

**Reinforcing Racial Hierarchy Through Visual Culture: Black Enslaved Children in New France and Early Quebec (1700-1834)**

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## **Abstract**

### *Thesis Abstract*

The purpose of this thesis is to provide an overview of the visual culture of enslaved black children in New France and early Quebec (1700-1834). Through an analysis of primary and secondary sources in both slave minority and slave majority sites, this project serves as a contribution to numerous fields notably that of Art History, Slavery, Canadian, and Postcolonial studies through its decoding of Canada's artistic legacy. Focusing primarily on the condition of the enslaved black children in the Canadian context, this project offers an analysis of black children in British portrait paintings to better comprehend Canada's artistic legacy. In all, this project aims to highlight the ways in which black enslaved children were used to reinforce racial hierarchies and power relations.

### *Résumé du mémoire*

Ce mémoire présente un survol de la culture visuelle des enfants esclaves noirs de la Nouvelle-France et du Québec (1700-1834). Afin de mieux comprendre le patrimoine artistique canadien, cette recherche offre une analyse des sources primaires et secondaires, des sites à minorité esclave ainsi qu'à majorité esclave, et par le fait même contribue à de nombreux domaines, notamment celui de l'histoire de l'art, de l'esclavage, des études canadiennes et postcoloniales. Portant principalement sur la condition des enfants noirs en esclavage dans le contexte canadien, cette recherche propose une analyse des enfants noirs dans les portraits britanniques afin de mieux comprendre l'héritage artistique du Canada. Finalement, ce projet vise à mettre en évidence la manière dont les enfants esclaves noirs ont été utilisés pour renforcer les hiérarchies raciales et les relations de pouvoir.

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I must express my very profound gratitude to my parents for their continuous support and encouragements throughout my years of study and sleepless nights; you are the reason this research was possible, I thank you for supporting me in all my spontaneous decisions and for reminding me to stay true to myself.

Finally, it is imperative that I mention that this Master's thesis is dedicated to the black enslaved children and their undeniable strength; may you rest in peace.



## Introduction

The practice of slavery is often neglected or absent when discussing Canada's history. The neglect of Canada's colonial history is a national myth of racial tolerance and the ongoing marginalization of black Canadians.<sup>1</sup> As in other parts of the West, the marginalization of Africans within the institution of slavery was strategically supported through the visual representation of black subjects as inherently inferior to whites. The visual culture of slavery is a field of critical importance since it allows for an examination of the role that art and visual culture played in the maintenance of white superiority through the Othering of black subjects.

According to Marcel Trudel, the first enslaved black person to arrive in New France was Olivier Le Jeune in 1632.<sup>2</sup> When Le Jeune arrived on the colonized land, the purchase and enslavement of the Indigenous people, known as panis, was already a well established practice by European settlers.<sup>3</sup> Combining both black and panis slaves, Trudel's research accounts for 4200 enslaved peoples on the colony in the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. Both New France colonized by the French, and Quebec from 1760 under the British, was a slave minority site, which functions quite differently from tropical and semi-tropical slave majority sites such as Caribbean plantations. One of the first issues raised by French colonists regarding the importation of slaves in New France was the climate. The colonists were concerned that

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<sup>1</sup> Charmaine A. Nelson and Camille A. Nelson. "Introduction," *Racism, Eh?: A Critical Inter-Disciplinary Anthology of Race and Racism in Canada* (Concord, Ont: Captus Press, 2004), 1-30.

<sup>2</sup> Marcel Trudel and Micheline D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec* (Montréal: Bibliothèque québécoise, 2009), 29.

<sup>3</sup> Upon the arrival of the colonizers, the land was inhabited by Indigenous peoples. The ownership of the land and the mistreatment of its Native people is still a prominent debate today in Canada, but it will not be discussed in further detail in this thesis; "Panis, from Pawnee, the name of a western Indian nation that became a generic French term for aboriginal slaves." Frank Mackey, *Done With Slavery: The Black Fact in Montreal, 1760-1840* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 7; According to Trudel, records indicate that between 1650 and 1834 there were more than 1443 black slaves in Canada. Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 94.

enslaved blacks would not be able to survive the cold winters. Cold weather also meant that slaveowners would have to provide appropriate clothing for the enslaved population, which was not an issue in tropical environments.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, since New France was a slave minority site, it would have been difficult for black enslaved populations to maintain their cultural identity. Imported from different colonies, and most likely separated from their families, the enslaved blacks would have been dispersed in different households. In cities like Montreal, slaveowners generally owned one or two slaves, either panis or black, in their household.<sup>5</sup> This highlights the possibility that black slaves were isolated from their cultural bonds (ethnic, spiritual, cultural practices, and languages) and that if they were indeed paired with other slaves, they most likely had barriers of language and different cultural traditions.

Initially intended to explore the representation of black children in New France, this thesis aimed to analyze and compare "high" art portrait paintings. After searching numerous archives, I soon began realizing that French-Canadian images of black subjects prior to the mid-nineteenth century, are very limited regardless of the medium and artistic genre. As a consequence of the slow growth of art patronage and art education in Canada, or perhaps due to the "undiscovered" images potentially concealed in British archives, the dearth of visual evidence of the black presence in the province compelled me to revise my research constraints. Subsequently, this research enlarged its time frame to include New France and early Quebec and

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<sup>4</sup> In 1689 François-Madeleine Ruelle d'Auteuil proposed that black slaves would wear beaver pelts, which would keep them warm, while simultaneously adding value to the fur coats on the market; the slaves would imitate the technique of the *Indians* by applying oil on their skin and sweating in the fur coats to make the long unwanted hairs fall off. This technique transforms the beaver pelt from a "castor sec" to a "castor gras" giving the coat a fine duvet and thus increasing its market value. See Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 32; Ruelle d'Auteuil de Monceaux and François-Madeleine-Fortuné. Memorandum on Canada, 1689. Fonds des Colonies. Série C11A. Correspondance Générale, Canada, vol. 10, fol. 344-345v. Archives Nationales.

<sup>5</sup> Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 177.

the artistic medium was no longer restricted to painting. Moreover, I felt that a comparison with the British artistic tradition was necessary to demonstrate that a historical convention was established for the depiction of the black child in portrait paintings.

In New France and Quebec, religion held a great importance, especially the practice of baptism. The enslaved were baptized, often times given new names, and instructed in the Catholic religion.<sup>6</sup> It is also important to note that children born to enslaved females were to follow the condition of their mother, regardless of the status of their father: Black, white, free, or enslaved.<sup>7</sup>

Focusing on the lives of enslaved black children in New France and Quebec, this thesis relates to the scholarly research, in Canada and in other slave sites, on enslaved children, enslaved children in art history, race, childhood and black childhood studies. Scholars such as Robin Bernstein and her work on *Racial Innocence* (2011) demonstrate that our understanding of the visual culture of slavery is a contributing factor to our contemporary outlook on racial ideologies.<sup>8</sup>

The first chapter explores the practice of slavery in New France and Quebec in order to better understand the condition of enslaved black children. A comparative analysis with slave majority sites will be offered to better understand the slave condition of black children across

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<sup>6</sup> The renaming of the enslaved is interpreted by Ira Berlin, as an attempt to separate the slaves from their African inheritance and it was used as a means to define and emphasize social and racial hierarchies. Ira Berlin, "From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African — American Society in Mainland North America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (1996): 251-2. Accessed March 4, 2019. [www.jstor.org/stable/2947401](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2947401); also in Charmaine Nelson, *Slavery, Geography, and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Marine Landscapes of Montreal and Jamaica* (London, UK: Routledge, 2016), 294; for an in-depth examination of baptismal rituals for the enslaved, see Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 180-97.

<sup>7</sup> Trudel and D'Allaire. *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 148, 269.

<sup>8</sup> Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York, N.Y.: New York University Press. 2011).

climates, practices and regions. I examine the practices of breeding, abortion, and infanticide as a means to better understand the condition in which black enslaved children were born. The health of these children along with their working environment and family dynamics are outlined to grasp an overview of what it meant to be an enslaved child in New France and Quebec. In the final section of this chapter I combine information from both the eighteenth and nineteenth century to argue that the definition of the term child was ambiguous during the period of slavery because black children were in fact not permitted any type of childhood. Our modern understanding of a child and childhood is therefore not applicable to the period of slavery and consequently cannot be used to comprehend their historical experiences.

The second chapter oversteps the dearth of images of black enslaved children in the New France and Quebec context by exploring the artistic practices of Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For the purpose of this research, British art here encompasses British artists and paintings of British subjects. A brief introduction to the practice of slavery in Britain will be presented. Peter Erickson (2009) indicates that there are three visual genres "through which the idea of Africa is filtered, processed, and given recognizable meaning: personifications of the continents, blackface performances on the English stage, and the inclusion of black attendants in portraits of the white masters to whom they are attached."<sup>9</sup> For the purpose of this chapter, I will focus on Erickson's third visual genre and more specifically on the visual representation of black attendants in British so-called *high art* portrait paintings. I also include the analysis of William Hogarth's satirical print series *A Harlot's Progress* (1731-1732), as an insight into the British social and racial hierarchy. Through visual analyses of the black page, a young child that is most

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<sup>9</sup> Peter Erickson, "Invisibility Speaks: Servants and Portraits in Early Modern Visual Culture," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 9, no. 1 (2009): 33.

often a boy, I expose the ways in which the black body's juxtaposition to the white figure works to define the social and racial hierarchies eighteenth-century British society.

The third and final chapter of this research questions the slow growth of art patronage and art education in Canada as a potential cause for the dearth of images representing the black child in New France and early Quebec's visual culture. I discuss *Portrait of a Negro Slave* (1786) by François Malépart de Beaucourt as the only known "high" art portrait painting depicting a black enslaved child in Canada. I argue that the artist has objectified, exoticized, and consequently dehumanized Marie-Thérèse-Zémire, the fifteen-year-old sitter. The white access to black bodies is discussed as a means to better understand the relationship between the black sitter and the practice of slavery in New France and early Quebec. Functioning as slave narratives and descriptive accounts of the enslaved body, I use slave sale advertisements and fugitive/runaway slave advertisements to obtain a better understanding of the condition of black enslaved children in the colony in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Overall, this thesis uses the study of visual culture as a means to understand how the black enslaved body was Othered and functioned to propagate racial hierarchies. My goal is to recuperate an understanding of the lives of black enslaved children in New France and early Quebec to better comprehend the ways in which their bodies served to reinforce racial ideologies. Essential to our understanding of Canada's current issues of race and racism, this study is necessary because the scholarly research on how stereotypical visual representations of black children in historical Canadian art have impacted the treatment of black people in Canada, is limited to a book chapter by Charmaine A. Nelson (2010).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Charmaine A. Nelson, "Racing Childhood: Representations of Black Girls in Canadian Art," *Representing the Black Female Subject in Western Art* (NYC: Routledge, 2010), 37-60.

## Chapter 1: Born Into Slavery

This chapter explores the condition of enslaved black children within the context of Quebec slavery and aims to recuperate an understanding of the environment in which they were born, lived and worked. As discussed in the introduction, the information on enslaved children in Quebec is limited, therefore a comparative approach, which includes the Caribbean and the United States of America will shed light on the differences and similarities in conditions for enslaved children across climates, practices and regions. Understanding how children are born into slavery involves understanding the lives and experiences of their enslaved mothers. The meaning and circumstances surrounding the production or "breeding" of enslaved children will be observed as a means to make better sense of the nature and dynamics of the slave family. The degree to which enslaved children were seen as viable units of labour will also be examined through an analysis of the age of labour and the nature of the work enforced. Indeed, an examination of enslaved child labour allows for a better comprehension of the ways in which dehumanization functioned in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

### **Breeding, Abortion and Infanticide**

Understanding the condition of enslaved black children under slave majority and slave minority sites is conditional on the analysis of enslaved mothers. Barbara Bush argues that "forced sex with white men, miscarriage, deaths of children and separation from children through resale or transportation" were some of the traumatic events faced by the enslaved girls and women.<sup>11</sup> The reproduction of children was important and valuable to slaveowners who had the

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<sup>11</sup> Barbara Bush, "African Caribbean Slave Mothers and Children: Traumas of Dislocation and Enslavement Across the Atlantic Worl," *Caribbean Quarterly* 56, no. 1-2 (2010): 81-82.

potential to increase their slave numbers without having to purchase new *chattel*. Women held the role of "producers and reproducers of the future labor force."<sup>12</sup> Deborah G. White (1999) argues that "American slavery was dependent on natural increase of the slave population, and through the use of innumerable incentives, planters made sure that slave women were prolific," which meant that planters "sought to breed 'Negroes' like horses and cattle."<sup>13</sup> The practice of breeding slaves benefitted slaveowners, especially when the importation of slaves became illegal (1793 in Upper Canada, and 1808 in the United States of America); breeding was then the only legal method to increase the enslaved population.<sup>14</sup>

On June 30th 1820, American slaveowner Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) wrote a letter to his father-in-law, Virginia planter and slave trader John Wayles Eppes, in which he specified the importance of reproduction on his plantation: "I consider a woman who brings a son or child every two years as more profitable than the best man of the farm. what she produces is an addition to the capital, while his labors disappear in mere consumption [*sic*]."<sup>15</sup> Jefferson was not

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<sup>12</sup> Marrietta Morrissey, "Women's Work, Family Formation and Reproduction among Caribbean Slaves," in *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader*, edited by Hilary McD. Beckles, and Verene Shepherd (Kingston, Jamaica, 2000), 671.

<sup>13</sup> Deborah G. White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 31; Londa Schiebinger, "Agnology and Exotic Abortifacients: The Cultural Production of Ignorance in Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 149, no. 3 (September 2005): 329.

<sup>14</sup> On the 9th July, 1793, Upper Canada introduced the *Act to prevent the further introduction of slaves, and to limit the term of contracts for servitude within this province*. In the United States of America, a similar act became effective on 1st January, 1808. Gregory D Smithers, *Slave Breeding: Sex, Violence, and Memory in African American History*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012), 81. For more information regarding the breeding of slaves, refer to Dorothy E. Roberts, "Reproduction in Bondage," in *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1997): 22-56.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Jefferson was the third president of the United States of America (1801-1809). Thomas Jefferson, *Letters to and From Jefferson, 1820* (Charlottesville, Va: University of Virginia Library, 1996), 75. Accessed April 1, 2018. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2009808>.

the only plantation owner to think along these lines. In order to encourage enslaved females to produce healthy children, slaveowners employed both coercion and rewards.

In the Caribbean, slaveowner Matthew Lewis encouraged his enslaved females to produce children by rewarding the mothers with the privilege of wearing a "scarlet girdle with a silver medal in the centre" which gave them respect and attention on the plantation.<sup>16</sup> Lewis also instated a "play day" which functioned as a leisure day for the slaves on the estate. The mothers were considered special guests on this day.<sup>17</sup> Lewis also used food as a reward system, he wrote in his journal that "the gaiety of the negroes was promoted by a distribution of an additional quantity of salt-fish (which forms a most acceptable ingredient in their pepper-pots), and as much rum and sugar as they chose to drink. But there was also a dinner prepared at the house where the "white people" reside, expressly for none but the *piccaninny-mothers*; that is, for the women who had children living."<sup>18</sup> It is important to understand that food was an incentive of importance since the slave diet was generally insufficient and Nelson argues that "protein was so absent from the slave diet that withholding it often served as a punishment." Caribbean master Stanislas Foäche was dissatisfied with the high rates of infant mortality on his sugar plantation and thus, for every live birth Foäche "ordered that the midwife be given 15 livres and the woman who delivered the baby, cloth. If the child died at birth, both women were to be whipped and the one

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<sup>16</sup> In his 1834 journal, Matthew Gregory Lewis explains that he gave mothers the scarlet girdle with a silver medal and that on feasts and holidays it entitled them to signs of respect and attention such as being served first and receiving larger food portions than other slaves. Matthew G. Lewis, *Journal of a West-India Proprietor: Kept During a Residence in the Island of Jamaica* (London: J. Murray, 1834), 125; Elsa V. Goveia *Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands at the End of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 394. Accessed 12 February, 2019. [http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/Sabindd=0&af=RN&locID=crepuq\\_mcgill&srchtp=a&c=1&ste=11&stp=Author&dc=frc&d4=0.33&docNum=CY102156232&ae=CY102156232&tiPG=1&an=SABCP01992400](http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/Sabindd=0&af=RN&locID=crepuq_mcgill&srchtp=a&c=1&ste=11&stp=Author&dc=frc&d4=0.33&docNum=CY102156232&ae=CY102156232&tiPG=1&an=SABCP01992400).

<sup>17</sup>Nelson, *Slavery, Geography, and Empire*, 237; Thomas Cooper, *Facts Illustrative of the Condition of the Negro Slaves in Jamaica: with Notes and Appendix* (London: Sold by J. Hatchard and Son, Piccadilly, and Lupton Relfe, 13 Cornhill; G. Smallfield, Printer, Hackney, 1824), 52.

<sup>18</sup> Lewis, *Journal of a West-India Proprietor*, 191.



who lost the child placed in iron collars until she became pregnant again."<sup>19</sup> This demonstrates the extent to which reproduction was an essential task for enslaved females and that if they failed to do so, they were to be severely punished. Giving birth to the next generation of slaves was seen as a part of the biological labour that could be legitimately extracted from enslaved females. We may here presume that the female slave who was to be "placed in iron collars until she became pregnant again" would have been raped, possibly by her white master, or members of the slave community who would have been forced to impregnate her.<sup>20</sup>

Several factors affect the health of infants, most notably the health of their enslaved mothers. Maintaining that malnutrition and overwork was problematic and that it impacted the health of all slaves, Nelson argues the following:

The problem of infant mortality amongst slaves in the diaspora is largely attributable to the health of the slave mothers and there is a direct link between the nutrition, labour and overall well-being of slave women and the survival and biological well-being of their children. Nutritional deficiencies (such as calcium, magnesium and iron) that slave children inherited from their mothers at birth would continue through nursing because the quality of the breast milk was affected by a slave mother's health.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Gabriel Debien, *Les esclaves aux Antilles françaises, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Basse-Terre: Société d'histoire de la Guadeloupe, 1974), 129-130; Bernard Moitt, "Women, Work and Resistance in the French Caribbean During Slavery, 1700-1848," in *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader*, edited by Hilary McD. Beckles, and Verene Shepherd (Kingston, Jamaica, 2000), 1027.

<sup>20</sup> The role of enslaved men in the practice of breeding is often overlooked due to what Thomas A. Foster calls our "gendered perceptions of rape," but in fact black men were also targets of sexual assaults. Using a variety of sources, Foster argues that the sexual assault of black men by white men and women was both physical and psychic. Foster also argues that by forcing black men to impregnate many different women prevented them from bonding with their children, creating yet another layer of traumatic experiences. We must therefore not neglect or omit the physical and psychological abuse enslaved men endured, especially in the context of coercive breeding. Thomas A. Foster "The Sexual Abuse of Black Men under American Slavery," in *Sexuality and Slavery*, ed. Daina Ramey Berry, Leslie M. Harris, Trevor Burnard, Stephanie M. H. Camp, David Doddington and Jim Downs (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018), 125, 133, 141.

<sup>21</sup> Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 41.

