

“VALUABLE DROPS OF GOLD:” EXPLORING ECONOMICS IN JOHN
GABRIEL STEDMAN’S NARRATIVE OF A FIVE YEARS EXPEDITION
AGAINST THE REVOLTED NEGROES OF SURINAM

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

“VALUABLE DROPS OF GOLD:” EXPLORING ECONOMICS IN JOHN
GABRIEL STEDMAN’S *NARRATIVE OF A FIVE YEARS EXPEDITION
AGAINST THE REVOLTED NEGROES OF SURINAM*

presented by Bri Kneisley,

a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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For Damian, who is the world to me,

for my family, without whose love and support, I could never have accomplished
a thing,

and for Liz, the best friend anyone could wish for.

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INTRODUCTION

To begin then—I am going to be told that my Narrative besides its not being interesting to Great Britain has neither stile, orthography, order, or Connection—Patcht up with superfluous Quotations—Descriptions of Animals without so much as proper names—Trifles—Cruelties—Bombast &c. to all which Accusations I partly plead Guilty—I say partly, but with very great Sincerity—Next that some of my Paintings are rather unfinish'd—That my plants fully prove I am nothing of a Botanist—And that the History of Joana deserves no place at all in this Narrative—Guilty—Still besides all which I may be perhaps mistaken in a few of the Dates &c. &c.—& now for my defence—D——n order, D——n matter of fact, D——n ev'rything I am above you all (Stedman 7).

Anticipating contemporary responses to his *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*, John Gabriel Stedman outlined a “defence” in his preface that he said he hoped would “Suspend the most bitter Critick in the Air” (7). While Stedman demonstrates a willingness to admit to shortcomings in style, he unapologetically demands a place for his story in the annals of literature. Ultimately, Stedman prepared his work for a criticism that seems never to have come, however.¹ Contemporary critics were quick to notice Stedman's inattention to “stile, orthography, order, [and] Connection,” but they lauded the *Narrative* for its respectable narrator and its thorough explorations of Surinam. Because Stedman's contemporary reviewers “kn[e]w how to Separate the dross from the mettall,” they were able to find “many Valuable drops of Gold & even some inestimable Gems” buried in his *Narrative*

1 We can be quite certain that it was not this preface which stopped the unnamed “Bitter Critick[s],” however, because this portion of the preface was all but eliminated from the published 1796 *Narrative*. See below for a further explanation.

(9). Similarly, if we overlook the *Narrative's* seeming deficits in “style, orthography, order, [and] Connection” we, too, can find those “Valuable drops of Gold” which he hoped would save him and his *Narrative* from obscurity.

Stedman's assessment of his work as not just interesting, informative, or worthwhile, but “valuable” information is no accident. Rather, as Margaret Hunt explains, part of the role of the travel writer is to assess the value of the lands he or she visits. Thus, readers of Stedman's *Narrative* would not only gain insight into the peoples and ecology of Surinam, they would also be able to estimate Surinam's profit potential. Like other contemporary travel writers, Stedman views Surinam with what Hunt deems the “commercial gaze.” Not only does he seek to assess the value of the objects he encounters in Surinam, he attempts to create “order” and “connection” from the chaos and dissonance inherent to new world slavery. As Vincent Carretta explains, “For most of the eighteenth century, certainly the first half, slavery was perceived primarily as an economic concern, not a moral problem, and the initial basis of African slavery was predominantly financial rather than racial” (3). As the end of the eighteenth century approached, ensuing debates about the morality of slavery demanded that not only planters, but also ordinary British citizens, consider the ethics of enslavement. Thus, not unlike many of his contemporary British countrymen, Stedman had to assess the inherent value of human existence. As such, we can look at Stedman's *Narrative* as his own attempt not only to evaluate, but also to value, his actions in the 1770s. By “[s]eparat[ing] the dross from the mettall,” this study aims to expose the underlying economic structure of Stedman's

Narrative—particularly its appraisal of people—in order to begin to make sense of the frustration that eventually forced Stedman to exclaim, “D——n order.”

Stedman and his expedition

Stedman was born in Holland in 1744 to Robert Stedman, an officer in the Scots Brigade, and Antoinetta Christina van Ceulen, a Dutch noblewoman. In 1760, Stedman followed his father into the Scots Brigade in Holland (Ferguson vol. 2 432), in which he served until 1772 when he left for Surinam, and from his return to Europe until 1783 when the Brigade ceased to dsbe aligned with the British crown (Ferguson vol. 1 xxiv).² When Stedman's father died in 1770, Stedman was left penniless and with little prospect to be otherwise. Two years later, Stedman resigned from the Scots Brigade and volunteered to join a Dutch mercenary expedition to Surinam. The marines were charged with quelling the Dutch colony's escalating slave uprisings.

The war that ensued, known as the First Boni Maroon War,³ was actually the third wave of slave revolts in Surinam. The country's vast uncultivated tropical forests ensured that run-away slaves could find both subsistence and protection from discovery. This fact, coupled with Surinam's huge proportion of slaves to planters, meant that the planters were at risk of losing profit as their workers and financial investments fled it to the woods. Yet, planters risked losing

2 Effective January 1, 1783, the Dutch government declared that the Scots Brigade, formerly aligned with British interests, would “be put on the same footing in every respect with the national troops of Holland, and [that] the officers [would be] required to take an oath of allegiance to the states of Holland *and renounce their allegiance to Great Britain for ever on*” (qtd. in Ferguson vol. 1 xxiii). Stedman was among 55 officers who resigned and “came over to Britain” (ibid. vol. 1 xxiv, vol. 2 521). When the Brigade was “revive[d]” in 1794, Stedman was again among the ranks (vol. 1 xxiv, vol. 2 539).

3 The Second Boni Maroon War began in 1789—over a decade after Stedman and his compatriots left Surinam.

not only their profits, but also their lives as rebel slaves wreaked havoc on their plantations, often killing the planters and overseers. In turn, planters—likely recognizing their powerlessness—offered treaties to the first two groups of Maroons—the Saramaka and Ndjuka bands, respectively—agreeing to provide regular gifts in exchange for peace. Governor Jean Nepvue, however, refused to negotiate with the Boni rebels. As Dutch historian Wim Hoobergen explains, “Nepvue thought that settling peace with the new groups of runaways was not the right way to solve the problem of marronage [sic], as it would encourage new groups of slaves to desert from their plantation and they in turn could always ask for a peace settlement,” thus leading to a perpetual cycle of rebellion and pacification (78). Whether strategically sound or not, Nepvue's resolution ensured Stedman significant time in Surinam, which helped give him significant material for his *Narrative*.

In fact, much of the success of Stedman's *Narrative* stems indirectly from this decision. Specifically, Nepvue's decision to bring in troops—led by Colonel Henry Fourgeoud—from the Netherlands rather than grant the rebels an annuity meant that Stedman and his company spent years combing the woods in search of Maroon camps. Though many Europeans had visited and a few had written about Surinam, Stedman's repeated marches through the almost impenetrable forests gave him a distinct advantage over his literary peers because reviewers favored the novelty of the material he presented. As the reviewer for *The Critical Review* explains, in spite of Surinam's prevalence in literature, Stedman's account is unique because, “no traveller, whose accounts have hitherto fallen

under our inspection, ever penetrated so far into the interior of the country as captain Stedman, or at least, from long residence there, was equally well qualified for a minute and accurate description of the colony and its productions” (“Narrative” 53). Thus, Stedman's access to the flora and fauna deep in the forests of Surinam gave his *Narrative* an air of both authenticity and originality. Because he was able to establish credibility as an expert on Surinam, his *Narrative* is listed in the bibliography of nearly every history of Surinam written in the last 210 years. Though this sort of continual exposure could not and did not prevent Stedman's readership from dwindling, it did help prevent his *Narrative* from becoming obscure or obsolete. The anomalousness of Stedman's journey, and subsequently also his *Narrative*, gave readers and scholars a reason to revisit his *Narrative* in the decades and centuries that followed and helped ensure our current access to his work (as will be explored more fully in the “Reception history” section below).

Publication history

About a year after his return to Europe, Stedman began writing his *Narrative* (Price XXX), transforming his terse journal entries in a “small green almanack⁴” into the manuscript (Stedman 8). In spite of the tattered condition of the journal, which he says had been “Carried in [his] pocket during the Expedition through Danger–Disease, Famine, water, Smoak & Fire,” Stedman was able to sufficiently use it to reconstruct his journey, though he claims that the remains of

4 After a long and peppered history, this journal is currently housed at the James Ford Bell library in Minneapolis.

the journal were “to all but to [him]self unintelligible⁵” (8). Whether caused by the illegibility of his own notes, the herculean size of his project, or mere personal distractions, Stedman's writing process took considerable time and effort. In 1790, thirteen years after his return from Surinam, Stedman completed his manuscript—made up of “no less than 30 Laboreous Chapr.s.”— and sent it, along with 106 original drawings, to Joseph Johnson, a London publisher.

Johnson was famous, or perhaps infamous, in his own right. Not only did Johnson establish *The Analytical Review*, which “had a reputation for radicalism,” he also published infamous revolutionary writers and thinkers such as Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin (Hall). Johnson also promoted such writers as Thomas Paine⁶ and Olaudah Equiano⁷ (Carretta xvi). In 1799, Johnson served six months in prison for publishing a seditiously libelous pamphlet. In spite of his own seeming abolitionist leanings—not least indicated by his friendship with and literary support of William Cowper—Johnson hired William Thomson to edit Stedman's *Narrative*.

Thomson, a rather popular ghostwriter and biographer, concurrently edited Stedman's work and wrote and published tracts advocating the continuation of the slave trade (Price LXV). Whether because of his own political interests or from a recognition that the French and Haitian Revolutions caused public support for abolition to wane (Raupach 21), Thomson significantly altered not only Stedman's style, but also his message. As Richard Price and Sally Price point

5 Stedman manuscript editors Richard Price and Sally Price negate this, however, explaining that, “[t]hrough some passages are difficult to read, they are on the whole legible” (LXXXVI).

6 As *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* biographer Carol Hall notes, Johnson “was the prime mover behind the publication of... *The Rights of Man*,” however, he omitted his name from the book's imprint, which saved him from prosecution.

7 Johnson was one of many booksellers whom Equiano solicited to sell his books (Carretta xvi).

out, Thomson's editing included “substantial alterations of Stedman's views on race, slavery, and social justice, obliterating or warping significant aspects of his Suriname experience and the social commentary he had intended to share with his readers” (Price LII). Stedman was so irate that he not only referred to Johnson as “the demon of hell” (qtd. in Price LXIX), he also claims to have “burnt two thousand vols., and made them print it over again” (qtd. in Price L).⁸ Most of the editing of Stedman's views tended to “slant his 'moderate' opinions... in the direction of a rigid proslavery ideology” (LXII). It was impossible to know how greatly Stedman's text was affected until the original manuscript was unearthed (and subsequently published) by Price and Price in the late twentieth century.

While the wisdom of Johnson's choice of editors can be challenged, history has proven that Johnson made at least one brilliant decision—and one which greatly promoted Stedman's *Narrative*: he hired some of London's best engravers to transform Stedman's drawings into plates. Among these master engravers were Thomas Holloway, Francesco Bartolozzi, and none other than poet and artist William Blake.⁹ This decision reflects Johnson's extreme faith in Stedman's *Narrative* because, as Price and Price suggest, Johnson likely invested upwards of £400 or more for the plates alone. This investment seems to have paid off, however, as the images not only were lauded by contemporary

8 Landeg White argues that, “there are no grounds for believing [Stedman] was dissatisfied with the final text of 1796,” given that Stedman's *Narrative* was going through a continual process of negotiations. As Price and Price explain, Stedman announced victory in saying that he had “overcome them all” (LI, also Thompson 75). Of this, Price and Price suggest that Stedman likely settled for the finished copy of the book in spite of its significant alterations, pleased with having mitigated some of its worst violations of infidelity to his manuscript. Ultimately, however, we do not know precisely what Stedman objected to both because he did not specify and because Thompson's edited manuscript has not yet been found.

9 Stedman formed a close friendship with Blake, and he both frequently sent gifts to and entrusted his business affairs to Blake (*Journal* 389). Stedman seems not to have gotten along as well with Bartolozzi; he writes, “I force Bartolozzi to return my plates...then take home my spoilt manuscript and repair all plates” (ibid 381).

reviewers, they continue to draw audiences to Stedman's work (as will be explored more fully in the “Literary Scholarship on Stedman” section below).

Furthermore, though the published 1796 *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam* is drastically less radical than the manuscript,¹⁰ particularly in its claims of universal humanity and in its praise of Africans, the work was still considered a powerful indictment of slavery. As an anonymous contemporary reviewer for *The Critical Review* writes, “we have never opened any work which is so admirably calculated to excite the most heart-felt abhorrence and detestation of that grossest insult on human nature,—domestic slavery” (53). Though the reviewer displays an obvious bias against slavery, the review demonstrates that in spite of the censorship of Stedman's more radical views, the *Narrative* maintained potent enough depictions of cruelty and of humanity to sufficiently condemn slavery. In fact, given that Stedman denounces abolitionism, both in his *Narrative* and in his journal, the power of Stedman's images—both visual and literary—seems to transcend the political objectives of both Stedman and Thomson.

Texts and terminology

There are primarily three versions of Stedman's work that are relevant to an exploration of his *Narrative*. The first of these is his journal(s). This text includes the “small green almanack” described above, as well as other bound books and sheets on which Stedman recorded thoughts and events during his lifetime. The majority of these primary historical documents are currently housed

¹⁰ See Price and Price LI-LXVI for a detailed comparison of the manuscript with the published edition.

at the James Ford Bell Library in Minneapolis. In 1962, Stanbury Thompson, a British antiquarian bookseller, compiled and published these documents as *The Journal of John Gabriel Stedman 1744-1797 Soldier and Author - Including an Authentic Account of His Expedition to Surinam, in 1772*. The *Journal* includes a few original Stedman sketches as well as Stedman's autobiography of his early life. Sadly, this text was altered and censored by Thompson;¹¹ however, as this is the only published version of Stedman's journal, it has been used (sparingly) in this study and is simply referred to as the *Journal*.

The 1796 published edition of Stedman's *Narrative*, which reflects William Thomson's drastic editing of Stedman's ideas, was, until the late 1980s, the most accurate version of Stedman's *Narrative* available. This edition has been studied by many historians and scholars—particularly prior to the late 1980s—but will be largely neglected in this paper because it has largely been superseded. Because this was the only version available to contemporary readers, however, this text will be discussed in the “Reception history” below. When it is used elsewhere in this study, it will be referred to as the 1796 *Narrative* or the published edition.

Since Price and Price recovered and published Stedman's personal copy of his manuscript in 1988, this text has come to replace the published 1796 edition as the version most worthy of scholarship. Both because it has become the standard Stedman edition and because it is the edition which most closely resembles Stedman's creation, it is this edition—which will be referred to as the manuscript or the *Narrative*—that will be used in this paper unless otherwise indicated.

¹¹ For a further discussion of the merits of Thompson's edition, see Price and Price XXIX.

Reception history

The principal publication which has appeared under the head of Voyages and Travels is Captain STEDMAN's 'Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition to Surinam;' a work which, if not distinguished by literary elegance, bears every signature of honesty and fidelity: it contains many curious particulars in natural history, and many interesting details of occurrences and descriptions of manners, chiefly tending to expose the savage cruelty of the traffic in slaves ("Voyages" 45)

The Monthly Magazine's terse description of Stedman's two-volume, 811 page *Narrative*, though barely longer than the book's full title (*Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam; from the year 1772, to 1777; elucidating the History of that Country, and describing its Productions, Viz. Quadrupedes, Birds, Fishes, Reptiles, Trees, Shrubs, Fruits, & Roots; with an account of the Indians of Guiana, & Negroes of Guinea*), accurately represents the contemporary response to the *Narrative*. Most of Stedman's readers seem to have similarly taken great pleasure in his work, and to have considered his *Narrative* as an unaffected, genuine account of life in eighteenth-century Surinam.

Stedman's *Narrative* was quite popular. Not only did the *Narrative* make it through to a second edition a decade after its original publication, and to an abridged edition three years after that (see appendix 1), it was also translated into German, French, Dutch, Swedish, and Italian. In fact, in the 212 years since its publication, Stedman's *Narrative* has not only gone through numerous editions, it has also been reviewed, excerpted, and cited countless times, inspired at least four novels, two books of poetry, and three plays, and been a

significant source for three biographies. Even after abolition and emancipation and before the resurgence of popular interest in studying the institution of new world slavery, Stedman continued to be referenced in books discussing natural history. For example, British novelist and author Charles Kingsley praised Stedman in the late nineteenth century, saying,

What a genius was Stedman. What an eye and what a pen he had for all natural objects. His denunciations of the brutalities of old Dutch slavery are full of genuine eloquence and of sound sense likewise; and the loves of Stedman and his brown Joanna are one of the sweetest idylls in the English tongue (Kingsley 114).

Thus, Stedman's *Narrative*—in spite of its being no longer timely decades after the formal eradication of slavery in Britain—had staying power that ensured its continual readership.

As hinted in the “Publication history” section above, however, the *Narrative's* images played a major role in the text's entry into literary study. In particular, David Erdman's *Blake, Prophet Against Empire. A Poet's Interpretation of the History of His Own Times* drew modern literary scholars' attention to the connections between Blake's work engraving Stedman's *Narrative* and his own poetic authorship. Literary scholars began exploring Stedman's *Narrative*—previously limited to study by anthropologists and natural historians—to understand the text's influence on Blake's poetry and images, especially *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* and *America: A Prophecy*. The more than fifty years since Erdman's publication have seen a rapid expansion in literary scholarship on the *Narrative*, though this scholarship primarily uses Stedman's *Narrative* as context, rather than as text.

Literary scholarship on Stedman

It is perhaps illustrative of literary scholars' relative dismissal of Stedman's *Narrative* to say that there has not yet been an edition of Stedman's *Narrative* by a literary scholar, perhaps suggesting that literary scholars have been inclined to relegate Stedman's work to the status of historical background. The editors of recent editions of Stedman have been widely varied—an antiquarian, a sociologist/historian, and two collaborating anthropologists, respectively—demonstrating the *Narrative's* breadth of content and diverse scholastic applicability. Similarly, the fact that there is currently only one edition of Stedman's *Narrative* currently in print—that being an abridged version—indicates a relative lack of scholarly attention to Stedman's work. In fact, Price and Price's groundbreaking 1988 publication of Stedman's original 1790 manuscript is no longer in print.

