OXFORD STUDIES IN AMERICAN LITERARY HISTORY

Slavery, Surveillance, and Genre in Antebellum United States Literature

Kelly Ross

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For my mom and dad, Jean Ross and Ken Ross

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Introduction

In the February 1837 issue of *The Slave's Friend,* the editors reported that the magazine's original frontispiece, "a good man teaching a school, was nearly worn out" and had been replaced. In the new frontispiece (see Figure I.1), the editors explained, "You see three little abolitionists are sitting down, while one of them is reading to the others. On one side is a column with the figure of Justice on it, and on the other column is the figure of Liberty. You can know Justice by the *scales,* and Liberty by the *cap.*"[1] Published by the American Anti-Slavery Society from 1836 to 1839, *The Slave's Friend* was an abolitionist periodical aimed at children.[2] Despite the periodical's didactic tone, the editors neglect to mention perhaps the most striking feature of the new frontispiece: the eye floating above the entire scene. This image of the Eye of Providence is a familiar one, appearing on the reverse of the Great Seal of the United States, on modern one-dollar bills, and in the sinister logo of the US Information Awareness Office.[3] In the *Slave's Friend* frontispiece, God's all-seeing eye presumably watches over the young abolitionists, observing their good behavior, yet the artist has rendered the eye looking directly at the reader, not down at the children below. This icon of divine surveillance thus disciplines the reader, reminding him or her that no secret is concealed from God's eye.[4]

Whereas God's eye watches from above in *The Slave's Friend*'s frontispiece, the November 1823 issue of another early antislavery periodical, *Genius of Universal Emancipation,* includes an image of "sousveillance"—a concept developed by Steve Mann to describe watching from below.[5] The lower two-thirds of this wood-block print depicts a slave coffle being marched past the US Capitol building, which occupies the top third of the frame (see Figure I.2). Because the artist has compressed the foreground and background, it appears that the enslaved people are literally underground. This image juxtaposes two looks: the supervisory gaze of a man in a black hat, whom the accompanying text identifies as a "member[] of Congress," and the resistant look of the enslaved man lifting his eyes and his manacled hands toward the Congressional overseer.[6] As Teresa Goddu points out, "the standing slave, despite the coarseness of the image, has an identifiable eye … [that] look[s] up toward the promise of freedom on the horizon."[7] By commanding the Congressman to "Behold, behold, this cruel chain" (the caption above the image), the enslaved man directs the white overseer's gaze to focus on his fetters. Drawing attention

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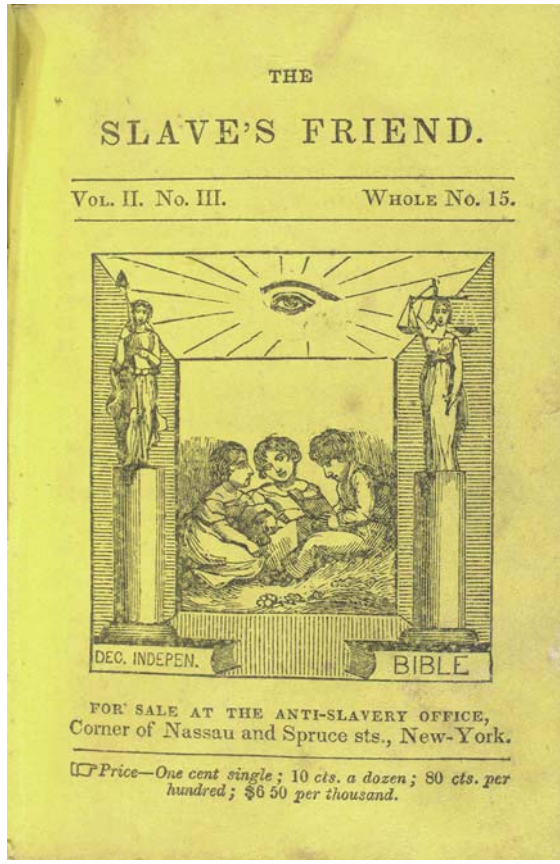

Fig. I.1 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library. "Three children in a temple." *The New York Public Library Digital Collections.* 1837. From The New York Public Library, https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47da-7554-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99

to the enslaved man's eye and hands by surrounding his upper body with white space and making him the largest human figure in the illustration, the artist portrays the man as an active agent, looking back at the government that permits the institution of slavery and protesting his captivity. If *The Slave's Friend* encouraged its readers to internalize God's all-seeing eye as a monitor to shape their behavior, *Genius* embodies an oppositional look in the figure of a Black man who defiantly challenges the racialized surveillance of African Americans.

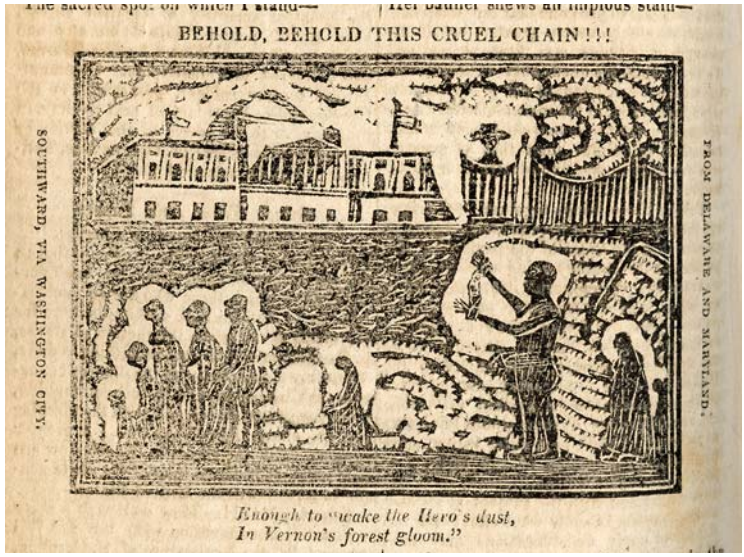

Fig. I.2 "Behold, Behold This Cruel Chain"; *Genius of Universal Emancipation* (1821–1839), Vol. 3, Iss. 7 (Nov 1823): 4 (misprinted as 68 in original). Courtesy of Oberlin College Archives, Oberlin, Ohio.

As the illustration in *Genius* indicates, until the open combat of the Civil War the conflict between enslavers and enslaved people was waged primarily via methods we normally associate with surveillance. Whereas the title of Michel Foucault's foundational work on surveillance, *Surveiller et Punir*, is usually translated into English as *Discipline and Punish*, the examination of racialized surveillance in the antebellum slave system that this study undertakes reminds us that *surveiller* literally means "to oversee." The overseer's panoptical eye watching the field to keep everyone working, biometric data advertised in runaway notices, slave patrollers' searches of slave cabins to foil incipient rebellion: these examples of surveillance indicate the context of visibility shaping enslaved lives. Surveillance, however, was mutual: just as overseers were watching enslaved workers, the workers were watching them, learning to detect any patterns of behavior that may eventually prove useful in day-to-day resistance as well as in larger acts of insurrection. Insisting on race's centrality to surveillance theory, Simone Browne has identified this faculty of detection as "dark sousveillance."[8]

Informed by this dialectic of racialized surveillance and sousveillance, *Slavery, Surveillance, and Genre* traces the emergence of an antebellum literature

of surveillance that includes multiple genres, from slave narratives and the African American gothic to criminal confessions and detective fiction. The genres constituting this literature of surveillance, I contend, all engage with a socially and historically specific conflict: the racial power dynamics of the antebellum slave system. Recent genre theorists including Wai Chee Dimock, Jeremy Rosen, and Travis M. Foster understand genre not as a static taxonomy but as a fluid set of conventions that "make visible the social functions of literature, the role of literary forms in articulating broader social and ideological formations."[9] One of the key contentions of this new genre theory is that genres change over time: "Aesthetic, formal, and thematic characteristics become newly familiar generic groupings when they fulfill a function for their particular present and their particular audience, fading once that function loses its urgency."[10] The task of genre analysis, then, is to identify these constellations of characteristics and examine the functions they fulfill.

The narrative genres I analyze share a thematic concern with the surveillance of racialized bodies and formal experimentation with what I call "modes of detection" (ways of telling a story in which certain information is either rendered visible or kept hidden).[11] Each genre turns those dynamics to dramatically different ends, however. For example, whereas slave narratives illuminate subversive practices of sousveillance to challenge the slave system's pretense of total surveillance and to advocate for political and social change, detective fiction creates a fantasized white figure of nonreciprocal surveillance in response to the threat of sousveillance, like Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin. White authors as well as Black authors take up these issues in their writing, though their representational goals differ widely—from calming white fears of enslaved rebellion to abolishing slavery.[12] Although it may seem counterintuitive to collocate in the same study genres whose rhetorical functions are at such marked cross-purposes, I do so because they collectively demonstrate the antebellum period's prevailing concern with the agency and mobility of Black people. The literature of surveillance is a "field of association," as Alastair Fowler proposes we should conceive of genre, and by comparatively examining the genres within it I am taking to heart John Frow's claim that genres "are neither self-identical nor self-contained. Each genre's form is relative to those of all other genres in the same synchronic system, and it changes as that system evolves."[13] This methodology enables us to perceive the literary functions that sousveillance and detection performed for different antebellum authors and reading publics as well as the ways these genres cross-fertilized one another in surprising ways.

Critics of the older, prescriptive model of genre frequently employ the metaphor of the "genre police" to indicate that "genre is an agent of social domination," in Bruce Robbins's phrase.[14] Genre, on this model, is a hierarchical sorting system, with arbiters who decide what belongs and what does not. To put this concept into terms more pertinent to my project, then, the traditional model of genre is a form of surveillance akin to Oscar Gandy's "panoptic sort": the processes by which data is amassed and used to identify, classify, and control.[15] While I share these critics' sense of the flaws within this authoritarian model of genre, I continue to think that genre reveals important dimensions of the relationship among authors, texts, and readers. Recent genre theory encourages scholars to investigate the "function of a generic form in its institutional contexts, illuminating the actions of various institutional agents and the contested values that shape the fields in which they act."[16] Rather than enforcing genre categories as a tool for normative classification, I use genre analysis to illuminate the difference between, for instance, fugitive slave narratives published in the 1820s and 1830s, before the rise of the institutional abolitionist movement, and those published in the 1840s and afterward. The later narratives, as many scholars have shown, were shaped by the abolition movement's rhetorical and political agenda, which framed enslaved people's stories as evidence for the prosecution of the case against slavery.[17] The earlier fugitive slave narratives, I argue, take up other generic conventions besides eyewitness testimony to craft their stories. Often published "for the benefit of" the narrator, and thus more focused on the idiosyncratic contours of an individual's experience than on compiling representative proof of slavery's cruelty, these 1820s and early 1830s narratives use espionage tropes to present the individual as an active agent with expertise about slavery's surveillance system. This example demonstrates how institutional contexts structure the situations to which authors respond and how these contexts change over time, thereby modifying the function of generic forms.

In keeping with this nonauthoritarian approach, I attend to the ways that these genres are emerging and transforming, and particularly to how "[t]extual procedures circulate across cultural genres."[18] For Rosen, "An account that does not try to reduce the complexity of a historical phenomenon demands acknowledgment of its unstable borders and overlap with other genres."[19] All of the texts I study, centrally concerned as they are with the conflict between racialized surveillance and sousveillance, experiment formally with ways to tell stories that render certain information visible or invisible. Tropes of espionage, captivity, secrecy, and revelation that characterize earlier genres, primarily gothic novels, are transformed when they are used to shape narratives about

fugitive enslaved people, for whom criminality was the only socially recognized form of agency. When fugitive slave narrators use these tropes to describe the crime of "stealing themselves away," these tropes become strongly associated with crime and punishment. Fugitive slave narratives thus anticipate what later become recognized as conventions of the detective novel. I trace the migration of these conventions to Poe's fictions of detection and beyond, as various antebellum authors take up the modes of seeing, being seen, and avoiding being seen that structure fugitive slave narratives. Herman Melville's and Frederick Douglass's novellas about historical slave rebellions told from the perspective of white surveillants dramatize the disillusion of white oversight: the fantasy of white invisibility that sousveillance punctures. Harriet Jacobs's and Hannah Crafts's novelized autobiographies harness the power of surveillance to envision an open future for their protagonists, thereby reversing the customary temporality of the gothic, with its emphasis on how the past haunts the present. Bringing together these multiple genres of antebellum literary surveillance, this project demonstrates slavery's centrality to the development of crime literature.

Racialized Surveillance and Sousveillance in the Antebellum United States

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault situates the shift from spectacular punishment to disciplinary surveillance in Paris and other European metropolises at the turn of the nineteenth century. Because metropolitan police forces developed only in the mid-nineteenth century in the United States, the surveillant penal economy has seemed a late arrival in the United States.[20] The overvaluation of the city has led, however inadvertently, to the undervaluation of the plantation as a key site for transformation in US punishment. As Bryan Wagner has shown, however, in the British colonies and, later, the United States, enslaved people were regulated and controlled by the police power long before the creation of the "police" as a "specific department charged with stopping or detecting crime." In the British colonies and the United States, Wagner states, slave laws were "police measures … concerned with the slave, first and foremost, as a potential threat" that required society to invoke the police power as self-defense. Moreover, under the slave system, "the power to police was considered not as a state prerogative but as a racial privilege of all whites over all blacks, slave or free."[21] Unlike the transition from punishment to discipline that Foucault identifies in early-nineteenth-century Europe, however,

the biopower of the US slave system always relied on both physical and disciplinary coercion—one supplementing the other.[22] Nicholas Mirzoeff has traced the history of imperialism's authorizing gaze, which he calls visuality, arguing that its "first domains were the slave plantation, monitored by the surveillance of the overseer, operating as the surrogate of the sovereign. This sovereign surveillance was reinforced by violent punishment but sustained a modern division of labor."[23]

The plantation has contributed an unappreciated discourse of detection and policing, primarily through the ramifications of sousveillance. Long before the northern United States established police forces, the southern colonies of British North America and, subsequently, the southern United States, relied on the police power (in the form of the overseer, slave patrols, slave catchers, and many other forms of oversight) to control and recapture enslaved African Americans.[24] Beyond the scopic realm, racialized surveillance technologies in the antebellum period included "negro dogs," identity documents, and biometrics.[25] Though these nineteenth-century technologies have been digitized and networked in the age of dataveillance, the continuity of practices is remarkable. Electronic sniffer machines have supplemented trained bloodhounds, but the extension of human sensory surveillance, whether via biotechnology or mass spectrometry, remains a key way of monitoring and controlling bodies.[26] The written pass (and, later, badge) system was an information technology that facilitated the "surveillance of black bodies by way of identity documents." Browne argues that "the tracking, accounting, and identification of the racial body, and in particular the black body … form an important, but often absented, part of the genealogy of the passport."[27] Branding and scarring from corporal punishment were two of the most widespread ways that enslavers marked the bodies of African Americans. These markers were, in turn, used to identify enslaved African Americans in such documents as slave passes, cargo inventories of slave ships, truancy and runaway newspaper notices, wanted posters, and plantation ledgers. The detailed biometric description of fugitives in runaway notices constitutes the technology of visual identification and documentation in the prephotographic age.[28]

Furthermore, long before the advent of the internet, antebellum slave catchers relied on a communication network that included plantation owners, overseers, "boat captains, mates, company officials, jailers, sheriffs, constables, and other slave hunters."[29] Enslavers and their agents used this communication

system to share news of escapees, to warn others to be on the lookout for a particular runaway, and to request information. They also cultivated a stable of informers and a "corps of spies," as John Pope, sheriff of Frederick, Maryland, put it in 1855.[30] Drawing an analogy between the Underground Railroad that helped fugitives escape to freedom in the North and the "reverse Underground Railroad" that kidnapped African Americans in the North and trafficked them into (or back into) slavery in the South, Richard Bell asserts "Participants in both networks relied on false documents, fake identities, and disguise and undertook considerable legal and physical risk to travel undetected and undisturbed over vast distances. … African Americans occupied front-line positions in both trafficking networks, more so than has commonly been acknowledged."[31] Southerners continued to refine and strengthen this system until the Civil War; and, as Douglas Blackmon has shown, it persisted under new terminology long after the war's end. Moreover, thanks to the Fugitive Slave Acts of 1793 and 1850, Southern states ensured that their racialized police system could operate throughout the northern United States and the Western territories.

Racialized surveillance had different effects for enslaved women and enslaved men. Historians have distinguished between the more "contained" nature of enslaved labor for women, "who were held more firmly than men within plantations," and the "somewhat more elastic" nature of labor for enslaved men, who were assigned "the work that provided opportunities to leave the plantation."[32] The relative "elasticity" of men's labor gave them greater familiarity with the surrounding landscape, including places to hide and routes to escape. Women's "containment" on the plantation or within the home made them subject to pervasive scrutiny. In particular, enslaved women who worked as domestics rather than in the field were inescapably under the eye of white supervisors. Describing the condition of enslaved woman as one of "hypervisibility," Saidiya Hartman stresses that "Within the private realm of the plantation household, [the enslaved woman] was subject to the absolute dominion of the owner."[33] As Jacobs demonstrates, this scopic dominion encompassed sexual abuse as well as power over labor and mobility.

Racialized surveillance and security measures in the antebellum period cannot be adequately accounted for by focusing on top-down surveillance, however. Recent theories of surveillance, particularly Browne's work, have provided a dialectical model for analyzing the reciprocity of watching from above and below in the antebellum slave system.[34] Browne positions race at the center of surveillance studies, examining the "interrelated … conceptual schemes of … racializing surveillance and dark sousveillance." Dark

sousveillance, for Browne, includes "not only … observing those in authority (the slave patroller or the plantation overseer, for instance) but also … [using] a keen and experiential insight of plantation surveillance in order to resist it."[35] While enslavers aimed for and often imagined their surveillance to be panoptical, sousveillance falsifies this fantasy. As Foucault so influentially describes it, "The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen."[36] By concentrating on the practices and insights of those watching from below, my study demonstrates that surveillants are not the unseen observers in the central tower but are themselves the objects of scrutiny.

In contrast to top-down surveillance aimed at maintaining white wealth and control, sousveillance practiced by enslaved men and women was necessary for survival under the dehumanizing slave system. Covert "day to day resistance," like work slowdowns, sabotage, and truancy, challenged domination without risking one's survival.[37] In this way, these methods resonate with the strategic invisibility that Jasmine Nichole Cobb has theorized as a tactic Black people used to subvert and undermine the visual logics of slavery.[38] As I demonstrate in Chapter 1, slave narratives from the 1820s and 1830s are full of examples of enslaved sousveillance, not only during escape attempts but also within the context of daily life. Enslaved people spied, eavesdropped, and shared information to create opportunities for religious practice, to protect themselves and others from punishment, and to slip away to visit loved ones, among a host of other reasons. They covertly alerted other enslaved people to danger through "counterveillance songs, for example, the folk tune 'Run, Nigger, Run,' which warned of approaching slave patrols."[39] Although research has focused on extraordinary situations such as escapes and insurrections—because those are better documented than mundane life—reading the literature of slavery and abolition through a sousveillance lens reveals how thoroughly and constantly enslaved people were watching from below.

Occasionally, enslaved men and women engaged in open opposition, sometimes even violent rebellion, that explicitly disputed the premises of the slave system. These moments of rupture reveal the illusory nature of the dominant group's stability and security. Coordinated resistance like insurrections (which I discuss in Chapter 3) and the Underground Railroad depended on sousveillance as well as on informal communication networks such as the grapevine telegraph.[40] An early historian of the Underground Railroad, who was himself a conductor, asserted in 1915 that "the Anti-Slavery League of the east … had a

detective and spy system that was far superior to anything the slave holders or the United States had."[41] He portrays railroad agents as undercover operatives, explaining

> They belonged to any and all sorts of occupations and professions that gave them the best opportunity to become acquainted and mix with the people and gain a knowledge of the traveled ways of the country. … These spies were loud in their pro-slavery talk and were in full fellow-ship with those who were in favor of slavery. In this way they learned the movements of those who aided the slave masters in hunting their runaways and were enabled often to put them on the wrong track thus helping those who were piloting the runaways to place them beyond the chance of recapture.[42]

William Still, whose 1872 history of the Underground Railroad remains a vital source, observes that one Underground Railroad operative specialized in counterintelligence: "Sometimes the abolitionists were much annoyed by impostors, who pretended to be runaways, in order to discover their plans, and betray them to the slave-holders. Daniel Gibbons was possessed of much acuteness in detecting these people, but having detected them, he never treated them harshly or unkindly."[43] Reflecting on the Underground Railroad at the end of the nineteenth century, these chroniclers recognized the parallels between antebellum freedom operatives and the fictional detectives that had become a mass cultural phenomenon in the dime novels of the postbellum period, as well as their real-life counterparts.

Perhaps the most well-known antebellum literary representation of surveillance and sousveillance in the slave system appears in the most famous novel of the era, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). Stowe depicts white surveillance as a fusion of official police, private slave hunters, and the public at large. The slave catchers Tom Loker and Marks, tipped off by Haley about the valuable fugitive Eliza and her son Harry, track her to the Quaker settlement where she has reunited with her husband, George. The fugitives flee the settlement with the help of Phineas Fletcher, but they are pursued by "Loker and Marks, with two constables, and a posse consisting of such rowdies at the last tavern as could be engaged by a little brandy to go and help the fun of trapping a set of niggers."[44] Although, as I will posit in Chapter 2, Poe has slave catchers in mind when he creates the cerebral character of Dupin in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," Stowe's slave catchers are animalistic; she describes the posse as "hot with brandy, swearing and foaming like so many wolves" (168). Alluding to the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, which buttressed enslavers' power

to recapture fugitives and mandated that Northerners assist in this effort or be fined $1,000 and imprisoned for up to six months, one of the constables adjures the fugitives to surrender, reminding them that "we're officers of justice. We've got the law on our side, and the power, and so forth; so you'd better give up peaceably, you see; for you'll certainly have to give up, at last" (170). In fact, Loker and Marks are acting illegally, as they neither own Eliza nor do they act as her enslaver's agent; they plan to kidnap her, lie about being her legal owner, and sell her for a huge profit in New Orleans. Kidnapping gangs throughout the border states profited from the advantageous provisions of the Fugitive Slave Law toward enslavers' property rights, which made it easy for slave catchers to transport free Blacks and escaped slaves to the South and sell them before a defense could even be mounted.[45]

However, Stowe also portrays these surveillants' adversaries, the conductors and station masters of the Underground Railroad. After Eliza and her husband, George, are reunited at the Quaker settlement, Simeon Halliday explains that Fletcher, another Quaker, "will carry thee onward to the next stand,—thee and the rest of thy company. The pursuers are hard after thee; we must not delay" (123). George is anxious to leave immediately, but Simeon assures him that it is safer to wait until dark: "Thou art safe here by daylight, for every one in the settlement is a Friend, and all are watching" (123). Simeon's emphasis on the community's sousveillance, "all … watching" for slave catchers, is borne out by the extant records of the Underground Railroad's activities, as well as by fugitive slave narratives, which continually depict the life-or-death stakes of watching and listening from below. Indeed, Fletcher proves an expert sousveillant who detects Loker and Marks's plot and ensures the fugitives' safety. Fletcher, the narrator notes, wears "an expression of great acuteness and shrewdness in his face … like a man who rather prides himself on … keeping a bright look-out ahead" (162). This disposition to be on the lookout bears fruit when Fletcher, hidden in the corner of a tavern under a buffalo skin, eavesdrops on the slave catchers' plans. Fletcher explains that his ability to gather this intelligence "shows the use of a man's always sleeping with one ear open, in certain places, as I've always said" (162). Armed with Fletcher's information, the fugitives set out ahead of the slave catchers and are able to mount a defense when their pursuers catch up to them. Stowe's representation of the contest between slave hunters and Underground Railroad operatives demonstrates the importance of sousveillance in protecting vulnerable fugitives from enslavers' detection.

As this analysis of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* suggests, literature was a crucial site for exploring the significance and consequences of a culture characterized

by racializing surveillance and sousveillance. Though surveillance has been a long-standing subject for the social sciences, there has been a significant lack of attention, beyond experts in contemporary fiction, to the ways that surveillance structures literary and other aesthetic works. Recently, in the cognate field that Johannes Voelz has dubbed "literary security studies," scholars including Russ Castronovo, Voelz, and Matthew Potolsky have begun to remedy this imbalance by developing a "critical poetics of securitization" that attends to aesthetic works created before the twentieth century.[46] My project underscores the importance of race to this emerging field by addressing the effects of surveillance on literary expression in the United States during the era of slavery. Though indebted to Browne's path-breaking work on racialized surveillance and dark sousveillance, my project further reveals that this binary opposition breaks down in literary works of the antebellum period. In these imaginative engagements with the real-life biopolitics of surveillance, authors upend the schema of white surveillants and Black sousveillants. Instead, they demonstrate how surveillance and sousveillance are too deeply imbricated to disentangle: racial identities can be misaligned with positions of power, the same person can be simultaneously a surveillant and a sousveillant, and techniques can be learned, shared, or appropriated by people with diametrically opposed goals.

Consider Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838), in which the white protagonist learns to sousveil by experiencing fugitivity and captivity, an experience that nevertheless does not lead him to sympathize with the Black Tsalalians.[47] Instead, after Pym avoids being massacred by the more cunning and ingenious Tsalalians, he relies on sousveillance to escape with his life. Grotesquely inverting the power dynamics of antebellum racialized surveillance, Poe's novel explores the efficacy of sousveillance without acknowledging its ethical imperative. On the other hand, the African American protagonists of Crafts's *The Bondwoman's Narrative* (written between 1853 and 1860, published 2002) and Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) are Black surveillants, exaggerating the techniques of the South's oppressive surveillance regime in order to survive and resist it. Unlike Poe, these authors are acutely aware of the life-or-death stakes of surveillance. Though the conceptual framework that differentiates surveillance and sousveillance according to the positions of power occupied by the observer breaks down in the literature I analyze, it nevertheless helps us to perceive how antebellum authors were variously inverting, destabilizing, and recombining the techniques of racialized surveillance and sousveillance in provocative ways.

Antebellum Genres of Surveillance

Across four chapters, *Slavery, Surveillance, and Genre in Antebellum United States Literature* argues for the existence of deep, often unexamined, interconnections between genre and race by tracing how surveillance migrates from the literature of slavery to crime, gothic, and detective fiction. In Chapter 1, I consider slave narratives from the 1820s and 1830s, a transformational period during which US abolition activists began demanding immediate (rather than gradual) emancipation and developing national institutions (rather than a loose collection of local groups). Slave narratives from these decades, including Moses Roper's *A Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper* (1837) and Charles Ball's *Slavery in the United States* (1837), increasingly detailed the mechanisms of surveillance within the slave system, along with the varied and creative ways enslaved people resisted this pervasive surveillance. With the turn in the 1820s from religious to legalistic abolition discourse and the effort to define slavery as a national crime, ex-slave narrators and their editors in the 1820s and 1830s tested out different ways to frame their narratives. Building on Jeannine Marie DeLombard's argument that the slave narrative genre "was, at times, coextensive [with] crime literature,"[48] I posit that narratives from these decades positioned the ex-slave narrator as a spy before the familiar "slave as eyewitness" trope became conventional. When we read slave narratives through this surveillant lens, we can perceive their emphasis on crime and punishment, evidence, and revelation: the same concerns that would become central to detective fiction a decade later.

