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Slavery and Anti-Republicanism in Sir Ralph Freeman's *Imperiale, a Tragedy* (1639)

In Sir Ralph Freeman's *Imperiale, a Tragedy* (1639), a young nobleman of Genoa named Francisco finds himself helplessly in love with Angelica, the daughter of his father's rival. He feels so tightly bound by his amorous desires that he describes himself as love's slave — a standard trope of courtier romance that could be easily dismissed if not for other factors in the play. Following dramatic convention (and Francisco always seeks predictable conventions to follow), the young lover believes he can bribe a clever domestic servant to help him woo the object of his love. To this end he engages Molosso, an African slave bound to the mortal enemy of Francisco's father. At first glance, one might assume that Freeman intends to follow a Plautine juxtaposition of love slave and chattel slave to emphasize the lover's sense of bondage to his desire, but Freeman surprises us. In this play, the slave does not reinforce the lover's plight; rather, the lover's pangs highlight the misery of slavery. That is, Freeman does not feature the chattel slave to reinforce metaphors for love; he portrays the love slave as a way of showing how empty mere metaphors of slavery are when compared to actual forced servitude.

Francisco O 'tis hee.

How is't *Moloss*? thy face hath businesse in't,
would thou wert at leysure.

Molosso My toyl'd body

Will not admit a cheerfull countenance;
But I can throw off care, if you command.

Francisco Wouldst thou embrace redemption?

Molosso Aske me whether

I would not wish some shade if I were broyl'd
Upon the *Lybian* Sands, where *Cancer* reignes:
But Sir, if I mistake not, you sustaine
A greater servitude, yet seek not freedome.

Francisco Thou woul'dst perswade me to shake off Loves fetters.
Molosso Rather to change them into chains of Gold,
 To wealth and ornament; it may be done
 Without your *Chymicall* projection. (C4v–D1r)¹

Francisco's love, doomed from the start, receives far less attention than Molosso's plot in the play overall. The socially superior nobleman is merely a pawn; the chattel slave controls the scene and garners our greater sympathy for his greater suffering. Although Francisco observes that Molosso looks serious and business-like, he can barely fathom the depth of Molosso's thought. He does not realize that Molosso's master, the titular Imperiale, has recently tortured the slave, nor does Francisco realize that Molosso plots a revenge scheme (although Francisco is one of the few Europeans who understands the slave's desire for emancipation).

Freeman is no Plautus, and Francisco's destiny is not comic. The slave manoeuvres Francisco in a complicated plot against Imperiale — a plot that includes Francisco's murder. In light of this dramatic irony, Francisco's complaint at bearing love's fetters lacks decorum and appears downright foppish when set next to a physically fettered and suffering slave. Molosso professes that Francisco's invisible shackles weigh more than his own tangible irons, but Molosso deceives the lover: the pangs of love pale compared to the tortures Molosso has endured. This subterfuge calls stoic philosophy into question. Mental bondage might only seem more severe than physical bondage to those who are not in actual chains. The slave allows and even encourages the lover to wallow in self-pity and the rhetoric of slavery, intentionally keeping the nobleman ignorant.

Freeman empties metaphorical love slavery of its poetic worth by considering physical and legal slavery, but the playwright has bigger slave metaphors to deconstruct than those of love. Published just prior to the outbreak of the English civil war, *Imperiale* is a product of a time when would-be rebels deployed slave rhetoric to justify their disobedience to a tyrannical monarch. Freeman uses the same process by which he deconstructs Francisco's love slavery to question the appropriateness of slave imagery used by Charles I's detractors and future revolutionaries. Freeman's play thus suggests that the rhetoric of slavery generated by rebel parliamentarians and republicans appears as absurd as Francisco's when considered next to actual chattel slavery — especially in light of difficulties that British colonists faced man-

aging their African slaves in New World settlements. The play appeared at a pivotal moment from several vantage points of English history.

Thomas Harper first published *Imperiale, a Tragedy* in 1639, the same year he published William Davenant's politically-charged court masque *Salmacida Spolia*. He then reprinted Freeman's play in 1640 and 1655, with revisions that reflect England's vastly altered political terrain. As for the play's dramatic reception, Kenneth Richards writes:

Professor G.E. Bentley, while conceding that *Imperiale* could possibly have had a performance at one of the universities, characterises the play as essentially closet drama, stilted and artificial. Yet the play has enough life and force to make Langbaine's judgment of it not wholly misconceived: 'I know not whether ever this play was acted; but certainly it far better deserv'd to have appear'd on the Theatre than many of our modern Farces that have usurp'd the Stage, and depos'd its lawful Monarch, Tragedy'.²

Despite its multiple publications and relative stage worthiness, Freeman's tragedy has been a faint blip on the critical radar; scholars usually relegate it to an occasional footnote on dramatic representations of stoic philosophy, mostly due to Sir Ralph Freeman's own translations of Seneca.³

Despite the author's close political ties and his dramatic depiction of foreign slaves, Freeman's drama has thus far not benefited from a reading incorporating modern political, imperialist, or race theories. No doubt derived in part from his service to the Stuart monarchs, Freeman's complex views regarding pre-revolutionary debates on monarchy and republicanism intertwine with an awareness of African chattel slavery to create a play that challenges tyrants, rebels, and slave-owners alike. Perhaps the most thorough biography extant on Sir Ralph Freeman comes from Charles Gumm, whose abortive attempt to edit *Imperiale* in 1917 yielded the first major article on the play (and the only significant work to be done until Richards's source study in 1968). Gumm depicts Freeman as a staunch royalist and anti-republican, recounting that the wealthy knight served as master of requests under Charles I, lost his position and was fined several times under the Protectorate, then regained his former duties after the restoration.⁴ When Freeman originally composed his play, however, the nation was not yet at war and Freeman's allegiance to the king had not yet been galvanized into royalism. While a playwright's future political views do not have to colour his drama, even the first printing of Freeman's *Imperiale, a Tragedy* has little esteem for

the republic where the action unfolds. Set in Genoa (which Freeman makes sure explicitly to identify as a republic in his text), the play climaxes in a scene of two cruelly oppressed African slaves rebelling against Imperiale by raping his wife and daughter and then committing suicide. Our initial sympathies for tortured African slaves ultimately tilt in favour of the cruel, tyrannical patriarch when we share his suffering before violent spectacles of rape, murder, and suicide. While the play undoubtedly renders Imperiale (the monarchical stand-in) as blameworthy and guilty of misrule, Freeman argues that rebellion can prove far more cruel than the initial state of oppression. By his excessive revenge, Molosso dissolves his own claims that his enslavement justifies his rebellion.⁵ If read politically, Freeman's play frames the English civil war with an anti-rebellion, anti-republican, and — just possibly — anti-slavery polemic. Freeman's depiction of slaves becomes more poignant when read alongside Karen Kupperman's archival research on the first attempted slave revolt in a British colony — the Providence Island slave revolt which occurred just a year prior to *Imperiale's* first publication. The political implications of Freeman's work have been left largely unacknowledged, but their stakes are large indeed as the play questions early modern notions of equality, slavery, and republicanism.⁶