Although Stedman's *Narrative* has been alluded to by many critics, there are fewer than ten literary scholars whose examinations of the *Narrative* are close and extended.¹² Scholarship tends to fit into three often overlapping categories: 1) that which seeks to categorize or classify Stedman's *Narrative* generically; 2) that which discusses Stedman's pornographic tendencies, and tends to focus on the illustrations to his text; and 3) that which attempts to make sense of Stedman's relationship with Joanna, both historically and literarily. Most scholars who look at Stedman's text tend to relate both text and author to slavery and tend to devote considerable time to unpacking the implications of Stedman's

¹² While there is a significant body of scholarship which places Blake's poetry in conversation with Stedman's *Narrative*, it is not being considered in this study because of its focus on Blake, rather than on Stedman.

“romance” with—and romanticization of—Joanna.

Of those scholars who attempt to place the *Narrative* among different literary traditions, four scholars argue for three different traditions. Tassie Gwilliam argues that while sentimental interracial love stories often muddy the mechanisms of slavery and colonialism, Stedman's characterization of his relationship with Joanna exposes the often subtle “compromises and coercion common in the sentimental love plot” (654). For Gwilliam, Stedman's “contradictions and internal pressures” are a result of his creation of sentimentality (653). In “A Suriname marriage - Why Joanna refused to leave the colony,” Landeg White, on the other hand, argues that Stedman's depiction of Joanna—particularly in its creation of multiple roles for her—follows the technique of the pastoral. Perhaps because of the brevity of his article, White does not spell out how she is related to the pastoral, beyond the often contradictory roles that she fills, nor does he flesh out the implications of this categorization. Finally, Marcus Wood and Mario Klarer each individually argue for the influence of the sublime on Stedman's text.

For both Wood and Klarer, the sublime in Stedman's text is directly related to the pornographic. Wood and Klarer both use the explicit connection that Burke draws between torture and beauty to discuss how the revulsion/arousal paradox of the sublime applies to Stedman's images. Wood uses the visual images in Stedman's *Narrative* as “a test case” to argue that scholars need to explore the racial implications of eighteenth-century pornographic representations of the black body. Wood closely reads the visual images of both

black female and black male bodies, exploring the broad-scale implications of the coercive sexuality of both. Similarly, Klarer argues that Stedman's use of erotic and pornographic imagery helped him reach and engage a male audience, and that the “paradoxical juxtaposition of arousal and rejection” helped Stedman encourage his readers' empathy for the subjects of his *Narrative* (559).¹³ Both scholars rely heavily on the visual images in Stedman's text, particularly on the famous scene regarding the “beautiful samboe” whose torture seems to appear in most every abridgment and excerpt of Stedman.

In close relation to the two previous scholarly conventions is the exploration of Stedman's interracial relationship with the enslaved Joanna. Each of the above scholars has discussed the importance of Stedman's depiction of her—romantically, sexually, or both. However, the following critics' arguments focus almost exclusively on that relationship. In *Neither Black nor White yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature*, Werner Sollors looks most especially at Lydia Maria Child's 1834 abridged and excerpted version of Stedman's *Narrative*—aptly titled, “Narrative of Joanna; An Emancipated Slave of Surinam”—in order to make larger claims about the subversion inherent in retelling or re-versioning a text, particularly one featuring miscegenation. Also tackling the issue of miscegenation, Susan B. Iwanisziw discusses the editorial censorship of Stedman's portrayal of his relationship with Joanna in his *Narrative*—in conjunction with two other contemporary texts—to demonstrate late eighteenth-century Britain's increasing discomfort with interracial marriage.

¹³ Though Wood's text antedates Klarer's by two years, Klarer does not discuss how his argument relates to Wood's, nor does he examine the black male body or the implications thereof.



*Flagellation of a Female Samboe Slave*¹⁴ (Stedman 265)

14 Captions for the images used in this paper are taken from Stedman's "Directions for the Plates" (21-24).

In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louise Pratt argues that Stedman's relationship with Joanna is an example of a form of neocolonialism wherein slave women's affections are the terrain to be conquered. In particular, Pratt shows that Stedman's sexual exploitation of Joanna is transformed from a colonialist endeavor into a romantic conquest. Relatedly, in *Ghosts of Slavery: A Literary Archaeology of Black Women's Lives*, Jenny Sharpe argues that while Stedman and Joanna's relationship could not be considered consensual because Joanna did not have the power to refuse his advances, she was able to use her sexual and romantic relationship with Stedman to vie for power and protection for herself and her family—that she was able to negotiate for slight amelioration through her sexuality. White, mentioned above, argues that Joanna refused to leave Surinam because she so greatly valued her family and her culture that she did not want to leave them behind. White's argument contrasts both Stedman's claim that Joanna stayed in Surinam because she refused to leave before he paid off her “mortgage” and Sharpe's claim that Joanna was never given an option to leave Surinam. White's argument that Joanna had agency to completely determine her own fate is interesting, but ultimately unsupported as it relies primarily on extratextual conjecture, rather than close reading or even contemporary analogical context.

“D——n matter of fact”

It is significant that Stedman's *Narrative* was written so long after his return from Surinam. As Price and Price explain, the *Narrative* “should be read in

part as Stedman's retrospective and somewhat idealized vision of his youth in Suriame, written from the perspective of a significantly changed personal situation" (XXXVI). Not only had Stedman aged 13 years since he left Surinam—from being at the prime age of 32 to to the post middle aged 55—he had also moved from roving and carefree bachelorhood to settled domestic life. Perhaps intending to give us a framework for understanding his post-hoc romanticizations of his time in Surinam, Stedman inscribes his title page with a Latin epigraph by Flaccus, which he then translates for his readers. The epigraph ends with,

but when the Heroic band
Returns triumphant to their native Land,
A Life domestic you will then deplore,
And sigh whilst I describe the various Shore

Though on the surface this epigraph speaks of the power of travel narratives to make readers desire to be adventuring along with their narrators, it might also hint at Stedman's own psychological state in 1790. Perusal of Stedman's journal for 1789 confirms his frustration with his "domestic" existence, saying, "between wives and children—nurses and maids—dogs and cats—mice and rats rats and mice—fleas and lice, I am plagued out of my senses" (qtd. in Price XXX).

Though it is impossible to tell whether the alterations between the journal and the manuscript stem from Stedman's regret of the life he left behind or merely from his affected narrative persona, it seems clear that Stedman is aware of and self-conscious about at least one contradiction between the texts: the nature of his relationship with Joanna.

In the preface to his *Narrative*, Stedman acknowledges the shortcomings of his work and predicts readers' responses. In the preface quoted earlier,

Stedman writes, “I am going to be told...that the History of Joana deserves no place at all in this Narrative—Guilty—Still besides all which I may be perhaps mistaken in a few of the Dates &c. &c.—” (7). No contemporary critics seemed aware of any “mistaken...Dates,” nor would they likely have had means to verify the accuracy of his claims. However, Stedman's placement of that particular item right next to his declaration that “Joanna deserves no place at all in [the] Narrative” seems more than coincidental. The two items are also adjacent in Stedman's “defence” of his writing. Directly after lauding Joanna and explaining his “debt” to her, Stedman writes, “while as to an Oversight in the dates it Can matter but little if she makes her first appearance on a Friday or if I first landed in Guiana upon a Monday” (8). Again, Joanna is placed right alongside an explanation of an “Oversight in the dates.”

While it is possible that Stedman juxtaposed these two seemingly unrelated flaws in his *Narrative* coincidentally, there is reason to at least take note of his paralleling. Stedman initially appears to simply be awkwardly lumping together two very dissimilar things. However, the most blatant change in chronology is surrounding Joanna. Near the end of his *Narrative*, in a section dated August 7, 1783, Stedman writes, *Alas—Joana is no more*” (623), and explains that she was poisoned. He then informs readers that his son, Johnny, came to live with him, at which point he sought a suitable wife and married, “a young Lady...of a very Respectable Family” to help care for the boy (625). However, as Price and Price use Stedman's journal to point out, Stedman was actually married a year and a half earlier, in February 1782. Of this contradiction,

Price and Price conclude that Stedman “seems to have decided well before [Joanna's] death to keep her as simply a precious memory and not to seek to bring her to Europe” (LXXXVII). It is possible that Stedman married Adriana Wintz van Coehorn, a Dutch noblewoman, out of financial necessity. It is also possible, however, and likely probable, that Stedman never intended to marry Joanna or to bring her to Europe, but instead hyperbolized the virtue of their relationship in order to demonstrate his genuine love for people of African descent. Further, it is possible that Stedman, bored silly with his “Life domestic,” came to “deplore” it, and romanticized his relationship with Joanna as a way of reclaiming the long past relationship.

Regardless of his reasons for altering the dates, it seems unlikely that this was mere “Oversight,” as Stedman claims. Knowing that he intentionally changed the details of this one element of his life helps pave the way to a discussion of Stedman's craft. Instead of looking at Stedman's *Narrative* as the genuine, or mostly genuine, experiences of a simple and naïve man, we can look at him as an author creating a literary work—intentionally highlighting some experiences and deemphasizing or omitting others, re-imagining as well as recreating the events in his life—all to a purpose. Thus, our task now becomes to look at Stedman's work as itself worthy of literary attention, to uncover its mechanisms and inner workings in the same way that we would a Shakespeare play or a Blake poem, to explore Stedman's *Narrative* for the sake of exploring Stedman's *Narrative*. Though this complex work is rich and capable of being interpreted in numerous ways, it is useful to begin by looking at Stedman's

presentation of a conflicted narrative persona.

In order to begin reading Stedman's *Narrative* in light of its literary value I suggest the following approach. To begin with, I will dispose of the tradition of comparing Stedman's *Narrative* to his *Journal* for the mere sake of addressing his fidelity—either to Joanna or to “true” history. Rather, I will assume that while characters and events may have genuine historical counterparts—real people and situations upon which they are based—Stedman was himself in control of his depictions of them. Therefore, any references to Stedman's *Journal* will tend toward uncovering his creation—rather than merely dictation—of a world in Surinam. To that end, it is necessary to parse out Stedman-as-author from Stedman-as-narrator. Just as most modern literary scholars would distinguish between Jonathan Swift and Lemuel Gulliver, I will attempt to distinguish between Stedman and his created narrative persona. When I am referring to the author, the man who lived and breathed, I will use Stedman and when I am referring to the narrator of his text, I will use Jack.¹⁵ Stedman's *Journal* is more difficult to characterize. However, Stedman's lack of elaboration in the *Journal*, coupled with his (above-discussed) declaration that it was “unintelligible” to anyone other than himself suggests that this text can rather safely be attributed

15 The choice of any name for the narrator of Stedman's text is a tricky one, not the least because Stedman does not name himself in his *Narrative*. Contemporary third party texts written about Stedman tend to refer to him as either John Gabriel Stedman or J.G. Stedman, suggesting that even they did not venture to drop his middle name and audaciously refer to him as John. This makes sense because Stedman's uncle, with whom Stedman lived for a brief period of time, was named John. In an autobiography that Stedman wrote as an adult, he writes of his uncle, “I'll be hanged if I liked him at all” (*Journal* 11). Thus, it seems unlikely that Stedman would have chosen that appellation. In the aforementioned autobiography, Stedman refers to himself as both “Johnny” and “Jack.” Since the former is both less frequently used and is the name of Stedman and Joanna's son, Jack seems preferable. Furthermore, David Richards establishes a precedent for this nomenclature in *Masks of Difference*, though he refers to this persona as simply the younger Stedman, noted prankster and womanizer. Notably, Richards suggests that this character is the true Stedman, opposed to the “falsified and untrue” narrator (92).

to Stedman, rather than to Jack. All the other characters of Stedman's literary text will be referred to by their character names and distinguished from their namesakes—the real people with whom Stedman interacted and whose actions and interactions pepper his *Journal*—by the modifier: “historical.” While it may seem at times that distinguishing between Stedman and Jack is arbitrarily and unnecessarily splitting hairs, it is necessary that we recognize Stedman's agency in creating his *Narrative*, even if the exploration begins awkwardly and forcibly.

Whether intentionally or not, Stedman often presents Jack as conflicted. Wood argues that “Stedman is seeking to reconcile the irreconcilable, the world of macho, mercenary and military violence, which he represents as Captain John Stedman in the early 1770s, and the world of hyper-sensitized empathy that he embodies as John Stedman, author and man of feeling in 1790” (137). I agree with Wood's observation that soldier Stedman of the 1770s is not the same as the author Stedman of the 1790s; however, I would argue that these distinctions are not only temporal, but also literary. While it may be the case that both Stedman and his character/narrator, Jack, were conflicted about Surinam, we now only really have access to the creation, not the creator. We have no means of truly knowing whether Stedman's “man of feeling” narrator is a reproduction of his own mentality in the 1770s or whether it is a literary affectation intended to bolster his image or even his book's sales.

Though we cannot know Stedman's thoughts or motivations in either the 1770s or the 1790s, we can attempt to make sense of Jack's frequently conflicted mental state. Specifically, much of his confliction can be seen as vacillation

between two competing values—that of mercy and that of his own mercenary endeavors. As he appraises the worth of the people around him, Jack strives to quantify the value of compassion—to determine the economic and humanitarian repercussions of slavery. By uncovering Stedman's estimation both of slaves and non-slaves alike, I intend to uncover his attempts to rank and order the world, to “reconcile the irreconcilable.”

In this exploration, Chapter 1, “The Estimable Joanna,” begins with by far the most commonly critically explored element of Stedman's *Narrative*: the relationship between Jack and Joanna. By looking at the way that Stedman frames Joanna's worth to both Jack and the rest of her society, I uncover the economic structure which underlies and underscores Jack and Joanna's relationship.

Using the framework of economics set up in Chapter 1, Chapter 2, “The Price of Sugar & Coffee” follows Jack through his journey to make sense of the value of slaves—first on the level of individual body parts, then on the level of the individual, and finally as a whole community. Ultimately, each new perspective requires Jack to resituate himself and reassess his values.

Finally, Chapter 3 three focuses on Jack's attempt to explore his own relationship to slavery through paralleling slavery with soldiery. When what starts as a thought-exercise runs away with him, Jack melds and even inverts the economic distinctions between the two groups before ultimately creating an economy of sympathy that allows him to hide his own economic exploitations of others.

Ultimately, this study seeks to explore the multivalent relationship between slavery and economics and to attempt to recapture cognitive dilemmas eighteenth century thinkers faced when trying to comprehend slavery. Because Stedman's is not the learned and polished voice we are accustomed to reading and because his *Narrative* is rife with confusion, his work perhaps best represents the middling British response to African chattel slavery. For the British citizenry to fully comprehend the mechanisms of slavery would not only require that they recognize their own complicity in the suffering and deaths of millions of people, it would also require that they see the gilded chains that bind them.

CHAPTER 1: THE ESTIMABLE JOANNA

As suggested in the introduction, Stedman seems most conscious of his role as author—as creator—when he is detailing his relationship with Joanna. In our quest to take Stedman seriously, therefore, it seems most logical to begin where both Stedman and modern literary scholars begin—with his formation and transformation of Joanna and of their relationship. Throughout his *Narrative*, Jack refers to his lover as “the inestimable Joanna,” suggesting that her worth is not just un-calculated, but further incapable of being calculated. However, Jack’s portrayal of her as a commodity and his consistent narrative focus on his attempts to purchase her show that she is, ultimately, estimable—not only in the sense of being worthy of esteem, but also in the sense of being capable of being appraised.¹⁶

Using the conventions of the romance genre, Stedman focuses much of his *Narrative* on the love story between Jack and Joanna. He introduces his heroine by describing her overwhelming beauty, and Jack’s instantaneous adoration of her. As he continues characterizing Joanna, Stedman’s depiction of her tends more toward the sentimental genre; specifically, her tragic history and Jack’s inability to fully commit to her are carefully calculated to evoke sympathy for his heroine. However, Stedman transforms these genres by constantly alluding to Joanna’s economic value. The ease with which Jack assigns a price

¹⁶ Incidentally, the *OED*’s first two definitions of “estimable,” both of which relate directly to value, are now obsolete and both of which seem to have tapered off near the beginning of the nineteenth century.

to his love and his lover jars readers into discomfort with his appraisal of Joanna.

From our first introduction to “the beautifull Mulatto Maid Joanna” (87), Jack paves the way for a discussion of Joanna's economic value. Stedman writes that she is:

Rather more than middle Size—She was perfectly streight with the most elegant Shapes that can be view'd in nature moving her well-form'd Limbs as when a Goddess walk'd—Her face was full of Native Modesty and the most distinguished Sweetness—Her Eyes as black as *Ebony* were large and full of expression, bespeaking the Goodness of her heart. With Cheeks through which glow'd /in spite of her *olive* Complexion/ a beautiful tinge of *vermillion* when gazed upon—her nose was perfectly well formed rather small, her lips a little prominent which when she spoke discovered two regular rows of *pearls* as white as Mountain Snow—her hair was a dark brown—next to black, forming a beauteous Globe of small ringlets, ornamented with flowers and *Gold Spangles*—round her neck her Arms and her ancles she wore *Gold Chains*¹⁷ *rings and Medals*¹⁸—while a Shaul of finest *indian Muslin* the end of which was negligently thrown over her polished Shoulder gracefully covered part of her lovely bosom—a petticoat of *richest Chints* alone made out the rest bare headed and bare footed she shone with double lustre carrying in her delicate hand a bever hat the crown trim'd row[n]d with *Silver*—The figure and dress of this fine Creature could not but attract my particular notice, as she did indeed of all who beheld her... (87-88 my emphasis).

As emphasized in the passage, Stedman describes Joanna, both in her person and in her attire, in terms of expensive and exotic colonial goods. By paralleling Joanna with other commodities, Stedman is able to explore the implications of

17 In his discussion of Albert James Ukawsaw Gronniosaw's *A narrative of the most remarkable particulars in the life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, an African prince, written by himself*, Henry Louis Gates, Jr suggests that gold chains serve as a reminder not only of slavery, but also of Gronniosaw's African cultural heritage. That Joanna was allowed to retain her gold chains even while enslaved might, according to this figuration, suggest a cultural melding between her African and European heritages; through accepting and conforming to the demands of the latter, she might be able to maintain a link with the former.

