women and men became significant (see Trudel 69). Therefore, Ward's chastisement that "British people have contracted no small share of blame for encouraging the slavery of other peoples, by their evil example," inadvertently applies to the British North American provinces (Ward 292).

black intellectual history that has been ignored and that is in need of public acknowledgment. Harking back to the same argument he made in his part on the United States (see Ward 88), he blames a general lack of familiarity with the history of black people and a reductive association with "one word and its cognate—slavery, slave trade" for the hostility towards Blacks (269). Ward points out that "[t]here is the history of the Negro, at least for the last seven centuries, while what is said of him before that time is interspersed among the annals of other peoples"—and with that, makes a powerful case for the recognition of minority history within larger national frameworks (269). The willful ignorance of this long history must be ended so that knowledge about the achievements of "the ancient Negro" can lead to the recognition of the potential of "modern" black people (269). Ward establishes the possibility of being proud of ancient black history and strengthens the link between antiquity and modern times for black people through the lens of future-orientation and progress. As a result, black people are cast as one of the "most progressive of the human race" (277).

With this history of black people largely ignored by whites, the scarcity of written source material, and the dominance of the narrative of slavery, Ward finally establishes the necessity to write a different kind of history of black people. In calling for this alternative historiography, Ward acknowledges the difference between a (white, Western) demand for "historical data" and an alternative archive of black people, consisting of "[s]craps, patches, anecdotes, these are all that bear record of us" (269-70). Being able to produce and exhibit the written record of one's people's history also means reaping its "benefit," as Ward suggests (270). It signifies being able to rely on the "creditable facts" that underline the long tradition of "honourable mentions […] of our fathers," and to be aware of a genealogy of self-made men (270). The list of contemporary examples for self-made, aspiring black men comprise such figures as James McCune Smith, Martin Delany, or Alexander Crummell, who stand as examples for Ward to counter racist prejudice (see 282). As the contemporary end of a genealogy that spans black scholars and intellectuals from antiquity onwards, Ward also sees these men as an "embodie[d…] history of struggles of all the learned and useful black men we have in the United States" (283). In this respect, Ward's conscious call that "if we do not vindicate ourselves, who will do it for us?" harks back soundly to David Walker's and even Thomas Smallwood's assertion of the importance of future black historians to undertake this task, to create a reliable genealogy from black people for black people (270). Of course, Ward himself is contributing to this kind of historiography, directly and symbolically, through his *Autobiography,* as did Walker in his *Appeal*, and Smallwood in his narrative.

Finally, it remains Ward's task to close the chasm between his description of black people as aspiring and progressive, whose potentials he envisions to be realized in Great Britain and British North America, and Great Britain's history of anti-black racism and slavery. In order to maintain the allegiance to the imperial center, Ward must rationalize Britain's position in this web of relations. Therefore, he discursively redeems the Empire as the moral convert from slavery, casting the victory of abolitionism as a sign that "the Englishmen […are the] friend [of the black man]" because they recognized that they "have sinned, and they have repented" (300). Through the Abolition Act of 1833, Great Britain has gained the function as "good example" (300). Rhetorically, this entails the lowering of the "modern" black man to "the poor and needy Negro" who receives mercy at the hands of the Samaritan-abolitionist (301). This unexpected move by Ward, contradictory to his self-confident vision of the progressive black man, can only be understood in the context of his religious rehabilitation of Britain to the status of a repentant great nation. Ward's image climaxes in the assertion that "English abolitionists are among the most devotedly pious of the laymen," underlining the fact that they have recognized the "holy" character of the anti-slavery crusade (302-03). This recognition ultimately restores them to their place as morally upright, religiously apt fighters for freedom. Additionally, Ward needs to cast this conversion to anti-slavery as a sign of modernity and progressivism for his allegiances of the black man to Great Britain to maintain validity. Therefore, progress and the quest for improvement are not only intrinsic qualities of black people, in Ward's view, but must be the imperative and prime motivation for "[us] of the British dominions" (286), remembering England's own "modern[ity]" (252).

As a mediator between black and white people, abolitionists, leaders, and not least Old and New World, Ward's parting remarks constitute a last powerful call to accept Great Britain's position as worthy of black allegiance. As he tours Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, he admits that his upbringing and socialization in "a new country" does not make him so appreciative of "relics of antiquity" that he encounters in Britain (398). The tales of Westminster Abbey and other monuments from bygone times remain for Ward what they are: instructive of "English history, with its dates and figures," yet distant from his own experiences (398). Still, he is able "to convey back to [his] people [certain] impression[s] [he] felt" when visiting the monument of the English abolitionist icons of "Pitt, Wilberforce, Buxton, and Clarkson" (398-99). Ward here creates signifiers of historical importance, although fairly recent ones, yet imbued with meaning for a black readership at home.

In only a few sentences, Ward weaves together the threads of his *Autobiography*, invoking his allegiance to Great Britain and transatlantic anti-slavery, the importance of interracial cooperation in abolitionism, and the direct address of his multifaceted readership, which is black and white, anti-slavery, Canadian, U.S.-American, and British. Ward has opened the genre of *Autobiography* to incorporate more than the story of one life, but has subjected it to various purposes and border crossings. With a new phase of his life in Jamaica on the horizon, the *Autobiography* is yet only a preliminary conclusion and, therefore, does not offer simple closure. Whether one considers Ward an empire apologist who submits himself willingly to white gentility or not, whether one deems his projects of interracial cooperation and fraternity realistic or naïve, his *Autobiography* stands as a complex manifesto for Blacks at mid-nineteenth century to (re-)claim control over their fate by exploring possibilities outside of the United States. In this traveling life narrative, this includes the testing of genre boundaries, too, as Ward attempts to fit a complex, cross-border life onto the pages of his narrative. Ward moved to Jamaica in 1855 to work as a minister and, as of 1860, as a farmer like his father. He died in about 1866.

5. Community

Twenty-Two Years a Slave and Forty Years a Freeman (1857)

Approaching Austin Steward (1793-1865) begins with a paradox. While he has been set on par with "the key black nationalist leaders of the antebellum period" such as "[Frederick] Douglass, Henry Highland Garnet, and James McCune Smith" (Hodges xxvii), he has also been called a more marginal, "lesser-known" figure (Pease and Pease, Introduction ix). Historiographical scholarship has dominated this critical reception of Steward. The introduction to the 1969 Addison-Wesley edition (merely reprinted with minor changes in 2004) by Jane Pease and William Pease might serve as an example here. They recognize the narrative's importance as a historical source but fail to identify its literary value. They struggle with the fact that Steward was an "exceptional black man" (xv) who did not, however, correspond to the image of a typical fugitive. Troubled by his autobiography, which lists "[ex-]slave" and "freeman" to describe the same existential condition (liberty), their language represents a conceptual restriction to envision Blacks claiming their identities as freemen—free men—men, when they can still be instrumentalized as ex-slaves—ex slaves—slaves. Graham Russell Hodges's 2002 introduction, while it realizes that freedom for Steward was not merely a disguise, offers little more in in terms of recovering the literary value of Steward's text. He does not resolve the central issue that Steward is part of a non-literary category, i.e. black political and intellectual leadership, yet chooses a literary expressive mode, the "jeremiad" (xxvii). This chapter attempts to offer a more coherent connection between Steward's narrative as a multifaceted literary text and his cross-border life and activism.

More than a chronological narrative of his own life, Austin Steward's narrative represents a mosaic of many different stories. John Ernest, eminent scholar of the slave narrative and African American literature, has described a change in *Twenty-*

Two Years a Slave "from the individual experience of oppression to organized resistance and collective self-definition," which eventually exhort other Blacks to stop considering whites as example figures worthy of emulation (Ernest, *Liberation* 209). This chapter shows that, while Ernest's assessment certainly reflects one important message of Steward, it does not do justice to the complex web of relations between individual and collective as represented in the narrative. I argue here that there is no teleological momentum underlying the narrative that could be summed up as "from slavery to freedom" or "from the United States to Canada", but that it is driven by the interplay between Steward as an individual and the collective as represented through a plethora of different stories that he inserts in his text. Opening up his own life story to that of so many others creates a genealogy of meaningful individuals that emerges from these stories, all within the scope of his own storytelling. Rather than disrupt or fragment the narrative flow, this genealogy helps Steward's textual community building, to make sense of Wilberforce in Canada West in which he was a leading figure, defend his own reputation, but also shows significant ways of forming alliances with other groups outside the black community in Canada West.

The chapter consists of three larger sections. It begins by looking at what I call the strategy of the looking glass. It underlines a particular purpose in Steward's narrative project that relies on the incorporation of the stories of others. The looking glass as a narrative strategy relies on the simple dichotomy of "good versus evil" to plot Steward and his family against his corrupt former slave master Captain Helm and his wife. Therefore, the looking glass does not equal a mirror that reflects sameness, but instead shows a perverted, evil "other." In this process, Steward is able to shape and control the memory of his family as a meaningful genealogy: their virtuous, moral, Christian lives are set against Helm, his wife, and brothers who are pictured as evil antagonists that lead corrupt, morally-debased lives as the products of the institution of slavery. Steward as a narrator successively writes their memory out of his story and out of the communities of, first, his former slaves and, later, of free black women and men. However, when Steward extends the motif of the looking glass to his opponent Israel Lewis (?-ca. 1841), one of the agents for the Wilberforce settlement in Canada West, the reflection functions less effectively and leaves an ambiguous image of Steward's relationship with them.

Subsequently, the chapter moves form the particular case of using the looking glass, which centers on Steward's opponents, to the inclusion of more eclectic individual stories and to an exploration of their narrative functions. Steward shows that he uses some of them pragmatically to underline his reformist agendas of promoting temperance, for example, or for his anti-slavery work. Others seem to

identify, in problematic ways at times, the possibilities of alliances with indigenous people for Blacks in a new country. Others still seem to follow goals for the black community that are more complex: in these stories, Steward gives testimony of, becomes a witness to, and works to uphold the memory of black life in slavery and freedom. In this way, these stories reflect diverse experiences on both sides of the border and show the importance of meaningful individuals for the creation and maintenance of a community.

The chapters' final section demonstrates how the motif of storytelling can be applied not simply to human individuals but to more abstract entities like Great Britain and Canada West. Steward's numerous border crossings between the United States and Canada West shape the very contradictory impressions of British North America and its suitability for Black fugitives in the pursuit of freedom. While Steward's experiences in the Wilberforce settlement leave him frustrated and prompt his return to his former home in Rochester, NY, his participation in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Conferences on both sides of the border a few years later lets him re-experience Canada West under a different vantage point. The visit as part of a religious convention focuses on prominent Canadian symbols of, particularly, Canadian nationalism and pride, without however referencing Steward's previous Canadian years. This curious gap leaves an unresolved picture of Canada West as the "Promised Land" for black settlers as well as of Steward's own changing alliances.

5.1 THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

A core motif of Austin Steward's narrative is the use of the dichotomy of "good versus evil". As if through a looking glass, Steward as the protagonist presents his former Virginia slave master Captain Helm not by way of similarity but opposition. *Twenty-Two Years a Slave* relies on their chiastic developments: while Steward rises from slavery to freedom, education, and Christian faith, Helm, his wife, and brothers successively descend from their wealthy life styles to moral and physical decay. This might seem like an all-too-well-known story, and indeed, Steward's narrative is a strong testimony to his anti-slavery activism, in which the opposition of former slaves and slaveholders was put to powerful rhetorical uses. However, this subchapter shows how the image of the looking glass, contrasting Steward and his family's uprighteousness to their former masters' decadence and unfitness for respectable society, helps Steward construct a first type of meaningful genealogy. The members of his family, as opposed to the Helms, represent generations of respected black men and women, valuable community

members, and decent Christian folk. Steward's narrative includes their portraits and assures their place in the collective memory, in the same way that it writes the Helms and their legacy out of existence. In turn, this strategy demonstrates Steward's powerful position of control as a narrator as well as the degrees of self-fashioning at play. The insertion of family stories in the shapes of homages, portraits, or elegies opens up Steward's own narrative as well as the genre boundaries of autobiographical writing to become more inclusive and fluid. What is more, it creates a form of written resistance by means of which Steward counters the (discursive) dominance of the institution of slavery, which denied the livability of black memory, family, and advancement.

Twenty-Two Years a Slave begins in Virginia around the turn of the nineteenth century. Steward's quasi-encyclopedic account of slave life on a plantation teems with well-known slave narrative topoi and characters at first glance, yet serves to position Steward, his family, and the other slaves as pillars of support within an oppressive system. Robert and Susan Steward, his parents, as well as his sister Mary form the nucleus of Steward's elaborations on plantation life that cover the crude housing provided for slaves, the availability of food, working conditions for men and women, daily schedules, as well as the terrors of punishment by the overseer and his dog. An emotional description of the arbitrary punishment on the plantation, heightened by the underlying (sexual) violence against the female body, exposes the otherwise unspeakability of the system of slavery, framed as a well-known appeal to (anti-slavery) readers: "Oh, you who have hearts to feel; […] think of the sufferings of the helpless, destitute, and down-trodden slave" (Steward 19). Despite the seeming utter hopelessness of their situation, Steward inserts the power of the slave community's communal support as healers, helpers, sympathizers, and keepers of each other.

Similar to classical drama, the plantation becomes the microcosmic stage on which protagonist and antagonist confront each other. Steward opens with a by now canonical "I was born," but defers the status of being a slave to several years after his birth: "At seven years of age, *I found myself a slave* on [a] plantation" (13; added emphasis). This life-changing realization of the narrator might signify the end of an ingenuous childhood, underlined by the fact that he is sent to work at the Great House. There, he is exposed to plantation owner Captain Helm and his wife. Both are portrayed as stereotypical representatives of their class. As such, Helm's usually rather "kind and pleasant" nature is subject to his "terrible" temper under intoxication (22). His predilection for gaming and alcohol as well as his failure at taking care of his businesses not only discredit him in the eyes of any nineteenth-century reformer but also have devastating consequences for Steward and his fellow-slaves, who are at risk to become the prizes to be lost or won in a

gambling bid (see 23). Mrs. Helm, on the other hand, while being "a very industrious woman," embodies the power-ridden plantation mistress who takes out her anger at the younger servants, especially (24). She takes pleasure in seeing others flogged; her power is both sadistic and arbitrary. The plantation's female slaves, on the contrary, are exposed to the (sexual) whims of their owners.

The Helms, both through their character and luxurious life style, become the narrator's tools to advance major topics of the reform movement in which Blacks were prominently engaged, both in Canada and the United States: abolition and slavery's deteriorating effects, temperance, frugality, and hard work.[1] Steward takes their negative examples as continuous lessons throughout the narrative in which he figures as a superior moral instance. Several chapters display Helm's immoral behavior, which becomes a stand-in for Southern society's misguided conduct at large. Helm indulges in horse racing, gambling, and later, dueling, whose pomp and vain pleasures Steward sharply criticizes (see 41). Finally, the Captain finds himself in dire financial straits after a horse race, causing him to consider emigration to another state. After a visit to the "far-off 'Genesee Country'," in today's western New York State, he returns enthusiastic, claiming that "the more slaves a man possesse[s] in that country the more he [will] be respected" (42-43). Consequently, Helm decides to sell all belongings at a great auction, retaining his slaves whom he will move to New York State with him.