Given the play's obscurity, a more complete plot synopsis proves useful. Previous to the action of the play, the Genoan noblemen Imperiale and Spinola begin to feud when Imperiale breaks off his daughter Angelica's engagement to Spinola's son Francisco. Imperiale intends now to marry her to the soldier Doria. Imperiale's slave, Molosso, learns from Spinola's slave, Sango, that Spinola has hired a bravado named Verdugo to assassinate Imperiale at Carnival. Molosso feels he will finally have vengeance for Imperiale's cruel punishments. Meanwhile, Angelica and Imperiale's wife Honoria have dreams that seemingly tame bears and wolves are brought into the house, turn wild, and ravish them. Imperiale at first dismisses the dream, then confronts Molosso (whom he feels can be likened to a bear or wolf), but Molosso wins Imperiale's trust by revealing Spinola's plot. Molosso decides he will pretend loyalty to gain a greater revenge later. Meanwhile, Angelica is secretly tested by a disguised Doria, and she denies his false report of his own death. Molosso arranges for Francisco, who (along with his slave Sango) still pines for Angelica, to disguise himself as Imperiale in an attempt to sneak an audience with the maiden. However, Molosso really plots Francisco's murder. Verdugo mistakenly assassinates Francisco, Spinola's son, and eventually faces trial (he is found guilty on multiple charges, including the previous rape

of a child). Spinola goes mad from grief and guilt at Francisco's death while his friend Justinian attempts to console him with stoic philosophy. During a masque re-enacting the rape of the Sabine women, Doria reveals himself to his bride to be. Afterwards, Molosso and Sango secretly abduct Honoria and Angelica, lock themselves in a tower, and violate the women. Imperiale discovers the plot, pleads with Molosso, and eventually blinds himself to thwart Molosso's threat to kill the women before his eyes. The slaves kill the women and then each other to escape dishonourable capture. Spinola and Justinian arrive to confront Imperiale, but, witnessing the tragic scene, Spinola is moved to pity his enemy and offers to take care of him in his infirmity.

Freeman's slaves display exceptional dignity, especially when we juxtapose them with their dramatic contemporaries in William Cartwright's *The Royal Slave* (1639) and Massinger's *The Bond-man* (1638). Both plays feature slave rebellions as well as individual slaves who behave nobly. In Cartwright's case, the noble slave has been taught Greek philosophy and experiences the great fortune of being appointed a carnivalesque king for three days. In Massinger's play, Marullo, a noble-hearted slave, turns out to be Pisander, a nobleman in disguise.⁷ Apart from these two individuals who appear to have distinguished upbringings, the other rebel slaves are base, cowardly, and foolish. Cartwright's ignoble slaves merely seek to gratify their physical desires and typically appear as comic drunks. Massinger's slaves anti-climactically and perhaps humorously surrender their revolt when their respective masters crack whips. In all three plays, rebel leaders spur revolt through rhetoric of solidarity in suffering and republican egalitarianism. Yet Freeman's slaves stand out against these others in three significant regards: first, his slaves are capable of lofty philosophical concepts of freedom based on their African heritage rather than European philosophy (and without any suggestion of noble birth or upbringing); second, they are brave even in the depiction of their suicides; and third, Molosso and Sango's revolt is cathartically tragic rather than innocuously comic.

Molosso articulates an interior conviction against the very concept of slavery, and his speech might sound like an English declaration of native freedom if Freeman did not explicitly remind us of Molosso's foreign lineage. Molosso is an African slave who remembers stories of natural equality told to him in childhood:

Though fortune made us wretched slaves to you,
We both retaine some sparks of th'active fire,

(Which the traditions of our Countrey tell us,
 Did sometimes flame in our Numidean breasts,
 Not yet so quench't by servitude, but we
 Have will and power to free our selves, behold
 Our *liberty*; these shall restore us now
 To that equality that nature gave,
 In which blinde chance hast put a difference:
 One blow from these *deliverers* can make
 An abject beggar equall to a King:
Sango keepe time. (H4r-v)

Molosso believes that even in his slavery his freedom has not been extinguished.⁸ One hears concern in his voice that no matter how strong that fire burns, prolonged slavery will transform an otherwise free man into a mental slave; that is, he refutes an Aristotelian belief in natural born slavery and asserts a belief that a slavish mind results from the bad luck of being enslaved and thereafter conditioned to think like a slave over time.⁹ He also reiterates a common early modern trope that death is the ultimate equalizer; thus, he believes that the guns he refers to as 'deliverers' provide him with power on par with royalty. Though his final deeds are cruel, Molosso shows himself capable of thoughts that seem beyond the base minds of Cartwright's and Massinger's mobs of slaves who cower before threats. Of course, Freeman's masters never consider the option of threatening Molosso and Sango. Imperiale fails to control his household and fails to regain order once his control falters. He sacrifices the distinction between the master and servant, committing the socially grievous sin of dealing with a slave as an equal — if not superior partner — in a bargain.

In his final speech, Molosso clears all questions that Freeman's slaves might have been intimidated into submission:

'Tis wretchedness to feare where ther's no hope,
 Could'st thou beleeve vaine *Spinola*, that we
 Would undertake to act so bold a mischiefe,
 And not resolve upon as brave an end?
 We that have gained such a full revenge,
 Meane not to lose it by a poore submission
 To hopelesse mercy, or your new found torments. (H4r)

Like a Roman, Molosso looks to suicide as the means of avoiding the dishonour or 'wretchedness' which would result from letting himself be captured.¹⁰ What concerns Molosso most is not so much the pain of torture but the humiliation of renewed submission to the will of others. As scholars have observed, this kind of heroic Roman rhetoric of freedom, liberty, and irrevocable self-worth was seen as inspiring anti-monarchical republicanism throughout early modern England and Europe.¹¹

Molosso's language of natural rights and liberties in turn echoes the republican rhetoric that was helping to foment the imminent English civil war. And republicanism seems to have been on Freeman's mind when he chose to deviate from his source materials and explicitly set the play in the republic of Genoa.¹² Furthermore, changes in the text of the third edition depict the rebel Africans as reflecting the ideals of English republicans:

My taske shall be to make it profitable
 No lesse than pleasant, by his foreknown fall
 Wee'l raise our selves to wealth and liberty,
 The great allurements of those bold attempts,
 Wherein the Vassall dares affront his Lord,
 And quite shake off the yoke of his subjection.
*When he; whose wilfull power rul'd all men, shall
 Find both his will and power ore-rul'd by all.*¹³

The last two lines appear only in the 1655 edition, indicating a shift from mere rebellion for liberty to a political revolution aimed at the overthrow of a monarch and the establishment of a more democratic rule — a radical parliamentary rhetoric. Freeman's conspiratorial rebels trigger memories of Charles I's more egalitarian enemies.