In the second chapter, I pair a story of detection embedded in Ball's narrative with Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* and his Dupin tales of the 1840s to demonstrate the way surveillance migrates from slave narratives to the emerging genre of detective fiction. Though *Pym* has never been read as detection fiction, Poe explicitly engages with the processes of investigation and deduction throughout the novel, a work that predates his Dupin tales, which are generally celebrated as the first detective stories. I show that Poe experiments in the novel with different modes of detection—"conspicuous" and "inconspicuous"—which diverge in their portrayal of the perspective from which one detects and in the aims of detection. Conspicuous detection deflects attention from systemic crimes by atomizing detection to focus on an individual mastermind's nonreciprocal surveillance of an individual criminal. Inconspicuous detection, by contrast, rejects the panoptical model of surveillance and reveals the efficacy of covert, cooperative sousveillance to address systemic injustices such as slavery and colonialism. Ball's

narrative provides a harrowing example of both the mode and the life-or-death stakes of inconspicuous detection, as Ball's detection both solves the crime and saves him from a torturous death. Though Poe increasingly effaces the racialized power dynamics of surveillance in each subsequent Dupin tale, taking into account the full scope of Poe's literary detection reveals his initial embroilment with the racialized dynamics of power. Ultimately, Poe's engagement with the contest between surveillance and sousveillance leads him to create the exemplary conspicuous detective: C. Auguste Dupin, the consummate fantasy of nonreciprocal surveillance.

I turn next, in the third chapter, to two novellas that depict the destruction of this white fantasy of seeing without being seen. Douglass's *The Heroic Slave* (1852) and Melville's *Benito Cereno* (1855) both concern violent moments of enslaved revolt, in which the "mask [is] torn away," as Melville's narrator puts it, and sousveillance is made visible. Told from the perspective of white surveillants, not enslaved rebels, these novellas dramatize the white characters' realization that they are not invisible but that they too are objects of surveillance.[49] Even as the emerging genre of detective fiction was imagining the potency of nonreciprocal surveillance, Douglass and Melville were stripping away the comfort that this illusion of invisibility provided to whites. Reading these novellas through the lens of *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1831), I examine how white surveillants' recognition of dark sousveillance ruptures textual form. The direct exchange of glances between white surveillant (Thomas R. Gray) and dark sousveillant (Nat Turner) causes Gray to lose rhetorical control of his account of the Southampton slave insurrection. In the first three parts of *The Heroic Slave,* Douglass portrays a different path that a white surveillant could take when he is confronted with the existence of dark sousveillance. Douglass dramatizes a white ally's transformation from surveillant to sousveillant as he learns the techniques and ethical obligation of sousveillance from a Black fugitive. In the final part, however, Douglass contorts the form of his novella, abruptly shifting to a new focal character, the *Creole*'s white first mate, who narrates the story of the rebellion. Like Gray, this white sailor attempts to maintain white supremacy even as he disseminates a story of Black resistance. Similarly, Melville registers Amasa Delano's resistance to the implications of dark sousveillance by abandoning the free indirect discourse of the first section and presenting the *San Dominick*'s history through the legal discourse of Benito Cereno's deposition. Taken together, these formal strategies demonstrate how historical novellas about slave rebellion grapple with the problem of testimony that destroys the form of the novella itself.

If literary representations of surveillance blur the distinction between sur- and sousveillance, this productive confusion is augmented when we consider the gender dynamics of watcher and watched. The emphasis on fugitivity, escape, and revolt that characterizes the first three chapters of *Slavery, Surveillance, and Genre* privileges male authors. Many scholars including Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Stephanie M.H. Camp, and Stephanie Li have described how women's resistance to enslavement tended to aim at preserving social networks rather than achieving individual liberty.[50] Li reminds us that while "flight and armed insurrection may provide the clearest indication of resistance, the ease with which we may identify such opposition does not imply a lack of active insurgency among those who remained in and perhaps even chose captivity."[51] The elevation of Douglass's 1845 *Narrative,* which presents a heroic story of an individual's escape to freedom, as the exemplar of the fugitive slave narrative has overemphasized evasion of racialized surveillance rather than the complex imbrication of surveillance and sousveillance that *Slavery, Surveillance, and Genre* highlights.[52] This complexity can be seen particularly in texts by women such as Jacobs, whose *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* "dates her emancipation from the time she entered her loophole, even though she did not cross into the free states until seven years later."[53]

If the focus on escape and revolt in texts about slavery privileges male authors because these extraordinary forms of resistance require the cutting of familial and social ties, the focus on detection privileges male authors for a different reason. The traditional or "conspicuous" detective relies on the Cartesian bifurcation between bodies and minds (a trope that Poe plays with in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," in particular). In this schema, rationality—the detective's purview—is linked to disembodied vision exclusively available to white male subjects, while women and non-white people are over-corporealized and thus barred from rational subjectivity.[54] The camera obscura was, according to Jonathan Crary, the "dominant paradigm through which … [eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century thinkers] described the status and possibilities of an observer." By placing the observer at a remove from the external world, enclosed within the camera, this model of vision emphasizes the observer's distance, detachment, and invisibility, and is therefore "a figure for both the observer who is nominally a free sovereign individual and a privatized subject confined in a quasi-domestic space."[55]

Given the camera obscura's influence as a visual archetype, it is perhaps not surprising that critics have identified its significance for both Poe and Jacobs. Susan Elizabeth Sweeney has demonstrated Poe's "fascination with

ocular organs and optical effects," including the camera obscura, arguing that Poe's detective protagonists in particular use optical technology "to discern something from a distance while shielding themselves from exposure to it."[56] Poe's detectives, in other words, exemplify the "free sovereign individual" who remains invisible and detached from the exterior world. Reading *Incidents* alongside visual artist Ellen Driscoll's installation "The Loophole of Retreat," Michael Chaney argues that the garret functions as a "revamped camera obscura," which "allows [the protagonist] Brent to remain invisible while surveying the landscape."[57] Brent in her garret embodies the second type of observer—"a privatized subject confined in a quasi-domestic space"—but Chaney argues that Jacobs revises the camera obscura model by "posit[ing] an embodied observer within a viewing context generally associated with detaching observation from the body."[58] In her emphasis on Brent's corporeality, Jacobs challenges the type of disembodied, rationalized gaze that underwrites both conspicuous detection and slave speculation.

Whereas the conspicuous detective's power comes from his ability to capture, the female protagonists I study in the final chapter harness the power of surveillance to protect themselves and others from capture. Like Poe's detective fiction, both Jacobs's autobiography *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and Crafts's unpublished novel *The Bondwoman's Narrative* take up the gothic conventions of secrets and revelation, but rather than constructing a fantasy of white sight, these African American gothic texts portray sousveillance as future-oriented speculation. Jacobs and Crafts explicitly contrast this enslaved speculation with the merciless speculation in slaves that destroyed the lives of enslaved people. Brent, Jacobs's pseudonym in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, and Hannah, the protagonist of *The Bondwoman's Narrative*, eventually use sousveillance to facilitate escape, as did the male ex-slave narrators I consider in Chapter 1, but the bulk of Jacobs's and Crafts's narratives dwell on surveillance and sousveillance within the conditions of enslavement. Brent's captivity in the garret, looking down on her enslaver through a loophole, ironically places her in the elevated position of the surveillant, but this viewpoint only underscores her powerlessness. She trades total invisibility for the ability to watch over her children. In *The Bondwoman's Narrative,* which repurposes material from Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*[59] (famously the first novel to feature a police detective), Hannah surveils other Black people and tries to use the secrets she discovers to create intimacy between herself and white women she hopes will be able to protect her. These texts break down any clear division between sur- and sousveillance in their exploration of the contingent power to protect conferred by watching from below.

We can see the contemporary relevance of this model of racialized surveillance and sousveillance in the conflict between twenty-first-century white overseers, who surveil Black bodies and police spaces perceived to be white (like a Starbucks coffee shop or a university dormitory), and the sousveillants who film viral videos of these encounters and release them on social media to spur political reform. Though *Slavery, Surveillance, and Genre* entails the sociohistorical specificity of the antebellum slave system, it recognizes that racialized surveillance persists as an "afterlife of slavery," to use Stephen Best's term.[60] While surveillance theorists often focus on the technologies and pervasiveness of twenty-first-century surveillance, my work redirects our attention to the human costs of sousveillance. In the coda, I consider what we can learn from studying the antebellum literary roots of racialized surveillance. The book's examination of sousveillance as a set of tactics to resist, escape, or merely survive racial subjugation restores a measure of agency to the surveilled, even as it also demonstrates how profoundly vulnerable is the watcher from below if sousveillance becomes visible.

The power asymmetry intrinsic to relations of domination such as the US slave system obliged the enslaved to conceal their resistance. Hartman elaborates on the methods available to oppressed groups: "Within the confines of surveillance and nonautonomy, the resistance to subjugation proceeded by stealth: one acted furtively, secretly, and imperceptibly, and the enslaved seized any and every opportunity to slip off the yoke."[61] Hartman emphasizes the fabrications required to maintain the fiction that slavery was a form of benevolent paternalism: "The simulation of consent in the context of extreme domination was an orchestration intent upon making the captive body speak the master's truth as well as disproving the suffering of the enslaved."[62] Against this performative simulation, which imposes "transparency and the degrading hypervisibility of the enslaved," concealment provides a limited form of resistance for the enslaved person.[63] This imperative to conceal, as James C. Scott notes, has "typically won [subordinate groups] a reputation for subtlety—a subtlety their superiors often regard as cunning and deception."[64] As opposed to the enslaver's power, which depended on conspicuous surveillance in the form of overseers and slave patrols, enslaved sousveillance had to remain concealed—inconspicuous—to be effective.[65]

Though the twenty-first-century United States should not be simplistically equated to the "context of extreme domination" that characterized the antebellum slave system, the protective function of invisibility for sousveillants is critical for analyzing contemporary visual documentation of state-sanctioned violence. The historical examples of visible and invisible sousveillance that

I consider in this book offer a framework for thinking about the pragmatic case for concealing sousveillance. Bystanders filming videos of police brutality who are seen recording by police are often targeted for harassment or arrest themselves, and, if their identity is revealed, they are frequently met with death threats. Nevertheless, observers continue to put themselves in harm's way in order to reveal the continuing violence faced by people of color.[66] By tracing the antebellum literary roots of sousveillance, *Slavery, Surveillance, and Genre* highlights the long and ongoing history of resistance to racialized surveillance and policing.

1

Fugitive Slave Narratives as a Literature of Sousveillance

To many nineteenth-century readers, fugitive slave narratives were crime literature. Jeannine DeLombard contends, "the slave narrative became a distinctive genre of American literature by aligning itself with the rule of law, against both criminality and lawlessness. … In the decades leading up to the Civil War, however, the challenge facing abolitionist authors, editors, and promoters was to distinguish the slave narrative from two literary modes with which it was, at times, coextensive: crime literature and fiction."[1] According to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, fugitive slaves and their abolitionist abettors were criminals, guilty of "manstealing." From the perspective of the formerly enslaved narrators and their antislavery readers, however, the crime in slave narratives is the national "crime" of slavery. The Declaration of Sentiments issued by the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833 makes this stance clear, proclaiming, "Slavery is a crime."[2] These narratives dramatize enslaved peoples' escapes, thus representing the act of evading detection from the point of view of the criminal, yet the abolitionist strategy of casting slave narratives as testimony about the "crime" of slavery asks readers to exonerate the fugitive as one who is in fact simply trying to recover property (in himself) that had been stolen from him. Although from our modern perspective slavery seems to be a crime with obvious culprits, in the antebellum period this crime was a perverse "whodunit." DeLombard notes that the national slavery debate of the antebellum period was a "crisis of accountability."[3] The reader of fugitive slave narratives must determine the true thief: the fugitive who steals himself away, or the enslaver who perpetuates the original kidnapping of people from Africa by stealing enslaved people's lives, labor, and liberty.

In this chapter, I survey the extant narratives of formerly enslaved African Americans published between 1825, the year the "first fugitive slave narrative in American history" was published, and 1838, the year the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) published its first slave narrative.[4] Encompassing the emergence of the fugitive slave narrative genre up to the point at which the

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genre became strongly constrained by the institutional abolitionist movement, this microperiod affords a view of the nascent genre while its conventions were still developing.[5] The slave narratives of the 1820s and 1830s were published before the rise of what Trish Loughran calls "the abolitionist culture industry" and thus were not subject to that movement's rhetoric.[6] In cases of self-published narratives, such as William Grimes's *Life*, this meant that the author had more control over his narrative, while in other cases, such as Robert Voorhis's "as told to" *Life*, it simply meant that the white amanuensis could craft the narrative in his own style, rather than conforming to the abolitionist movement's "conceptual frame."[7]

Though fugitive slave narratives published in the 1820s and 1830s have received scant critical attention compared to the abundance of scholarship on narratives from the 1840s to 1861, this is a crucial period in the development of the US slave narrative.[8] The 1820s were a tumultuous decade of transition for the US slavery debates, the antislavery movement, and the slave narrative genre. The Denmark Vesey conspiracy plot of 1822 and David Walker's radical *Appeal* in 1829 signaled a more militant tone among African American antislavery activists, a revolution in Black consciousness that can be traced to the Haitian revolution at the turn of the nineteenth century, according to Eugene Genovese.[9] In response, US enslavers became more fearful of slave rebellion and more radical in their proslavery ideology.[10] At the same time, US antislavery activism replaced its central demand for the gradual elimination of slavery with the immediate emancipation of enslaved people.[11]

Related to this shift from gradualism (emancipation over time) to immediatism (emancipation now), the slave narrative genre's primary concern transformed from religion to abolition. Comparing eighteenth-century slave narratives, which were often sponsored and published by Evangelical Christian organizations, to antebellum slave narratives, Philip Gould notes that "[w]hile earlier narratives were published, read, reviewed, and reprinted as much for their religious as racial experiences, the antebellum slave narrative … became an increasingly popular and effective political means of fighting slavery."[12] The three narratives published in the 1810s about people enslaved in the United States exemplify Gould's claim about the religious focus of early slave narratives, as they all focus on "Conversion" and "Gospel Labors."[13] After a fourteen-year gap without any (extant) US slave narratives, Solomon Bayley's and Grimes's narratives appeared in 1825. While Bayley's narrative, as I will show, preserves the transitionary moment in its fusion of religious and abolitionist concerns, Grimes's secular narrative devotes little attention to his

religious life. The antislavery movement's shift to abolitionism in the late 1830s is visible in the explanations given by the narrators or editors for their decision to publish. Whereas the four earlier narratives (Bayley, Voorhis, Grimes, and Charles Ball) state that they are "published for [the] benefit" of the formerly enslaved narrator (in the case of Grimes, he self-published his narrative to redeem his "claim upon [the] charity" of his readers), the three later narratives (Moses Roper, James Matthews, and James Williams) all express the goal of aiding the oppressed "subjects of the cruel system here partially delineated" and ending slavery in the United States.[14]

The transition in the slave narrative genre's primary concern from individual religious conversion to the immediate abolition of slavery has two significant consequences for the form of the slave narrative. First, the religious conversion narrative no longer sufficed as a generic model for ex-slave narrators. In this period of transition, we can see ex-slave narrators and their editors testing out other ways to frame their narratives in relation to the emerging criminal and legal discourse of the abolitionist movement. In the 1840s, the institutional abolitionist movement would establish the "slave as eyewitness" trope that is familiar to contemporary critics, but narratives from the 1820s and 1830s position the ex-slave narrator differently—often more actively and subversively—than the passive witness role, in which ex-slave narrators merely provide evidence for white abolitionists to interpret. It is important, therefore, to recognize that the slave as eyewitness trope does not apply to fugitive slave narratives published in the transitionary period of the 1820s and early 1830s, which were much more idiosyncratic than those published after the rise of the abolitionist culture industry of the mid-1830s. In the first section of this chapter, I argue that Ball presents himself in his narrative, *Slavery in the United States,* as a spy, not a witness. Whereas a witness merely chances to see or hear an event by happenstance, a spy is a skilled agent who purposefully uncovers secret information and uses or communicates it to achieve a goal. This espionage framework is most explicit in Ball's narrative, but once we recognize it we are able to perceive the other narratives of the 1820s and 1830s differently, as part of the antebellum literature of surveillance. These ex-slave narrators understood their role not as witnesses providing testimony about the crime of slavery, but as informants communicating confidential intelligence about the slave system.

Second, the shift from religious concerns to abolitionism transforms ex-slave narrators' depiction of the stakes and agents of surveillance in their texts. Whereas in eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century slave narratives the eye

of God was the ultimate surveillant, slave narratives after the 1820s foreground the secular surveillance of enslaved people. As Bryan Wagner has shown, the slave codes of the North American British colonies and, later, southern United States instantiate the police power, conceptualizing enslaved people "first and foremost, as a potential threat" and placing no "limit to the law's breadth" because "it is always conceivable that some threat may arise that is wholly unanticipated in the existing law, to which the law's authority nonetheless immediately applies." Moreover, under slavery, "most crimes were punished extralegally, usually at a master's discretion, and … the power to police was considered not as a state prerogative but as a racial privilege of all whites over all blacks, slaves or free."[15] Slave narratives of the 1820s and 1830s register the police power in their portrayal of racialized surveillance. Wagner's analysis indicates that policing Blackness was not limited to what we would now think of as "the police" or even its antebellum institutional antecedent, the slave patrol. Highlighting the pervasiveness of the police power, ex-slave narrators depict enslaved people's experience of surveillance through crime tropes of detection, evidence-gathering, pursuit, and capture. Though organized abolitionist print culture would pressure slave narratives in the 1840s and onward to circumscribe their focus to the punishment of enslaved people, these earlier narratives depict the full range of crime and policing, not just punishment.[16]

Fugitive slave narrators recognize surveillance as a threat and depict an active practice of vigilance against it.[17] Vigilance is a key word for Black antislavery writers and activists in the 1820s and 1830s, not only in reference to the surveillance of the slave South but also regarding the insidious and widespread practice of kidnapping Black people. Manisha Sinha notes that "Between 1813 and 1820 nearly all free states bordering the slave South passed antikidnapping laws. … Even so, the explosive growth of slavery led to hundreds, if not thousands of free blacks being kidnapped and sold into Deep South slavery, a development that galvanized border state abolitionism."[18] As Carol Wilson argues, most Black resistance to kidnapping occurred in ad hoc groups that formed spontaneously in response to specific incidents: "since members of the community lived so closely together and maintained daily contact with each other, they could immediately regroup and take action when threatened."[19] This informal resistance coalesced by 1819 into the Baltimore Society for the Protection of Free People of Color, followed by numerous other Black-led vigilance committees in Northern cities, such as the New York Committee of Vigilance (founded in 1835). The emphasis on watchfulness in

the titles of these vigilance committees indicated the need to be on the lookout for kidnappers and to share information via what Richard Bell calls "de facto neighborhood-watch networks."[20] These early vigilance organizations, both informal and official, provided the infrastructure of what would become known as the Underground Railroad.[21]

Slave narrators of the 1820s and 1830s urge vigilance not only by detailing practices of surveillance in the slave South and North, but also by portraying what Simone Browne calls "undersight," "the tactics employed to render one's self out of sight, and [the] strategies used in the flight to freedom."[22] Fugitive slave narratives of the 1820s and 1830s devote more attention to the dynamics of sur- and sousveillance than narratives produced within the constraints of the "abolitionist culture industry" of the late 1830s onwards. Whereas later slave narratives emphasize the cruelty of enslavers, narratives from the 1820s and 1830s elucidate the complex ways in which African Americans evade enslavers' oversight and practice sousveillance to protect and defend themselves. This vigilance is downplayed by what John Sekora calls slave narratives' "white envelope," the authenticating documents that frame slave narratives affiliated with the institutional abolitionist movement from the late 1830s onward, which assign the ex-slave narrator a victim role. In contrast to the more passive role of sufferer that abolitionist institutions assign to fugitive enslaved people, narrators of the 1820s and 1830s highlight their own agency as watchers and frame their narratives as inside accounts, providing intelligence on the slave system.

As the fugitive slave narrative most explicitly concerned with the dynamics of racialized surveillance and sousveillance, not only does Ball's *Slavery in the United States* provide a lens through which to perceive these dynamics in other slave narratives, but it also itself contains an embedded detective story. In Chapter 2, I compare the stakes and rewards of detection in Ball's story, in which Ball becomes a detective not to uphold justice but to exonerate himself as a suspect, to those in Poe's Dupin tales. For Ball, failure to solve the crime will result in his own torture and death, and his success at solving the crime is soon forgotten by his enslavers. Ball realizes that sousveillant detection brings little reward, since his enslavers are less concerned with uncovering the truth than they are with gruesomely punishing any plausible culprit. Whereas we typically understand literary detection as engaged with questions of justice, the perverse legal regime of the antebellum United States and particularly the slave South meant that sousveillance could serve justice only when it was deployed not to solve crimes but to perpetuate them, by fomenting resistance and facilitating escape.

Before the "Slave as Eyewitness" Trope: The Ex-Slave Narrator as Spy

One result of the interrelated transformations in the early-nineteenth-century US antislavery movement was that abolitionists increasingly framed the slavery question in legalistic terms, as a "crime," rather than in moral and religious language, as a "sin" or a "stain" on the national conscience. DeLombard has shown that, beginning in the 1830s, "immediatist abolitionists introduced a distinct form of antislavery propaganda that exploited the public's enthusiasm for legal spectatorship even as it appropriated the language and imagery of the courtroom to bring the 'crime' of slavery before the court of public opinion."[23] The US antislavery movement began to figure "the slavery controversy as a criminal trial," enslavers "as perpetrators and defendants," and the US public as jurors.[24] Insisting that slavery was a criminal—rather than a civil—injury extended the matter beyond "a dispute over the right of individual slaveholders to hold human property versus the right of individual blacks to property in themselves; it was an offense against the entire society, and thus one that required adjudication by that society."[25] Drawing on Loughran's argument that the abolitionist movement of the 1830s was "national and synchronic—positing the essential correspondence of every part of the union (rather than the disparateness of each part)," DeLombard further maintains that "abolitionist publicists sought to produce, on a mass scale, individual consciousness of slavery's 'criminality.'"[26] The abolitionist movement aimed to force all US citizens to acknowledge their complicity in the national "crime" of slavery, thereby extending culpability beyond the men and women in slave states who directly owned and profited from enslaved people.

According to the legal logic of this abolitionist strategy, African Americans were both victims of and eyewitnesses to slavery's criminality. As the slave narrative genre shifted in the 1820s from religious concerns to immediate abolition, the narrative focus moved from proving the "full humanity of the African" to "exposing the evils of the Southern plantation … [through] detailed evidence."[27] This latter goal led to what Janet Neary calls the slave narrative's "evidentiary epistemology": "Literally the testimony of a fugitive, the slave narrative provides crucial eyewitness evidence for the abolitionist case against slavery."[28] By presenting ex-slaves as witnesses and victims, the abolitionist campaign also aimed to disrupt print culture's long linkage of African Americans and criminality. One reason for this association between African Americans and criminality was that enslaved people were considered to have

"the 'double character of person and property' under the law, which generally meant that slaves were persons when accused of a crime, and property the rest of the time."[29] Thus, enslaved people's agency only became legally perceptible when they were accused of a crime.

White abolitionists from the 1840s onward sought to dissolve this link between African Americans and criminality by "[s]upplanting gallows literature's confessing malefactor with the slave narrative's testifying 'eye-witness to the cruelty.'"[30] This method of disassociating African Americans from criminality "also served to reinforce black discursive subordination," however.[31] The slave as eyewitness trope placed the ex-slave narrator in a passive position, merely providing evidence of slavery's abuses; as Frederick Douglass famously recounted, white antislavery activists cautioned him to "[g]ive us the facts, … [and] we will take care of the philosophy."[32] The "slavery on trial" trope granted African Americans a legal voice that had been denied to them by their classification as property, but it also subordinated them to the white activists—the editors and amanuenses of the antislavery movement—who advocated on their behalf. If African Americans were witnesses in slavery's criminal trial, white antislavery activists were lawyers.

When we investigate slave narratives published before the "slave as witness" trope became firmly established in the 1840s, however, we see alternative pathways by which ex-slave narrators and their editors and amanuenses worked to purge "the taint of criminality."[33] As the religious impetus for the slave narrative lost purchase, ex-slave narrators in the 1820s and 1830s turned to frameworks linked to law, policing, and espionage. Most significantly for my analysis, in his 1836 edition of *Slavery in the United States* Ball depicts himself as a spy gathering intelligence for white readers who cannot access Southern spaces in order to see slavery for themselves.[34] Ball's experience as a soldier and an undercover agent in the War of 1812 complements the sousveillance he practiced to survive, resist, and escape the state-sanctioned surveillance of the slave system. The trope of espionage that Ball employs throughout his narrative positions him as an agent actively watching from below, gathering intelligence and using it to evade or undermine white oversight.

On the first page of the first edition of *Slavery in the United States* (1836), Ball asserts that social surveillance by the population of free states keeps enslavers in check: "experience has taught me, that both masters and mistresses … if not observed by strangers, would treat their slaves with the utmost rigour."[35] The ameliorating effect of this surveillance is a point repeated by numerous slave narrators through the subsequent decades, including Douglass.[36] Yet Ball goes

on to state that "People of the northern states, who make excursions to the South … know nothing of the condition of the southern slaves" because they stay in the cities or the homes of large planters rather than penetrating into the slave quarters to see slavery in situ: "To acquire this knowledge, the traveler must take up his abode for a season, in the lodge of the overseer, pass a summer in the remote cotton fields, or spend a year within view of the rice swamps … and witness[ ] the execution of [the overseer's] decrees" (Ball, *Slavery*, 6). Though social surveillance provides a check on enslavers, who have pretensions to gentility, Ball indicates, it has not gone far enough in scrutinizing their agents. By opening his narrative with this commentary on the efficacy of surveillance and promising "faithfully and truly, to present to the reader" (6) the facts about slavery, Ball frames his narrative as a document of sousveillance—his intelligence dossier—that will allow his white readers to infiltrate the spaces, such as the overseer's lodge and the rice swamps, normally inaccessible to them.

Ball continues to use this language of sousveillance throughout the narrative: for instance, when eavesdropping on white hunters in the woods on the third day of his escape journey, Ball hears the men discuss an advertisement offering a hundred-dollar reward for Ball. Just as he portrays himself as a spy for white readers, Ball here draws on the language of espionage to discuss the intelligence he gains from his spying:

> Information of the state of the country through which I was travelling, was of the highest value to me; and nothing could more nearly interest me than a knowledge of the fact, that my flight was known to the white people, who resided round about. … It was now necessary for me to become doubly vigilant. (308)

He later hides in a river to eavesdrop on a party of slave patrollers who discuss his probable whereabouts. Not only does he learn their recapture strategy, he also "learned the distance to the river. From these people I had gained intelligence, which I considered of much value to me … and I determined from this moment, so to regulate my movements, as to wrap my very existence, in a veil of impenetrable secrecy" (313–314). Ball frequently turns to auditory sousveillance throughout his journey when he is unsure of his next steps: "I resolved to try to get information concerning the country I was in, by placing myself in some obscure place in the side of the road, and listening to the conversation of travelers as they passed me" (325). The information he gains by sousveillance enables him to outwit his pursuers.