Richard H. Steckel (1986) expands on the ways in which breast milk was necessary to the well-being of infants:

[...] breast milk was probably the most important, if not the only, source of nutrition early in infancy. [...] The transition away from breast milk and toward solid foods and manual feeding must have been a difficult adjustment accompanied by elevated rates of illness and mortality. Manual feeding introduced unsanitary implements and contaminated food or liquid, and the diet emphasized starchy products such as pap and gruel. This diet lacked sufficient protein and was probably deficient in iron and calcium. It is not surprising that the postneonatal infant mortality rate was as high as 162 per thousand in a sample of plantation records.<sup>22</sup>

Discussing the slave condition in Cuba, Franklin Knight (2000) confirms that it was difficult for women to produce healthy infants due to the harsh labor conditions and absence of proper hygiene.<sup>23</sup> Knight further contends that these conditions combined with the punishments pregnant women underwent for individual misdemeanours, could have been contributing factors to the birth of deformed and stillborn babies.<sup>24</sup> Herbert S. Klein and Stanley L. Engerman (1978) also argue that lower fertility rates have been ascribed to elements of malnutrition and harsh labor, abortion and infanticide.<sup>25</sup> Klein and Engerman argue that a poor diet has been shown to affect the period of childbearing for women, as well as having a direct impact on increasing infant deaths and reduction of potential children.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Richard H. Steckel, "A Peculiar Population: The Nutrition, Health and Mortality of American Slaves, from Childhood to Maturity," *Journal of Economic History* 46, no. 3 (September 1986), 732; Also found in Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 44.

<sup>23</sup> Nelson argues that as property, Africans and their diasporic descendants were often obliged to renounce or adapt their rituals and daily self-care practices. Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 96; Franklin Knight, "Slavery in a plantation society," in *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader*, edited by Hilary McD. Beckles, and Verene Shepherd (Kingston, Jamaica, 2000), 406.

<sup>24</sup> Knight, "Slavery in a plantation society," 406.

<sup>25</sup> Alongside the practice of abortion, enslaved females would have used breastfeeding as a contraception method. Herbert S. Klein and Stanley L. Engerman, "Fertility Differentials Between Slaves in the United States and the British West Indies: A Note on Lactation Practices and Their Possible Implications," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 35, no.2 (April, 1978): 358.

<sup>26</sup> Klein and Engerman, "Fertility Differentials," 367.

In addition to the hard labor and childcare they provided for their slaveowners, black females were often victims of the sexual abuse of their owners.<sup>27</sup> There are countless amounts of slave narratives and slaveowner accounts that confirm that the rape of slaves was not an uncommon practice and Brenda E. Stevenson (2013) contends that the type of labor and domiciles of domestic female slaves gave slaveholding men "greater physical access" and that "[i]t was not unusual for enslaved girls, raised in the main house or in the adjacent yard as the children of older domestics (some of whom also had been concubines), to become the sexual targets of the white men and boys who also resided there."<sup>28</sup> The female slave Linda Brent (pseudonyme for Harriet Jacobs) was born in North Carolina in 1813. In her 1861 autobiography, Brent describes how her master Dr. Flint abused her on a daily basis starting at age twelve. According to Brent's own testimony, this abuse was justified by Flint's claim that she was his property and thus, he had every right to treat her as he saw fit: "I was compelled to live under the same roof with him — where I saw a man forty years my senior daily violating the most sacred commandment of nature. He told me I was his property; that I must be subjected to his will in all things..."<sup>29</sup>

In the Quebec context we may refer to the enslaved black woman Marie-Joseph Angélique's peculiar childbirth case. In January 1731 she gave birth to her first child Eustache

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<sup>27</sup> Gwyn Campbell, Suzanne Miers, and Joseph Calder Miller, *Women and Slavery: Africa, the Indian Ocean World, and the Medieval North Atlantic, vol.1* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007), 249.

<sup>28</sup> Brenda E. Stevenson, "What's Love Got to do With it? Concubinage and Enslaved Women and Girls in the Antebellum South," *The Journal of African American History, Special Issue: "Women, Slavery, and the Atlantic World"* 98, no. 1 (Winter 2013): 108.

<sup>29</sup> Harriet A. Jacobs, Lydia Maria Child, and Jean Fagan Yellin, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1987), 44-45; See also White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?*, 24.

who's father was identified as the black slave Jacques César.<sup>30</sup> Eustache died the following month. In May of 1732, Angélique gave birth to twins named Louis and Marie-Françoise; both children died that same year.<sup>31</sup> What is intriguing is that on Louis's baptismal record, the father is identified as Jacques César, but the father of his twin sister Marie-Françoise is "unknown."<sup>32</sup> Afua Cooper (2011) proposes that perhaps Marie-Françoise would have been a mulatto, fathered by a white man, and that this white man may have been Angélique's master Francheville.<sup>33</sup> If Angélique's twins were in fact fathered by Francheville, we could easily argue that she was raped by her master for either the purpose of his own sexual pleasure and/or with the intention of impregnating the woman with his future slaves.<sup>34</sup>

Sexual and reproductive exploitation were two of the many violent actions inflicted on enslaved females and although direct evidence of strategies of breeding in Quebec is harder to ascertain than in slave majority sites, documents indicate that an attempt was made to forcibly marry two black slaves: Mathieu Léveillé and Angéline-Denise. Léveillé was the black executioner for the city of Quebec for nearly a decade (1734-1743). Authorities had ordered the importation of Angéline-Denise, a 24 year old black female from the Antilles specifically to

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<sup>30</sup> Jacques César was owned by Ignace Gamelin. Afua Cooper. *The Hanging of Angelique: The Untold Story of Canadian Slavery and the Burning of Old Montreal* (Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers, Ltd., 2006), 163; Jean-Claude Castex, *La ballade des pendues: La tragique histoire de trois Québécoises pendues pour crime* (Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2011), 24.

<sup>31</sup> Cooper. *The Hanging of Angelique*, 164.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 164-5.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>34</sup> Trudel calculated that of the female slaves of 14 years of age or older, 19.4% of them (55 mothers on a total of 284) gave birth to one or more illegitimate children. The term illegitimate is here not defined, but it would be a fair assumption to interpret it as referring to any child conceived as a result of rape, or children born from unmarried parents. Trudel and D'Allaire. *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 255.

marry Léveill , but the executioner died before her arrival.<sup>35</sup> It is not clear why authorities wanted to marry them, but breeding may certainly have played a role.

Regardless of the size of the enslaved population, across the Americas, children born to enslaved females were to follow the condition of their mother.<sup>36</sup> The child of an enslaved mother was automatically born a slave and became the property of their mother's owner regardless of the father's status: black, white, enslaved, or free. The challenges faced by female slaves would have undoubtedly been traumatic as they were forced to produce children that would have to experience the inhumane reality of slavery.<sup>37</sup> As a form of resistance some enslaved females resorted to the practice of abortion and infanticide, which would, as Gwyn Campbell (2007) states; "deprive their master of the opportunity to exploit their offspring."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> For a legal and historical accounts of reproductive and sexual abuse of slaves during the American slavery era, refer to Pamela D. Bridgewater, "Un/Re/Dis Covering Slave Breeding in Thirteenth Amendment Jurisprudence," *Washington and Lee Race and Ethnic Ancestry Law Journal* 7 (2001): 11-44; Trudel and D'Allaire. *Deux si cles d'esclavage au Qu bec*, 143.

<sup>36</sup> Trudel and D'Allaire. *Deux si cles d'esclavage au Qu bec*, 148, 269. See note 16 in "Representing the Enslaved African in Montreal" in Nelson, *Slavery, Geography and Empire*, 145. See also Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 72; Nelson, *Representing the Black Female*, 53. See article 12 of the Code Noir: France, *Recueils de r glements,  dits, d clarations et arr ts: Concernant le commerce, l'administration de la justice, & la police des colonies fran aises de l'Am rique & les engag s, avec le Code noir et l'addition audit code* (Paris: Chez les libraires Associez, 1745), 86. Accessed April 1, 2018. [http://eco.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.9\\_02061/2?r=0&s=1](http://eco.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.9_02061/2?r=0&s=1).

<sup>37</sup> On several occasions in Quebec enslaved children are identified in association to their masters, their mothers being completely erased or absent in the records. This familial erasure is in line with Orlando Patterson's argument that "[n]ot only was the slave denied all claims on, and obligations to, his parents and living blood relations but, by extension, all such claims and obligations on his more remote ancestors and on his descendants. He was truly a genealogical isolate." See Trudel and D'Allaire. *Deux si cles d'esclavage au Qu bec*, 270; Orlando Patterson, "The Constituent Elements of Slavery," in *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader*, edited by Hilary McD. Beckles, and Verene Shepherd (Kingston, Jamaica, 2000), 34.

<sup>38</sup> Campbell, Miers, and Miller, *Women and Slavery*, 250. For more information on birth control techniques, refer to Roberts, "Reproduction in Bondage," 22-56; For more information on *lactational amenorrhea* (lactation as a form of resistance to breeding) see Klein and Engerman, "Fertility Differentials," 357-358; Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 193; Nelson, *Slavery, Geography and Empire*, 251, 272-273; Note that mass suicides were also recurrent practices, Rodriguez explains that "[s]everal instances of mass suicides occurred when groups of escaping slaves who faced capture decided death was better than returning to slavery," Junius P. Rodriguez, "Violent and Nonviolent Approaches to Resistance," in *Encyclopedia of Slave Resistance and Rebellion* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2007), 564.

Illustrating the traumatic distress of enslaved mothers, Junius P. Rodriguez (2007) outlines the tragic story of Nat Turner's mother who attempted to kill him as an infant to prevent him from being subjected to slavery.<sup>39</sup> Alas, Turner's mother did not succeed in killing her son, but we may recall the infamous story of Margaret Garner, the fugitive American slave, who did in fact kill her child. Mother of four children, Garner attempted to escape the dreadful confinement of slavery. On the verge of being found, she was able to slit the throat of her two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Mary.<sup>40</sup> Garner preferred the idea of killing her children rather than to see them reduced to slavery.<sup>41</sup>

The plight of the enslaved "NEGRO WENCH" named Bett, described as "big with child, and within a few days of her time" in a fugitive notice placed on the 8th of March 1787, sheds light on the potential practice of infanticide in Quebec.<sup>42</sup> We know Bett was recaptured because three months later on the 5th of July 1787, Bett's owner was selling her at a private sale as a "stout, healthy, active Negro woman."<sup>43</sup> Significantly, only Bett was being sold. There was no mention of her child, which she would have given birth to by then. Mackey suggests that perhaps Bett could have given birth to a stillborn child, but that she "had been briefly held on suspicion

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<sup>39</sup> Rodriguez, "Violent and Nonviolent Approaches to Resistance," 564.

<sup>40</sup> Mark Reinhardt, *Who Speaks for Margaret Garner* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 5.

<sup>41</sup> For more information regarding the controversial story of Margaret Garner including the court case and newspaper articles that discuss the events, please refer to Mark Reinhardt, *Who Speaks for Margaret Garner*. For additional information regarding Garner's trial and litigation as well as accounts of fugitive slaves and infanticide in the United States refer to Steven Weisenburger, *Modern Medea: A Family Story of Slavery and Child-Murder from the Old South* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998). For an account of female slave resistance oriented towards the case of Garner, refer to the collection of essays in Mary E. Frederickson and Delores M. Walters, *Gendered Resistance: Women, Slavery, and the Legacy of Margaret Garner* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013). For an art historical interpretation of Thomas Satterwhite Noble's 1867 oil on canvas titled *Margaret Garner*, refer to Leslie Furth, "'The Modern Medea' and Race Matters: Thomas Satterwhite Noble's 'Margaret Garner,'" *American Art* 12, no. 2 (Summer, 1998): 36-57.

<sup>42</sup> Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 329.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

of murdering the child," which may indicate that Bett deliberately harmed or killed the child, or that the dangerous nature of her flight, in the winter, led to the death of the baby.<sup>44</sup>

We may also stipulate that in the Quebec context the practice of abortion would have been known by enslaved females. Charmaine A. Nelson (2010) offers an analysis of the sugar apple on the plate of fruits depicted in François Malépart de Beaucourt's *Portrait of a Negro Slave* (1786; now titled *Portrait of a Haitian Woman*). Nelson argues that a paste made of the sugar apple seeds was poisonous and when applied to the uterus, had the power to induce abortion.<sup>45</sup> Nelson then puts forward the idea that "[if] indeed the female sitter, who was more than likely born and raised in the French Antilles, had indigenous knowledge of the fruits, plants and vegetation of her native land, is it not a fair assumption that a part of her knowledge might entail the medicinal, or so-called folk knowledge of the sugar apple as an abortifacient?"<sup>46</sup> Along these lines, I insist that Beaucourt's sitter likely not the only imported female slave of the colony to have knowledge of abortion methods.

## **Family Dynamics**

Enslaved family dynamics are a complex matter that had an impact on children. Deprived of control over their lives, black families were subjected to separation. Orlando Patterson (2000) posits that:

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 309.

<sup>45</sup> Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 83.

<sup>46</sup> Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 83-84; John M. Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 17-18; White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?*, 84-85. Nelson wrote this prior to the knowledge that the Beaucourts had travelled to St. Domingue on the eve of the Haitian Revolution and that the black female sitter, most likely Marie-Thérèse-Zémire, was enslaved in the island. See Nelson, *Slavery Geography and Empire*, 111-56.

[i]n all slaveholding societies slave couples could be and were forcibly separated and the consensual 'wives' of slaves were obliged to submit sexually to their masters; slaves had no custodial claims or powers over their children, and children inherited no claims or obligations to their parents. And the master had the power to remove a slave from the local community in which he or she was brought up.<sup>47</sup>

Conversely, the Code Noir, the French laws governing slavery which were to be followed in the West Indies and in Louisiana prohibited in article 47, the separate sale of parents and their pre-pubescent children:

Ne pourront être saisis et vendus séparément le mari, la femme et leur enfants impubères, s'ils sont tous sous la puissance d'un même maître [...]<sup>48</sup>

Even though many of New France's rules and regulations concerning the practice of slavery were based on the Code Noir, this specific section was never officially enforced and we may even argue the opposite; the separation of enslaved family members and the relocation of enslaved children was in fact a common practice in New France and Quebec.

In 1745, Étienne, also referred to as Eskenne, was only one year old when she was sold to Joseph-Jacques Gamelin and her parents became the property of Luc Lacorne Saint-Luc.<sup>49</sup> In 1755, the enslaved black female Soumande-Delorme gave birth to her son named Jean-Joseph. One year later the infant was buried as the property of captain François Mercier; Soumande-Delorme's owner had therefore sold the newborn.<sup>50</sup> In 1785 William Ward from Vermont sold a black male, female and child to William Campbell of Montreal; one month later Campbell resold these three people to Doctor Charles Blake; in 1791, Blake auctioned a young black slave.<sup>51</sup> It

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<sup>47</sup> Patterson, "The Constituent Elements of Slavery," 35.

<sup>48</sup> France, *Recueils de règlements*, 96; Trudel and D'Allaire. *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 147, 271; Lovejoy estimates the pre-pubescent age to be before 13-14 years old. Paul Lovejoy, "The Children of Slavery— The Transatlantic Phase," *Slavery and Abolition* 27, no. 2 (2006): 198.

<sup>49</sup> Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 233-234.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.



would be a fair assumption to state that the three slaves sold by Ward and Campbell were a family unit and that the youngster sold four years later by Blake would have been the child he purchased from Campbell thus, the child would have been separated from his parents and sold to an unidentified party, perhaps when he was of age to work without his parent's care.

The immediate removal of black newborns from their mothers seemed to have been a practice that benefitted white female widows. In November 1757, the governor general Vaudreuil-Cavagnial's enslaved black female Marie-Anne-Victoire gave birth to a male infant who was baptized in Montreal and immediately transferred to the widow Janot-Lachapelle's home in Pointe-aux-Trembles where he died six days later.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, Marie-Charlotte, *legitimate* daughter of the enslaved blacks Jacques and Marie, was born into slavery on January 23rd, 1759 within the household of Luc Lacorne Saint-Luc.<sup>53</sup> After being baptized two days later, she was moved to widow Lapistole's home in Longueuil where she would die eight months later.<sup>54</sup>

The aforementioned infants removed from their black mothers were all transferred to wet nurses within the homes of white women where they died shortly thereafter.<sup>55</sup> This somewhat common and extremely cruel practice of hastily removing black infants from the care of their enslaved mother raises several concerns. Would this have been a deliberate form of punishment inflicted on black mothers? Or perhaps these infants were displaced with the eventual aim to use

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>53</sup> The term *legitimate* is borrowed from Marcel Trudel and in this context signifies that Marie-Charlotte's parents were legally married. Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 146-152.

<sup>54</sup> Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 152.

<sup>55</sup> It is unclear who the wet nurses would have been in these specific examples, but it is important to note that black enslaved women did serve as wet nurses for white mothers in Quebec. Daniel Gay, *Les Noirs Du Québec, 1629-1900*, (Québec: Éditions du Septentrion, 2004), 398; Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 152.

them as units of labor? Putting forward a third hypothesis, I may suggest that the removal of infants could be related to the potential procreation of black mothers: Danielle Gauvreau (1991) argues that in early eighteenth-century Quebec, nursing practices for white women acted as a means to reduce the period of near-sterility that accompanies breastfeeding (postpartum amenorrhea), resulting in higher fertility levels.<sup>56</sup> In this sense, the removal of the black infant increases the chances for the enslaved woman to get pregnant again more rapidly. Despite the high mortality rate of black children in Quebec, we must question the reasons leading to the death of these infants.<sup>57</sup> Although Trudel does not have a definite explanation for their death, he

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<sup>56</sup> Danielle Gauvreau, *Québec, une ville et sa population au temps de la Nouvelle-France*, (Sillery, Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1991), 139-40. Accessed 13 February, 2019. <https://proxy.library.mcgill.ca/login?url=https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mcgill/detail.action?docID=3257663>; Émilie Robert posits that in eighteenth century, the bourgeois did not place only their own heirs in the hands of a wet nurse, many paid women to take care of the children of their slaves. Émilie Robert, *La mise en nourrice en Nouvelle-France: l'île de Montréal, 1680-1768*, (Master's thesis, Université de Montréal, 2011), 8. Accessed 14 February, 2019. [https://papyrus.bib.umontreal.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1866/6870/Robert\\_Emilie\\_2011\\_memoire.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y](https://papyrus.bib.umontreal.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1866/6870/Robert_Emilie_2011_memoire.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y).

<sup>57</sup> Trudel's collected data demonstrates that infant mortality rates are very high for the black population. On a total of 238 black children, 93 died before they were one year old, meaning that 39.1% of black children did not manage to survive a complete year in Quebec. Trudel does not offer an explanation for this high rate of death, but he does question whether climate would have been one of the primary causes of death. He also puts forward the possibility that black children could have been neglected essential care. Trudel mentions that child mortality rates were also high for the white population. Out of 1000 children born alive, one quarter died in their first year. Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 165-169.

does put forward the idea that climate conditions and lack of essential care may have been the causes of such early deaths.<sup>58</sup>

It was not rare that enslaved people were sold to repay the debts of their white slaveowners.<sup>59</sup> The Paterson family gave up their 12 year old enslaved black child to free themselves of the debt they owed to the Bissett family; the slave would therefore move to a new home for an undetermined amount of time, and possibly permanently.<sup>60</sup> In 1787 the priest Louis Payet purchased a 10 year old black child. Similarly, Pierre-Charles Boucher de Labruère purchased an 8 year old black child in 1790 in exchange for wheat.