Helm's whim, therefore, initiates the long list of geographical removals and border crossings Steward undergoes in his life. The first relocation away from the Virginia plantation problematizes not merely the slaves' status as (literally) movable goods but the impact of their forced migration in the face of an uncertain future. The final good-byes from their families and friends in Virginia illustrate the slaves' feelings that leaving for New York State is about "the greatest hardship they had ever met" and, so they think, a move "beyond the bounds of civilization" (47). At the same time, the forced move to New York State at Helm's desire spark a reflection in Steward that reveals his complex relationship with the plantation, Virginia, and notions of "home." Steward remarks that the plantation remains the "land of our birth, the home of our childhood" and "all that was so familiar to us" (48-49). However, he seems torn when he confesses that the memories of his "native State" are tinged with the memories of slavery (49). He seems frustrated

1 Cooper notes the significance of the temperance issue for the middle-classism of many free Blacks: "Blacks […] took up the temperance sword, in conjunction with the rest of white society, simply because they saw this as a vehicle toward respectability. […] In joining the temperance movement, free Blacks, many of whom were also middle class (or aspired to its rank), were simply doing what others of their class were doing" ("Doing Battle" 326).

at the loss of the more joyful thoughts at his early youth and manhood that any free person might have, but which have been denied him as a slave. The "despairing sigh" that he feels at the memory of Virginia points to the loss of a sense of home and belonging—a home he feels does not correspond to the norm—and introduces the *déracinement* of a diasporic man (50). On the other hand, Captain Helm indirectly figures not only as the one who causes the loss of "life's sweetest memories" by the new uprooting of his slaves but also as someone most incapable "of taking care of himself and family" (50-51). In this respect, he proves inferior to his slaves. The chapter's foreshadowing of his future downfall against his own prophesy of being successful in the new state seems to be a slight compensation at this moment of anxiety.

For the time being, however, Helm establishes himself and his family in his chosen home, attempting to consolidate his control. At the same time, Steward develops the first thoughts of freedom and self-emancipation. The great "general training" of the army in Phelps, NY, marks an incisive moment in his life and he is overwhelmed with thoughts of wanting to be free.[2] Feeling infused with the spirit of joining the army on the spot to take his chance in "fight[ing] the British," this "grand display" causes him to have serious troubles "to content [himself] to labor as [he] had done" (77-78). He is transformed in the sense that he clearly pronounces his increasing dissatisfaction with being a slave and, moreover, the utter impossibility of identifying himself with this category any longer: "I was sick and tired of being a slave, and felt ready to do almost any thing (sic) to get where I could act and feel like a free man" (78). His prospects, however, are crushed by Helm who refuses that he join the army and reasserts his control over Steward's movements ("[I]f you get killed your wages will stop; and then who, do you suppose, will indemnify me for the loss?" 79).

Soon, however, Steward's narrative shows that he and Helm have embarked on irreversible courses that will lead one of them to self-determination and the other, to slow destruction. After roughly one year Steward finds his personal growth and changes during the past months quickly make it "beyond endurance" to re-adapt to his old life as Helm's slave (81). In a move of self-empowerment

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2 Up to date, I have been unable to get source credit for this training or when this would have taken place. The only hint is the appearance of Governor Lewis, which Steward describes in the course of the episode, on the second day of the training (Steward 76-77). The only Governor Lewis of New York State was in office between 1804 and 1807, which would place the training a good way before the outbreak of the War of 1812. Another point of reference is that the village of Dresden, where Tower first takes his workers, was apparently started in 1811 as a planned community, meaning that Steward and his fellow workers would have witnessed the very beginning of this place.

and determination, Steward sets about "making a virtue of necessity" and educates himself, learning to read with the aid of a self-procured spelling book (82). This courageous and dangerous undertaking is finally discovered and he suffers a severe flogging by Helm's son-in-law (82-83). The punishment only spurns Steward's determination and defiance, and he resolves "to learn to read and write, at all hazards, if [his] life was only spared" (83). Steward takes this open act of resistance, one that aligns him with a plethora of slave narrative authors, to foreshadow the Captain's worsening financial situation, at the same time that he as his "slave" has taken a crucial step on the way to concrete (psychological) emancipation from his "master."[3]

Steward fleshes out the allusion to the Helms' downward spiral through Mrs. Helm's death in an almost metaphysical reflection on decay, death, *memento mori*, but also new beginnings. His extensive description of death and dying is one of his tools of mirroring, used to establish the moral integrity and thus, superiority, of himself and his family as the exact opposite of the slaveholding class. The Helms as representatives of the latter become negative foils, or reflections, of a decent Christian life, their moral debauchery being a sign of the influence of slavery that extends even to the moment of death. In this way, Mrs. Helm's final moments are part of a dramatic chapter setting. Like her luxurious life, her death becomes a spectacle. Her and her husband's condescending attitudes toward inevitable death quickly turn into desperate lamentations and anxiety. Steward coldly remarks that "[s]urrounded as she was with every elegance and luxury that wealth could procure, she lay shrieking out her prayers for a short respite, a short lengthening out of the life she had spent so unprofitably" (85). He seems to feel this to be a deserved end of someone with an initially "active intellect and great force of character," but whom slavery had "made a tyrannical demon" (87). The gap between her and her slaves is ever more apparent at the end of her life, when she finds herself alone and let down by earthly riches, whereas her slaves, though suffering from "rough, lowly cabin[s]" enjoy a "quiet conscience" (85). The extravagance of her life continues in the drama of her death scene, which is displayed in the narrative as a Gothic celebration of her final minutes in the midst of heavy rain and storm, culminating in her expiration "as the clock struck the hour of midnight" (86). Mrs. Helm's passing is so horrible that it makes a lasting impression on family, friends, and the slaves present. Amongst them, feelings are

3 The importance of (self-)education for enslaved women and men cannot be emphasized enough. It is a recurring feature in slave narratives, and marks both rebellion and self-determination. Literacy and emancipation are often inseparable in slave narratives. On the connections between literacy, emancipation, and manhood, see, for example, Cooper's case study on Bibb ("Doing Battle" 26).

mixed, as Steward describes: "some doubtless truly lamented the death of their mistress; others rejoiced that she was no more, and all were more or less frightened" (86). For Steward, Mrs. Helm is the prime example of a fallen woman in that she would have had the means to become a positive role model to other women of her class, had she been religious and "under a different influence" than slavery (86).[4]

Steward forcefully illustrates this different influence through the elegy dedicated to his daughter Patience Jane Steward, who dies unexpectedly in the mid-1840s and represents, in stark contrast to Mrs. Helm, a perfect example of the devout and humble young Christian woman.[5] Foreshadowing his daughter's unexpected illness, Steward's plans for her are put to a stark hold. He reveals their close father–daughter relationship and the hopes he had put in his child. Given that women appear rarely enough in the narrative other than as fugitives, for instance, Steward's expectations and respect for his daughter gain significance. He points out that all his efforts had gone into her education, accompanied by "all the trials and difficulties that every colored man meets, in his exertions to educate his family" (306). Knowing all too well the reality of discrimination in education and the often insufficient learning conditions for Black children, his daughter's role would have been to teach her younger siblings. Steward proudly reports that Patience held a teaching certificate in the sciences, "reward[ing]" her father's efforts (307). However, it is her faith that exceeds Steward's expectations by far. Here, his elegy turns into an idealization of his dying daughter as "the quiet sufferer," whose faith seems to sustain her and grow the weaker her body becomes (308). Her faith is relevant in her own dealings with her illness, but also because it helps her in trying to alleviate the situation for her family (307).[6] Patience suffers death "without a struggle or moan" (308). Her passing, noted by the exact date, marks an incisive moment in Steward's life and another personal loss to the "fell destroyer" (307).

It is crucial that hers is the first name we learn out of the family, and "Patience" reflects her demeanor and character as she approaches the final months of her life (308). Patience's death at only eighteen, although it leaves the family's house "desolate," is ultimately turned into something triumphant (308). Not only does she die in peace with herself, but in complete submission to God and his will (see 309). Her passing represents what Steward understands as tragic but dignified, and

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4 One can see the parallel here to Mrs. Auld in Douglass' 1845 *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.

5 I use the term in this chapter not in the sense of the poetic form of elegy, but in its quality as a "song of lament" (Cuddon 253).

6 Patience's younger sister died in 1837, aged eleven (see below).

not without hope for a Christian family who believes in the afterlife. Therefore, the poem "The Autumn Evening" by Unitarian minister William B. O. Peabody (1799-1847), which forms the chapter's epilogue and whose melancholy is mitigated by "the morning's happier light" waking the dead, leaves a hopeful note (310). Steward does not conceal his personal feeling of gratification as he sets up his daughter's passing as the greatest possible contrast to Mrs. Helm's death. Hers was accompanied by screams and mortifications, whereas Patience, who has lived an honest and upright, albeit short life, dies a "peaceful death" (309). His daughter's "triumph" is also one over the former mistress.

Patience's death serves to underline how Steward labors explicitly throughout the first third of his text to distance himself from Helm, his family, or any of their acquaintances, attributing to himself the realm of Christian faith and temperance, in particular. In fact, his concerns to lead a moral life become more and more acute in the changing Helm household. The Captain hastily remarries a widow of six weeks, Mrs. Thornton, who transforms the house in such dramatic fashion until two slaves run away. In this tense atmosphere, Steward recounts his own religious self-examination in a moment of crisis. Quite suddenly, he falls so seriously ill that he is afraid to die and makes his testament. This experience sparks what he describes as "examin[ing] [his] own condition before God" (90). As one would expect, he himself flawed and imperfect in character and deed even as a slave in the non-place of society (see 91). He prays to God to spare his life in return for a better life as a Christian. Curiously enough, the episode of his sickness seems incomplete and at odds with the rest of the chapter. His conversion moment seems like a staple narrative element he might have felt needed to be included; in any case, it serves to underline the opposition to an unreligious, unconcerned Captain Helm.

There are signs, nevertheless, that Helm's influence as a master is crumbling. Through the long and convoluted abolition process in New York State, Steward ultimately gains his freedom, and Helm will be defeated. With the help of Mr. Cruger, a lawyer in Bath, and the local manumission society, represented by Mr. Comstock and Mr. Moore, Steward is eventually able to clarify his status as a freeman, but only after much uncertainty.[7] Having reached freedom, Steward goes

7 Possibly Daniel Cruger (1780-1843), who was admitted to the bar in 1805 and began practicing in Bath. In the War of 1812, he served as a major, and thereafter was involved in several political offices such as the State assembly and the 15th Congress (see "Cruger"). Dennis Comstock and James Moore, both directors of the local Manumission Society (see Landon, *African-Canadian Heritage* 78-79). Steward exceptionally gives the year for these events, 1814, toward the end of the War of 1812. He encounters U.S. troops returning from Buffalo when he is allowed to visit with

on to describe his rise to self-improvement through education. While asserting his freedom made him feel like his own master, buying his first school books to continue his studies makes him feel like a king (see 114). The clear defeat of the former master Helm through freedom and personal uplift continues as the latter descents further into depravity and crime. Helm, now deserted by most of his slaves and his second wife, devises a scheme to alleviate his need of money. His plan illustrates his utter moral depravity and exposes him, in Steward's moral eye, as a true child of the slave South: "[H]e had been raised in a slave State, and Southern principles were as deeply instilled into his mind, as Southern manners were impressed on his life and conduct" (117). In order to make money, Helm resorts to "collect[ing]" all of his former slaves in order to sell them south (117). Simon Watkins, whose task is to assist Helm, sets about inviting black people of the surrounding villages to a party. Steward explains that "[his] parents were invited; and Simon took the pains to come to Farmington to give [him] a special invitation" (118). In hindsight, Steward sharply denounces the plan as morally outrageous and an act of "piracy" unfit for the Republic (117).

Only the use of another tool of reflection, namely, the use of forebodings and dreams, saves Steward's life. At first entirely unsuspecting, he prepares for the evening when, "by some mysterious providence, or something for which I can not (sic) account, a presentiment took possession of my mind that all was not right. […] I grew so uneasy, that I finally gave up the party and returned home […]" (118). While Steward is in safety, Helm and his helpers upset the party and make their arrests. When panic erupts and the betrayed slaves fight for their lives, Steward's own father is severely wounded and will later die from his injuries (119). Even though Steward is not participating in the event, being absent from the scene, he delivers a vivid account of its turmoil. Most slaves manage to escape, he explains, but some were not so fortunate. He therefore accounts for lost community members by explicitly naming and recording them: "Among those taken were Harry Lucas, his wife, Lucinda, and seven children; Mrs. Jane Cooper and four children, with some others" (120). In doing so, he gives an identity to and

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friends in Geneva and Canandaigua (see Steward 108). Hodges explains that Austin Steward received his official freedom papers on April 21, 1821 (a fact that is left out in the narrative, interestingly): "Elisha B. Strong, the first judge of Monroe County, endorsed a certificate that declared Austin Steward a free man. It was an interesting statement" (xviii). According to Hodges, Strong argued that in his personal opinion, Steward had indeed been free since January 1, 1811, when Helm first hired him out to a man named Towers.

account of those whom he knew, before they might be irretrievably lost.[8] He knows that "[t]he sorrow and fearful apprehension of those wretched recaptured slaves can not (sic) be described nor imagined by any one (sic) except those who have experienced a like affliction" (120). His record is crucial, not only because so far, they had been subsumed under the title of being "Helm's slaves" but because Steward assures that they become part of the genealogy of meaningful individuals that all his fellow slaves and the black community will recall and identify with.

When forced to cope with his father's death at Palmyra in 1816, following several months of severe illness due to the attack by Helm, Steward delivers one of the strongest instances of establishing a meaningful genealogy of his family in opposition to Captain Helm. He becomes the writer of his father's elegy, shaping his life as a respectable Christian and role model. While Steward emphasizes, in the words of the Bible, the promise of Heaven for the oppressed, he equally establishes his father's earthly reputation (see 125). He gives a brief insight into the personal estimation in which he held his father as a son by casting the latter as a morally upright person, both in public and in private. "My father had a good reputation for honesty and uprightness of character among his employers and acquaintances, and was a kind, affectionate husband and a fond, indulgent parent. His, I believe was the life and death of a good man" (126). Given that the father has only appeared twice before in the narrative, Steward ensures that he is in charge of his father's memory, not as a slave, but as a respectable man. It is significant that Steward shares this moment with readers as a moment of reverence. The role of the father in slave narratives is often enough one of absence. Here, Steward connects himself firmly to his parent just as he will focus several times on his own children throughout the narrative. In his personal genealogy, incidentally, the mother as well as the wife are almost completely absent.

Most slaves are eventually able to escape before being shipped south by Helm, and the Captain continues to become more miserable. After several stages of moral and material deterioration, Helm reaches the bottom of the social ladder: reduced to utter poverty, Steward describes him living with "one of his slave women, and […] supported by public charity!" (145). Being both desperate and sly, Helm tries to profit from his former slave's rise to wealth and employs a lawyer to demand money from Steward for alleged debts he has with Helm. Steward, however, now

8 In Lawrence Hill's novel *The Book of Negroes (*2007) the protagonist Aminata, abducted from her home village in Africa and survivor of the Middle Passage, quickly learns of the existence of the "fishnet" as the secret web of information by which the slave community corresponds. "'What is the fishnet?' I asked. 'It is how we find each other, passing messages from one to another to still another'" (137).

not only has the legal back-up but also possesses a new self-confidence which he makes known to Helm and his lawyer: “I replied that I should […] continue to maintain my personal rights and enjoy the freedom which was already mine” (146). Helm, unrequited, initiates a trial against him, claiming “every particle of property [Steward] possessed” (146).[9] Before the trial can begin, however, Helm suddenly dies.