But Freeman takes his time condemning Molosso and Sango; their republican rhetoric sounds appealing given their situation, and, perhaps more significantly, Freeman concedes the tyranny of Imperiale.¹⁴ One might conjecture that Freeman writes his play to an audience hostile to his own royalist views. He appears to grant them as much as possible before condemning rebellion itself. No one denies Molosso's accusations that Imperiale has been willful, self-serving, and cruel in his mastery, and Imperiale himself considers that his torture of Molosso was too harsh when Molosso reveals Spínola's plot. But even after Imperiale promotes Molosso to major domo, the African retains the status of slave. Francisco's offer to buy his manumission if he can arrange access to Angelica is the only hope of emancipation that

Molosso ever sees, but even if Molosso could grant Francisco's wish, Francisco hardly seems capable of achieving his desired outcome. Molosso might be able to ameliorate his conditions, but service will afford him no plausible opportunity to achieve legal freedom. Only Molosso's own (and admittedly self-destructive) rebellion can remove his enslavement. Freeman gives us sympathetic rebel slaves: we feel for their plight; we witness the cruelty of their masters; we hear their despair. If ever a rebellion was justified, Freeman seems to say, Molosso would be in the right.

Freeman creates as sympathetic a rebel slave as possible, at least until the actual rebellion and horrific rape. Or does he? These slaves sound sympathetic in their language. One might identify with them in words, but would they have appeared sympathetic if staged? Is it possible that the African identity of the slaves undermines their republican rhetoric? Colour and race pose a puzzle in Freeman's play for anyone attempting to stage it.¹⁵ Molosso and Sango are African, but are they black? If black, how might this affect an early modern English audience's sympathies? None of the characters in *Imperiale* ever directly refer to Molosso's skin colour, even though nationality distinguishes slave from master.¹⁶ Freeman depicts Molosso and Sango's background through their names and two geographical references. At one point, Molosso declares his origins in Africa when he refers to their 'Numidian breasts' in his death speech (H4v).¹⁷ Francisco also describes their origin: 'her father keeps a slave / A cunning Affrican, whose very soule / For mony and hope of liberty I'll buy' (C3v). Molosso's wit, for better or for worse, naturally coincides with his African identity according to Francisco, and one might perhaps recall Tamora's sons consulting the cunning Moor in matters of love. If Molosso's intelligence is connected to his African-ness, then so too is his philosophy. Freeman's slaves do not learn egalitarian values from Europeans in the play (despite living in a republic); freedom and equality are, as mentioned before, part of a Numidean collective memory.¹⁸ These slaves do not receive a European education although they speak like European revolutionaries trained in the classics. They have independently developed the values of the Roman republic; but Molosso's faux-classical education proves not civilizing but barbarizing.

As Eliot Tokson observes, the seventeenth-century Englishman viewed African cultures as paganism spawned by Satan himself.¹⁹ In the view of a more recent generation of race scholars such as Kim Hall and Ania Loomba, Africa could indicate worldly evils if not supernatural ones. In *Performing Blackness on English Stages, 1500–1800*, Virginia Mason Vaughan observes

how the ‘black-faced devils’ of the homiletic tradition had become amalgamated with the figure of the black Moor of Africa in a conventional symbol of the qualities — barbarism, ignorance, impudence, and falsehood — in opposition to white Englishness and true religion. The battle between the forces of good and evil no longer figured in the next world, but in the here and now of exploration and trade.²⁰

British imperialism borrowed these traditions for more earthly colonial metaphors. Although Molosso’s African descent does not demand that he possess somatic or racial blackness, he nevertheless evokes Loomba’s definition of blackness which ‘represents danger, becomes a way of signifying what lies outside familiar or approved social, political, religious, and sexual structures’.²¹ If the African heritage of the slaves does not necessarily make them evil, then Loomba still suggests that it could make them less identifiable to a white English audience: ‘Recent criticism has persuasively demonstrated that “everything English” could only be defined by establishing what lay outside’.²² Or, as Joyce MacDonald writes, ‘Race becomes a matter of what the English writers and readers of these stories are not, or are not supposed to be’.²³ Nabil Matar modifies this system of ‘Othering’ to suggest that authors could use race not so much as a means of defining Englishness as separate from some other identity but as a means to project social problems (such as sodomy) of self-avowed Englishmen onto others (such as Muslims) to avoid scandal.²⁴ According to Ian Smith’s Hegelian analysis of early modern blackface, ‘the denigration effect . . . installs blackness as the undesirable thing that threatens to erupt within whiteness’.²⁵ Whereas the modern reader might see Molosso’s speech as elevating his character, Freeman’s audience might have seen Molosso’s African identity as a blow to an English (or at least classically European) republican cause. Republican rhetoric might sound like an attractive alternative to tyranny and rebellion might seem to be the only choice left, but to Freeman these are not the good fruits of European civilization. Read in this way, Molosso and Sango’s Numidean heritage becomes an aesthetic signifier that reveals their republican rhetoric to be merely a thinly veiled guise, if not excuse, for their savage barbarity.

Race theorists often describe early modern references to the lustful depictions of Africanized figures, citing roles such as Shakespeare’s Othello and Aaron the Moor who play lovers and consorts.²⁶ Freeman’s Africans also exhibit sexual depravity by raping Honoria and Angelica.²⁷ Of Freeman’s two slaves, Sango, ultimately motivated by Molosso’s offer to give him Angelica,

most closely relates to the base and lustful black man. He is, perhaps, a more realistic version of Massinger's Pisander/Marullo. Whereas Massinger's hero refuses to violate his hostage Cleora in order to win her by demonstrating his virtue (also like Tamburlaine with Zenocrate), Sango takes the unwilling Angelica while he can have her and feels villainously satisfied after the deed:

Molosso Both yet alive, the mischief's done already,
 But not the vengeance, thou shalt that behold,
 Till then there's nothing can be call'd revenge:
 Goe bring u'm *Sango*, thou hast had thy fill.
Sango Of Nectar, sweeter far than that of *love*. (H1v)

Sango's response suggests that he is a base slave to his carnal passions. Whatever sympathy we might have held for Sango's plight (law forbids Sango from any romantic relations with a master's daughter) dissolves through his aberrancy.²⁸

But is Sango's appetite more or less disturbing than Molosso's emotionless rape of Honoria? Although Sango professes his physical desires for Angelica, Molosso never makes any such expressions for his victim and refers only to Sango's enjoyment of the act. Rather, Molosso rapes Honoria solely to humiliate Imperiale (H1v). Molosso stands apart from Sango because of his disinterest in sexual activity. He professes no satisfaction from the deed other than its effect on Imperiale's peace of mind and desires only a public and humiliating revenge on his master. Violence is the only viable option that Freeman allows his characters to pursue in their power struggles. The playwright has closed off all avenues of negotiation, but he does not excuse the criminals, even if the audience pities their initial, desperate situation.