In other instances, we may associate the sale of slaves with the burden they would have caused their owners through forms of resistance, notably by attempting to escape their masters. Identified as a fifteen or sixteen year-old mulatto, Bell was also referred to as Isabella Grant. Bell was first sold by ship captain Thomas Venture at an auction to butcher George Hipps. Bell

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<sup>58</sup> The new slaveowners would have been in charge of these infants, but it is unclear as to whom would have cared for them within the household: The white female slave owner, servants, or other slaves? We must also acknowledge the realities of poor diet and lack of proper hygiene, as discussed earlier. Moreover, we may suggest that because these infants were separated from their mothers, this could have meant that the babies were weaned and fed animal milk or fed by a wet nurse. Denise Lemieux, *Les petits innocents: l'enfance en Nouvelle-France* (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1985), 112; Sally McMillen, "Mother's Sacred Duty: Breast-Feeding Patterns Among Middle and Upper-Class Women in the Antebellum South," *The Journal of Southern History* 51, no. 3 (1985): 348-49; Herring, Saunders and Katzenberg examine the relationship between infant mortality and breast-feeding and weaning behaviours in nineteenth-century Ontario, Canada, and concluded that in populations where breast-feeding was practiced for a short period of time, the infant mortality rate increased. D. Ann Herring, S.R. Saunders, and M.A. Katzenberg, "Investigating the Weaning Process in Past Populations," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 105, no. 4 (1998): 425-39, accessed 16 February, 2019. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/%28SICI%291096-8644%28199804%29105%3A4%3C425%3A%3AID-AJPA3%3E3.0.CO%3B2-N>.

<sup>59</sup> Hilary McD. Beckles calls attention to the fact that in the eighteenth and nineteenth-century Caribbean context, white women rented black women as prostitutes and even though this was illegal, it was a common practice. Beckles further explains that "[i]nfants of slave prostitutes were owned by their mothers' owners and often sold when weaned as an additional product." Hilary McD. Beckles, "White Women and Slavery in the Caribbean," in *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader*, edited by Hilary McD. Beckles, and Verene Shepherd (Kingston, Jamaica, 2000), 663.

<sup>60</sup> Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 104.

escaped twice from Hipps before he sold her to lieutenant-governor Hector Theophilus Cramahé in November 1778. Bell was sold again the following April to Captain Peter Napier. After Napier's death, his widow Sarah sold Isabella to Francis Daniel and Richard Dalton in February of 1783.<sup>61</sup> What is disconcerting in Bell's story, notwithstanding her numerous sales to different owners, is the fact that in the August 1778 slave advertisement published in the *Quebec Gazette*, Bell ran away from Hipps and "had no shoes or stockings on."<sup>62</sup> Although it was common for slaves not to own or wear shoes on plantation sites, this was completely uncommon in the temperate regions of Canada, even in the summer months. Running away under these conditions attests to the fact that she fled under some duress.<sup>63</sup> Based on the documentation we have, by the age of approximately sixteen, Bell was sold to five different owners and this does not account for her potential owners prior to her arrival in the colony. Although we do not know for certain why Bell was sold so many times, the two runaway advertisements in her name attest to the fact that she would have been resorting to forms of resistance and that she would have been an encumbrance to her owners.

We may hypothesize that these children were born into slavery and separated from their families and sold to new owners in order to relieve their masters of their debts, or simply because slave owners typically did not give any more consideration to the separation of enslaved children from their older family members or parents, than with any other age group of enslaved people.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 321, 535; Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 130.

<sup>62</sup> Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 321

<sup>63</sup> Trudel posits that Isabella's owner, George Hipps, was a butcher belonging to the bourgeoisie class therefore Hipps would have had sufficient funds to purchase shoes for his slave. Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 163.

<sup>64</sup> Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 120.

Enslaved children were first and foremost, units of labour, and their well being was secondary to the needs, demands and whims of the slaveowner.

A common method of transferring enslaved property was through the will of the deceased. Slaves were often enumerated alongside other property in their owner's will with indication of their subsequent owner. Furthermore, estate inventories also sometimes reveal if the enslaved was sold or gifted to another person. In 1729 *premier baron* Charles Lemoyne of Longueuil died leaving in his will a family of seven black slaves. Lemoyne's son *le chevalier* Paul-Joseph obtained possession of the father (Charles), mother (Charlotte-Élisabeth), and three of their children: Eight year old Charles-Claude, 3 year old Marie-Charlotte, and one year old Joseph. Lemoyne's son *second baron* Charles II was given the two remaining black children: Six year old François, and five year old Marie-Élisabeth.<sup>65</sup> Although the slaves were being dispersed among slaveowners of the same family, we should not assume that the Lemoyne's sons would have given the opportunity to their slaves to communicate with each other.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, depending upon their living arrangements, they may no longer have lived in the same homes, neighbourhoods, or regions, and the labour demands routinely placed upon the enslaved left only Sundays as a "day of rest" and the day when enslaved people would attempt to undertake the necessary travel to preserve familial bonds. One can only begin to imagine the trauma imposed on these children who were constantly transferred from one owner to another and that had to adapt to new environments at such a young age without knowing whether the new conditions (home, slaveowner, labour regime, etc.) would last.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 271.

## Child Labor

Whether forcibly removed from their parents or not, enslaved children were quickly subjected to difficult labour. B.W. Higman (2000) states that in 1834, the work force of the British Caribbean was composed mainly of field laborers and domestics.<sup>67</sup> Higman posits that 81.7% of the enslaved were working; the non-working slave population consisted of children under the age of six (13.6%), and of slaves "aged [70 years and over], diseased, or otherwise non-effective" (4.7%).<sup>68</sup> Discussing the similarities in terms of work and culture in New England and the Middle Colonies, Harvey Amani Whitfield (2016) states that in both regions

slaves worked in a mixed economy and engaged in a wide variety of occupations. The chores of rural slaves were not usually assigned according to sex, as 'black men and women labored in the fields, cut firewood, and fed animals.' Northern slaves usually lived in close proximity to their masters, along with perhaps one or two other slaves. They also worked alongside their owners as farmers, domestics, or urban artisans.<sup>69</sup>

Bernard Moitt (2000) posits that in the Caribbean, slaves were separated into different labor *gangs*, which defined their role within the plantation workforce:

[T]he great gang consisted of the strongest male and female slaves who performed the most arduous tasks such as preparing the soil for planting, weeding, cutting canes and manufacturing sugar. It was always led by a male slave driver. Less robust slaves, newly arrived slaves who had to be acclimatised, pregnant slaves and nursing mothers comprised the second gang which performed lighter and more varied tasks than those of the first gang, including the cultivation of food crops. On some sugar plantations weeding was the preoccupation of women in the second gang. The third gang was made up of children between the ages of 8 and 13 years who picked weeds and gathered cane trash from around the mill. At age 13 or 14, young slaves moved up to the great gang.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> B.W. Higman, "Physical and Economic Environments," in *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader*, edited by Hilary McD. Beckles, and Verene Shepherd (Kingston, Jamaica, 2000), 370.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

<sup>69</sup> Harvey Amani Whitfield, *North to Bondage: Loyalist Slavery in the Maritimes* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 21.

<sup>70</sup> Moitt, "Women, Work and Resistance," 1019-1020; See original source in Debien, *Les esclaves aux Antilles françaises*, 135-146.

According to Moitt, we may observe that regardless of their fragile state, pregnant and nursing women, and children were not exempted from the harsh labor of plantation field work. Indeed, the ground-breaking analysis of Lucille Mair on enslaved Jamaican females revealed that females outnumbered the males in field labour by 1000 to 920.<sup>71</sup>

In 1817, Reverend Thomas Cooper was sent to Jamaica to improve the condition of the Negroes "by means of religious instruction."<sup>72</sup> Documenting his observations, Cooper outlines the condition of enslaved children working on plantations:

Mr. Roughley is speaking of the children's gang, he advises that the driveress be 'armed with a pliant, serviceable *twig*.' "yet I have seen many gangs of little boys and girls at work in the field before the driveress, who, however, always had her whip. Women are generally put to drive the children, though I have seen men so employed. Mr. Roughley is the first that ever I heard of as recommending the *twig*, for field service, in preference to the whip, which, even at this early period, is something more than a mere sign of office, the little victims being doomed to feel, as well as see it. I remember once riding up to a place where the children's gang was at work: the overseer, who was with me, thinking that the driver was not sufficiently vigilant, called out, 'what are you doing there, Sir? What is the use of your having the whip, unless you make use of it? Attend to them, Sir.' The poor fellow instantly obeyed, and more than one of the little creatures felt the weight of his instrument. There may be cases, even in this country, where the corporal punishment of children is judicious, if not absolutely necessary; but surely the practice of putting them indiscriminately and constantly into the gang before the cart-whip, savours of barbarity and cruelty. In this way they are, even in the morning of life, degraded from the rank of rational beings, to the condition of cattle in a team: their whole education is committed to the driver, who has himself been brutalized by similar training.<sup>73</sup>

As Cooper indicated, on the plantation, the driveress was in charge of the *children gang*, violence was used to control and scare the children, and enslaved children were dehumanized

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<sup>71</sup> Lucille Mathurin Mair, "Women Field Workers in Jamaica During Slavery," *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader*, eds. Verene Shepherd and Hilary McD. Beckles (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 2000), 390.

<sup>72</sup> Cooper, *Facts Illustrative*, 1.

<sup>73</sup> Cooper, *Facts Illustrative*, 49-50; Also refer to Nelson, *Slavery, Geography and Empire*, 289.

and reduced to the status of cattle from a young age. In all, children on plantations were not treated any differently from adult slaves. Rather, their violent "educations" under the discipline of female drivers was meant to prepare them for the backbreaking drudgery of the hard labour of their middle and adult years.

In a slave minority site such as Quebec, the structure of the workforce was organized differently than what is proposed by Moitt in the Caribbean context. As mentioned in the introduction, enslaved blacks were first brought to New France to aid in the cultivation of land and for the benefit of the Canadian economy.<sup>74</sup> Trudel's research demonstrates that most of the black slave population resided in cities: Out of the 4185 enslaved people (combining both Indigenous and Black), 60.6% of the slaves were in urban environments and therefore only 39.4% were found in rural locations between the 1650s and 1834.<sup>75</sup> We may argue that blacks were given different tasks to accomplish and that their location on the territory aids us in determining the type of labor to which they were subjected. Mackey argues that:

With a few exceptions, Montreal masters owned one or two slaves at a time. These were usually employed in domestic service, or something akin to it — working in inns or taverns, for instance. They were housed not in slave huts but in a room in the master's house — sometimes just a spot on the kitchen floor — or in a shed, a stable, barn, or other outbuilding. In terms of the tasks they performed — cooking, cleaning, washing, waiting on tables, chopping and fetching wood, drawing water, tending to horses, driving coaches, milking cows, running errands, etc., — there was no difference between slaves and servants.<sup>76</sup>

We know for instance, that the enslaved black woman Marie-Joseph Angélique, owned by Thérèse de Couange and François Poulin de Francheville, was used as a domestic and would

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<sup>74</sup> William Renwick Riddell, "The Slave in Canada," in *The Journal of Negro History* 5, no. 3 (July, 1920), 316.

<sup>75</sup> Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 94-96, 101.

<sup>76</sup> Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 177.



have been assigned domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning, serving, and laundry on a daily basis along with seasonal tasks and occasional labor at the farm in Saint-Michel owned by the her master.<sup>77</sup> Both urban and rural tasks were therefore assigned to Angélique depending on the needs of her owner.

Slave sale advertisements are valuable for understanding the various functions occupied by slaves. Slaveowners would advertise the enslaved by outlining the different skills their "property" possessed, which in turn helps us to understand the type of work to which they were subjected. In the table below, based on Frank Mackey's *Appendix 1* (2010), I have selected fugitive and slave sale advertisements that mention enslaved people between the ages of 0-16 year-old with specific tasks or skills that they may provide, including language abilities.

<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Date of notice</b>	<b>Tasks/skills</b>	<b>Fugitive or Sale</b>
Quebec Gazette	18 June, 1767	"A Healthy NEGRO BOY, about 15 Years of Age, well qualified to wait on a Gentleman as a body Servant."	Sale
Quebec Gazette	17 November, 1768	"a very healthy hand Negro Girl, about Eleven Years of Age, speaks both French and English."	Sale
Quebec Gazette	13 April, 1769	"a healthy Negro boy, about 15 Years of Age [...] and is a compleat Cook"	Sale

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<sup>77</sup> Cooper, *The Hanging of Angelique*, 157; David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine. *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 302-306; Bouchard, Lévesque and Back, *Elles ont fait l'Amérique*, 159.

<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Date of notice</b>	<b>Tasks/skills</b>	<b>Fugitive or Sale</b>
Quebec Gazette	19 September, 1771	"a bound Servant, suppos'd to be about 16, tho' small of his Age, remarkable for the Number of Masters he has served [...] speaks English and French French fluently"	Fugitive
Quebec Gazette	13 May, 1784	"A Likely healthy Negro Wench, between 15 and 16 years of age [...] understands all sorts of house work"	Sale
Quebec Gazette	12 May, 1785	"a stout Negro-boy, 13 years old"	Sale
Montreal Gazette	29 January, 1789	"Une jeune Nègresse d'environ 15 ans, parlant Anglois & François, & au fait du train d'un ménage"	Sale
Montreal Gazette	16 May, 1793	"A Mulatto Boy sixteen years old, capable of Cooking and doing all kind of House Work"	Sale
Montreal Gazette	31 July, 1797	"Ten years Service of a Negro Girl aged about seventeen years"	Sale

This data is quite limited since many of the enslaved in the advertisements were either not given an age or there was no mention of their working abilities. Unless born into their households, it would have been difficult for owners to know the exact age of their slaves; the forcible removal of enslaved children from their family units, and their resale, would have made it burdensome to keep track. Given the high mortality rate of the period and the short life expectancy of black slaves in the colony estimated at 25.2 in 1730 and 46.9 between 1811 and 1820, it would have been advantageous for slaveowners to withhold on the age of their slaves or to falsify the numbers to encourage the sale of their property.<sup>78</sup> Young slaves had the potential to

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<sup>78</sup> Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 165-169.

live longer, to be more physically adapted to perform various types of labor, and to be more easily "tamed" to follow the rules and regulations of their master.

Nonetheless, we may assert that the enslaved under the age of sixteen were asked to provide the following services and skills: body servant, ability to communicate in different languages, cooking skills, able to perform various duties required by owners, diverse house work abilities, and physical strength. Based on this data and in comparison to Moitt's explanation of different labor tasks for children on plantations, we may conclude that enslaved people under the age of sixteen in Quebec were often employed as domestics providing an array of different services, rather than field work.

### **Child or Adult?**

The practice of slavery has made it difficult to define the term child in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Quebec. Nelson (2010) problematizes the age and period of life at which a human is a child:

If we go by today's standards, basing it on legal markers like the legal drinking age in Canada, the answer would be prior to the age of eighteen or nineteen, and in the United States, twenty-one. But how do things shift if we factor in issues like historical mortality rates as they were specific to racial populations? And should mortality be used as a marker of childhood at all or does it utterly warp the calculations? For instance, if we assume that an historical mortality rate should also be used to determine a life marker like 'mid-life' then a population that lived to be twenty would have been middle-aged at ten years old, and if 'mid-life' cannot be childhood, then the childhood phase of this groups' development is summarily curtailed. On the other hand, is it better to theorize amazing rises in human mortality? And if so, is it logical or productive to think of people who lived to be only twenty years old as still being children at eighteen? As a kind of compromise and because I am not a developmental psychologist, I am considering childhood to be from infancy into the early to middle teen years, in part because of the socialization and developmental processes that every human must undergo

over the course of years and in part because of the standard age of the start of menarche (globally seen as a girl's right of passage) in black slave girls, which Trussell and Steckel have calculated as fifteen.<sup>79</sup>

Lovejoy (2006) analyzes pre-1850 Angolan data and proposes that the term infant was used for those who required their mothers for survival purposes, whereas the term child defines a 6-7 year old that could more easily be separated from their mother.<sup>80</sup> Lovejoy also explains that *girls* applied to females between the ages of 7 and 13 or 14, and *boys* was employed to define males between the ages of 7-14 or 15.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, in the British context, Lovejoy argues that at the end of the eighteenth century "Britain tried to regulate the trade by defining adults as those individuals who were at least 4 feet, 4 inches tall."<sup>82</sup> The definition of the terms infant, child, and adult were therefore dependent on subjective measures, which complicates our historical understanding of childhood.

In an attempt to use terminology as an indicator of age for the enslaved in Quebec, I assembled a chart using slave advertisements based on Mackey's research (2010), that outlines the twenty-eight different terms used to define slaves and associated them with the corresponding age.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 38; See also James Trussell and Richard Steckel, "The Age of Slaves at Menarche and Their First Birth," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 8, no 3 (1979): 477-505; White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?*, 104. The lack of recorded or surviving data on black slaves in Quebec makes it difficult for scholars to fully comprehend the slave condition. Considering that the research is based on limited data sample, we can only hypothesize on the meaning of the values; on a total of 4087 slaves (both indigenous and black) in Quebec, Trudel informs us that we account for the age of death of only 38.8% slaves. Considering only blacks, their average age of death is estimated at 25.2 years in 1730; between 1811 and 1820, the age mean increases to approximately 46.9 years. Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 165-169.

<sup>80</sup> Lovejoy, "The Children of Slavery," 199-200.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Mackey collected slave advertisements for the following Quebec newspapers: *Quebec Gazette*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Gazette du commerce et littéraire*, *Gazette littéraire du district de Montréal*, *Quebec Herald*, *Quebec Herald and Universal Miscellany*, *Quebec Herald Miscellany & Advertiser*, *Quebec Mercury*, *Canadian Courant & Montreal Advertiser*. Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 312-313.

**Table 2: Correlation Between Terminology and Age in Slave Advertisements**  
*"Single data" in this table signifies that the combination of age and terminology was only found once.*

Black Boy	N/A
Black Girl	Estimated age of 20 or 30 (Single Data)
Bound Servant	16 (Single Data)
Brown Complexion	N/A
Canadianman	26 (Single Data)
Fair Complexion	Ages between 27-30
Jeune négresse	15 (Single Data)
Mulatto	Ages between 18-24
Mulatto Boy	Ages between 13-16
Mulatto Child	4 (Single Data)
Mulatto Fellow	18 (Single Data)
Mulatto Girl	26 (Single Data)
Mulatto Male Child	9 Months (Single Data)
Mulatto Man	30 (Single Data)
Mulatto Negro Slave	23 (Single Data)
Mulatto Woman	N/A
Mulatto Young Man	23 (Single Data)
Negro	Ages between 20-27
Negro Boy	Ages between 13-15
Negro Fellow	Ages between 21-23
Negro Girl	Ages between 11-24
Negro Lad	Ages between 18-25
Negro Man	Ages between 22-40
Negro Slave	Ages between 30-35
Negro Wench	Ages between 12-30
Negro Woman	Ages between 18-30

<b>Table 2: Correlation Between Terminology and Age in Slave Advertisements</b> "Single data" in this table signifies that the combination of age and terminology was only found once.	
Pale Complexion	Ages between 19-27

A total of twenty-eight different terms were used to define the slaved, and seventeen were not given an age in the slave advertisements available to us. The data sample is quite insufficient to raise any decent conclusions since some of the terms are associated with only one data, making our understanding of the terms dubious. Moreover, even if we were to use this chart as a reference, we would notice that there are no correlation between the terms and ages. In conclusion, I argue that terminology used by slaveowners to define their slaves was randomly selected and had nothing to do with the age of those that they held in bondage: The terms *negro man* or *negro woman* could be used to define a slave of ages 18-40; similarly, a *negro boy* or *negro girl* could define a slave of ages 11-24. Overlapping in ages, the terms *man*, *woman*, *boy*, and *girl* were used interchangeably.