18 It is possible that these medals are even Johannes, or, as Stedman writes, “Joannes,” Portuguese gold coins (236). While it genuinely seems to be purely coincidental that Joanna's name so closely resembles a form of currency, it is possibly a Freudian slip that the two names are conflated, the currency written to so closely resemble the character and the character occasionally written as the currency.



Figure 2: Female Mulatto Slave of Surinam [Joanna] (Stedman 83)

Joanna as a piece of property made available through imperialist and colonialist ventures. Like the other precious commodities—pearls, ebony, gold, etc—used to frame Jack's description of her, Joanna is only obtainable through the triangular trade—in particular her mother's African lineage. Furthermore, Stedman chose non-European *and* non-American objects like muslin and chintz for Joanna's attire. These objects—varied in origin, exotic, expensive, and obtained through European exploration and trade—seem to reflect attributes of Joanna herself. Thus, by surrounding Joanna with luxurious material objects from our first introduction to her, Stedman not only sets Joanna above her fellow slaves, he also begins his continual assessment of her price.¹⁹ However, Stedman's narrator allows for a multivalent appraisal of Joanna's worth.

Jack frames his exploration of Joanna as an inventory; as he systematically catalogues each individual feature of Joanna's body, Jack shows multiple ways of pricing Joanna. Jack first describes Joanna's size, shape, and elegance in order to consider her value only as a woman—void of racial characterization. By showing that Joanna is “much distinguished above all the rest of her Species,” in this case not only her race, but more importantly her gender, he can allow her to transcend her social and economic role (88). As a woman, her elegant and beautiful form—particularly when coupled with her “modesty” and thus virtue—give her domestic and conjugal value. Eighteenth-

19 Stedman draws readers' attention to these fine items by having Mrs. Demelly explain to Jack that “the Gold Medals &c which may seem to Surprize you are the Gifts which her faithful Mother...received from her father” (88). In a discussion of Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, written by himself*, Houston A. Baker explains Equiano's drive to make money as a realization that, “only the acquisition of property will enable him to alter his designated status as *property*” (35). As such, Stedman's presentation of Joanna as a woman who *owns* anything, let alone such valuable items, might be intended to help readers question her position as property.

century sentimental and romantic literary precedent suggests that beauty and virtue can allow even the poorest European women to transcend their economic conditions.²⁰ By beginning his description of Joanna by highlighting these features, Stedman forces readers to consider her as an eligible bachelorette whose honor will augment her value.

As Jack's description continues, however, he gradually reminds readers of her non-European status. Jack begins coloring his depiction of Joanna first by telling readers that her modesty is “native,” suggesting that it is natural, but also allowing for the possibility of her being an indigenous American. He keeps up the illusion as the description continues, describing her skin as “olive” rather than brown and her nose as “rather small” instead of wide or flat. Furthermore, while he allows Joanna's lips to be “a little prominent,” he then describes her hair as being in “ringlets” rather than wooly. Tassie Gwilliam notes that Stedman's Europeanized description of Joanna, “hovers uncertainly between exoticizing eroticism and insistence on European qualities” (657). By exoticizing and carefully eroticizing Joanna, Stedman at once creates a lover for his narrator who can add the intrigue of being distinctly different from his readers—thus increasing the allure and marketability of his text—without being physically outside the spectrum of European standards of beauty.

Much later in his *Narrative*, however, Stedman gives readers a means of converting the value of African women's beauty into a Europeanized economic system. Jack voices a preference for natural and unadorned beauty, criticizing

20 Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and Francis Burney's *Evelina* are two examples of heroines whose beauty and virtue allow them to marry considerably beyond their inherent socioeconomic status.

European undergarments which artificially “hide” the wearer's “Defects” (369). Instead, Jack says, he values “the Strength, liveliness & Agility Anex'd to a Natural State” (369). Not only does Jack express an aesthetic preference for women of color, he attempts to counter Eurocentric beauty standards, saying,

even in the Black Women theyr Sparkling Eyes,—Ivory Teeth, and remarkable Cleanliness All over, fully Compensates for the Silk Ribbons, Gold lace, and Borrow'd Feathers that Grace the to[o] many Languid Looks, Sallow Complexions, deform'd Bodies, and Broken Constitutions, of our European Contriwomen (368-69).

Here Jack creates a set of aesthetic values that controversially superordinates African women above even European women.²¹ By framing Jack's preference for a “Natural State” of unadorned²² and non-European aesthetics in this way, Stedman is also able to construct a pecuniary code for understanding the trade value of African women's—and thus Joanna's—physical features. Though he does not assign a specific price in pounds and shillings to Joanna's features, by comparing her features to luxury items whose price contemporary readers are presumably familiar with, Stedman gives readers—and himself—a means of assessing the worth of Joanna's body within a mercantile system.

As scholars have noted, Stedman had a blatantly economic relationship with the historical Joanna. Both anthropological scholarship on Surinam in general and Stedman's *Journal* suggest that the couple's seeming love affair at least began within a formalized system of concubinage known as Surinam

21 Jack's set of values is so controversial, in fact, that Thomson transforms the long discussion of the beautiful slaves that prompted the reflection into the pithy—and dramatically different—claim that the slaves, “whose beautiful shapes, liveliness, strenght, and activity, were inferior to no Europeans” (255). While Thomson notably does not force the African women into aesthetic subordination, he does refuse to grant them superiority.

22 And, in this passage, notably unclad.

marriage. As Pratt explains and other scholars—in addition to the *Journal*—confirm, the historical Joanna “was acquired from her family, after some negotiating about the price, and became one of many sexual partners Stedman disposed of in Surinam” (96). While Stedman's *Journal* entries regarding his negotiations for Joanna and his sexual exploitation of other slave women are interesting and worthy of consideration, they are outside the parameters of this discussion of Stedman's literature.²³ However, as Pratt aptly notes, “Traces of this arrangement remain in the romanticized version of Surinam” (96).

Specifically, Jack explains Surinam marriage to readers.

The mere presence of such a lengthy discussion of the inner workings of Surinam marriage within the *Narrative* might suggest that Stedman intended for his readers to recognize Jack and Joanna's marriage as being within that system.

Jack explains that Surinam marriage is:

as common as it is almost necessary to the batchelors who live in this Climate; these Gentlemen all without Exception have a female Slave /mostly a creole/ in their keeping who preserves their linnens clean and decent, dresses their Victuals with Skill, carefully attends them/ they being most excellent nurses/during the frequent illnesses to which Europeans are exposed in this Country, prevents them from keeping late Hours knits for them, sows for them &c— while these Girls who are sometimes Indians sometime Mulattos and often negroes, naturally pride themselves in living with an European whom they serve with as much tenderness, and to whom they are Generally as faithfull as if he were their lawfull Husband...nor can the above young women be married in any other way, being by their state of Servitude entirely debard from every Christian priviledge and Ceremony, which makes it perfectly lawfull on *their Side* (47-48).

By emphasizing “their,” Stedman seems to be freeing Joanna of any accusations

²³ Fortunately for the curious reader, the fidelity of the accounts has been discussed by Price and Price, Richards, and Pratt as well as explored in depth by Sharpe.

of wrongdoing—even at the expense of pointing a finger at his own narrative persona. However, Stedman implores readers to not hold the illegitimacy of Jack's marriage to Joanna against him either because her “Servitude,” or more accurately her slavery, prevents anything more “Christian” than a Surinam marriage. Rather, Stedman renders both Joanna and Jack powerless to sanction their union in any other manner. By constructing Jack and Joanna's relationship in this way, Stedman not only allows his narrator to escape censure, he also allows Jack an opportunity to demonstrate his transcendent love for Joanna by expressing his desire to “make [her] even [his] lawfull Wife *in Europe*” (98).

Beyond simply redeeming or bolstering the hero of his *Narrative*, however, Stedman's introduction of Surinam marriage also explicates the system's reliance on bartering. Though Stedman is careful to omit any reference to Surinam marriage as a monetary transaction, he does allow for its mercantilism; in this case, services are the goods being traded. While this introduction to Surinam marriage is decidedly unbalanced—with the women providing considerable services and only receiving “pride” in exchange—Stedman attempts to tip the scales in the other direction later in the *Narrative* by having Jack offer Joanna crucial services.

To demonstrate their exchange, Stedman carefully shows Jack protecting Joanna from sexual assault. At one point early in his *Narrative*, Jack tells readers that it was rumored he was dead. Soon thereafter, Jack is told in confidence that one of his subordinates has attacked Joanna. Jack explains,

my Serjeant one fowler had /having first got drunk with my wine/
offered violence to this virtuous woman... Heaven and Earth, I

Swore immediate destruction to the villain, and having ordered a Negro to Cut 12 bamboo Canes, I [swore] to assassinate him, inch by inch (158).

By placing this incident in such close proximity to Jack's presumed death, Stedman is able to suggest that Joanna was only endangered because it was rumored that Jack was dead—and thus she had no protector. Though Jack was not present to prevent Joanna's attack, he was at least able to avenge it. Confronting Fowler, Jack says that he, “broke Six of the bamboes over [Fowler's] head, till he escaped all bloody out at the Window” (158). This incident demonstrates the vicarious power that Joanna receives as a result of her relationship with Jack: her violation is avenged in a way that it could not be had she been married to a fellow slave.²⁴ As Sharpe demonstrates, concubines like Joanna were able to “exact favors” of this sort from their European partners in exchange for their sexual and domestic services (59).²⁵

It is noteworthy that the incident with Fowler is almost completely absent from Stedman's *Journal*. The only mention of anything directly related to this incident is the short phrase “knock down my sergeant” (134) among other passages and without explanation. While it is, of course, possible that the incident happened and simply was not recorded, it is also possible that Stedman transformed a disagreement with Fowler into an assault on Joanna in order to demonstrate Jack's value to her. Beyond merely helping show the reciprocal exchange of services within their marriage, however, this incident also highlights

24 While Jack beats Fowler for attacking Joanna, a slave can have his hand amputated “for...dar[ing] to lift it against any of the Europeans” (246). Murder and/or execution are of course other possibilities for an insubordinate slave, especially one who threatens Europeans.

25 Sharpe further explains that “The [concubine's] entire family benefitted from such marriages in the form of money, gifts, and prestige” (59).

what is at stake for Joanna without Jack's protection.²⁶ According to Sharpe, events like this one demonstrate that Stedman (in this case Jack) constantly “needed to police” the space around Joanna in order to protect her from abuse (70). Had Jack really died, Joanna would have remained in slavery and have been subject to threats of “violence,” in spite of his desires or promises to the contrary, demonstrating the ephemerality of Joanna's currency. Like many enslaved women—her own mother not excepted—Joanna could have been left with neither freedom nor protection, showing that slavery offers no guarantees.²⁷ The irony of the incident, however, is that Jack's revenge is neither required nor justified. When Jack visits Joanna, she explains that he was mistaken about Fowler, who, Jack explains, “never had attempted the smallest rudeness, so far the reverse that his enibriation had proceeded from his Sorrow, at seeing both me and Joana so ill treated” (163). By showing a threat of rape, but not an actual rape, Stedman is able to show Jack's protection of Joanna while still allowing her to remain faithful and pure.

Stedman's language surrounding the attack is worth exploration. Perhaps unintentionally, Stedman parallels the violation of Joanna with that of Jack's other property—namely his wine. This is evidenced not only by Jack's indignation that

26 *Joanna of Surinam*, a fascinating contemporary play adaptation of Stedman's *Narrative*, really emphasizes the danger Joanna faces. In the play, both Colonel Fourgeoud and Baron (one of the rebel leaders) are enamored with Joanna, and frustrated by her rejection of them in preference of Stedman. Baron attempts to physically carry her off. Stedman heroically rescues her and arrests Baron and his men. Fourgeoud, on the other hand, uses his power and political sway to prevent Stedman from buying her and to eventually have Stedman arrested and Joanna enchained. Baron escapes and again attempts to kidnap her, but this time is successful. While Stedman saves her in the end—from both “Negro barbarism” and “Batavian avarice”—the play calls attention to Joanna's powerlessness as a slave and a woman.

27 Joanna's vulnerability without Jack's protection is perhaps best demonstrated by Stedman's account of Joanna's death five years after his departure. Jack tells readers that Joanna died from the effects of “poison, administred by the hand of Jealousy & Envy” (624).

the sergeant had “first got drunk on my wine,” but also by the absence of any reference to contacting or inquiring after Joanna for almost an entire week after first hearing of the incident. Upon hearing that his wife is raped or almost raped, it seems reasonable that Jack would demonstrate at least the slightest concern for Joanna's wellbeing. However, at this moment, Joanna's role as chattel is evident and Jack's outrage seems in part to revolve around property damage. When it turns out that Fowler did not assault Joanna, the “enibriation” on Jack's wine appears to be excused and the two men become “friend[s] for ever after” (139), suggesting at least that Jack values Joanna more than the wine.

Though the *Narrative* is laced with references to Joanna's value—both economic and otherwise—there are perhaps none more striking or worthy of discussion than those surrounding her purchase. Seven months after claiming a willingness “to Purchase to Educate & to make even [his] lawfull Wife in Europe, the individual Mulatto Maid Joanna” (98) and after “the valuable Mulatto Slave Joanna” (100) agrees to marry him, her master's estate is sold to pay for his debts. Stedman sets the scene by saying that the “inestimable Joana,” ironically about to literally have her value estimated, was among the slaves to be sold (175). Jack says,

I now felt all the Horrors of the Damn'd bewailing my unlucky fortune that did not enable me to become her Proprietor my self and figuring in my Mind her ensuing dreadfull Situation—Me thought I saw her, mangled, ravished, ridiculed, and bowing under the weight of her Chains calling aloud for my assistance (176).²⁸

28 Sharpe says that this passage “is the only moment in Stedman's *Narrative* that the reality of Joanna's enslaved condition is presented as holding the potential for her being physically, sexually, and verbally abused” (81). However, as I demonstrate above, it is one of at least two such moments.

Stedman's choice of the word "Proprietor"—notably not her "liberator" or her "emancipator"—highlights the financial relationship between Joanna and Jack. Furthermore, Stedman's use of the word "Chains" recalls his initial description of Joanna—adorned with gold chains. This suggests that she is bound not only by her slavery, but also by Jack's poverty—namely his inability to afford her.

Stedman uses Jack's poverty in order to forge a link between Joanna's price and Jack's emotional state. More specifically, Jack appropriates Joanna's suffering. Because he is not able to purchase her, to redeem her from slavery and to "become her Proprietor," Jack is "miserable" to the point of being "truly wretched" (176). Here Jack collects sympathy for his lover, but ultimately transfers it onto himself. The passage turns one more time, however, as Jack continues by saying that he was "labouring under such Emotions as had now nearly deprived [him] of all [his] faculties" (176). Thus, while he just imagined Joanna being overworked and "bowing under the weight of her chains," it is he, Jack, who labors and these labors are not physical, but rather emotional.

The most extreme irony of this passage, however, is that it falls within the same chapter as Jack's detailing of the "Negroes going to be sold" (162). The description of the slaves freshly arrived from Africa is horrific. Jack says that they were "a set of living automatons" and "a resurrection of Skin and bones" the likes "of which no better discription can be given than by comparing them to walking Skeletons covered over with a piece of tand leather" (166).²⁹ Without disputing the historical accuracy of the abominable conditions of those just landed from the Middle Passage, it seems relevant that this account of the newly

²⁹ For a further exploration of the economics of these and other slaves, see Chapter 2.

arrived slaves so drastically contrasts that of Joanna. Where she is “full of expression,” they are “automatons;” where she has “the most elegant shapes,” seemingly meaning curves, they are “skeletons;” where she has an “olive Complexion [with] a beautiful tinge of vermillion,” their skin resembles “tand leather.” All these parallels highlight the contrast between Joanna and her peers and further set Joanna “above the rest of her Species.” By underscoring Joanna’s superiority over her fellow slaves, Stedman is able to augment her value accordingly.