These “startl[ing]” news trigger Steward’s reexamination of the life of a man who, for so long, had exercised brutal control over his life (147). It is tempting to read these reflections in the moralizing tone of anti-slavery discourse that interprets Helm’s life as preconditioned to end the way it did: like his wife, he was reared on a plantation and “nurtured” in the values of a slave society (147). Moreover, his character was spoilt by alcohol, gambling, and a type of arrogance summed up by Steward’s laconic comment that “[h]e who had once been thought to be one of the wealthiest as well as one of the greatest men in the county, died a pauper - neglected and despised, and scarcely awarded a decent burial” (147). There is, however, something else to Helm’s death in Steward’s words that transcends the apparent simple moral undertones. In fact, set against the death of Steward’s father as a consequence of the struggle against re-enslavement, Helm’s death functions as a type of (anti-)elegy and represents another instance of using the looking glass to establish contrast. Steward symbolically takes on the role of funeral speaker for his former master, but instead of establishing him as a respected, upright member of society, as he did with his father, Helm dies bereft of all earthly goods and the victim of his own moral deviance. Steward states, “now he is regarded as no better than his poorest slave, and lies as lowly as they” (147).

The seeming erasure of all hierarchies in death should not hide the crucial difference between Steward’s father and the unrepentant slaveholder: for Helm, there can be neither honorable legacy nor memory. In a final reversal of roles, Steward puts himself in control of Helm and his inheritance. In fact, he even expands this control to Helm’s brother Thomas. Steward claims to have visited Thomas’s grave, but found “very little to mark [his] resting place” (148). On the fate of the Helm brothers, the narrator remarks: “They had passed away. Their wealth, power and bravery had come to nought; and no tribute was now paid to the memory of one of ‘Old Virginia's best families’” (148). Steward thus fashions himself as a witness to the physical manifestation of the Helms’ non-memory, by

9 In an aside, Steward mentions that the trial is to be held before William Beatty Rochester (1789-1838), son of the city’s founder Nathaniel Rochester (146). This does not only mark Steward again as a pioneer citizen of Rochester but also as well versed in the city’s elite (see “Rochester”).

the same token attempting to erase Helm not only from his own remembrance, as a cathartic cleansing from the vestiges of slavery, but also from that of the following narrative.

Using the Helms as a negative foil, or reflection, occupies much of the first third of *Twenty-Two Years a Slave*, from Steward's birth into slavery to his liberation and decision to move to Canada West. The portraits of the Helms focus on their descent into moral depravity, poverty, illness, and death, whereas Steward (and his family) emerges as a moral example and rises to freedom. Once he transitions into Canada West to become involved in the all-Black Wilberforce settlement in Biddulph,[10] the looking glass motif reappears in the shape of a new antagonist: Wilberforce agent Israel Lewis.[11] The controversy surrounding the settlement centered on the personal feud between Steward and Lewis, in particular. In Steward's narrative, the agent undergoes a similar negative development as Captain Helm, which marks him as Steward's opponent and that of the communal effort that Wilberforce represents. While the motif of the traitor figure appears in relation to Lewis, too, it is less strong overall than in the narrative by Thomas Smallwood, for example. Instead, Steward's descriptions allow for direct parallels to the white former slave master, but with a far more ambiguous result. While Lewis will eventually be reduced to depravity and death in poverty as well, Steward cannot easily write him off—or, *out* of the narrative, as it were. After all, he must acknowledge Lewis's involvement in Wilberforce as a leader and partly successful agent for the settlement abroad. Therefore, Steward must focus on distancing his character from his, while there is no longer a chiastic development between himself and Lewis as it had been the case with Captain Helm.

Steward introduces Lewis early on as an opponent. In his testimonial, Steward, the newly appointed president of the colony, recounts the board of managers' most important and far-reaching decision, namely the appointment of two agents for "soliciting" funds for the support of the settlement (185). Ripley has called Wilberforce both "an experiment in social reform and an antislavery symbol." Thus, its support was basically a must for self-proclaimed anti-slavery philanthropist as "a measure of their abolitionist commitment" (*BAP* 47). The board's choice of Lewis does not proves a felicitous one, however. While Steward does not dispute that Lewis in fact collects money, he laments that he "would neither pay it over to the board, nor give any account of his proceedings" (187). Not only do the board members suspect him of defrauding the collected sums, Steward also accuses him of indulging in luxuries on his tours. "[E]xtravagan[ce

10 Biddulph; today, the county is named Lucan Biddulph.

11 The other agent was Nathaniel Paul, see footnote 17.

…] expensive hotels, [and] giving parties" do not only run counter to the colony's ideological framework but also to the practical and material circumstances of the settlers who fight for survival (187). Lewis's behavior is cast as creating great damage and "dishonor" for the colony and its reputation, particularly (187). Therefore, Steward's testimonial is concerned with rectifications, re-contextualizations, and providing the "correct" information. He emphasizes, for example, that Wilberforce did not consider "begging" an option, an association with which would have seriously threatened the project.[12] As Ripley explains, the fact that the colony had to rely on philanthropy at all represented a "dilemma, [as] the Wilberforce managers attempted to solicit financial assistance without diminishing the credibility of their experiment" (47).

Finally, the board decides to go public and make the "facts in the case" known (Steward 188). This resolution lays open the schism between the board and its agents. Desperate to save the well-meaning help of their supporters, Steward appears to bear the brunt of the "excitement…on the part of Lewis and his friends, who were joined by the friends of N. Paul, to destroy, if they could, the board of managers" (188). His standing in the United States, where he had succeeded as a Rochester businessman, makes him the target of the adversaries' efforts. His "high reputation for truth and honesty," in his opinion, saves him from severe social consequences (189). Publicizing the scandal, however, leads the Canada Company to cease all further land dealings with the Black settlers in Wilberforce. Steward explains that he is unable to buy land from the Company's agent "because he so despised Lewis" (189).

Hodges has rightly pointed out that the conflict in Wilberforce is indicative of Steward's narrative control, using his narrative, and particularly the appendix (341-360), as "the fullest record of the futile settlement [to put…] most of the blame for its demise [on Lewis]" (xxiv). Lewis's own voice is silenced in the narrative, whereas he appears in the *Black Abolitionist Papers* with a vociferous letter from 1833 disavowing Steward and the board of managers. Calling himself "President and Agent of Wilberforce Colonization Company," which he had organized with his followers in July 1832 in view to replace Steward and the board, illustrates the open struggle for power in the settlement (*BAP* 58). Steward and his supporters tried to "minimize[…] the support" of the rival body, Ripley explains, but Lewis nevertheless received "notable white support" before 1839 (61n5). The letter discloses the stark contrast of opinion between Lewis and Steward on how the colony should be run, and also underlines Lewis's self-

12 For more on the contention around "begging" in the Black community in Canada, see Cooper on the controversies between Mary Ann Shadd and Henry Bibb ("Doing Battle" 231; 251), as well as Michael Hembree's "The Question of 'Begging'."

confidence and understanding as the founder of Wilberforce "which [he] had the honor to plant" (58). Moreover, the document directly challenges Steward's one-sided narrative authority at the same time that it reveals the fragility of Wilberforce as a collective settlement experiment as, indeed, "one of the first times that blacks acted together and independently" (Hodges xxiv). Steward, on the other hand, turns Lewis into a dishonest traitor figure who neglects the communal well-being, but as much as the image of the traitor, it was the public controversy that threatened the settlement. The ensuing factionalism "raised serious doubts about the feasibility of organized black settlements and threatened the relationship between white philanthropy and the black Canadian community" (*BAP* 63). Faced with the Canada Company's cut on land deals, Steward laments that "it cannot be right [for them] to judge the character of a whole class or community by that of one person" (189).

Steward includes a variety of other documents to show Lewis's ill behavior against Wilberforce, but also to illustrate that he as the president and the board of managers received (white) public support. The circular of the "committee of colored citizens of the city of New York," the resolutions by that body at a public meeting, and those resolutions passed by the board at Wilberforce are all signed by well-known abolitionists such as Theodore S. Wright, Samuel E. Cornish, or Charles B. Ray (see 232-34).[13] The board of managers shows unity in its assessment of Lewis and Paul, and the American supporters clearly and openly warn the public against Lewis (see 234). Wilberforce also has the important support of Arthur Tappan who openly announces, according to Steward, "that Israel Lewis was not a man to be fully relied upon in his statements regarding the Wilberforce colony" (235).[14] In turn, Lewis is cast as a vociferous and belligerent man, none to shy away from the renown of a Tappan, whom he takes to court for "defamation of character" (235). Finally, Steward recounts that Lewis tries to bribe him as well, promising to reward him if he keeps silent about the attempt to sue Tappan and if he "abandon[s] the interests of the colonists" (236). When Steward refuses, distancing himself from "that kind" of disloyal behavior, Lewis turns against him personally and tries to get rid of him (236).

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13 Theodore S. Wright (1797-1847), Samuel E. Cornish (ca. 1796-1858), and Charles B. Ray (1807-1886), all three of them African American ministers and abolitionists. Wright was the protégé of Cornish, who co-established the *Freedom's Journal* in 1827. Ray eventually owned and edited the *Colored American* (see *BAP* 79n1; 189n7).

14 Arthur Tappan (1786-1865), American businessman and abolitionist, the first president of the American Anti-Slavery Society and founder of the *Emancipator* in 1833 (see *BAP* 71n6).

While Lewis's moral depravity has thus been established, two further incidents clearly align him with the character of Captain Helm. First, Lewis sues Steward for theft, remembering a land deal he had struck with Steward, in which the latter had ended up taking up twenty-five dollars for Lewis to be refunded (see Steward 191-92; 236).[15] Second, he, too, plans an attack on Steward's life. The trial itself and the preparations serve to carve out the psychological distress it is causing Steward, who had been laboring to establish himself as an upright moral man. He is desperate to be "arraigned, for the *first* time in [his] life, as a *criminal*, by one of the very people [he] had spent my substance to benefit" (237; original emphasis). Implicitly, he calls Lewis a traitor here, but Lewis uses the same argument. In his letter, he describes that he was the one who brought Steward to Wilberforce in the first place, as "he was recommended to [him] as a man of color supporting a fair character" (*BAP* 58). Lewis's counter-narrative portrays himself as the good Samaritan who took Steward into his own home before he could get settled himself. Rhetorically, discrediting Steward subsequently as a thief weighs therefore even more heavily. Steward, on the other hand, feels personally threatened by Lewis. More than by the personal discredit, he is struck by the fact that Lewis attributes everything to a "private quarrel" (Steward 237). This damage to Steward's reputation of both his private and public self, if the settlers believed it and/or if the court sanctioned it, would entail his societal destruction.

While Steward describes the strains of the trial as "a dark time" that weighs heavily on him, he emphasizes his resolution and commitment to the project of Wilberforce (237). He refuses to follow his friends' advice to "flee from the country, which I had labored so hard and so conscientiously to benefit"—even more so, he stresses, as his labor had been accompanied by "nothing but detraction and slander" (237). He still firmly believes that the court will establish his innocence. Lewis, on the contrary, is seen to spread the "slander" before the trial (237). Steward goes further in describing Lewis's efforts to spread rumors about his person as sinking to the lowest echelon of the moral ladder: Lewis tries to instrumentalize his own "faithful, but illiterate wife" in his scheme to discredit him (238). Steward, however, is equally engaged in defamations himself: elaborating on Lewis's scandalous treatment of his wife whom "he looked now with disdain upon," he details how Lewis lies to her in order to win her over as his

15 Steward follows up on a previous mention in the narrative with more detail on the actual trial that had been adjourned in 1832. Lewis, in his 1833 letter, announces the trial for "felony" against Steward to follow in August of the same year: "I lost a twenty dollar note of hand out of my house, which I found some time afterwards in the hands of a man, who said he got it of Austin Steward. I presented Steward to the grand jury" (*BAP* 58).

accomplice (238-39). Although she finally gives in, she soon regrets and, remembering to behave loyally, "mortified [… flees] to Wilberforce" to confess to Steward (240).

While a most unfavorable light shines on Lewis's character, Steward has succeeded in asserting his voice and control over the event. The day of the trial confirms Steward.[16] At first, he elaborates on the humiliation of being seated in the "prisoner's box" and next to a murderer (241). His only comforts here are the written notes of support from some of Rochester's former fellow businessmen; "first men" testifying to his "good character" (241). While the prosecutor only relies on Lewis's testimony, Steward emphasizes that his own attorney brings into account the well-meaning testimonies of three "respectable white men" (241). This leads the jury to release Steward on a verdict of "not guilty" (241). He thus regains his reputation despite Lewis's defamatory efforts, which recalls his victory over Helm who, too, who had given in to immorality and failed legally against him.

The climax of the personal feud between Steward and Lewis, however, is the attack on Steward's life upon his return from London. If Lewis had already reached the lowest moral level, as Steward had pointed out previously, he has now forsaken even the most basic legal scruples, too, like Captain Helm. Steward implies that Lewis steals his letter to his wife telling her when he would return to Wilberforce. Additionally, a woman who is married to one of Lewis's "associate[s]" warns Mrs. Steward of her husband's return (254). She urges her to

16 The description of the court proceedings represents an interesting comment on Steward's relationship to Great Britain. He describes the trial to follow "English court style," for example (241). This applies to Chief Justice John Beverley Robinson's dress as well as to the loud "God save the King!," which opens the trial (241). Sir John Beverley Robinson (1791-1863), who shares almost the same life dates with Steward, became chief justice in 1829. In the rebellions of 1837/38, he sentenced two of the leaders to death. He is known to have contributed to upholding the separate school system for black children in his ruling in *Hill v. School Trustees of Camden and Zone* (see Ripley 8). Steward's descriptions, however, are based on the topos of equality before the law, which Black settlers in Canada praised highly. To be able to use the court system to obtain justice constituted one of the pillars of citizenship and thus greatly helped to idealize Canada in the eyes of Black immigrants. Jehu Jones describes his feelings upon his arrival in Toronto in 1839 in a letter to Charles B. Ray: "That I assure you, sir[,] my soul was absorbed in rejoicing, prayer and thanksgiving to the Author of all good gifts, that he has given me courage, through so many difficulties […] to find a place where I am protected by the law - besides that I can enjoy my peculiar Religious opinions, without giving offence to my neighbors" (*BAP* 76).

make him stay in London for the night and only return the next morning, thereby announcing the impending danger. Again, as did Lewis's wife when she confessed to Steward before the trial, the wives of his adversaries represent moral conscience. Since "the violent threatenings of Lewis" against Steward and his family have by this time become so frequent, however, Mrs. Steward does not heed the bad omen (254). Yet, on the way to Wilberforce, Steward crosses "McConnell's Dismal Swamp, […] one of the most dreary places in all that section of country," in which a Gothic episode unfolds in the course of which he is suddenly shot at twice from the thicket (254; 255). Miraculously, Steward's horse carries him "to [his] own door" (255).

It is no surprise to the reader, due to Steward's hints throughout the episode, that Lewis and his friends are the instigators of the life-threatening attack. Steward learns from other colonists that they had not only been out all night but had also been seen near the swamp (255). The serious offense by Lewis does not, however, make Steward seek legal redress, but rather sparks his concern for Lewis's soul, as he is glad "that he had been prevented from imbruing his hands in the blood of a fellow being" (256). Steward finds the opportunity to cast himself as a generous Christian who, even now, muses on his perpetrator's fate. He concludes with a short morale in the form of a poem pointing out that Lewis's conscience will do its share (256). This cannot detract, though, from the disappointment and annoyance that Steward, his family, and their fellow-settlers begin to feel about their Canadian experiment.