Through an analysis of these slave advertisements, we may confirm that slaveowners attributed random and inconsistent ages to their slaves. The notorious fugitive slave Joe was about 20 years old in November 1777 and in January 1778. In December 1778 he was advertised as a 21 year old. In September 1779 he was said to be near 22 years of age. Seven years later, in February of 1786 Joe's age is not advertised, but in May of that same year he is said to be about 26 years old; an increase of four years of age over a period of seven years. The slave advertisements for Ishmaël proposes a similar problem: In his first fugitive ad in July 1779, he is said to be about 35 years old. Five years later in March 1784 Ishmaël age is listed as only one year older and is about 36 years old. Four years later, in a third fugitive notice in June 1788, he

returns to his initial age of 35 years old. In September 1779, an unidentified *Negro fellow* is advertised as about 21 years old. Two years later in October 1781 he is said to be 22. Two months later, in December 1781 the slave's age decreases and he is then advertised as being about 21 years old. In May 1782 and in January 1783 the *negro lad* is still 21 years old. One year later in January 1784 he suddenly gains 4 years of age and was advertised as being 25 years old.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, we may notice that the ages given are unreliable and imprecise as in the advertisement on 21 October 1784 that announces the private sale of a black girl on indenture who is said to be between the ages of 20 and 30.

Since it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine at what age a slave was considered to be an adult, I argue that the age at which the enslaved were deemed fit to work at certain types of labour is a good indicator of how we should define and understand the line between child and adult. Considering Moitt's definition of working *gangs*, we may hypothesize that a child in a slave majority site became an adult at the age of thirteen, when he or she was regarded as equal to all other working slaves and deemed apt to be part of the *great gang*. In a slave minority site such as Quebec, it is more difficult to raise such conclusion due to the lack of data available. Nonetheless, I would argue that the enslaved between the ages of thirteen and sixteen were providing the same type of labour as their older counterparts. Combining the data and research provided by the scholars aforementioned, I would place the very approximate line separating the so-called childhood and adulthood of the enslaved population of Quebec, at sixteen years of age.

The lack of accuracy of age recordings is demonstrative of the process of dehumanization and objectification of the black population during the period of slavery both within slave

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<sup>84</sup> See advertisements 31, 36, 37, 39, 41, and 44 in "Appendix 1," Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 307-344.

majority and slave minority sites. Understanding the environment in which enslaved children were born, lived, and worked helps us shape the context in which the visual culture of slavery was established in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Quebec.



## **Chapter 2:**

### **Depicting Power Relations in British Art**

The objectification and dehumanization of the black body has a long history in Western art. Visual elements, such as the metal collars enslaved blacks were compelled to wear, reinforce the idea that black people were in fact owned by their white counterparts.<sup>85</sup> The lack of visual representations of black subjects, especially children in Quebec, compels me to expand my research to the broader British context for a better understanding of late eighteenth-century representations of black children. Through an analysis of various artworks, chapter two explores how British visual culture functioned to dehumanize and objectify black children in the dominantly white society of Britain.

I will begin by discussing Britain's relationship to transatlantic slavery to acquire a general understanding of eighteenth-century power relations. The ways in which black bodies function as exotic commodities and their inclusion in portrait paintings will then be discussed. I will examine the experiences of black individuals in Britain to obtain a better comprehension of the meaning of the visual culture of enslaved blacks. I will end the chapter by exploring how black subjects, especially children, were visually Othered and exoticized.

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<sup>85</sup> Waterfield posits that the collars worn by the enslaved were produced by the craftsmen who produced dog collars and that they were inscribed with the owner's name. This only exemplified the fact that black people were possessions and treated as chattel. Giles Waterfield, "Black Servants," in *Below Stairs: 400 Years of Servants' Portraits*, eds. Giles Waterfield, Anne French, and Matthew Craske (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2003), 141.

## Slavery in Britain

According to Giles Waterfield (2003) enslaved Africans were first brought to Britain in 1555.<sup>86</sup> With the growing needs of labour on sugarcane plantations, the English saw an economic opportunity and became involved in the triangular trade of enslaved Africans in the early seventeenth century.<sup>87</sup> Thus, the practice of slavery played an important role in the expansion of the British economy.<sup>88</sup> Although slavery was not permitted in Britain after 1772, it was not until 1834 that its abolition was official.<sup>89</sup>

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, thousands of Africans were working in British households as domestic slaves, which was regarded as a "hallmark" of the "English urban life."<sup>90</sup> Susan Dwyer Amussen (2007) explains that "[t]he history of slavery and settlement is familiar to historians of the colonial Americas; it is less so to historians of England and Britain in the seventeenth century. Yet because the slave population of the mainland colonies grew more slowly than that in the Caribbean [...]. Furthermore, few colonial historians have concerned themselves with what happened when people went back to England."<sup>91</sup> It is therefore quite difficult to obtain an in-depth account of the black enslaved population of Britain.

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<sup>86</sup> Waterfield, "Black Servants," 139; David Bindman, "Am I Not a Man and a Brother? British Art and Slavery in the Eighteenth Century," *Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 26 (1994): 69.

<sup>87</sup> Between 1640 and 1807 Britain was dominating the slave-trade by transporting 3.1 million Africans. —, "Britain and the Slave Trade," *The National Archives*, np, accessed March 4, 2019. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/slavery/pdf/britain-and-the-trade.pdf>.

<sup>88</sup> Tobin states that eight to fifty percent of Britain's economic growth is associated to the sugar-slavery system in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Beth Fowkes Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-Century British Painting* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999), 45.

<sup>89</sup> Waterfield, "Black Servants," 139.

<sup>90</sup> Waterfield, "Black Servants," 139; Helen Mears, "Silver Service Slavery: The Black Presence in the White Home," in *(Re)Figuring Human Enslavement: Images of Power, Violence and Resistance Vol. 5*, eds. Ulrich Pallua, Adrain Knapp and Adreas Exenberger (Innsbruck University Press, 2009), 45.

<sup>91</sup> Susan Dwyer Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 10.

Black people were perceived by the dominantly white population as "the most ignorant and unpolished people in the world."<sup>92</sup> The establishment of racial hierarchies through slavery pushed forward the marginalization of black people and the treatment of so-called inferior beings, as chattel. The demand for slaves in Britain was in part because of the exoticism associated with black subjects.<sup>93</sup> The wealth of a white citizen was displayed through the purchase of exotic and foreign items, and the idea of owning a person of colour contributed to the white owners' sense of power and colonial reach.<sup>94</sup> In some instances, black children were handed over to white children for the purpose of entertainment. Mary Prince (1788-1833) for instance was born enslaved in Bermuda and shipped to England where she was given to her master's grand-daughter and served as her "pet" and "little nigger."<sup>95</sup> Prince's example gives way to the early educating of children in cross-racial interactions and consequently attests to the importance of racial hierarchy that places black as the inferior race.

Most likely separated from their family units and shipped overseas, the enslaved population of Britain would have been dispersed amongst the households of white slaveowners, as opposed to living on a plantation site.<sup>96</sup> These imported slaves would have been isolated from their families and segregated from their cultural identity.

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>94</sup> See note 8 in Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 205.

<sup>95</sup> Mary Prince and Thomas Pringle, *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave* (London: Published by F. Westley and A.H. Davis, 1831), 1, accessed 16 February, 2019. <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/99Rz63>.

<sup>96</sup> In slave majority sites the enslaved population would often be living as a community on the plantation itself. This type of living environment did not prevent family units from being separated, but it did allow for some cultural bonding.

Amussen argues that the presence of blacks in England is traceable through newspapers that include several notices for black runaway slaves.<sup>97</sup> Amussen also confirms that very little has been recorded on black individuals and that thus, these slave advertisements are "often the sole documentation of their existence."<sup>98</sup> Amussen's argument pushes forward the idea that black subjects were in fact objectified, and that their presence in art does not seek to humanize or individualize them.

The importation of blacks was therefore not only for labour purposes, but also "as a way to indicated the colonial connections of these wealthy and powerful people," which is perceivable in artistic practices, especially at court and in aristocratic portraiture.<sup>99</sup>

The conversation piece *Elihu Yale; William Cavendish, the Second Duke of Devonshire; Lord James Cavendish; Mr. Tunstal; and an Enslaved Servant* (ca. 1708; Figure 1) demonstrates the ways in which the black body in portrait paintings of the period may function as an element of racial segregation.<sup>100</sup> Central to the painting are four white men smoking tobacco, a foreign luxury good.<sup>101</sup> To their left stands a liveried and turbaned black boy who wears a collar with a padlock to the neck.<sup>102</sup> Beth Fowkes Tobin (1999) states that the black figure's presence in the

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<sup>97</sup> Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges*, 179.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power*, 28; Also in David Dabydeen, *Hogarth's Blacks: Images of Blacks in Eighteenth Century English Art* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 86-100.

<sup>100</sup> According to the Yale Center for British Art, the painting holds two alternate titles: *Elihu Yale, the Second Duke of Devonshire, Lord James Cavendish, Mr. Tunstal, and a Page*, and *The 2nd Duke of Devonshire, Lord James Cavendish, Elihu Yale, an Unknown Adult Male, and a Page*. "Elihu Yale; William Cavendish, the Second Duke of Devonshire; Lord James Cavendish; Mr. Tunstal; and An Enslaved Servant," Yale Center for British Art, accessed July 5, 2018. <http://collections.britishart.yale.edu/vufind/Record/1665331>.

<sup>101</sup> Rosenthal and Lugo-Ortiz posit that enslaved Africans notably children and especially males, were sold to European courts as luxury items. Angela Rosenthal and Agnes Lugo-Ortiz, *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World*, eds. Angela Rosenthal and Agnes Lugo-Ortiz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 2-3.

<sup>102</sup> Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power*, 28.

painting "exoticizes the activities of these English subjects, calling attention to the foreignness of their activities."<sup>103</sup> Tobin argues that the presence of the black body in this image evokes overseas trade and colonialism; two practices exploited by the white wealthy and powerful male sitters of this portrait.<sup>104</sup> The Duke's black page in this image, therefore functions as an exotic commodity comparable to that of sugar and tobacco.<sup>105</sup>

### **Depicting the black body**

In his 2013 "Subjectivity and Slavery in Portraiture: From Courtly to Commercial Societies," David Bindman argues the following:

On plantations black slaves were economic units, organized into gangs and compelled to carry out hard and repetitive work until they could no longer do it. At European courts, on the other hand, were found only small numbers of blacks, their primary role being to contribute an exotic note to the theatricality of court life. This theatricality was based on the paradox that court societies were both self-enclosed yet acutely conscious of being observed by those outside the court.<sup>106</sup>

The presence of black people in British society was therefore not limited to the members of the court.

Catherine Molineux (2005) explains that "[a]s soon as African slaves began appearing in European courts in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, painters began including them in portraits of elite Europeans."<sup>107</sup> The first identifiable example of the white mistress depicted with

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Pointon states that we do not know anything about the identity and status of the black page in this painting; I would however argue that his collar asserts his role as an enslaved boy. Marcia Pointon, "Slavery and the Possibilities of Portraiture," in *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World*, eds. Agnes Lugo-Ortiz and Angela Rosenthal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 43.

<sup>106</sup> David Bindman, "Subjectivity and Slavery in Portraiture," in *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World*, eds. Agnes Lugo-Ortiz and Angela Rosenthal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 71.

<sup>107</sup> Catherine Molineux, "Hogarth's Fashionable Slaves: Moral Corruption in Eighteenth-Century London," *Essays in Honor of Ronald Paulson* 72, no. 2 (2005) : 497.

a black slave as a "decorative accessory" originated in *Laura Dianti* (1520; Figure 2) by Italian artist Titian (1488-1576).<sup>108</sup> The tradition was then developed by the Flemish artist Rubens (1577-1640) who included black pages in his large compositions.<sup>109</sup> In Britain, the tradition was carried on by artists such as Van Dyck (1599-1641) who used the black subject as an attendant, notably in his *Princess Henrietta of Lorraine* (1634; Figure 3).<sup>110</sup> The visual culture established in the British context of this period is therefore indicative of how enslaved blacks were perceived by their white counterparts.

Erickson proposes that the "[i]nclusion of the black servant does not represent benign inclusiveness but is rather keyed to incorporation into a visual regime structured in white dominance."<sup>111</sup> Artistic practices that apply the traditional depiction of black bodies demonstrate that racial hierarchy was of importance to its white citizens who were concerned with maintaining their racial power.

Appearing in high art portrait paintings, notably in court portraiture, the black child, especially male, was often depicted as dehumanized and objectified in order to emphasize the discrepancies between white sitters and the so-called inferior black subjects, and to "confer dignity" on the master or mistress.<sup>112</sup> Commonly referred to as pages, black children in portraiture were traditionally portrayed in manners similar to that of dwarfs, dogs, and horses.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Waterfield, "Black Servants," 141; Also in Bindman "Subjectivity and Slavery in Portraiture," 71. Bindman explains that portraiture in which the white sitter is accompanied by a black servant disappears in Europe after 1800. Bindman "Subjectivity and Slavery in Portraiture," 85.

<sup>109</sup> Waterfield, "Black Servants," 141-42.

<sup>110</sup> Waterfield, "Black Servants," 142; There was a general conflation between Arabic, African, and Indian origins in the representation of slaves, which did not matter since the importance was given to the idea of exoticism. Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power*, 27.

<sup>111</sup> Erickson, "Invisibility Speaks," 34.

<sup>112</sup> Bindman "Subjectivity and Slavery in Portraiture," 77.

<sup>113</sup> Angela Rosenthal, "Visceral Culture: Blushing and the Legibility of Whiteness in Eighteenth-Century British Portraiture," *Art History* 27, no. 4 (2004), 569.

Angela Rosenthal (2004) stipulates that the black page purposefully served "as advertisement for their employer's access to wealth, international power and civilizing agency, and, pictorially, to animate the sitters they attended and thus produce a value for whiteness."<sup>114</sup>

Encompassing the idea of exoticism, the black subject was therefore valuable for its association to foreign identities and consequently, to wealth; their presence in portrait paintings therefore functions as a "visual fantasy of masterly subjectivity granted to the white sitter."<sup>115</sup>

Richard Dyer (2017) argues that white is 'unraced' and thus, thought to be the ideal and normative race.<sup>116</sup> Considering this fact, we must then understand that racial arguments, notably in art practices of the eighteenth century, are fundamentally based on the idea that all races are interpreted in relation to the predominant race: white.

Amussen states that among the English men who colonized lands where slavery was taken for granted, few have been depicted in portrait paintings with slaves.<sup>117</sup> Amussen has found only two portraits of English colonists that include a black servant and that have "direct colonial connections."<sup>118</sup> Questions related to the identity of black individuals in portrait paintings of the period, should be raised. Bindman argues that the enslaved blacks depicted in portraits of the period are not necessarily owned by the sitter and that they may be fictive, copied from other

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<sup>114</sup> Rosenthal, "Visceral Culture," 563-92.

<sup>115</sup> Lugo-Ortiz and Rosenthal, *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World*, 4.

<sup>116</sup> Richard Dyer, *White: Twentieth Anniversary Edition* (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2017), 38, 45; Rosenthal argues that the white body may be interpreted as a fetish in the visual arts of the Neo-classicism and early Romanticism period. Rosenthal, "Visceral Culture: Blushing and the Legibility of Whiteness in Eighteenth-Century British Portraiture," *Art History* 27, no. 4 (2004), 588.

<sup>117</sup> Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges*, 215.

<sup>118</sup> The two paintings are that of Gerard Soest (c. 1635-50), "Cecil Calvert, 2nd Lord Baltimore, with His Grandson and Unidentified Servant," and a military portrait of Sir Charles Lyttleton (c. 1665). Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges*, 215. The portrait of Lyttleton may be found in C.H. Collins Baker, *Lely and the Stuart Portrait Painters: A Study of English Portraiture Before and After Van Dyck, volume 2* (London: P.L. Warner, 1912), 3-6.

paintings, owned or employed by the painter.<sup>119</sup> This attests to the desirability of the black body in portrait paintings: artists and white sitters were well informed of the meaning of depicting the Other and of the use of their bodies as spectacles of curiosity and symbols of wealth of white ownership. Furthermore, Angela Rosenthal and Agnes Lugo-Ortiz (2013) argue that the inclusion of the black page in portraiture was often depicted as a type rather than a specific individual.<sup>120</sup> Since it was a common practice for slave owners to rent the enslaved, the black sitter may have been rented for money by their owners to the white sitters or the artists.

Portrait paintings have the ability to function as an ideal representation of one's character within a given society. Sir William Young for example, governor of the Caribbean island of Dominica and commissioner of St. Vincent, is depicted as the central figure holding a cello in the family portrait *The Family of Sir William Young* (1770; Figure 4) by Johann Zoffany.<sup>121</sup> The Young family is here depicted with musical instruments that refer to the family's qualities as accomplished, learned, elegant, and culturally superior.<sup>122</sup> Visual elements such as the steps on the right, and the parkland in the background, make reference to the family's possessions of land and an English country house, both understood to be key status symbols.<sup>123</sup> Aiding a young boy onto the horse in the left side of the painting, is a black male figure. According to Dian Kay Kriz (2008), this black boy is John Brook, a servant of the family.<sup>124</sup> Tobin (1999) argues that the

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<sup>119</sup> Bindman, "Subjectivity and Slavery in Portraiture," 77.

<sup>120</sup> Rosenthal and Lugo-Ortiz. "Envisioning Slave Portraiture," 2.

<sup>121</sup> Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power*, 40.

<sup>122</sup> "The Family of Sir William Young," Walker Art Gallery, accessed July 5, 2018. <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/collections/paintings/18c/item-238515.aspx>; For a complete visual analysis refer to Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power*, 45.

<sup>123</sup> "The Family of Sir William Young," Walker Art Gallery, accessed July 5, 2018. <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/collections/paintings/18c/item-238515.aspx>.

<sup>124</sup> Dian Kay Kriz, "Marketing *Mulâtresses* in Agostino Brunias's West Indian Scenes," in *Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement: Picturing the British West Indies, 1700-1840* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 40.



black figure is wearing a metal collar beneath his neckcloth, which would reinforce his enslaved status.<sup>125</sup> Whether a servant or a slave, the black subject is the only figure in this conversation piece that is depicted as working rather than enjoying leisurely bourgeois activities, which attests to his rank as a racially inferior subject. Moreover, Sir William Young's elite status was gained through the economic exploitation of African labor through the practice of slavery in the West Indies, the presence of the black figure in this family portrait therefore immediately challenges the viewer to racial-power relations.<sup>126</sup>

### **William Hogarth: A Social Perspective**

Best known for his satirist works and social critiques through art, William Hogarth (1697-1764) explored the black body in the context of moral corruption through his print series *A Harlot's Progress* (1731-1732).<sup>127</sup> As a prominent artist in Britain, Hogarth demonstrated his ability to produce widely disseminated works that commented on the everyday life of Londoners and society's fear of moral decay through consumption and excess. In his series *A Harlot's Progress Plate 2* (Figure 5) Hogarth depicts the story of Moll, a young white woman who is introduced to prostitution and then becomes the mistress of a wealthy London Jew.<sup>128</sup> In his *plate*

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<sup>125</sup> Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power*, 42.

<sup>126</sup> Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power*, 42-46; Kriz, "Marketing *Mulâtresses*," 37.

<sup>127</sup> William Hogarth's print series *A Harlot's Progress* (1731-1732) is composed of six plates, all depicting a different scene in which the artist outlines the story of a young countryside white woman named Moll (Mary) Hackabout who arrives in London, becomes a prostitute, and eventually dies from syphilis after being corrupted by the Londoners' excess in consumption. Dabydeen, *Hogarth's Blacks*, 101-40.

<sup>128</sup> Christine Riding, "The Harlot and the Rake," in *Hogarth*, eds. Mark Hallett and Christine Riding (London: Tate, 2006), 80; Dabydeen suggests the presence of the Jewish merchant in Hogarth's print is a reference to slave dealings through the shipping or sale of slaves to the colonies, and through the trading of the products such as tobacco, sugar, and rum produced as a result of their enslavement. Dabydeen, *Hogarth's Blacks*, 114; Using Dabydeen's argument, Sarah Phillips Casteel posits that the discussion of Jews in reference to Hogarth's prints are outlining the eighteenth-century British colonial possessions and thus referencing the presence of the Sephardic port and plantation Jews in Caribbean colonies (Suriname, Curaçao, Barbados, and Jamaica." Sarah Phillips Casteel, "David Dabydeen's Hogarth: Blacks, Jews, and Postcolonial Ekphrasis," *The Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 3, no. 1 (2016): 118.