"Information" and "intelligence," terms Ball uses frequently throughout his narrative, differ from "testimony" in that the former are valuable commodities that can be wielded by their possessor to gain power, while the latter is simply neutral evidence of experience that must be framed by an expert to give it meaning. The former also have military connotations, while the latter has a juridical connotation. Ball draws on his own military and espionage experience to frame his narrative. Ball's first involvement with the military came when he was hired out by his enslaver to work as a cook for the sailors and officers onboard the USS *Congress* for two years in his early twenties. After escaping from his enslaver and living in Maryland as a free man, Ball enlisted in the Chesapeake Bay Flotilla under Commodore Joshua Barney during the War of 1812. In his narrative, Ball offers his opinion on military strategy regarding the battles he participated in, asserting that if the United States had used covert tactics it would have won the Battle of Bladensburg. Praising tactics that rely on undersight, such as concealing oneself in the woods and leveraging the power of surprise, Ball states that "if General Winder had marched the half of the troops that he had at Bladensburg, down to the lower part of Prince George county, and attacked the British in these woods and cedar thickets, not a man of them would ever have reached Bladensburg. I feel confident that in the country through which I marched, one hundred Americans would have destroyed a thousand of the enemy, by falling trees across the road, and attacking them in ambush" (362). Ball here applies the wisdom gained from his expertise in sousveillance to the realm of military theory.

Before enlisting in the US navy, Ball actually operated as an undercover agent for a white woman whose enslaved people escaped to the British troops. Describing the campaign of terror imposed by the British on the residents of Maryland's Western Shore, Ball notes that in addition to destroying US citizens' property, the British encouraged enslaved people to desert. Several people enslaved by Mrs. Wilson, a white woman in Ball's Western Shore community, coordinated secretly with a nearby British officer to facilitate the escape of ninety-nine out of her one hundred enslaved people. Ball subsequently agreed to join a "deputation of gentlemen," who went "on board the [British] fleet, with a flag of truce, to solicit the restoration of the deserters." Ball disguises himself "in the assumed character of the servant of one of the gentlemen who bore [the flag of truce]; but in the real character of the advocate of the mistress [Mrs. Wilson], for the purpose of inducing her slaves to return to her service" (364–365). Unsuccessful in his mission to persuade the fugitives to return to enslavement, Ball is stranded for nine days on the British ship, along with the gentleman whose servant he is pretending to be, when

the ship sails out of the Chesapeake Bay. Ball highlights the danger he felt as a secret agent "now at least seventy or eighty miles from home, in a ship of the publick enemies of the country" (366). While on board, he declines to join the formerly enslaved fugitives when they are transferred to a sloop destined for Trinidad, and he does not alert the British sailors when he notices a group of US prisoners escaping from the British ship.

In this section of the narrative, Ball identifies as a US patriot, fighting for his country and advancing the interests of US citizens against the nation's "publick enem[y]," Great Britain. Ball reflects on his military service and his decision not to flee to the West Indies when he is later captured by a man claiming to own him and marched through Bladensburg in a coffle, "in full view of the very ground, where sixteen years before I had fought in the ranks of the army of the United States, in defence of the liberty and independence of that which I then regarded as my country. … And this, thought I, is the reward of the part I bore in the dangers and fatigues of that disastrous battle" (373–374). Ball underscores the hypocrisy of a country that benefited from his service yet allows someone to claim him as property. Staking his place in "that which I then regarded as my country," Ball endorses a theory of citizenship as "active engagement in the process of creating and maintaining collectivity," which Derrick Spires has documented in Black print culture.[37] The editor of Ball's narrative, Isaac Fisher, highlights Ball's military experience in the full title of the 1836 narrative, *Slavery in the United States: A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball, a Black Man, Who Lived Forty Years in Maryland, South Carolina and Georgia, as a Slave Under Various Masters, and was One Year in the Navy with Commodore Barney, During the Late War*.[38] Both Ball and Fisher, then, recognized Ball's military service as a significant factor in shaping his life story. Ball's self-definition as a US soldier underscores his active role as a defender of liberty at the individual and the national level, not simply as a witness to suffering.

By portraying himself in his narrative as a spy embedded in enemy country retrieving and relaying intelligence, Ball frames the conflict between the slave system and antislavery activists as a war, rather than a trial. A trial, while adversarial, is settled without the use of force and assumes that both sides agree on the rule of law. Warfare, on the other hand, embraces force as necessary and does not presume that the combatants share the same worldview. While the white abolitionist movement was spurred by the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act to accept an "emerging consensus … that the use of violence in self-defense by slaves and their allies was justified," Sinha notes that "early black abolitionists" had long recognized the need for a radical, militant stance and "demand[ed]

freedom not simply as an act of mercy or benevolence but as acts of justice and retribution."[39]

Moreover, Ball's personal experience with a juridical approach to ending slavery was bitterly disappointing. After escaping to Maryland, Ball is captured by his enslaver's brother, who has claimed Ball as his own slave, "without the colour of legal right" (375): since Ball in fact belongs to the man's sister, "my present master had no right whatso ever to me, in either law, or justice" (376). Ball attempts to obtain his freedom through the Georgia courts, paying a lawyer to file a writ for him even though the lawyer advises him that it will be difficult to prove his case since he has no witnesses to testify on his behalf. Ball posits himself as a person entitled to be recognized by the courts, stating, "I would attempt to claim the protection of the laws of the country, and try to get myself discharged from the unjust slavery in which I was now held" (376). The judge rules against Ball, "declar[ing] that the law was well settled in Georgia, that every negro was presumed to be a slave, until he proved his freedom by the clearest evidence" (378). With this experience of the justice system, it is unsurprising that Ball did not turn to legal tropes to structure his narrative, but instead drew on the trope of espionage.

In the first edition of the narrative, then, neither Ball nor his amanuensis Isaac Fisher use the slavery on trial trope; rather, Ball figures himself not as a witness but as a spy. When editors affiliated with the institutional heart of the abolitionist movement took up Ball's narrative for republication, however, they overlaid a new juridical frame onto Ball and Fisher's original. Ball's narrative, as told to Fisher, was originally published by subscription in 1836 by John W. Shugert in Lewistown, Pennsylvania. As Michaël Roy documents, "none of the three men involved in the [initial] publication of *Slavery in the United States*—neither Ball, Shugert, nor Fisher—was closely tied to the abolitionist circles of Philadelphia, New York, or Boston."[40] *Slavery in the United States* was chosen for inclusion the following year in The Cabinet of Freedom, an antislavery book series created by American Antislavery Society (AASS) member Lewis Tappan and published in New York by John S. Taylor. Although not technically an AASS imprint, the Cabinet of Freedom's mission, according to Taylor's prospectus for the series, was to "exert an influence favorable to the cause of immediate and universal emancipation."[41] Roy concludes that "the AASS and Taylor worked closely together in the production of printed documents" and *Slavery in the United States* benefited from "large-scale distribution through the channels of the AASS and auxiliary societies."[42]

The second edition of Ball's narrative, published in association with the institutional abolitionist movement in 1837, preserves the establishment of

the slave as witness trope, as Ball's spy frame is overlaid by his AASS editors' witness frame. The 1837 Cabinet of Freedom edition added a new "Introduction" that engaged in the authenticating strategies typical of post-1840 slave narratives, which seek to demonstrate the ex-slave narrator's credibility as an eyewitness. Ball's existence was verified by two white men: David W. Holings, a lawyer and politician, and W. P. Elliott, a justice of the peace and editor of the Lewistown *Gazette*.[43] The author of the "Introduction" (perhaps Gerrit Smith or William Jay, the editors of the series) seeks to prove Ball's veracity by including excerpts from newspaper articles that discuss incidents similar to those Ball experienced.[44] Many of the excerpts describe the lynching via burning of African Americans accused of murder; the final excerpt reports the trial of a white overseer who has killed an enslaved man under his supervision and is required to compensate the enslaved man's owner but suffers no further punishment for the murder. Contrasting the extralegal violence inflicted on African Americans with the perversion of justice in the white overseer's trial, the author of the introduction frames Ball's narrative in the language of the law, noting that enslaved people "are prohibited from entering a Court of Justice as suitors, or even as witnesses against any individual whose complexion is not coloured like their own."[45] The new introduction to the 1837 edition emphasizes the criminality of the slave system both through its recourse to extralegal killings and its sanctioning of murder. The influence of the abolitionist campaign to frame slavery as a national crime—not just a "peculiar institution" or a "sin"—is thus noticeable in Ball's narrative in the contrast between the slavery on trial trope and Ball's espionage trope. Ball's *Slavery in the United States* illuminates the transitionary moment of these early slave narratives that were published before the rise of the institutional US abolitionist movement. Indeed, the text itself preserves the shift between these two eras in the contrast between Ball's portrait of himself as a spy in the first edition and his later editors' depiction of him as a witness.

The year after Ball's narrative was reissued by the Cabinet of Freedom, the AASS officially published its first slave narrative, the *Narrative of James Williams,* dictated to and with a lengthy preface by John Greenleaf Whittier. As Teresa Goddu has shown, "When it published the *Narrative of James Williams*, the AASS took ownership of the slave narrative." Structuring the *Narrative* as a compendium of evidence against the "abomination" of slavery, Whittier "plays down the runaways' resistance and figures the slaves' humanity only in terms of their suffering."[46] It is Whittier's editorial apparatus that truly inaugurates the genre's slavery on trial trope. Using the words "evidence" and "testimony" innumerable times throughout the preface and appendix, Whittier liberally

relies on legal discourse to frame Williams's narrative, beginning by asking the reader to "examin[e] the statute books of the American slave states."[47] His preface condemns the hypocrisy of "American slave-holders[']… hideous anomaly of a code of laws" (Whittier, *Narrative*, 4) and he excerpts several Southern news articles to provide "the testimony and admissions of slave-holders themselves" (5). In an appendix, Whittier "offer[s] now the testimony of several gentlemen, who are natives of the South" to "corroborat[e] the facts stated by James Williams" (137). Whittier assures the reader that the internal consistency of Williams's narrative "afford[s] strong confirmation of the truth and accuracy of his story" (12). Here we see the authenticating documents of the "white envelope" that enclose fugitive slave narratives from the 1840s onward and figure the ex-slave narrator as a passive eyewitness to slavery's cruelty.

In the text of Williams's *Narrative*—of those published in the 1820s and 1830s, the one most shaped by the institutional US abolitionist movement—there is almost no attention paid to sousveillance. Instead, the narrative is essentially a catalog of gruesome punishments and enslaved suffering. Williams details his own coercion into his enslavers' surveillance and policing system when he is forced by the overseer to whip and torture his fellow enslaved people or risk his own whipping or death. The narrative dwells on the occasions when fugitive slaves are captured and brutalized by bloodhounds, but it gives almost no account of enslaved people's subversive actions or sousveillant practices. Not only has the slave as eyewitness trope displaced Ball's espionage trope, but the ex-slave narrator's gaze has transformed from covert spying to pained spectatorship, compelled to witness the "routine display of the slave's ravaged body," as Saidiya Hartman has argued.[48] The parameters of Whittier's and the AASS's discourse, its emphasis on scenes of subjection, placed Williams and the enslaved people he depicted in his narrative in the passive role of victim rather than the active role of sousveillant evident in the other fugitive slave narratives of the 1820s and 1830s.

Significantly for my argument, however, recent investigative scholarship by Hank Trent has revealed Williams's agency in shaping the narrative by omission. Williams's sousveillance of Whittier and other AASS leaders prompted him to detect that they did not want to hear the aspects of his story that foregrounded his own agency, but rather preferred for him to give a more passive account of his experiences as an enslaved man.[49] Williams thus deliberately excluded from the narrative portions of his life that presented him as an active agent, such as his first escape. After Williams's narrative appeared in print, an Alabama newspaper editor named John B. Rittenhouse published several articles discrediting Williams's story by pointing out several "falsehood[s]."[50]

Eventually, the AASS concluded that Rittenhouse's evidence was accurate and Williams's narrative was not true; they discontinued the sale of the *Narrative*.[51] Though scholars long accepted the AASS's position that Williams's narrative was fraudulent, Trent has painstakingly documented the veracity of portions of Williams's story and filled in details of Williams's life that he left out of his narrative. Williams was indeed a fugitive slave who had grown up in Virginia and was then taken to Alabama where he worked on a cotton plantation and eventually escaped to the North. Yet contrary to the story he tells in his narrative, in which he claims he was tricked by his enslaver into going to Alabama, he was in fact sold down south after he was accused of (but not prosecuted for) complicity in a plot to poison neighboring enslavers.

Furthermore, his escape was much more complicated than the brief account he presents in the narrative, in which he emphasizes the role of luck rather than sousveillance. In fact, Williams escaped by collaborating with James B. White, a con man, who would pretend to sell Williams to a local famer and then secretly help him run away. The two men repeated this swindle as they progressed to the North, until they reached Baltimore and White sold Williams to a slave trader who prepared to send Williams back to the Deep South for sale. To prevent this calamity, Williams told the slave trader about the scam White had been perpetrating, and the trader informed the police, who captured White. After being held in a Baltimore slave jail for several months, Williams was sent to New Orleans and sold to a hotel owner. Williams soon escaped by stowing away on board a Mississippi steamboat and then masquerading as a waiter. Eventually arriving in Cincinnati, Williams then traveled to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where, as Trent states, he "found the Quaker-run Underground Railroad that led him to the American Anti-Slavery Society, John Greenleaf Whittier, and a chance to trade his story for freedom."[52]

Williams, that is, left out the parts of his story that evidence sousveillance: his involvement in a plot to poison a white couple, his participation in a slave-stealing scam, and the details of his daring escape. Indeed, Williams was practicing sousveillance when he dictated his story to Whittier. Trent posits that "Williams watched the abolitionists' reactions, concentrating on the parts that seemed to interest them most, such as descriptions of his overseer's brutality, and omitting the parts that reflected badly on him or on abolitionists in general."[53] Shortly after Williams arrived in New York and met with AASS leaders, they heard that three men were in the city to recapture him. Williams was terrified of being recaptured, and Trent suggests that the AASS "made their offer, implicitly if not explicitly: after he had dictated all the information to … Whittier, they would conduct him to safety by providing

him passage to Liverpool, England."[54] After Williams reached England, the AASS never heard from him again, despite their efforts to contact him to disprove Rittenhouse's attacks on the narrative. Though the details of racialized surveillance and sousveillance are absent from the narrative he and Whittier produced, Williams's long and complex flight to freedom, including his strategic negotiations with the AASS, demonstrates his own sousveillance.

Racialized Surveillance and Sousveillance in Slave Narratives of the 1820s and 1830s

Ball's presentation of himself as a spy for Northern readers enables us to perceive the dynamics of racialized sur- and sousveillance throughout his narrative, as well as in other narratives from the 1820s and 1830s. Though abolitionists later reframed ex-slave narrators as witnesses, the figure of the spy is more akin to the way formerly enslaved narrators saw themselves. Whereas the witness is a passive role, the more active and subversive spy role indicates the formerly enslaved narrator's expertise in sousveillance, which the narrators drew on to resist their working and living conditions while enslaved and in order to escape. In their narratives of the 1820s and 1830s, these formerly enslaved spies emphasize the racialized conflict between surveillance and sousveillance. Ball's narrative not only reveals the prehistory of the abolitionist slavery on trial campaign, but it offers a different way of reading the slave narrative genre, through an espionage epistemology rather than an evidentiary epistemology.

Slave narratives of the 1820s and 1830s feature an active practice of vigilant watchfulness that anticipates and counters the ever-present threat of surveillance, which they document extensively. Detailing the policing of African Americans in the antebellum South, these slave narratives reveal the ways in which enslavers and overseers detected and prevented crimes committed by enslaved people. Though ex-slave narrators and their amanuenses expected readers to recognize the injustice of a system that conferred on individuals the power to prosecute and punish, these narratives divulge the evidence-gathering methods of enslavers and overseers, as well as the tactics of pursuing and recapturing fugitives. Because slave codes gave enslavers the power to correct most enslaved behavior without involving the formal legal system, the framework of policing and detection has not always been a primary concern in scholarship on slave narratives. The institutional abolitionist movement would later circumscribe the genre's focus to the cruel punishments that enslaved

people suffered, but slave narratives of the 1820s and 1830s detail a full range of crime tropes including policing, detection, evidence, pursuit, and recapture. The emphasis on tropes of espionage and crime that characterize these fugitive slave narratives anticipates and lays the groundwork for the emergence of detective fiction, a genre strongly associated with a Southern US author, Poe.[55]

Nearly all of the slave narratives in the 1820s and 1830s describe numerous encounters with the slave patrol, indicating that policing is a foundational trope for the fugitive slave narrative genre.[56] For instance, Ball reports a conversation he has with an enslaved man in South Carolina who has suffered unimaginable torture, yet does not attempt to run away because "if I knew the way, how could I hope to get there? would not the patrol be sure to catch me?" (Ball, *Slavery*, 89). Ball's interlocutor reveals that the slave patrol—even more than the hardships of flight—structured the horizon of possibility for potential fugitives. In addition to depicting the institutionalized police force, the narratives portray numerous scenes of enslavers pursuing runaway enslaved people by themselves and alongside overseers and neighboring enslavers. For example, Roper states "I found myself surrounded by planters looking for me": not just his own enslaver, but a posse of local enslavers (Roper, *A Narrative*, 63). Matthews indicates that enslavers searched for all escapees, not simply their own: "Master's overseer and another man were out to hunt for niggers, and they came upon us before we knew it" (Matthews, *Recollections*, September 13, 1838). Ball describes how a posse was assembled:

> "Messengers were despatched [*sic*] round the country, to give notice to all the planters, within the distance of many miles, of the crime that had been committed, and of the escape of one of its perpetrators, with a request to them to come without delay, and join in the pursuit. … Those who had dogs, trained to chase thieves, were desired to bring them; and a gentleman who lived twelve miles off, and who owned a blood hound, was sent for, and requested to come with his dog, in all haste."
>
> (Ball, *Slavery*, 194)

Ex-slave narrators also affirm that enslavers pooled their knowledge about the best ways to manage enslaved people. For instance, Matthews reports "They go round to each other's plantations to find out how they manage. All they talk about when they meet, is, what crops they get, and how they manage their slaves" (Matthews, *Recollections*, October 11, 1838). As these

fugitive slave narratives indicate, the slave system relied on an elaborate public/private partnership, in which the state extended and supported enslavers' and overseers' individual surveillance. As opposed to later narratives, which focus on the atrocities of punishment, these narratives provide the reader with robust intelligence on the operations of this public/private police power.

Because enslaved people were skilled at concealing behavior that challenged enslavers' absolute claim to authority, enslavers and their agents had to resort to spying to discover thefts, plots, and work slowdowns. For example, Matthews repeatedly describes overseers eavesdropping and "creeping" around at night: one "overseer used to creep round behind the camp at night to listen and find out what we were talking about. He heard the woman praying, and in the morning she was whipped for it"; another overseer "was in the habit of walking about at all hours of the night to find out who stole wood, or turnips, or hogs, or any thing else" (October 11, 1838 and September 13, 1838). Matthews reveals that even children were coopted into enslavers' surveillance system:

> Mistress had a little daughter named Jane, and she used to send her out to the old cotton house to watch us, and see if we were working smart. She crept along and peeped through the chinks, and if she saw us laughing and talking or a little merry, though we were about our tasks, she would say, 'Ah, I see you idle, I shall go and tell ma.' Then we would beg and say, 'pray don't tell this time, Missy Jane,' but she always did. It pleased her mightily to have us whipped.
>
> (August 23, 1838)

In these depictions of spying from the perspective of the objects of supervision, the conflict is asymmetric, conserving violence for enslavers, yet the narrators' knowledge of enslavers' and overseers' methods of detection revealed in their depiction of events emphasizes enslaved people's ongoing, active resistance. Ex-slave narrators also explicate how enslavers used forensics to detect theft. For example, Matthews notes that his enslaver used a scale to prevent women from stealing cotton: "In rainy weather the slave women have some cotton weighed out for them to spin, and it is weighed when they return it, to see if they do not keep any part back" (September 13, 1838). Matthews's enslaver investigated a theft of several musk melons via biometrics: "they measured our tracks and then measured our feet, and whipped some of us, till one told who did it" (September 13, 1838). As these slave narrators indicate, enslavers traced

clues such as footprints to track down thieves. These narratives establish the conflict between enslavers and enslaved people as a contest of detection and concealment.

When other methods of detection failed, enslavers could always rely on violence to coerce enslaved people to divulge secret information or to help them spy on other enslaved people. Matthews describes how enslavers used torture to force enslaved people to give up information: "The overseer, in searching about after stolen things, found it, and then whipped me to make me tell who put it there, because they thought I knew" (September 13, 1838). Grimes's narrative provides an example of an overseer enlisting an enslaved man in a sting operation to expose Grimes's escape plans. When, as a boy, Grimes decides to run away for the first time, he asks an enslaved man named Planter George for help, which George promises to give him. However, when Grimes falls asleep, George tells the overseer of Grimes's plans. Returning to George's cabin, the overseer

> sent in George to question me, while he should listen without. George asked me if I intended to run away. … [B]eing partly asleep I answered that I did not know. He repeated the question several times and still received the same answer. The overseer then hallooed out, 'Hey, you son of a bitch, you are going to run away, are you? I'll give it to you; bring him out here.' So they brought me out and horsed me upon the back of Planter George, and whipped me until I could hardly stand.
>
> (Grimes, *Life*, 37)

Enslaved people were also coerced into becoming part of the visual surveillance system when they were forced to become the spectators of gruesome punishments. Roper notes that after he was recaptured following repeated escape attempts, his enslaver chained him to a female slave, placed twenty-pound iron bars on his feet and "a heavy log-chain on my neck, … [and] made us walk round his estate, and by all the houses of the slaves, for them to taunt us."[57] While these moments reinforce the ultimate power of enslavers to punish and torture, I want to underscore the way in which they are framed by ex-slave narrators as continuous with enslavers' and overseers' efforts to solve and prevent crimes, whether theft or "manstealing." These fugitive slave narratives continually foreground the expertise of enslaved people about the police power. Tropes of policing and detection are a central concern of slave narratives in the 1820s and 1830s, anticipating the emergent genre of detective fiction in the 1840s.

Despite their multi-faceted surveillance system, enslavers never achieved the totalized oversight at which they aimed. Enslaved people demonstrated enormous cunning and courage by evading surveillance and matching it with their own sousveillance. Slavery fosters a hermeneutics of suspicion, making the ability to "read the real intentions" behind the mask an essential skill for both enslavers and enslaved.[58] Voorhis presents a moment in which his knowledge of the state-sanctioned surveillance system undermines his enslaver's attempt to deceive him. Like other slave narrators, Voorhis depicts a culture shot through with deception, saying of his enslaver "the better to deceive me, [he] voluntarily granted me the indulgence to walk a few hours unguarded and unattended about the city, without a well authenticated pass—of this I was not ignorant, and therefore sought other and less dangerous means to escape."[59] By giving Voorhis this false "freedom" to walk around the city unattended, this unnamed enslaver intends for Voorhis to experience the pervasive surveillance system of the slave South, in which a Black man without a pass will be stopped, questioned, and imprisoned until his enslaver can reapprehend him. Voorhis does not fall for this deception, however, as he recognizes the danger of this seeming freedom. Voorhis's narrative demonstrates his superiority to his enslaver in perceiving his enslaver's deception and in practicing sousveillance.[60] With his use of litotes ("I was not ignorant"), Voorhis's narration of this incident sardonically highlights his knowledge, challenging enslavers' presumption that surveillance was not reciprocated.

The narratives of 1825 to 1836 (Bayley, Grimes, Voorhis, and Ball) had more latitude to discuss details of sousveillance practices, information networks, and escape methods because they were either self-published (Grimes) or published for the individual benefit of the narrator by antislavery advocates not associated with the US abolitionist culture industry (Bayley, Voorhis, Ball), and thus they were not constrained by the rhetorical agenda of the institutional US abolitionist movement. The institutional abolitionist movement's strategy to end slavery via political action and legal proceedings did not require or even encourage disclosing the acts of resistance and subversion that sousveillance made possible. Rather, the abolitionist movement's strategy depended upon amassing evidence of the slave system's brutality, hypocrisy, and anti-democratic tyranny: all of which emphasize enslaved peoples' victimization rather than their agency.

The fugitive slave narratives of this transitionary period were more explicit about enslaved sousveillance and resistance before abolitionist editors and sponsors shaped narratives to fit the goals of the slavery on trial campaign. Slave narrators depicted an active practice of sousveillance, or "vigilance"

in Ball's words, that resisted top-down surveillance. Ball reminds his readers, "Notwithstanding all the vigilance that is exercised by the planters, the slaves … are no less vigilant than their masters" (Ball, *Slavery*, 147). Whereas Sekora notes that the "white sponsors of slave narratives … seem to have believed that all important aspects of a slave life could be told by recounting what was done to him or her," reading fugitive slave narratives through a lens of sousveillance allows us to perceive the narrator explaining what he and other enslaved people *did*.[61] When we examine slave narratives with an eye to sousveillance, we recognize that these texts present the conflict between police and lawbreaker from the perspective of the criminal.

If the slave narratives of the 1820s were not yet constrained by the conventions of the institutional abolitionist movement, they were still influenced by the genre's earlier focus on religion. As the genre shifted away from the spiritual narrative as a model and became more engaged in the sociopolitical circumstances of US slavery in the 1820s, narratives turned to the methods of secular surveillance, with the vigilance of human agents replacing that of the divine. Appearing at the outset of this transition, Bayley's 1825 *Narrative* offers a striking example of sousveillance that indexes this move from religious-focused slave narratives before the 1820s to abolitionist slave narratives of the 1830s onward. Combining piety with a robust attention to the dynamics of watching from above and below, Bayley's narrative demonstrates the pressures that new political aims put on the genre's older religious model. In the end, Bayley harnesses these scenes to his religious agenda, interpreting them as moments of trial that tested and renewed his faith in God's mercy. This religious framework is largely subordinated to an abolitionist agenda in the subsequent narratives I examine, however, so that scenes of escape, concealment, pursuit, tracking, and subterfuge focus on the conflict between surveillance and sousveillance rather than explaining these scenes as evidence of God's miraculous power to shield the faithful and punish the wicked. Bayley's transitionary narrative provides a lens through which to perceive the depiction of sousveillance in the other narratives from the 1820s and 1830s.

The first nine pages of Bayley's narrative focus on his flight from his kidnappers; the prominent themes are Bayley's concealment and deception, and his pursuers' efforts at tracking him. By hiding in some bushes, he escapes from the wagon caravan that was taking him west to be sold; after the slave traders search for him for forty-five minutes, he states "that was the last I ever saw or heard of them."[62] This escape from his immediate captors is incomplete, however, as he finds himself under totalizing surveillance by slave society as a whole. Lamenting that he and his fellow fugitive were "hunted like partridges"

(Bayley, *Narrative*, 6), Bayley highlights the three times he is chased by dogs, as well as the three times he is "examined" by suspicious whites. He also describes his betrayal by a Black man, who leads white men to Bayley's hiding place to capture him; luckily Bayley has had a premonition about the betrayal and has moved to a different hiding place and covered himself with branches, so the men do not find him. In this section of Bayley's narrative, he figures himself as the prey of ubiquitous slave hunters: not only his own enslaver, who is specifically seeking to recapture him, but all of white society, who are disposed to suspect and examine any Black person they encounter. Bayley demonstrates how Southern whites have been deputized by the slave system to act as detectives at all times, presuming the guilt of any Black person they encounter.