Steward's final portrait of Lewis at the news of his death irrefutably casts him not simply as a negative reflection of Steward's moral Christian life but as a parallel to Captain Helm.[17] Lewis's death represents a chance for Steward to

17 Nathaniel Paul, Wilberforce's other agent, and his brother Benjamin, are similarly aligned with Captain Helm. Benjamin Paul is described as one of Lewis's most devout followers (see 257-58). Steward also casts him as a proud, but unhealthy man, recalling the unison of *mens* (mind) and *corpus* (body) which had marked Helm's fate, too. Paul's mind and body begin to decline after Lewis's demise in the colony: "[He] had kept up pretty well, until Lewis was effectually put down, and his own character involved in many of his notorious proceedings […] his health failed, and he sank rapidly under accumulating disasters, to the grave" (258). Additionally, his spirit suffers as he is overcome with "melancholy and remorse for his past course of living" (258). As Steward comes to visit Paul on his deathbed, the latter's sufferings are strongly reminiscent of Mrs. Helm's memorable death scene. Paul's last days, for example, are spent "writhing in agony," a punishment, Steward seems to suggest, for a life of "extravagance and a style far beyond their means" (259). As with the case of the Helms, the "mysterious ways of Providence" again seem to confirm Steward's turn to moral

review the larger framework of Wilberforce's leading figures, but his contemplations are at the same time reflections on his own position and life. He thereby instrumentalizes Lewis as a personal moral lesson, in the shape of another anti-elegy, a review of Lewis's life and times. Simultaneously, Steward shows himself somewhat at pains to come to terms with Lewis's complex character, as he oscillates between defamation of and fascination for the figure who proved his most obvious and tenacious adversary in Canada West.

Like the Captain's, Steward describes Lewis's end as a tragic but logical consequence of his "living in extravagance" (283). At the end of his life, Lewis is not only "despised and dishonored" but also dies a pauper in a Montreal hospital without even a "decent burial" (283). The semi-benevolent exclamation "Poor man!" cannot mitigate Steward's observation that finally, all of Lewis's material and immaterial luxuries "have perished with his memory" (284). Similar to Helm's example, Steward makes sure that in his narrative, he remains in control of people's legacy. Despite the alleged erasure of memory, Steward elaborates eloquently on Lewis's character and life, painting a detailed picture of the man ranging from his outer appearance to his moral character, from his upbringing, education and connubial life to his career as a leader. It appears that both Helm's and Lewis's fate have been determined by the influence of slavery. Steward is quick to point out Lewis's potential, since his "natural abilities [are] above mediocrity," and his character as strong, determined, and energetic (284-85). However, he claims, Lewis also had a natural penchant to use these qualities 'the wrong way,' giving in to his "malicious, selfish, and consequently […] deceptive disposition" (285). According to Steward, his life as a slave aggravated this circumstance; being surrounded by "vice" prevented Lewis's intellect from developing in an acceptable way (285).

Steward seems fixated on slavery's corrosive influence on Lewis, but visibly cannot do away with Lewis's allegedly flawed character so easily. For example, Steward pays respect to Lewis's strong aura and personality, which fascinated many people around him, above all his own wife. She is not the only one to suffer from Lewis's "dangerous…and overbearing" nature (285). Steward illustrates Lewis's Janus-faced attitude by contrasting his "prepossessing" outward appearance as a "gentleman" and his abilities as a "good speaker" with his "ungoverned passions" (285-87). After all, Steward has to concede that "Lewis became the founder of the Wilberforce colony" (286). The office was offered him

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integrity and Christian spirituality, summed up in his formula of "an honest man" under God's guidance and protection (259-60). Paul, like the Helms, becomes an example to be cautioned against, and only to be taken as another exhortation to beware of the "temptation" of wealth and "lusts" (260).

by his fellow citizens in Cincinnati, an observation that implicitly speaks to Lewis's standing and the trust people must have placed in him, but which also establishes parallels to Steward himself and how he came by his office as president. Steward even detects "the fame of a [Benjamin] Lundy" and "the memory […] of a [Thomas] Clarkson" in Lewis, had he not devoted his life to "characteristics directly opposed to the deportment of the humble Christian" (287). This statement is crucial to Steward's self-fashioning as the moral Christian man and to the lesson he draws from Lewis's anti-exemplarity. He emphasizes the necessity of constant self-examination and reliance on the "ROCK (sic)" of Christian faith as opposed to the "self-aggrandizement" which Lewis had come to represent (288). Set against Steward's disappointment with his Canadian years and the Wilberforce project (see below), the struggle with Lewis has left a significant mark on Steward. Only the sense of community and a genealogy of meaningful individuals will help Steward make sense of this experience and find something positive in the colony.

5.2 MOSAIC STORIES

This section leaves behind the strategy of the looking glass, which represents Steward's particular method of creating a meaningful genealogy to set against his former dominant slave owner, to look at a more eclectic cluster of brief stories and accounts. These mosaic pieces centered on friends, fellow-slaves, and often marginal characters, I argue, transcend Steward's own life writing and turn his narrative into a mosaic of different stories, voices, and narrative tones. At the same time, they cover the cross-border area between the United States and Canada West, and highlight, too, the fluid genre boundaries in the narrative. In attempting to trace the stories' narrative purposes for Steward, this section shows how they, too, create a genealogy of meaningful individuals. They serve Steward a pragmatic goal of advancing a reformist agenda, and are a testimony of black life under slavery and in freedom. As such, these stories witness the continuous violence and discrimination against black bodies, but also a tradition of black protest and rebellion against oppression. They record fugitive slave stories to save and uphold the memory of those who might otherwise be lost to succeeding generations, while centering escaped slaves at the heart of free black communities such as Wilberforce. Finally, by including these stories Steward also suggests the possibility of building alliances between the black community and additional "othered" groups in white settler states such as the First Nations. The portrayals of people in these stories are not always unproblematic, but they evidence

Steward's relationality to a multitude of other individuals in the narrative's past and the present who shape each other's lives, creating a genealogy necessary for the creation and maintenance of a (textual) community that transcends national borders.

Reformist Agendas

Temperance figures as the strongest reformist goal in Steward's narrative. There are numerous references to be found, and Steward embeds his own conversion to temperance in an ongoing discussion "which commenced about this time," i.e. after the black convention in Philadelphia in 1830 (168). Up to this point, he admits to have been selling liquor freely in his store in Rochester, "as most other grocers were at that time" (168). Although it yields financial profits, alcohol causes him trouble with drunk clients (see 168-69). Having seen "the matter in its true light"—namely, that it "would make beasts of men"—he stops his business with alcohol altogether (168-69). His decision is clearly motivated by his faith, a "duty to God and [his] fellow-men" (169-70).[18]

The most elaborate story concerns the alleged smuggler Cannouse, who appears at Steward's tavern in Wilberforce. The young man serves two important purposes in Steward's narrative: for one, he shows himself repentant of the deed he is accused of and, therefore, seems fit to receive Christian moral teachings. Initially, however, Cannouse arrives at the tavern to authenticate Steward's good reputation and renown as an upright man: When Cannouse has to leave St. Catharines precipitously, a young man tells him to "get to the colony if you can; if you succeed, go to A. Steward; he is an upright man and will never betray you for money" (199). Against the atmosphere of fraud and betrayal marking Steward's first chapters on Wilberforce, this affirmation will not go unheard among Steward's abolitionist readership. Cannouse tells Steward he is accused wrongfully of smuggling, but recognizes that his situation is due to "[his] own folly," having visited a young woman, which angered another aspiring admirer (198). Repentant and duly suffering, Cannouse seems to Steward "a talented young man … who would have felt deeply the disgrace of imprisonment" (201). Most importantly, he has "learned a lesson," and Steward is proud to have assisted not only in his protection but also his final, successful escape from his persecutors (201).

Most important, however, is Cannouse's second function as a type of fugitive. In all likelihood (and although this is never made the topic of conversation),

18 Hodges has remarked on the influence of the "religious impulses" of the 1820s on Steward, by which he refers to the Second Great Awakening (ca. 1790-1840) (xx).

Cannouse is white, and thus, his story represents an obvious counterpoint to the 'classic' fugitive slave stories in Steward's narrative. However, his tale certainly qualifies as a "thrilling narrative," showing at least some parallels to fugitive slave stories (203). When he hears that he is pursued by officers who want to arrest him in St. Catharines, after having been given away by his rival, Cannouse escapes into the woods (see 198). Then, during the week at Steward's house, the children hide Cannouse in "a thicket" every time the persecutors get too near (200). Like many fugitives, he has to rely on well-disposed helpers like the brother of the young lady or the protagonist and his family for assistance and protection. At all times, he is in danger of being discovered, and relives several of the "hair-breadth escapes" that Steward otherwise seems to reserve for the fugitive slave (203). Steward details how only sheer luck saves him eventually from the officers who are close on his heels but informs readers that "[h]e had succeeded in reaching Detroit, from whence he passed safely to his home" (201). Cannouse's story of repentance and his reverse-fugitive tale from Canada West back to the United States show how Steward incorporates non-Blacks into the powerful trope of the fugitive slave, a variation on a theme that expresses both Steward's narrative control and the willingness to experiment with topoi and genres.

Rebellion and Violence

One of the longest and most central stories in Steward's narrative occurs almost at its very beginning, when the young Austin is sent to work in Captain Helm's great house. The episode centers on the "grand dance" at Colonel Alexander's estate neighboring the Helms'. It reflects the social hierarchies on the plantation, the rules of oppression, but also the hazardous possibilities of insurgence. Alexander represents the "indulgent master" and has been suspiciously eyed by his neighbors; Steward lets readers in on the principles of slave society by explaining that "it is not true, that slave owners are respected for kindness to their slaves" (28). When Alexander allows for a dance to be organized by his slaves for other slaves from neighboring plantations, the preparations take place under the eyes of the patrol. Through Steward's comments, the dance eventually unfolds as a perfect imitation of a Southern (high) society event, including invitations, fine dresses, an abundance of food, drink and music. Given the embeddedness of the dance in the confines of slavery and the constant threat of the patrol only waiting to make their appearance and violently put the slaves in "their place", as a common phrase went, the staging of the dance seems an grotesque suspension of the everyday terror of the plantation.

Steward appears as a highly critical observer of inter- and intra-racial hierarchies and codifications as they are played out at the dance. “Slaves like on such occasions to pattern as much as possible after their master's family,” he explains, and thus, “the aristocratic slaves began to assemble, dressed in the cast-off finery of their master and mistress, swelling out and putting on airs in imitation of those they were forced to obey from day to day” (29). In fact, Steward reveals a clear class bias here. Not only does he insist on the differences between “aristocratic” and “unpolished” slaves but he also describes the dance pejoratively as infused “with all the wild abandon of the African character” (30; 33). House servants appear on the top of the hierarchy on the plantation, enjoying respect as the ones with the greatest insight into the planter class and being looked upon as models of “politeness and gentility” (32). However, Steward also discloses their ambiguous standing as objects of envy and even hatred, and as the subjects of plots against their fellow slaves (see 32).

The grand dance quickly turns from an imitation of a white social practice into the “imitation” of a crucial black tradition, i.e. the slave revolt, and thus, into a form of (temporary) black empowerment.[19] The sudden appearance of the patrol at the dance causes instant panic among the assembled guests, many of whom have arrived without a written pass to excuse their absences from their plantations. Yet, a feeling of defiance and resistance begins to emerge when a slave named Robert seizes control of the situation and instantly becomes the leader of a small rebellion. Steward’s tone now markedly changes from a more critical to an openly pathetic and emotional description of the situation, although he does not cast himself as an active participant in the events. Robert becomes the stereotypical “leader, a gigantic African, with a massive, compact frame” and, most importantly, possessing a “spirit the cowardly overseer had labored in vain to quell” (34). He becomes the prototype of the Black insurgent when he declares “that he would resist unto death,” echoing Patrick Henry’s revolutionary call to “[g]ive me liberty or give me death” (34).

Locked in a cabin, Robert and his followers await the arrival of their opponents. The members of the patrol are a haughty, condescending group of men who underestimate the resistance that awaits them. A dialogue between the patrol leader and his men illustrates their function as flat proslavery character foils. Finding the rebels unwilling to yield, a fight erupts as the patrol bursts into the cabin, resulting in the death of six slaves, and two more wounded. Steward dwells on the impact of the revolt by reporting all its graphic detail. Although he claims that it would “be impossible to convey to the minds of northern people, the alarm

19 Other well-known rebellions in Virginia involved, for example, Gabriel Prosser (1800) and Nat Turner (1831).

and perfect consternation that the above circumstance occasioned," he uses the occurrence to explain the intensification of white fear following the revolt as reports rapidly spread to the neighboring plantations (37). As an intertextual reference to other Virginia slave rebellions, the brief episode of rising up against white oppression also illustrates the well-known anti-slavery argument that slavery's effects weigh on the slaveholding class as well by creating an atmosphere of suspicion and threat from which no one can feel safe (see 37).[20] The aftermath of the drama belongs to the black slave community, however, who prepare their dead for the funeral.

Later in the narrative, when Helm has relocated to Sodus Bay in New York State, where he and his slaves experience the hardships of pioneer life, a slave called Williams openly resists Helm's overseer. Having attracted the wrath of the man, the latter intends to flog Williams who resists punishment. The episode is crucial in that it describes Williams's open physical defiance of the overseer and thereby, establishes an effective intertextual reference to other slave narratives such as Frederick Douglass and his fight with Edward Covey.[21] In fact, Williams enacts a moment of ultimate revenge by wrestling the cowhide from the overseer's hands and "[giving him] such a flogging as slaves seldom get" (58). Similar to the scene in Douglass, the other slaves who rescue Williams from the overseer's dog refuse to aid the overseer, who then commences begging for assistance. The ultimate humiliation of the most hated person in charge is opposed to Williams's logical defiance of the overseer's authority when he claims that "as he was no longer in Virginia, he would not submit to such chastisement" (57-58). For the first time, the forced geographical relocation to New York State opens new possibilities for the slaves. Williams, having decided the overseer had received enough lashes (and thereby, again, asserting his control of the situation through a reversal of roles), takes a boat and escapes by water. The overseer is unable to catch Williams, though now armed with a rifle, and is left "crestfallen and unrevenged" (59). The slaves have successfully achieved the defeat of the overseer, who eventually returns to Virginia where, as Steward sarcastically observes, "he could beat slaves without himself receiving a cowhiding" (59). Curiously, despite Williams's successful stance against the system of slavery and his escape, which is the result of a community effort, Steward makes no further comment on the consequences or implications of this incident for the remaining slaves.

20 The scenario recalls the aftermath of other examples like Nat Turner's rebellion, which would have been familiar to both southern and northern readers.

21 The scene famously takes place in ch. X in Douglass' *Narrative* (1845).

The stories take a violent turn in the drama of Daniel Furr, a Black man, and his wife, a white woman. Here, racial prejudice reaches a life-threatening high. Their decision to marry immediately triggers ferocious opposition in Rochester. When they can find “no one to perform the marriage ceremony in the village,” they finally resort to Steward “to accompany them” (134). Interracial marriage, however, proves a contentious matter even for him. Though Steward concludes “that [he] could take no active part in the affair, nor bear any responsible station,” he does join them once he learns that “all the mischief was already done” (134). In the middle of the night, they reach the magistrate’s house, who only marries the two after great hesitancy and after all attempts to dissuade the young woman (not Furr, significantly) have failed (see 135). The sensational news of the marriage quickly spread in Rochester, causing “threats of alarming character” against the newlyweds (135). Indeed, shortly after their marriage, Furr spends an evening drinking with a class of “pretended friends” and falls seriously ill quickly after (136).[22] Again, Steward is called on for assistance. He describes the doctor’s reaction as more than suspicious, condemning the suffering Furr to a sudden death. Steward bitterly remarks, “so it proved, though not so speedily as the medical man had predicted; nor did he ever visit him again, notwithstanding he lingered for several days in the most intense agony” (136).