2 Hogarth depicts several figures: Moll, the Jewish merchant, two voyeurs, and a black child entering the scene from the right hand side. The black child is wearing a turban with a feather, an earring, a collar, and clothing that appears to mimic the merchant's attire. The boy is holding a kettle, placing him in the role of the servant. His lips are voluptuous and his white eyes contrast with the darkness of his skin.

Helen Mears (2009) posits that "Hogarth was reflecting a strand of contemporary thought which viewed black servants as luxurious frivolities."<sup>129</sup> The presence of the black boy as a "luxurious frivolity" in this scene is complemented by the boy's witnessing of the white subjects' debauched behaviours; notably the woman's exposed breast and the theme of prostitution to which this scene references.

David Dabydeen (1987) argues that references to slavery are presented through the Jewish merchant:

[...] he is the polite keeper of courtesans like Moll who are slaves to his pleasure, and he also deals in Africans, who are slaves for his profit, either shipping them to the colonies for sale or working them in his West Indian plantations or trading in the products of their labour (tobacco, sugar, rum, brandy, tea, *et cetera*) - the black boy bearing the tea-kettle suggests this much, being an emblem of colonial wealth.<sup>130</sup>

The black page is therefore subsumed into the realm of foreign commodities that further imply exoticism and Otherness.

In the left foreground plane of the print is the depiction of a monkey. Elite women of the time "sought to establish themselves in society by acquiring pets, black slaves and fashionable animals became a form of social currency; they became objects consumed and displayed in a

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<sup>129</sup> Mears, "Silver Service Slavery," 53.

<sup>130</sup> Dabydeen, *Hogarth's Blacks*, 114.

semiotic system of status."<sup>131</sup> Additionally, the monkey figure symbolizes "foolish affectation, deceit, and hypocrisy," which denotes Moll's act of betrayal towards her wealthy keeper.<sup>132</sup> The figure of the monkey puts forward the historical references that relate the black body to that of simians, while simultaneously foregrounding the "slave-child-pet parallel," which stresses the idea of Othering through racial dominance, and the objectification and dehumanization of the black boy.<sup>133</sup> This practice of Othering directly recalls the history of slavery in which "both women and men were subjected to practices (whipping, branding, renaming, etc.) designed to animalize and strip them of their individuality, humanity, and dignity."<sup>134</sup> Presenting degrading aspects of society in *A Harlot's Progress*, Hogarth is expressing the fears of his London subjects to further demonstrate the realities of excess and consequently, of the jeopardized moral ideals.

Participating in the "discourses that represented Africans as intellectually, culturally, and morally inferior to Europeans," Hogarth demonstrates his ability to pursue artistic practices that "master the exotic and incorporate it into the domestic moral and political economy."<sup>135</sup> While Hogarth uses the black page to reverse the roles of the sitters by questioning the morality of the white female protagonist, the implications of the black body in eighteenth-century art is indicative of practices of slavery and consequently, of the dehumanization of black people.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Molineux, "Hogarth's Fashionable Slaves," 498.

<sup>132</sup> Catherine Molineux, *Faces of Perfect Ebony: Encountering Atlantic Slavery in Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012), 192.

<sup>133</sup> Charmaine A. Nelson, "Male or Man?: The Politics of Emancipation in the Neoclassical Imaginary," *Companion to American Art*, eds. John Davis, Jennifer A. Greenhill and Jason D. LaFountain (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2015), 74; Molineux, "Hogarth's Fashionable Slaves," 498; Marcus Wood, *Black Milk: Imagining Slavery in the Visual Cultures of Brazil and America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 213.

<sup>134</sup> Nelson, "Male or Man?," 70.

<sup>135</sup> Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power*, 39.

<sup>136</sup> For an explanation of the ways in which *A Harlot's Progress* was misunderstood by the white English viewer, see Dabydeen, *Hogarth's Blacks*, 131.

## Dehumanizing The Black Child

Black children were treated as chattel and understood to be exotic and "expensive objects of display."<sup>137</sup> Amussen posits that this was visible in art through the depiction of the enslaved wearing collars, and by the "frequent pairing of blacks with animals and the interchangeability of black children with pets."<sup>138</sup> Artist Bartholomew Dandridge, an English portrait painter, depicts this type of racial Othering in his paintings *A young Girl with an Enslaved Servant and a Dog* (1725; Figure 6). The young girl stands in a garden wearing a silver gown. Her skin is pale white with accentuated pink cheeks and lips. The quasi-transparency of the white skin is described by Rosenthal as a communicative tool through which the "inner virtues" of the figure become visible. The whiteness of the skin thus allows the viewer to access the "more profound level of being" of the sitter.<sup>139</sup> Highlighting its racial privileges, the skin itself suffices to express the racial dominance of the white sitter.<sup>140</sup> The unidentified girl is directly looking at the viewer while gently petting a white and light brown dog that looks up in awe to her. Behind the girl and the dog, is a young black figure who is handing her a basket of fruits recalling the artistic traditions in which the black boy is in "fawning devotion" to his white counterpart whilst "holding up Africa's 'natural riches' in the form of an emblematic offering" as a symbol of the West's "'civilising' of the dark continent."<sup>141</sup> The black figure is pointing to his right while looking at the girl to his left. He is positioned on a lower visual level than the girl. His black opaque and obscure skin and earthy coloured attire contrast drastically with the seemingly

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<sup>137</sup> Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges*, 216.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Rosenthal, "Visceral Culture: Blushing and the Legibility of Whiteness in Eighteenth-Century British Portraiture," *Art History* 27, no. 4 (2004), 563-92.

<sup>140</sup> Rosenthal, "Visceral Culture: Blushing and the Legibility of Whiteness in Eighteenth-Century British Portraiture," *Art History* 27, no. 4 (2004), 563-92.

<sup>141</sup> Mears, "Silver Service Slavery," 46.

translucent skin and lightness of the gown of the young girl. The difference in status and race of the boy and girl are here clearly identifiable through posture, as the black boy holds an awkward body position while gazing at the gracefully poised girl. Also, the collar with a padlock worn by the boy enforces his status as a slave. The artist's colour palette also accentuates the contrast between races by pushing forward the whiteness of the girl and darkness of the slave thus making the "relationship between master and slave visibly unequivocal."<sup>142</sup> Moreover, the juxtaposition of these children in this image brings forward the idea that the black boy was to the service of the white girl, and may have been purchased by his owners as a playmate, as we may recall in Mary Prince's biography.

Bringing back Amussen's argument, we are here able to visually pair the black figure with the dog and to notice that the white sitter gives more attention to the animal than for her human attendant. Subsequently, this creates a visual hierarchy that amplifies the inferiority of the black body, which in return accentuates racial and social hierarchy. The juxtaposition of the black boy and dog in this portrait works to dehumanize the male figure and to treat him as inferior to both the white sitter and the animal.

### **The Exotic Other**

Tobin examines the integration of colonial subjects in eighteenth-century art and calls attention to how the representation of the black subject in portraiture reflected society's outlook on the so-called exotic beings:

In the early part of the century, the black page is often portrayed as naughty or disruptive and is frequently placed in scenes that contain innuendoes of sexuality or moral laxity. However, as the century progressed, the figure of the black

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<sup>142</sup> Bindman, "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?," 71.

servant was placed in closer proximity to children and mothers, signalling the incorporation of the exotic into the everydayness of the domestic scene.<sup>143</sup>

The concern with integrating the enslaved into British society and British households derives from the idea that black subjects were savages and needed to be tamed, educated, and converted to Christianity as a part of slavery's supposed civilizing mission.<sup>144</sup> Hence, the artistic traditions that depict the proximity of the black subject, and his or her gaze looking up in awe to their white counterparts and "acting as a foil to the latter's superiority," demonstrates that the so-called exotic and savage being has been controlled or tamed by the ideal white Briton.<sup>145</sup>

Sir Joshua Reynolds portrays this relationship in his 1782 full-length portrait *Charles Stanhope, Third Earl of Harrington, and a Servant* (Figure 7).<sup>146</sup> Depicted in a dramatic manner, Charles Stanhope proudly stands atop a hill surrounded by soldiers and dark clouds. Dominating the scene with his hight, posture, and impenetrable steel armor, Stanhope projects authority, masculinity, and power. This attitude and the phallic nature of his identity is reinforced with the depiction of a sharp sword in the center of the canvas and with the presence of the black servant on the lower right hand side. Holding Stanhope's helmet, the black boy looks up in awe to his master; the whiteness of his eyes emphasize his gaze as they stand out in the earthy palette of the artist. The parted lips accentuate the boy's admiration of his racially superior master.

Although there are no records of the identity or ownership of the black slave depicted in the painting, there is no doubt that Stanhope was an active participant in the enslavement of black individuals. During the American War of Independence, Charles Stanhope (1753-1829)

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<sup>143</sup> Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power*, 29.

<sup>144</sup> David Bindman, "A Voluptuous Alliance Between Africa and Europe: Hogarth's Africans," in *The Other Hogarth: Aesthetics of Difference*, eds. Bernadette Fort and Angela Rosenthal (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 260.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 264.

<sup>146</sup> Originally titled "Portrait of a Nobleman" when exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1783.

served with British forces in North America and the Caribbean; Stanhope is also associated with the practice of slavery through his wife Jane, who was the stepdaughter of a Caribbean plantation owner.<sup>147</sup> The presence of a black servant in the portrait painting of Stanhope may therefore be justified by his direct connection to the practice of slavery, or it may be an artistic decision by Reynolds, who either wanted to heighten the status of his client or to mimic established artistic practices.<sup>148</sup>

The importation of the black figure in a dominantly white society did not evoke unprejudiced responses on behalf of the dominant population. The visual culture of black subjects in British art was therefore a means through which the white élite could highlight the racial distinctions and inferiorities of what constituted a black body.

Desired for their association to the "global system of exchange," and conversely frowned upon by those who believed exotic goods were "spreading the seeds of moral and economic decay," the so-called savage black figure was represented as domesticated exotic property.<sup>149</sup> In order to depict the exoticism implied with the appropriation of foreign enslaved blacks, the slaveowners often dressed their possessions with oriental attires and imposed on them classical names such as Socrates or Pompey.<sup>150</sup> This erasure of identity puts forward the ownership and control of the white subject over the black body. Regarded as chattel, Bindman posits that black slaves were often used as "horse grooms, domestic servants, or fashionable pets."<sup>151</sup> Young black

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<sup>147</sup> "Charles Stanhope, Third Earl of Harrington, and a Servant," Yale Center for British Art, accessed July 5, 2018. <http://collections.britishart.yale.edu/vufind/Record/1669237>.

<sup>148</sup> The Yale Center for British Art states that Reynold's painting resembles that of Hyacinthe Rigaud's portrait painting of the King of Poland. "Charles Stanhope," accessed March 4, 2019. <http://collections.britishart.yale.edu/vufind/Record/1669237>.

<sup>149</sup> Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power*, 33.

<sup>150</sup> Waterfield, "Black Servants," 140-141.

<sup>151</sup> Bindman, "A Voluptuous Alliance Between Africa and Europe," 263.

boys were favoured by the aristocrats and bourgeoisie because of their youthfulness and the fact that their bodies had not yet been "destroyed by the labor in the plantations or through the horrible conditions of their passage."<sup>152</sup> The interest in depicting the black boy therefore served as a "stereotype and fetish; the black subject providing a visual reminder of the victims of enslavement while his youthfulness and petted status disavow the physical horrors of the slave trade."<sup>153</sup> Moreover, racial fears were attenuated by the presence of black boys versus men: the boy would be easier to domesticate, which attenuated the idea of losing control over them; boys were also less sexually threatening which attenuated the threat of miscegenation evoked by the black male body.<sup>154</sup> Furthermore, there was a special interest in enslaved people with very dark skin because it made their juxtaposition with the white-skinned master or mistress much more prominent, thus highlighting the racial hierarchy and making the "relationship between master and slave visibly unequivocal."<sup>155</sup>

Sir John Baptiste de Medina demonstrates how visual elements may project racial hierarchy and power in his 1700 painting *James Drummond, 2nd Titular Duke of Perth, 1673-1720* (Figure 8).<sup>156</sup> In this painting, James Drummond is depicted in a three-quarter-length portrait in the center of the canvas with a direct gaze at the viewer. Drummond's left hand rests on his hip near his sword, while his elbow points outwards, which prevents the viewer from

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<sup>152</sup> Bindman, "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?," 71.

<sup>153</sup> Mears, "Silver Service Slavery," 47.

<sup>154</sup> Anne McClintock, *Imperial leather: race, gender, and sexuality in the colonial contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 113.

<sup>155</sup> Bindman, "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?," 71.

<sup>156</sup> For the purpose of this thesis, I categorize this painting as British art because although the artist is not British, he established a portrait painting practice in London prior to creating this portrait. "Sir John Baptiste de Medina, *James Drummond, 2nd Titular Duke of Perth, 1673-1720*," National Galleries Scotland, accessed July 5, 2018. <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/3473/james-drummond-2nd-titular-duke-perth-1673-1720-jacobite>.



entering the scene. Drummond's right hand rests on his helmet and thus, asserts his role as a cavalry commander.<sup>157</sup> The white sitter's power is also claimed with the depiction of his steel armour, which is ostensibly impenetrable. To help exemplify Drummond's power, John Baptiste included a black figure in the lower left side of the portrait. The presence of the black enslaved child conveys the idea of racial hierarchy, and the visual composition positions Drummond as the dominant figure. The black child is wearing a thick silver collar with a padlock which emphasizes his status as a slave. As we have observed in previous images, the slave looks in awe to the master to accentuate their respective social ranking. The sunset and trees in the background bring forward the idea of an exotic location that could perhaps refer to global exchange, the land of the so-called Other, and provenance of the black slave. Finally, the contrast between the blackness of the slave's skin with the whiteness and pink blushed cheeks of Drummond's enlightened face, establishes the overall argument of the artist in identifying the power of whiteness as the most desired racial identity.

In conclusion, there is very little information regarding the identity of black sitters in British portrait paintings. Considered more often as a type than a specific individual, the depiction of the black body works to define the social and racial hierarchy of the white sitters. Through visual elements, artists were able to portray the cultural implications of race in eighteenth-century Britain. Creating a visual culture that objectifies and dehumanizes the black body, artistic practices bring forward important issues that need consideration. Rethinking the ways in which we interpret the presence of black bodies in portrait paintings is essential to begin to understand their role within a dominantly white society.

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<sup>157</sup> "Sir John Baptiste de Medina," accessed March 4, 2019. <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/3473/james-drummond-2nd-titular-duke-perth-1673-1720-jacobite>.

### Chapter 3:

## Representing Black Enslaved Children: The Legacy of Visual Culture and Slave Advertisements

The popularity of depicting the black child in British portraiture raises the question of why there are no such abundance of images in early Quebec art. This absence is particularly noticeable since Canadian artists, like the francophone François Malépart de Beaucourt, travelled overseas to train in the European traditional visual arts from the 1780's.<sup>158</sup>

As a consequence of the slow growth of art patronage and art education in Canada, or perhaps due to the "undiscovered" images potentially concealed in British archives, this chapter will begin with an outline of the histories of art practices in Quebec. Discussing the only portrait known painting of an enslaved black child, *Portrait of a Negro Slave* (1786) by François Malépart de Beaucourt (1740-1794), I will introduce the ways in which artistic agency produced another level of power over the black body, notably through social and legal repercussions.<sup>159</sup>

However, another archive of representations of enslaved blacks — adults and children — does exist in the Canadian and Quebec contexts. Following the argument of Charmaine A. Nelson that the textual data in fugitive slave advertisements are a form of unauthorized *visual*

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<sup>158</sup> See *Appendix 1* for a list of the archives and museums that were contacted or visited in order to find images of black children: Note that all mediums and genres were searched; any image between 1700-1800 were included; the geographical location was restricted to New France and Quebec, but any image, artist, patron, or sitter that was associated to this constraint, was valid. Also, archives were notified that any image that included one of the guidelines would be pertinent to my research; François Malépart de Beaucourt studied at the Royal Academy of Bordeaux in France under Joseph-Gaétant Camagne. The exact dates of his studies overseas are unclear. Nelson, *Slavery, Geography, and Empire*, 119-20.

<sup>159</sup> *Portrait of a Negro Slave* (also known as *The Negress*) is now officially titled *Portrait of a Haitian Woman*. In 2010, following the publication of an article by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts Curator Jacques Desrochers, the McCord Museum changed the name of the painting.

portraiture, I shall respond to the dearth of more traditional visual art images of black enslaved children in late eighteenth-century Quebec by examining slave advertisements.<sup>160</sup>

Discussing the significance of American print culture in the first half of the nineteenth century, Marcus Wood (2000) highlights its function as utilitarian and "intensely visual."<sup>161</sup> Generally combined with an icon, the texts in slave advertisements "elaborate the unique human status of, and the particular signs of suffering on, the body described."<sup>162</sup> David Waldstreicher (1999) argues that through the fugitive slave advertisements, we are able to observe the "changing possibilities for black resistance in late-colonial America."<sup>163</sup> Waldstreicher also argues that runaway advertisements "attempt to describe individuals for their conformity to certain expected appearances or their equally generic alleged failure to perform certain roles."<sup>164</sup>

Examining slave advertisements as an important part of the colonial archive, Nelson (2017) maintains that runaway slave advertisements are "repositories of data on enslaved populations, recording all manner of visual characteristics, skills, and oral attributes of the runaway."<sup>165</sup> Slave advertisements may therefore serve as evidence of the condition of the enslaved and as a projection of the opinions and expectations of the dominantly white

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<sup>160</sup> Charmaine A. Nelson, "McCready Lecture on Canadian Art," Baillie Court, Art Gallery of Ontario, January 20, 2016. Accessed March 2, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gq1-5ERv0oI>; Charmaine A. Nelson, "Servant, Seraglio, Savage or 'Sarah': Examining the Visual Representation of Black Female Subjects in Canadian Art and Visual Culture," *Women in the 'Promised Land': Essays in African Canadian History*, eds. Wanda Bernard, Boulou Ebanda de B'éri, Nina Reid-Maroney (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 43-74.

<sup>161</sup> Wood, "Rhetoric and the Runaway," in *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780-1865* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 89.

<sup>162</sup> Wood, *Blind Memory*, 87.

<sup>163</sup> David Waldstreicher, "Reading the Runaways: Self-Fashioning, Print Culture, and Confidence in Slavery in the 18<sup>th</sup> c. Mid-Atlantic," *The William and Mary Quarterly* (April 1999), 245.

<sup>164</sup> Waldstreicher, "Reading the Runaways," 248.

<sup>165</sup> Nelson, "'Ran Away From Her Master... A Negroe Girl Named Thursday': Examining Evidence of Punishment, Isolation, and Trauma in Nova Scotia and Quebec Fugitive Slave Advertisements." *Legal Violence and the Limits of the Law*. Edited by Joshua Nichols and Amy Swiffen (NYC: Routledge, 2017), 72.

population: Nelson argues that the archive is not "an objective or neutral container of facts and information" and that it should be interpreted as "a site through which the elite secured their power through determinations on who could be represented and in what fashion."<sup>166</sup>

Easily disseminated, slave sale and fugitive slave advertisements were accessible to the general public.<sup>167</sup> Wood posits that the wide circulation of print culture from one decade to another and from country to country is a testament of its "practical efficacy."<sup>168</sup> We may therefore argue that print technology was a type of colonial discourse and that it should not be overlooked when studying enslaved peoples.