Bayley's narrative amalgamates his knowledge of the slave system's surveillance practices with his faith, resulting in an episode of miraculous sousveillance. The strangeness of the episode is explained when we understand the historical context of shifting political imperatives served by the slave narratives in these decades, a context that involves pressure exerted by prior religious models as well as resistance to these models as writers and producers adapted to new political aims such as opposing particular aspects of slavery and racism in the United States, including the kidnapping of free Blacks. Bayley's immersion into the pervasive surveillance of slave society leads him to begin practicing sousveillance. Worried that a white man who "examined" him about his reason for being in the neighborhood is now coming after him, he tries to evade detection by going the opposite direction to the route he had inquired about and hiding in a counterintuitive place. Despite Bayley's sousveillant maneuvers, the man and a companion whom Bayley calls "the old conjuror" manage to track him down. Yet though they walk within inches of Bayley and "look[] right into [his] eyes" (12), they cannot see him because God has created a magical circle, demarcated by birds, within which Bayley is protected.

Bayley explicitly figures this dramatic scene as a conflict between surveillance and sousveillance, but he in fact supplements his own watching from below with divine oversight, thereby elevating his subordinated vision to meet the surveillance of enslavers eye to eye. Throughout the passage, Bayley repeats the language of sight, both literal and metaphorical. When he awakes in his hiding place he observes two birds: "seeing the little strange looking birds, it roused up all my senses. … I saw the birds went all round me" (10). At first, he is not sure what this sight means, but he realizes that God has sent the birds to protect him; as he reflects on this impression, "a sight of my faults came

before me, and a scanty sight of the highness and holiness of the great Creator of all things" (10). Recalling the Biblical trope of the scales falling from Saul's eyes (as well as the reminder in Luke that God's eye is on the sparrow), Bayley's religious faith grants him sharpened sight. Moreover, it makes him invisible to the surveillance of the two white men, who are using a stick as a divining rod to dowse for Bayley. Their superstitious belief in the divining rod is trumped by Bayley's true faith, as God tells Bayley to "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord" (12). Obeying this dictate, Bayley watches the men from his hiding place: "I opened my eyes and saw them right before me. … I sat there, and looked right at them" (11). Ultimately, surveillance (technologically enhanced via the divining rod) and sousveillance come eye to eye, as "the young man stopped and looked right down on me, … and I looked right up into his eyes; and then he stood and looked right into my eyes, and when he turned away, he ran after the old man, and I thought he saw me; but when he overtook the old man, he kept on, and then I knew he had not seen me" (12–13). Bayley's emphasis on the antagonists' looking "right down," "right up," and finally "right into [one another's] eyes" indexes the way in which the vigilance urged by African American antislavery activists aimed to undermine the visual superiority of white surveillance. Conflating literal and metaphorical sight at the conclusion of the passage, Bayley gives thanks to God for his supernaturally-aided sousveillance: "Then I said, bless the Lord, he that gave sight to man's eyes, hath kept him from seeing me this day" (13). Though Bayley attributes his sousveillance to divine power, this passage anticipates the secularized analyses of the conflict between surveillance and sousveillance in subsequent slave narratives of the 1820s and 1830s.

Reading other slave narratives through the lens provided by Bayley's narrative, we can see that sousveillance accomplishes several things for enslaved people, from negotiating better working or living conditions and protecting individuals from abuse, to carving out some degree of autonomy or facilitating escape. Throughout the narratives I discuss, ex-slave narrators depict a range of sousveillance practices to emphasize that the slave system is not omniscient and to establish the expertise of enslaved and formerly enslaved people. Over and over, ex-slave narrators demonstrate how they strategically leverage this knowledge against enslavers in order to gain some degree of power in a certain situation. For example, Ball negotiates with the overseer of the fishery to escape surveillance at night. Although the fish-master is supposed to stay up all night monitoring Ball and his enslaved colleagues, Ball makes a deal with the fish-master, telling him that Ball will take charge of the fishery at night so the fish-master can sleep. This arrangement allows Ball and the other enslaved

workers at the fishery to secretly supplement their food ration by trading shad for bacon with white traders along the river. Ball remarks that "I was in no fear of being punished by the fish-master; for he was now at least as much in my power, as I was in his; for if my master had known the agreement, that he had made with us … he would have been deprived of his situation, and all the profits of his share of the fishery" (Ball, *Slavery*, 230). The story of agency—albeit limited—engendered by sousveillance that the slave narratives from the 1820s and 1830s tell is more complicated than the passive witness story prescribed to ex-slave narrators by the white antislavery movement from 1838 onwards.

Grimes also uses sousveillance to negotiate for better conditions by deceiving his detested enslaver into selling him to a more humane enslaver. He pretends to be ill and refuses to eat, though he tells the reader "I would, however, have it understood, that during all this time, I did not go without victuals. … [The food I found,] together with what I stole, made me a comfortable subsistence; or as much so, as the slaves generally receive. I was determined not to eat anything in his sight, or to his knowledge, in order to make him think he must either sell me or lose me" (Grimes, *Life*, 55). He also pays a free Black man to disparage him to his enslaver. After his sale and reveling in his improved condition, Grimes "rode down by my old master's, and cracked my whip with … pride. … My old master happening to see me pass in this manner, was very much chagrined, to think he had sold me under the impression that I was just ready to die" (56). Grimes flaunts his skillful deception as proof that he has outwitted his enslaver. This skill at sousveillance is, of course, a prerequisite for his subsequent escape attempt as he pretends to be a free man in the North rather than a fugitive from the South.

Again, Grimes depicts his ability to wield knowledge gained from sousveillance in order to protect himself. When an overseer named Thead threatens to whip him, Grimes "told him that if he struck me, I would inform my master about his riding a favorite horse without my master's consent; that my master had already enquired of me why the horse grew so poor, but I would not then tell him; the fear of detection induced him to let me go, telling me to be a good boy, and he would not flog me" (36–37). Leveraging his information against Thead's violence, Grimes is able to manipulate the power structure that makes the overseer submissive to the master. Later, Grimes manipulates another overseer, this time named Bennet. Grimes has discovered that Bennet and his mother "secretly bought things from the negroes which they had stolen from my master" (46). When Bennet whips Grimes, Grimes forces him to stop by threatening to inform the master, Colonel Thornton, about Bennet's illicit activities. Bennet

> promised me that if I would hold my tongue, and say nothing about this, he would see that I should not be whipped. He knew that it was for his interest to keep me from exposing their buying things which they knew the slaves had stolen. My master, however, heard something about this scrape, and was going to whip me, but Mr. Bennet interfered, and told him that I was drunk, as I said, and that he had whipped me enough. (47)

Grimes's sousveillance provides him information about his overseers, which he can then strategically deploy to avoid or curtail a whipping.

Beyond this protective function, though, sousveillance was absolutely crucial for escape. Revealing the details of their escape routes established the narrators' expertise in sousveillance, since they were able to evade and deceive the agents of the slave system's surveillance, and increased the interest (and thus salability) of their narratives for curious white readers who were able to gain access to information they would not otherwise know. Since the narratives published between 1825 and 1836 were published to benefit the individual narrators, these narrators were not bound by the discretion of later abolitionist narratives, which recognized, as Douglass states in his 1845 *Narrative*, that

> those open declarations [of escape methods] are a positive evil to the slaves remaining, who are seeking to escape. They do nothing towards enlightening the slave, whilst they do much towards enlightening the master. They stimulate him to greater watchfulness, and enhance his power to capture his slave. … I would keep the merciless slaveholder profoundly ignorant of the means of flight adopted by the slave. I would leave him to imagine himself surrounded by myriads of invisible tormentors, ever ready to snatch from his infernal grasp his trembling prey. Let him be left to feel his way in the dark; let darkness commensurate with his crime hover over him; and let him feel that at every step he takes, in pursuit of the flying bondman, he is running the frightful risk of having his hot brains dashed out by an invisible agency. … [L]et us not hold the light by which he can trace the footprints of our flying brother.[63]

I quote Douglass's passage at length to emphasize his use of surveillant vocabulary. By giving enslavers intelligence about the escape methods of fugitive slaves, these "open declarations" allow enslavers to more effectively target their "watchfulness," thereby increasing the efficiency of their surveillance and recapture system. Instead, Douglass declares, by withholding that

information from white readers, he hopes to keep enslavers "in the dark" and left to imagine "invisible tormenters" and "invisible agency." By reiterating the contrast between enlightenment and darkness, Douglass indicates that sousveillance must be invisible to be effective. Implicit in Douglass's comments is the fact that intelligence about the escape routes is indeed being disseminated, but not through the medium of the post-1840 slave narrative. The information networks of the Underground Railroad, as well as ad hoc and localized "grapevine telegraphs," disclosed the necessary intelligence to aspiring escapees and operatives, but they controlled the circulation of information to prevent proslavers' sabotage. Douglass, that is, is hinting at the intelligence and counterintelligence operations facilitated by racialized sousveillance, to which he denies his white readers access.

We can see a more ambivalent version of Douglass's censorship in Roper's narrative, published in 1838, the same year that the AASS published its first fugitive slave narrative (*Narrative of James Williams*). Although Roper discloses the details of his escape, he condemns himself after he escapes (and begins attending church) for "the wicked part I had taken in using so much deception in making my escape" (Roper, *A Narrative*, 71). This deception primarily involves misleading whites he encounters into believing that he is an apprentice—because he is light-skinned enough to pass for white—rather than a runaway slave. He also pretends that he has lost a written pass for traveling and convinces a white boy to write him a new one, and then, when he realizes that pass is not written well enough, he pretends to drop that pass in the river to get a better one from some cow-drovers who have befriended him. As Ian Finseth points out, the "social stigma of deceptiveness attaches more tenaciously to [Roper], as a slave narrator, than to his white contemporaries," and thus Roper must disavow the once-necessary deceit that pervades the slave South in order to be accepted by abolitionists.[64] Writing at the cusp of the institutional US abolitionist movement's takeover of the slave narrative genre, Roper compromises between establishing his expertise in sousveillance and demonstrating a proper Christian moral stance, which is the necessary prerequisite to Black freedom in white readers' eyes. However, ex-slave narrators in the 1820s and earlier 1830s (Bayley, Grimes, Voorhis, and Ball) did not feel this compunction to disavow their "deceit"; rather, they celebrate their sousveillance as evidence of their special expertise, which they are imparting to white readers in their narratives.

Ball's geographical reconnaissance is a form of visual sousveillance that aids his escape. When Ball is sold to a Georgia slave-trader and marched

from Maryland to Georgia in a slave coffle, he scrutinizes the landscape and memorizes key features so that he will be able to find his way back home:

> I endeavored through the whole journey … to make such observations upon the country, the roads we travelled, and the towns we passed through, as would enable me, at some future period, to find my way back to Maryland. I was particularly careful to note the names of the towns and villages through which we passed, and to fix on my memory, not only the names of all the rivers, but also the position and bearing of the ferries over those streams.
>
> (Ball, *Slavery*, 33)

Throughout his account of his journey to Georgia, he describes the land in minute detail and indicates that he keeps track of compass directions as he travelled. He notes that by "repeatedly naming the rivers … in the order which we had reached them" he memorizes the names of all the rivers "from the Potomac to the Savannah" and the ferries by which they crossed them; "I afterwards found this knowledge of great service to me; indeed, without it I should never have been able to extricate myself from slavery" (34). This careful scrutiny of the countryside—or as he later says, his ability "to reconnoitre" the landscape (350), proves essential to Ball's escape, as he has adequate geographical knowledge to make his way north without maps.

The "panoramic perspective" that Ball achieves during his escape demonstrates his expertise in visual sousveillance.[65] Ball recognizes that his sousveillance will be most effective from an elevated perspective, so he climbs trees and hills to "t[ake] a wide survey of the region around me" (345).[66] Not only does this aerial perspective improve his vision, but it also protects him: he chooses "the highest piece of ground that I could find in the neighborhood. … I thought people who visited these woods, would be less inclined to walk to the tops of the hills, than to keep their course along the low grounds" (327). He is unimpressed with another fugitive slave he runs into, who has built a shelter in "a level open wood," and declines the man's proposition to travel together because of the man's "great want of discretion" (339–340). Once Ball leaves the man he immediately moves to high ground: "I thought it prudent to change my place of abode … and removed along the top of the hill" (340). By disclosing his sousveillant strategies to the reader, Ball establishes his active practice of vigilance against the surveillance of the slave system.

Passing as white is another sousveillance practice that facilitates escape. Jinny Huh has recently argued that racial passing narratives of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century constitute a subgenre of detection;[67]

we can see the roots of this subgenre with narratives such as Grimes's, as well as later slave narratives such as *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*. Because Grimes is light-skinned, he can pass as white at night as long as he convincingly acts the part: encountering a group of patrollers when he is walking after curfew, Grimes "summoned all my resolution; and marched directly on towards them, not turning to the right hand nor to the left, until I came up to them. … I continued on, head up, walked past them and happened to brush one of them a little in passing, they immediately turned off the walk; one of them spoke and said we ask your pardon sir" (Grimes, *Life*, 71). Before he makes his escape attempt, Grimes exploits his ability to pass as white in order to protect a free Black friend who is visiting him after the curfew and would otherwise be in danger walking home alone (70–71). When he decides to escape, he enlists a free Black sailor to help him. Grimes "directed [the free Black sailor] to walk behind me in the capacity of a servant, (as they would consider me his master, the watch or guard being all on their posts;) he did so, and we procured every thing necessary for me, took them on board, and I stowed them away in the hole left for me, where I myself went and remained until we arrived at the Quarantine Ground, New York" (82). Grimes's sousveillant freedom practices give him latitude of movement.

In addition to passing as white, enslaved people disguised themselves by literalizing the legal fiction that they were chattel property. One of the more ironic disguises that recurs frequently in these slave narratives is the escaping slave disguising himself as cargo on ships travelling north. Often, slave narrators squeeze in among "cotton bales" (see Grimes, *Life*, 50), transforming themselves into the very product of their forced labor in order to gain their liberty. Matthews conceals himself among the cotton bales on both a railroad car in his initial escape from his labor on the Charleston railroad and then on a vessel sailing to Boston. Voorhis points out the irony of this type of disguise, describing himself as property that can stow itself away: "I unperceived ascended and secreted myself between two casks in the hold. … I had the satisfaction to find myself in less than three hours, from the time that I was purchased like a bale of goods at auction, stowing snugly away, and with fair prospects of regaining my liberty!" (Voorhis, *Life and Adventures*, 14–15). His own status as chattel ("purchased like a bale of goods") and his escape method of "stowing … away" in the cargo hold are compressed into one sardonic sentence.

In the transitionary period between the waning of the slave narrative's religious orientation and the establishment of the institutional abolitionist movement, the narratives of the 1820s and 1830s reveal aspects of the racialized dynamics of surveillance and sousveillance that are less legible in earlier

and later narratives. As I have shown, these narratives document not just the punishment, but the detection and policing of African Americans by whites across the spectrum of Southern society, from overseers to slave hunters and patrollers. These narratives portray the surveillance of enslaved people via the crime tropes that would come to be central to the emergent genre of detective fiction. Though these narratives critique the police power that conceives of any Black person as a threat, they nevertheless depict this reality of life under the slave codes. Furthermore, because the narratives of the 1820s and 1830s are more secular than earlier narratives, they are less focused on the eye of God as the ultimate surveillant and more detailed in their depiction of the mechanisms of earthly sur- and souveillance.

Complicating the Dialectic of Racialized Surveillance and Sousveillance

As I have shown, slave narratives of the 1820s and 1830s amply illustrate the conflict between top-down white surveillance and bottom-up Black sousveillance. I want to end by returning to Ball's narrative, examining two passages in which he theorizes the gaze not just as instrumental watching from below in order to resist or evade surveillance but as constitutive of Black subjectivity. Ball depicts himself as a seeing subject who takes pleasure in looking. First, in his portrayal of the scene most emblematic in white readers' minds of the slave system's scopic economy—the slave market—he ironically undermines his readers' expectations of a uni-directional gaze at the moment when enslaved people's chattel status is laid bare. Ball instead foregrounds his own watching in his inversion of the archetypal slave market scene. Rather than being elevated on an auction block in front of a crowd, Ball presents himself as a flaneur: for two weeks, he was "not required to do any work; and I had liberty and leisure to walk about the plantation, and make observations as I could upon the new state of things around me" (Ball, *Slavery*, 73). Potential buyers come to Ball, and their inspections are narratively subordinated to Ball's gaze at them. Although Ball and his fellow enslaved people are being "inspected" and "scrutinized" by potential purchasers (73), Ball structures the scene to emphasize the reciprocity of observation and applies the vocabulary of the gaze to both white "view[ers]" and Black "observ[er]" (73). Ball's leisured observations "upon the new state of things around me," signifying his curiosity as he allows his gaze to roam about the world, are set against the scrutiny of the potential buyers whose inspecting eyes register only signs of enslaved people's capacity

for labor. Ball's expansive gaze is superior to this narrow-sighted examination. Ball, of course, recognizes the asymmetry of the veillance, but by insisting that he, too, is an observer, he foregrounds his interiority, his subjectivity, in contrast to the slave system, which, in Cobb's words, "failed to entertain the existence of an inner Black subject, with a sense of will."[68]

Second, in a scene that renders the slave system as theatre, Ball goes beyond simply depicting sousveillance to ridiculing the spectacle of slavery. During his time at a South Carolina plantation, Ball portrays himself as watching the actions of white inhabitants of the plantation as though he is attending a play: the dining room "looked into the yard where my companions and I had been permitted to seat ourselves, and had an opportunity of seeing, by the light of the candle, all that was done within, and of hearing all that was said" (69). The "play" the enslaved audience watches is a romantic farce, as the South Carolina planter "endeavor[s] to impose a belief [upon a visiting Georgia slave-trader] that he was the head of a family which took rank with those of the first planters of the district" (68) and to present his daughters as marriageable to this single man. Ball watches comic scenes of the plantation owner's daughters hiding in the kitchen so that the slave-trader will not see them before they are appropriately attired and made up. He wittily critiques the family for making fools of themselves as they attempt to impress the slave-trader. Ball notes that whereas the slave-trader was "called a *negro buyer*" and scorned by polite society in the Upper South, he is deemed a respectable gentleman in South Carolina, "elevated to the rank of merchant" and honored with the unearned title of "Colonel" (63, 69).

Ball's critical spectatorship in this scene challenges slavery's "constru[al of] unfree Black people as devoid of the ability to properly see, prefiguring them as visible objects that lacked the ability to consciously manipulate notions of visuality."[69] As Cobb, Sarah Blackwood, and others have argued, enslaved African Americans defied this notion of Black people as unseeing by "posit[ing] a powerful black visual acuity as an observant, interpretive, and recording force"; "assert[ing] … a critical black gaze."[70] Recognizing that the white South Carolina family is ludicrous even though they do not realize it themselves, Ball sets himself up as a more discerning observer than his enslavers. By emphasizing his spectatorship as a sousveillant for white readers, Ball inverts what Hartman has called "the obscene theatricality of the slave trade" (17) such that Ball is the audience for and arbiter of performances of whiteness.

Though Ball does not exchange direct looks with his enslavers, in both scenes he accentuates his own position as a viewer. Extending sousveillance beyond its life-or-death stakes as a means of protecting enslaved people from

racialized surveillance, Ball acknowledges the aesthetic dimension of watching from below, whether as a flaneur or an audience member. He notes the pleasure to be had in looking at the world when one is "at liberty and leisure," and the amusement provided by watching white people make fools of themselves. Ball's exposé of white folly anticipates the problem of "white oversight," a topic I will turn to in Chapter 3. White oversight is a racialized worldview that has epistemological power but assumes white invisibility. By portraying himself as a sharp-eyed observer, Ball strips away the South Carolina planter family's presumption of invisibility. Whereas white oversight's failure to see the reality of the Black gaze has potentially lethal consequences in the case of enslaved rebellion, in this case it is simply an occasion for reminding white readers that they are objects of scrutiny. Repudiating the suppression of the Black gaze, Ball's rich narrative demonstrates his nuanced awareness of visuality. Ball, that is, not only depicts "undersight," he theorizes sight itself.

2

Inconspicuous and Conspicuous Detection in Ball and Poe

Though "the gradual coming-to-consciousness of American slavery and racism" is "the story of many of [Poe's] stories, and a narrative in the history of Poe criticism," Maurice Lee points out that Poe nevertheless "den[ies] … the subjectivity of racial others." It is not, Lee proposes, that Poe is haunted by "buried racial phobias"; he is cannily aware that whites repress fears of Blackness, yet "[t]he problem is that such acute self-consciousness fails to raise Poe's moral conscience."[1] Dramatizing these racial phobias, Poe capitalizes on their ability to produce effects of terror and horror, not in order to educate or reform his readers, but to entertain. In so doing, Poe's stories re-inscribe the necessity of "certain 'laws of nature' … the most significant being the racial distinctions between black and white," as Cindy Weinstein has shown.[2] Indeed, I argue, C. Auguste Dupin is Poe's fantastic wish-fulfillment for the enforcement of these "laws of nature": a character who can repress—both in the sense of contain and in the psychological sense of deny—the threat of Blackness.[3]

Poe's strategic enactment of his regressive politics paid off perhaps most magnificently in his Dupin tales, which have earned Poe credit for "inventing" an entire genre.[4] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, whose Sherlock Holmes is even more iconic than Poe's Dupin, awarded Poe the title "father of the detective tale" in 1901, noting "On this narrow path the writer must walk, and he sees the footmarks of Poe always in front of him."[5] This origin story, which casts Poe as creating the *sui generis* "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841)—the first Dupin tale—out of thin air, still has popular currency, albeit in a subdued form in which a glancing reference to Poe inventing the detective story has become *de rigueur* for histories of the genre. When literary historians discuss Poe's Dupin tales, written in the early 1840s, as the first detective stories, however, they retrospectively apply a set of concepts that are anachronistic to the antebellum United States. While Poe's Dupin tales were well received at the time of their publication, they were not singled out as instigating a new genre, or even adding a new stock character—the detective—to literature. Instead, the stories were praised for their intriguing and highly satisfying depiction of

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the act of ratiocination, and Dupin was admired for his singularity. Indeed, Poe never used the word "detective." According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word first appeared in print in the *Chambers Journal* in 1843, two years after "Murders," to refer to the "detective police," and the term was not widely used until the 1850s.[6] Poe's Dupin tales correspond to the era of institutionalized policing in Europe, but they predate US police departments.

Rather than examining Poe's literary engagements with detection through the Eurocentric lens of turn-of-the-twentieth-century detective-fiction genre conventions in order to demonstrate that Poe anticipates Holmes, we should place them within the specific history of policing and surveillance in the United States, which developed out of a need to control a particular group of people: African Americans. I argue that antebellum US literary detection is primarily concerned with the dialectic of racialized surveillance and sousveillance. Martin Kayman's definition of detection is pertinent here: "What we call 'detection' is most usefully construed as a historically specific strategy for mastering what are designated as the mysteries which, at various moments, a range of discourse, structures, and institutions claim the privilege and power of being able to read/write."[7] The most salient mystery of the antebellum United States was the "crime" of slavery, or—to proslavery advocates—the crime of slave resistance. When we recognize this central mystery, we can see that detective fiction emerges from widespread imaginative engagement with the modes of surveillance and detection inherent to slavery in the antebellum United States.

The slave narratives that I discussed in Chapter 1 depict this conflict from the perspective of the oppressed, demonstrating how Black sousveillants detect white surveillance in order to evade and resist its controlling gaze. The tropes of racialized sur- and sousveillance migrate from slave narratives to the emergent genre of detective fiction; that is, slave narratives anticipate what later become recognized as conventions of detective fiction. Poe's tales of detection recognize the potency of the sousveillance revealed in stories of fugitive slaves and accounts of slave insurrections, but they depict this watching from below as a menace to be constrained by "superior" white surveillance. As I will show, Poe's most well-known figure of detection, Dupin, is based on slave catchers. Detection for Poe is inextricably linked to the threat posed by Black people.[8]

To demonstrate this relation between the archive of the slave narrative and tales of detection, I analyze a work that predates Poe's Dupin tales, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838). *Pym* has never been read as detective fiction, but Poe explicitly engages with the processes of investigation and deduction throughout the novel. The act of detecting is central to many of Poe's writings, and indeed was characteristic of the culture of the antebellum United

States.[9] *Pym* is entangled with the racial dynamics of power, surveillance, and sousveillance, which Poe increasingly effaces in each of the three Dupin tales. Whereas in *Pym* Poe acknowledges sousveillance's potency to generate readerly terror at the threat of Black rebellion, in the Dupin tales he produces the pleasurable affects of satisfaction and security as Dupin represses that threat. Reading *Pym* alongside the Dupin tales illuminates the racialized origins of Poe's stories of detection by showcasing a different mode, which I call inconspicuous detection.

Grounded in sousveillance, inconspicuous detection acknowledges that veillance is dialectical: those watching from above are themselves watched from below. Unlike the puzzles and mind games usually associated with detective fiction, inconspicuous detection examines mysteries with life-or-death stakes such as escapes of fugitive enslaved people and slave insurrections. The solution to these mysteries disrupts the status quo and lays the groundwork for resistance to the slave system. Because of this subversive goal, however, inconspicuous detectives do not draw attention to themselves. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, for example, Phineas Fletcher is an inconspicuous detective as he hides in the corner of the tavern and eavesdrops on the slave catchers. In the first section of this chapter, I analyze an early example of inconspicuous detection in a murder-mystery story embedded within Ball's *Slavery in the United States* (which I discussed in Chapter 1). Published one year before *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym,* Ball's story demonstrates the value of sousveillance in solving crimes, in addition to its necessity for resistance and escape.

Poe, like Ball, recognized the efficacy of sousveillance, but for Poe that recognition was threatening rather than liberatory because sousveillance undercuts the racial order. Poe explores the power of this mode of inconspicuous detection in *Pym*. The first two thirds of Poe's novel depict a white man (Pym) learning to sousveil after experiencing captivity, threat, and powerlessness in a parallel to fugitive slaves escaping to the North. Stripped of the security normally afforded by white supremacy, to survive Pym must practice the methods of undersight upon which fugitives rely. This racial appropriation of sousveillance by a white man does not lead to racial knowledge, however, as the final third of the novel depicts Pym failing to recognize the danger of sousveillance once he is restored to a position of white authority. Pym embraces the illusion of Black passivity after he recovers a position of racial dominance, and thus barely escapes with his life thanks to his blindness to the Tsalalians' sousveillance. Poe ends the novel with a fantasy figure of white surveillant supremacy, bigger and better than Pym, who will suppress the threat of sousveillance.

Poe develops this fantasy figure in his Dupin tales, crafting a character who denies the threat of sousveillance by insisting that veillance is not dialectical: that he sees all without being seen himself. This panoptical presumption is often translated into the language of penetrating another person's mind; that is, Dupin asserts that he can infiltrate another person's private interiority to discover secret information while keeping his own interiority concealed. The Dupin tales, which portray a singular mastermind, exemplify conspicuous detection. Conspicuous detection restricts the investigation's scope and resolution to the individual level, deflecting attention from systemic inequalities and suppressing alternative accounts that identify the effects of systemic violence and oppression. In the end, the conspicuous detective produces a coherent, satisfying story that reestablishes the status quo, maintaining rhetorical mastery. Conspicuous detection celebrates the individual mastermind and heaps credit upon him (often through the narrative device of the dull-witted sidekick) for solving the mystery. This publicity within the text has translated into generic conventions that award Poe the honor of inventing detective fiction and that occlude other antebellum versions of detection.