Freeman could simply demonize his rebels, but he chooses instead to undermine their political theory. His political challenges become even more pronounced when he asks his audience to consider that even if rebellion is the proper solution to a tyrannical monarchy, what is the proper solution to a republic run amok? Several aspects of the play undermine faith in a republic. For instance, the republic still retains a graduated class structure in which nobles boast varying ranks, feud with one another, and oppress a slave class. Furthermore, the republican court's famed impartiality (touted since Brutus's fatal judgment of his own sons) proves to be a charade when the Genoese magistrate falls into a rage after Verdugo recounts his ill deeds, including pedophilia. But, perhaps most dramatically, *Imperiale* constructs a carnival-

esque retelling of the rape of Lucretia, one in which the virtuous women are violated by not a prince but slaves. I am concerned most with the last of these three aspects, when Freeman's characters explicitly lament their feelings of impotency in retaliating against grievances caused by slaves. Indeed, Molosso and Sango outdo Tarquin in their spectacular violence — leading Freeman's characters to conclude that rebellion from below is far worse than tyranny from above.

Doria, betrothed to Angelica, alludes to the rape of Lucretia when he laments the tragic destruction of his bride to be. Despairing vengeance after Angelica dies at the hands of untouchable slaves, Doria cries out:

To make me suffer barbarous wrongs from such
 As are not capable of my revenge.
 Were the sole Monarch of the world, the actor,
 Or had he but conniv'd at the deed done
 By his lustfull sonne or minion; I might hope,
 Arm'd with the justice of my cause, to wrest
 The ill-sway'd scepter from him, and reduce
 Him and his race to unparallel'd examples
 Of wofull pride, and miserable greatnesse ...
 honour cannot stoop to punish slaves,
 Whose vile condition sinks beneath that vengeance,
 'Bove which no tyrants power could hope to clime. (H3r)

If royalty tyrannizes, one can depose the monarch. If slaves in a republic terrorize, what is one to do? Doria considers what would have happened if Angelica had been raped by a figure like prince Tarquin and hopelessly wishes to re-enact the events that follow Lucretia's death. He cries out that he cannot perform the duty of Brutus, to depose a monarch and convert the government into a republic, simply because the situation is ironically the opposite of Brutus's. In *Imperiale*, the rapists are not princes in a monarchy but slaves in a republic — the classical archetype of rape offers no solution. In this scenario, a republic retaining slavery does not protect its citizens from violation any more than monarchy. When Doria admits he cannot physically combat slaves because it would be a disgrace to his nobility, Freeman shows how an enslaving culture renders itself impotent and unable to control domestic forces that do not submit to the cultural values of the ruling classes. Molosso learns to exploit the aristocratic caste values that render him untouchable.

Although Molosso and Sango at first appear as the sympathetic victims of tyranny, they are remorseless and cruel in their vengeance and end the play as villains. Spinola and Imperiale, once the savage tyrants, learn however to appreciate the folly of their own wickedness; they evoke pity and end the play on the road to spiritual redemption. Whereas Freeman's slaves never repent, Freeman's nobles are capable of a conversion to true nobility. This dynamic resonates with Margot Heinemann's reading of Massinger's *The Bond-man*, which she argues calls for social reform from within the court drama in ways that did not simply encourage popular revolt.²⁹ Massinger seems uncomfortable suggesting that slaves are capable of heroic behaviour and therefore reveals the lofty-minded and virtuous leader of the slave revolt to be a foreign nobleman in disguise, as Heinemann writes:

The revolt is present at this stage with what seems like a measure of sympathy, and some of Marullo's speeches, read out of the context of the play as a whole, have a startlingly revolutionary ring... . However, as Marullo makes clear, the ideal is not really equality, but the acceptance by the natural rulers of their traditional responsibilities towards the ruled... . This moral having been made, the strong confrontation is deflated with startling suddenness.³⁰

Likewise, Freeman's play resolves itself by shifting away from the call for rebellion. Also like Massinger, Freeman calls masters to task for the sins of their slaves.

Although the play ends with the patriarchal feud's resolution in solidarity and peace, the stoic Justinian's concluding speech returns the audience's attention to the problem of slavery itself:

What need we care how powerfull our foes be
 When slaves can bring us to such misery?
 Whose innate cruelties at length appeare,
 Though they the same may cunningly forbear,
 For their owne ends; it is not wisdom then
 To place our trust in such condition'd men,
 Whom punishments, and wants, and feares prepare
 To hatred, to deceit, and to despaire:
 Yet these are but poore instruments, the cause
 That on our heads heavens indignation draws,

Springs from our selves, 'ganst which ther's no defence
 Like th'armour of a spotlesse innocence. *Finis.* (H4v)

Though it ought to elucidate the moral of the drama, Justinian's speech collapses under its own rhetorical inconsistencies. His speech begins with a warning against slaves, who he claims can attack with greater effect than any of the upper classes. Justinian implicitly refers to Imperiale's vulnerability in having the treacherous Molosso as a trusted domestic servant. Since Justinian does not name Molosso or Sango, however, he therefore seems to be speaking of slaves in general. Thus, when he discusses their 'innate cruelties', he implies that slaves — all slaves — have some inherent defect rendering them evil. '[I]nnate' might refer in this line to philosophic notions that slaves receive their station from their inferior and base nature, but three lines later Justinian describes these same slaves as 'condition'd men / Whom punishments, and wants, and feares prepare / To hatred, to deceit, and to despaire'. Suddenly, their innate cruelty only manifests out of external pressures from their station as slaves. Slaves are not doomed to do evil; their masters' treatment draws evil out of them. Yet Justinian has not mentioned abuse of the slave. 'Punishments, and wants, and feares' do not always come from mistreatment nor are they necessarily unjustified, as Verdugo's sentencing results from justice. Still, because the master's treatment is the prime motivation for the slave's own misbehaviour, Justinian locates blame not on the immediate perpetrators of crime but on those responsible for their keeping.

Responsibility falls on the master class: 'the cause / That on our heads heavens indignation draws, / Springs from our selves'. Whether the masters are guilty of mistreating other human beings or are simply responsible as household patriarchs who have lost control is not completely clear due to the ambiguity of 'these poor instruments'. If 'poor instruments' refers to the slaves, then Justinian reiterates his command not to trust those under forced servitude. If 'instruments' refers to the master's use of 'punishments, wants, and feares' to control their slaves, then Justinian echoes Seneca, who pleads with masters to treat their slaves as equal men and forego injuring them or depriving them of their desires, needlessly turning them into enemies.³¹ The final call to seek defence in a 'spotless innocence' reinforces the notion that the master's own sins cause his suffering at the hands of slaves. Justinian remains ambiguous as to what sin the masters have committed. Is this sin simply the feud between the patriarchs that distracts them from the graver threat of rebel slaves? Does heaven punish them for their mistreatment of

slaves? Are they to blame for trusting those who cannot be trusted? Had Imperiale cruelly kept Molosso in a dungeon, would he have been spared Molosso's revenge? Or is Justinian's final speech implicitly a call to abandon slavery altogether? If so, the speech still fails to clarify whether slavery is itself an act that brings divine judgment or if its error is more pragmatic. If all those who could be slaves are innately cruel, then all who could be slaves are too dangerous to actually enslave. Ironically, those fit for slavery by their moral inferiority are unfit for servitude by that same moral inferiority. Justinian's language vacillates between socially progressive/pragmatic views of egalitarianism and calls for social reform motivated by prejudice. Ultimately, Freeman draws characters with conflicting worldviews together in a single scene of terrifying chaos, but the epilogue leaves the audience to determine the true source of the play's moral conflict.