Slave sale advertisements and fugitive/runaway slave advertisements function differently. When an owner advertises their slave for sale, either at a public or private auction, it is in the best interest of the owner to promote their property: their language and labour experiences or abilities, physical attributes, aptitude at producing children, good conduct, and having had diseases such as the small pox are some of the elements highlighted by the seller. Conversely, when a fugitive or runaway slave advertisement is published, the goal of the owner is to recapture their *chattel* and they do so by textually creating a recognizable picture of the runaway slave.<sup>169</sup> These advertisements therefore "supplied information about a miscreant's name, age, skin color, likely destination, and clothing."<sup>170</sup> Fugitive advertisements aimed to recuperate the runaways and therefore compelled slaveowners to "describe what the slaves or servants had done to escape their role and what attributes (positive, negative, or both in their view) they possessed

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<sup>166</sup> Nelson, "'Ran Away From Her Master...'," 72.

<sup>167</sup> Wood, *Blind Memory*, 89.

<sup>168</sup> Wood, *Blind Memory*, 92.

<sup>169</sup> Tamara, Extian-Babiuk. "'To Be Sold, a Negro Wench.'" *Slave Ads of the Montreal Gazette, 1785-1805.* PhD diss. (McGill University, 2006), 38.

<sup>170</sup> Shane White and Graham White, "Slave Hair and African American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *The Journal of Southern History*, vol. 61, no. 1 (February 1995), 49-50.

that might or might not help them 'pretend to be free'.<sup>171</sup> We may therefore use slave sale advertisements as a reference to better understand what was appealing to slaveowners and what type of skills were valuable to potential buyers. On the other hand, fugitive slave advertisements provide a slave narrative that attests to the harsh realities of the enslaved, notably to the condition of enslaved children in Canada and in general.

### **The History of Art in Early Quebec**

When discussing Canada's art history, the starting point is often the infamous landscape artists of the *Group of Seven* officially established in 1920. Often represented in scholarly research as the pillars of Canadian art, we tend to overlook the group's predecessors. J. Russell Harper (1977) states that after Samuel de Champlain's arrival, the Catholic church became the first patron of the arts in Canada.<sup>172</sup> Abbot Pommier being the first to settle in the colony, was most likely the first Canadian painter.<sup>173</sup> Creating religious images for the church, Pommier apparently painted in ways that recalled the canonical art of the European Renaissance that worked towards "starkly posed and artificial tableaux so far removed from contemporary life [...]."<sup>174</sup>

Harper's research gives way to important historical information, notably that British officers were all introduced to art in their studies of topographical drawing when training at the Woolwich Military Academy.<sup>175</sup> Harper claims that "[a]t least fifty British officers, serving in the four Atlantic provinces, Quebec, and Ontario, were competent water-colour topographers, while

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<sup>171</sup> Waldstreicher, "Reading the Runaways," 248.

<sup>172</sup> J. Russell Harper, *Painting in Canada: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 3.

<sup>173</sup> Harper, *Painting in Canada*, 3.

<sup>174</sup> Harper, *Painting in Canada*, 4.

<sup>175</sup> Harper, *Painting in Canada*, 48.

dozens of others were more pedestrian painters."<sup>176</sup> It is highly plausible then, that soldiers would have sketched enslaved black people that they encountered in the territory. Our lack of findings of such images depicting black children is in part surely do to the relocation of the images within archives in Britain.

Harper mentions that it was not uncommon for Canadian students and artists to travel to Europe in order to improve their artistic skills through traditional art education.<sup>177</sup> Charmaine A. Nelson (2010) argues the following:

Early Canadian artists commonly emulated European models to validate their art within the youthful colony. However, this emulation did not extend itself to modern European trends. Rather, twentieth-century Canadian artists embraced established historical styles of recognized European artistic schools. This colonial dependence was fostered by art patronage and art education that celebrated and rewarded artists who patterned their work after canonized western art.<sup>178</sup>

Traditional art education and canonized Western art were the main references for artists in Quebec from the seventeenth century and well into the twentieth century.<sup>179</sup> Moreover, Canadian artists were clearly influenced by European art and therefore may have been familiar with the depiction of enslaved black people in bourgeois and aristocratic portraiture. Although we cannot assume that all Quebec artists viewed paintings such as the ones discussed in the second chapter, many were trained to produce so-called high art paintings that included portraits, which was

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<sup>176</sup> The four Atlantic provinces are New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador; Harper, *Painting in Canada*, 48.

<sup>177</sup> Harper, *Painting in Canada*, 222.

<sup>178</sup> Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 128.

<sup>179</sup> According to Harper, Abbé Pommier came from Paris to Quebec City in the seventeenth century and would have been the first "real painter" to work in Canada. Harper, *Painting in Canada*, 3; Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 128.

considered the second most valued genre of art in seventeenth-century Europe.<sup>180</sup> Quebec-born artist François Malépart de Beaucourt received professional training at the Bordeaux Academy in France, becoming the first Canadian artist to study abroad in Europe.<sup>181</sup>

### **Portrait of a Black Enslaved Child**

François Malépart de Beaucourt was known as a Quebec portrait painter who received his professional training in Europe.<sup>182</sup> Perhaps due to the slow growth of art patronage and art education in early Quebec, Beaucourt travelled to study art, notably in Bordeaux (France).<sup>183</sup> There is very little information regarding Beaucourt's encounter with specific European paintings, but I suggest that as a member of the *Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Civil and Naval Architecture of Bordeaux*, he would have most likely been aware of artistic traditions that depicted the black subject in portraiture.<sup>184</sup>

Beaucourt's legacy includes his 1786 *Portrait of a Negro Slave* (Figure 1). This oil on canvas, three-quarter length portrait, depicts a black female gazing directly at the viewer. Her body is adorned with golden earrings and a long beaded black neckless. Her hair is wrapped in a

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<sup>180</sup> History painting was understood to be the highest of achievements during the Renaissance period. In seventeenth-century Europe, the *Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture* established a hierarchy of genres that placed history painting at the top followed by landscape, portraiture, and still-life. Penny Huntsman and Association of Art Historians (Great Britain), "Genres and Subjects," *Thinking About Art: A Thematic Guide to Art History* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 23-73; Grove Art Online, *History Painting*, last modified 26 May, 2010. Accessed March 2, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T038306>.

<sup>181</sup> Nelson, *Slavery, Geography, and Empire*, 151; Russell J. Harper, "The Golden Age in Quebec: Maturity," *Painting in Canada: A History* 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 68-80.

<sup>182</sup> Sometimes written Beaucour or Beaucours in historical sources. Madeleine Major-Frégeau, *La vie et l'oeuvre de François Malépart de Beaucourt (1740-1794)* (Université de Montréal: Série arts et métiers, Ministère des affaires culturelles, 1979).

<sup>183</sup> Nelson, *Slavery, Geography, and Empire*, 119-120.

<sup>184</sup> Nelson, *Slavery, Geography, and Empire*, 123; "Beaucourt, French Painter," in *General Advertiser* 394 (3 January 1792): 3.

red and white cloth. The sitter's white blouse contrasts in a striking (arguably deliberate) manner with the dark tones of her skin. The female's right breast is fully exposed in a manner that suggests, given an understanding of Beaucourt's multiple roles as artist, patron, and slave owner, that it was orchestrated by Beaucourt. Her nipple directs the viewer's attention to the platter of exotic fruits that she holds with both hands. Behind the sitter we are able to make out a dark cloudy sky with a mountain on the left. The stone wall behind the sitter positions her in an interior location or a patio of some kind.

Given Beaucourt's European training combined with his visits to the French West Indies and records that prove his possession of black slaves, the female in his 1786 portrait was not painted as a *type*, rather, it depicts a specific individual.<sup>185</sup> This premise is supported by Marcel Trudel's (1990) research which names the sitter in Beaucourt's portrait as Marie-Thérèse-Zémire, property of his wife Benoîte Gaëtan.<sup>186</sup> Frank Mackey (2010) posits that Marie-Thérèse-Zémire would have been about fifteen years old at the time of the painting.<sup>187</sup> As outlined in the first chapter, the ages attributed to the enslaved were problematic, since age was given to them based upon subjective measures, notably from their physical characteristics or their labor abilities. As I have argued earlier, fifteen would have been the approximate age that defined the line between childhood and adulthood. Considering that Marie-Thérèse-Zémire was fifteen years of age when

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<sup>185</sup> Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 140.

<sup>186</sup> We must remember that this name would have been given to her when purchased by Beaucourt and his wife. For more information on the practice of name giving to slave, see Bouchard, Lévesque and Back, *Elles ont fait l'Amérique*, 159; Alternate spelling: Benoite Gaëtan. Marcel Trudel *Dictionnaire des esclaves et de leurs propriétaires au Canada Français* (La Salle: Éditions Hutubise HMH Ltée, 1990), 105, 379; also in Nelson, *Slavery, Geography, and Empire*, 119

<sup>187</sup> This age was determined based on documents that state she was twenty-five in April 1796 and 29 at her death on 15 December 1800. See Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 466; Nelson, *Slavery, Geography, and Empire*, 119; BANQ, *Register of the Hôpital-Général Chapel*, 16 December 1800. HDM, admission registers, Book E, 19 April 1796. Montreal, Canada.



this portrait was painted, I here argue that the artist worked to objectify, sexualize, and exoticize the body of an enslaved black child.

According to Nelson,

[...] portraiture functioned dominantly as a genre through which patrons commissioned representations of their likeness or that of family members or institutional colleagues as commemorations and declarations of wealth, privilege and status, it was also the almost exclusive domain of aristocratic and the bourgeois classes who alone could afford them.<sup>188</sup>

Nelson also argues that portraits of servants were rare and that they were "usually commissioned and paid for by the masters or mistresses who used the portraits as a further indication of their own status and the hanging of such portraits, often in less grand areas of the family estates and houses, echoed the diminished significance of the sitter."<sup>189</sup>

Beaucourt was part of the bourgeois class in Quebec, and although we have no documents that justify the production of his *Portrait of a Negro Slave*, her status as a slave and the customary impoverishment of that population, indicates that Beaucourt would have occupied the role of patron, artist, and owner of the painting.<sup>190</sup> Maintaining complete agency over the artistic production of this image, Beaucourt's representation of the enslaved female as an objectified, sexualized and exoticized subject, was therefore deliberate on his part.<sup>191</sup>

The first visual element in this image that conveys the patron's wealth is the black body itself. In Quebec, a minority slave site, due to the ongoing exoticization of people of African descent (regardless of their birth origins) owning a black slave was perceived as a luxury, more

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<sup>188</sup> Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 71.

<sup>189</sup> Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 71.

<sup>190</sup> Nelson states that "as a slave, she was most likely without the economic means and cultural knowledge to commission such a work and would have had no private residence of her own in which to install it." Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 71.

<sup>191</sup> Nelson, *Slavery, Geography, and Empire*, 131.

so than the ownership of panis(e). Maureen Elgersman (1999) posits that in New France, the racial hierarchy positioned the Panis as labourers of the middle class and the blacks as property of the elite and represented objects of luxury.<sup>192</sup> The exoticization of the black body was not directly associated to the provenance of the individual; enslaved blacks born in Canada and therefore African-Canadian Creoles were also Othered because of the exoticization evoked by the color of their skin.

The presence of blacks in the dominantly white homes was indicative of one's wealth, privilege and colonial reach.<sup>193</sup> As described in depth in the second chapter, the black body was often included in portraits to heighten the status of the owner of the black sitter. Although this image does not juxtapose the master with his or her slave, it does visually work to objectify the black body for the good of the white master and the implied white male viewer. The golden earrings and beaded neckless emphasize the idea that the sitter was an object that could function as an element on which props could be added. Nelson argues that

[k]nowledge of the histories of material deprivation and bodily regulation within Trans Atlantic Slavery effectively prohibits a viewer from an easy reading of the jewelry that adorns the slave woman's body as *hers*. Of course her ownership of them is not an utter impossibility, but more likely these expensive objects may have been loaned to her or bestowed upon her by the white male artist himself, as a type of 'payment' for her modeling.<sup>194</sup>

Unlikely owned by the sitter herself, the jewelry may have been used as a means of manipulating or coercing Marie-Thérèse-Zémire into sitting for this portrait; we may recall the discussion in the first chapter of this research where I outline how Caribbean plantation

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<sup>192</sup> Maureen G. Elgersman, *Unyielding Spirits: Black Women and Slavery in Early Canada and Jamaica* (New York: Garland, 1999), 4; Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 70; Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 7, 48, 70.

<sup>193</sup> Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 79.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

slaveowner Matthew Lewis uses scarlet girdles and silver medals as a reward to women for producing children.

Objectified on another level, the painting *Portrait of a Negro Slave* never held the name of the sitter. Portraits commonly bear a title which is the name of the sitter. Beaucourt's oeuvre demonstrates that many of his other portrait paintings of white sitters bore their names. (Figures 10-13). Beaucourt's ongoing relationship with Marie, the specificity of her face, and the lack of an allegorical theme, indicates that this portrait was not a *type*, but rather the depiction of an individual. Therefore, Beaucourt intentionally singled out her status as a *negro slave*. Central to the visual analysis of this image is the exposed breast of the female sitter which calls attention to a racialized hypersexualization. But, as Nelson has argued, the exposed breast is both sexual and maternal.<sup>195</sup> The breast calls attention to breastfeeding and lactation in its use in the nurturing of children. It can therefore not be separated from its biological role in fertility, reproduction, and the exploitation of enslaved black females as breeders of new slaves. Moreover, the exposed breast hints to the use of the black woman as a wet nurse to white children, and to her role in the rearing of white children that could eventually become her owners.<sup>196</sup>

Using an art historical approach, Nelson explains the dichotomy between white and black female nudes in art and argues the following:

The black woman, already deemed sexually insatiable and pathologically deviant, needed no disguise to mediate her sexualization within the realm of the nude. Her disguise was the colour of her skin. 'Blackness' as a marker of difference and

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>196</sup> Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 44-45, 195; Paula A. Treckel, "Breastfeeding and Maternal Sexuality in Colonial America," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 20, no. 1 (1989): 47-48

inferiority released western artists from all obligations to contain the sexuality, the Nature, of the black female in representation.<sup>197</sup>

The emphasis on the sexuality of the black female body in Beaucourt's image evokes the fetishism of sexual and racial otherness.<sup>198</sup>

Several components in the painting brings the viewer to think about the foreignness of the sitter and thus, of the practice of Othering. Considering the extremely high ratio of African-born enslaved people in St. Domingue, Beaucourt and his wife would most definitely have encountered black females in St. Domingue who practiced headwrapping. Malick W. Ghachem's research has shed light on the extreme brutality of the Dominguan slave system, but also, relatedly, on the profound African-ness of the enslaved population.<sup>199</sup>

Striking as these figures are, however, they do not reveal the colony's extremely high slave mortality rate relative to other New World slave societies. During their first three to five years of labor in Saint-Domingue, newly purchased Africans died on average at a rate of 50 percent. Never was slave mortality higher than during the 1780's. During that decade, the importation of Africans to Saint-Domingue served not to augment the total number of slaves but rather to replace those who perished as a result of overwork, neglect, and abuse on the colony's plantation fields.<sup>200</sup>

The crushing mortality rate of the Dominguan plantation regime also meant that enslaved African-born people often did not live long enough to give birth to the next generation of slaves. This fact meant that their population was comprised of less Creoles than other slave populations.

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<sup>197</sup> Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 119-120.

<sup>198</sup> Nelson, *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 107; Homi K. Bhabha, "The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*. Eds. Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-ha and Cornel West (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1990), 80.

<sup>199</sup> Nelson, *Slavery, Geography, and Empire*, 127.

<sup>200</sup> Malick W. Ghachem, *The Old Regime and the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 36.

Evidence from the Quebec fugitive slave archive indicates that enslaved blacks in Quebec also maintained this headwrapping practice.<sup>201</sup> The wrapping of the sitter's hair was also certainly encountered by the artist in slave majority sites during his stay in Saint-Domingue (now Haiti).<sup>202</sup> Although it is possible that this is a representation of the sitter's hair care, the artist's decision to include it was most likely not for the authentic representation of his slave, but rather for the Otherness evoked by such headwrapping techniques that were foreign to white culture. The background of the image and the platter of fruits also convey to the viewer the Otherness of the sitter's provenance. The depiction of landscape behind Marie-Thérèse-Zémire evokes a sense of worldliness and travel to the land of the Other; similarly, the exotic fruits encompass the idea that the sitter holding the platter is associated to the land in which these goods grow.<sup>203</sup>

Probably forced to pose for the artist, who was also her owner and possibly her sexual abuser, Marie-Thérèse-Zémire would of had no say in the ways in which her body was depicted;

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<sup>201</sup> The *Quebec Gazette* published a runaway slave advertisement on 14 May, 1767 in which a "Mulatto Negro Slave, named Andrew" ran away from James Crofton in Montreal. The advertisement mentions that the enslaved "is remarkable for being clean dress'd and wearing a Handkerchief tied round his Head [...]." This advertisement is a sign that enslaved blacks in Canada maintained African headwrapping traditions. Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 315.

<sup>202</sup> In 1785, Beaucourt posted a work advertisement in Saint-Domingue's *Affiches américaines* which states the following: "Le sieur Beaucourt, Peintre de l'Accadémie [*sic*] royale de Bordeaux, arrivé depuis peu en cette Colonie, a l'honneur d'offrir ses talents aux amateurs de cet art." This advertisement situates the artist in the colony on 23 March, 1785. *Affiches américaines*, "Beaucourt," 23 March, 1785. Originally published in Saint-Domingue. University of Florida Archives, accessed 17 July, 2018. <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00000449/00018>; Neil, *Dictionary of Pastellists Before 1800* (London: Unicorn Press, 2006); For english translation and further information see Nelson, *Slavery, Geography, and Empire*, 132-33, 149.

<sup>203</sup> Nelson argues that one of the fruits depicted in Beaucourt's painting is a sugar apple. A paste could have been made from this sugar apple using the seeds of the fruit. This paste was known to some female slaves as an abortifacient (Refer to chapter one of this thesis for the implications of sexual coercion, rape and child bearing for enslaved women). For more information concerning the meaning of this fruit in Beaucourt's portrait painting, see Nelson, "The Fruits of Resistance: Reading *Portrait of a Negro Slave on the Sly*," in *Representing the Black Female Subject*, 76-87.

Beaucourt, as Nelson argues, would have had both social and legal control over his slave.<sup>204</sup> Nelson further contends that "whereas the portrait itself exists as a symbolic concretization of Beaucourt's accumulation of power, the actual process of producing this portrait must also be read as a form of colonial and patriarchal violence, reliant upon and supportive of the racial, sex, and class distinctions between white men and black women."<sup>205</sup> This analysis puts an emphasis on the fact that the enslaved, such as the sitter in this painting, had no rights over their own bodies.<sup>206</sup> But furthermore, it exposes Marie-Thérèse-Zémire's lack of agency in the negotiation of the creation of her likeness; whether she would pose for a portrait and how she would pose were not within her control.