The tragedy of Furr’s death is heightened even when his young widow dies during childbirth, along with her baby. Steward’s sentimental tone relates their end to the evils of slavery (see 137). After the description of Furr’s sad burial, therefore, Steward clearly positions himself on the matter. “It has ever been my conviction that Furr was poisoned, most likely by some of his false friends who must have mingled some deadly drug with his drinks or food; nor do I believe that the medicine administered by the physician was designed to save his life” (137). Even years after the actual event, featuring the Furrs’ story in his narrative is still an important statement. Although Steward himself seems to have no favorable position on interracial marriage, a contentious issue in abolitionism as well, the story of the Furrs transcends an anti-slavery impetus and stands as an important record of the injustice inflicted on the young couple as a part of Rochester’s early history of discrimination and racism.

Fugitives

Out of the many different stories included in *Twenty-Two Years a Slave*, a substantial number concerns fugitive slaves. As Steward awaits clarification on his status as a free man, for instance, it is the energetic fugitive woman Milly who

22 Steward himself will later be poisoned by tea, but survives (see ch. XXVIII).

inspires Steward to forget his scruples attached to fugitivity and flee from Helm (see ch. XI). She quickly disappears without a word from the narrative, but her presence triggers a crucial step in the plot. This seems to leave her as a narratological tool and yet, her name and brief influence on Steward are noted. Other fugitive slave stories move away from Steward's own life, but stand as records of individual fates, slavery's tentacles in free and enslaved territory, and how these individual fates relate to collective ones, such as those of the Wilberforce settlers.

The case of Ellen, for example, describes how the force of the first Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 came to bear in Ontario/Genesee county. Ellen arrives in Rochester at the time of the Carthage Bridge disaster in 1822, but is arrested and finally returned to bondage (139).[23] As Steward explains, "nothing short of an open violation of the law of the land, could prevent her return" (140). Ellen's case is significant in the genealogy of the numerous fugitive cases whose number would increase in the decade after 1850, when the narrative was written. Ellen's being escorted from the village by a military cortege after her trial strongly echoes with the much later procession of Anthony Burns (1834-1862), who was carried through the streets of Boston to the harbor in broad daylight and for thousands of spectators to witness.[24] Despite his polemic anti-slavery language, Steward succeeds in conveying Ellen's humiliation as a human being and as a woman inherent in the return as a public show. He also points out the bitter ridicule in having a defenseless fugitive woman led out of the village with military pomp: "She indeed must have required this military parade - this show of power! And that too, by men who throw up their caps with a shout for freedom and equal rights!" (140).

The bitter defeat of Ellen contrasts ever more strongly with the case of "Doctor Davis," which Steward recounts simultaneously. Davis's case, arrested as a fugitive from Kentucky, not only exemplifies a typical fugitive rescue case but also functions as a powerful narratological strategy at this point in the narrative.[25]

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23 For a detailed contemporary account on the Carthage Bridge, see O'Reilly's *Sketches of Rochester* (1838).

24 Although Burns was famously shipped back into slavery only in 1854, three years before the narrative was published, it had such an impact in the North that it might easily have influenced the author.

25 Pease and Pease have pointed out that Steward did not represent the typical fugitive. "Doc Davis" does, according to their definition, as his case does feature the "exciting drama" of disguise and pursuit (Introduction ix-x). Davis's case reminds us, for example, of Ellen and William Craft, who are prime examples for the use of disguise and passing, or Shadrach Minkins, an escaped slave, who was forced from the Boston

His arrest creates much “excitement,” particularly among the Black community (140-41). The court room is packed on the day of the trial, as such cases usually drew large crowds, but some of his friends manage to disguise Davis and usher him out of the room and send him on to Canada (141). The Kentucky slave catchers, however, quickly notice his disappearance and offer a fifty-dollar reward for his return. The distribution of the handbill featuring the reward sum leads to Davis’s betrayal and recapture. The dramatic climax of the episode is Davis’s emotional lament after his arrest. Like William “Jerry” Henry, in whose rescue Samuel Ringgold Ward would become involved in 1851, Davis, too, issues Patrick Henry’s dramatic “Give me liberty or death! Or death!” before he attempts suicide (143). The onlookers of the scene immediately denounce the institution of slavery. The Kentucky slave catchers, accordingly, have to give Davis up for dead and are driven out of town (143). Davis’s friends, subsequently, are able to take care of him and see to his recovery, after which he is finally assisted in crossing over into Canada.

Davis’s case is thus relevant for various reasons. First and foremost, it represents the opposite of Ellen’s recapture, who was returned to slavery. Davis’s is the case of a fugitive man, not a woman, and although he, too, experiences the public display of his case as well as his body, there are no sexual or voyeuristic innuendoes as with Ellen. Davis has a voice in order to function as the model refugee (choosing death over slavery) and his escape story is cast entirely in the current anti-slavery rhetoric of the day, combining sentimental and revolutionary language, denouncing slavery as an institution along with its dehumanizing features, which seems to appropriate the Davis case for “the cause.” Part of the appropriation of his story concerns the role of Canada, which here figures prominently in its mythical function as a safe haven for all refugees: “[T]he poor slave […] must fly from this boasted land of liberty, to seek protection in the dominion of England’s Queen!” (142). Davis’s case as a success story is a strategic counterpoint to Ellen’s tragic return to slavery, and its position at the end of a chapter leaves readers with the “right” (i.e., anti-slavery) impression of the peculiar institution.

The fate of Rosa and Joe, fugitive slaves from Virginia like Steward, move the significance of such stories across the border into Canada West. Theirs represents a complete, self-contained story at the heart of what characterizes the colony of Wilberforce. Steward points out that as a Black settlement, Wilberforce offers “many a thrilling narrative,” emphasizing the plethora of fugitives assembled in

courtroom by activists and escaped into Canada. The case occurred in February 1851. See William Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom* (1860); Collison, *Shadrack Minkins* (1997).

the colony (203). Appealing to his abolitionist readership and their hunger for sensationalism, he chooses Rosa and Joe as representatives of these "hair-breadth-escapes from the slave-land" (203). At the same time, he fashions himself as the mediator of their story, or their amanuensis, vowing to tell the story "as 'twas told to [him]" (203).[26] Rosa and Joe are set in the context of Wilberforce as an obvious defiance of white racist assumptions about free Blacks. The industry of the Wilberforce settlers is meant to "show […] to the world that they were in no way inferior to the white population" and moreover, to "prove […] that the colored man can not only take care of himself, but is capable of improvement," despite the fact that many settlers have arrived only recently and thus have enjoyed freedom for only a brief amount of time (202).

The story of Rosa and Joe reads like a sentimental novella. They represent the stereotypical slave couple: Joe is the more daring, determined husband willing to risk his life for freedom as soon as he hears that both are to be sold south. Rosa, on the contrary, is stylized into the fearsome, weak, dependent wife scared to lose her "old plantation where [they] were born," but who submits to her husband (204).[27] As they set out on their escape journey, they follow two core topoi of fugitive slave accounts: the North Star for guidance, and the woods for protection and hiding (see 204).[28] The woods, which soon turn into a dangerous "wilderness", as Rosa had feared, bring the two fugitives close to starvation. Disoriented and exhausted, they become indeed "bewildered" and completely

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26 The choice of words here is important: nowhere else in the narrative does Steward employ an expression similar to "'twas" (203). It is in line with the dramatic tone of Rosa and Joe's story, and possibly meant to underline his identity as amanuensis and story-teller. If one looked for editorial intervention in Steward's narrative, this chapter would probably qualify as the most serious contestant. Its sentimental language and phrasings seem to correspond too readily to a typical fugitive slave drama cut out for an abolitionist audience.

27 The narrator, trying to distance himself again from 'ordinary' Black people, here marks Rosa and Joe's superstition as a characteristic trait of "most slaves" (206). Given the fact, however, that he himself is frequently plagued by forebodings and dreams, and believes in their significance, he inadvertently becomes one of them.

28 The story even features a quote from poet John Pierpont's (1785-1866) "The Fugitive Slave's Apostrophe to the North Star" (1839): "Star of the North! though night winds drift the fleecy drapery of the sky,/ Between thy lamp and thee, I lift, yea, lift with hope my sleepless eye" (205).

absorbed by the density of the surroundings for several days (205).[29] After several turns, Joe and Rosa escape discovery by their former master and haste to Cincinnati, only to join other Blacks for the Wilberforce project. Steward fashions their story as one of success, well fit for a country that seems to be made to support survivors like Joe and Rosa and their happy endings: in Wilberforce, he explains, "they are in no danger of the auction block, or of a Southern market; and are as much devoted to each other as ever" (209). This happy-end, I argue, is not only an important reminder of black success and the potential of Canada West as an apt place for such promising settlers; the story should also stand as a forceful reminder for Steward himself who will struggle to make sense of his years in Wilberforce. Rosa and Joe stand in for all the other fugitives in the colony who make up the fabric of the settlement.

"Indians"

The appearance of "othered" characters in the form of First Nations representatives is not unproblematic in Steward's narrative. While their presence is used to typify a "Canadian" setting, Steward's appropriation of their stories, his stereotypical descriptions and use of language, and not least his use of "mock Indians" remain difficult to incorporate in his narrative project. Their presence might suggest, as I argue, a possible alliance for non-white settlers in white Canada, as Steward opens to them use of the label "fugitive" as a marker of inclusion. His treatment of these characters as his narrative subjects, however, also suggests an implicit hierarchy in which he determines their degrees of "aptness" to fit into such an important category.

The first appearance of "Indian" characters both uses and undermines the topic of the "Other." On a typical Canadian winter evening, Steward and his family receive an unexpected visit from three men whom he "suppose[s] to be three Indians," according to their clothes, which identify them as "red men of the forest" (211-12).[30] However, because of their "voice" and their suspicious behavior, Steward quickly recognizes them not only as non-Indian but also as non-Canadian (211-12). The Stewards quickly make out their guests as "belong[ing] to that race

29 The "wilderness" becomes the "woods" again as soon as they find assistance from the man to whom Joe turns for help. He tells Joe to stay in the forest with Rosa for the night before coming out in the open, a life-saving advice as it turns out (207).

30 Steward mentions "piercing cold," "the snow four feet deep," and "snow-shoes" as a kind of cultural artifact. A brief mention of his house being "situated on the king's highway" helps to enhance the "Canadian" ambience of the passage (211).

who had so long looked haughtily down upon the colored people" (212). As Steward observes not without some amusement, they gave themselves away in being surprised to find "the least exhibition of comfort, or show of refinement" in the house of a Black family (212). In turn, "the smell [of] coffee" reveals the couple as being "from the States," which leaves the newcomers rather puzzled (212). After the wife finally recognizes one of the men as from Canandaigua's high society, the three "mock Indians" cast off their "savage costume," as they are assured to be "among friends now" (212-13). Eventually, the guests also disclose the purpose of their costumes in this cross-border cultural mix-up: they had been trading "in the wilderness"—presumably with First Nations—for "valuable furs," evoking the ur-Canadian topos of the *coureur de bois* (213).[31]

Steward goes on to dedicate a whole chapter to "Incidents and Peculiarities of the Indians" (ch. XXVI). While it does shed at least some light on the relations between First Nations and Black pioneer settlers, the chapter also problematizes Steward's role as quasi-ethnographer.[32] It oscillates between obviously stereotypical representations of "the Indian" and the playful undermining of the cultural appropriations at work. Steward identifies with the anonymous representatives of "the Indians" first by virtue of their regular visits to Wilberforce, "which gave us an opportunity to learn their character, habits and disposition," but also by virtue of his recognition of the First Nations as "that abused people" (223).

Two imbalanced episodes suffice Steward to lay claim to knowing "the Indians" quite thoroughly. The first incident he relates has one man appear at the tavern in the middle of the night. "Had he been in his own wigwam, he could not have looked about him with more satisfaction and independence," Steward explains, delving into the stereotype of an alleged strong-willed Indian character (223). He follows this image in the description of the man's 'habits' (sleeping on the floor, noiseless movements) and his speech ("Me lost in the woods," 223).[33] The brief visit of the man, who is looking for a place to stay for one night, might

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31 Unlicensed fur traders in New France, engaging in the trade with the First Nations, which was crucial for the colonial economy, "often in defiance of the law. […] The fur trade frontier had become a law unto itself" (Conrad 60).

32 Trudel treats encounters between First Nations and Blacks in New France, as well as their involvement in slavery both as slave owners and enslaved people. A lot of work remains to be done in the field, however.

33 One of the gravest instances of regurgitating stereotypes comes with Steward's assertion that "he would have scorned to injure any one beneath the roof that gave him shelter, unless he had been intoxicated" (224).

be meant primarily to entice the reader's interest in giving one exotic glimpse at life in Canada.

The second incident, however, is a more intricate play between appropriation and reappropriation. Similar to the young alleged smuggler Cannouse, the Indian's uprighteousness intrigues Steward, as we learn from "his history" (225). Although Steward willingly advertises this story of the "old warrior," the latter remains conspicuously anonymous, and is more reminiscent of a stand-in than a fully developed character (226). We do not learn his name nor his tribal origins, and as Steward entirely controls his story including his appearance, speech, and thoughts, it becomes clear that the "Indian" serves as a medium of another fugitive story and as Steward's vehicle to reflect on the future of Black people.[34]

Indeed, the warrior stands out for having lived what Steward perceives to be an honorable life. From his youth a "great warrior," he knew and fought at the side of Shawnee chief Tecumseh (1768-1813), and participated in the Federation that allied with the British to fight against the United States in the War of 1812 (225).[35] Having assisted in the Battle of the Thames, when Tecumseh fell "on the fifth of October, 1813," emphasizes the warrior's deep veneration of the chief.[36] Tecumseh is idealized as a great, generous, just chief and warrior, protecting even the feeble "pale face" in battle (225). After the war, the warrior buys land to settle in peace, but an envious (white) neighbor tricks him out of his possession, which establishes an obvious parallel to Steward's flawed land deal with Israel Lewis. His alliance with Britain turns against him now, as he not only loses his land but is also jailed and sent South along with a group of prisoners to be tried as a traitor (see 226). After a stop on the way to Detroit, one of the guards enjoys a sentimental reunion with his aged mother who gives her last surviving son an "American mother's blessing" (227). Steward emphasizes that the Indian warrior observed

34 While at the moment of his appearance at Steward's tavern, he addresses the daughter in impeccable English ("Will my little lady please to give me a drink of water?" 224), his speech is assimilated in the following to the somewhat broken speech pattern used in stereotypical representations ("'Me *must* get a rifle,'" 229; original emphasis).

35 A subtle undertone might be read into this observation; first because the War of 1812 also saw many Blacks take up arms for Britain, and because loyalty to Britain in the event of war was often emphasized in the discourse among Black leaders at the time (see *BAP* 87-94).

36 The Battle of the Thames took place near today's Chatham, ON. Chatham is an important location in Black Canadian history, as it had a substantial Black (refugee) community in the nineteenth century. It was, however, also known for its problems with racism and discrimination against Black residents, as Benjamin Drew noted on his tour through Canada West (see Drew 235-39).

very attentively what was happening in order to contradict the set opinion of some who would call him "heartless" (227). Thus, Steward does rely on racial stereotypes of the warrior while he defends him at the same time.

