

Public Abstract

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Title:Valuable drops of Gold: Exploring Economics in John Gabriel Stedman's *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*

Though John Gabriel Stedman's *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam* is not completely unfamiliar to literary scholars studying eighteenth-century depictions of African chattel slavery, it has primarily been used as context for studying other literature. This study aims to elevate Stedman's *Narrative* from context to text. As such, I first provide a framework for literary study of the *Narrative* and then begin exploring a central theme in the work: economics. Using a conflicted narrator who is troubled by his role as a mercenary soldier, Stedman demonstrates the difficulty of balancing ethics and economics. By uncovering Stedman's numerous approaches to the economics of slavery, I show how he recreates the confusion inherent to trying to fully comprehend slavery and its repercussions.