Just as inconspicuous detectives conceal their sousveillance within these stories, their authors' contributions to detective fiction have gone unnoticed. By grounding the literary tropes of early detective fiction in the subversive sousveillance as well as the state-sanctioned surveillance of the antebellum slave system, however, my analysis expands our understanding of the genre to encompass both inconspicuous *and* conspicuous modes of detection. I use "conspicuous" to refer to the type of detection that has been recognized as detective fiction. Inconspicuous detection has not been recognized as detective fiction because it does not circumscribe the crime and its solution to the individual level, but rather investigates systemic causes of violence. Because inconspicuous detection takes a systemic approach to cause and effect, its understanding of motive is correspondingly broader, recognizing the sociohistorical forces that shape individual actions. Penetrating a person's private interiority is less likely to provide the truth, therefore, than examining social power dynamics. Just as inconspicuous detection recognizes the systemic scope of the mysteries it examines, its methodology recognizes the value of networks and collaboration rather than individual brilliance. Inconspicuous detectives are therefore less interested in asserting a tidy solution to the puzzle, but are instead aware that their retrospective reconstruction of events is provisional and contingent. Like the twentieth-century subgenre of postmodern detective fiction, inconspicuous detection often poses more questions than it answers. Bringing Ball's and Poe's texts into conversation as part of

an antebellum literature of surveillance demonstrates that numerous authors were engaging with the racial power dynamics of sur- and sousveillance, though we now cordon them off into separate genres. Both Ball and Poe are interested in the methods and meaning of detection; however, Ball lacks Poe's authority due to the association between African Americans and criminality that had characterized African Americans' representation in print since the colonial period.

"On the Trail of the Murderer": Charles Ball Solves a Crime

The fugitive slave narrative that most emphasizes racialized surveillance and helps us identify these dynamics in other narratives is the one that actually contains a murder mystery—the stuff of detective fiction. As I argued in Chapter 1, Ball's narrative, with its espionage frame, provides a lens that enables us to perceive that fugitive slave narratives are part of the antebellum literature of surveillance, along with other genres such as tales of detection. About halfway through his narrative, Ball relates the story of a young woman's assault and kidnapping (and subsequent death), in which Ball himself solves the mystery. While Ball is more likely to use the language of surveillance in the rest of his narrative, Ball explicitly frames this murder mystery as a story about "crime," beginning the chapter by affirming that crimes are "imagined, and even sometimes perpetuated" on slave plantations (Ball, *Slavery*, 218). Ball's sousveillance allows him to perceive clues that are invisible to whites and thus solve the murder, but, as an enslaved man, his expertise is negated by the presumption of his criminality. Thus instead of reconstructing the crime in a "convincing narrative of explanation," the hallmark of literary detection according to Peter Thoms, Ball must guide white authorities through his process of investigation and detection, enabling them to see for themselves what he has already seen from below.[10] Ball subsequently narrates two sharply contrasting stories of the crime—the white authorities' and his own—thereby demonstrating that there is never just one explanatory narrative, but that solutions to crimes are highly subjective, shaped by the worldview of the crime solver.

Ball emphasizes that his expertise in sousveillance enables him to solve the crime, which has stymied the forty white men who are trying to catch the murderer. Sitting at night along the side of the road in a spot that conceals him yet allows him to "see a great distance" (231), he observes an enslaved mulatto man named David and "instantly" suspects he is the murderer, being

"confident, that no honest purpose could bring him to this place, at this time of night, alone" (232). He tracks David deep into the woods, "with the caution of a spy, traversing the camp of an enemy" (232). Relying on his already-established skill at auditory sousveillance, Ball "pursue[s the man] by the noise he made, amongst these bushes"; he has to be vigilant to avoid making noise himself, "which might expose me to detection" (234). Ball's pursuit pays off when he hears a woman's voice and solves the mystery: "My mind comprehended the whole ground of this matter, at a glance. … I was now in possession of the clearest evidence of the guilt of the two murderers" (236). This claim to comprehension elevates Ball beyond a skilled tracker who can pursue a fugitive; with his statement that he understands the entire mystery Ball constructs a causal story that "connects and puts in proper order … the array of events leading up to the crime." This retrospective reconstruction is the identifying feature of stories of detection, as opposed to other crime literature.[11]

However, Ball's testimony as an enslaved man is undermined by the assumption of Black criminality on the part of the white authorities. When Ball reports that he has solved the crime, both the overseer and the plantation owner tell Ball that they still believe he is the murderer, though they agree "to go and see if all you say is a lie; if it is, the torments of — will be pleasure to what awaits you" (237). This retrospective account told from the perspective of an enslaved man thus complicates a key point in detective fiction theory. If, as Thoms argues, literary detection is about the power to "conquer the ostensible criminal by absorbing him and his deviant plot within [the detective's] own controlling story, defeating his rivals by presenting a convincing narrative of explanation," Ball's murder mystery demonstrates the problem that the enslaved crime solver faces, in which the stakes of the story are not defeating rivals but preventing one's own torture and execution.[12]

Since Ball cannot compel belief in his solution to the crime by "presenting a convincing narrative of explanation," he must guide his enslavers to practice sousveillance in order to see and hear the evidence for themselves. Ball, that is, must share his expertise with his enslavers in order to protect himself. Throughout the resolution of the story, Ball continues to use the language of detection as he describes locating the woman in the swamp. Returning to the swamp with a posse of enslavers, Ball emphasizes his expertise in following a trail of physical traces, noting that "I perceived some stains of mud, on the bark of the log. … [Investigating this log, I] here discovered evident signs of a small trail. … Creeping along, and following this trail. … [I] found that the small bushes were discomposed" (244). Although the white posse doubts Ball's skill and the conclusions he draws from his methods, meticulously following

these clues leads Ball to the woman. As the posse regroups and prepares to search for the fugitive criminal, however, Ball makes clear their instrumentalization of him: "I was permitted to be present at these deliberations; and though my advice was not asked, I was often interrogated, concerning my knowledge of the affair" (251). The posse is not interested in Ball's "advice": his holistic understanding of the crime or his capacity to predict the criminal's actions. Instead, "interrogated" implies that he is still a suspect, indicating that he will never purge the taint of criminality.

Instead of one authoritative causal story, Ball relates two accounts of the crime at the conclusion of his tale: one from the perspective of the white authorities, which focuses on how best to torture the African American criminals in order to make an example of them, and the other from his own perspective, which focuses on the suffering of the criminals. Although the white posse hold a "kind of court … in the woods" (255), the court is not concerned with establishing the guilt of the defendants, as that is taken for granted; rather they convene "for the purpose of determining what punishment should be inflicted. … All agreed at once, that an example of the most terrific character ought to be made of such atrocious villains, and that it would defeat the ends of Justice to deliver these fellows up to the civil authority, to be hanged like common murderers" (256). This vigilante justice presents a story of the crime that assumes Black guilt and dehumanizes African Americans by inflicting spectacularly cruel torture. Ball's nuanced, complex response to the criminals is in stark contrast to the white authorities'. Ball expresses sympathy for David, the first criminal captured, who is in great pain after being shot and tortured by the posse, and comforts him by bringing him water. Ball recognizes David's humanity, though he feels conflicted: "I felt a horror of the crimes committed by this man; was pained by the sight of his sufferings, and being unable to relieve the one, or to forgive the other, went to a place where I could neither see nor hear him" (256). Ball's story wrestles with the defendants' suffering and the impossibility of justice in an already-corrupt system, as well as his own role as an instrument of enslavers' brutal vengeance.

Ball's story demonstrates the way in which sousveillance facilitates solving crimes, a theme that Poe also dramatizes in his stories of detection. The stakes and rewards of detection are drastically different for Ball, an enslaved man, than they are for Dupin, a white aristocrat. Whereas Dupin's conspicuous detection brings fame and fortune, Ball's inconspicuous detection merely prevents him from being tortured and killed. Ball detects only because his enslavers believe he is the murderer and are about to flay him alive as punishment, despite Ball's truthful insistence that he has "committed no crime"

(225). Ball is reprieved when a witness to the woman's abduction states that Ball was not the man he saw. "[A]nimated by a spirit of revenge, against the wretch, whoever he might be, who had brought me so near to torture and death" (232), Ball decides to solve the crime. In addition to his revenge motive, Ball also wishes to repair his enslavers' opinion of him: to eliminate the suspicion that remains tenaciously attached to him even after an eyewitness clears him of guilt.

This asymmetry in rewards between Ball and Dupin reminds us that the stakes of sousveillance in Jacksonian slave narratives are self-preservation, not the puzzle games that readers often associate with detective stories. Though Ball receives praise from the white families of the area for "discovering the authors of the murder" (259), he later laments that "The part I had performed in the detection of the murders of the young lady was forgotten" (277). As J. Gerald Kennedy remarks, Ball's "sleuthing brings no reward … and indeed results in an execution that horrifies even the detective: white men stake a quadroon and a mulatto [the murderers] to the ground, causing them to die from starvation and exposure before the men are devoured" by carrion crows and buzzards.[13] Whereas critics have long claimed that the detective's function in the classical detective novel is to restore justice, Ball's detection instead reveals that there is no justice to restore in the slave South.

Poe's Experiments with Detection in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*

Poe lived nearly half his life in the slave South. Although he was born in Boston, he was raised by a foster family in Richmond, Virginia, after his parents died when he was two; he attended the University of Virginia (for less than a year); he was stationed at Fort Moultrie in Charleston, South Carolina, and Fortress Monroe in Virginia when he enlisted in the army; and he lived in Baltimore and Richmond for six years after he was discharged from West Point. Moreover, in New York and Philadelphia, the other cities in which he resided during his adult life, he was surrounded by some of the most active antislavery organizations of the 1830s and 1840s: the American Anti-Slavery Society was founded in Philadelphia in 1833, and the New York Committee of Vigilance (one of the precursors to the Underground Railroad) was established in New York in 1835. He was also in the midst of ongoing, violent attacks by white mobs against antislavery advocates, including one of the country's worst riots, which occurred in Philadelphia in 1838.[14] As a writer and editor, Poe

would have encountered numerous articles about antislavery efforts to free and protect fugitive slaves, as well as about the South's fears of slave insurrection and their intensified efforts to recapture runaways. Poe's background and geographic location put him at the heart of the antebellum slavery debates when he was writing *Pym*.[15]

In *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym,* Poe demonstrates that detection relies on the sousveillance practices that are figuratively linked in the novel to Black people. The long-standing critical tradition of seeing Pym as a "poor reader" or the novel as "a fable of misreading" stems from the final section of the book, when Pym is nearly killed by the Tsalalians' plot, and, to a lesser degree, from the first section, when Pym is under the thrall of Augustus.[16] Focusing on Pym's captivity aboard the *Grampus* reveals a much more startling reading of the novel: when Pym sousveils his detection is successful. Pym learns to detect by occupying the disempowered position of a fugitive slave and an insurrectionary like Nat Turner. Appropriating the methods of Black sousveillance as revealed in antislavery literature, Pym successfully detects the weaknesses of the mutineers who are holding his comrades hostage and enacts a revolution to retake the ship. But Poe also depicts the way in which Pym represses the knowledge of sousveillance's racial origins, as Poe stages a scene of Pym disguising himself in whiteface—that is, re-whitening himself—as he prepares to enact his sousveillant plot. Poe thereby acknowledges Pym's racial appropriation and hence the power of Black sousveillance.

When Pym, returned to his position of white supremacy as part of the crew of the *Jane Guy,* surveils the Black Tsalalians, however, his detection fails. Poe depicts the defeat of conspicuous detection by inconspicuous detection as the sousveillant Tsalalians detect the imperialist plot of the *Jane Guy* and devise a cooperative strategy of resistance. Indeed, Pym escapes the Tsalalians' massacre only because he conceals himself—metaphorically re-placing himself in the situation where he learned to detect, as a stowaway on the *Grampus,* in the position of a fugitive slave—and allies himself with a non-white person. Poe's recognition of the dangerous potential of sousveillance is not a tribute to the ingenuity, cunning, or courage of Black people, as it is in the antislavery archive. Rather, Poe wields the threat of sousveillance to ratchet up the terror in his tale. As Weinstein has argued in her reading of the chronopolitics of *Pym,* "Poe's aesthetic power has the alarming effect of obstructing his ideological perspective."[17] Once acknowledged, however, the recognition that surveillance is dialectical, that Black people are always watching from below, proves difficult to repress.

Although Pym's attempt at conspicuous detection fails, the enormous, shrouded white figure Pym sees at the conclusion of the narrative is a prototype of Dupin, the superhuman fantasy of conspicuous detection, to which Poe will turn in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." The vision of this vast white figure triggers the linguistic puzzle games in which Poe engages in the final pages of the novel, transforming the deadly threat of Black resistance into an esoteric exercise in cryptography. This is the same strategy Poe turns to in his tales of ratiocination, most notably "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." However, in the first Dupin tale, Poe eliminates the collective power of Black rebellion, reducing the figure of Blackness to one unreasoning brute rather than acknowledging the intelligence of coordinated conspiracy. Reading *Pym* alongside the Dupin tales demonstrates the limits of Dupin's capacity to repress the threat of Blackness.

Experiencing powerlessness; learning to detect

For Poe's antebellum readers, Pym's situation as a stowaway on the *Grampus* would immediately call to mind a fugitive slave, concealed on a northbound ship to escape slavery. The "water route" (as Douglass calls it) was one of the most common ways that fugitives effected their escapes. Augustus convinces Pym that he should defy his family's prohibition and sneak away to join Augustus on a whaling voyage. Augustus handles all the details of this deception, organizing a space in the ship's hold to stow Pym away until the ship is far enough from land to make returning Pym to shore impractical. Confined below decks, Pym has space enough only to sit or lie down; he is able to stand up and stretch his limbs only every other day; he is surrounded by a noxious air so that he can barely breathe; he doesn't have enough water; and his food is putrefied.[18] Numerous fugitive slave narratives include accounts of escaping in this way. For example, Robert Voorhis's 1829 description of his escape from enslavement concealed in the hold of a ship is eerily similar to Pym's journey, not only because both are stowaways, but also because Voorhis becomes so dehydrated during his concealment that he nearly loses his senses, and when he appears the crew of the ship believes he is a ghost:

> I was enabled to endure the calls of hunger and thirst, until the close of the fifth day from that of our departure, when the latter became too oppressive to be longer endure [*sic*]—had I then possessed the wealth of the Indias, it appeared to me, that I should have made a willing exchange for a draught

> of sweet water; not however until nearly deprived of my senses, did I feel willing to make my situation known to those on board—on the reflection, that should it even cost me my life, that an instantanious [*sic*] death would be preferable to a lingering one, I seized a fragment of a hoop, with which I crawled to and commenced thumping upon a beam near the hatchway, at the same time hallooing as loud as the strength my lungs would admit of—soon I was heard by the hands on deck, and while some broke out in exclamations of wonder and surprize, others ran affrighted to the cabin, to proclaim to the captain the fact that "the brig was most certainly haunted, and had become the habitation of bodiless spirits, as one or more were at that moment crying out lamentably in the hold!"—bodiless spirits they no doubt concluded they must be, for the hatches being so well secured with a tarpolin, none other, as they supposed, could have obtained access.
>
> (Voorhis, *Life and Adventures*, 18–19)

Pym implicitly connects his experience of concealment on the *Grampus* with the position of fugitive slaves when he dreams that he is "naked and alone, amid the burning sand plains of Zahara. At my feet lay crouched a fierce lion of the tropics" (Poe, *Pym*, 28). Placing Pym on the African continent (Zahara is a variant of Sahara), this dream links him to African Americans. Pym's experience of fugitivity and powerlessness puts him imaginatively in the position of enslaved narrators whose survival depends upon their ability to sousveil.

Prior to Pym's fugitivity, Poe has established his intimacy with and dependence on Augustus Barnard, a relationship that Poe would reproduce in that of the Dupin tales' unnamed narrator and C. Auguste Dupin. The replication of these interpersonal dynamics in Poe's later, more famous tales of detection suggests that *Pym* is an early experiment with the formal mechanics of telling a story about detection. The resemblance between Augustus's and C. Auguste Dupin's names indicates their shared status as figures of control.[19] Both Pym and Dupin's companion emphasize the intimate isolation of their relationship with Augustus and Dupin, respectively. In the first paragraph of the *Narrative,* Pym lingers on his friend, Augustus, two years Pym's senior and clearly the recipient of Pym's hero-worship: "I became intimate with the son of Mr. Barnard. … I used frequently to go home with him, and remain all day, and sometimes all night. We occupied the same bed, and he would be sure to keep me awake until almost light, telling me stories of the natives of the Island of Tinian, and other places he had visited in his travels" (7). Similarly, Dupin's companion discloses his infatuation with Dupin early in "Murders," describing their nocturnal habits: "We existed within ourselves alone," counterfeiting the

darkness of night by closing "all the massy shutters of our old building during the day."[20] Poe also underscores the inequality in these relationships by exposing the financial arrangements of the two pairs. In both stories, Poe takes care to note that Pym and the narrator of "Murders" provide financially for their companions, tarnishing the motivations of Augustus and Dupin by suggesting that they tolerate their companions' presence because they receive an economic benefit. Whereas in the Dupin tales Dupin's companion becomes more and more obtuse over the sequence of the three tales, in *Pym* Poe explores how the loss of his companion forces Pym to learn to detect in order to survive.

When Pym's fugitivity becomes an incomprehensible captivity, verbs of ratiocination and detailed descriptions of investigation proliferate, suggesting that Pym's captivity forces him to learn to detect. When Augustus does not appear at the expected time to release Pym, Pym tries to solve the mystery of Augustus's disappearance and his own captivity, examining and deducing from the evidence he discovers. In this section Poe draws on the gothic trope of "characters … thrown in to an investigation out of the fear they feel when confronted by an unfathomable world."[21] Pym sifts through "clew[s]" (38) and tests out various interpretations. For example, when his dog, Tiger—who inexplicably appears in the hold—begins acting strangely, Pym describes at length his attempt to investigate the mystery: "As the dog seemed distressed, I concluded that he had received some injury; and, taking his paws in my hands, I examined them one by one, but found no sign of any hurt. I then supposed him hungry, and gave him a large piece of ham" (33). This sequence of tentative suppositions and investigation continues until Pym "perceive[s] a slight erection of the hair. … Probing this with my finger, I discovered a string. … Upon closer scrutiny, I came across a small slip of what had the feeling of letter paper" (33–34). With the exaggerated minutiae of Pym's narration and the accumulation of verbs indicating mental activity ("concluded," "supposed," "occurred," "perceived," etc.), Poe calls the reader's attention to the transformation occurring as Pym learns to detect.

The power of sousveillance

In *Pym*'s second section, Poe demonstrates the power of sousveillance in overthrowing authority. While Pym investigates and ratiocinates in the first section of the novel, he cannot sousveil because, as Poe emphasizes, he is blind in the absolute darkness of the hold. Pym's detection is stillborn without sousveillance; sousveillance, as Poe indicates in the next section, is what

transforms the gothic trope of "investigat[ing] out of fear" into a tale of detection. Pym draws on his figurative identification with fugitive slaves and captives to deploy the methods of undersight in order to defeat oppressors who possess weapons and power. Released from captivity but still a fugitive, Pym allies with Augustus and Dirk Peters to retake the ship from the mutineers who have control of the *Grampus*. Hidden in the bulkhead next to Augustus's cabin, Pym sousveils the other sailors, who have no idea he is on the ship: "I could see and hear everything from my hiding place," he says (67). Poe repeatedly refers to the hole through which Pym spies on the sailors as an "aperture," emphasizing the visual sousveillance Pym performs.

Watching from below, Pym detects the mutineers' weakness and devises a plot that hinges on psychological manipulation, just as the Tsalalians will later do to the crew of the *Jane Guy*. Although Pym, Augustus, and Peters were aligned with authority when Augustus's father, Captain Barnard, was alive, they are now the weaker party; the nine mutineers possess nearly all the weapons on the ship. Knowing that the mutineers' leader is highly superstitious, Pym proposes to disguise himself as the grotesque corpse of a sailor who had earlier been poisoned by the mutineers. Pym eavesdrops on the sailors, waiting for the perfect moment to reveal himself, while Peters steers the conversation until "the whole party were wound up to the highest pitch of nervous excitement" (83). The ensuing shock and terror among the mutineers at seeing the seemingly animated corpse gives the trio the chance to kill most of them before they recover their "presence of mind" (84), leaving Pym, Augustus, and Peters "masters of the brig" (85) as they collaboratively retake the ship. Pym's experience of powerlessness and captivity has given him access to the practices of sousveillance and deception that he uses to defeat a stronger, armed force.

Though Pym employs the sousveillant tactics of inconspicuous detection, however, Poe indicates that Pym conceals the racial origins of his methodology. Pym's plot relies on his corpse disguise, for which he dons whiteface: "Peters then arranged my face … rubbing it well over with white chalk" (79). Pym's whitening disguises his racial appropriation, repressing the fact that his survival depended on his figurative positioning as a fugitive and a captive. By depicting this scene of the white subject repressing the knowledge of sousveillance's racial origins, Poe thus acknowledges Pym's appropriation, and hence the power of Black sousveillance.

Unlike fugitive slave narrators, who were vulnerable to recapture even after their escape, Pym has no motive to remain inconspicuous once his sousveillance puts him back in power. Poe's diction in proclaiming the trio

"masters of the brig" indicates his return to a position of racial dominance. Though Pym employs similar strategies to fugitive slave narrators, he insists on receiving credit for masterminding the scheme. This success depends upon a cooperative effort, but Pym is careful to note that it is *his* plan. As the three countermutineers discuss their options, Pym rejects the suggestions of the other two men and promotes his own plan (not content simply to reject them in advance, Pym again returns to these suggestions as they are about to attack the enemy and reminds the reader why the other plans would not have worked). In a tone of false modesty belied by the vigor of his efforts to dismiss any other suggestions, Pym claims full credit for the successful scheme: "By good fortune I at length hit upon the idea of working upon the superstitious terrors and guilty conscience of the mate" (77). By elevating himself as the mastermind and obscuring the teamwork required to overcome a group that outnumbers them two to one, Pym enacts the model of conspicuous detection that subsumes collective efforts into a solitary figure.

Furthermore, Pym claims to be able to read the mutineers' minds, a practice that characterizes conspicuous detectives. Detective fiction critics have asserted that "it is this ability to project himself into the mind of his opponent that allows Dupin (and later Holmes) to triumph consistently in the game of detection."[22] In an attenuated paragraph, Pym projects himself into the mutineers' minds and describes their reasoning process as they were confronted with the apparent corpse: "in the minds of the mutineers there was not even the shadow of a basis upon which to rest a doubt that the apparition of Rogers was indeed a revivification of his disgusting corpse, or at least its spiritual image" (83). Going on for another page, Pym works through exactly what the mutineers were thinking in minute detail, just as Dupin will do with the sailor in "Murders." As critics of detective fiction have argued, this presumption of mind reading signifies the detective's authorial control over the narrative, such that his master narrative eliminates all potential rival or counter narratives. Whereas fugitive slave narrators kept their practice of detection inconspicuous—to avoid making themselves targets, to enable others to continue using the same practices, and because they recognized the systemic, ongoing nature of both the crime of slavery and resistance practices—Pym condenses the system into his own person and claims credit as an individual. At this point in the narrative, Pym most resembles the model of conspicuous detection that Poe develops more fully in Dupin: he claims credit for masterminding a clever ruse, defeats his enemies, and absorbs their thoughts and memories into his own narrative.

The triumph of inconspicuous detection

Finally, in the novel's third section, Poe demonstrates how whites' naïve belief in Black contentment and passivity leads to their destruction when they fail to perceive the power of sousveillance. Pym is unable to detect the insurrection plot of the Tsalalian natives, who overthrow the colonialist threat posed by Pym and his colleagues on the *Jane Guy*. As Dana Nelson has established, Pym and the other crew members "feel assured in their assumptions about the Tsalalians' ignorance because of their confidence in their superior force. … [T]he crew's own blind sense of superiority … exposes them to ambush."[23] Not only does Poe indicate that the Tsalalians have practiced successful inconspicuous detection in order to arrange their massacre of the *Jane Guy* sailors, but he also invites readers to interpret the clues that Pym misses and solve the mystery for which Pym cannot account. Poe thus encourages in his audience what Bran Nicol, building on Garrett Stewart's work, has called "gothic reading": a "'suspicious' attitude to a world loaded with hidden meaning and menace, and the impulse towards investigation to solve its mysteries, are integral to gothic reading."[24] Having provided an explanatory framework for the sousveillant plot in the *Grampus* countermutiny section, Poe encourages his readers to apply it to the Tsalalians' analogous behavior in order to detect Black resistance even though Pym and the other whites remain blind to it.

Whereas Pym was in a position of powerlessness in both of the first two sections (first as a stowaway and then as a member of a smaller, unarmed rebel group), when Pym lands on the island of Tsalal alongside the rest of the *Jane Guy*'s white crew in the novel's third section, he is in a position of authority.[25] Having been rescued from the wreck of the *Grampus* by a Liverpool ship named the *Jane Guy,* Pym is affiliated with the ship's Anglo crew and its imperialist project of discovery and exploitation, as signaled by Poe's liberal use of Morrell's travel narratives, which "assume[d] … the inherent inferiority and simplicity of darker skinned peoples."[26] In relation to the Tsalalians, a race of Black people whom Pym describes as "savages," Pym is now a member of a stronger, armed force: like the mutineers on the *Grampus*, the *Jane Guy* has all the guns while, like Pym, Augustus, and Peters on the *Grampus*, the Tsalalians have only clubs and a few spears. Just as Pym, Augustus, and Peters used subterfuge to overcome the mutineers on the *Grampus*, the Tsalalians put into action a "deeply laid plan" (180) to defeat their stronger enemies, luring most of the sailors into a gorge rigged to collapse on them. Thus, while Pym wants to portray himself as the innocent victim of the Tsalalians, the structure of the episode indicates that Pym is in the position formerly occupied by

the *Grampus*'s piratical mutineers, whose murderous behavior makes them a much better example of savagery than the Tsalalians. Pym fails to detect and hence nearly becomes the victim of the Tsalalians' superior, inconspicuous detection.

The Tsalalians' strategic performance of ignorance, like those frequently described by fugitive slave narrators, signals their sousveillance of the *Jane Guy*'s crew. Playing the part of docile "savages," the Tsalalians' elaborately theatrical show of ignorance, designed to distract the crew while the Tsalalians examine their weapons and supplies to determine what they are up against, takes advantage of the crew's "blind spot" regarding native inferiority: "The Tsalalians manage to dupe the crewmen by turning their sense of security against them."[27] Pantomiming "amazement exceed[ing] all bounds," twenty Tsalalians "ramble[d] over every part of the deck … examining every article with great inquisitiveness" (164–165). The Tsalalians' ability to convince the crew that they had not "the least suspicion of [the arms'] actual use, but rather took them for idols" allows them to be "suffered to handle and examine them at leisure" (165).

Similarly, the Tsalalians pretend not to understand questions and directives with which they do not wish to comply, such as when the *Jane Guy* crew "endeavored to ascertain if they had among them any articles which might be turned to account in the way of traffic, but found great difficulty in being comprehended" (166). Just as Pym capitalizes on the mutineers' superstitious prejudices in order to create an opportunity for them to retake the ship, and Babo in Melville's *Benito Cereno* exploits Delano's racism to camouflage the Blacks' control of the ship, the Tsalalians create an opportunity for insurrection by, in Hartman's words, "puttin' on ole massa'" to "simulat[e] … compliance for covert aims."[28] The Tsalalians' actions are similar to Dupin's when he goes to the Minister's apartment to search for the purloined letter: "I complained of my weak eyes and lamented the necessity of the [green] spectacles, under cover of which I cautiously and thoroughly surveyed the apartment, while seemingly intent only upon the conversation of my host."[29] These ruses allow the detectives to scope out their enemy without alerting them that they are under surveillance—or, in the Tsalalians' case, sousveillance.