Freeman's interest in Senecan philosophy might have bearing on questions of guilt in *Imperiale*, especially in terms of Seneca's thoughts on slavery. In Freeman's translation of the Roman's *The Shortness of Life* (1633), at least two passages allude to the practice. The first is a brief condemnation of the overemphatic punishment of slaves, couched in a list of daily activities which can squander one's time: 'But tell us now how much from that great store / Thy Creditor hath got, thy Mistris, Friend, / Thy Clients, or the Jarre (that hath no end) / Between thy wife and thee? How much is spent / In chastising thy Slaves?'.³² Imperiale might have done well to have contemplated this question, given Molosso's claims for vengeance: 'for severe and unusuall punishment, inflicted upon him' (A3r). Imperiale is allegedly guilty of excessive chastisement. Seneca also depicts a scene where a Roman noble who arranges the bloody spectacle of animal baiting is himself slain by a rebellious slave: 'He was at length perfidiously betray'd / When his own Slave rude hands upon him lay'd, / And Murdred him, letting him plainly see / That his proud Sur-name was but vanitie'.³³ Imperiale, also possessing a proud name, is not murdered by Molosso, but both incidents describe a distracted nobleman whose slave strikes while his guard is down. According to Seneca, legal slavery not only challenged one's moral standing but was simply a dangerous practice. Merely keeping slaves could be unexpectedly hazardous to one's health.

While Freeman could imagine the dangers of slavery and read about them in antiquity, English colonists were realizing this threat first hand. Occurring just a year before Freeman's play first saw print, the 1638 African slave rebellion on Providence Island is an event easily overlooked in the midst of the

larger political conflicts going on in England itself and also obscured by the 1641 loss to the Spanish of the Puritan colony off the coast of Nicaragua.³⁴ Karen Kupperman recounts the revolt in *Providence Island 1630–1641: The Other Puritan Colony*:

Planters and adventurers knew how serious these threats were. There was a steady leaching of slaves out of servitude and into the sanctuary of the island's mountainous interior, where they apparently created alternative communities. Expeditions to recover runaway slaves were partially successful, as allotments of the 'Negroes taken in the woods' show, but many could not be recaptured. In 1638 the company, recommending 'all fair means' to entice them back, directed that if they remained recalcitrant 'and thereby seem to seek their own destruction we would have one or two of them apprehended and executed that the rest may take warning'. As the tensions mounted, an abortive slave rebellion, the first in any English colony, erupted on May Day, 1638.³⁵

If playwrights in the 1620s lacked 'moral language' to describe colonial chattel slavery, by 1639 the need for such a language was becoming more urgent.³⁶ According to Kupperman, the staunchly puritan Samuel Rishworth grew disgusted with his fellow colonists enslaving Africans on Providence Island and openly promised to liberate slaves.³⁷ Rishworth returned to England in 1637 as an elected representative of the colony's planters, perhaps modernizing the moral language of slavery on the English homeland. When colonial powers charged Rishworth with defiance, company secretary William Jessop wrote in a familiar Puritan allegory: 'God's people stand on a hill, and their actions are more obvious and public than others, and therefore it concerns them to look unto their feet lest by their stumbling God's enemies should be occasioned to prevail'.³⁸ Although Kupperman presents Jessop's letter as a defence of Rishworth, his language warning of 'God's enemies' prevailing could, given the usual early modern English portrayal of Africans, easily be read as a code phrase for 'slave-revolt' as well as concern for Spanish invasion. Even if Jessop did not believe slavery was immoral, his religious language reveals the practical implications of keeping slaves in an already unstable society. Jessop's city-on-the-hill appeal also resonates with Justinian's claim that a 'spotless innocence', or moral purity, is the best defence against falling into the hands of wicked slaves.

The lack of clarity regarding Imperiale's and Spinola's sins also resonates with the questionable practice of colonial slavery itself. In 1639, Providence

Island's Governor Butler wrote to the company with views uncannily similar to those in Justinian's speech describing

desperate runaways out of the Island both English and Negroes And I find that the over harsh and rigorous dealing of the masters mainly occasioneth this. But I am afraid that if I should name some of the masters unto you and the manner how you would not believe me. I pray to God there fore that this Incredulity cost you not dear at some time or other.³⁹

Like Justinian, Governor Butler puts the primary blame for misbehaving slaves on their masters' own misbehaviour; and, like other early modern critics of slavery, neither the governor nor Freeman explicitly condemn slavery as immoral, despite condemning masters for turning their slaves evil.⁴⁰ Also, Butler observes that oppression unites English and Africans in servitude. Bonds formed through shared hardships in servitude emerged between black slaves and white servants, as Kupperman notes: 'Nathaniel Butler's diary ... is filled with notations of escapes, or tries at escapes... . Sometimes the runaways, who often stole their master's boat to make good their escape, were bands of slaves or servants, but often the groups were mixed, African and English fleeing their mutual servitude together'.⁴¹ Freeman likewise observes the binding force of shared misery between his fictional slaves. Sango and Molosso's relationship is built out of shared blood by race as well as solidarity in suffering when Molosso refers to their 'friendship, / Begotten first by consanguinity, / And since confirm'd by our joynt sufferings here' (B1r).

Freeman's play echoes Butler's claims that forced servitude generates solidarity among subordinates and that masters bear the responsibility for their slaves' misdeeds.