This strategy becomes clearer when the party stops in Detroit, where the warrior decides to escape. He seems superior and aloof throughout the episode to be able to simply "[make] up his mind to leave, which with the red man is paramount to an accomplishment of his design" (227-28). Managing to free himself from the attic of a hotel where the prisoners are kept, he plans also to take with him the fur coat of none less than General Isaack Brock, another Canadian war hero of 1812, which is to be exposed in the town (see 228). At this moment, however, the warrior is made to remember "that old pale-faced mother," as he is made to say, and pity for her does not only make him leave the coat where it is but return to "his attic prison" (228). For the moment, he gives in to his captivity, becoming the idealized embodiment of the "noble savage."

After the arrival in Virginia, however, there is no trial and the warrior is treated no better than a slave, as Steward observes. In the spring, he attempts to escape again. He manages to trick a pioneer woman out of her rifle and finally reaches his old farm. Here, he consciously makes use of the stereotypes that whites have adopted of him: "giving himself the most frightful appearance possible," he enters his house and starts to play with its new inhabitants, ordering them about and threatening them with his mock-"frightful attitude," succeeding in driving them off his property (230). The warrior literally re-appropriates his land and his life. In his story, Steward brings to bear the explicit parallel between the Indian and himself, as the former's dispossession "reminded me of the injustice practiced on myself, and the colored race generally" (230). In fact, the warrior's cross-border story of escape bears many similarities to Steward's own. What is more, the Indian warrior remains an anonymous stand-in so that his parable can be applied to aspects of the larger framework of the Black freedom struggle. Steward relates to instances of white suspicion that Black (and First Nations) property owners face (see 230-31), and muses on the relevance of the "vanishing Indian" trope to the black population: "I have often wondered, when looking at the remnant of that once powerful race, whether the black man would become extinct and his race die out, as have the red men of the forest" (231). However, he insists on the decisive difference between the two: according to his conviction, "the colored man has yet a prominent part to act in this highly-favored Republic" (231).

5.3 CROSS-BORDER STORIES OF CANADA WEST

Steward's storytelling creates two different portraits of Canada West as a potential place of settlement for black emigrants. One is centered on Steward as a successful, respected Rochester businessman who moves to Canada West to be involved in the all-Black settlement experiment in Wilberforce. After several years of serving as its president, at the heart of the struggle with Israel Lewis, Steward returns to Rochester, NY, frustrated and disappointed. The second portrait sees him visiting Canada West again a few years later, this time as part of the African Methodist Episcopal Conference. This visit to fellow church members in Canada West also constitutes a tour of famous Canadian symbols and sites, which leaves a more positive and proud impression of the province with regard to black expectations. Without referencing Steward's own previous Canadian years, the curious gap between the two portraits leaves an unresolved picture of Canada as the "Promised Land" for black settlers.

Steward's decision to move to Canada West to begin, essentially, an adventure in an unknown land, gains gravity when considering his life as a businessman in Rochester, NY, which he leaves behind. It is here that he begins his professional and personal career as a freeman, first as a peddler, later as the owner of a meat market. Steward underlines his decision to settle in town after his first visit in the winter of 1816 as his "chosen place of [his] destination" (129). In fact, he elaborates extensively on Rochester's history and race relations in the young town; with Rochester being established only in 1811, Steward is truly one of its pioneer citizens and gives important insights into the life of its early years.[37] Prospering, increasing his business and landed property, he marries an "intelligent and amiable Miss B—," a daughter of "a particular friend" in May, 1825 (149). As an inhabitant of Rochester, Steward witnesses the official abolition of slavery in New York State in 1827. He describes the black community's emancipation celebrations on July 5, 1827, as he delivers the Emancipation Day speech, a great honor underlining his respected position in Rochester (see ch. XVII).

37 For example, he recalls that, though Rochester was rapidly thriving and developing into the economic center of the region in rivalry to Carthage, "the surrounding country was mostly a wilderness. Mr. E. Stone, who then owned the land on the east side of the river, thought his farm a very poor one; he, however, commenced clearing it in the midst of wild beasts and rattlesnakes, both of which were abundant, and in a few years was richly rewarded for his labor, in the sale of village lots, which commanded high prices" (131-32).

The project of Wilberforce originates in the reactions to a severe race riot in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1829. In a series of conventions, the decision is made to "establish a colony in Canada" (176). In view of the recent race riot, this decision turns Canada into a potential shelter "from this boasted free Republic" (178). The resolutions of the a solidarity meeting in Rochester shortly after explicitly pick up the diction of the Declaration of Independence to justify the move across the border, a fact which plays on the common contemporary trope of Canada as the "*true*" and better America (Clarke, "'No Hearsay'" 26).[38]

The first impressions from and about Canada West that Steward includes are conflictive, however. Israel Lewis, who had been sent to Canada West by the group of Cincinnati Blacks to make arrangements for settlement, returns from his land negotiations with the Canada Company with reports of a group of settlers in Canada West living under harsh conditions and in a "state of actual starvation" in the "dense woods" (Steward 179). He calls for help on his fellow Blacks, particularly on Steward. The latter finally agrees to join the project, explaining his motivation to "try to do some good; to be of some little service in the great cause of humanity" (179). His statement reveals his Christian incentive as someone who had "just made a public profession of [his] faith," but it also points to the insecure and experimental character of the settlement in Canada West (179). In fact, he will soon see for himself what Lewis meant by his report.

To follow up on his promise, he leaves Rochester for Toronto in order to convince himself personally of the status quo. His trip constitutes the first of many across the border into Canada West and back. His first journey from Rochester to the settlement via Toronto (York, at the time) and Ancaster gives insight into a "new country," referring here literally to the pioneer setting (179). He witnesses "hard traveling" on "bad roads," few inhabitants, and the "destitute circumstances" of the first Cincinnati settlers upon their arrival (179-80).[39] Steward explains that the piece of land for the settlement was initially nothing but "one unbroken wilderness"—a characteristic feature of their new Canadian home—and that the first harvest was still "ripen[ing]," causing the settlers' temporary hardships (180). However, "a few rude log cabins" had already been

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38 The passage from the narrative reads as follows: "That when a class of men so far forget the duty they owe to God, their fellow men, and their country, as to trample under their feet the very laws they have made, and are in duty bound to obey and execute, we believe it to be the duty of our brethren and fellow citizens, to protect their lives against such lawless mobs; and if in the conflict, any of the mobocrats perish, every good citizen should say Amen" (177).

39 Hodges explains that only between 300 and 500 people went to take up settlement in Canada, but that no more than 200 were at Wilberforce ever (see xx-xxi).

set up and the pioneers were busy (180). Right after Steward's arrival, they set about their settlement's administrative and formal organization. Just one "day after [he] arrived at the settlement," they look for an adequate name (180). Steward is the one to make the decisive suggestion: he opts for Wilberforce, "in honor of the great [English] philanthropist"—firmly rooting the settlement in the context of English abolitionism and therefore, Great Britain's protection (180).[40]

The project of Wilberforce is designed as an all-Black enterprise, although it has to rely on the financial support of philanthropists (see *BAP* 47). It is the first in a series of settlement efforts, which heightens its significance from its inception.[41] Returning from this short first visit, Steward therefore hastens to relativize Lewis's initial reports which had confirmed the stereotype of the "cold and dreary [Canadian] wilds" (Steward 178). He admits that the life of the settlers is still characterized by "hardships and privations of a new settlement," but it seems an incentive to him, a challenge with the possibility of improvement (181). Therefore, he decides to move to Canada West with his family—a brief sentence only announcing a life changing move for the successful Rochesterite (see 181).

In fact, Steward delivers the first promotional report of Wilberforce to frame the project within the rhetoric of a Canadian haven. From its concrete geographical location to its agricultural potential, Wilberforce is symbolically heightened to an "asylum for the oppressed" which "guid[es them] by its beacon light of liberty" (182). This also continues the "American" rhetoric of the convention. In Wilberforce, Steward explains, people will not only find a new "home" but opportunities of education and self-development by "obtain[ing] a competency for themselves" (182). Steward's and Benjamin Paul's letter to John G. Stewart, for example, written only three months after Steward's arrival in the settlement, reads as an "early progress report" (*BAP* 47). It reflects the work of the settlers on housing and farming, as well as their religion and education. A truly enthusiastic and optimistic account of Wilberforce, however, is the report by Steward's friend, the abolitionist Benjamin Lundy.[42] He published his report on his visit to Wilberforce along with a travelogue in his own paper, *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, in March 1832. Lundy's description of the colony follows an

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40 William Wilberforce (1759-1833), British politician, known for his labors in favor of the abolition of slavery.

41 Wilberforce was followed by Dawn in 1842, the Elgin settlement and the Buxton Mission in 1849, and finally, the R(efugee) H(ome) S(ociety) program in 1851. See Simpson, Winks.

42 Benjamin Lundy (1789- 1839), American abolitionist and anti-slavery activist, issued his own anti-slavery paper, *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* from 1821-1839, when he died.

obvious abolitionist agenda and wants to be an enticement for Black Americans to immigrate to Canada (see Landon, "Diary" 110). It is brimming with praise for both the location of Wilberforce and its potential, as well as for the settlers themselves. It is instructive in its detail on the settlers' work and is firm in its conclusion that "Wilberforce will be, by far, the most important […] nucleus for an extensive emigration from the [United States]" (Landon, "Diary" 116). Lundy succeeds in believably stressing that "the colony had good prospects" (Hodges xxii).

In spite of these promotional accounts, a negative air hovers about Wilberforce's beginnings. After his first visit, Steward is well aware of the opposition to the settlement, which is only a slight hint at the difficult race relations in Canada West facing the influx of Black refugees from the United States.[43] At this point in the project, though, Steward is still infused with his dedication to the colony and his Christian motivation to assist in the establishment of the settlement. In underlining his "purest motives" and "honest purpose," he separates himself not only from the opposition to Wilberforce, but also from a second dangerous group, namely those whose motivations are led by financial gain (182). From the start, therefore, Wilberforce oscillates between being the space for both ideals and 'dishonest' motivations.

Despite his professed dedication to the project, Steward's preparations to leave for Canada West are accompanied by mixed feelings. Entreated by his friends to stay in Rochester, he is at the same time plagued by "forebodings of evil" that add to his worries about the impending journey (183). He experiences "frightful dreams," which contribute to the gothic character of his arrival in Wilberforce as seemingly bad "omens" for his undertaking (183-84). The fact that he feels no consolation from God during this time, although he had cast Wilberforce as an explicitly Christian project, intensifies the atmosphere of anxiety (183). It turns out that the actual journey to Wilberforce is far from agreeable. Leaving Rochester in May of 1831, "[n]otwithstanding these omens," Steward and his family experience unfavorable winds that extend their journey via Buffalo and Port Stanley (Ontario) considerably (184). Stopping at Port Stanley on Lake Erie to pursue the journey toward London, Steward is struck by the "very wild and picturesque […] appearance" of the small town (184). His choice of words is characteristic not only of a romantic idea of the wild but also of a common association with Canada's wilderness. Indeed, their spirits seem to brighten as they pursue the itinerary to their "wild and new home" (185). It is worthy to note the

43 Ripley describes that "Canadian racial attitudes often resembled those of northern whites, and some Canadians opposed the formation of black settlements. The situation worsened in the 1850s" (*BAP* 72n13).

double significance of "new" here: it is not so much the question of Canada West and Wilberforce being "new" places and the new homes for Steward and his family to discover but rather that the "newness" of the country refers to untouched nature evoking the pioneer setting Steward finds himself in.

Although the family's arrival in Wilberforce is followed by Steward's appointment as president, life there is quickly overshadowed by the inner conflicts in the colony. At first, Steward's high position seems to promise hope. Indeed, he identifies relatively quickly as "one of [the settlers]" (185). This identification and mutual acceptance of Steward as a member and leader of the settler group speak for his standing and reputation that seem to have transferred without question from Rochester to Canada West. It also puts into focus his emerging cross-border identity as a highly public and publicized figure, being a leading member of his communities in New York and now, Wilberforce. By consequence, "reputation" and "character" become key terms for his involvement in Wilberforce. As the Conventional Board in Philadelphia remind him in a letter, he must "have an eye to character, knowing full well that by that alone you must *stand* or *fall*" (345; original emphasis).[44] The dominance in the narrative of the conflict in the colony contrasts with the description of daily settler life in Wilberforce. In fact, two motifs are prominent in his elaborations on life in Wilberforce, the recurrence of wild animals and the woods, and the mention of foreboding dreams. Taken together, they create somewhat of a Gothic atmosphere around Canada West, which reflects both what is taken to be a "Canadian" feature (wild nature) and the dangers of inner-communal conflict.

As Steward briefly moves away from Israel Lewis's misconduct, life in Wilberforce emerges with a strong reference to pioneer literature in Canada. The chapter entitled "Roughing it in the Wilds of Canada" recalls, most prominently, Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852).[45] The chapter is concerned with one main theme, land, both with its actual purchase as the prerequisite of Wilberforce's survival and its characteristics as part of the "new home" in the "new land." Moreover, Steward reports two encounters with wild animals as a

44 The Philadelphia Convention elects Steward as their "*General Corresponding Agent* for the Wilberforce Settlement" (Steward 344; original emphasis).

45 Clarke has pointed to Moodie's activities as "antislavery editor" and her involvement in "the transcription and editing" of the narratives by Mary Prince and Ashton Warner ("'No Hearsay'" 12-13). Clarke suggests that *Roughing It* might be read "intertextually with Prince," but warns that "such a 'stealth' reading must underline, again, the invisibility of the slave narrative in Canadian literature" (13). Still, I would like to suggest that an allusion to Moodie seems more probable considering that her well-known book appeared five years before Steward's narrative.

distinctive feature of this kind of life at Wilberforce. In the first instance, he is alone and hunting for deer with his dog, when he suddenly faces two wolves whom he manages to kill, eventually. In the second instances, he describes a bear with his cubs taking possession of the settler children's playhouse. They leave before being shot, but the children "soon desert" their playground which their "unbidden guests" had appropriated (194). For Steward, these episodes underline the dominant facet of their new home in Canada, whose "forest[s] abounded with deer, wolves, bears, and other wild animals" (194). Even after roughly a year in Wilberforce, the settlers still live a difficult pioneer life and, Steward explains, "such incidents are common in a new country, surrounded as we were by a dense wilderness" (195). The bears leave the settlers "somewhat alarmed for their safety," but they rationalize their presence as a feature of their pioneer reality (194). Steward, finding himself out of munition after he shot the first wolf, improvises another ball out of a beech limb, thus managing a dangerous confrontational situation (193). He shows adaptability and a certain amount of control of their natural surroundings, not least when he sells the wolves' skins "for nine dollars and a half, - making pretty good wages for a few hours labor" (194). In this light, the hunting episodes represent moments of success that contrast with the overall bleak situation of the colony.

Other appearances of wild animals are less encouraging, however, and play into the underlying tone of anxiety connected to Wilberforce. The "bad omen" that plagued Steward before leaving Rochester was in fact a bad dream involving wild animals. He recalls his dream about snakes on the road from Rochester to Genesee River, and being spread all over Lake Ontario's shore. The snake as a treacherous animal in Christian symbolism might foreshadow the "treachery" of Israel Lewis regarding Wilberforce's finances. In the same dream, "A large bird like an eagle"—the eagle being usually associated with the United States—is flying south from Lake Ontario, in what appears to be a movement away from Canada West (184). Clarke has remarked that some slave narratives "exhibit […], then, the stuff of historical romance, as well as the murky, labyrinthine, Gothic terror demanding the stoic, yet active, heroic response" ("'No Hearsay'" 30). In Steward's dreams, they in fact assume prophetic qualities that challenge him to act in certain ways.