The episode on Tsalal presents the same methods that Pym learned in the hold of the *Grampus* and deployed to defeat the mutineers, but this time the narrative perspective is not on the side of the sousveillants. The Tsalalians' inconspicuous detection facilitates their plot to engineer a massive landslide, which buries nearly all of the *Jane Guy* sailors (Poe, *Pym*, 182–183) and

requires extensive advance planning, cooperation, and secrecy. Although Pym claims that the "means by which the vast mass had been precipitated were not more simple than evident," the description of "the marks left in the soil resembling those made by the drill of the rock blaster" (187) reveals the extensive labor necessary to achieve such a landslide, as well as the high degree of precision in the teamwork required to set it off at the right moment. Turning their weaker position into a stratagem, the Tsalalians make a show of being unarmed, even commenting, "*Matee non we pa pa si,*" which Pym translates as "there was no need of arms where all were brothers" (181). Most critics gloss this as an ironic comment underscoring the hypocrisy of the *Jane Guy*'s crew, who claimed friendship but are "armed to the teeth" (181). A better reading, I argue, refers to the Tsalalians themselves. Their "brotherhood," or coalition, renders traditional "arms" unnecessary, as they have devised a superweapon that depends on a precisely orchestrated cooperative effort for its deployment. Even the Tsalalians' leader, Too-wit, emphasizes the cooperative nature of their society. His name can be read as a homophone for two wit: not one individual mind, but a collaboration.

The reader sees the effects of the Tsalalians' conspiracy, the triumph of their inconspicuous detection, through Pym's eyes. Pym views the Tsalalians from the perspective of the racist, white colonizer. His experience of captivity and powerlessness has taught him how to sousveil, but not how to empathize with others who are facing conditions of oppression. Pym should have recognized the parallel between the countermutiny on the *Grampus* and the Tsalalians' plot, however, as he watches Too-wit act exactly as he had during the subterfuge on the *Grampus.* Just before Pym, disguised as a corpse, launched the attack on the *Grampus* mutineers, he looked at himself in the mirror and "was so impressed with a sense of vague awe at my appearance, and at the recollection of the terrific reality which I was thus representing, that I was seized with a violent tremour, and could scarcely summon resolution to go on with my part" (80). Likewise, when Too-wit performs his role of ignorant "savage" on the *Jane Guy*, he "see[s] his reflected self in the glass." Pym reports, "I thought the savage would go mad; … beholding himself a second time. … I was afraid he would expire upon the spot. … [T]hrowing himself upon the floor, with his face buried in his hands, he remained thus until we were obliged to drag him upon deck" (166). Both Pym and Too-wit are overwhelmed with anxiety that they have lost themselves in the profound deception of their disguise. By repeating this detail in both scenes, Poe indicates that the two insurrections are deeply linked: both are grounded in sousveillance practices gained through the experience of powerlessness and the need for survival.

While Pym refuses to acknowledge the similarities between the two episodes, Poe encourages the reader to be suspicious of Pym's interpretation. The most prominent example is Pym's incomprehension when the Tsalalians refuse "to approach several very harmless objects—such as the schooner's sails, an egg, an open book, or a pan of flour" (166). The reader, of course, helped along perhaps by several additional examples of Tsalalians exhibiting disgust or fear of white objects, recognizes the link among these "harmless objects" that Pym cannot. Critics tend to emphasize this moment as an example of Pym's outrageous blindness, but this Pymcentric reading downplays the significance of the episode. More importantly, the scene demonstrates the Tsalalians' sousveillance, as well as the reader's interpellation into the Tsalalians' inconspicuous detection, in a manner similar to the one Melville uses in *Benito Cereno*.

Nevertheless, Pym does have brief flickers of recognition and suspicion, suggesting that his captivity and his sousveillance of the mutineers have made him more watchful than the rest of the *Jane Guy* colonizers, who have not experienced powerlessness. Pym's misgivings are raised by the Tsalalians' cooperation on his first visit to the village, when he reports that the procession "was momentarily strengthened by smaller detachments, of from two to six or seven, which joined us, as if by accident, at different turns in the road. There appeared so much of system in this that I could not help feeling distrust" (170). He repeats this concern with "system" among the Tsalalians later in the chapter, remarking "we saw nothing in the demeanor of the natives calculated to create suspicion, with the single exception of the systematic manner in which their party was strengthened during our route from the schooner to the village" (175). Pym's nervousness about this "systematic manner" betrays a fear of conspiracy, supporting the link that many scholars note between the Tsalalian massacre and the Nat Turner slave rebellion, but also indicating the power of collaboration.[30]

Moreover, although Pym does not perceive the Tsalalians' plot, he does survive it, along with Dirk Peters, a racially "hybrid" son of an Upsaroka woman and a fur trader (57). The only two crewmen from the *Jane Guy* to survive the massacre are both affiliated with non-whiteness: Pym imaginatively thanks to his captivity in the hold and Peters due to his parentage.[31] Pym and Peters survive by concealing themselves in a rock fissure, which Pym refers to as an "aperture" and a "loophole," while they spy on the Tsalalians: "we congratulated ourselves upon the security of the position; for we were now completely excluded from observation" (193–194). As vulnerable fugitives, Pym and Peters scavenge off the land and clandestinely reconnoiter their surroundings to find a means of escape. By returning Pym, along with the

non-white Peters to the position of concealed fugitives (now hidden in subterranean caverns rather than a ship's hold) in the last section of the story, Poe reiterates the efficacy of sousveillance. While the Tsalalian's massacre demonstrates the danger of white blindness to the reality of the Black gaze, the ending of the novel circles back to the opening, linking Pym's sousveillance on the *Grampus* to his sousveillance of the Tsalalians. Pym's ability to detect decreases in proportion to his affiliation with whiteness.

Pym's appropriation of sousveillance may be enough to escape the island, but a stronger mode of detection will be necessary to defeat the threat posed by the Tsalalians, an analogue of the threat of slave insurrection in the antebellum United States. In this final version of the conflict between inconspicuous and conspicuous detection with which Poe has been experimenting throughout the novel, Poe writes an ending that prefigures the Dupin tales. Drifting southward, Pym, Peters, and Nu-Nu (a Tsalalian Pym and Peters kidnapped in their escape) enter a fantastic region of pure whiteness, in which the sea is of "a milky consistency and hue" and a "fine white powder" covers their canoe (215–216). This whiteness terrifies Nu-Nu and saps his strength; he is unable to survive in this environment. The white figure Pym encounters at the end of the novel embodies the stronger mode of conspicuous detection Poe will develop in the Dupin tales: "a shrouded human figure, very far larger in its proportions than any dweller among men. And the hue of the skin of the figure was of the perfect whiteness of the snow" (217). Pym's whiteface in the countermutiny episode foreshadows this figure's hyperwhiteness, concealing and repressing the racial origins of sousveillance in the figures of Blackness with which Poe has imaginatively identified Pym throughout the novel. The ending of *Pym* presents a comforting fantasy of whiteness, though its hyperbole indicates Poe's warning about the illusory nature of this safety.

Critics have offered a multitude of readings of this infamous ending, arguing, for example, that the white figure is a sign of racial purity, a reflection of Pym himself, or a personification of the blank page. I want instead to emphasize that *Pym* ends with an appropriate emblem of the individual mastermind, the conspicuous detective: a solitary human figure, elevated above the realm of average men. Like Dupin's claim to nonreciprocal surveillance, this figure is shrouded, protected from view. When Dupin is engaged in analysis, the narrator notes, "His manner … was frigid and abstract; his eyes were vacant in expression" (Poe, "Murders," 533).[32] By immobilizing his face and glazing his eyes, Dupin guards the typical points of access to one's interiority. Similarly, the white figure in *Pym* is impenetrable and unreadable; so much so that its appearance abruptly truncates the narrative, cutting off the story before the expected *denouement*. As Daniel Hoffman observes, the "series … of

'of' phrases [in the final sentence], is the perfect syntactical epitome of the action, an endlessly regressive series of phrases disappearing into each other until there is nothing left to say or see but Nothing."[33] The "Nothingness" that Hoffman describes in these phrases correlates to the conspicuous detective's abstraction; the "of" phrases present an impenetrable surface of whiteness just as the narrator of the Dupin tales cannot penetrate Dupin's glazed eyes and paralyzed countenance. Pym rushes toward the embrace of this conspicuous detective, who is perhaps powerful enough to defeat the threatening cooperation among the Tsalalians that proved too much for Pym.

With the rise of this superhuman white figure, Poe transforms the mystery of the text from an urgent social anxiety about slave revolt to a linguistic puzzle, just as he will in the Dupin tales and other tales of ratiocination such as "The Gold-Bug." Following the narrative's abrupt ending, Poe appends a "Note," purportedly written by the editor of the text.[34] The tone and content of this note are Dupinian: just as Dupin wields Cuvier's natural history in "Murders" and the collated contents of every Parisian newspaper in "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt," in the "Note" a self-appointed expert on secret codes and ancient hieroglyphics identifies and belittles the false reasoning of previous commentators (including "Mr. Poe" himself), and provides an "accurate" analysis. During Pym and Peters's fugitivity on Tsalal, they discover "indentures in the surface" of one of the cavern walls. Peters suggests that they are "alphabetical characters" along with a hieroglyph of a "human figure standing erect with outstretched arm," while Pym criticizes Peters for "adopt[ing] th[is] idle opinion" and endeavors to "convince[] him of his error" (Poe, *Pym*, 202).[35] Giving a pseudo-learned disquisition on ancient and modern languages, the author of the "Note" deciphers the "indentures" Pym and Peters found in the Tsalalian caves (220).[36] This philological mystery allows the editor to display his erudition and analytic mastery in generating a solution. The editor steps in like a conspicuous detective with a controlling story of explanation. Pym's encounter with the superhuman white figure at the end of the narrative *engenders* the editor, who enters the narrative on the following page and is tonally identical to Dupin in his pedantry, and hence, I argue, *generates* Poe's most successful tales of detection.

Yet this ending is incommensurate with the threat posed by the Tsalalians within the text, and even more with the threat of enslaved resistance in the world outside the text. If the ending is a gesture of triumph via analysis, it is ultimately an empty gesture.[37] As in the Dupin tales, the individual never confronts the threatening collective directly; instead, he retreats to the fantasy of a linguistic realm. In *Pym,* therefore, Poe signifies that conspicuous

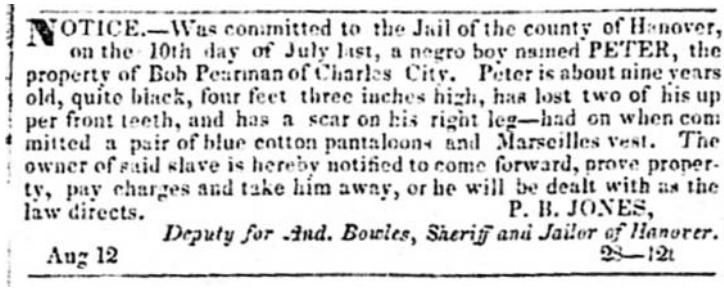
detection is a defensive position that emerges from conflict with inconspicuous detection practiced by African Americans and their white allies. Over the course of the Dupin tales, Poe increasingly moves away from acknowledging that conspicuous detection is generated in response to the powerful threat of sousveillance and shifts instead to presenting the conspicuous detective as an extraordinary figure detached from sociohistorical context.

Perfecting Conspicuous Detection in the Dupin Tales

Raising the specter of violent insurrection by foreign-born captives, the first Dupin tale—"The Murders in the Rue Morgue"—essentially picks up where *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* left off. The murderous orangutan in this tale would have strongly evoked what Toni Morrison calls "the Africanist presence" for nineteenth-century readers.[38] As Ed White argues, "the first American detective story, … 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue,' is a response to American slave rebellions."[39] I would extend White's insightful reading, however, to argue that "Murders" combines fears about slave rebellion with Southerners' increasing anxiety about recapturing fugitive slaves. Whereas in *Pym* the Tsalalians were an autonomous civilization, in "Murders" Poe subjugates the figure of Blackness, the orangutan, by placing him under the ownership of a white male. Dupin never confronts the ostensible killer, he confronts only the sailor who kidnaps the orangutan from its native land, transports it to the city, and holds it captive until it recovers from its shipboard injuries and he can sell it (Poe, "Murders," 564). When this slave trader's captive escapes, Dupin places an advertisement in the newspaper that states

> Caught—In the Bois de Boulogne, early in the morning of the –inst., (the morning of the murder,) a very large, tawny Ourang-Outang of the Bornese species. The owner, (who is ascertained to be a sailor, belonging to a Maltese vessel,) may have the animal again, upon identifying it satisfactorily, and paying a few charges arising from its capture and keeping. Call at No.—, Rue –, Faubourg St. Germain –au troisieme. (560–561)

This advertisement matches those that US jailors placed in newspapers to alert enslavers to come collect their property when a fugitive enslaved person was recaptured. Constables and sheriffs advertised to find the legal owner of enslaved people who were apprehended in their district; these ads gave as much detail as possible including the enslaved person's name, physical appearance, clothes, and owner's name (see Figures 2.1–2.3 for examples published in

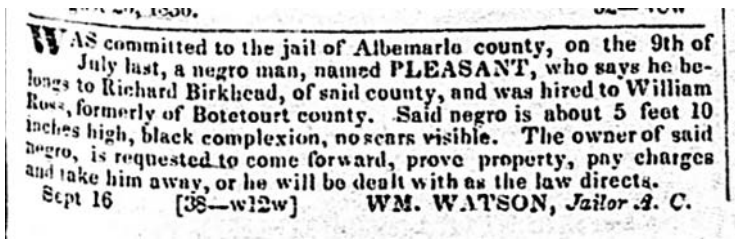


NOTICE.—Was committed to the Jail of the county of Hanover, on the 10th day of July last, a negro boy named PETER, the property of Bob Pearman of Charles City. Peter is about nine years old, quite black, four feet three inches high, has lost two of his upper front teeth, and has a scar on his right leg—had on when committed a pair of blue cotton pantaloons and Marseilles vest. The owner of said slave is hereby notified to come forward, prove property, pay charges and take him away, or he will be dealt with as the law directs.

P. B. JONES,
Deputy for And. Bowles, Sheriff and Jailor of Hanover.

Aug 12 28—12t

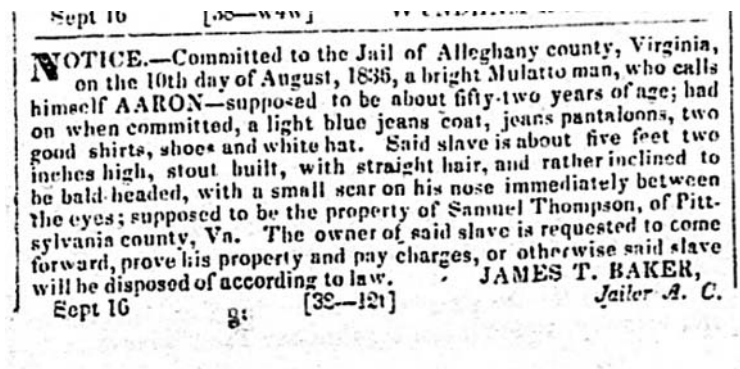
Fig. 2.1 "*Richmond Enquirer*" (Richmond, VA), Sept. 6, 1836, pg. 4, col. 6. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024735/1836-09-06/ed-1/seq-4/



WAS committed to the jail of Albemarle county, on the 9th of July last, a negro man, named PLEASANT, who says he belongs to Richard Birkhead, of said county, and was hired to William Ross, formerly of Botetourt county. Said negro is about 5 feet 10 inches high, black complexion, no scars visible. The owner of said negro, is requested to come forward, prove property, pay charges and take him away, or he will be dealt with as the law directs.

Sept 16 [38—w12w] WM. WATSON, *Jailor A. C.*

Fig. 2.2 "Richmond Enquirer" (Richmond, VA), Sept. 23, 1836, pg. 1, col. 1. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024735/1836-09-23/ed-1/seq-1/



Sept 16 [38—w4w]

NOTICE.—Committed to the Jail of Alleghany county, Virginia, on the 10th day of August, 1836, a bright Mulatto man, who calls himself AARON—supposed to be about fifty-two years of age; had on when committed, a light blue jeans coat, jeans pantaloons, two good shirts, shoes and white hat. Said slave is about five feet two inches high, stout built, with straight hair, and rather inclined to be bald-headed, with a small scar on his nose immediately between the eyes; supposed to be the property of Samuel Thompson, of Pittsylvania county, Va. The owner of said slave is requested to come forward, prove his property and pay charges, or otherwise said slave will be disposed of according to law.

JAMES T. BAKER,
Jailer A. C.

Sept 16 [38—12t]

Fig. 2.3 "*Richmond Enquirer*" (Richmond, VA), Sept. 23, 1836, pg. 1, col. 3. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024735/1836-09-23/ed-1/seq-1/

a Richmond paper during Poe's residence there).[40] These advertisements for captured fugitives described the enslaved person and requested "the owner of said negro … to come forward, prove property, pay charges and take him away." Poe would have seen numerous examples of these advertisements in the classified section of any Southern or border-state newspaper. By echoing the language of advertisements for captured fugitive enslaved people in Dupin's advertisement, Poe signals that Dupin's methods are based on those of slave catchers. Dupin, however, uses the methods of slave catchers to track down not the fugitive slave, but the slave trader: he acts as an enslaver catcher, rather than a slave catcher.

According to Dupin's solution, the orangutan's kidnapper and "master" is "innocent of the atrocities in the Rue Morgue. … You have done nothing which you could have avoided—nothing, certainly, which renders you culpable" (563–564). This explanation ignores the sailor's responsibility for capturing the orangutan in the first place, for imprisoning it in his apartment, for whipping it, and for providing the murder weapon—a razor that the orangutan has watched the sailor use to shave. By placing the blame entirely on the orangutan's "intractable ferocity" (564), Dupin exonerates the sailor for his guilt in the system of exploitation that the animal mimics in killing the women. Dupin's solution not only protects the sailor from penalty, but releases the bank clerk—a symbol of capitalism—who has been imprisoned as a suspect in the murders. At the end of the story, the three individuals implicated in the murders have returned to their original positions—the kidnapped orangutan is recaptured, while the sailor and bank clerk are free to continue profiting from the exploitation of marginalized groups. Dupin's solution denies the possibility that something larger than one individual might be responsible for the violence, averting the search for explanations from the system of domination within which captive, master, and victims are located. By defending the interests of the dominant class against the threat represented by the Africanist presence, Dupin has not only assuaged the public's fears, but augmented his own reputation.

The Tsalalians' threat in *Pym* represents not just Blackness but coordinated Black resistance. Over the course of the three Dupin tales, Poe represses both the racial and the collective aspects of this threat. By excluding the orangutan as an agent, the story denies the conflict between racialized surveillance and sousveillance that prompted Poe's experiments with detection in *Pym*. While the orangutan sousveils the white sailor in the story—it "watched its master [shaving] through the key-hole of the closet" (565)—it uses this observation to try to imitate the white sailor, not to plot subversive resistance. Unlike the

Tsalalians, who sousveil the *Jane Guy*'s crew in order to develop their "deeply laid plan" of rebellion, the orangutan's sousveillance merely underscores its inferiority to the white sailor and leads to its brutal but random violence against the L'Espanayes. In *Pym*, Poe encourages the reader to be suspicious of Pym's imperialist blind spot and to recognize that the Tsalalians' rebellion was analogous to the countermutiny, thereby implying that it was a reasonable response to a situation of asymmetric warfare. In "Murders," on the other hand, the ape's irrational violence is due to its survival instincts, not to its intentional resistance against systemic domination. As DeLombard demonstrates, "the ape cannot lay claim to the *mens rea* that constitutes legally responsible personhood for slave and freeman alike."[41] Poe thus suppresses the recognition that enslaved people practice sousveillance to facilitate resistance and attain freedom.

In addition to repressing the threat of Blackness, Poe denies the power of collective resistance by individualizing the threat in the Dupin tales: one isolated fugitive in "Murders" rather than the Tsalalians' collaboration. Poe complements this individualization of the criminal with a narrative structure that denies the reciprocity of surveillance. The orangutan sousveils the sailor, not Dupin. Poe internalizes figures of external surveillance, such as peeping through windows, in describing Dupin's ability. Dupin boasts that "most men, in respect to himself, wore windows in their bosoms" (533), which allows him to solve crimes by penetrating the exterior coverings of others and accessing their interiority. Just as important as Dupin's ability to peer into the windows in other men's bosoms is his ability to shutter his own: that is, his panopticism. Curiously, in a genre strongly associated with the mind and thought—"ratiocination," in Poe's preferred term—the detective's mind remains obscured. The foundation of Poe's tales of detection, then, is a special kind of mind, one that remains individuated and impermeable while simultaneously infiltrating the minds of others. Poe thereby transforms the conflict between surveillance and sousveillance into a nonreciprocal mind-reading that consolidates a power differential between observer and observed. Not only does Dupin penetrate other minds, but by severing the collaboration between other minds, he reduces every other mind to an individual, isolated mind like his own, except inferior.

"Murders" thus establishes Dupin's habit of reconfiguring the parameters of a case to ensure that his rival is more or less identical to himself. By individualizing the criminal, Poe makes the threat manageable, in contrast to the demographic realities of portions of the American South where enslaved people outnumbered whites. As the narrator of the Dupin tales notes in "Murders,"

"the analyst [glories] in that moral activity which *disentangles*" (528). The figure of an entangled, or interwoven, network represents the most dangerous opposition to the solitary analyst. Imaging "the analyst" as separating knotted strands, the narrator attempts to cast the collective figure against whom the analyst deploys his "moral activity" in the negative light of a tangled mess, but his textile metaphor betrays an unspoken anxiety, since weaving or knotting increases the strength of a string.

Poe explores the way that groups can thwart detection in an earlier story of investigation that serves as a bridge between *Pym* and "Murders." In "The Man of the Crowd" (1840), Poe depicts an extended chase, in which an individual surveillant pursues a stranger whose "absolute idiosyncrasy" defies comprehension. Stalking this fugitive, the narrator realizes that the man is seeking out crowds, seemingly drawing his energy from them. After an entire day of pursuit, the narrator finally abandons his effort to understand the man, deciding "This old man … is the type and the genius of deep crime. He refuses to be alone. *He is the man of the crowd*."[42] The narrator thus blames his failure to explain the man on the way that crowds harbor criminals. As Dana Brand notes, "the opacity of the urban crowd ceases to be merely confusing; it becomes actively threatening."[43] Metaphorically linking crowds to the ability of a criminal to evade capture, the narrator's final comments suggest that detection requires individuation and isolation.

Poe pursues this individuation in the subsequent two Dupin tales as well. In "The Mystery of Marie Rôget," while Dupin, and ultimately Poe, fails to unravel a web that was not of his own making, the story did alter the public perception of the case by dismantling the prevalent theory that Mary Rogers was killed by a "gang of ruffians." As Thomas Dunn English noted in his review of "The Mystery of Marie Rôget," "At all events, [Poe] has dissipated in our mind all belief that the murder was perpetrated by more than one."[44] Indeed, Dupin reduces not only the criminal, but every collective in the story (the mass media, the public, and the police) into individuals and then shows how easily he can defeat them one-on-one. After neutralizing these groups by reconstituting them as unconnected individuals, Dupin reconfigures the mystery itself to become a question of a shrewd, manipulative genius facing off against another individual, thus anticipating his refinement of this situation in "The Purloined Letter." Poe's conspicuous detection thus denies the efficacy of the collective and turns the readers' attention away from systemic explanations for crime.

In "The Purloined Letter," the final Dupin tale, Poe takes this individuation to such an extreme that Dupin merely reads his own mind. Although Dupin detects the Minister D's disguised letter, Poe indicates that the Minister

is Dupin's doppelganger. In contrast to Dupin and the narrator's insistence that Dupin's success comes from an extraordinary ability to adapt his thinking to that of his opponent, neither over- nor underestimating the opponent, this identity between the detective and the criminal highlights the banality of Dupin's detection: Dupin can detect only himself.[45] When contrasted with the failure of Pym and the problematic assays in the first two Dupin tales—in which Pym or Dupin were trying to detect and master "others" who differed in race, class, gender, and even species from the detective—we can see Poe's effort to create the fantasized solution in the "Purloined Letter." By the time Poe wrote "The Purloined Letter," the third Dupin tale, which he called "perhaps the best of my tales of ratiocination,"[46] he had created an enduring formal structure that presents Dupin's interpretation as universal and archetypal rather than historically contingent. Reading the Dupin tales in conjunction with *Pym,* however, allows us to see Poe's continuing process of experimentation with literary detection, rather than a set form that he "invented" and delivered whole in "Murders."

Scholars have shown that the racial anxiety that motivated Poe's experiments with literary detection in *Pym* and the Dupin tales also prompts Poe's other tales of investigation and ratiocination. Michelle Robinson argues that in "The Man That Was Used Up" (1839), in which a white war hero depends upon a Black valet to reassemble him from a mass of prosthetic devices, "Poe rehearses a method of assembling narrative that would become customary to classical detective fiction"; moreover, the narrative suppresses the knowledge of whites' "parasitic dependence on blacks." Robinson also proposes that in "The Gold-Bug" (1843), another of Poe's tales of ratiocination, Poe "used detection's tools … to embody and interrogate the psychodynamics of interracial dependency."[47] Like "The Man That Was Used Up," "The Gold-Bug" features an elderly African American man (Jupiter) and the white man (Legrand) he serves. Legrand, an impoverished aristocrat like Dupin, solves a cryptogram on an old piece of parchment that he realizes is a map to Captain Kidd's buried pirate treasure. To recover the treasure, Legrand exploits Jupiter's labor just as he capitalizes on Jupiter's discovery of the parchment. As Frankie Y. Bailey observes, Jupiter, "this ignorant, superstitious slave … provides the plot's red herrings" that deflect the narrator's (and the reader's) attention away from Legrand's detective work until he reveals his solution to the mystery.[48] "The Gold-Bug" uses racist stereotypes of Black minstrelsy in order to ridicule the African American figure, who is not intelligent enough to perceive the value of the parchment or to solve the mystery, but whose labor the conspicuous detective exploits.[49] Thus, by the time of writing "The Gold-Bug" Poe has not

only suppressed the reality of African American sousveillance and its challenge to white supremacy, which initially provoked Poe's literary engagement with detection, but he turns African American inconspicuous detection into a racist parody of white conspicuous detection.

Ball's inconspicuous detection foregrounds the potency of sousveillance to detect clues and solve mysteries that are inexplicable to whites—that is, it reveals an alternative way of knowing that has epistemological validity but remains invisible to whites. Like the sousveillance depicted in other slave narratives of the 1820s and 1830s that I discussed in Chapter 1, it protects the sousveillant rather than publicizing his achievements. In *Pym,* Poe appropriates sousveillance's efficacy at interpreting the world, portraying how a white man's imaginative identification with the powerless position of a fugitive slave enables him to detect and manipulate a more powerful confederation. However, Poe also depicts how quickly Pym loses this insight once he regains a position of white supremacy, and he uses this blindspot to generate terror in his white readers. For Poe, awareness of Black sousveillance does not translate into sympathy for Black people—instead, it presents a problem to be solved. Rather than offering a solution, though, Poe shifts discursive registers from sociohistorical anxiety about Black resistance to the linguistic realm of cryptography, thereby replacing a violent threat with an arcane puzzle.