The juxtaposition of Joanna with the newly arrived slaves is particularly notable because of the contrast between Jack’s account and the accompanying illustration, “Group of Negros, as imported to be sold for Slaves.” Though it is, at this point, impossible to tell whether it was Stedman or Blake who transformed the slaves for the visual depiction, they are, nonetheless far from the “skeletons” Jack describes them as. Rather, their bodies are barely covered, but their bodies are curvaceous and they appear healthy. Some are wearing beaded necklaces and other adornments and one woman is even smoking a pipe. Although none of them seems particularly ecstatic, they certainly do not look to be “automatons.” Since history suggests that Jack’s description of the slaves is accurate, it is unlikely that Stedman exaggerated the severity of slaves’ conditions upon arriving in Surinam. Rather, the image could be altered to support Jack’s claims that the slave trade is not wholly bad in theory. Moreover, it is possible that Stedman calculated reader responses to graphic images of emaciated people

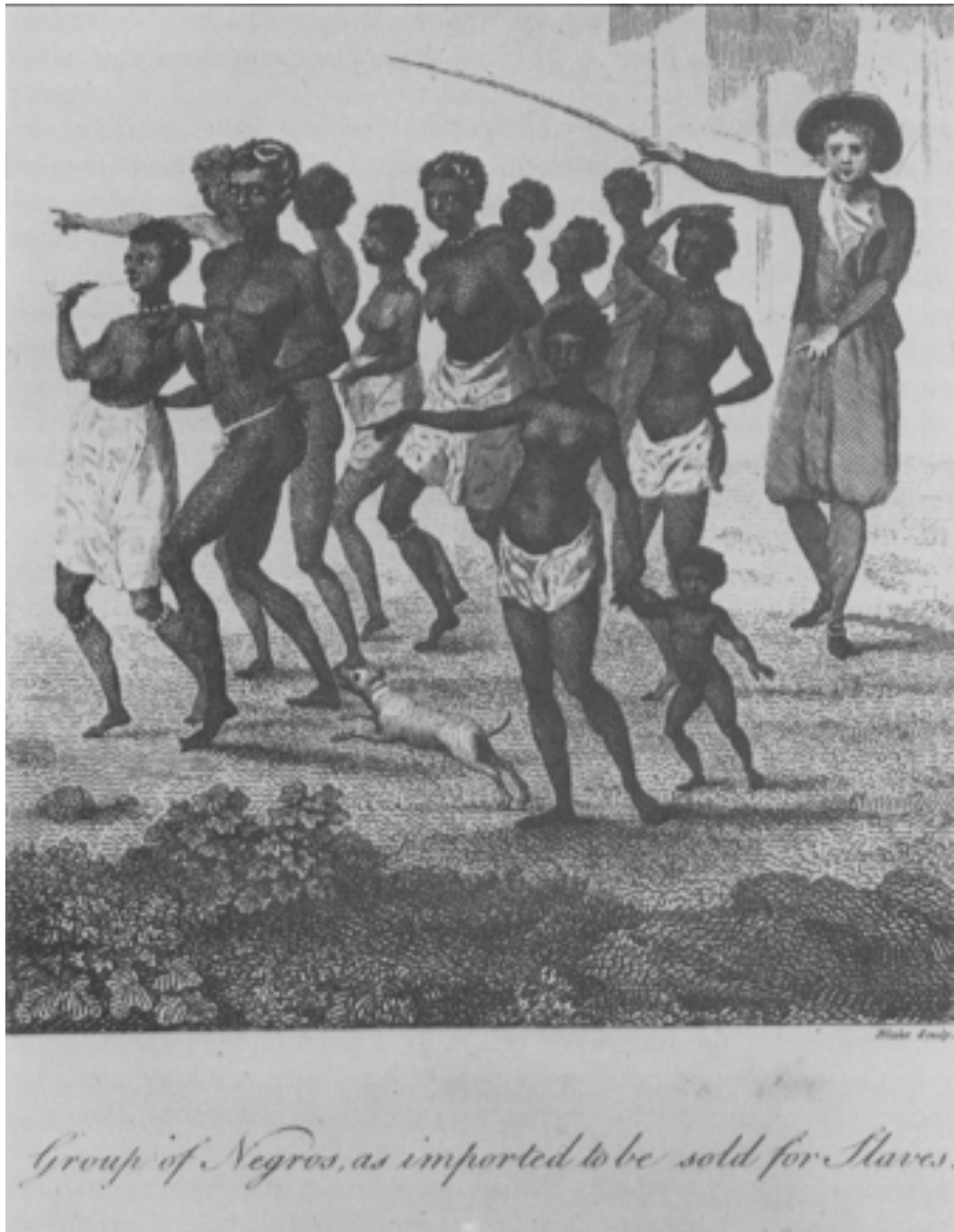


Figure 3: Group of Negroes as Imported to be Sold for Slaves (Stedman 167)

and chose instead to make his image more appropriate for his middle-of-the-road audience.³⁰

While Stedman later discusses the ways that sea captains cosmetically alter slaves in order to make them more aesthetically pleasing—and thus more marketable—he is unable to account for several of the discrepancies between his description and his illustration. Stedman does explain that prior to their sale, the slaves are cleaned up, “decorated with Pieces of Cotton to serve as fig leafs, arm bands beads &c being all the Captains Property” (174). This explains the presence of the clothing and beads. However, it leaves the pipe, and most especially their body shapes and expressions, unaccounted for. In fact, Stedman's explanation that the clothing and beads—already more plain than Joanna's garb and adornments—are borrowed from the captain, further bolsters Joanna's value as she is presented as actually owning her clothing and jewelry.

Like the newly-imported female slaves that are to be sold on the auction block, however, Joanna's value is “Augmented accordingly” when she is found to be pregnant (175). While Jack expresses a desire to “become [Joanna's] Proprietor” from almost the first moment that he sees her, he seems only to be desperate for her redemption when she becomes pregnant with his child. Jack describes his “dejected Spirits” upon learning of the death of Joanna's absentee master—with whom he says he had begun negotiations for her purchase—meaning both that Joanna will be sold and that he will have to begin his negotiations anew. Like elsewhere, Jack monopolizes the sympathy of Joanna's

³⁰ This possibility, of course, requires that we consider the economics of Stedman's authorship, an avenue very worthy of consideration, though not really explored in this study.

impending sale, saying that her pregnancy “redouble[s his] distress” (276). Jack reflects on his dismay, saying, “Heavens, not only my *friend*, but my *Offspring* to be a Slave, and a Slave under *such* Government” (276). That Joanna—here his “friend,” but elsewhere his wife—is a slave frustrates and distresses Jack. However, when the slave is his family—here not only a genetic, but also a nominal representation of Jack—his empathy spurs him into action. Not only does Joanna's pregnancy increase her sentimental value to Jack—helping ensure his desire to purchase and/or liberate her—it also inflates her price. While Jack is able to claim that slavery is preferable for most Africans, his indignation with the system increases with his proximity to the slaves.

Throughout the *Narrative*, “the valuable Joanna” becomes increasingly more valuable to Jack before finally becoming completely estimable. In July of 1775, Jack tells us of a letter that he received that informs him that he will be allowed to purchase Joanna and Johnny. He says,

the Amiable Joana and her Little Boy Were at my Disposal But at no Less a Price than 2,000 Florins,³¹ Amounting With Other Expences to near £200, a Soom Which I Was no more Able to pay than to fly, And While I Already Owed the £50 that I had Borrowed for the Black boy Qwacco's Redemption³²—indeed She Joanna was a Charming young Woman, And though Apprized at one Twentieth Share of the Whole Estate, Which had been Sold for 40000 Florins, no Price Could be too Dear for one that Was so Valuable to me (376).

Even as he claims a willingness to purchase Joanna regardless of the price, Jack

31 It seems relevant to observe that Stedman lumps Joanna and Johnny's prices together—not even suggesting the possibility that the two could be purchased separately. Rather, this seems to allow Stedman to demonstrate Jack's regard for Joanna in that he does not even inquire about manumitting only his son. It also, however, seems to show Stedman refusing to challenge the doctrine that the fate of the child follows that of the mother.

32 See Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of this transaction.

seems unable to avoid telling us how much she will cost.³³ Furthermore, Jack seems to take issue with their assigned price—near £200. This price, however, is not completely outside of the range that Jack previously explains is typical for “good Negroes” (175). Rather, Jack informs us that the going rate for these “good Negroes” is “from 50 to 100 Pound each” (175). Given that he is purchasing both Joanna and Johnny, £200 is at the high end of the scale, but is within the parameters of their previously figured market value. For a moment, Jack even seems to question whether Joanna is worth the sum by reducing her to “a Charming young Woman”—notably distinct from the normally glowing terms with which he describes his lover. However, even within the same sentence, Jack seems to recall all of his “debt” to her and concludes by saying how “Valuable” she is to him—not dear, not important, not significant, but valuable.³⁴ Indeed, Joanna is so “Valuable” to him that in spite of his previously detailed—and colorfully described—inability to afford the astronomical figure, Jack says that he would save enough “Out of [his] pay” to redeem Joanna “if [he] Should exist till then on Bread and Salt And Nothing Else” (384-85). By showing Jack's

33 Jack's indignation about Joanna's price, coupled with his reference to his current debt from purchasing Quaco, calls to mind Venture Smith's *A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, a Native of Africa, but Resident above Sixty Years in the United States of America, Related by Himself* wherein he famously—or perhaps infamously—details the economic value of his wife and children as he purchases them. For example, when Smith's son dies while on a whaling expedition, the event is narrated as, “My son died of the scurvy in this voyage, and [his son's former boss] has never yet paid me the least of his wages. In my son, besides the loss of his life, I lost equal to seventy-five pounds” (382). While this is one of the more extreme and jarring financial assessments in his *Narrative*, it exemplifies Smith's conflation of sentimental attachment and monetary value. Compare also Jack's later melding of his frustrations about not being able to emancipate Johnny and about money he had expended in the effort. Jack says, “Thus had I after Spending so much time & Labour, besides the Expense of above a Hundred Guineas Already Pay'd, Still the Heartfelt mortification to See this dear little Fellow, of whom I was both the Father And the master Exposed to Perhaps Eternal Servitude” (551). In “Free Carpenter, Venture Capitalist: Reading the Lives of the Early Black Atlantic,” critic Phillip Gould calls this phenomenon as “the cultural paradox [which blurs] the ontological boundaries of property and humanity” (677).

34 Jack presents himself as indebted to Joanna because she sends him fruit when he is ill. As Mary Louis Pratt notes, the gesture of sending fruit to Jack, “indebts him to her for life, making his *debt* to her the basis for his *claim* upon her” (97).

willingness to save money specifically from his “pay,” the fruit of his own labor, Stedman is able to again reiterate the exchange between Jack's labor and Joanna's. Furthermore, by detailing the extremity of Jack's willingness to live frugally—even to the point of malnutrition—Stedman demonstrates Jack's regard for Joanna; he will exchange his health and possibly even his life for her freedom.

Conveniently, however, Jack does not need to implement this “Penurious Resolution” because, he says, “Heaven interceded...by Sending that Angelick Woman Mrs. Godefroy to my Assistance” (385). Thus, not only is Jack saved from possible malnutrition, he is even saved from having to live frugally. However, Stedman's choice of the word “penurious” to describe his plan seems ironic, given his description in the *Journal* of the bargain with the historical Mrs. Godefroy that he transforms into his literary account. In the *Journal*, Stedman says he asks Mrs. Godefroy on two separate occasions to “be caution for Joanna and Jack's liberties,” but she refuses, much to his chagrin (180, 181). He even writes that her refusal of the first request “makes [him] mad” (180). When she refuses him a second time, however, Stedman writes in a style similar to that of the *Narrative* when he says, “I speak with Mrs. Godefroy who absolutely refuses to be caution for Joanna and Jack's liberties, so find myself worse as ever” (181). Not unlike Jack's appropriation of Joanna's suffering when she is to be sold, Stedman seems to consider himself as the person most greatly affected by historical Joanna and Johnny's enslavement.³⁵

35 Stedman's worry is likely compounded by the fact that, unlike in the *Narrative*, where he works to secure Joanna's freedom a little over halfway through his time in Surinam (July 1775), the *Journal* places all of

After what appears to be almost an entire month of negotiations, however, Mrs. Godefrooy and Stedman come to an agreement. Stedman writes,

This day I visit Mrs. Godefrooy with whom I strike a bargain, infinitely more to my advantage, than that of Joanna, as she had been the caution, viz: I let Joanna to herself so long as she lives, but then she is to have her liberty at Mrs. Godefrooy's entire expense, whose capital is her caution (183-84).

This account demonstrates Mrs. Godefrooy's demand for financial reassurance—collateral—before being willing to purchase Joanna. Furthermore, as Sharpe points out, Stedman's request for Mrs. Godefrooy to “post a bond for both his slave wife and son (and not just Johnny, as he reports in his Narrative)... suggests that he had the purchase price for both of them” (75). If it is true that Stedman had the money for his family in hand, that certainly explains, though grimly, the passage that follows in the *Journal*. Stedman says, “I profit 900 florins, and the buying of a yard and house” (184). Far from being her liberator, this account places Stedman as historical Joanna's trader (traitor?). Even within the *Journal*, however, Stedman seems conflicted and seems to feel the need to justify this action—to mediate his profiteering. He writes, “Joanna is with a mother not with a mistress, and free from all taxes and assizes, and sure of her liberty, with all the appendages at her lady's death, which were not in my power to give her. I also form a request to free Johnny” (184). Unable to allow himself to be painted as a profiteer, even in his own *Journal*, Stedman justifies his behavior by suggesting that Joanna will be better protected, particularly financially, by being a slave, particularly a slave essentially in name only. In spite of his

these transactions in August of 1776, just 8 months before he leaves the country for good. If securing Joanna and Jack's freedom was as important to him as he claims, he must have been feeling quite anxious as he saw the war dwindling with little prospect of redeeming his family from slavery.

justifications, however, Stedman's actions make him seem greedy and, unfortunately for him, there is nobody to save him from his “Penurious Resolution.”

In his transformation of this historical event into a literary one, however, Stedman is able to bring in Mrs. Godefrooy—in true and acknowledged *deus ex machina* style—to save Jack from miserly behavior. In the *Narrative*, Stedman has Mrs. Godefrooy generously offer to simply give Jack 2000 florins, or, he says, however much he needs, with no strings attached. The literary transformation of both the character of Mrs. Godefrooy and of the negotiations for and exchange of Joanna is noteworthy for several reasons, not the least of which being their irony. According to the *Narrative*, Mrs. Godefrooy gives Jack the money he needs and commands him to “go and redeem Innocence, good Sense, and Beauty, from the Jaws of Tiranny—insult, and Oppression” (385). This passage is ironic for a couple of reasons: first that we never see Joanna subject to any tyranny, particularly since Stedman works so hard at depicting Jack as her protector; second that Jack informs us that Mrs. Godefrooy is herself a large-scale planter who owns numerous slaves. Thus, Mrs. Godefrooy would have to consider slavery itself to be oppressive and insulting in principle—or at the very least for someone like Joanna—which seems incongruous with owning and exploiting so many slaves.

Stedman saves Mrs. Godefrooy from hypocrisy, however, because Joanna refuses the offer. Stedman's Joanna—constructed as extremely humble, moral, and selfless—stands in the way of her own freedom, expressing a desire

to be “Mortgaged to Mrs. Godefrooy till every Farthing Should be paid” (385). Literary Joanna, then, places financial obligations above even her own freedom—though notably not above Johnny's.³⁶ By creating a Joanna with this system of values, Stedman is able to rewrite the history of his relationship with Joanna in order to give his character a more heroic and honorable role. However, Stedman is also able to effect slightly less self-serving changes. For example, Stedman is able to grant literary Joanna an agency that historical Joanna appears not to have actually had.³⁷ While this may artificially bolster his valuation of her and make his treatment of historical Joanna more virtuous, it also gives literary Joanna a voice—albeit one resonant of “ventriloquism” (Sharpe 77)—that few contemporary women of color, especially enslaved ones, could boast of.³⁸

Furthermore, Stedman's transformation of Mrs. Godefrooy's role—from capitalist to humanitarian, from proprietor to liberator—can be seen as a gentle rebuke to the historical Mrs. Godefrooy. By crafting literary Mrs. Godefrooy's actions in such a way as to highlight her “Angelick” generosity, Stedman can show historical Mrs. Godefrooy—who, it is important to note, became a subscriber to his *Narrative* (669)—not only what actions she *could* have taken,

36 In transforming historical Joanna into her literary counterpart, Stedman gives her middle-class British values. Margaret Hunt explains that, “Middling people were obsessed with the problem of individuals who did not pay their debts, who failed to honor their contracts, or who lived beyond their means” (342).

37 Historical Joanna's relative lack of agency in this situation is perhaps best demonstrated by Stedman's *Journal* entry for the next day, in which he writes, “Joanna, her mother, and myself, go to Mrs. Godefrooy's. The two women declare their good will to let Joanna go over in Mrs. Godefrooy's hands, which makes the bargain infinitely more agreeable” (184). Thus, not only is it evident that it was not Joanna's idea to be “mortgaged” to Mrs. Godefrooy, Stedman's language suggests that her assent might have only been convenient—not necessary.

38 Perhaps the most obvious example of an enslaved woman of color did have a voice in a European society, however, is Phillis Wheatley, whom Jack praises. Coincidentally, Wheatley also appeared—particularly at first glance—to conform to the surrounding system of European hegemony.

but also what actions she *should* have taken. Rather, Stedman seems to suggest, historical Mrs. Godefroy should have wanted to help him “redeem Innocence, good Sense, and Beauty, from the Jaws of Tirany—insult, and Oppression” (385). Thus, Stedman ventriloquizes Mrs. Godefroy in addition to Joanna in order to critique her actions in ways that only she will understand, but also in order to plant the seeds of skepticism about the appropriateness of slavery for at least a subset of enslaved Africans.

Finally, through his literary creation and transformation of Joanna, Stedman is able to re-appraise historical Joanna's value. As he writes Jack's adventures, we can see Stedman trying to make sense of the incomprehensible world of eighteenth-century Surinam and of his own placement within that society. As the years passed, it seems that Stedman came to appreciate Joanna and that Joanna's value appreciated accordingly. After undervaluing historical Joanna's life and subsequently coming to “deplore” his own domestic situation without her, perhaps Stedman created in Jack a hero who was capable of recognizing Joanna's real value. Thus, even though literary Joanna's life is priced at almost £200, Jack is able to recognize that she is not only that “valuable,” and not only “estimable,” but also, ultimately, “inestimable.”

CHAPTER 2: THE PRICE OF SUGAR & COFFEE

Just as Jack uses multiple means to arrive at an assessment of Joanna's value, so too does he use varied approaches as he attempts to access the economic elements of slavery in general. In his exploration, Jack considers the economic and social worth of slaves on three different levels: first, he assesses the slave (and formerly enslaved) body in its various parts; second, he appraises the value of individual slaves; and third, he estimates the worth of slaves as a community and on a larger scale. Jack offers a price list for slaves—both in parts and as individuals—and tries to create a logical means for assessing slave worth. However, Jack's attempt to balance ethics and economics in a rational and consistent manner ultimately fails.

Discussing Stedman's romanticized portrayal of Joanna, Tassie Gwilliam argues that, “the competing demands of pathos and slavery fatally disrupt any hope Stedman might have of logic or consistency” (665). Gwilliam is referring specifically to Stedman's transformation of Joanna from slave to “sentimental heroine” (665). However, I would argue that “the competing demands of pathos [in this case a humanitarian approach to slavery] and slavery [in this case the financial demands of planters] disrupt any hope that [Jack] might have of logic or consistency.” In fact, I think it is possible to look at the inconsistencies in Jack's logical and ethical systems as Stedman's intentional means of demonstrating the cognitive dissonance inherent to slavery.

Before setting out on this exploration, it seems helpful to briefly outline Stedman's categories of men that are relevant to this chapter as well as to the next.³⁹ In particular, Stedman divides the white men in Surinam into two easily-distinguished groups:⁴⁰ planters (and overseers)⁴¹—who have resources and power—and soldiers—who are imported from Europe in order to protect the planters. The black men, on the other hand, are divided into three groups which are dynamic and occasionally even difficult to separate.⁴² The slaves are “owned” by the planters and mostly work on the plantations; however, some are also rented out to the soldiers to carry their belongings. The rangers are soldiers who are former slaves who have been offered manumission in exchange for military service against the rebels. The rebels or Maroons are (mostly) former slaves who escaped from their masters.⁴³ As is explained in the introduction, there were historically three primary groups of these Maroons, the Boni Maroons being those against whom Jack and his company are fighting. The primary group of individuals of interest to this chapter is the slaves; however, given the

39 Though there are other groups of men operating within the Surinamese society in the *Narrative*, not least the indigenous Americans, Stedman's exploration of these groups is neither as thorough nor as frequent as is that of these five groups.