*Portrait of a Negro Slave* is of great importance to this research because not only does it prove that black children were in fact part of the visual culture of slavery in Quebec, but also because it was most likely the first painting of its kind in Canada according to a 1796 newspaper article in the *Boréal Express*:

Cette esclave, dont la bonté pourrait en montrer à plus d'un maître, n'ose, au Bas-Canada, revendiquer des droits d'être humain. Elle aura peut-être été cependant la première «figure humaine» dans notre peinture canadienne. Nous avons bien des portraits classiques, ces commandes qui imposent à l'artiste de faire ressemblant, mais où il est difficile de s'abandonner à la peinture pure. Beaucourt, très détaché devant un modèle qui— parce qu'étant esclave— pouvait être vu comme un objet, objet d'étude comme, d'ailleurs, les fruits magnifiques, a réussi là une des plus belles oeuvres de notre peinture, croyons-nous. Aucune préoccupation étrangère à

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<sup>204</sup> Nelson, *Slavery, Geography, and Empire*, 131; As outlined in the first chapter of this thesis, black females were often used for non-consensual sexual services or commonly raped by their master. For information regarding the relationship between Beaucourt and his slave, or so-called mistress, see Nelson, "Slavery, Portraiture and the Colonial Limits of Canadian Art History," in *Representing the Black Female Subject in Western Art*, 63-75.

<sup>205</sup> Nelson, *Slavery, Geography, and Empire*, 132.

<sup>206</sup> Hilary McD. Beckles, "Property Rights in Pleasure: The Marketing of Enslaved Women's Sexuality," in *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader*, eds. Verene Shepherd and Hilary McD. Beckles (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 2000), 693; also in Nelson Nelson, *Slavery, Geography, and Empire*, 111-2.

l'oeuvre peinte, à la réalité plastique. François Beaucourt (1740-1794), premier peintre canadien de naissance à avoir étudié en Europe, a peut-être fait son meilleur tableau en immortalisant une esclave!<sup>207</sup>

Depicting the portrait of a black female child, Beaucourt's *Portrait of a Negro Slave* is the only painting of its kind found to this day.<sup>208</sup> The painting's presence in the history of Canadian art functions in a way that emphasizes racial and sexual hierarchy. The analysis of Marie-Thérèse-Zémire's portrait demonstrates the ways in which the artist worked to assert his ownership of the slave's body on an artistic, physical, and legal level.

### Slave Advertisements

In the Quebec context, slave advertisements were accompanied by an image, or icon, that made reference to a slave that was either being sold or on the run.<sup>209</sup> The imagery used in both slave sale advertisements and runaway slave advertisements was a visual reference that was easily identifiable by readers who would automatically associate the image to that of fugitive slaves. The analysis of the ninety-four slave advertisements gathered by Mackey brings me to the

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<sup>207</sup> See Appendix 2 for an english translation; —"L'abolition de l'esclavage dans le haut-Canada," *Le boréal express* 4, no. 3 (1796) : 377. Accessed 31 August, 2017. <http://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/2222669>.

<sup>208</sup> As mentioned earlier, the title of the painting *Portrait of a Negro Slave* was changed in 2010 by the institution. Using the original title in this research was deliberate on my part because *Portrait of a Haitian Woman* is problematic for several reasons: the term *woman* which does not apply to the sitter in this painting. As outlined in this chapter, the sitter, Marie-Thérèse-Zémire would have been fifteen years old and thus considered a child, not a *woman*; the omission of the term *Slave* decontextualize the painting and the sitter and engenders racial and social problematics for the contemporary viewer, as argued by Nelson. It is worth mentioning that institutions are still debating the identity of the sitter in Beaucourt's painting as Marie-Thérèse-Zémire, the fifteen-year-old enslaved black female, because Jacques Desrochers (Curator of Quebec and Canadian Art at the *Montreal Museum of Fine Arts*) argues that the sitter is not likely to be Marie-Thérèse-Zémire because the "model's maturity" does portray a fifteen-year-old female. This subjective argument does not overrule the evidence found by scholars, nor can it justify the changing of the painting's title from *slave* to *woman*, or attest to the inadequate didactic panel. See Nelson, *Slavery, Geography, and Empire*, 125-33.

<sup>209</sup> Note that in the context of Canada, the image associated with the advertisement of black slaves is different than that of the Panis(e) (Indigenous slave).

conclusion that twelve (13%) of these advertisements are published with a *running logo* (Figure 14); twenty-four (26%) are published with a *standing logo* (Figure 15); and that fifty-eight (62%) are not associated with any logo.<sup>210</sup> The *running* and *standing* image representing a *type*, as opposed to a specific individual, worked as a visual motif that alerted readers to the type of advertisement which had been printed. The power of such visual references is exposed in Hubert Neilson's incorrect analysis discerned by Mackey. In his "Slavery in Old Canada" (1906), Neilson mistakenly identified advertisements in the *Quebec Mercury* (1820-1821) as fugitives slave advertisements. The *running figure logo* in the *Mercury* advertisements (Figure 16) is comparable, but not identical, to the logos used in earlier fugitive slave advertisements, which perhaps explains Neilson's interpretive error.<sup>211</sup> This error confirms the power of the logos that appear alongside slave advertisements and attests to the visual culture of slavery in early Quebec.

Since this thesis attempts to recuperate an understanding of the enslaved child in the context of early Quebec, a narrowing down of slave advertisements is needed. Based on previous arguments, the border between *childhood* and *adulthood* for the enslaved black population lies at fifteen years of age. Following this claim, the table below outlines the slave advertisements that mention either the sale or escape of children.

<b>Table 3: Children (15 and under) in Advertisements (See plates 17-26)</b>			
<b>Sale / Runaway</b>	<b>SEX/AGE</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>Recurring AD</b>
SALE	MALE /15	<i>Quebec Gazette</i> , 18 June 1767	X

<sup>210</sup> Note that after viewing the images associated with the advertisements, I conclude that only two logos were used to represent the sale or escape of the enslaved.

<sup>211</sup> Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 310-1.



<b>Table 3: Children (15 and under) in Advertisements (See plates 17-26)</b>			
SALE	FEMALE /11	<i>Quebec Gazette</i> ,17 November 1768	X
SALE	MALE /9 months, (sold with female /25, and male /23)	<i>Quebec Gazette</i> ,23 February 1769	yes, (ad. 11) 4 months later on 15 June, 1769.
SALE	MALE /15	<i>Quebec Gazette</i> ,13 April 1769	X
SALE	FEAMALE /a. 15-16	<i>Quebec Gazette</i> ,13 May 1784	X
SALE	CHILD /? (sold with male /13, and female /26)	<i>Quebec Gazette</i> ,12 May 1785	X
SALE	MALE /13 (sold with child /?, and female /26)	<i>Quebec Gazette</i> ,12 May 1785	X
ESCAPE	MALE (Ben) /13	<i>Quebec Gazette</i> , 8 May 1788	yes, (ad. 62b) one month later on 19 June, 1788
SALE	FEMALE /15	<i>Montreal Gazette</i> , 29 January 1789	X
SALE	FEMALE /a. 12-13	<i>Montreal Gazette</i> ,28 December 1795	X
ESCAPE	FEMALE (Jane) /4 (escaped with male /?, and female /?)	<i>Montreal Gazette</i> ,20 August 1798	X

Based on this archive of advertisements, it is important to note that not all of them mention the age of the slave, therefore the data remains imprecise when attempting to construct valid assumptions.<sup>212</sup>

<sup>212</sup> Mackey clearly states that the sale and escape of slaves were not always documented. Mackey posits that the last advertisement for the sale of a slave was published in January 1798, when in fact the last sale occurred in September 1799. Mackey also points out that some newspapers did not survive and thus, we may not hold evidence of all the advertisements that were in fact published. Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 529.

Using Mackey's transcribed slave advertisements, I conclude that out of ninety-four advertisements, thirteen were for individuals of fifteen years of age or younger. The advertisement for a nine-months-old "Mulatto Male Child" on 23 February, 1769 reoccurred four months later on 15 June, 1769; and the escape advertisement for a thirteen year old male on 8 May, 1788 reoccurred one month later on 19 June, 1788.<sup>213</sup> This means that only eleven known individuals were between nine months and fifteen years of age.

Of these eleven individuals, only two were listed in runaway advertisements: Ben and Lydia or Lil. Thirteen-year-old *Negro Boy* named Ben ran away from his master Levy Solomons on 24 April, 1788. The advertisement was published in the *Quebec Gazette* on 8 May, 1788. The same advertisement was reprinted approximately one month later on 19 June. The second advertisement mentions the same date of escape as in the first advertisement meaning that Ben was never recaptured. There are no subsequent advertisements for Ben; he would have therefore been recaptured or succeeded in escaping. Ben was said to be a "Mulatto Boy," we may therefore suggest that perhaps he had light skin and was able to "pass." As for the *Negro Woman* named Lydia or Lil, she ran away with a *Negro Man* named Robin or Bob and a four-year-old female named Jane (*Montreal Gazette*, 20 August, 1798). According to Mackey, this was the last published notice about a fugitive slave.<sup>214</sup>

The collected data also outlines that only two of the sales were for multiple slaves, perhaps these were family units: A nine month old *Mulatto Male Child* was sold along with a

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<sup>213</sup> Note that the nine-months-old "mulatto male child" advertised on 23 February, 1769 and again on 15 June, 1769, was said to be the same age in both advertisements, regardless of the time gap that would suggest the child would have been about 13 months old at the time of the second publication. Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 316-7, 330.

<sup>214</sup> Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 542.

*Negro Woman* (twenty-five) and *Negro Man* (twenty-three) on the 23 February, 1769. The advertisement does not make any connections between the woman, child, and/or man. The terms "with a Mulatto Male" are used instead of "with *her* Mulatto Male," which would have made the connection between the enslaved more obvious. Moreover the printer writes "she was formerly the Property of General Murray" [*Sic*] but there is no mention of the previous owner of the child or of the man. With a failed attempt at selling them through a private auction in February 1769, slaveowner Miles Prenties put them up for auction in June of that same year. There is no doubt that the repetitive attempts to sell the enslaved would have been traumatic: regardless of the blood relation between the enslaved in this *unit*, they would have most likely bonded in order to survive the atrocities that were inflicted on them daily; and the calculation of their economic worth would have certainly been traumatic. Moreover, the dehumanization process endured by the enslaved at their auctions through the observation and examination of their bodies and worth would have certainly been traumatic. In all, the fear of being separated and the moving around would have caused instability and would have required constant adaptation on behalf of the enslaved.

The second *unit* advertisement was for an *approximately* twenty-six-year-old *Negro-wench* who was for sale along with her child of unknown age and a thirteen-year-old male on the 12 May, 1785. In this second advertisements, the printer indicates "with her child," but makes no mention of the relationship between the *Negro-wench* and the thirteen-year-old *Negro-boy*. It is therefore possible that the woman and child were a unit and that they were sold as a package with the boy; we may also suggest that the boy could have been the son or brother of the woman.

As for the two fugitive advertisements, only one was for multiple slaves: Four year-old *mulatto child (Jane)* escaping with a *Negro Man (Robin or Bob)* and *Negro Woman (Lydia or Lil)*, both of unmentioned age, advertised on 20 August, 1798. When analyzing the data and concluding that only two sale advertisements were for multiple slaves, we must question whether these individuals were part of a family unit or if they were forcibly combined for the benefit of the owner. We may also consider the possibility that the remaining nine *single* advertisements for children who were forcibly separated from their families. In all cases, the advertisements prove that families were customarily torn apart and that the enslaved suffered from a fundamental lack of agency.

The detailed nature of slave advertisements allows me to get a better idea of black enslaved children in early Quebec. With different motives, slave sale and runaway slave advertisements should be interpreted with diligence. In sale advertisements, white masters tend to emphasize the qualities of the enslaved, notably their physical attributes and laboring skills. The aim of the advertisement here, was to emphasize the value of the enslaved and to omit any compromising information such as disobedience or violent behavior. Conversely, runaway slave advertisements were predisposed to reveal as many details as possible concerning the enslaved. This type of advertisement aspired to retrieve a fugitive, meaning that the accuracy of the descriptive elements was key to a successful recapture of one's fleeing property.

Using the children advertisements I attempted to reconstruct an understanding of who these enslaved children were as individuals. Nonetheless, given that these slave advertisements were written by a class of slave owners who believed themselves to be the racially superior and

who had the driving motivation of the recapture and incarceration of people whose flight positioned them as criminals, we must remain skeptical of their accuracy,

The analysis of these advertisements clearly demonstrates that a social hierarchy was in place. The terminology used to define or name the enslaved was racially focused: *Negro boy*, *negro girl*, *mulatto male child*, *negro wench*, and *jeune Nègresse*. These enslaved individuals were distinguished using language of racial significance that placed them in a socially inferior position and thus, reinforced their status as chattel. Using the eleven slave advertisements of children outlined in the table above, we may observe that only the names of the children in the fugitive slave advertisements are mentioned: Ben on 8 May, 1788; Jane on 20 August, 1798.<sup>215</sup> The omission of slave names in slave sale advertisements is often deliberate on the part of the seller because in several cases scholars were able to associate the children advertised with their given names.<sup>216</sup> The inclusion of children's names in the fugitive slave advertisements would have served as an element of identification of the escapees. Conversely, the exclusion of the names in the slave sale advertisements exemplifies the objectification of the enslaved and attests to the dehumanization process through the erasure of identity.

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<sup>215</sup> For a complete transcript of the advertisements for Ben and Jane, see Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 330, 339.

<sup>216</sup> In the private sale advertised in the *Quebec Gazette* on 12 May, 1785 composed of a child, thirteen-year-old male, and twenty-six-year-old female, the advertisement makes no mention of the child's age nor of the slaves' names. According to Mackey, the child would have been named Maria, a three-year-old daughter of Grace (also referred to as Gresse). The thirteen-year-old boy would have been known as George. Belonging to Carpenter Charles Bordwine, Grace, George, and Maria were sold for £80 to David Lynd on 25 August 1785. Later on, Grace and Maria were sold as a unit for £48 and George was sold separately for 30 guineas. According to Grace's baptismal records, we are able to conclude that After David Lynd's death in 1802, Grace belonged to Mrs. Lynd (Jane Henry). Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 537-8, note 44; For the 28 December, 1795 sale advertisement of the "Negro Wench" of about twelve or thirteen years of age, there is no mention of her name. However, Mackey suggests that this slave is possibly Catherine, a "Nègresse" belonging to Mr. Gible, a tailor. Catherine would have died two years after this publication at Hôtel-Dieu on 21 February 1797. Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 541-2, note 65.

The second point of observation would be the evidence of physical scarring in advertisements. In the children's advertisements there are no mention of branding or of scars as a result of violence. Perhaps this is explained by the lack of fugitive slave advertisements for children (except for Jane); reminding us that slave sale advertisements would have embellished the physical attributes (like health and strength) of the enslaved rather than admit any bodily marks which could have been read as signs of illness and debility. Moreover, any sign of violence on the body of a slave would suggest that he or she was disobedient.<sup>217</sup> On the other hand, the scars left by diseases such as small pox would be advantageous to masters who would want to sell their slave; when buying a slave that has already had the small pox, their immunity was implied. In the children's advertisements, we encounter two notices where slaves are described as "has had the small pox"; a fifteen-year-old male and a fifteen or sixteen-years old female.<sup>218</sup>

The descriptive nature of fugitive slave advertisements is more helpful than that of sales when trying to portray an individual since it often provides a physical description of the escapee sometimes including his or her clothing. Unfortunately, only two of the children's advertisements are for fugitives and only one of them includes a description of the *about* thirteen-year-old *Negro Boy* named Ben who is "five feet four or five inches high, black hair, and very streight; had on when he went off a blue round jacket and trowsers, and a round hat."*[sic]*<sup>219</sup> Unable to compare

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<sup>217</sup> Mackey states that "[a]lthough hangings were not so common as the law allowed, the other physical punishments— whipping, branding, and the pillory— were applied with relative frequency, and for what today would be considered petty infractions." Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 246; A concrete example of the violence inflicted on the enslaved is that of runaway slave Joe. In 1777 twenty-year-old Joe was caught after escaping his master once again. His owner, Brown, paid the public executioner to whip him publicly in Quebec's market square. Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 463 note 62; Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage*, 159.

<sup>218</sup> Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 316, 326.

<sup>219</sup> Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 330.

this advertisement with another of its kind, it is difficult to claim that all children were wearing similar attire, especially when considering that there was no official uniform or cloth ration used for the enslaved in Quebec.<sup>220</sup>

Advertisements may also be useful in the recuperation of information such as the former location of enslaved children; the *about* fifteen or sixteen-year-old *negro wench* advertised on 13 May, 1784, is said to have been "brought up in the province of New-York."<sup>221</sup> Another *negro wench* of *about* twelve or thirteen-years of age was described as "lately from Upper Canada, where she was brought up."<sup>222</sup> Claiming that their slaves are being "brought up" in nearby colonies, and were therefore Creoles, supported the idea that they are perhaps less resistant because they were born in the Americas and more likely to be stripped of their cultural roots. The traumatic impact this would have had on these children is inconceivable: they would have been separated from their families, relocated (perhaps several times), and placed in a cultural context that is foreign to them.

Language is also an important component for our interpretation of a child's journey as a slave. The eleven-year-old female for sale on 17 November 1768, and the fifteen-year-old female for sale on 29 January 1789, were said to be able to speak both French and English.<sup>223</sup> Considering that these children were enslaved, formal education, apart from the imposed

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<sup>220</sup> Trudel has found detailed evidence of the type of clothing worn by adult slaves, notably from slaveowner and printer William Brown who noted all purchases made for his slave, Joe. Trudel and D'Allaire, "Les conditions de vie des esclaves," in *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 158-63; Nelson outlines that females imported from the Caribbean to Montreal would have been familiar with the fabrication of clothing from oznaburgh fabric, a common cloth provided to the enslaved on plantations to manufacture the materials for their clothing. Nelson, *Slavery, Geography, and Empire*, 82.

<sup>221</sup> Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 326.

<sup>222</sup> Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 325.

<sup>223</sup> Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 316, 331.

religious teachings, would not have been available to them.<sup>224</sup> The mention of their bilingualism demonstrates their ability to learn new skills and speaks to their creolization, both of which are quite valuable to prospective owners.

The list of skills mentioned in advertisements varies: "qualified to wait on a Gentleman as a body servant"; "handy negro girl"; "is a compleat [*sic*] cook"; "understands all sorts of house work"; "au fait du train d'un ménage."<sup>225</sup> These notices offer an overview of the type of skills that make reference to the labor forced upon enslaved children. In comparison to the workload of children in slave majority sites presented in the first chapter, children were not affiliated with specific tasks. Rather, enslaved children in Quebec had to be polyvalent in their labor skills in order to satisfy the needs of their owners who, based on the seasons and weather, would have different needs.<sup>226</sup>

With the aim to better understand the condition of enslaved black children in Quebec, the analysis of the slave advertisements of children, both for sales and escapes, has demonstrated that white slave owners gave little attention to the individuals who they owned. Treated as any other goods, enslaved black people were understood as units of labor and valued mainly for their ability to yield profits or to symbolize the owner's wealth and colonial reach.

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<sup>224</sup> Trudel notes that documents regarding the education of white children is scarce. Trudel observes that the level of illiteracy was high for the white population and that therefore it is reasonable to assume that black slaves did not receive formal education. Trudel's research demonstrates that only few black slaves (after 1800) were known as able to sign their names. Trudel and D'Allaire, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*, 153-4.

<sup>225</sup> Mackey, *Done With Slavery*, 315-17, 326, 331.

<sup>226</sup> For an account of a slave executing different seasonal tasks, see note 67 in chapter one that makes reference to twenty-year-old Marie-Joseph Angélique.



## Conclusion

As a contribution to Art History and numerous fields, notably that of Slavery, Canadian, and Postcolonial studies, this project dealt with the decoding of Canada's artistic legacy. With an emphasis on the visual culture of slavery in New France and Quebec between 1700 and 1834, I aimed to recuperate a better understanding of the condition of enslaved black children. Taking into account the condition of the enslaved mothers and of the environment in which enslaved children were born, I expanded on the ways in which black children were understood as potential units of labor as opposed to individuals. Through textual and visual interpretation I was able to establish that black children, born into slavery, were systematically deprived of any kind of childhood. Moreover, this research offered one comparative analysis that was performed within the context of the transatlantic world, and one that was transnational. These comparisons used visual culture beyond the selected geographical parameters to expand and clarify the role and meaning of enslaved children during the selected period. Going beyond New France and Quebec allowed me to better assess the ways in which the black body was othered through its objectification, exoticization, and dehumanization as a way to demonstrate and entrench racial power relations. This thesis therefore allowed for a direct correlation between power relations and visual culture through race and the racism directed at black people.