Kupperman remarks that although Rishworth's moral pleas were not heeded, the company did take concerns over the increase in slaves very seriously:

Rishworth's challenge caused the company to reconsider, not the legal and moral foundation of slavery, but its wisdom; their instructions henceforth were filled with advice about how to distribute the slaves so that they had no opportunity to plot rebellion or flight together By 1637 the company prohibited further importation of slaves unless they were possessed of special skills Providence Island had already fended off one Spanish attack; in future crises, the slaves would increase the island's danger.⁴²

Imperiale essentially portrays the same danger that the Providence Island Company foresaw. The feud between Spinola and Imperiale distracts the masters, providing slaves and servants an opportunity to grow in solidarity and rebel. The feud between nations of Spain and England, or between parliamentarians and royalists, could distract colonists, giving slaves and servants an opportunity for insurrection. And political rivalry was not far from sight on Providence Island. Kupperman notes with irony that many of the company leaders who fell victim to the slave revolt on Providence Island became leading parliamentarians who exploited revolutionary rhetoric at home.⁴³ Those who would claim that slavery to Charles justified their revolt were compelled to suppress that same revolutionary instinct in their own slaves.⁴⁴

Even without a moral language, several early seventeenth-century Englishmen were already providing practical reasons to avoid the enslavement of Africans in the new world. Much of this language addresses division, unity, and national allegiance. Suffering on Providence Island dissolved the national loyalty of white servants who forged partnerships with black slaves. Whether in the colonies or in England, politicians had come to realize that power was not as secure as it appeared. The lower classes could wield a power capable of usurping that of the established hierarchy, be it a company or a king.⁴⁵ Thus, power could reside in the physical might of the masses rather than the authority of the few.

Yet as parliamentarians discovered after the execution of Charles I, the very act of rebellion could have the unintended consequence of transferring sympathy back to the oppressor. Molosso's spectacular revenge, for example, makes one forget Spinola and Imperiale's cruelties and improprieties. When Molosso's revolt succeeds, he creates a carnivalesque moment of power inversion where the domestic slave becomes the new master of the house. Mark Thornton Burnett writes that the carnivalesque was a familiar device in plays involving male domestic servants: 'With many of these representations, it is impossible to ignore the carnival component. This is evident in several ways, most obviously in an emphasis on a "holiday" spirit and the inversion of roles, and an attention to the rituals whereby the lower orders could step out of place'.⁴⁶ Holidays also can serve as convenient opportunities for violent and less than innocent rebellion. Kupperman notes that even the revolt on Providence Island breaks out on the holiday of May Day, creating another parallel to Freeman's play, which itself is set during carnival. But actual, violent rebellion perverts the otherwise harmless carnivalesque

of holiday, and Freeman's tragedy sours what should be comic sports. Francisco becomes Imperiale for a day and dies as a result. Doria's two disguises (when he reports his own death and when he dances as a masquer in a mock Rape of the Sabine Women) foreshadow his lover's own demise and real rape. The public humiliation of Imperiale resembles a ritualized charivari by publicly humiliating a weak and cuckolded patriarch in an attempt to release social tensions.⁴⁷ Through the sexualized torture of the patriarch's wife and daughter, Molosso and Sango effectively cuckold Imperiale, announcing the violation of Imperiale's marriage and daughter from atop Imperiale's tower. Molosso then uses the spectacle to draw attention to the conflict between his innate equality and his imposed slavery.

To suit the spectacle of the rebellion, Freeman emphasizes the carnivalesque with stage directions and dramatic conventions which aesthetically depict the overthrow of power:

Actus Quintus, Scena Quarta.
Molosso, Sango above, Imperiale below. (H1r)

And again:

Actus Quintus. Scena Quinta.
Iustiniani, Spinola, Imperiale, below. Molosso, Sango, Honoria, Angelica above. (H1v)

The tower setting comes directly from a source narrative in Bandello, but Freeman's choice to reiterate the slaves' altitude over their masters reinforces the inversion of power. Burnett writes that 'Across a range of genres, images of the servant "on top" have the effect of debunking authority in all its manifestations, thereby subjecting the dominant order to a particularly exacting scrutiny'.⁴⁸ Yet, in Freeman's play, the servants themselves are scrutinized when they are 'on top', whereas those making up the dominant order are pitied. Molosso and Sango have literally and figuratively placed themselves above their masters in the act of rebellion and in taking sexual liberty with Imperiale's women (as with Massinger's slaves, liberty has both egalitarian and pejorative connotations). Molosso and Sango choose to die rather than step down from the tower, despite Imperiale's promises (albeit specious) guaranteeing their safety. Unlike Massinger's slaves who are content to return to servitude so long as their masters mend their ill-treatment of them, Freeman's slaves refuse to surrender their usurped power. They will die before returning to subjugation. Molosso does not only disdain misused power, but also loathes the very idea of legal slavery, regardless of how it is implemented.

Indeed, Molosso takes action when his condition as a slave is the least oppressive, which is also the time when a slave has most access to the resources needed for a rebellion.

I have offered ways in which slavery in this play could relate to political discourse contemporary with Freeman, but could the play be about slavery itself? As I have discussed, the play's tragic structure grants Imperiale's hamartia, conceding part of the political argument to Charles I's opponents while also challenging their rhetoric of metaphorical slavery. I have argued that Freeman poses this challenge by juxtaposing metaphorical slavery with chattel slavery. This comparison demands that the play directly stages the plight of legal slaves. Given its proximity to the Providence Island slave revolt, the play becomes about slavery as such. Molosso offers a typical, satirical view of universal slavery:

Why should proud greatnesse undervalue us,
 And our condition? since all men are slaves;
 If we survey the greatest monarchies,
 What art their Courtiers else? with all the suits
 They either beg or weare? the rich Banquier
 Enthrals his debtor, and his money him:
 This Captaine is a captive to that wench;
 This Magistrate to bribes; that Lord to pride,
 This Statesman to ambition; all to feare
 From whence we only that have nought to loose,
 Are free, and that shall instantly appeare. (G2v)

In a paradox, Molosso at once deconstructs metaphorical slavery while also showing it to be truer than others have intended. Indeed, Molosso's universal slavery parallels Peter Garnsey's translation of Seneca on the ubiquity of the slave-like condition in *Epistitulae* 47.1:

‘They are slaves’, people declare. No, rather they are men. ‘Slaves’. No, comrades. ‘Slaves’, No, they are unpretentious friends. ‘Slaves’. No, they are our fellow-slaves, if one reflects that Fortune has equal rights over slaves and free men alike Kindly remember that he whom you call your slave sprang from the same stock, is smiled upon by the same skies, and on equal terms with yourself breathes, lives and dies. It is just as possible for you to see in him a free-born man as for him to see in you a slave.⁴⁹

Despite declaring himself free because he lacks material possessions or concerns, Molosso's speech concludes: 'So are my thoughts transported, I'll away, / My fury calls for blood, and I obey' (G2v). Ironically, after declaring his freedom from worldly things, Molosso exposes himself to be a slave to his fury, which he treats like his true master. In the world-turned-upside down that Molosso depicts in his speech above, mastery lies not in the possessor but the possessed. As a slave unable to lay claim to private property, unable to pursue servitude to bribes, wenching, or ambition, the last realm that Molosso can claim ownership over is his interior space, the realm of will and emotion. He prizes his secret fury, concealed from Imperiale's view, as greatly as any miser would a hidden treasure. In adding himself to the list of those enslaved to the objects of their desires, Molosso satirizes himself by claiming to submit to his last possession — emotion — as his true master.