40 Women in Stedman's *Narrative*, on the other hand, are lumped into two groups, essentially along racial lines. The white women, who are generally either planters' wives or bachelorettes on the prowl, tend to be quite negatively portrayed. The black women, on the other hand, are mostly objects of torture (by planters and overseers) or of kidnapping (by rebels). While there is obviously a third category, the Surinam wives, which bridges the seeming dichotomy, this group is mostly unexplored with the notable exception of Joanna. Though the groups of women in Surinam are fascinating and worthy of exploration, both in terms of economics and in general, they are not within the scope of this study.

41 Elsewhere, it might be significant to distinguish between these two groups, particularly as Jack does. Jack points to incredibly interesting social and economic divides between the two and essentially presents the overseers as pretentious social climbers. However, for the purposes of this study, there is no benefit to separating the two groups.

42 Though there are interesting and valuable discussions to be made about the eurocentrism of even Stedman's categorization of the black men—most especially of his purely racial distinction between the rangers and the soldiers—my use of these terms is merely for continuity's sake: to discuss the groups of people that Stedman presents in the way that he presents them.

43 While the rebels appear to have initially all been former slaves, these groups survived long enough to have children of their own. As Jack explains, Boni is a second-generation rebel as he was born in the woods after his mother absconded from her master's plantation (398).

potential of slaves to be either rebels or rangers, it seems worthwhile to occasionally explore Jack's use of one to better comprehend another.

Perhaps the most striking and jarring discussion of the economics of slavery is Jack's consideration of the value of the body parts of slaves. Unlike his initial description of Joanna, wherein she is figured as a sum of separately calculable but ultimately inseparable parts, Jack's account of the value of black male body parts seems to both stem from and require their separation from the body. At this point, both the severed limb and the mutilated body each have an individual—and estimable—value.

Before arriving at a specific price for slaves' limbs, Jack approximates their value referentially. To start with, slaves' limbs are worth the price that is paid to have them severed. Jack narrates:

during my Stay here, 9 Negro-Slaves had one leg cut off each, for having rund away from their Work at Plantation; this Punishment is part of the Surinam administration of Justice viz at the Masters desire, and was executed by Mr. Greber the Surgeon of the Hospital, ...and for which he told me he was regularly pay'd at the rate of about 6 £ Per Limb—Query how many would not do the office of Jack Catch for less Money?⁴⁴ (246).

Within this passage, Jack assigns a value to the slaves' limbs; however, their cost is strangely a negative cost. That is, their value derives from their absence. This is the price that planters must pay to surgeons in order to have slaves' limbs removed, so it is perhaps more appropriately a fee than a price. Jack seems

44 John (Jack) Ketch was a seventeenth-century executioner, whose name became synonymous with his profession. Stedman's reference to Ketch becomes even more appropriate as his passage continues because Ketch was infamous for his incompetence. Ketch published an apology for bungling Lord Russell's execution. Reportedly, during another beheading, Ketch "dealt at least five strokes, and even then... had recourse to a knife to completely sever the head from the trunk" (T.S. 71). Thus, Stedman seems to suggest that Mr. Greber not only played the role of the executioner, but also that he mutilated his patients.

almost to suggest that this price (or fee) is too high, however, when he suggests that many would be willing to amputate the limbs for less.

As the passage continues, Jack further discusses the value of these nine slaves. For starters, four of them died of complications from the operation and one committed suicide, leaving only four slaves. Thus, five out of the nine slaves died, costing their master(s) not only six pounds each for their operations, but also their original purchase prices, which, as was discussed in Chapter 1, is likely between £50 and 100 each. Assuming that these nine slaves were all owned by the same master, then, and assuming that their price was initially on the lower end of Stedman's scale, the planter would have lost £304, but would still possess four slaves. While the planter would have suffered a financial loss from the procedure, one can imagine that this will serve as a deterrent to prevent other slaves from running away. Thus, even if the planter loses £304 by having slaves' legs amputated, he may save himself hundreds of pounds by intimidating his other slaves. Furthermore, those slaves who survive their mutilation can still prove beneficial to their masters. As Jack says, "These amputated Negroes are frequent in this Colony, where they are equally useful in rowing the boats or barges of their Masters" (246). While he does not assign a specific value to the "amputated Negroes," Jack does demonstrate that those four remaining slaves will still be valuable.

However, Jack gives readers one more means of quantifying the value of these nine slaves. Jack adds that, "others are sometimes met with that want a hand, but this is for having dared to lift it against any of the Europeans, and this

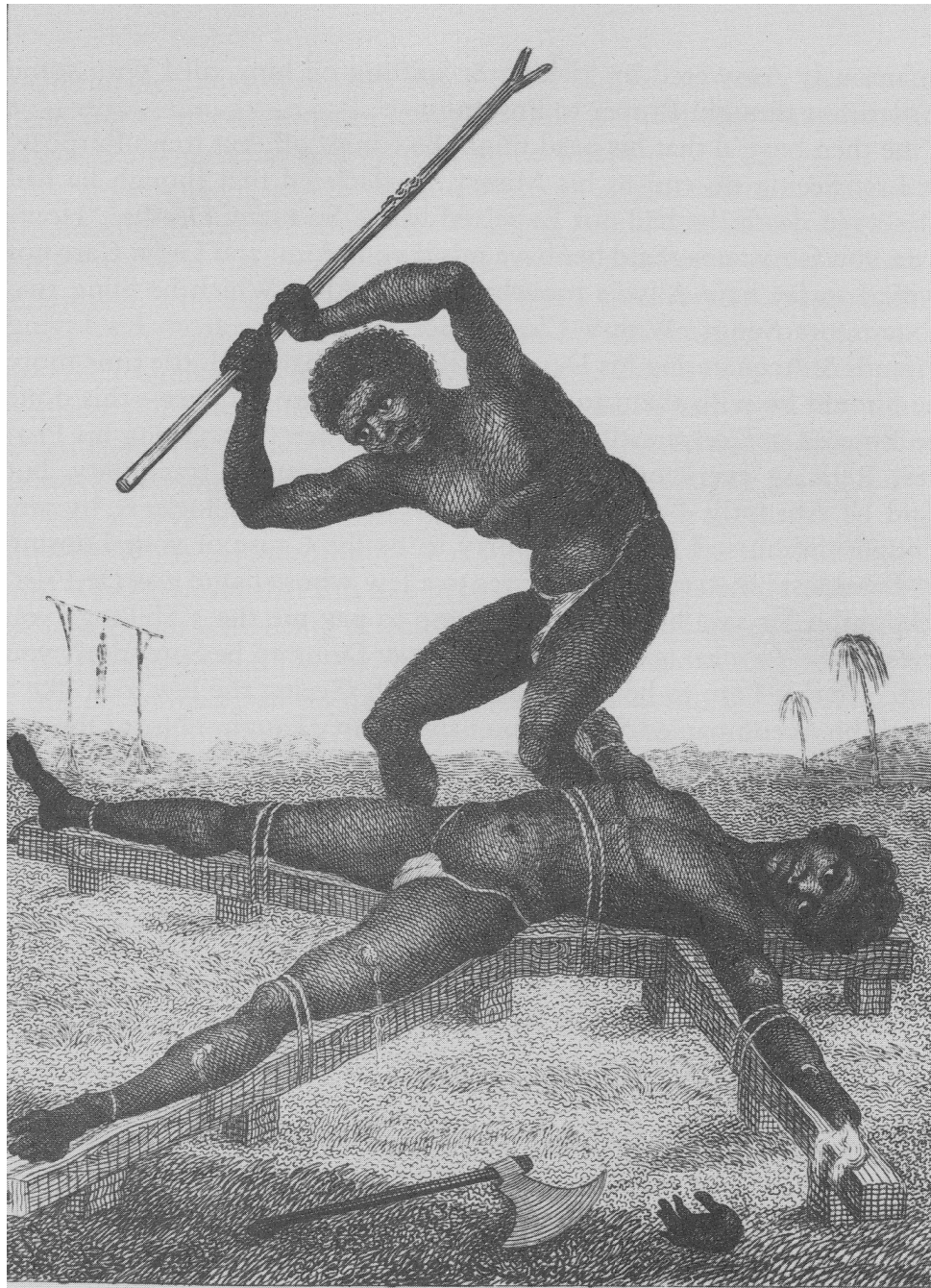
verifies what *Voltaire* says in his *Candide*" (246). Though seeming at first to merely confirm Voltaire's claim that there are slaves in Surinam who are missing limbs, the literary reference gives the passage grim implications for an assessment of the economy of slaves' lives. Namely, upon stepping ashore in Surinam, Candidus comes in contact with a slave who is missing an arm and a leg. Upon inquiry, the slave explains the systematic amputation of slaves' limbs and exclaims, "Such are the conditions on which you eat sugar in Europe!" (Voltaire 100).⁴⁵ While Stedman stops short of drawing a direct line here between the price of sugar—approximately £6 per thousand pounds, not counting the value of the byproducts and refuse, the latter of which is used for fuel (254)—and the price of slave limbs, the allusion allows readers to connect that assessment to his discussion of the economy of slave limbs.⁴⁶

Stedman allows readers one other way of indirectly assessing slave limbs. In the narration which accompanies the plate entitled, "The Execution of Breaking on the Rack," Stedman depicts the slave who is being tortured as making gallows-humor style jokes with the crowd. Jack says,

Observing the Soldier Who stood Sentinel over him biting
Occasionally on a piece of Dry Bread [the slave] asked [the soldier],
'how came it that he a *White Man* Should have no meat to eat along
with it' *Because I am not So rich* said the Soldier, 'then I will make
you a Present first pick my Hand that was Chopt off[f] Clean to the
Bones Sir—Next begin to myself till you be Glutted & you'll have both
Bread and Meat which best becomes you' (547).

45 There is an element of correction at play within Stedman's text. Voltaire's slave character says that his arm was chopped off because his finger got caught in the sugar mill. However, Stedman amends the reasoning for amputating arms when Jack says that "this is for having dared to lift it against any of the Europeans."

46 In fact, when he is exploring the institution of slavery much later, Jack pointedly connects slaves' lives to the commodities they provide. Stedman writes, "The Calculation is 100,000 [slaves] Pr. Annum thus in 20 years 2 millions of People are murdered to Provide us with Coffee & Sugar" (533).



The Execution of Breaking on the Rack.

Figure 4: The Execution of breaking on the Rack (Stedman 548)

While Stedman does not assign a monetary price to this slave's hand—or to the rest of his body—the slave's body here actually stands in for what it previously only represents. That is to say that while in the previously explored passage there is a suggestion that slaves' limbs are traded for sugar to be consumed by Europeans, here it is the physical limb that is to be consumed. By collapsing his metonymical construction and rebuilding it as a literal one, Stedman forces Europeans to confront their own complicity in slave mutilation. Furthermore, the slave seems to suggest that bread is sufficient food for a person, but that eating meat is “becom[ing]” for Europeans. In other words, like sugar, meat is fashionable and luxurious, but not necessary. Though distinctly less quantified than the previously-explored discussions of limbs, this passage utilizes literary devices to enable European readers to see a link between their consumption and the lives and limbs of slaves.

While Stedman approaches the value of slaves' limbs in a roundabout manner, he quite directly addresses the economy of rebels' body parts. Narrating a piece of “news” that he receives about a battle between the rebels and the rangers, Jack says that the rangers “carried off[f] three Prisoners,⁴⁷ Leaving 4 others shot dead upon the Spot whose right hands chop'd off[f] and *barbacued* or dried in Smoak they had sent to the Governor at Paramaribo”

47 It seems incredibly interesting to me to consider why the rangers would take prisoners at all if they are offered more money for the rebels' hands than for their (alive) bodies. While it would make sense to keep one prisoner alive to probe for information, taking three does not make sense economically. When paired with close readings of other accounts of interactions between the rangers and the rebels, however, it is possible to read the two groups as much more aligned than Jack (or likely even Stedman) seems to give them credit for. This is, I think, an avenue for further exploration.

(99).⁴⁸ After offering an inventory of the items collected—prisoners and hands—Stedman gives readers an explicit price for each in a footnote. It reads, “For every Rebel Prisoner a reward is paid of 25 florins—& for every right hand fifty being nearly 5 pound” (99). This passage, beyond merely explicating the monetary value of rebels, accurately, though paradoxically, demonstrates that a rebel is worth more in parts than as a whole and worth more dead than alive. When coupled with the above passages, this assessment seems to suggest that while a runaway slave can be reintegrated into a slave society, a rebel cannot, and thus becomes not only useless for planters, but relatedly also valueless.⁴⁹

Ironically, while the rebels represent a cost for the planters and the government of Surinam, they represent a bonus salary for the soldiers. The potential for the soldiers to exchange rebel lives for their daily bread makes Jack's ambivalence about capturing or killing rebels seem noble. As shown above, soldiers can earn almost £5 for right hand submitted to the governor. Knowing that Stedman has presented Jack as being impoverished and moreover willing to live “on Bread and Salt And Nothing Else” in order to redeem Joanna from slavery when he could potentially earn the money for her purchase by instead killing 40 rebels allows Stedman to demonstrate that Jack values rebels' lives above his own comfort (385).⁵⁰ By showing Jack's selfless valuation of the

48 There is an intriguing discussion to be made about the ways that Stedman depicts the Africans—especially the rangers—as barbarously mutilating others, especially since it would stand to reason that the Europeans would also sever the limbs in order to collect their reward.

49 Not to mention dangerous.

50 The anonymous author/editor of the 1824 *Joanna, or, the Female Slave: A West Indian Tale* forges a direct link between Jack's expeditions in the forest and his ability to redeem Joanna. The narrator says, “the greater and more hazardous the danger which attended our expedition, the higher our reward; consequently, the sooner and easier it appeared realizing that sum, which would at once emancipate my beloved Joanna” (73). Though it is not explicit that this Jack is supposed to exchange rebels' lives for Joanna's freedom, logically speaking the battles with the rebels, rather than the dangerous climate,

rebels, Stedman not only makes his hero more appealing, he also makes Jack into a sympathetic character when he is forced to combat the rebels. Because Jack refuses to sell the rebels' hands, even to combat his own poverty, he demonstrates that they are not only worth more than the sum of their parts, but also that they are worth more to him alive than dead.⁵¹ Stedman seems to suggest that Jack's extraordinary empathy both originates from and leads to his high appraisal of human worth.

While it seems reasonable that Jack would struggle most to quantify the value of those closest to him, ironically the only two slaves whose specific individual prices are named are those whom Jack values most and those whom he actually purchases: Joanna and Quaco,⁵² and there are significant parallels to be drawn between the two. In fact, Stedman invites readers to compare the two purchases when Jack says,

I now to my Sorrow received a Letter from Mr Kenedy who was Preparing to go to Holland, that he desired my boy Qwacco might be returned to his Estate, whom I Accordingly Sent Down, but with a Letter offering to buy him from his Master as I had offered to buy *Joana* from Hers, While heaven knows I Was not master of a Shilling to pay the redemption (330).

Not only does Jack pointedly invoke Joanna's name when telling readers that he has offered to buy Quaco, he also expresses dismay at the idea of losing Quaco. In fact, just as Stedman shows Jack being negatively impacted emotionally when Joanna was about to be auctioned off, so too does he initially frame Jack's

would be the hazard most likely to afford the soldiers bonuses.

51 For example, Jack says that he is unable to bring himself to really attack the rebels, but was "rather induced to fire with Eyes Shut...than to take a Proper Aim, of Which I had Frequent Opportunities" (405). Jack also takes pity on a captured rebel and refuses orders to bury the man alive, he even risks his own life to run back into "the Burning Camp to Afford him some Assistance" (448-49).

52 As noted in Chapter 1, Jack purchases Johnny, but he is not sold individually.

response to the possibility of losing Quaco in terms of Jack's "Sorrow." Stedman uses the framework of sensibility to present Jack as a man of feeling, and as before, this technique seems intended to draw readers' sympathy towards Jack. However, Jack's "Sorrow" is not an end in itself, but rather spurs him into action—action which necessarily involves Jack's pocketbook. Jack even explicitly tells readers that he cannot afford to purchase either Joanna or Quaco.

While those are all noteworthy similarities between Jack's narration of these two slaves, there is ultimately a gulf which divides them. In the passage above, for example, Stedman demonstrates that Quaco is fully without agency. Namely, Mr. Kennedy decides that Quaco must return to his plantation and Jack decides to purchase him to keep him nearby; Quaco is given no say with either of them. Furthermore, Jack seems to reference Joanna—whom he claims to purchase in order to exalt her above the status of a slave—in order to allow the supposed virtue of Joanna's purchase to similarly elevate his purchase of Quaco. However, Quaco is quite clearly Jack's servant throughout the *Narrative* before becoming his actual slave.⁵³ Though I could easily spend pages demonstrating Stedman's attempt to show the differences between Quaco and Joanna, simply pointing to Jack's epithets for each should prove a potent example of the difference in his valuation of each. As explored in Chapter 1, Joanna is frequently referred to as "the inestimable Joanna" or "the valuable Joanna," or occasionally even "my mulatta." Quaco's most frequent appellation, on the other

53 This distinction is not intended to suggest that Quaco is not a slave throughout the *Narrative*, but rather that he is not *Jack's* slave throughout. Furthermore, while historically, Joanna was likely as much Stedman's servant as was Quaco, in the *Narrative*, Stedman clearly intends to distinguish between the two.

hand, is “my Black Boy.”

In spite of his seeming desire to hierarchically order Joanna above Quaco, Jack's discussion of their purchases troubles that ordering. Jack narrates Quaco's return saying,

Now returned my Boy Qwacco from Paramaribo Where to my Great Joy his Master Mr. Walter Kenedy Sold him to me for the sum of 500 Duch Florins Amounting With other Expences to near £50 for which Col: Fourgeoud Civily gave me a Bill for his Agent with Which I Pay'd This faithful Servants ransom, Wishing to God My Dr. *Joana* and her Boy were also Mine, from whose new Master I had not yet Received an Answer (336).