Historical Quebec art was very much reliant on European art practices and paradigms and the western canon of art. After having provided a brief history of art in Canada, it is difficult to understand how so many members of the white population, especially soldiers, were trained in the arts but left no visual records of their encounters with enslaved black adults and children. My discussion of Beaucourt's *Portrait of a Negro Slave* was crucial to my arguments since it is the

only "high" art proof of the visual representation of a black enslaved child in early Quebec. I have also deliberately sought to destabilize the reading of Marie-Thérèse-Zémire as a woman, given the pervasive sexual exploitation and "breeding" of enslaved females across the transatlantic world, an enterprise which hastened the sexualization of enslaved black girls. Depicted in a manner that highlights racial, gender, and social hierarchies, the visual analysis of the painting allowed for insights into power relations between a black girl and her white male slave master. Finally, I provided a brief overview of slave advertisements as a means to outline the importance of visual culture in late eighteenth-century Quebec. Questioning once more the absence of historical images that portray the black child's body, I used these primary sources as evidence of the objectification and Othering of enslaved children and their pervasive representation within the realm of popular print culture.

Conclusively, this research demonstrates that there are many similitudes between the lives, experiences, and representations of enslaved black mothers and black children in Britain, New France and Quebec, and tropical slave majority sites. The primary documents demonstrate that regardless of the environment or geographical location, enslaved children were deprived of a childhood and of all rights. As for the visual representation of the black body, the analysis of British portraiture and Hogarth's print allows me to confirm that the black body was dehumanized in eighteenth-century visual arts through elements that put forward its exoticism and Otherness. The abundance of "high" art images depicting the black page in Britain brings back the idea that black people were seen as elements of curiosity and that their visual representation aided in the formation of white power relations. We may observe the similarities

in artistic practices between Britain and Quebec using Beaucourt's Marie-Thérèse-Zémire, a portrait painting that functions as to exoticise the black female sitter.

The study of the eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries visual culture of black enslaved children in Quebec, Canada, and in the Transatlantic world is quite limited. Art historians and other scholars should focus on interdisciplinary research to expand my study and to provide a better understanding of the relationship between the visual arts and the contemporary social climate with regard to issues of race and racism. The dearth of historical images representing the black body in Quebec is perhaps due to the relocation of documentation in France and/or Britain; archival research overseas would therefore be essential to the pursuit of this research. Moreover, the research of visual evidence should not be limited to "high" art and should incorporate drawings, sketches, prints, and slave sale and runaway advertisements. In the absence of slave advertisements, primary sources by slaveowners such as testaments, correspondence letters and diaries would also be valued documentations since the mention of their slaves are often very descriptive and simultaneously attest to the slave condition of the period.

In all, the slow growth of art patronage and art education in Canada along with the untapped archive of "undiscovered" images, speak to the lack of representations of black enslaved children in historical Quebec art. However, fugitive slave advertisements are a powerful supplement for the missing visual images that can fill the gaps in the visual archive, providing crucial details about the lives and experiences of enslaved black children in Quebec. This research therefore contributes to the study of slavery in Canada, New France, and Quebec and

more specifically to an understanding of the lives and experiences of enslaved black children in Canada.

## APPENDIX 1

### List of archives contacted and/or visited

Amherstburg Freedom Museum, Amherstburg, Canada

Archives of Ontario: Alvin D. McCurdy Collection, Toronto, Canada

Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence, France

Archives, Ville de Québec, Québec, Canada

Bibliothèque et archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada

Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ), Montreal, Canada

British Library, London, United Kingdom

Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau, Canada

Halifax Municipal Archives, Halifax, Canada

Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Canada

McCord Museum Archives and Documentation Centre, Montreal, Canada

McGill University Archives, Montreal, Canada

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Canada

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada

Niagara Historical Society Museum, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Canada

Ontario Black History Society, Toronto, Canada

Saskatchewan African Canadian Heritage Museum, Regina, Canada

## APPENDIX 2

This slave, whose goodness could show more than one master, dares not to claim human rights in Lower Canada. She may have been the first "human figure" in our Canadian painting. We had many classic portraits, these orders that impose on the artist to paint in all likeness, but where it is difficult to surrender to pure painting. Beaucourt, very detached in front of the model who, because she is a slave, could be seen as an object, an object of study like the magnificent fruits, he has succeeded here one of the most beautiful works of our painting, we believe. No foreign concern to the painted work, to the plastic reality. François Beaucourt (1740-1794), the first Canadian-born painter to have studied in Europe, may have done his best painting by immortalizing a slave! [translation mine].

## Plates

Fig. 1 Unknown Artist, *Elihu Yale; William Cavendish, the second Duke of Devonshire; Lord James Cavendish; Mr. Tunstal; and an Enslaved Servant*, ca.1708. Oil on canvas, 201.3 x 235.6 cm. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, New Haven, Connecticut, USA.



## Plates

Fig. 2 Titian, *Portrait of Laura Dianti*, c. 1520-25. Oil on Canvas, 119 x 93 cm. Collezione H. Kisters, Kreuzlingen, Switzerland.





## Plates

Fig. 3 Van Dyck, *Portrait of Henrietta of Lorraine*, 1634. Oil on Canvas, 213.4 x 127 cm. English Heritage, Kenwood, London, UK.



## Plates

Fig. 4 Johan Zoffany, *The Family of Sir William Young, Baronet*, 1770. Oil on canvas, 114.3 x 167.8 cm. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, England, UK.



Fig. 5 William Hogarth, *A Harlot's Progress* plate II, 1731-32. Etching and Engraving, 31.5 x 38 cm. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, California, USA.





## Plates

Fig. 6 Bartholomew Dandridge, *A young Girl with an Enslaved Servant and a Dog*, ca. 1725. Oil on canvas, 121.9 x 121.9 cm. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, New Haven, Connecticut, USA.



## Plates

Fig. 7 Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Charles Stanhope, Third Earl of Harrington, and a Servant*, 1782. Oil on canvas, 236.2 x 142.2 cm. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, New Haven, Connecticut, USA.



## Plates

Fig. 8 Sir John Baptiste de Medina, *James Drummond*, 1673-1720, a. 1700. Oil on canvas, 126.80 x 102.60 cm. National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland.





## Plates

Fig. 9 Beaucourt, François Malépart, *Portrait of a Haitian Woman*, formerly *Portrait of a Negro Slave*, or *The Negress*, 1786. Oil on Canvas, 72.7 x 58.5 cm. McCord Museum, Montreal (currently on loan at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts), Montreal, Canada.



## Plates

Fig. 10 Beaucourt, François Malépart, *Portrait de l'abbé Claude Poncin*, 1792. Oil on canvas, 74.93 x 55.88 cm. BAnQ Québec, Montreal, Canada.



## Plates

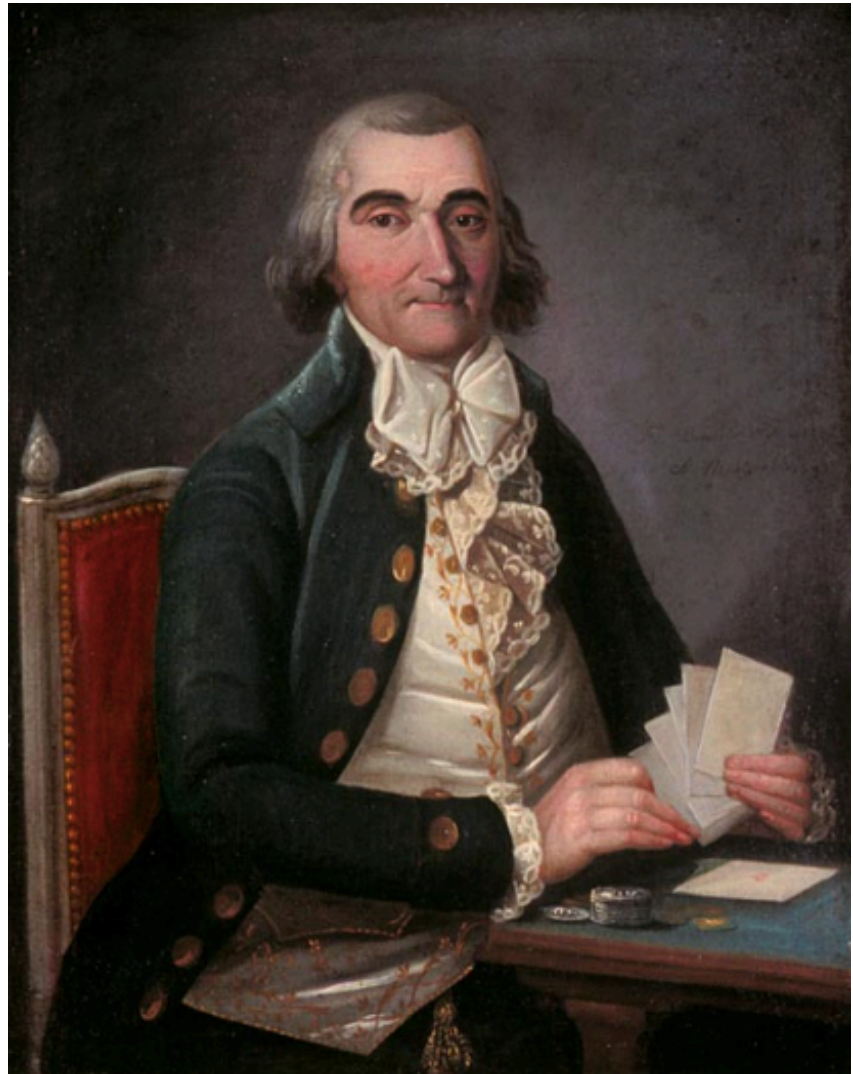
Fig. 11      Beaucourt,  
François Malépart, *Portrait  
de Margaret Sutherland  
(née Robertson)*, 1792. Oil  
on canvas, 82 x 61 cm.  
Musée royal de l'Ontario,  
Toronto, Canada.





## Plates

Fig. 12 Beaucourt, François Malépart, *Eustache-Ignace Trottier dit Desrivières Beaubien*, 1792. Oil on canvas, 84 x 68 cm. Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, Ottawa, Canada.




## Plates

Fig. 13 Beaucourt, François Malépart, *Madame Eustache Trottier Desrivières Beaubin, née Marguerite-Alexis Mailhot*, 1793. Oil on canvas, 79.5 x 63.5 cm. Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Québec, Canada.



Fig. 14 "Il s'enfuit de Québec." In *Quebec Gazette*, no. 256 (3 September, 1789): 3.




**I**L s'enfuit de Québec Lundi dernier matin, un NÈGRE nommé JOË ou CUFF, âgé d'environ 35 ans, environ 5 pieds 10 pouces de haut. Il avoit quand il partit un capot rouge, une paire de grandes culottes de Cotton rayé. Il a aussi l'œil droit couvert de blanc, parle François et Anglois. Les Capitaines et Officiers de Milice sont priés de l'arrêter et en donner avis à l'IMPRIMEUR, ou à Mr. BELLE-COUR chez le Sieur Jo. Dilste, au Cul-de-Sac à Québec, et il seront raisonnablement récompensés; et toutes personnes qui le cacheront ou lui donneront asile seront poursuivies selon la rigueur de la loi à cet égard. — QUÉBEC, 3 Septembre, 1789.

## Plates

Fig. 15 "Run away from Mr. George Hipps." In *Quebec Gazette*, no. 688 (5 November, 1778): 3.


**ADVERTISEMENTS.**



**R**UN away from Mr. GEORGE HIPPS on Thursday last, a Mulatto wench named *BELL*, this is to give notice, that any person or persons whatsoever who harbours the said Girl may depend that he will go to the utmost rigour of the Law. When she went away she had upon her a Callico Gown and Petticoat, a drefs'd Cap, and a black silk Handkerchief,  
**QUEBEC, November 3, 1778.**

Fig. 16 "Absconded From James Ellis." In *The Quebec Mercury*, no. 22, vol. 17 (1 June, 1821): 3.

**ABSCONDED,**




**F**ROM JAMES ELLIS, Silver-smith, St. Ursule-street, on the 14th inst. JOHN REES, his indentured apprentice, a lad of fifteen years of age, marked with the small pox in the face, fair complexion rather stout made; whosoever harbours or employs the said John Rees until the expiration of his indentures, will be prosecuted to the utmost rigour of the Law.  
**Quebec, 17th May, 1821.**

Fig. 17 "A Healthy Negro Boy." In *Quebec Gazette*, no. 129 (18 June, 1767): 3.

in Spanish River, any Time between the last Day of June and the last Day of October next ensuing, by applying to Mr. WILLIAM LLOYD, at Spanish River aforesaid.  
*Spanish River, in Cape-Brava, 15 May, 1767.*

**TO BE SOLD;**



**A** Healthy NEGRO BOY, about 15 Years of Age, well qualified to wait on a Gentleman as a Body Servant. For further Particulars enquire of the Printers.

**TO BE SOLD**

Fig. 18 "A very healthy handy Negro Girl." In *Quebec Gazette*, no. 203 (17 November, 1768): 3.

bonne caution, ou leurs comptes seront remis en main de son Procureur pour être poursuivis.  
 Il a aussi quelques Barriques de PORTER.

**TO BE SOLD,** a very healthy handy Negro Girl, about Eleven Years of Age, speaks both French and English. Enquire of the Printers hereof.

**TO BE SOLD,** by N. JACQUIN,



## Plates

Fig. 19 "Mr. Prenties has to sell a Negro Woman." In *Quebec Gazette*, no.217 (23 February, 1769): 3.

Depth, Situate on the Height of St. Lawrence, near said Town, advertises such as have Claims, by Mortgage or otherwise, on said Land, that they present them before the last Day of March next, otherways they will be excluded.

**A S MILES PRENTIES, Tavern-keeper in the Lower-Town of Quebec,** intends leaving the Province, he requests all Persons who have any Demands upon him, to give in their Accounts; and he also requests all Persons who are indebted to him, to make speedy Payment, so as he may be the better able to pay off his just Debts.

(Mr. Prenties has to sell a Negro Woman, aged 25 Years, with a Molesto Male Child 9 Months old; she was formerly the Property of General MURRAY; she can be well recommended for a good House-servant, handles Milk well, and makes Butter to Perfection; Likewise a Negro Man, aged 25 Years, a very good House-servant, understanding waiting upon a Gentleman, and looks well in Livery.)

Fig. 20 "a healthy Negro Boy, about 15 years of age." In *Quebec Gazette*, no. 224 (13 April, 1769): 3.

et après trois Publications faites, ils seront déchus de tous droits et prétentions sur les biens du dit Jaquet Mally.

Québec, le 11 Avril, 1769. PANET, Avocat.

**WHEREAS JOHN FERGUSON,** intends leaving this Province in June next, all those who have any Demands on him, are desired to bring their Accounts to be settled, and all those indebted to him are desired to make immediate Payment, otherwise their Accounts will be put into the Hands of an Attorney without farther Notice. To be sold at the same Time, a healthy Negro Boy, about 15 Years of Age, who has had the Small-Pox, and is a compleat Cook; also a Horse, Chaise, Calash; and all his Household Furniture. — Montreal, 3 April, 1769.

**WHEREAS JACQUES DUFETE,** of this City,

Fig. 21 "A likely healthy Negro Wench." In *Quebec Gazette*, no. 977 (13 May, 1784): 2.

paid to their orders.

**TO BE SOLD by PRIVATE SALE,**

**A Likely healthy NEGRO Wench,** between 15 and 16 years of age, brought up in the province of New-York, understands all sorts of house work, and has had the Small-pox. Any person desirous of purchasing such a Wench, may see her at the house of Mr. John Brooks in the Upper-town; where the conditions of sale may be made known; and if she should not be sold before the 20th instant, she will on that day be exposed to publick sale.

Quebec, May 10, 1784.

Fig. 22 "a Negro-wench, with her child." In *Quebec Gazette*, no. 1029 (12 May, 1785): 4.

**A Gentleman going to England has for sale, a Negro-wench,** with her child, about 26 years of age, who understands thoroughly every kind of house-work, particularly washing and cookery: And a stout Negro-boy, 13 years old: Also a good horse, cariote and harness.—For particulars enquire at Mr. William Roxburgh's, Upper-town.


Quebec, 10th May, 1785.

**UN Monsieur, qui va partir pour Angleterre,** a pour vendre, une Nègresse avec son Enfant. Elle est âgée d'environ 26 ans, entend parfaitement tous les ouvrages du ménage, surtout le blanchissage et la cuisine; aussi un Nègre robuste de 13 ans: Deplus un bon cheval avec la carriole et le harnois. Pour information on s'adressera à Mr. William Roxburgh, à la Haute-ville.

Quebec, 10 Mai, 1785.

Plates

Fig. 23 "a Negro Boy named BEN." In *Quebec Gazette*, no.1186 (8 May, 1788): 7.



**R**UN away on the 24th instant, a Negro Boy named BEN, about thirteen years of age, five feet four or five inches high, black hair, and very straight; had on when he went off a blue round jacket and trowsers, and a round hat. Whoever will apprehend the said boy and return him to his master at Mr. Levy Solomons', shall be well rewarded and all expences paid. All persons are forewarned to harbour or employ said Negro, under pain of being prosecuted as the law directs.

Montreal, 28th April, 1788. ¶1p. M. MICHAELS.

Fig. 24 "Une jeune Nègresse d'environ 15 ans." In *Montreal Gazette*, no. 5, vol. 4 (29 January, 1789): 4.

**A VENDRE,**

**P**AR le Souffigné, Une jeune Nègresse d'environ 15 ans, parlant Anglois & François, & au fait du train d'un ménage.

**J. F. PERRAULT.**

**A V E N D U E**

Fig. 25 "A Young healthy Negro Wench." In *Montreal Gazette*, no.22 (28 December, 1795): 4.

Mr. M<sup>r</sup>. Adam's. Mr. Sketchley's Quebec Suburbs, and of J. D. Sketchley St. Peter Street.

**F O R S A L E**

**A** Young healthy Negro Wench between 12 and 13 years of age, lately from Upper Canada, where she was brought up.—Enquire of GIBB & PRIOR.

Montreal 24 December 1795.

MONTREAL | **T**HE next Court of General Quarter Sessions of the TO WIT. | Peace, in and for the District aforesaid, will be held

Fig. 26 "a Negro Man named Robin or Bob." In *Montreal Gazette*, no. 160 (20 August, 1798): 3.

**Nine Dollars Reward.**

**R**AN away from the Subscriber, on the 12th instant, a Negro Man named Robin or Bob he is about five feet six inches high, had on when he went away, a coarse shirt and trowsers, a light coloured cloth waistcoat, felt hat, and old shoes, also a Negro Woman named Lydia or Lil, partly of the melatto colour, about five feet high had on a blue and white striped short gown, a blue druggit petticoat and black silk bonnet, she is thick and well set, they may possibly change their cloathes; they took with them a mottled child, named Jane about four years old. Any person taking up and securing said Negroes and Child, so that the owner gets them again, shall have the above reward and all reasonable charges paid by,

**JAMES FRAZER.**

N. S. All masters of vessels and all others are hereby forbid to harbour, employ, carry off, or conceal, said negroes, as they will be prosecuted in the highest manner, the said James Frazer hath the Protection of Government for said negroes.

Current of St. Marys near Montreal, August 12th 1798.

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