3

White Oversight in *The Confessions of Nat Turner, Benito Cereno,* and *The Heroic Slave*

If the emergent genre of detective fiction posited a fantasy of unreciprocated surveillance, other antebellum authors investigated the conditions under which this illusion was destroyed. The rare instances of enslaved rebellion were moments in which slavery's system of surveillance and policing failed and sousveillants faced surveillants directly. Even more than the freedom practices I examined in Chapter 1, these violent upheavals make plain the dialectical nature of veillance. Enslaved rebellion epitomizes bell hooks's notion of the "oppositional gaze," a "dangerous stare" that declares "'Not only will I stare. I want my look to change reality.'"[1] The oppositional gaze challenges what Sarah Blackwood terms "white sight," "a set of viewing practices that claim an interpretive and epistemological authority that is fused with racial identity."[2]

I want to link Blackwood's concept of "white sight" to hooks's claim that "[i]n white supremacist society, white people can 'safely' imagine that they are invisible to black people since the power they have historically asserted, and even now collectively assert over black people, accorded them the right to control the black gaze."[3] The legal and social practices of white supremacy that enforce white invisibility also give the white gaze its "epistemological authority." This assumption of invisibility, which I call white oversight, makes the white person like the unverified observer at the center of the panopticon—able to see without being seen in return.[4] The supervisory white overseer nevertheless fails to see the reality of the Black gaze, an oversight that has potentially lethal consequences in the case of enslaved rebellion.[5] Enslaved rebellion destroys the illusion that surveillance is nonreciprocal by looking back at the surveillant, meeting white oversight with Black sousveillance.

The three texts about the crime of enslaved rebellion that I examine in this chapter—*The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1831), Frederick Douglass's *The Heroic Slave* (1853), and Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno* (1855)—grapple with the shattering effects of the destruction of white oversight. The "interpretive and epistemological authority" of white oversight subtends reconstructions of the past, stabilizing historical narratives. When white surveillants

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recognize that they are not "safely" invisible, but are also objects of scrutiny, the dialectic of white surveillance and Black sousveillance breaks down, causing a rupture in narrative form. Enslaved rebellion temporarily upends the power dynamics of watching, a reversal these authors register in their portrayals of the contingency of veillance. These narratives depict Black *sur*veillance as well as white fugitivity and *sous*veillance. Whereas the slave narratives I discussed in Chapter 1 reveal enslaved sousveillance despite the pervasive white surveillance system of the slave South, in narratives of enslaved rebellion, whites watch from below to evade violence and captivity at the hands of Black rebels. Ironically, in other words, whites practice what Simone Browne calls "undersight" in reference to Black freedom practices: "the tactics employed to render one's self out of sight, and [the] strategies used in the flight to freedom."[6] In *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, *The Heroic Slave,* and *Benito Cereno*, depictions of *white* undersight deauthorize retrospective narrative reconstructions.

I begin with a nonfiction account of perhaps the most famous example of enslaved rebellion in the United States, *The Confessions of Nat Turner,* because it haunts later narratives of slave revolt, including Douglass's and Melville's. Thomas R. Gray, a young white Virginia lawyer, purportedly transcribed verbatim Turner's confessions about the slave rebellion Turner led in Southampton, Virginia, on August 22, 1831. As many scholars have noted, Gray's agenda in the *Confessions* is intriguingly ambiguous.[7] By giving Turner a voice and thus the ability to shape the narrative of his rebellion, Gray's text works against the authoritative legal account that sentenced Turner to execution. As Eric Sundquist argues, "it is Turner, not Gray, who should be seen to be in control of his text."[8] Though Gray begins his encounter with Turner as a white surveillant, the climactic moment of the *Confessions* is produced by an exchange of looks, as Turner forces Gray to "loo[k] him in the face."[9] This recognition of reciprocal veillance destabilizes the epistemological authority of Gray's white oversight, collapsing the differentiation between watcher and watched and rupturing the *Confessions*'s narrative form. After merging his own identity with Turner's, Gray reproduces testimony about the techniques that white survivors of the rebellion used to escape death, figuring them as fugitives and sousveillants. This story of white undersight recognizes the surveillant authority of the Black rebels, thereby undermining the authoritative retrospective narrative of the crime that Gray attempts to reestablish via the legal documents he appends to his interview with Turner.

Melville and Douglass take up this problem of testimony that dissolves narrative form in *Benito Cereno* and *The Heroic Slave*, novellas based on historical slave rebellions at sea. Though Douglass's novella predates Melville's

by two years, I discuss Melville's first because it tracks more closely with the *Confessions*, as both Turner and Babo, the Senegalese leader of the enslaved rebellion in *Benito Cereno,* are executed. In Douglass's novella, on the other hand, Madison Washington, the titular heroic slave, wins his freedom through rebellion. Both Melville and Douglass engage with the problem of reconstructing narratives about the past when the white witnesses to the events have lost the epistemological authority of white oversight. As in the *Confessions,* white surveillants come to recognize, as a result of their contact with normally hidden Black sousveillance, that watching is reciprocal and that they are objects of scrutiny. Thus, the *Confessions* provides a lens through which to examine Melville's and Douglass's fictional strategies. When typically invisible Black undersight becomes visible, the racialized dialectic of surveillance and sousveillance becomes untenable, such that whites become fugitive sousveillants and Blacks become overseers. Melville and Douglass register the disruptive effects of this moment of recognition in the form of their historical novellas, leaving fragments instead of a smooth, coherent story that would authorize the past. These historical novellas thus present "mysteries," but unlike Poe's Dupin tales, in which a conspicuous detective offers an authoritative retrospective account, Melville and Douglass foreground the problems of testimony that leave these mysteries unsolved.

Melville's *Benito Cereno* fictionalizes chapter eighteen of Amasa Delano's 1817 *Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres*. Throughout the first section of Melville's novella, the white American captain, Delano, parallels Gray's false panopticism. Melville structures the novella as "mystery": as a reviewer noted in 1856, "'Benito Cereno,' is most painfully interesting, and in reading it we became nervously anxious for the solution of the mystery it involves."[10] In order to solve the mystery, Melville's (presumably white) reader must recognize the Black gaze that is portrayed in the first section of the novella yet overlooked by Delano. Babo, like Turner, sousveils and manipulates Delano. As in the *Confessions*, when Delano is finally forced to recognize the Black gaze it ruptures the novella's narrative form, as Melville famously abandons the third-person narrator and interpolates Cereno's deposition. Jeannine DeLombard demonstrates in her reading of *Benito Cereno* that when Cereno is taken captive by Black rebels, he loses "the legal personhood to ensure that his words—whether contractual or testimonial—have the requisite authority to activate these verbal assertions of civil agency."[11] His deposition, therefore, cannot provide the authoritative retrospective narrative that would reestablish order after the violent upheaval of the rebellion. Building on DeLombard's essential analysis, I attend to Melville's

depiction of Black surveillance and white undersight in the novella, which the inadequacy of Cereno's deposition forces the reader to reexamine and thereby experience vicariously the unsettling effects of the destruction of white invisibility. Unlike the authoritative reconstructive narrative provided by the conspicuous detective in the Dupin tales, Melville refuses to resolve the mystery, instead foregrounding how the reconstruction of historical events depends upon white oversight. Without that stabilizing epistemic authority, the mystery cannot be solved.

Likewise, in *The Heroic Slave,* Douglass's novella about the 1841 *Creole* slave ship mutiny, Douglass foregrounds the unsolved mystery that has prompted his foray into fiction. Washington remains an enigma, the narrator notes: "Glimpses of this great character are all that can now be presented. He is brought to view only by a few transient incidents, and these afford but partial satisfaction. … [H]e again disappears covered with mystery."[12] Moreover, the narrator indicates the work of reconstructing the past from incomplete data: "Speaking of marks, traces, possibles, and probabilities, we come before our reader" (Douglass, *Heroic*, 132). Douglass presents the mysterious Washington through the eyes of two different white observers: Listwell and Tom Grant. Listwell begins as a white surveillant, albeit a sympathetic one, but discovers the damaging falsehood of white oversight. Tutored in sousveillance by Washington, Listwell breaks the law to aid Washington's escape and later becomes part of a conspiracy to commit insurrection. However, Listwell's illegal acts render his testimony about the rebellion problematic since, as a criminal, he is no longer a credible witness. Though Listwell has voluntarily repudiated white oversight, he nevertheless loses the epistemic authority required to reconstruct the past. As a fugitive from the law, Listwell disappears from Douglass's novella, replaced by a white witness, Grant, who narrates the story of the *Creole* rebellion and thereby becomes, in Robert Stepto's words, "a white Southern storyteller of a tale of black freedom."[13] Douglass based Grant's testimony on the actual deposition of the white crew of the *Creole*, which Douglass would have read in the antislavery newspaper *The Liberator* in December 1841. The alterations Douglass makes to the deposition are instructive, particularly when compared to Melville's use of the deposition of Spanish captain Benito Cereno.

Whereas Melville calls our attention to Delano's "monumental amnesia" in the final section of *Benito Cereno*, Douglass hides the necessary forgetting behind the scenes in his emendations to the *Creole* crew's deposition.[14] In the first three-fourths of the novella, Douglass dwells on the tactical functions of white fugitivity and sousveillance, as taught to Listwell by Washington, but he abruptly terminates this storyline and offers a fragment as the novella's

conclusion. In Part 4, Douglass imagines a white witness who, unlike Listwell, has the credibility to tell the story of the *Creole* rebellion. To ensure that this testimony retains the requisite epistemic authority, Douglass eliminates all evidence of white undersight and Black surveillance that is present in the actual *Creole* crew's deposition. Grant acknowledges the courage and revolutionary antecedents of enslaved rebels, yet nevertheless insists upon white supremacy, thereby maintaining the credibility necessary to tell his story publicly in a white supremacist society. *The Heroic Slave* thus presents two very different white witnesses: one who acknowledges that white oversight is illusory but consequently loses his credibility as a witness, and one whose credibility is preserved by Douglass's erasure of Black surveillance and white sousveillance.

The Destruction of White Oversight in *The Confessions of Nat Turner*

Early in the morning of August 22, 1831, Turner and six co-conspirators killed the family that enslaved Turner, then moved on to other white households in the neighborhood, murdering the inhabitants of each house. Numbers of rebels and victims vary widely, but there may have been as many as eighty rebels at their strongest point, and they killed at least fifty-seven whites. Nineteen African Americans were executed by the state for the murders, and untold numbers were killed by vigilantes across the region.[15] Though most of the rebels were quickly captured and arraigned in trials beginning August 30, Turner remained at large until October 30. Gray interviewed Turner in his prison cell from November 1 to 3, taking down Turner's "Confession" to satiate a public who had waited for this crucial testimony for months. Gray knew the background of the revolt well, since he had served as counsel for five of the enslaved defendants tried in connection with the rebellion. Published toward the end of November 1831, *The Confessions of Nat Turner* "may be the most important work on slavery written and published in the slaveholding South," according to historian Patrick H. Breen.[16]

Gray, the individual embodiment of the larger Southern surveillance system, entered his interview with Turner as a white observer who assumes his own invisibility. In his preface, titled "To the Public," Gray emphasizes the importance of this surveillance system, remarking that Turner's account "is calculated also to induce all those entrusted with [the slave codes'] execution, as well as our citizens generally, to see that they are strictly and rigidly enforced. Each particular community should look to its own safety, whilst the

general guardians of the laws, keep a watchful eye over all" (Gray, *Confessions*, 41). Parsing various levels of white surveillance from citizens to slave patrollers to communities, Gray urges vigilance through his visual diction: "see," "look," "watchful eye." Just as the guardians should "keep a watchful eye over all," Gray will keep his watchful eye on Turner in his jail cell, surveilling Turner for the benefit of the public who, unlike Gray, do not have "ready access to him" (40).[17] Gray's preface acknowledges only the unidirectional surveillance of African Americans by white observers, suppressing the terrifying possibility that the rebellion discloses, that enslaved people were watching from below in order to plan and execute this violent uprising.

In contrast to Gray's white oversight, Turner's confession redefines the dynamics of surveillance, foregrounding his own divinely bestowed second sight. Placing the 1831 rebellion into the context of his entire lifetime, Turner dwells on his extraordinary sight in this pre-history of the rebellion. In DeLombard's words, Turner "replac[es] Gray's time frame with his own, more comprehensive one."[18] From childhood, he notes, he was "observant of every thing that was passing. … [T]here was nothing that I saw or heard of to which my attention was not directed" (45). As numerous scholars have discussed, Turner presents himself as a prophet who is "shewn … things" by the Holy Spirit (44, also 46, 47).[19] Turner's explanation for the rebellion thus foregrounds his exceptional visual subjectivity: his ability to see things that others cannot (or have not been chosen to) perceive.

Significantly, I argue, it is Turner's experience of being a subject of white supervision that focuses his heretofore generalized second sight, giving him visions with concrete repercussions in the material world. Turner links his specific "vision" of racial combat—the vision that precipitates the slave rebellion—to his direct experience of white surveillance. Whereas he leaves the "things that had been shewn to me" in his early life unspecified, he details the precise "vision" of "white spirits and black spirits engaged in battle" only after he "was placed under an overseer" (46). This moment of immediate surveillance initiates Turner's commitment to violent rebellion. Turner's second sight becomes concretized in the corporeality of slave insurrection rather than abstracted in "signs in the heavens" (48). While Turner initially runs away from the overseer, he returns because "the Spirit" chastises him for focusing on his own safety rather than accepting his larger, divinely ordained purpose, which is to take up Christ's "yoke … and fight against the Serpent" (47–48): that is, to lead an insurrection against the system of slavery.[20] Now with eyes focused on earthly rather than supernatural sights, Turner continues to present himself primarily as an observer during and after the rebellion. Turner witnesses the killings,

rather than actively engaging in the violence. Noting that since he typically sent his best armed men ahead to begin the killings at each house, Turner usually only "got in sight in time to see the work of death completed, [and] viewed the mangled bodies as they lay, in silent satisfaction" (51). Turner discusses his spying when he describes his situation in the weeks following the rebellion, before he was captured. "Conceal[ing him]self for six weeks" in a hole after the rebellion, he goes out at night to "eaves drop" but "gather[s] little or no intelligence" (53). Turner's emphasis on his visual subjectivity throughout his narrative lays the groundwork for Gray's recognition of Black sousveillance.

Gray's experience with Turner destroys his fantasy of white oversight, and Gray preserves in the form of the text the destabilizing effects of his recognition that he is not invisible to Turner's gaze. After Turner finishes his narrative, Gray reports that he cross examined Turner to determine the accuracy of his confession and set to rest theories of a wider conspiracy that stretched beyond Southampton. Turner responds to Gray's inquiry regarding a "concerted plan" in North Carolina occurring at the same time as the Southampton revolt, stating that he "denied any knowledge of it." At this critical moment, in which Gray must establish the truth of Turner's claim, Gray notes that he intensifies his visual scrutiny to verify Turner's words: "I looked him in the face as though I would search his inmost thoughts" (54). Rather than telling the reader what he ascertained with his surveillant gaze, however, Gray instead quotes Turner's response to Gray's scrutiny: "I see sir, you doubt my word; but can you not think the same ideas, and strange appearances about this time in the heaven's [*sic*] might prompt others, as well as myself, to this undertaking" (54). In this moment of reciprocal looking, Gray tries to read beyond Turner's surface to access his interiority—his "inmost thoughts"—and Turner, gazing at Gray, does the same, successfully inferring Gray's doubt ("I see sir, you doubt my word"). Gray's silence and his reproduction of Turner's words, which indicate Turner's own visual scrutiny of Gray, acknowledges that Turner is able to see Gray, thus puncturing Gray's fantasy of white invisibility.

Gray's recognition of Turner's oppositional look has serious consequences for the form of Gray's text. On the typographic level, Gray's "I" becomes indistinguishable from Turner's "I": Turner's last sentence, "I am here loaded with chains," gives way to Gray's "I here proceeded to make some inquiries of him" without any break or indication that the pronoun's referent has changed (54).[21] Before Turner's first-person narrative, Gray includes a brief paragraph stating that he "visited NAT on Tuesday the 1st November" (44). This paragraph is separated from Turner's narrative by a colon, an em-dash, and a line break. The preface was likewise typographically sequestered with page breaks and a

separate title, "To the Public," all of which clearly marked Gray's authorship. Within Turner's narrative, Gray inserts a few brief explanatory comments, marked by asterisks, brackets, or parentheses, and transcribes three of the questions he posed to Turner, labeled "*Question*" and "*Ans*," or "*Q.*" and "*A.*" At the conclusion of Turner's narrative, however, this segregation disappears, and Turner's voice bleeds into Gray's, typographically indexing the interchange that has occurred between the two men. Gray's failure—or refusal—to distinguish between the "I"s of the two men following Turner's speech sets the stage for the exchange of looks that he goes on to describe in the paragraph, when Gray "look[s] him in the face."

The disillusionment of white oversight occasioned by Turner's gaze upends the power structure of the text. First, Gray describes Turner in terms that evoke the well-known emblem popularized by antislavery movements, initially in England and later in the United States, of a manacled Black man raising his hands to heaven (see Figure 3.1). Gray depicts Turner "clothed with rags and covered in chains; yet daring to raise his manacled hands to heaven, with a spirit soaring above the attributes of man" (54–55), a sight that forces Gray to confess "I looked on him and my blood curdled in my veins" (55). Gray's reaction reintroduces the possibility that whites should be fearful, the very possibility Gray has set out to suppress. Moreover, Gray's religious language ("raising his hands to heaven") indicates the victory of Turner's divine second sight over Gray's secular surveillance. The intrusion of an antislavery image and the specter of white fear into the text resurrects the inverted power dynamics of the rebellion itself, when whites had the comfortable illusion of their own invisibility stripped violently away.

Following his exchange of glances with Turner, Gray can no longer maintain the presumption of unreciprocated white surveillance. Instead, reproducing the rebellion's power reversal, Gray inverts the typical racial positions of those who see and those who are seen in the slave system. In the paragraph following the image of Turner raising manacled hands to heaven, Gray recounts the experiences of white victims who escaped being killed in the rebellion. Gray depicts whites as fugitives, concealing themselves to escape from Blacks who are hunting them down. The whites practice strategies of concealment that are familiar from fugitive slave narratives: one girl hid in a chimney, then "fled to a swamp, where … she lay concealed until the next day," another "fled to the woods, and concealed herself" (55–56). One woman, eavesdropping "while concealed in a closet[,] … heard two of her women in a quarrel about the division of her clothes" (55). The final paragraph of Gray's comments demonstrates that whites are capable of undersight when they can no longer rely on

Fig. 3.1 "Am I not a man and a brother." Detail from a broadside printed for the American Anti-Slavery Society, New York, NY, 1837. *Broadside Collection*, Library of Congress, LCUSZ62-44,265

power. Whereas white oversight presumes that its subjects are invisible, slave rebellion has made these white fugitives desperately seek out invisibility to protect themselves. Gray's awkward language in the opening sentence to this long paragraph also collapses the distinction between white and Black, as he states he "will not … wound afresh the bosoms of the disconsolate sufferers" by detailing the "deeds of their fiend-like barbarity" (55). Gray's syntax makes the "sufferers" the referent of "their," implying that the sufferers were themselves the fiends. Though this incoherence is surely due to Gray's rush to publish the *Confessions,* it fits a larger pattern in which Gray collapses the racial hierarchy

enforced by white oversight. The *Confessions* ultimately demonstrates that the positions of observer and observed are reversible, thus revealing the power structure that subtends white oversight.

Though his recognition of a Black gaze has disrupted the form of his text, Gray attempts to reestablish authority by appending several documents to the destabilized narrative, the same strategy that Melville ironizes in *Benito Cereno*. Gray interpolates an account of Turner's trial, though Mary Kemp Davis points out that the trial record "lacks a [legal] seal" and "sharply differs from the official transcript," despite being presented in the form of a legal document. Kenneth S. Greenburg also notes that Gray adds "the presiding justice's dramatic speech condemning Nat Turner to death," which is not included in the official trial transcript.[22] The fact that no press in Richmond, Virginia, would print the *Confessions,* forcing Gray to go north to Baltimore to publish his text, suggests an anxiety about the potentially inflammatory repercussions of Gray's text. Gray did not achieve an authoritative narrative reconstruction of the enslaved rebels' crime, but rather left visible the unnerving reality of Blacks' oppositional gaze.[23] Melville and Douglass take up the implications of Black *sur*veillance and white *sous*veillance in *Benito Cereno* and *The Heroic Slave*, portraying the way that white oversight stabilizes narrative reconstructions of the past.

Black Surveillance in *Benito Cereno*

From the outset of *Benito Cereno*, Melville signals the clash between white surveillance and Black sousveillance that will structure the text. Delano views the *San Dominick* through his "glass," or telescope, also known as a "spy-glass."[24] He is thus figured as a panoptical observer: his technology allows him to see details on the other ship without being seen (in equivalent detail) in return. Delano's "glass" serves a similar function to the camera obscura and other technologies that subtend the sovereign white gaze, allowing the viewer to be detached rather than embodied.[25] In the next paragraph, the narrator compares the *San Dominick* "wimpled by clouds" to "a Lima intriguante's one sinister eye peering across the Plaza from the Indian loop-hole of her dusk *saya-y-manta*" (Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 36). This striking image of the *San Dominick* as a clandestine eye peeping out of a veil emblematizes the covert sousveillance that—the reader will slowly come to realize—the Black rebels on board the ship are practicing. Whereas Delano's technology allows him to remain distanced from what he sees, Melville's image of the *San Dominick* and,

by extension, the rebels on board, emphasizes vision that is both embodied (in the person of a Lima intriguante) and covert (peering through a loop-hole). Melville figures the vision of both Delano and the observers on the *San Dominick* as monocular, such that Delano's one eye to the glass is met by the "one sinister eye" watching him through a loop-hole. From the start of the novella, then, Melville indicates that Delano's panoptical eye (here watching through a telescope) is met by the sousveillant gaze of the formerly enslaved rebels.

Set in 1799, Melville's 1855 novella *Benito Cereno* consists of three unequal sections. The first and longest section unfolds as Amasa Delano, captain of the *Bachelor's Delight*, spots a strange ship in the harbor of St. Maria, off the coast of Chile. He boards the ship, intending to help the crew, and spends some hours in the company of the ship's captain, Benito Cereno. Cereno's ship, the *San Dominick*, is a slaver, and it has, according to Cereno, lost numerous sailors and become damaged in heavy gales that they encountered. Near the end of this section, Cereno jumps into Delano's departing whale boat to escape the power of Babo, a formerly enslaved man who had led a mutiny aboard the *San Dominick* seven days after they had set sail and had been in control of the ship ever since. When Delano realizes that he has been witnessing a masquerade of Cereno's power all day, he captures Babo and eventually takes the *San Dominick*, sails to Lima, and has Babo and the other rebels arraigned. The second section, only about a quarter of the first section's length, presents extracts from Cereno's deposition in the criminal case against the rebels and from documents recovered from the enslaver who owned the rebels, Don Alexandro Aranda. These extracts are written in incomplete sentences, without paragraph breaks or other linguistic or typographic markers of a coherent narrative. Following the deposition, the third-person narrator from the first section returns and briefly relates a conversation between Delano and Cereno that occurred after the *San Dominick* was recaptured and they were sailing to Lima. The novella ends with two paragraphs describing Babo's fate. This third section is the shortest of all, at only two and a half pages.

The changes Melville makes to Delano's 1817 original *Narrative* signal Melville's engagement with the dynamics of racialized surveillance and sousveillance in the antebellum period. In his *Narrative,* the historical Delano is much less concerned with these dynamics; rather, his priority is to establish Benito Cereno's perfidy regarding the reward owed Delano for salvaging Cereno's ship and cargo.[26] Famously, Melville changes the date of the rebellion from 1805 to 1799 and the name of the Spanish slave ship *Tryal* to *San Dominick* to evoke the Haitian Revolution. In his *Narrative,* Delano begins

the chapter that treats his encounter with the *Tryal* with a two-page excerpt from his ship's logbook that succinctly outlines the entire event, including the revelation that the enslaved people had taken control of the ship, thus eliminating the possibility of suspense that Melville attenuates over fifty pages. Moreover, Cereno's actual deposition, which Delano reproduces in his *Narrative,* states that Cereno—not Babo, as in Melville's version—proposes to stage the masquerade while Delano is on board. The plotting of the Black rebels is consequently absent from Delano's *Narrative,* which deploys instances of "unruly conduct" by the Blacks as evidence of Cereno's "los[s] … of authority over the slaves" and hence his indebtedness to Delano for rescuing him.[27] The conflict in Delano's *Narrative* is thus between Delano and Cereno, not between white surveillants and Black sousveillants.

In his elaboration and fictionalization of Delano's narrative, Melville rescripts the historical events to dramatize the intractability of white oversight. The scenes that Melville invents for his novella all foreground the dynamics of watching: the shaving scene, the luncheon scene, and the forced viewing of Aranda's skeleton by the Spaniards. In the shaving scene, for example, which Babo stages in order to present to Delano a spectacle of servility while simultaneously threatening Cereno with bloodshed, the narrator notes that Delano could not resist the idea "that in the black he saw a headsman, and in the white, a man at the block" (74). In the luncheon scene, Delano is surprised that Babo stands behind his chair rather than Cereno's, but then decides that "by facing [Cereno] he [Babo] could the more readily anticipate his slightest want" (79). The narrative underscores the ironic visual politics of these scenes, as Delano both sees and does not see the threat of Babo's glances at Cereno.

In the first section of the novella, the narrator figures Delano as a surveillant via copious references to Delano's "eye," "glance," and "gaze."[28] For example, the narrator mentions Delano's "stranger's eye" (40), "blunt-thinking American's eyes" (47), "visitor's eyes" (60), "eye curiously surveying" (61), and "charmed eye" (85), and Cereno calls Delano's eyes "inexperienced" (46). As the tone of these examples suggest, Delano's surveillance is not neutral; rather, it is distorted by his racial prejudices, which make it impossible for him to recognize that the Africans are in control of the ship. Delano is convinced he can comprehend the Africans he views, while they cannot see him. Dismissing the possibility that "Don Benito [could] be any way in complicity with the blacks" at the same instant that he raises it, Delano remarks "But they were too stupid" (65). This dismissal is consistent with Delano's behavior throughout the first section, as he disdains the Africans' intelligence whenever suspicions arise that they might be plotting against him. For example, after feeling "an apprehensive

twitch in [his] calves" as he walks through a line of Africans, he reduces them to "organ-grinders, still stupidly intent on their work, unmindful of everything beside" (48).[29] Delano thus imagines himself a panoptical surveillant who sees without being seen. Babo's sousveillance remains invisible to Delano as a result of Delano's white oversight.

Babo sustains Delano's white oversight through his tactical manipulation of spectacles. As Jean Fagan Yellin argues, Babo produces "a series of masquerades … tableau[x]" that "appear[] to be a sequence of familiar versions of reality, none of which involve a basic challenge to his preconceptions about slavery and race."[30] Babo, that is, recognizes and capitalizes on the epistemological authority of white oversight, which overlooks the reality of a Black gaze. When Delano sees two Black men assault a white sailor, something that would be instantly punished on a slaver, he "quickly" asks Cereno, "do you see what is going on there? Look!" Cereno staggers, but Babo orchestrates a scene of subservience to his "master" that assuages Delano's suspicion: Delano's "glance was thus called away from the spectacle of disorder to the more pleasing one before him" (59–60). Represented explicitly as a "spectacle" staged for Delano's pleasure, Melville indicates that Babo's masquerade is intended to bolster Delano's confidence in his white oversight.