In this speech on universal slavery, Freeman renders all slave comparisons to be as absurd as when Molosso and Francisco riff on the metaphor of love slavery. Molosso's bondage in the play trumps all other forms of slavery. Those who consider themselves to suffer like slaves are misled because they believe that a slave suffers by being overly attached or bound. They do not realize that a chattel slave's suffering arises from not his subservience or bondage but his lack of attachment to anything, as when Molosso explains that the real reason that rebellion seems appealing to the slave is because the slave has nothing to lose. If the slave felt some form of attachment, then he would not risk losing the pleasure of that attachment.

Although *Imperiale* does not clearly denounce slavery as inherently immoral, it does expose how slavery brings early modern culture's values into conflict. By placing Imperiale's cruelty to Molosso in the back-story, Freeman uses the structure of the play to make abuse towards slaves a foregone conclusion. Benevolence or mercy towards slaves does not appear before the audience as a possible reality. After Imperiale hears his wife's dream, he decides to confine Molosso on the same grounds that he was willing to dismiss as simple fancy. When Imperiale imposes a harsh cruelty on Molosso with little justification, we again recall the play's argument that describes how, before the play's action, Molosso '*had waited an opportunity to be revenged on his Patron for severe and unusuall punishmet, inflicted upon him*' (A3r). Imperiale's imprisonment of his slave after the dream repeats his former error against Molosso. Imperiale only treats Molosso kindly after the slave informs him of Spinola's plot, and then his kindness serves only to encourage Molosso to perform evil deeds against his enemy. Thus, Freeman shows how the slave-

master all too easily falls to temptations to commit actions that doom him. Even Spinola suffers because his own slave's deceit opens the action of the play, although Sango does not recount being punished as Molosso was. Like Molosso, Sango is not opposed to slavery because he is abused, but because he rejects its very structure, which denies him an outlet to express his attachments to Angelica.⁵⁰ Freeman's fictional world offers no consequences to the practice of slavery other than betrayal and suffering. Freeman's patriarchs only reconcile after Molosso and Sango are dead; Genoa's nobles only find security and peace when legal slavery ceases to exist. Chattel slavery — as the play depicts it — will always breed rebellion because the practice is always truly tyrannical. Circumventing rebellion therefore necessitates a refusal to own slaves as well as a refusal to tyrannize, and requires that both subject and crown bear these responsibilities. Furthermore, Freeman's argument undermines the claims of would-be English republicans. Whether or not Freeman's slaves allegorize republicans or comment on actual slavery, Freeman's play suggests that claiming a right to rebel on the basis of metaphorical slavery is both excessive and unjustified. If Freeman's slaves allegorically represent members of the English revolutionary movement, then the play condemns the revolutionaries for their potential barbarities (while conceding that the king has been less than ideal in his rule). But if Freeman's slaves represent nothing more than chattel slaves, the play condemns English revolutionaries for overstating their own sufferings by misunderstanding the nightmarish reality of actual slavery.

Notes

I would like to thank David Norbrook for invaluable advice during the genesis of my argument, as well as Marshall Grossman and Donna Hamilton for their helpful suggestions.

- 1 Ralph Freeman, *Imperiale, a Tragedy* (London, 1639). Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from the play are from this edition.
- 2 See Kenneth Richards, 'The Sources of Sir Ralph Freeman's *Imperiale*', *Studia Neophilologica: A Journal of Germanic and Romance Languages and Literature* 40 (1968), 185.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 See Charles Clayton Gumm, 'Sir Ralph Freeman's *Imperiale*', *Studies in English Drama* (1917), 105–29.

- 5 Constance Jordan critiques a constitutionalist use of royal slave metaphors in Shakespearean romance. She also distinguishes between 'true slavery' (actual chattel slavery) and a metaphorical 'political servitude' often described as slavery. See Constance Jordan, *Shakespeare's Monarchies: Ruler and Subject in the Romances* (Ithaca, 1997), 184.
- 6 Had Freeman's play been staged, it certainly would help deconstruct the myth of the aesthetically vacant, politically sycophantic, and decadent court theatre against which Martin Butler writes, noting 'that the drama of the 1630s, perhaps more than any earlier drama, did persistently engage in debating the political issues of its day, and repeated articulated attitudes which can only be labeled "opposition" or "puritan"' (1–2). See Martin Butler, *Theatre and Crisis, 1632–1642* (New York, 1984).
- 7 For more on the implications of Pisander's disguised nobility, see Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (New York, 1980), 216.
- 8 See Joyce Green MacDonald, "'The Force of Imagination': The Subject of Blackness in Shakespeare, Jonson, and Ravenscroft', *Renaissance Papers* (1991), 53–74. MacDonald depicts an early modern English view of Africans: 'With the development of a state commercial interest through the founding of the various African trading companies, the impulse to write the moral origins of blackness gained a newly material impetus in English culture as colonial appropriation of African resources and African bodies became more and more explicitly tied to their position on the margins of English conceptions of the wild, the foreign, the masterless' (59). On the one hand, one might observe that Freeman's Molosso appears in line with early modern English views Africans as wild, foreign creatures requiring English conquerors to tame them. On the other hand, that same wildness and inherent liberty translates into an unconquerable resistance to mastery.
- 9 See Derek Hughes, 'Race, gender, and scholarly practice: Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*', *Essays in Criticism* 52.1 (2002), 1–22. The idea that fortune rather than inherent characteristics ultimately determines who becomes a slave resonates with Derek Hughes's reading of Aphra Behn's novella *Oroonoko*. Hughes points out that seventeenth-century authors such as '[José de] Acosta and [Morgan] Godwyn argue that differences between European and other races are potentially reversible ones of education; we could be as our slaves, they as us' (7).
- 10 Molosso and Sango simultaneously kill one another, as a mutually agreed upon means of death.
- 11 See Sir Thomas North's translation of Guevara's *The Diall of Princes* (London, 1582). Guevara blames ancient Roman literature for perpetuating misbegotten notions of an attractive but illusory political liberty and for glorifying rebellion and

republicanism (f 41r). Also see Quentin Skinner, 'John Milton and the politics of slavery', Graham Parry and Joad Raymond (eds), *Visions of Politics Milton and the Terms of Liberty* (Cambridge, 2002), 1–21. Skinner's essay is a litany of republican arguments that depict the English as enslaved to Stuarts. Constance Jordan's *Shakespeare's Monarchies* similarly describes English debates concerning absolutism and what she calls 'political' slavery: 'By the end of the sixteenth and the first decade of the seventeenth centuries, constitutionalists emphasized the claims of the people. They characterized a tyrant as a "master" who claimed to own the commonwealth and used his subjects as "slaves". In so doing, they resumed an old argument and resorted to established imagery' (182). Jordan refers to Erasmus's *Institutio principis christiani* and Robert Parson's *Conference About the Next Succession* as sources for slave imagery in reference to the body politic.