Finally, with the feud in the colony deteriorating, Steward decides to return to the United States. The fact that he is elected township clerk, a newly created office in Canada West, cannot change his decision, although his election constitutes a remuneration for his endurance, the trials he underwent with his opponent, and proof of the "entire confidence, and respect shown [him] by [his] townsmen, after all the cruel persecutions" (261). As Steward explains, a new law in the province provides for the constitution of a board, in each township,

consistent of three commissioners and one township clerk and "possessing all the power of a court, in relation to township business" (260). While this important office serves to highlight his standing in the colony, it serves Steward to ponder the significance of this law for Black life in Canada. In fact, as he explains, the law holds great potential and possibilities for the black settlers to become involved in township politics by their own vote and by actually becoming elected to these positions: "[I]n the township of Bidulph (sic), the colored people were a large majority of the inhabitants, which *gave us the power to elect* commissioners *from our own settlement*, and therefore, three black men where duly chosen [...]" (261; added emphasis).

Conscious of the power the Black settlers exert by their numbers and their willingness to make use of the vote, Steward also casts this empowerment in the context of a great Canadian achievement: by becoming township clerk, he sees "the same power given him as though he had been born in Her Brittanic (sic) Majesty's dominion, with a face as white as the driven snow" (261). This crucial passage on the idea of equal rights in Canada also expresses the loyalty toward Great Britain. What is more, Steward emphasizes the possibility to exercise one of the most crucial rights of a citizen, with the vote being usually singled out as one of the greatest concrete offers of immigration to Canada. This short passage casts Wilberforce, for the first time, in an explicitly political context.

In the end, however, as Steward reviews his Canadian years, his conclusion is one of both personal and political disappointment. Indeed, his final assessment of his 'two lives' on both sides of the border is as complex as it is ambivalent, and predicated on an abolitionist discourse all too often based on the binary opposition "United States versus Canada." Musing on his personal development from slavery to "entire independence" and his image as a self-made man, Steward realizes that he had acquired all this "competency" before setting foot in Canada West (269). It was in Rochester, he claims, as an independent, well-situated businessman with a solid education, that "comfort and happiness of myself and family, required no further exertion on my part to better our worldly condition" (269). In fact, now that he feels close to his return to Rochester, he idealizes his life in the city as well as in the United States in general.

Doing so, he also comes to reverse the trope within abolitionism that casts Canada as a haven for fugitive slaves from persecution and the land of abundance. If Clarke had asserted that many slave narratives made Canada "the *true* land of opportunity," the discourse of superiority is here again brought back to bear on the United States as "one of the best countries on the earth" (Clarke, "'No Hearsay'" 26; Steward 269). For Steward, this quality is defined by "friends, - good and intelligent society, and some of the noblest specimens of Christian philanthropy"

along with "persons of refinement and cultivation" to surround his family with (269). Just as he had logically deducted the emigration to Canada as a necessity a few years prior, he now rationally explains that, given the circumstances in Rochester, "it cannot be thought very strange that they [his family] should desire to return" (269). Canada West, in turn, becomes the land of personal sacrifice and trial. Steward underlines that his family had not only given up everything to accompany him to a new land but had received "little less than care, labor and sorrow" in return (269). In fact, Samuel E. Cornish, a friend of Steward's, congratulates him on his and his family's return, claiming that "your Colony is by no means suited to her [Mrs. Steward's] talents and refined mind. She never could be happy there" (356).

Aside from personal disappointment, Steward had held higher hopes for the community of Wilberforce, too. First, he had hoped for a geographically more extended settlement by the "purchase [of] the whole township of Bidulph (sic)," a plan which was destroyed by poor choices of agents (270). Second, given the number of colonists, he underlines his great disappointment at the foiled prospect of sending "a member to Parliament, one of our own race" (270). Again, he blames both the Canada Company and, by consequence, Israel Lewis, for their "unjust judgment of a whole people, by one dishonest man" (270). The settlers were dependent on this external support for the practical realization of their experiment. In Steward's point of view, the Canada Company has given in all too easily to racist assumptions about free Black people being unfit for business by taking one man as an example. He laments that more "respectable and intelligent colored men" could have emigrated to Wilberforce had land sales not been disrupted (270). Steward's complaints throw light on the expectations and pressure surrounding the idea of Wilberforce. Initially conceived of as the only way out of oppression in the United States, it was well envisioned in theory and started out under favorable auspices (see Lundy). Nevertheless, it possessed an aura of having to work at all costs, creating pressure that materialized not least in the personal feud between the protagonist and Lewis. This observation also heightens the threat individuals like Lewis posed to the collective, ideologically and concretely.

The fact that *Twenty-Two Years a Slave* is almost the only account we have of Wilberforce has led to its being considered primarily a failure (see Pease and Pease, Introduction). On the contrary, I want to argue that Steward's final chapters on Canada West paint a more complex picture of Wilberforce and Canada West. Despite the preponderant sense of failure, he does admit, for example, that "the weight of that cruel prejudice" did thrive in the province (269). On a personal level, however, it was "usually" also met with "all that kindness and confidence, which should exist between man and man" (270). He positively recalls the

comings and goings at his tavern, where he succeeded in winning the trust of his guests and built a reputation for himself. Moreover, once the decision to leave the colony is publicly known, Steward can hardly conceal his pride that people "both in and out of the settlement, [importune him] to remain awhile longer, at least" (271).

The Stewards' farewell scene from Wilberforce has become iconic. It constitutes a direct parallel worthy of note to the family's arrival several years prior. Arriving from Rochester as a wealthy businessman with "five two-horse wagon loads of goods and furniture," the couple now has two more children, yet "now, [their] possessions were only a few articles, in a *one-horse wagon*" (271; original emphasis). Their material losses, however strongly they might bear on the family, contrast with the communal spirit developed over the past years. Enumerating several communal practices, from religious communion to social gatherings to acts of "neighborly kindness" serves to underline the establishment of a close-knit community, where "a mutual regard and friendship had bound us closer to each other" (272). In fact, Steward states that their "Christian brotherhood" held firmly through both "weary days" and "sweet[er]" moments, transcending "the adverse scenes incident to frail human life" (272). Taking into account Steward's motivation in going to Canada based on religious grounds, Wilberforce's community building must to be read as a success, and not as failure. In addition, taking into account the numerous stories that make up the fabric of this community, such as Rosa and Joe's, Cannouse's, the Indian warrior's, etc., it becomes clear that this genealogy of meaningful individuals stands in stark contrast to the sense of failure attached to Wilberforce and forces Steward to revise his assessment of his Canadian years.

Since the years in Wilberforce have been incisive in Steward's life, his own return to Rochester in January 1837 and the whole first year back are heavy with the relicts of his Canadian, or rather cross-border, experience. His return journey from Canada West, for example, is also marked by evil forebodings: Steward observes that his oldest daughter catches a cold during the trip to Rochester, which will eventually lead to her death (see 273). Also, his family now returns to a different town from what they had left and in which they start out again in difficult circumstances. With "not one dollar [left] for the support of [his] family," the Steward feels to have to commit everything to God's care and providence (273). Initially, he feels that his "honest purpose" and labors in the colony have not come to fruition, and assesses his "mission [… as] an entire failure" (290-91). It is only in hindsight that he sees that not everything was "in vain, but that some good did result from [his work]" (291). Thus, despite looking forward to returning to Rochester and reunite with family and friends, he feels wrapped in "gloom like

thick darkness" (291). This despondency is not least attributable to his anxiety about his reception in Rochester. Casting himself indirectly as the biblical prodigal son "reentering the city penniless" on January 23, 1837, he finds himself well received (292).[46] Several Rochester businessmen grant him credit so that he is able to open a store on Main Street soon after his arrival (see 292-93). Taking the trust put in him by these persons as a motivation to excel in "industry and diligence," he soon manages a simple, but "comfortable living for [his] family" (293).

However, Steward' idyll is soon thwarted by the death of his oldest daughter. Having announced her attracting "a violent cold on Lake Erie" as his family returned to the States, he now blames the deprivation of the "comforts of life" in Canada West for her weak health (293). In a special instance of personal and intimate family life descriptions, Steward traces the despair as the couple realize their eleven-year-old "darling child" cannot be cured (294). He shares the existential moment of her death a mere three months after his return to Rochester: "One pleasant morning after passing a restless night, I observed her to gaze earnestly upward, and a moment after I called her name but received no answer" (294). He records April 15, 1837 as the first time that death "had…made [an] inroad in [his] family circle," and foreshadows the death of two more of his children in the following years (295). This scene is the most forceful reminder of the sense of evil surrounding Canada West in the narrative so far. It is also a clear contradiction to the passage across Lake Erie as a positively-connoted episode and topos in slave narratives, as Alyssa MacLean had it (2010). In line with Steward's depiction of Canada West as tied to evil forebodings, Lake Erie becomes the harbinger of death and desperation.

Although the first year back in New York States proves difficult for Steward, who is less lucky in business, runs into debt, and eventually moves to Canandaigua, he still actively participates in community life. As such, he embarks on the AME Conference in New York City, presided over by Bishop Morris Brown (see 299).[47] This tour of AME meetings through several American and Canadian cities is another forceful reminder of Steward's complex relation to both the United States as "home" and Canada West as "adoptive home." Indeed, his

46 The parable of the prodigal son appears in Luke 15:11-32. Steward does not resemble the son's wastefulness as described in the Bible but shares his sense of almost remorseful return to the city that had brought him wealth.

47 Morris Brown (1770-1849), co-founder, with Richard Allen, of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Philadelphia in 1816, founder of the AME Church of Charleston in 1818. In July 1840, Brown organized the AME's Upper Canada Conference in Toronto (see Simpson 46-47; Yee).

obvious disappointment with the province is quickly forgotten as he engages in the AME tour's cross-border trajectory both as observer and commentator of the Black populations in both countries. The New York City conference, which relies on a substantial body of around sixty or seventy participating ministers, lasts for around ten days in the city before moving on "to the West" (300). Steward does not give details on who exactly, aside from Bishop Brown, makes up the group of travelers, only that, after a short stop at Rochester, they cross the border into Canada West "where a conference was to be holden" at Hamilton, Ontario (300). Reminiscent of Richard Warren's narrative, Steward implicitly sheds light on the cross-border cooperations within the AME Church and its communities. Moreover, Steward resumes his role as observer-chronicler and offers a new view on Canada West, which had before been limited to the Wilberforce colony and the township of Biddulph. Now, following the geography of the tour to on both sides of the border produces a very different image of Canada West.

Arriving in Hamilton, Steward observes the Black soldiers stationed in the city by "the English government," making it a thing of everyday life there "to meet every few rods, a colored man in uniform, with a sword at his side" (300). He readily establishes the contrast between the "English government," a monarchy, and "this *free republic*" where Blacks are yet excluded from the military (300; original emphasis). But not only is Hamilton as such different from the New York City environment, the conferences, too, take place under different auspices. As a guest in Canada West, Bishop Brown opens the convention "under the authority of Her Brittanic (sic) Majesty," imbued with a "solemnity" that spreads to the audience (300). Steward draws a highly favorable image of the Hamilton convention, which profits from a large mixed audience and is embedded in several community activities (301). The conference leaders are invited to inspect the city and the conditions of its many fugitive slaves, who are engaged in work and church-building (301). They pay the usual "social calls" to local community leaders and members and "conver[t]" many to the faith (302). Steward obviously prefers the Hamilton setting to New York City, both for a "more interesting" conference and a different situation of the Black population (300). "The colored people were much more numerous in Hamilton, and in far better circumstances than in New York," he observes (301). On the contrary, he elaborates on New York City as a classic example of Black urban poverty marked by housing discrimination and "squalid" living conditions which have only begun to change at the time of his writing the narrative (301). Slowly reinserting Canadian greatness into his text, Steward describes Hamilton as an anti-New York City in the sense that it seems devoid of "that wretchedness and […] drunken rowdyism [of] Eastern cities" (301).

The Hamilton meeting soon turns into an extended sightseeing tour in the area for the American visitors. Interestingly enough, Steward joins these expeditions seemingly as a guest himself: there is no direct mention that he has returned to a province where he lived himself until not too long ago. The places and monuments the party visits almost all represent core Canadiana, making the tour also an exposition of Canadian history and culture while evoking standard topoi of the Canadian wild. This is the case, for example, at the Burlington Heights, north of Hamilton, whose "wild and terrific grandeur" Steward emphasizes (302). Next, the company is given a private tour through the residence of Sir Allan Napier McNab.[48] McNab, a "notorious" and well-known figure at the time not only in the "history of the Canadian revolution" had Dundurn Castle erected, which was completed only in 1835, merely a few years before the visit (302).[49] Steward gives his own impression of McNab's imposing estate and his appreciation of the surroundings "laid out in the English style of princely magnificence" (302). One might observe here that in contrast to Steward's anti-luxury stance, McNab's impressive mansion is cast only in positive terms of "Englishness" and not connected to an overly excessive lifestyle.

After another night spent in Hamilton, a particularly iconic scene follows with the visit of "the Falls" the next morning (303). This visit is embedded in a romantic description of the Hamilton scenery from which the party takes its leave: "the lake was still, no sound was heard but the rushing waves, as our boat moved on through its placid waters, toward our destination" (303). Here, the overwhelming sight of Niagara Falls disrupts the quietude of the morning. Steward is taken aback by the sublime character of nature and the "stupendous work of Almighty God" (303). His appropriation of one of the most iconic Canadian sites and its "awful grandeur" connects, nevertheless, to the infringement of U.S.-American reality: Niagara Falls is the embodiment of the cross-border, manifesting the proximity of the two states through the juncture of the Canadian and American Falls. For Steward, this proximity is linked not only to tourism that brings together people "from all parts of the world" but also to being an attraction for the "idle, swaggering slaveholder" (303). For him, slaveholders make use of their occasional trips to the Falls to "boast […] of [their] wealth," while their slaves are

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48 Sir Allan Napier McNab (1798-1862), Canadian statesman, politician, businessman, lawyer. Widely known and controversial public figure in Upper Canada and Canada West (see Baskerville).

49 Steward refers to the Rebellions of 1837/38 in Upper and Lower Canada against the Crown, led by William Lyon Mackenzie (1795-1861) and Louis Joseph Papineau (1786-1871), respectively.

toiling at home (303). The impression of the Falls therefore carries the stain of the hypocrisy he feels has entered the site.

On their way back to Buffalo in the United States, the party stops at two more significant spots. First, they pass Grand Island, Mordechai Manuel Noah's vision of the erection of the city of Ararat.[50] The parallel to fugitivity and persecution are evident as Steward explains the purpose of Noah's project to erect a "City of Refuge" for "the poor Jew" (305). He deems the project to have failed, since by the time of his visit, "it remained in its native wildness" (305). The great monument erected there cannot compete, however, with that of "Gen. Brock" at Queenston Heights.[51] Although Steward does not further elaborate on Brock, the famous war hero, he has inserted another crucial figure and, implicitly, another crucial event in Canadian History, the War of 1812. Moreover, this war re-evokes the cross-border theme in that it represents the quintessential conflict between the United States and Great Britain on Canadian soil and along the border. The monument of Brock is another sentimental reminder of an allegiance to Great Britain/British North America, which seemed altogether unlikely after Steward's disappointment at Wilberforce.