At this point in the *Narrative*, Joanna's price has not yet been named, but it seems that having a specific price for Quaco again reminds Jack of his inability to buy Joanna. However, purchasing Quaco also has the potential to diminish Jack's ability to purchase Joanna even once he has a quoted price for her redemption (as discussed in Chapter 1). By explaining that Fourgeoud “gave [Jack] a bill⁵⁴” to pay for Quaco, Stedman paves the way for readers to question Jack's later declaration that he is unable to pay for Joanna since Jack is never seen even asking Fourgeoud to fund Joanna's purchase. Furthermore, by referring to Quaco's “ransom,” rather than his price, Jack paints Quaco's bondage as inappropriate—as if he has been kidnapped. Like with Joanna, then, Jack expresses indignation that Quaco is enslaved, but ironically, it is Quaco's role as a “faithful Servant” that makes him worthy of the “ransom.”

Jack forges a connection between Joanna and Quaco once more when he redeems Joanna and Johnny. Jack says, “I Was Crown'd for What I Had thus far

⁵⁴ In this case, “bill” seems to mean “bill of exchange,” perhaps most analogous to a check (“bill, n.3” definition 9a.)

Finished, With Praises, and Congratulations... this Being indeed the third Person /including *Qwacco*/ that I had Rescued /Within a little more than 3 Months/ from the Jaws of the Monster Persecutor” (387).⁵⁵ Given both that Quaco was owned by Jack's dear friend Mr. Kennedy and that Joanna and Johnny were owned by a different master, the “Monster Persecutor” is not a specific slave master, but rather seems to be slavery itself. This is a strange figuration, however, because Jack quite clearly becomes Quaco's owner, rather than his liberator.

It is perhaps nowhere more evident that Quaco becomes and remains Jack's property—as well as that he is distinctly subaltern to Joanna—than in the concluding remarks to the *Narrative*. While Jack is forced to leave Joanna behind, Quaco is allowed to accompany him to Europe. Jack narrates,

I now also made a present of my true & Faithful Black boy *Qwacoo* by *his own Consent* to the Countess of *Rosendaal*, to Which family I was under high Obligations & who Since on Account of his Honesty & Sober Conduct not only Christned him by the name of *Stedman* at my desire but Created him to be theyr Butler, with a promise to take Care of him as Long as he Lived—& which was a Blessing I Could never have Bestow'd on him myself (620).

It is here that the logic of Jack's account of Quaco seems most to falter. That Quaco could both be capable of granting “Consent” and be able to be “made a present of” is difficult to reconcile as it requires that he be both granted and denied agency. Furthermore, while Stedman gives Quaco agency to consent to being given away, he does not at all indicate that Quaco had a part in his renaming or in his choice of profession. By alluding to his “high Obligations” to

⁵⁵ Jack also later reflects on the positive changes that he effected while in Surinam, saying, “I had at least done material good to a few others by Relieving 3 Deserving people from a State of Bondage—nor had I enter'd 1 Farthing into Debt notwithstanding,” suggesting again that he has saved not only Joanna and Johnny, but also Quaco from slavery (607).

Lady Rosendaal, Jack even suggests that he traded Quaco to Lady Rosendaal in order to pay off his own debts.⁵⁶ Ultimately Jack frames Quaco's situation as a happy ending because while he is left in subservience, Quaco gains financial security.⁵⁷ Perhaps because he seems to be trying to balance two often incompatible values—ethics and economics—Jack's logic frequently fails. As in the instances above, Jack tries to “reconcile the irreconcilable,” to create a philosophy that will allow him to be both a moral agent and a profiteer.

The incongruity of Jack's simultaneous condemnation and his support of slavery only increases his confusion as he pans out further and explores slavery on a broader scale. On one hand, Jack seems to want to use his experiences, particularly with Quaco, as examples of how slave masters can and should treat their slaves. On the other hand, however, in order to maintain his position as Quaco's savior, Jack must argue that there is something inherently evil or insulting in slavery itself. Yet, when considering slavery in general, Jack states, “I must conclude that *this trade*, or buying of negroe Slaves, is not so bad a thing as some try to support, while the effects that follow it, are alone the complicated Evils, under which lay groaning, the too helpless African negroes” (170). Jack attempts to argue that slavery is separable from cruelty, and, while he advocates the amelioration of the harsh physical conditions of slavery, he suggests that slavery itself is inherently bad. As explored above, however, this argument directly opposes the logic that allows him to “rescue” Quaco from the “Monster

56 Arguably, these “obligations” need not be financial, but regardless, there is a suggestion that Quaco is exchanged for a debt—fiscal or perhaps even social—which is not his, but rather Jack's.

57 There is an interesting conversation to be made about Quaco's role as a domestic servant in the Netherlands. Specifically, slavery was illegal on the mainland; however, Quaco's being “a gift” suggests a less than clear line between servants and slaves, both within Stedman's *Narrative* and in general.

Persecutor,” slavery. Jack’s argument is further complicated by the fact that, unlike with Joanna, he does not build up a case that Quaco is above the station of a slave. Quaco is not described as overly intelligent or virtuous, handsome or noble.⁵⁸ However, Jack attempts to create an alternative system of values that allows Quaco to *earn* a place above slavery—making slavery inappropriate for him but not for his compatriots.⁵⁹

Jack’s first task, then, is to divide Quaco from his fellow slaves. So, while Jack argues that “for the Sake of...the African himself,” he should remain “*dependent* & under the proper restrictions,” he allows a loophole to avoid outright condemning all Africans (172). Jack says that there are “a few very industrious individuels” for whom slavery is seemingly unnecessary, a category under which Quaco would seem to fall. Thus, now that his two closest friends are safely excepted—Joanna by her “virtue” and “extraction” and Quaco by his industry—Jack can safely condemn most of the rest of the Africans to economic exploitation.

After explaining that only Africans are capable of cultivating sugar and other crops that grow in the “Tropicks,” and after dividing the Africans into his two distinct groups: “a few very industrious individuels” and all the rest, Jack argues

58 By not giving Quaco these traits, Stedman not only defies the system of logic that he uses to argue for Joanna’s superiority, he also defies literary precedent. Specifically, Stedman could have chosen to give Quaco traits similar to those Aphra Behn gave her romantic hero, Oroonoko. Behn’s narrator describes Oroonoko, also a slave in Surinam, as “a great man” and goes on to explain that, “the most illustrious courts could not have produced a braver man, both for greatness and courage of mind, a judgment more solid, a wit more quick, and a conversation more sweet and diverting” (80). The narrator continues extolling Oroonoko’s virtues—both natural and learned, all to the purpose of elevating Oroonoko above the status of a slave. However, Stedman might have chosen to avoid following this precedent simply because of its comparative logic. If he is attempting to communicate that slavery uses confusing, subjective, and arbitrary restrictions to determine a person’s worth—in either sense—then it is best that his narrator rely on faulty logic.

59 It is significant that Quaco earn his position both to support Jack’s proposed system of values and, more importantly, to ensure that Joanna retains her position as being uniquely above the rank of slave.

for economic and social stratification and African subservience. To support his claims that most Africans are not “industrious,” Jack points to the two previous bands of Maroon rebels: the Saramaka and the Ouca.. These groups, Jack informs his readers, “neither want land, time, hands, or the proper tools for Cultivation,” but strangely choose not to grow cash crops. Yet, Stedman's word choice allows for multiple readings of this passage. By using the verb “want,” Stedman is both able to explain that the group was already in possession of all the essentials for industrious farming, and hint at a different set of cultural values. Though couched in an inherently racist claim about Africans' need for European oversight to protect them from themselves, Jack's claim can also hint at a sort of cultural relativity which de-emphasizes Eurocentric entrepreneurialism.

Jack seems to vacillate between these two sets of values—the Maroons' and the Europeans'—as he continues. Jack explains that if the Maroons planted “Coffee–Sugar–Cacao–Cotton or Indigo...their *Wealth* in a short time might be increased, not only beyond a Possibility of want, but even to affluence for themselves and for their descending Posterity to many generations” (172). This passage seems both to criticize the Maroons for not actively pursuing wealth and to acknowledge that they are immensely capable of acquiring it, should they choose to. Yet, Jack does not even engage the possibility that the Maroons might have trouble exporting these products or negotiating for a fair price. Jack's position on the Africans' industriousness is muddied even further as the passage immediately continues, however, saying, “the too much aspiring after *which*, has indeed made as many miserable in the State of Civilization, as it has made

happy if not more” (172-73). So, once again, their not being industrious seems to help prevent their being made “miserable” by chasing wealth, and becomes positive.

Through these and other passages about the rebels, Jack creates a vision of the rebels' lives as strangely utopian. Jack suggests that the rebels (and previous bands of Maroons) live a life of affluence (for a further explanation, see Chapter 3). Not only does the forest provide them all their nutritional needs, their culture discourages them from pursuing material gain.⁶⁰ Perhaps because of his emphasis on his own financial well-being, Jack seems unable to fully subscribe to his idyllic view of the rebels.

Another part of Jack's indecision about industriousness seems to stem from his ambivalence towards planters. Specifically, Jack describes planters as gluttonously steeped in opulence and luxury. In one of the most significant and oft-quoted sections of the *Narrative*, Jack details planters' excesses for pages on end, referring to the generic planter as “his Greatness” and “His Worship” (364, 366). Stedman creates a caricature of the planter, dressing him in such expensive and luxurious items as “a pair of the Finest holland Trowsers, White Silk Stockings, and red or Yellow Morocco Slippers” and surrounding him with numerous slaves (363). This long description can perhaps best be summarized by the simple line which describes the selection of food on the planter's table, but applies synecdochically to his entire existence: “nothing is Wanting that the

60 This view of supposedly primitive societies is not limited to the eighteenth century. Anthropologist Marshall Sahlins argued in 1972 that hunter-gatherer bands were the “original affluent society.” Sahlins' reasoning was that while foragers had little in the way of luxury items or material culture, their needs were met and their culture placed no value on accumulated goods.

World Can Afford” (364). Though it is obvious that this description starkly contrasts that of the slaves, particularly in terms of economics, this section of the *Narrative* also critiques the extremity of affluence. Though—or perhaps because—the planters do not themselves work, they represent the vice that comes with placing too much demand on industriousness—it can lead to greed and exploitation.⁶¹ Thus, Jack must avoid pointing the Africans too far in this direction, lest they, like the planters, become “miserable” through the quest for material wealth.

Though Jack often seems to challenge the excess that results from the Europeans' exploitation of slave labor, it is notable that his proposal for improving slavery ensures that planters maintain physical, social, and financial dominance over their slaves. However, Jack argues that planters should not only rein in their excessive spending, but also feel a sense of obligation to their slaves. Jack says that

by Abandoning *Pride & Luxury*, only in a moderate Degree, at Least 20,000 Negroes Could be Added to those now Labouring in the Fields, which would at the same time keep the Above Superfluous number of *Idlers* employ'd, & by *helping* The others in the necessary Accupation, greatly Prevent that Shocking mortality to Which they are at Present Exposed by ill usage, & which Reflects eternal Shame & infamy on those who have it in theyr Power to Prevent it, & do it not (593).

Because he is arguing for the amelioration of the conditions of slavery, Jack's remedy for the wrongs of slavery paradoxically includes increasing the workload—and thus the exploitation—of approximately twenty percent of the

61 In fact, Jack criticizes likely the most industrious contemporaneous black individual in Surinam, the historical Graman Quacy. Jack says that Quacy “fill'd his Pockets with no inconsiderable Profits” in his position as a healer. However, both because of his seemingly cannibalistic financial exploitation of his peers, Jack ultimately condemns him as “an indolent dicipating Blockhead” (582).

slaves. Notably, however, Jack does intend for these slaves to reduce the workload—and relatedly also the mortality rate—of their field-working peers, which would ameliorate *their* conditions.

In his proposal and in general, Jack seems bound by the limits of pragmatism. He seems unable to imagine that Europeans will simply abandon their colonial ventures, particularly in the interest of a group of people whose exploiters work so hard to present as not only foreign, but even subhuman. Furthermore, because he is ultimately a product of the ontology of his time, Jack seems unable to cross certain boundaries or to challenge certain institutions. In spite of his arguments about the humanity and, on many levels, equality of Africans, he must combat—both psychologically and rhetorically—his own notion that “*whatever is, is right whatever Dreadful the apparent consequences*” (170).

The goal, then, of Jack's proposal—and of many of his descriptions and much of his analysis throughout the *Narrative*—seems to be to present a way of mediating financial and humanitarian concerns. Unfortunately, Jack's attempts to provide reasons for a humanitarian approach to slavery rather undermine his attempts to fix slavery in a moral and viable manner. Specifically, Jack's humanization of Quaco and Joanna—which seems intended to support his claims that slaves deserve humane treatment—troubles his claims that there can exist a humane system of slavery. Rather, Jack comes across as a hypocrite for arguing for slavery for most Africans, but not those closest to him.

Jack's exploration of the body parts of slaves—though constantly referring back to prices and values—seems focused primarily on ethics. Specifically,

Jack's desire to alleviate the physical suffering of slaves requires that he condemn their mutilation. As Jack zooms out to the individual—specifically to Quaco—he attempts to balance, or at least alternate uncertainly between, economic and ethical elements of slavery. However, as Jack zooms out one final time to view slavery as a whole, he primarily focuses on ensuring that slavery remains economically viable for slaveholders. Jack brushes aside concerns about the financial well-being of Africans and disregards the significance of their fiscal autonomy. Though it could be argued that this problem is specific to Jack, it seems more likely that the ambiguity and confusion Jack appears to have about slavery is a result of his attempts to “reconcile the irreconcilable” demands of humanitarianism and financial gain—of people as people and people as property.

CHAPTER 3: MERCENARY SOLDIER

Just as Jack's exploration of the value of slaves leads him to an irrational and inconsistent system of beliefs, so too does another of his attempts to make sense of slavery through analogy. In what initially appears to be a rhetorical strategy, Jack uses a discussion of soldiers to set a precedent for Surinam's treatment of Maroon slaves. As the *Narrative* continues, Jack uses the metaphor of soldiery as a psychological means of comprehending the less familiar world of slavery. However, though he occasionally points to distinctions between the two groups, Jack seems to become so wedded to showing the similarities between them that he starts losing sight of the social and economic differences—differences that can mean life or death—between soldiers and slaves. As the two groups become inexorably conflated, Jack creates a form of emotional currency wherein he builds up sympathy for slaves only to transfer it to soldiers.

In the two chapters of the *Narrative* that detail Surinamese history (Chapters 2 and 3), Stedman seeks to inform his readers about Surinam, both for pure information's sake and to contextualize Jack's mission. Jack explains the history of Surinam from its "earliest Discovery"⁶² until his arrival in 1773.⁶³ Part of this history includes introducing readers to the previous bands of rebels—the

62 In what we would now label as a distinctly colonial perspective, Jack acknowledges the presence of indigenous Americans, but considers the "earliest Discovery" to be that made by Columbus in 1498 (58).

63 As Price and Price point out, Jack arrives in Surinam in February of 1773 and leaves in April of 1777, placing him there for just over four years, not the five that he claims in the title. However, Jack left Europe in December of 1772 and touched European soil again in June of 1777, making his entire expedition about four and a half years long.

Saramaka and Ouca Maroons—and discussing the legal and historical precedent for the Surinamese government's response to the most recent wave of slave revolts. Seemingly in an effort to demonstrate the repercussions of rebellion—regardless of race or social status—Jack includes in his history an instance of white soldiers rebelling in the late seventeenth century. Jack explains that

the Governor and the Commandant under him, were murdered by their own Soldiers which was alledged to be owing to their having not only forc'd the Men to work like Negroes in digging Canals &c— but also forced them to subsist on very bad and short Allowance which at last had drove them to this desperation (61-62).

This passage seems intended to set up rebellion as at least an understandable, if perhaps not an ideal, response to excessive labor exploitation. However, Jack's use of the word “Negroes” rather than the most likely intended connotation, “slaves,” sets up a dual set of expectations: one for “Men” and one for “Negroes,” a dualism which resurfaces many times throughout the *Narrative*.⁶⁴ While elsewhere Jack challenges the premise that any group of individuals should be overworked to this extreme, here Jack's indignation seems to stem from the the similarity between these two supposedly hierarchically ordered groups.

Jack does offer consistency in his discussion of rebellion resulting from overwork, however. Throughout the *Narrative*, Jack justifies the Maroon rebels' cause with statements like, “the most abject Slavery and bad usage...provoked [the rebels] to break their Chains and shake off[f] the Yoke to seek revenge and Liberty” which show that he acknowledges the legitimacy of their anger and of their desire to avenge their abuse by attacking plantations (68). However, Jack

⁶⁴ For example, consider Jack's claims that European planters should reap the rewards of African labor, as discussed in Chapter 2 .

seems unaware of the differences between these two groups of rebels—the historical European rebel soldiers and the present African rebel slaves—particularly in their relative punishments. Jack explains that the revolted soldiers were “tried for Murder & Rebellion” and sentenced to death. However, as Jack explains much later, Africans need—and thus do not already have—a valid and fair justice system (594). Furthermore, the African rebels are subject to much more severe punishments, even for similar crimes. Jack demonstrates this when he discusses another group of European rebels who joined the African rebels and were captured along with them. Jack narrates that one of the Europeans was hung and the others were “broke alive upon the Rack,” showing that the Europeans were subjected to not only death, but also torture. However, the Africans who were captured, “ were roasted alive by half dozens in a shocking manner being chain'd to Stakes in the Middle of Surrounding flames” (77). Though in the end both groups were executed, Jack appears unable to suppress his disgust with the inhumane way that the Africans were killed. Though likely intended to establish precedent for stomping out revolution and rebellion, the similarity that Jack points out between the African slave rebels and the European soldier rebels in these early scenes helps Jack get comfortable with paralleling African slaves and rebels with European soldiers throughout the *Narrative*. Discussing historical precedent wherein Europeans are the rebels (especially since their rebellion is quelled) allows Jack to disclaim racist motives; it is rebellion itself which must cease, not just black rebellion. This move helps Jack justify—both to his readers and to himself—his own role as a military opponent of

the Maroon rebels.