- 12 See Richards, 'Sources', 192.
- 13 Freeman, *Imperiale* (1655), emphasis mine, B2r–v.
- 14 *Imperiale's* regal-sounding name certainly makes his connection to the English throne viable; even in the supposed republic of Genoa, he apparently holds a station of superiority among the nobles.
- 15 See Ania Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race and Colonialism* (New York, 2002). Loomba observes that the somatic definition and modern connotations of race might be anachronistic for the early modern period.
- 16 Molosso himself proclaims an association between foul deeds and blackness in a way that might also connect his evil with his body when he refers to his 'horrid plot' as 'this black designe' (C3v).
- 17 Also See Joyce Green MacDonald, *Women and Race in Early Modern Texts* (New York, 2002). When discussing Joseph Addison's *Cato* (1713), MacDonald describes a Numidean named Juba who is also a staunch republican (84).
- 18 See Dymphna Callahan, *Shakespeare Without Women: Representing Gender and Race on the Renaissance Stage* (New York, 2000). Discussing Irish slaves and *The Tempest*, Dymphna Callahan argues that the colonizer must undermine or overcome culture's memories (97–137).
- 19 Elliot H Tokson, *The Popular Image of the Black Man in English Drama, 1550–1688* (Boston, 1982).
- 20 Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Performing Blackness on English Stages, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, 2005), 71.
- 21 Loomba, *Shakespeare*, 36.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 9.
- 23 MacDonald, *Women*, 87.

- 24 See Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York, 1999). For a similar argument, see Ian Smith, 'White Skin, Black Masks: Racial Cross-Dressing on the Early Modern Stage', *Renaissance Drama* 32 (2003), 33–67. Smith writes that 'Hegel's *History* makes for an ironic reading of *Phenomenology* when the latter asserts that the self always carries the trace of the other and "does not see the other as an essential being, but in the other sees its own self"' (41).
- 25 Smith, 'White Skin, Black Masks', 41.
- 26 Tokson summarizes conceptions of hyper-sexualized Africans, especially on stage, in the English renaissance (17). On blackness, slavery, and sexualization, also see Carolyn Prager, 'Concept of Slavery in English Renaissance: with Illustrations from the Drama' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Fordham University, 1974). For a more recent approach to Othello's black lustfulness, see Margo Hendricks, "'The Moor of Venice,'" or the Italian on the Renaissance English Stage', Shirley Nelson Gardner and Madelon Sprengnether (eds), *Shakespearean Tragedy and Gender* (Bloomington, 1996), 193–209. In *Women and Race in Early Modern Texts*, MacDonald also describes 'Massinassa, a Numidian, [who] promotes the myth of their uncontrolled sexual appetite as in Holland's translation of Livy' (78).
- 27 For a critique of Fanonian theories on black men raping white women as a political act, see Ania Loomba, 'Gender, race, Renaissance Drama', Gerald Graff and James Phelan (eds), *The Tempest: A Case Study in Critical Controversy* (Boston, 2000), 326. Also see Arthur L. Little, *Shakespeare Jungle Fever: National-Imperial Re-Visions of Race, Rape, and Sacrifice* (Stanford, 2000).
- 28 Freeman transitions into the rape scene by first depicting a masque of the Rape of the Sabine women. Doria, disguised as Thassalius, abandons the dance and seizes Angelica. The mock rape of the masque re-enacts the drastic measures that Romans adopted when their neighbors sought to contain them by refusing them means of reproduction. This dramatic re-creation points towards Sango's tragic rape of the virginal Angelica which, like the rape of the Sabine women, arises because fathers deny lesser men access to their daughters.
- 29 Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre*, 203.
- 30 Ibid, 216.
- 31 See Peter Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (New York, 1996). Garnsey translates Seneca's *Epistulae* 47.2 as follows: 'The result of it all is that these slaves, who may not talk in their master's presence, talk about their master ... [but] they are not enemies when we acquire them; we make them enemies Associate with your slave on kindly, even on affable, terms; let him talk with you, plan with you, live with you' (55–6).
- 32 Ralph Freeman, *Shortness of Life* (London, 1633), A4v-B1r.

- 33 Ibid, D2r-v.
- 34 See Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Providence Island 1630–1641: The Other Puritan Colony*, (New York, 1993), 170. The year of *Imperiale's* third and final printing also coincides with at least two significant events where English politics intersected with colonial slavery. Cromwell celebrated his new title of Lord Protector with the conquest of Jamaica, where England inherited complicated relations with island slaves and maroons from the Spanish. Also see Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492–1800* (New York, 1997). As Blackburn has noted, the political metaphors of slavery became quite literal for a band of royalists captured in a rebellion at Salisbury and sold into Caribbean servitude in 1655 (248).
- 35 Kupperman, *Providence Island*, 170.
- 36 See Carolyn Prager, 'The Problem of Slavery in *The Custom of the Country*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 28 (1988), 301–17. According to Prager, early modern poetry could not address the problem of slavery directly, but only through metaphor.
- 37 Kupperman, *Providence Island*, 168–9.
- 38 Qtd in *ibid*, 168.
- 39 Qtd in *ibid*, 180.
- 40 Though direct connections between Freeman and Providence Island are still wanting, Kupperman remarks that the colonists were desperately dependent on friends in Charles's court for survival (*Ibid*, 153). Given Gumm's account of Freeman's duties, which included those of the master of requests, Freeman might have come across letters from the island, if not served as an intercessor. Freeman's family also invested in colonial ventures. Describing the elder Ralph Freeman, lord mayor and uncle to Sir Ralph Freeman, Gumm writes, 'His mercantile success must have been extraordinary, for he offered in the same year, 1623, to advance the king the sum £55,00. The next five years are taken up in matters pertaining to the business of the Muscovy Company' until Sir Ralph Freeman inherited his uncle's estate (106–8).
- 41 Kupperman, *Providence Island*, 179.
- 42 *Ibid*, 169.
- 43 *Ibid*, 1.
- 44 For a similar discussion of how political slave rhetoric often came into conflict with chattel slavery in the American revolution, see Gary B. Nash, *Race and Revolution* (Madison, 1990).
- 45 See Elliot Visconsi, 'A Degenerate Race: English Barbarism in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* and *The Widow Ranter*', *ELH* 69.3 (Fall 2002), 673–701. Visconsi writes that in late

seventeenth-century literature, authors often worried that colonial practices would degrade English civility at home (675).

- 46 Mark Thornton Burnett, *Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and Culture: Authority and Obedience* (New York, 1997), 80.
- 47 Discussing a scene in *The Great Duke of Florence*, Burnett describes a dramatic representation of *charivari* as a carnivalesque device; *ibid.*, 101.
- 48 *Ibid.*, 101.
- 49 Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery*, 67–8.
- 50 Jordan also observes early modern authors connecting domestic politics and colonial practices: ‘If the tyranny was to be resisted at home, and if no man was naturally bestial, servile, or deserving of uncivil treatment or rule, then tyranny could not be exported abroad. To sympathize with the political slave who had been dispossessed of his property was also to reject the violence proposed by such colonists as George Peckham’ (*Shakespeare’s Monarchies*, 197).