After the conference's return to New York State, however, it is clear that Steward begins "to feel quite settled" in Canandaigua, and that a veritable identification with Canada West is absent (306). The city is a place where Steward engages in several activities other than his business and colony leadership, such as his work as a teacher in a Black school, together with one of his daughters (299). What is more, he becomes an agent for the *Anti-Slavery Standard* and thus, openly involved in the anti-slavery movement (306).[52] The local "Celebration of the First of August" to honor the abolition of slavery in the British Empire constitutes a determined, yet cautionary example of believing in the collective struggle for freedom and honors Steward both as a part of the collective as well as his own accomplishments.

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50 Mordecai Manuel Noah (1785-1851), well-known Jewish thinker, playwright, journalist, politician. Plan to establish colony on Gran Island (close to Buffalo) for Jews under the name of "Ararat," but the project failed (see *Jewish Virtual Library*).

51 Sir Isaac Brock (1769-1812), army officer and colonial administrator, famous war hero of the War of 1812. He died in the Battle at Queenston Heights, which he fought against U.S. Major General Stephen Van Rensselaer. Brock fought the battle with the assistance of a large number of First Nation warriors (see Stacey).

52 Following Hodges's remarks, Steward should have been known to Black abolitionists ever since he participated in the first Black national convention in 1830 (see Hodges xx).

His concluding chapter reinforces his complex position as a black, cross-border figure who has experienced life in the United States and Canada West. Turning away from explicit anti-slavery debates, Steward casts himself as the "observer of [his] race" and the condition of Blacks on both sides of the border (319). He concludes that there is some visible progress for Blacks in the North, but that "prejudice against that color is not destroyed" (319). Like Samuel Ringgold Ward, Steward points out the three areas that he feels evidence the most severe and constant discrimination against Blacks: hotels (or, public service), schools (or, education), and the church (320). Steward, however, makes clear that he has also gone beyond the role of "observer" in becoming actively involved in assisting fugitive slaves, whom he has received often in his house to "see and feel the distresses of that class of persons" (319).

The relation to the many fugitives and their escape to Canada, however, represent a complex matter for him. He feels "gratifi[cation]" at each escape and has followed closely the "movements of the fugitives" (321). His choice of words leads to suspect, though, that he does not identify himself as an escapee, although he had described himself often in the same terms as the "poor, frightened, flying fugitive" (319). Moreover, his references to the refugees in Canada West do not seem to stem from his perspective as a former resident. "The knowledge that [he] ha[s] of the colored men in Canada, their strength and condition" are never linked to his personal experiences (321). Just as he merged with the AME representatives as a tourist in Canada West, he lets through no personal affiliation with the Black population in that province.

Despite this ambiguous personal stance, Steward does use his "knowledge" of the Black population to return to the well-known image of Canada as a safe haven for fugitives. He cites the "monarchical government" in Canada as the institution that grants Black people true liberty which had been denied them in the "nominally free States" (321). This is the reason, too, why in the event of war, which even after 1814 seems always impending, the United States would stand very bad chances. In fact, much like Smallwood and Ward, Steward is convinced that "England could this day, very readily collect a regiment of stalwart colored men, who, having felt the oppression of our laws, would fight with a will not inferior to that which actuated our revolutionary forefathers" (321-22). "England's Queen" not only offers the true promises of the United States but also "acknowledge[s] [Black] manhood," which forms the basis of loyalty to both Britain and Canada (323-24). The United States, on the contrary, have stayed behind in fulfilling their ideals, and thus, offer no basis for identification, as Blacks are "drive[n …] from the soil which has been cultivated by [their] own labor" (323).

Joining other authors in their hierarchical division of black refugees, and no less problematically, Steward seems to observe a significant change that operates on the Black arrivers in Canada West, which constitutes the reason for their strength and support of Canada in wartime. More specifically, he establishes a crude contrast between the Blacks in Canada and "a class of poor, thriftless, illiterate creatures, like the Southern slaves" (321). Revealing a definite and problematic class-bias himself, Steward turns Blacks in Canada into "hardy, robust class of men; very many of them, men of superior intellect" (321). He claims that they can no longer be called "slaves," having spent many years in freedom or having never been bondsmen at all (321). Implicitly, Steward raises the question whether "fugitive" is an adequate term, which only seems valid to briefly describe the arrivers in Canada.[53] He seems to suggest a radical transformation that a free life effects on the former fugitives, both connected to the acknowledgment of manhood and a concrete realization of (U.S.-American) ideals as manifest in the triad of "his own broad acres, his family and fireside" (324).

Similar to some degree to Smallwood and Ward, Steward neglects the hardships of life under slavery in the South and the difficulties of effecting a successful escape. He also disregards his own experiences with racism and discrimination in Canada West. One could speculate on Steward's ambiguous assertions throughout the narrative—speculations related to editorial infringements, market value considerations, or the play with popular genres such as the sentimental novel. In sum, whether Steward takes his experiences in Wilberforce as failure or success, he establishes Blacks as "Americans; allied to this country by birth and by misfortune; and [claims that] here they will remain" (327). At the same time, he displays an unrelenting optimism for the future of his fellow Blacks "in North America" as "equal with the proud Anglo-Saxon in all things"—not specifying whether he means the United States *and* Canada, or only the United States (328). His narrative has shown that he was able, despite the setbacks within his own black community, to find meaningful individuals who embodied this hope for the future, by making it possible to keep those stories from being forgotten, and remembering that they, too, were assets to a community that, after all, represented an effort to defy anti-black racism and prejudice.

53 Steward himself still identifies as American. Not only does he refer to "our revolutionary forefathers" but also laments, having exposed continuing prejudice in the United States that drives his fellow Blacks into another land: "[h]umiliating as it is for an American citizen to name these things, they are nevertheless true […]" (322-23).

Conclusion

This project has brought together four diverse autobiographical narratives, from long elaborate narratives to short biographical sketches. Yet, their authors were part of one generation of black leaders in Canada West and the United States, and the narratives are more similar than they first appear. Austin Steward and Samuel Ringgold Ward, for example, both attended the Emancipation Day celebrations in Canandaigua, New York, on August 1, 1847. Steward describes that speaking to the large crowd to begin "the exercises [fell to] the Rev. S. R. Ward, who addressed the throne of grace, after which, Mr. Frederick Douglass delivered an oration, in a style of eloquence which only Mr. Douglass himself can equal" (312). Only one day later, on August 2, Thomas Smallwood and Richard Warren participated in the convention in the AME Chapel at Drummondville, Quebec. There, they sat together on the Business and Finance Committees (*Report* 6). While each of their narratives deserved a separate case study, this book has sought to unite them by demonstrating how they each create a form of genealogy out of which emerges a cross-border black community via text.

If the authors were not entire strangers to each other, their narratives, too, can be brought into conversation. All four writers, for example, within the space of a couple of years, produced long narratives that do not easily fit into one genre category. While they are certainly life narratives, they also include travelogues and accounts of abolitionist work in the forms of letters, minutes, or witness accounts. Part of this work consists in exposing the everyday discrimination of black people in Canada West and the United States in several public sectors. Steward names hotels (or, public service), schools (or, education), and the church as such areas (see 320); Ward includes several episodes illustrating discrimination in public services such as hotels and taverns, public transport including steamboats, and education (see 146-49). As a consequence, both Steward and Ward give free Blacks advice on what considerations should guide their life as freemen, such as financial independence and the importance of education

(Steward 333-34), or a professional calling and the avoidance of segregated settlements (Ward 34; 205). They seem to take these lessons from the inspirational figures of their fathers who serve as role models in their respective narratives. Ward honors his father as the black yeoman whom he appears to emulate by moving to Jamaica as a farmer (34), while Steward upholds his father's memory as an upright man and devoted husband (126). Aside from the personal level, Steward's and Ward's narratives also share the appearance of the role model fugitive slave and his pathos-laden appeal to the public. In Steward, Doctor Davis incarnates this figure, whose dramatic appeal to the bystanders after his recapture is Patrick Henry's famous "Give me liberty or death! Or death!" (Steward 143). Ward, in turn, transforms Jerry Henry into a very similar character: Henry's emotional lament is centered on a call for liberty, and he is portrait as a valiant, courageous, and determined fugitive who recalls, indeed, Doctor Davis, who would rather attempt suicide than be returned to slavery.

Steward and Smallwood, too, interconnect in several respects. Both are concerned with their respective reputations and fashion themselves as morally upright men in the face of their enemies. While Smallwood constantly struggles with members of the black community, particularly in Washington, D.C., and feels attacked from all sides, Steward faces opposition from Israel Lewis in Wilberforce. Smallwood tries to maintain his engagement as an Underground Railroad conductor even as he is obsessed with 'traitors' from his own community, just as Steward stands his ground in Wilberforce as long as he can. They both echo David Walker, who is the subtext in Smallwood's narrative and once refused to leave for Canada to protect his life, which turns him into a hero (Garnet qtd. in Smallwood xi). In a similar way, Steward underlines how he remained in Canada West when the conflict with Lewis deteriorated, despite his friends' advice to "flee from the country, which I had labored so hard and so conscientiously to benefit" (237). However, while in these two narratives, much seems to revolve around the authors' public personae and character, both use their position as storytellers to defend the reputation of other people. Smallwood, for example, includes a letter to the *Albany Patriot* that he wrote under his pseudonym "Samuel Weller, Jr.", and in which he renders his point of view on several kidnappings of free Blacks in Washington, D.C. In this way, he can criticize the authorities and the Auxiliary Guard's involvement at the same time that he is able to name the victims in order to make sure the outrage does not go unseen (see 60-63). Steward, too, actively opposes what he feels is a wrongful portrayal of a fugitive's dramatic attempted suicide on a boat, which he witnessed, by writing a counterstatement to a newspaper in New York City (see 250-51).

Siemerling calls Smallwood, Steward, and Ward leading figures contributing to the literary output of what he calls the “Black Canadian Renaissance” (*Reconsidered* 98). Indeed, all four authors in the present book challenge preconceived notions of black writing at mid-nineteenth century in that they do not easily conform to the category “slave narrative” but work with a plethora of genres to create multilayered texts. Ward, for example, is turned into a fugitive as a toddler, when his parents escape slavery, but has no vivid memory of this period himself. Grown up as a free, educated black man, Ward’s point of departure for writing his autobiography might differ from the other three authors. His narrative, for instance, contains no introductory letters by white abolitionists, unlike those by Steward and Warren: Steward receives support from his fellow Rochester businessmen and politicians, whereas Warren can rely on other AME ministers and printers. Ward and Smallwood, on the contrary, lay claim to their own work and writing from the beginning. While the slave narrative provided a powerful and, most importantly, marketable template that certainly made for a convincing tool in the authors’ anti-slavery work, it did not serve the necessity to map the experiences of free and active cross-border individuals. Their stories continued long after emancipation and the arrival on free soil, and their complex narratives bring to life a vibrant borderland along the “fluid frontier”.

All four authors also contribute to ambivalent portrayals of Great Britain and Canada West as spaces which are long free from slavery, resulting into problematic interpretations with regard to (potential) black immigrants. Smallwood, Steward, and Ward largely dismiss criticism of England, particularly, as a former slaveholding nation and rather depict the country as a remorseful convert to the cause of abolitionism. Since Canada West is a stand-in for the British monarchy, it becomes a place where black people can enjoy freedom from oppression. Nevertheless, the authors discussed here establish troublesome relationships between black fugitives or emigrants and their adoptive country. Ward and Smallwood, for example, display a certain class bias when they complain about those black peers they feel “lack energy [and] courage” to bring about substantial change for Blacks (Smallwood 55). Such fellow Blacks, Ward chides, discredit the group as a whole (see Ward 197). For the two authors, fugitives in Canada West are responsible to counteract this image. Together with Steward, they turn Blacks in Canada into a class of survivors who are superior to those who remain in slavery or are unsuccessful in making their escape. In Ward’s opinion, these “vigorous people” form a perfect addition to the prospects that Canada West offers for settlement (155). For Smallwood, these ambitious women and men represent Black yeomen in the Canadian wilds, far from the drudgery of black urban poverty (55-56). Steward openly contrasts Blacks in Canada as a

"hardy, robust class of men" with those who are enslaved in the South as "a class of poor, thriftless, illiterate creatures" (321). These statements speak not least to a gap between black leaders and those who were seeking to shape their daily lives in Canada West.

Although each author evokes a particular form of genealogy, as this book has argued, there is also recognizable overlap. Ward's underlying project to establish a genealogy of heroic fugitives who find a ground to enjoy the fruits of their heroism in Canada and inspire pride and admiration resonates with Smallwood and Steward. Furthermore, the fact that Steward includes ever so many stories centered on other people in his own is not singular among the four authors. Ward, too, presents readers with a collection of several heterogeneous stories. The anonymous fugitive (170-71), well-known fugitive slave rescue cases (181-82), and other instances either appear like brief vignettes or, sometimes, as more extended accounts. Just like Steward, Ward serves as the mediator and authenticator of these stories who prevents them from being forgotten. At the same time, such stories remind us of the lasting importance of community and the impossibility to shed your background by crossing a border. The individual communities from which these stories emerge remain more powerful, eventually, than national allegiances or nation-states.

This is echoed in the appearance of Black radical, intellectual genealogies, which are not confined to one narrative either. David Walker (mediated through Smallwood's narrative), Smallwood, and Ward all invoke the necessity of black historiography to create a reliable genealogy *from* black people *for* black people. Henry Highland Garnet, whose biographical sketch of Walker is inserted in Smallwood, claims a place for the late abolitionist in the line of great black men. Walker himself had done the same for Reverend Richard Allen, founder of the AME Church in the United States, in the *Appeal* (see 69-70). From Allen to Walker, Smallwood echoes the call for a black tradition of anti-slavery fighters and great men, not simply by claiming himself a place among their ranks, but by contributing to the establishment of it through his writing. Moreover, when Ward—almost at the end of the 1850s—asks "if we do not vindicate ourselves, who will do it for us?," he harks back soundly to Walker's and Smallwood's assertion of the importance of future black historians to write the history of outstanding black men (270). Ward, too, is already part of this process.

In as much as the four texts in this book speak to each other, they are part of the literature produced in a decade that changed North America. Smallwood, Steward, Ward and Warren all were cross-border individuals who lived lives on both sides of the border between Canada West and the United States, in slavery and freedom, and who contributed to making the "fluid frontier" not least a

creative space in flux. Through their movements, they shaped cross-border relations between black communities, abolitionists, the AME church, and individual families. Their texts reflect how much this decade was changing the dynamics in North America and how black authors who were also activists, preachers, aspiring or established leaders were experimenting with literary forms that would suit their need to express complex cross-border lives. These narratives equally show the challenges and problems that these authors faced, struggling with inner-communal fights as well as threats from outside the black community. They also hint at the fragility of black communities and the strain to maintain their lives while encountering discrimination, on the one hand, but also the pressure to succeed, on the other. It is clear, however, that the community remained the anchor for black individuals crossing the border, and that it took supremacy over the (emerging) nation-state. As such, studying narratives of the "fluid frontier" means questioning the national literary canons as well as narrow academic curricula. However, in times of renewed attention to fugitivity, transnational migratory flows, and forced dispersals of people, these narratives push to the fore and invite us to look back. They reinforce the importance of genealogies, and remind us of the endurance of (black) communities, individual stories, fates, failures, and successes in the face of nation-states who, often enough, threatened their well-being.

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