While Jack is adamant about classifying and clarifying systems and relationships throughout much of the *Narrative*, he does not explicitly explain what the hierarchical stratification of his military unit means for his fellow soldiers' lives. Throughout most of the *Narrative*, distinctions in rank bear little significance beyond the four following ranks, given in order of superiority: Commander-in-Chief (Colonel Fourgeoud), officers (including Jack), private men (also referred to as soldiers or marines), and slaves.⁶⁵ Jack makes clear that there is a difference between these groups not only in their pay, but also in their weekly food allotments. For example, while Jack frequently complains that Fourgeoud withholds food, alcohol, and provisions which are sent from Europe for the benefit of “the Poor, emaciated, and languishing Officers” (283), he elsewhere makes clear that “Private Soldier[s]” receive fewer rations—that which he once refers to as a “Pityful Allowance” (418).⁶⁶ Even though Jack seems almost reluctant to say that the private soldiers' allowance is insufficient, he quite clearly explains that the slaves in the company suffer from the military's frugality. These slaves, Jack says, “are in General Obligated to Subsist on but half the Allowance of the Soldiers...While they are forced to Do Double the Drudgery” (330). Though he demonstrates that there are significant differences between slaves and soldiers (and between himself and common soldiers) and that these differences can mean life or death, Jack later comes to ignore these stratifications and conflate these groups.

65 Stedman offers a more detailed breakdown of these categories on page 113.

66 Notably, Jack only acknowledges that the private soldiers' allowance is “pityful” when he is forced to subsist on it.

Initially, Jack's linkage between soldiers and slaves seems merely to be thematic. After detailing a historical account of soldier rebellion in Surinam, Jack seems to feel obligated to discuss soldier rebellion, particularly to place it in context with slave rebellion. Jack says, "Having thus far dwelt on the Subject of negro Slaves revolting against theyr Masters I shall now say something Concerning Sailors and Soldiers rebelling against theyr Commanders" (75). As he describes the second historical account (discussed above), Jack shows how soldier rebellion and slave rebellion are linked. He explains that both forms of rebellion are similar in their origins—brought on by harsh and inappropriate usage—and that both, even when justified, must be quelled. And, after completing his outlining of the historical facts, Jack explains that he wants to offer a similar assessment of the conditions of soldiers, saying, "Permit me here to make a short observation on the usage of the navy and Army in the west Indies as I have done before on that of the Negro Slaves" (77). In both of these passages, Jack has a common and clearly-defined theme—in this case unfair treatment—that links soldiers and slaves.

As he continues with his assessment of the "usage" of sailors and soldiers, Jack follows a similar trajectory to that of his assessment of the usage of slaves. Jack explains,

The Sailor and the Soldier who are on Duty in the Colony if taken proper care of are certainly two of the most useful members in helping to Support it what strong Spirited and willing drudges are they when properly protected and Encouraged by theyr Commanders—How careless they are of theyr own Lives—and how ready and fearless of Danger to protect theyr Officers if they are well supported and are but fairly dealt with (78).

Jack advocates an amelioration of the conditions of soldiers, arguing that they should be “taken proper care of” in order to reap the benefits of their service. However, Jack is careful not to release soldiers from their servitude. In fact, within the passage, Jack seems to almost encourage the soldiers to be “careless...of their own Lives” and to “protect their Officers.” However, Jack's reasoning for this encouragement makes sense—though becomes quite self-serving—when we recognize that Jack was himself an officer. Thus, Jack was among those who stood to gain the most from his subordinates' selfless dedication.

Perhaps because they do not recognize the potential benefit to themselves, however, Jack's fellow officers seem to value the private soldiers less. Jack says,

pity it is that by the Carelessness of so many others /especially Young Officers/ about the welfare of their Soldiers and Sailors, to whom the whole Care and trust of these useful creatures is given and who ought to Pride in making theyr Lives at least Supportable, such Numbers of Stout able and blooming young Men are now dayly swept to the Grave (78).

In true noblesse oblige fashion, Jack argues that officers should feel a greater sense of duty to those in their care. It is easy to forget, however, that Jack—as a young officer—can potentially be indicted in his own criticism. Jack attempts to exonerate himself, though, by frequently alluding to the attentions that he pays his subordinates. Not only does this strategy help prevent him from being implicated alongside his peers, it also places Jack as a model officer and leader, showing his peers how to properly treat their subordinates. The intended parallels between soldiers and slaves are clear: if we substitute “slaves” for

“Soldiers and Sailors” and “masters” for “officers,” this passage would closely echo Jack's suggestions for slave holders.

While the passage could easily pass for a pamphlet on the slave trade with this change in terminology, Jack makes a clear distinction. Jack says, “but I am Sorry to say that ...to[o] often at least with some nations the Sailor the Soldier and the Slave but differ in the name” (78). It is obvious that Jack is comparing soldiers and sailors to slaves as a means of drawing attention to the improper treatment of the former. However, Jack does not clearly criticize slavery here and, as discussed in Chapter 2, he actually supports slavery—albeit without the cruelty. Jack's primary lament is not that these three groups of people are oppressed, but rather that there is insufficient stratification between soldiers and slaves. This passage demonstrates that while Jack is interested in drawing parallels between soldiers and slaves, his use will primarily be to criticize those parallels—to demonstrate the problems with treatment of soldiers.

Jack's most consistent link between soldiers and slaves, however, is socioeconomic. Both groups of people occupy a subordinate economic space—both are deprived and impoverished. These two groups, however, are strangely related to one another. In Jack's military company, many of the soldiers appear to either own or borrow slaves from nearby plantations. Sailors, on the other hand, have a more intimate—and troubling—connection to slaves. Specifically, Jack admits that many sailors are actually slave traders. He says,

as for the *Sailors* employed in [the slave trade] great numbers of them perish I acknowledge, but who if not died in this Way, would possibly have been obliged, to pick your Pockets for a Subsistence, and in Company with too many of theyr unfortunate Ship Mates,

have been hang'd to keep them from Starving—it being very well known that these poor Men /who are the props, and bulwarks of every Mercantile-Nation/ have no Provisions made for them in times of Peace, and that the brave Tar, who has escaped a watery Grave during the War /to protect your Life and Property/ is often only saved to exchange it for an Airy one when it is over—thus better go to the Coast of Guinea to buy Negroes (171).

In a complex rhetorical strategy, Jack suggests that providing sailors with a sufficient salary when the country is not at war will lessen their need to participate in the slave trade. Though pointing to the number of people who “perish” aboard ship during the Middle Passage, Jack is strangely referring not to the slaves, but rather the sailors. Not only are the sailors the ones whose mortality rate is considered, the sailors are also the people who are bound—here by financial limitations—rather than those who are binding others. By framing sailors as “poor Men” who are “Starving,” turns the tide of sympathy from slaves to their captors. Not only does Jack attempt to collect pity for sailors, he also points out—as he does with his discussion of sugar explored in Chapter 2—his readers' complicity in these systems. British citizens send sailors to “a watery Grave” in order to protect their own “Li[ves] and Property” but then refuse to share their “Property” by providing “Provisions” for sailors. Because British citizens are too stingy to provide their sailors with “Provisions,” then, the sailors must either “pick your Pockets” or “go to the Coast of Guinea to buy Negroes.” Thus, Jack inexorably links the slave trade to the financial well-being of the sailors. The implications of this link are that those interested in reducing or eliminating the slave trade must ensure sailors a sufficient and consistent salary.

Jack not only claims a causal link between economic oppression of

sailors, he also argues that slaves are better off than many Europeans, including sailors and soldiers. While attempting to excuse Africans for their part in the slave trade, and to argue (as explored in Chapter 2) that the slave trade “is not so bad a thing as some try to support,” Jack compares slaves favorably to Europeans. He refers, for example, to “the too helpless African negroes... whose lives if properly looked after might /at the same time without being less usefull/ be made incomparably more happy, than those of eyther our Sailors, or Soldiers” (170). It is notable that Jack seems to feel such a sense of obligation to make the slaves' lives “usefull.” While it is possible to read the usefulness as an ideological goal, it is quite clear that the intention is to attempt to maintain or improve their usefulness to/for their masters. However, most important for this discussion is Jack's comparison of slaves with soldiers and sailors: in Jack's figuration, slaves have a greater chance of happiness than soldiers or sailors.

Jack attempts to explain his reasoning for this conclusion as the passage immediately continues. Jack says,

These [sailors and soldiers] are obliged to go, and be drownd or shot abroad, to get a pernicious Substinance for their little starving families at home & to which they are to[o] often drag'd, lock'd short in Irons, contrary to their Capacity, or inclinations (170).⁶⁷

This passage is rife with parallels to slaves, however; so much so, indeed, that it is not immediately clear whether Jack is discussing slaves or sailors and soldiers.

⁶⁷ Fascinatingly, Jack takes his claims even one step further in arguing that slaves are inherently better off than prostitutes, also. He continues, “not to speak of above 50,000 helpless young Women, who independent of their genius, and beauty, parade the Streets of our Metropolis in all Weathers, exposed to all thats Horrid, till they die unpitied upon a dunghill, in the middle of their own Countrymen, Starved, detested, kik'd, and wallowing in Corruption” (170-71). While there are many problems with this figuration—not the least being the similarities to be drawn between sexually-exploited slave women and prostitutes—this passage is, unfortunately, outside of the parameters of this study. However, this is definitely an avenue for further exploration.

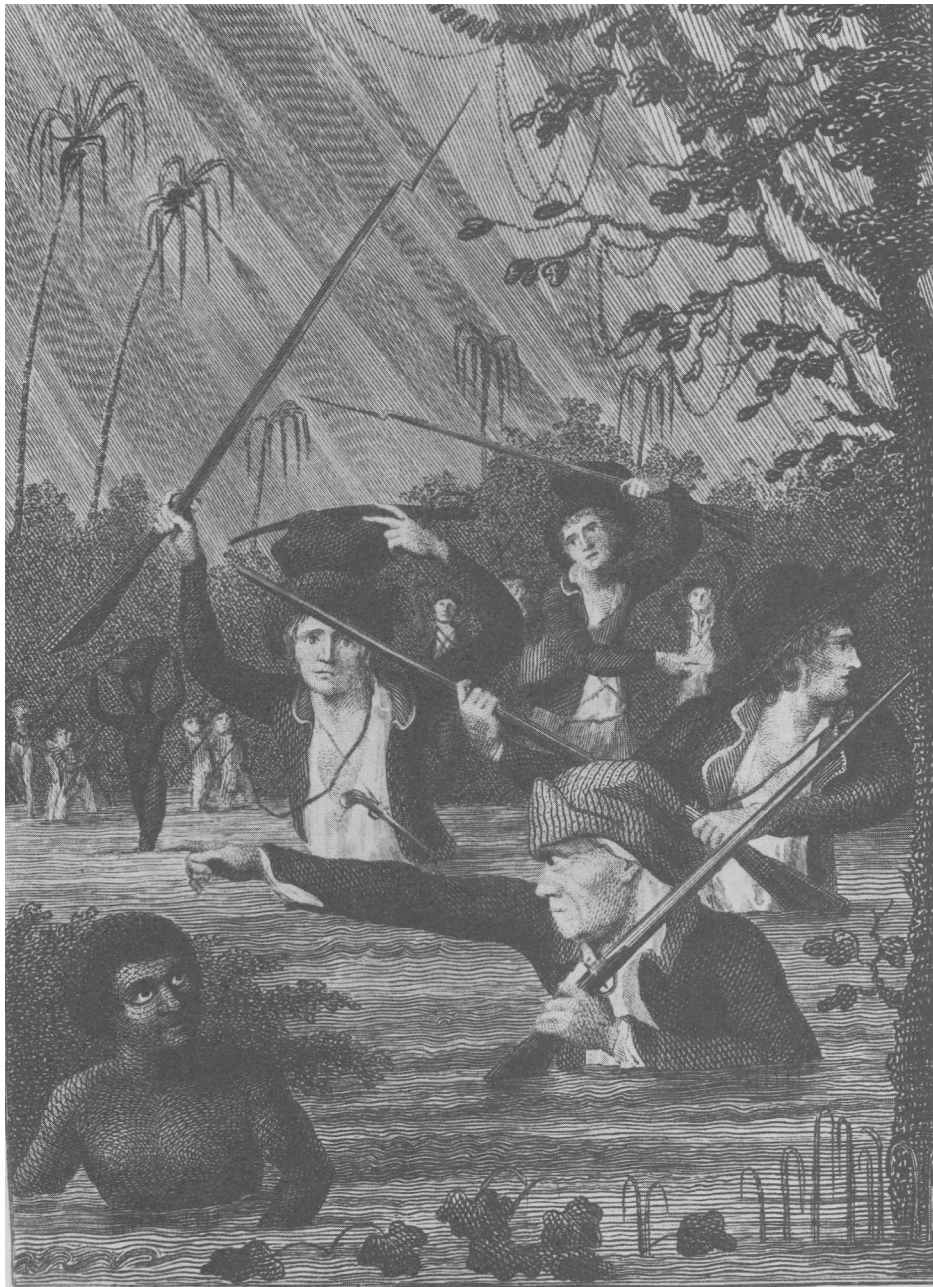
Jack's logic starts to fall apart here as most of the conditions that describes are common between sailors, soldiers, and slaves. In fact, the word which most hints at a difference between soldiers/sailors and slaves is "Capacity," which is indirectly explained two pages later, when Jack claims that Africans are, for the most part, "indolen[t]" and not "industrious" and thus have a lesser capacity (172). Regardless of Jack's implicit claims about racial inferiority, however, he does not explain how or why conditions are ameliorable for slaves but not for soldiers or sailors.

Throughout the *Narrative*, Jack's claims about the felicity of slaves and of their potential to have lives considerably better than those of soldiers or of slaves get increasingly more dramatic. Near the end of the *Narrative*, Jack explains that slave families remain together before saying,⁶⁸

How Wide Different is not this from the Generality of Europeans who spend /under the name of Liberty/ a Wretched Existance Enveloped in a Turbulent Sea of Care & Anxiety, While theyr Decendants are even Happy if by being Wafted to all the Different Corners of the Earth, And being torn to all Eternity from theyr Presence they Can only Get Bread, though Steep'd in Bitterness & the Sweat of their Forehead—Good God, What are our Soldiers & Sailors, are they not Dependant under the Verry Severest Laws, do they not Sell Theyr Liberty for a Precarious Subsistance, And to Serve as Marks to be Shot at; Away Detestable prejudice Which Cannot See its own Chains on Account of theyr Guilding⁶⁹—And Hail; thou Happy People, Who under the Name of Slavery enjoy often the Purest Bliss—Which is to Say in Other Words, that the African Negroe Slaves, Who have the Good Fortune to be Under a Master Who is Really a man, Enjoy that State of Felicity, that is Superior to most, & even inferior to None (541-42)

68 In Surinam, unlike in most contemporary slave-holding communities practicing chattel slavery, it was customary for at least matrilineal slave families to be sold as a unit, meaning that mothers and their children were seldom parted (Pierce 227).

69 The notion that their golden color—i.e. representation of wealth—masks the chains of slavery puts an interesting spin on Joanna's aforementioned "gold chains."



March thro' a swamp or Marsh, in Terra-firma.

Figure 5: March through a Swamp or Marsh in Guiana (Stedman 403)

The “Generality of Europeans” that Jack refers to is more specifically the families of soldiers and sailors. This passage demonstrates Jack’s tendency, particularly in the latter parts of the *Narrative*, to begin talking about slaves and seemingly subconsciously slip into a discussion of soldiers instead. Furthermore, when compared with the previously discussed passage, this shows how much more grandiose Jack’s claims about the similarities between soldiers and slaves and about slaves’ comparative happiness have become. Not only does Jack fail to recognize that while soldiers and sailors “Sell Theyr Liberty for a Precarious Subsistance,” the slaves’ liberty is stolen from them. Furthermore, Jack also seems to forget that there are slave men accompanying him and his troops—being “Shot at” alongside Jack and his men and even, as discussed earlier, living on half the soldiers’ rations.

Beyond what it signifies about Jack’s narrative structure and rhetorical strategy, the above passage shows Jack challenging even his own position. Because he is a mercenary soldier, a soldier paid for his services, Jack seems to be indicting himself in this willful blindness. Whether because he is deprived of his “Bread” and unable to get his “Precarious Subsistance” or because his (at this point) three and a half years in Surinam have altered his perspective on the price and worth of his family, Jack seems to have a different set of values here than he did previously and he seems to suggest that his enlisted soldiers should, also.

Jack does not have such an ambiguous relationship to money at the outset of the *Narrative*, though. In fact, Jack criticizes Fourgeoud for depriving the soldiers of part of their salaries, saying,

from our first Landing in Surinam till now our Private Men were paid in Silver Coin, which the Captains had proposed to exchange for card Money at the rate of 10 Pr Cent gain for *them*, by which the poor fellows would have benefitted between 2 and 300 Pound Sterling Pr Year to buy Refreshment—But Colonel Fourceoud insisted they should Continue to receive their little Cash in Coin which in small Sums was no more value than paper and I thought unaccountably hard, Since this was hurting the whole without profit to one single Individual (117-18).

Initially, this passage seems to critique Fourceoud's decision to pay the soldiers in an inconvenient currency or even to challenge Fourceoud's appropriation of a portion of the soldiers' pay. However, particularly when we recall that Jack was himself a captain—one of those “poor fellows” who stood to gain from this proposed system of economically exploiting the enlisted soldiers—his criticisms seem at least self-interested and at worst greedily so. Though the soldiers are already being paid “little Cash,” Jack has no problem with exploiting those who are already oppressed in order to pay for booze. Rather, Jack's frustration is not that the soldiers were deprived of ten percent of their pay, but rather that nobody was able to “profit” from the exploitation.⁷⁰

It seems that Jack's time with his company—in particular his expeditions in the forest—changes his valuation of both soldiers and money. As his fellow officers and his subordinates die in droves in the forest, Jack seems to question the profiteering occurring all around him. Jack narrates,

On the Ninth Were Sold to the best Bidder and on Credit the Goods
of the Deceased Ensign Strows When the Poor Soldiers
Regardless of any Price And Only Wishing to Come at Some
Cloaths & Refreshments to keep Soul and Body Together Actually
Paid at the Rate of 700 Pr. Cent

and even goes on to detail even further financial abuses (420). Though above,

70 Jack later explains that Fourceoud himself profited significantly from this system (596).

Jack is seen trying to profit from the enlisted soldiers, here he is incredibly critical of the practice. Jack's language suggests that this type of rapacious profiteering entails not only depriving soldiers of some of their "little cash," but even of their lives. The enlisted men will pay whatever it takes to "keep Soul and Body Together," though it costs them every bit of money they hoped to gain by putting their lives on the line in the first place. Jack analyzes and censures these actions, saying,

This Were a parcel of Poor Dying Wretches Robb'd even of that
Little income Which they so Dearly Earned at the expence of their
Sweat And Blood And Which might have So easily been Prevented
by Only Supplying them With What was their Due (420).

Notably, at this time the soldiers—including Jack—are suffering not from the loss of ten percent of their income, but rather from its entire worth being withheld from them by Fourceoud. To add insult to injury—or worse—then, Fourceoud first deprives them of their wages, refusing to "Supply... them With What was their Due," and then marks up the price of the items they should have been provided with by those wages "at the Rate of 700 Pr. Cent." Jack's graphic descriptions of the soldiers as a "parcel of Poor Dying Wretches" who "Robb'd" seems carefully calculated to create sympathy for the soldiers—himself included—and spark the readers' indignation at this extreme form of exploitation.

Jack explains that the recurrent deaths—and perpetual want—during the expedition significantly altered the soldiers' perspectives on monetary gain. He explains, "death was so Common to us on this Expedition that after Losing our Dearest Friend or Relation the first Question ask'd Generally was 'has he left any Rum, Brandy or Tobacco'" (445). Thus, by looking at even his "Dearest Friend or

Relation” through a fiscal lens, Jack shows how a person is reduced to a piece of property. Seemingly it is because of his continual deprivation that Jack is able to view human beings as commodities. Just as his friends can be reduced to their possessions, so too can slaves become objects to be traded.

Ironically, though Jack demonstrates that he and his fellow soldiers were so desperate for money and goods that they reduced their friends to their sheer economic worth, he explains that there were sufficient resources for Fourceoud to offer the rebels “Life, Liberty, Meat, Drink, and All they Wanted” (408) in exchange for their surrender. Not only did the rebels not take the offer, they:

Replied With a Loud Laugh, that they Wanted Nothing from him
Who seemed a Half Starved Frenchman, Already Run Away from
his own Country, [but] that if he Would Venture to give them a Visit
in Person, he Should not be Hurted, And might Depend on not
Returning With an Empty Belly (408).

This tale allows Jack to poke fun at Fourceoud, but more significantly, it allows him to dramatically alter the dynamics of the relationship between the soldiers and the rebels. Specifically, while Jack has continually expressed sympathy for the rebels throughout the *Narrative*, at this point the situation is reversed and they are seen sympathizing with him and his peers.

This shift in pity is made even more explicit as the passage continues. Jack narrates that the rebels, “Call'd to us that we were more to be Pitied than themselves, Who were only a Parcel of White Slaves, hired to be shot at, & Starved for 4 Pence a Day” (408). The rebels' speech here is notably similar to Jack's earlier proclamations about the role soldiers play.⁷¹ Like Jack, the rebels

⁷¹ As well as Jack's later discussion about how depraved soldiers are, which was discussed earlier in this chapter.

claim that the soldiers' economic status makes them analogous to slaves; because they are poor, they work for a mere “4 Pence a Day.” Thus, according to Jack's configuration of their motives and rending of their speech, the rebels are hesitant to “Expand [Expend] much of theyr Powder Upon such Scarcrows” who, in spite of tracking them down, destroying their villages, and trying to kill them, are not “the Agressors” (408-09). Rather, the “Agressors” are the planters.

By constructing the dialogue between the rebels and the soldiers in this way, Stedman is able to forge an alliance between seemingly disparate groups. The previously complex system of interacting men is narrowed down to two opposing groups: rebels and planters. For a brief moment, all other groups—slaves, rangers, and soldiers—become unnecessary. Ironically, the only way for Stedman to be able to successfully reduce the five groups into a dichotomy is to lump together the soldiers and rangers with the slaves and even their adversaries the rebels to form an alliance against the planters. The ties that bind all the opposing groups together, then, is economic oppression—poverty.

As part of their refusal to view the soldiers as their adversaries, Jack explains, the rebels intentionally use weapons intended to harm, rather than kill, the soldiers. Jack says, “the Surgeons, Who Dress[ed] the Wounded Extracted in Place of Lead Bullets only *Pebbles Coat Buttons*, and *Silver Coin*” (409). These items, he explains, do the soldiers “Little harm” because the objects are unable to sufficiently penetrate the soldiers' skin (409). This choice of projectiles is ironic. Because the rebels so pointedly draw attention to the insufficient compensation inherent in their role as mercenary soldiers, the rebels' use of

“*Silver Coin*” draws attention to the their relative affluence. In case readers miss the irony of the situation, however, Stedman has Jack point our attention to the financial aspects of this attack even once more as Jack explains that “even Gold Could do themselves [the rebels] as Little Good in a Wild Forrest where they had nothing to buy for it” (409).⁷² This passage hints at a system of alternative value and values, which allows Jack to question the worth even of the money he is earning as a soldier. Ultimately, both the choice of coins as ammunition and the narrative discourse that ensue seem calculated to highlight the soldiers' relative poverty. So much are the rebels better off financially than the soldiers that they can load their guns with money, seemingly without thinking twice about it. In spite of Jack's claims that the rebels' choice of projectiles is driven purely by sympathy for the soldiers, there is a distinct possibility that the rebels were simply being resourceful. It is even possible that they had no bullets. However, Jack's narrative mission here requires that the rebels protect the soldiers out of sympathy.

Specifically, both in this passage and in the *Narrative* in general, Jack creates another mercantile system of exchange, not of financial wealth or material goods, but of pity. Throughout the *Narrative*, Jack collects sympathy from his readers—for tortured slaves, murdered monkeys, exploited soldiers, and even his abandoned lover. Once collected, Jack attempts to transfer the sympathy to and onto others. Especially as his *Narrative* draws to a close, Jack cashes in on his venture by transferring all the garnered sympathy to himself.

72 This complicates Jack's earlier criticism of the Saramaka and Ouca Maroons' refusal to plant cash crops (explored in Chapter 2) because it stands to reason that similarly, the gold they would earn would do them “Little Good in a Wild Forrest where they had nothing to buy for it.”

Whether that sympathy is then intended to be transferred from Jack to Stedman is another issue altogether.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The historical relationship between John Gabriel Stedman and a slave woman known to only by the name Joanna is one that cannot be reclaimed or relived. Though we as literary scholars can try, as many have before us, to rewrite that relationship—to give it new meaning and to impose meaning—it seems more valuable that we instead try to *read* it. Let us leave behind what we cannot know and try for now to explore what of it we can—the resultant *Narrative*. If we center our discussions around the fidelity of Stedman's manuscript to the journal it was based upon, we will end up with a list of contradictions. What we will not have is a meaning for those contradictions. It seems to me that as literary scholars, our job is not to uncover a text's verisimilitude; our job is to look at its function. We cannot assume that the Stedman of 1772-1777 was any more “true” or authentic than the Stedman of the 1780s. However, both author Stedmans (Stedmen?), that of the private journal and that of the public manuscript, were constructions. Both were intimately bound to the subjectivity of the moment. It has too often been the case that scholars look to Stedman to explain his life, his relationship with Joanna, and Surinam in general. However, by looking at the contradictions and re-imaginings, we see a Stedman who, even as he wrote the manuscript and transformed the journal, struggled to comprehend his past. Thus, instead of Stedman using the manuscript to explain his life in Surinam during those four years, Stedman can be

seen as using the manuscript to explore them—to try to understand the complexity and incongruity of all that he saw.

Throughout this exploration of Stedman's *Narrative*, I have tried to point to questions that I think are worthy of further exploration. Along with those, I wish to offer the following suggestions for further research on Stedman's *Narrative*:

1. As a late eighteenth century narrative so intimately concerned with slavery, Stedman's text deserves to be put in conversation with contemporary anglophone African writers including, but not limited to:
 - a. Olaudah Equiano's narrative in order to discuss amelioration of slave conditions and optimizations of slave systems.
 - b. Venture Smith's narrative in order to discuss economics, either of family or of slavery in general.
 - c. John Marrant's narrative in order to discuss ethnography, either of indigenous Americans or in general.
 - d. Phillis Wheatley's poetry in order to discuss either his use of her works or to discuss the similarities in content or form between his quoted poems and her works.
2. Stedman's discussions of contemporary Christianity are particularly fascinating. Not only does he have no patience for what he deems as religious hypocrisy, he denies Christian hegemony. As such, it is worth exploring Stedman's:
 - a. Praise for/value of the African and syncretized religions he sees in the slaves and rangers.

- b. Creation of a system of values seemingly intended to supplement or even replace Christianity.
 - c. Use/appropriation/transformation of the myth of Adam and Eve.
 - d. Ultimate indifference to baptizing Johnny.
3. Much of the *Narrative* is concerned with discussing Stedman's bodily condition. Along those lines, it would be worth examining (no pun intended):
- a. The ways that the history of medicine plays out in the *Narrative*.
 - b. The rending of Jack's body by disease and injury.
 - c. Jack's valuation of hygiene and the repercussions of cleanliness on (public) health.
 - d. Jack's nakedness in relation to his European peers, particularly with regard to Margaret Hunt's observation that one of the traditional marks of distinction between middling English travel writers and their narrative subjects was that the subjects were "naked" while they were fully and properly dressed (344-45).
4. Like many other texts which deal with slave societies, Stedman's *Narrative* contains harsh criticism of white women which merits further exploration in the fields of:
- a. Gender studies.
 - b. Whiteness studies.
 - c. Sexuality studies.
5. Though this seems obvious, Stedman's text, a memoir/autobiography

should be looked at in terms of what it says about autobiographical theory and vice versa.

Though I could point to at least half a dozen more ways that this text can and should be explored, it seems perhaps more relevant to simply emphatically implore *that* it be explored. Not only does this text deserve to be studied because it is itself rich in possibilities, this text deserves considerably more scholarly attention than it has gotten to date in part *because* it is non-canonical. As both the academy in general and English studies in particular come to recognize the significance of marginalized voices, we must come to expand the gamut of texts that are considered worthy of study. We as scholars must not only allow those texts written by non-traditional authors—including authors with limited educations and even authors whose literary talents we consider marginal—to be read/heard/seen, we must encourage it. For their sakes, and for our own.

APPENDIX 1: EDITIONS OF STEDMAN

Key:

Plain text: Texts included in Richard Price and Sally Price's list of editions of Stedman's Narrative (LXIII-LXXXIII)

Italics: Literary re-imaginings of Stedman's Narrative (Not included in Price and Price's list)

1796 – Narrative of a five years' expedition, against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam, in Guiana, on the Wild Coast of South America; from the year 1772, to 1777; elucidating the History of tht Country, and describing its Productions, Viz. Quadrupedes, Birds, Fishes, Reptiles, Trees, Shrubs, Fruits, & Roots; with an account of the Indians of Guiana, & Negroes of Guinea. By Captn. J.G. Stedman. illustrated with 80 elegant Engravings, from drawings made by the Author. London. Printed for J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church Yard, & J Edwards, Pall Mall. 1796

1796 – Idem no. 1 (large paper issue...with all plates colored by hand

1797 – Stedman's Nachrichten von Surinam und von seiner Expedition gegen die rebellischen Neger in dieser Kolonie in den Jahren 1772 bis 1777. Ein Auszug aus dem Englischen Original. Mit einer Karte und Kupfern Mit allergnädigsten Freiheiten. Hamberg, 1797. bei Benjamin Gottlob Hoffmann.
(abridged)

1797 – Stedmans Nachrichten von Suriname, dem letzten Aufruhr der dortigen Negersclaven und ihrer Bezwingung in den Jahren 1772. bis 1777. Auszugsweise übersetzt von M. C. Sprengel. Halle, in der Rengerschen Bunchhandlung. 1797.
(abridged)

1797 – Idem no. 4.
(excerpt of Stedman in Sprengel?)

1798 – Voyage à Surinam et dans l'Intérieur de la Guiane, contenant La Relation de cinq Années de Courses et d'Observations faites dans cette Contrée intéressante et peu connue; Avec des Détails sur les Indiens de la Guiane et les Nègres; Par le Capitaine J. G. Stedman; traduit de l'Anglais par P. F. Henry: Suivi du Tableau de la Colonie Française de Cayenne/ Avec une Collection de 44 Planches in-40., gravées en taille-douce, contenant des Vues, Marines, Cartes Géographiques, Plans, Portraits, Costumes, Animaux, Plantes, etc dessinés sur les lieux par J. G. Stedman. A Paris, Chez F. Buisson. Imprimeur-

Libraire, rue Hautefeuille, no. 20. An VII de la République.
(abridged)

1799 – Reize in de binnenlanden van Suriname, door Kapitein John Gabriël Stedman. Met Plaatén. Naar het Hoogduitsch door J. D. Pasteur. Leiden: A. & J Honkoop.
(translation of 1797 German?)

1799? – I. G. Stedmann's Reisen in Surinam, für die Jugend, bearbeitet von M. Chr. Schulz. Neue Auflage mit V illuminirten Kupfertafeln. Berlin, in der Schüppelschen Buchhandlung.
(abridged juvenile edition)

1799-1800 – Reize naar Surinamen, en door de binnenste gedeelten van Guiana; door den Capitain John Gabriël Stedman. Men plaatén en kaarten. Naar het Engelsch. Te Amsterdam, by Johannes Allart.
(abridged)

1800 – Capitain Johan Stedmans Dagbok öfwer Sina Fälttåg Inwånare och öfriga Märkwådigheter. Sammandrag. Stockholm: Tryckt i Kongl. Ordens Boktryckeriet hos Assessoren Johan Pfeiffer.
(abridged)

1800 – Kleines Magazin von Reisen zur angenehmen und behchrenden Unterhaltung der Jugend. Nach den neuesten deutschen und ausländischen Originalwerken, bearbeitet von Schulz. Erstes Bändchen mit 5 Kupfertafeln. Berlin 1800. bey Oehmighe dem Jüngern.
(abridged juvenile edition)

1804 – Joanna of Surinam. John Cross play.

1804 – Die Sclavin in Surinam. Franz Kratter play.

1806 – Second edition of 1796

1809? – Curious Adventures of Captain Stedman, During an Expedition to Surinam, in 1773; Including the Struggles of the Negroes, and the Barbarities of the Planters, Dreadful Executions, the Manner of Selling Slaves, Mutiny of Sailors, Soldiers, &c. and Various Other Intersting Articles. London: Printed for Thomas Tegg, III. Cheapside.
(abridged)

1813 – Release of 1806

1816 – The Slave, a musical drama in three acts. By Henry Bishop.

1818 – Viaggio al Surinam e nell' Interno della Guiana ossia Relazione di Finque Anni di Corse e di Osservazioni fatte in questo interessante e poco conosciuto Paese dal Capitano Stedman. Versione dal francese del Cav. Borghi. Corredata del Ritratto dell'Autore; di una Carta geografica, di rami colorati, ed accresciuta di note e di un supplemento del Traduttore sulle altre parti della Guiana, nè visitante, nè descritte dal sig. Stedman. Milano, dalla Tipografia di Giambattista Sonzogno.

1824 – Joanna, or the Female Slave. A West Indian tale. Founded on Stedma's Narrative of an Expedition Against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam. London: Printed for Lupton Relfe, 13, Cornhill; Constable and Co., Edinburgh; and R. Milliken, Dublin.
(abridged, “stylistically altered”)

1834 – “Joanna.” In *The Oasis*, Mrs. [Lydia] Child, ed., Boston, Benjamin C. Bacon, pp. 65-105

1838 – Narrative of Joanna; an Emancipated Slave, of Surinam. (From Stedman's Narrative of a Five Year's Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam.) Boston: Published by Isaac Knapp, 25, Cornhill.
(excerpted sections about Joanna)

1840 – *Les Aventures D'Hercule Hardi*. By Eugène Sue.

1857 – *The Adventures of Hercules Hardy, or Guiana in 1772*. By Eugene Sue.

1960 – Voyage à Surinam par le capitaine Jean-Gabriel Stedman. Edition établie et présentée par Michel Rouzé selon la traduction originale de P.-F. Henri. Paris: Le Club Français du Livre.
(abridged from 1798)

1962 – *The Journal of John Gabriel Stedman, 1744-1797, Soldier and Author: Including and Authentic Account of his expedition to Surinam, in 1772*. Edited by Stanbury Thompson.

1965 – *Soldier in Paradise: The Life of Captain John Stedman 1744-1797*. By Louise Collis.

1966 – *John Gabriel Stedman: A Study of his Life and Times*. By Stanbury Thompson.

1963 – Expedition to Surinam being the narrative of a five years expedition against the revolted negroes of Surinam in Guiana on the wild coast of South America from the year 1772 to 1777 elucidating that country and describing its productions with an account of Indians of Guiana and negroes of Guinea by Captain John Stedman newly edited and abridged by Christopher Bryant and

illustrated with engravings selected from the earliest edition themselves made after drawings by the author. London: Folio Society.
(modernized, abridged)

1971 – Narrative of a five years' expedition against the revolted Negroes of Surinam in Guiana on the Wild Coast of South America from the years 1772 to 1777. Elucidating the history of that country & describing its productions, viz. quadrupedes, birds, reptiles, trees, shrubs, fruits, & roots; with an account of the Indians of Guiana and Negroes of Guinea by Captain J. G. Stedman, illustrated with 80 elegant engravings from drawings made by the author Printed for the Imprint Society Barre, Massachusetts.
(reprint of original 1796)

1972 – 1971 edition in a single volume

1974 – Reize naar Surinamen en door de binnenste gedeelten van Guiana I-IV Opnieuw uitgegeven naar de oorspronkelijke editie Amsterdam 1799-1800 Met inleiding en aantekeingen door Prof. Dr. R. A. J. van Lier Hoogleraar aan de Landbouwgoschool te Wageningen. Amsterdam: S. Emmering.
(reprint of 1799-1800 Dutch edition with translated van Lier intro)

1983 – *For Captain Stedman. Book of Poetry by Landeg White.*

1984 – *Slave Song. Book of Poetry by David Dabydeen.*

1988 – Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam. Edited, and with an Introduction and Notes, by Richard Price and Sally Price. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

1991 – *Stedman and Joanna--a love in bondage : dedicated love in the eighteenth century. Novel by Beryl Gilroy.*

[1992] – Stedman's *Surinam: Life in an Eighteenth-Century Slave Society.* Edited by Richard Price and Sally Price.
(abridged)

2003 – *Paramaribo: A True Story Of Love, Slavery, And Rebellion In The Amazon. Biography by Lee Miller*

2005 – *Slave Song. Book of Poetry by David Dabydeen*
(reissue of 1984 with a reflective afterward by the author).

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