Melville uses ocular diction to describe the moment of Delano's recognition of Babo's Black gaze, emphasizing the shift in visuality that occurs. It is not until Delano sees Babo aiming a dagger at Cereno's heart that he finally realizes that Babo and the Blacks have been in control of the masquerade on board the ship the entire time. Seeing Babo's "countenance lividly vindictive, expressing the centred purpose of his soul," triggers "a flash of revelation" for Delano (88). Figuring this revelation in the language of sight restored, the narrator continues, in a frequently quoted passage, "Delano, now with the scales dropped from his eyes, saw the negroes … with mask torn away … in ferocious piratical revolt" (88). Melville's scopic vocabulary at this climactic moment ironizes Delano's position as white surveillant throughout the first section of the narrative, as the narrator now indicates that Delano's surveillance was in fact blind. Delano's recognition that he has been the subject of scrutiny and manipulation destroys his fantasy of invisibility. As in *Confessions*, this recognition of the Black gaze ruptures narrative form.

Dropping the third-person narration focalized through Delano, Melville interpolates Benito Cereno's deposition as the "key" that will unlock the mystery of the revolt. However, Melville foregrounds the deposition's aporia: the narrator explains that the documents are not complete and that they "were held dubious" by the tribunal (92). As DeLombard has shown, Cereno cannot

muster the requisite legal personhood to narrate an authoritative retrospective account of the insurrection.[31] Shari Goldberg demonstrates that "Cereno's deposition is subject to the same patterns of inadequate formulations and incomplete assertions that his previous speech demonstrates."[32] Posing the deposition as the solution yet simultaneously denying it as an authoritative account, Melville forces the reader to return and re-read the novella. Trish Loughran has described Melville's construction of "two radically different versions of the same text in one: one (almost disposable) version of the text that is to be consumed just once (upon first reading) and another (more historically durable) version that is assigned a memory and meaning after the fact of (a first, or flawed) reading, which is intended to be understood retroactively as a *mis*reading."[33] When readers return to the first section to correct this "*mis*reading," they recognize—contra Delano—that the Black gaze has been present throughout. Melville thus engineers for his (presumably white) readers the destruction of white oversight.[34]

As in the *Confessions*, the recognition of the Black gaze not only destroys white oversight and ruptures narrative form, but it also upends the racialized positions of surveillant and sousveillant. Once the reader disidentifies with Delano's perspective, the novella becomes a story of Black surveillance and white undersight. In another of Melville's wholesale additions to the account given in Delano's *Narrative,* Babo organizes a ship-wide disciplinary surveillance system, invisible to Delano's white oversight but visible and threatening to Cereno and the Spanish sailors. When the Blacks see Delano's ship in the harbor, Babo quickly produces a fictional account of the *San Dominick*'s history and forces the entire ship to enact the masquerade. He deploys a number of Blacks to police the ship and to distribute weapons if Delano sees through the masquerade. This surveillance system includes "six Ashantees … stationed on the … poop, as if to clean certain hatchets … but in reality to use them, and distribute them at need, and at a given word he told them," and "the conspicuous figures of four elderly grizzled negroes … sphynx-like" (39) who serve as "monitorial constables" (43). Guarding the deck just as the Sphinx guarded the city of Thebes, these "constables" use sound as well as sight to check outbursts and remind the Spanish that they are under surveillance. The Ashantees "clashed their hatchets together, like cymbals" (40), while the elderly oakum-pickers use "a continuous, low, monotonous chant" (39). Throughout the first section of the novella, the narrator reports these sounds whenever a conflict threatens to disrupt the masquerade.

Melville's portrait of Babo at the head of this surveillance system ironically replicates the figure of the overseer on a slave plantation. Throughout the

first section of the novella, Babo "keep[s] his eye fixed on [Cereno's] face" (45), supervising him for hours while Delano is aboard the *San Dominick*. Melville depicts Babo's overseer role in language that focuses on Babo's eye, with nearly as many references to Babo's eye as to Delano's. Whereas when Melville described Delano's eye he consistently undermined it with qualifiers such as "inexperienced" and "charmed," Babo's "admonitory eye" is laser sharp (87). He warns Cereno before Delano boards the ship that his "dagger would be as alert as his eye" (99), reminding Cereno that he will be under constant surveillance from Babo's merciless gaze and he will suffer violence if he steps out of line. This regime of Black surveillance, Melville indicates, subjects Cereno's gaze to the suppression that white supremacist power structures enforce on the Black gaze. Under slavery's scopic regime, in Jasmine Nichole Cobb's nice turn of phrase, "Whites were always on the lookout, and never to be looked at."[35] Melville's frequent references to Cereno's averted eyes throughout the first section invert the proscription of Blacks' "right to look," making it clear that Babo's supervision prevents Cereno's look.[36] Cereno is continually "averting his glance" (51, 55) and "dropping his eyes to the deck" (55). As Melville's figuration of Babo as an overseer indicates, slave rebellion dissociates surveillance and sousveillance from their expected racial subject positions, thus emphasizing the contingency of power.[37]

Despite the Africans' surveillance system, the Spanish sailors nevertheless find opportunities to practice tactics of undersight, trying to communicate visually with Delano to warn him of the reality on board the ship. Occasionally, Babo maneuvers to get Cereno alone so that he can discipline him for not playing his role convincingly or instruct him in questions to ask Delano. While Babo's surveillant eye is absent, one Spanish sailor, who surreptitiously shows Delano that he is wearing fine linen under his dirty wool shirt, "with a sort of covert intentness, kept his eye fixed on Captain Delano, from whom, presently, it passed as if by a natural sequence, to the two whisperers [Babo and Cereno]" (53–54). Melville indicates that the sailor guides Delano in watching from below by modeling it with his own eye, first fixing it on Delano and then drawing Delano's attention to Babo and Cereno's suspicious behavior by shifting his glance to the two whispering men. However, the sailors' communications are policed and suppressed by the Blacks. The sailor who is tying an exceedingly complicated knot throws it to Delano and tells Delano in English to "Undo it, cut it, quick" (65). The Blacks on the ship do not speak English, so the sailor's use of Delano's native tongue is an attempt to conceal his meaning. Immediately Atufal appears and the sailor is removed, while an "elderly negro" takes the knot from Delano and "ferret[s] into it like a detective Custom

House officer after smuggled laces" (66). The overseer's absence leads these white sailors to risk acts of resistance against their captors, but the police system the Blacks have established represses these threats to order and punishes the offenders. These captive white sailors, communicating "covert[ly]" and in code, are practicing sousveillance.

The experience of captivity, which has forced the Spaniards not only to recognize that they are the subjects of observation but also to practice tactics of undersight to evade Black surveillance, destroys the stabilizing epistemological authority of white oversight and renders Cereno unable to produce testimony about the past. In the novella's penultimate paragraph, the narrator reports on the trial of Babo, who refused to speak once he was captured. Even when Babo is secured "in irons," Cereno "[n]or then, nor at any time after, would he look at him. Before the tribunal he refused. When pressed by the judges he fainted" (107). The narrator expresses the enduring consequences of Cereno's experience as a captive in terms of sight. Stripped of his former expectation of white sight, the ability to surveil and dominate through a racist scopic regime, Cereno now is physically incapable of exchanging looks with Babo. Unable to forget the threat of Babo's oversight, Cereno continues to suppress his own look, inverting the typical suppression of the Black gaze produced by white supremacist power structures. The novella ends not with Cereno's inability to look, however, but with Babo's tenacious stare.

The opening simile comparing the *San Dominick* to a Lima intriguante foreshadows Babo's ultimate fate: his head, "fixed on a pole in the [Lima] Plaza, met, unabashed, the gaze of the whites" (107).[38] Babo is the Lima intriguante of the opening image, but by the time his head is displayed in the Plaza the masquerade is revealed, and thus the "intriguante's" shawl is removed. Melville's syntax suggests that Babo's eye still peers across the Plaza, meeting the gaze of white surveillants. The overt rebellion has dispensed with the need to hide normally covert Black sousveillance, and so the final image highlights Babo's direct exchange of looks with the whites. Nevertheless, Melville demonstrates the asymmetrical stakes of surveillance and sousveillance: in Jeffrey Hole's words, *Benito Cereno* ultimately depicts the conflict between enslaver and enslaved as one "of stasis and enduring strife, a set of asymmetric relations in which conflict may not necessarily yield emancipation."[39] Whereas Delano can forget "the sight of so much suffering, more apparent than real" on board the *San Dominick*, Babo is executed for his role in the rebellion (106). At the cost of his own life, Babo has destroyed the fantasy of white panoptic surveillance and revealed the efficacy of dark sousveillance. The shipboard rebellion reversed the racialized dialectic of white surveillance and Black sousveillance,

but only temporarily. Melville registers this reversal as a rupture in narrative form, demonstrating that white oversight stabilizes the reconstruction of historical events, but for his readers who maintain their identification with Delano this rupture is as easily forgotten as "turn[ing] over new leaves" (106).

White Undersight in *The Heroic Slave*

The Heroic Slave, like the *Confessions* and *Benito Cereno,* represents the shattering effects of a white surveillant's realization that he is also a subject of scrutiny.[40] In his only work of fiction, Douglass depicts first fugitivity and then rebellion as seen through the eyes of two white observers, Listwell and Grant. Though Douglass initially underscores Listwell's spying and eavesdropping on an enslaved man, he depicts a transformation in Listwell that occurs as a result of his subsequent exchange of glances with Washington. This encounter prompts Listwell to abandon his presumption of invisibility, just as does Gray's interchange with Turner, and this disillusionment has disruptive effects on the form of the text. Whereas Gray begins from a pro-slavery position, however, Listwell has already committed to abolition and is open to the revised perspective to which Washington guides him. Consequently, the formal effects of Listwell's recognition index Listwell's adoption of the methods and techniques of sousveillance in which he has been tutored by Washington. Actively and illegally abetting escape and rebellion by enslaved people, Listwell embraces a mode of "fugitivity" that Douglass registers in the text as formal rupture, with the focal character's disappearance from the text. Part 4 introduces a new set of characters including Grant, who testifies to white Southerners about the *Creole* rebellion. In his adaptation of the actual deposition of the *Creole*'s white crew, Douglass elides all the evidence of the breakdown of the racialized dynamics of surveillance and sousveillance. Grant's testimony is credible because he does not abandon the epistemic authority of white oversight, which stabilizes his reconstruction. Yet by fragmenting the narrative in order to present this testimony, Douglass indicates the reality of Black sousveillance that remains out of Grant's sight.

The Heroic Slave is based on the historical Madison Washington, the leader of a mutiny on the slave ship *Creole* that occurred in November 1841. Washington had escaped from enslavement in Virginia and was living in Canada, but decided to return to Virginia in the hopes of freeing his wife. His rescue attempt failed; he was recaptured and sold to a domestic slave trader, who intended to sell Washington in New Orleans. En route from Hampton Roads, Virginia, to

New Orleans, nineteen enslaved men, including Washington, seized control of the *Creole*, killing one of the white slave traders. The mutineers forced the white crew to land the ship at Nassau, in the British colony of the Bahamas, where the British governor detained the nineteen leaders but allowed the 116 other enslaved passengers to leave the ship, effectively emancipating them.[41] The leaders were imprisoned for several months but were finally freed in April 1842. Aside from an 1852 letter reprinted in *Frederick Douglass's Paper* claiming that Washington was living in Nassau, there are no further records of Washington after that date.[42]

In fictionalizing Washington's story, Douglass makes a significant departure from the historical record.[43] While the dramatic events of the *Creole* mutiny seem tailor-made for a gripping adventure story, Douglass chooses not to depict the mutiny first-hand in the story. Instead, Douglass imagines Washington's life in the six years preceding the mutiny, inventing a white character named Listwell, who plays an important role in Washington's bid for freedom.[44] As Karin Hoepker asserts, "strangely for a novella concerned with African American agency, the depiction of the black heroic figure seems to be filtered through others, subject to their selective perception, representation, and interpretation."[45] Washington's decision to escape and his journey to the North come to the reader through the mediation of Listwell, the focal character for Parts 1 through 3. Though the narrative voice is heterodiegetic, the narrator occasionally inserts a phrase such as "Mr. Listwell confesses" to indicate that he is relaying Listwell's own narrative of events in Parts 1 through 3 (Douglass, *Heroic*, 151). Washington is largely absent from Part 3, which centers on Listwell's visit to a Virginia tavern. The narrator briefly frames the scene in Part 4, which takes place at a Marine Coffee-house in Richmond, but the remainder of the section is told through dialogue and then a long speech about the mutiny by the *Creole*'s fictional first mate.

Douglass structures Part I as a paradigmatic instance of white oversight in which an invisible white surveillant "gazes upon" a Black person (134). Listwell's spying and eavesdropping on Washington represents sympathetic white spectatorship rather than the punitive surveillance of the slave system, but it nevertheless objectifies Washington rather than recognizing him as an observing subject. Listwell "conceal[s] himself" throughout this scene yet maintains "a full view of the unsuspecting speaker" while Washington soliloquizes about his desire for freedom (133–134).[46] This experience of, as Listwell believes, "sound[ing] the mysterious depths of the thoughts and feelings of a slave" inspires Listwell to convert on the spot to abolitionism (134–135). Yet the intelligence Listwell gains from spying on Washington is inadequate because it

maintains the power differential between seer and seen and allows Listwell to persist in the belief that he is unseen and thus detached from what he surveils.[47]

Douglass undercuts Listwell's naïve belief that he is invisible, however, indicating that Listwell is an object of Washington's vision even as he surveils Washington. The narrator points out Washington's careful sousveillance both in the Virginia forest of Part 1 and in his approach to the Listwells' home in Part 2. At the end of Part I, Washington "cast around a searching glance, as if the thought of being overheard had flashed across his mind" (135). Similarly, before he enters the Listwells' home, the wary Washington halts "a short distance from the door" and keeps his options open, "prepared alike for flight or battle" (137). Washington "regard[s] his host with a scrutinizing glance," ascertaining the degree to which he might trust Listwell. The narrator's emphasis on Washington's searching and scrutinizing glances prepares the reader to recognize, along with Listwell, the reality of Black sousveillance.

Listwell's recognition of the fallibility of white oversight is not forced upon him, as with Delano, but occurs as a result of reflecting on the effects of his interaction with a Black man. When Washington miraculously shows up at Listwell's Ohio home in his flight north, Listwell initially imposes his white oversight on him: "I have seen your face, and heard your voice before. I am glad to see you. *I know all*" (137). Though attempting to assure Washington of his sympathy, Listwell's language of omniscience here reimposes the power dynamics of white surveillance onto the fugitive Washington. Listwell's "recognition" of Washington does not recognize Listwell's own position as an unknown white man to a vulnerable, fleeing enslaved man, and thus his "recognition, so unexpected, rather disconcerted and disquieted the noble fugitive" (137). Listwell's initial exclamation betrays his presumption of his own invisibility—his lack of understanding that Washington is looking back at him. However, Listwell, "[q]uickly observing the unhappy impression made by his words and action, … assumed a more quiet and inquiring aspect" (137). This disposition to be quiet and ask questions rather than projecting the conclusions he has drawn from his surveillance transforms Listwell's listening from the unidirectional eavesdropping of Part 1 to the conversational interchange of Part 2. Listwell is no longer invisible and detached but embodied and present, permitting a reciprocal interaction with Washington. As John Stauffer has noted, *The Heroic Slave* "functions as a handbook or guide for whites that explains what they need to do in order to gain blacks' trust and friendship."[48] Specifically, in the moment of Listwell and Washington's meeting, Douglass indicates that whites must recognize the reality of a Black gaze rather than presuming their own invisibility.

Listwell's abandonment of white oversight disrupts the racialized dialectic of white surveillance and Black sousveillance. In the conversation that follows Listwell's recognition of a Black gaze, Washington tutors Listwell on the nuances of watching, relating several situations in which both surveillant and sousveillant are Black, complicating the racial positions and sympathies of observer and observed. Goddu argues that antebellum Black cultural producers "creat[ed] a countermode of fugitive sight … [that was] partial and precarious[,] … constricted and contingent."[49] Washington's parables of surveillance instruct Listwell in this precarious countermode, indicating that a fugitive's survival depends upon recognizing the contingencies of power and veillance in each situation. Before he fled to the North, Washington hid on his enslaver's plantation and later in the swamp. As a fugitive, he surveils his fellow enslaved people, "peeping through the rents of the quarters" (140). Washington realizes he cannot trust them not to betray him because "where there is seeming contentment with slavery, there is certain treachery to freedom" (140). As a Black surveillant, Washington underscores the importance of gathering intelligence before revealing himself in order to ascertain the interests and intentions of those he might ask for help.

Douglass decouples whiteness from observer, thereby instructing white readers—via their fictional stand-in, Listwell—in Black visual subjectivity. Washington reiterates his lesson about the contingency of watching when he narrates a scene of surveillance that reenacts the events of Part 1, except that Washington occupies the position that Listwell did: concealed and spying on another man's soliloquy regarding his enslavement. During Washington's escape from Virginia to Ohio, he spends the day hidden in a treetop waiting until nightfall so he can travel. Beneath the tree in which Washington is concealed, an enslaved African American woodcutter prays for "deliverance from bondage" (143) just as Washington did in Part 1. Like Listwell's earnest response to "the extraordinary revelations to which he had listened" (135) as he eavesdropped on Washington, Washington states that the enslaved man's "prayer [was] the most fervent, earnest, and solemn to which I think I ever listened" (143). Confident that his spying has given him access to the woodcutter's deepest thoughts and feelings, Washington reveals himself, but, just as Listwell's overbearing assertion that he "knows all" initially scared Washington, Washington frightens the man: "He seemed a little alarmed at first, but I told him my story, and the good man embraced me in his arms, and assured me of his sympathy" (144). This use of a key word in abolitionist discourse, sympathy—the first appearance in the text—alerts the reader to the scene's subtext, a criticism of sympathy's inefficacy.[50]

The sympathetic response generated by eavesdropping may be affectively fulfilling, but it does not acknowledge the material conditions of enslavement and the dangers of fugitivity. While Washington trusts the man with his last dollar and asks him to buy him food, he nevertheless prudently moves to a different location than the one in which he had conversed with the man, so that when the man returns with the slave catchers they cannot find him despite their "peering about like so many bloodhounds" (145). When Mrs. Listwell accuses the man of betraying Washington, Washington replies that he thinks the man was genuine in his sympathy but that systemic suspicion of whites toward Blacks raised the alarm when the man tried to make a purchase. Sympathy, in other words, is beside the point given conditions that are outside of individual control. Indeed, Douglass doubles down on his critique of sympathy when he depicts Washington forced to witness the man's beating by frustrated slave catchers. Powerless to act in the face of superior numbers, Washington experiences the beating vicariously: "My own flesh crept at every blow" (144). Like Listwell in Part 1, Washington observes but does nothing to help the man. In this restaging of Listwell's initial scene of surveillance, Washington depicts the futility of sympathetic spectatorship and the necessity of vigilance for self-preservation.

Through Washington's parables of surveillance, Douglass deconstructs the identification of Blackness with the object of scrutiny, upon which slavery's scopic regime depends. Fugitivity, Douglass demonstrates, requires hypervigilance. The Black surveillant cannot rest in the assumption of invisibility afforded by white oversight, but rather must constantly assess the exigencies of a given situation. Listening well to Washington's tutelage, Listwell adapts after his conversation with Washington, shifting from the position of white observer to Black-identified radical abolitionist. In this new commitment to illegal action rather than sympathetic spectatorship, Listwell places himself outside the law. As a fugitive himself, Listwell must employ Washington's precepts of hypervigilance and skepticism to protect himself, recognizing that he, too, is an object of surveillance. Listwell transports Washington to Cleveland and arranges for Washington's flight to Canada on board a steamship despite the penalties imposed by the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 on those who aid fugitives. To evade "the hunters of men" who gathered at the wharf to "pounce upon their victim[s]," Listwell "cautiously sounded [the captain of the boat] on the matter of carrying liberty-loving passengers, before he introduced his precious charge" (146). Listwell's "caution" here indicates that he recognizes himself as an object of scrutiny, rather than resting in the delusion of white oversight.

Douglass registers the disruptive formal effects of Listwell's recognition and embrace of the tactics of sousveillance in Part 3, when Listwell deceives and spies on white proslavery Southerners. Like Washington's tales of Black surveillance in Part 2, Listwell's sousveillance in Part 3 undoes the typical racial hierarchy of white surveillance and Black sousveillance. Douglass indexes this unsettling of slavery's power structure in the contortions of his narrative form. Having returned to Virginia, Listwell arrives at a deteriorating tavern needing a place to spend the night. Approached by a white man who is loafing out front, Listwell immediately assumes the performative vigilance of the fugitive, cautiously concealing aspects of himself that might put him in danger and probing his interlocutor for information. Douglass signals the significance of this transformation by abandoning the novella's authorial narration and taking up dramaturgic form instead. The conversation between Listwell and "Loafer" is produced on the page as the dialogue of a stage-play script, with the two characters' names italicized preceding their lines. This sudden departure from the established form of the novella indicates that Part 3 is a masquerade; Listwell is acting a part based on his training in fugitive sight.

Whereas in the *Confessions* and *Benito Cereno* white undersight aims to protect white victims from violence and captivity at the hands of Black rebels, in *The Heroic Slave*, Listwell deploys white undersight to protect himself from white proslavery Southerners, making Listwell a Black-identified white sousveillant. Douglass expands on Listwell's masquerade in the remainder of the section, as Listwell uses tactics of concealment and disguise to shield himself. The narrator notes that Listwell's subterfuge is motivated by "bodily fear" (152): among proslavery Southerners he must play the part of a slave trader in order to escape assault. Deploying the methods of fugitivity that Washington has inculcated in him, Listwell conceals himself in "his private room, private to the eye, but not to the ear" (150), to eavesdrop on the white Southerners in the bar below. Listwell thereby garners "important hints as to the manner and deportment he should assume during his stay at that tavern" (150); he realizes "that a buyer of men and women stood the best chance of being respected" (151) and resolves to adopt that disguise. Rather than being able to rely on his white sight to assert that he "knows all," he must practice the covert methods in which Washington has tutored him. No longer eavesdropping on an enslaved man, Listwell now occupies the position of the enslaved, which requires him to be suspicious of whites and to practice deception to avoid their surveillance. This inversion of the racial positions of surveillant and sousveillant is important for Douglass's larger project not only of ending slavery but also of dismantling the structures of visuality that objectify African Americans.

As opposed to Listwell's white oversight in the first section of the novella, Douglass underscores the reciprocity of looking when Listwell and Washington meet in Part 3. When Listwell sees Washington in the slave coffle outside the tavern, the narrator states that Listwell "met the glance of one whose face he thought he had seen before. … Mr. Listwell ran up to his old friend, placing his hands upon his shoulders, and looked him in the face! Speechless they stood gazing at each other" (152). Again, as in their conversation at Listwell's home, the direct exchange of looks, face to face, precedes and enables freedom practices grounded in disguise and concealment. Listwell later sneaks out to talk to Washington while other white men at the tavern are occupied with breakfast. After ascertaining that Washington was recaptured when he returned to Virginia to free his wife and that there is no way for Listwell to buy Washington's freedom, Listwell tells Washington, "I shall see you at [the slave-market in] Richmond, but don't recognize me" (155). Listwell's command echoes his peremptory "recognition" of the fugitive Washington at his doorstep in Ohio, but whereas Listwell previously presumed he was invisible to Washington, here he counsels Washington strategically to pretend he is invisible to him. Thanks to this disguise, Listwell is able to slip Washington the three files that Washington uses to remove his manacles on board the *Creole*, facilitating the rebellion that gains Washington and more than one hundred other formerly enslaved people freedom.

Just as Listwell's illegal aid to a fugitive enslaved person unsettled the novella's narrative form in Part 3, Listwell's engagement in a conspiracy to commit insurrection ruptures the narrative focalization established in Parts 1 to 3 of the novella. Listwell's illegal activities damage the credibility of his testimony. In recognizing and adopting methods of sousveillance, Listwell has repudiated the illusory comfort of white oversight, but in so doing he has lost its epistemological authority and thus his testimony cannot authorize a historical reconstruction of the crime of slave rebellion. Douglass therefore shifts from Listwell as the focal character to a new white observer: Grant. As Ivy Wilson argues, "The effect created in this last section is the removal of the black physical presence from the United States. Only Grant and Williams are left, preoccupied with the project of national history."[51] Not only has Washington been removed, however, but Listwell has also disappeared, replaced by ardent Southern anti-abolitionists. The disappearance of the established focal character, I contend, reflects Listwell's full embrace and successful deployment of the methods of sousveillance in Part 3. By becoming a radical abolitionist committed to aiding Black rebellion, despite its illegality, Listwell makes himself into

a "fugitive," who is outside the bounds of US slave law. His fugitivity disrupts the form of the novella, resulting in Listwell's disappearance from the text.

As does Melville in *Benito Cereno,* Douglass appends a fragment of white testimony following the rupture of the established third-person narrative form. Douglass based Grant's narrative on the actual deposition of the *Creole*'s officers and crew.[52] Whereas Melville embroiders Cereno's actual deposition with invented details of Black surveillance and white undersight, Douglass eliminates this information from the real *Creole* deposition in Grant's fictional testimony. The actual deposition of the *Creole* officers and crew describes how the rebellion inverted the typical racial positions of watcher and watched, emphasizing Black surveillance and clandestine white sousveillance. The deponents' primary concern was to demonstrate that they were not guilty of negligence or mismanagement, and hence that the *Creole*'s insurers were liable for the value of the lost "property."[53] While the crew insists that prior to the rebellion "the slaves were all carefully watched," the deposition proves that the Black rebels were the more capable surveillants.[54] After gaining control of the brig, the rebels compact with William Henry Merritt, their erstwhile overseer, to take them to Nassau. Throughout this journey, the four leaders of the rebellion—Ben Blacksmith, Madison Washington, D. Ruffin, and Elijah Morris—"kept watch by turns the whole time … with knives drawn. So close was the watch, that it was impossible to rescue the brig. Neither passengers, officers, nor sailors, were allowed to communicate with each other." Ruffin knew how to read a compass and thus "was all the time either at the compass or watching Merritt" to make sure Merritt did not try to change course. Other rebels "would also watch the compass by turns." Furthermore, Ruffin carefully checked any attempt of Merritt's to communicate covertly with other whites: "Ruffin, when he saw Merritt mark on the slate the altitude which he was then taking, compelled him to rub out the words in writing, and make only figures and marks on the slate for fear that Gifford [the first mate] and Merritt might communicate secretly by that means." The Black rebels' "close watch" and strict control over communication succeeds where the white overseers' watching failed.

In the temporarily inverted power dynamics which make the Black rebels overseers and whites the objects of surveillance, the deposition reveals the undersight that the whites practiced to evade their captors. The deposition dwells on the details of where, when, and how the whites (as well as one enslaved person who sympathized with the whites) "secreted" and "concealed themselves" as the Blacks took control of the brig. Merritt exemplifies this white undersight: at the start of the rebellion Merritt "blew out the light" in

the hold to hide from the rebels and then escaped in the darkness to the cabin; finding that he could not leave the cabin "without being discovered," he "hid himself in one of the births [*sic*]." "After a great deal of search, Merritt was found … and dragged … from his birth [*sic*]," whereupon he negotiated for his life by persuading the rebels "that he was the only person who could navigate for them." This white undersight echoes both the fugitivity Gray describes in the *Confessions* and the behavior of Cereno in contracting with the *San Dominick* rebels in *Benito Cereno*.

This surreptitious white resistance to Black surveillance operates at the national level as well once the *Creole* arrives at Nassau. The deposition reveals a counterrevolutionary "plan" secretly arranged by the US consul in the Bahamas, the captains of two other US ships then docked in Nassau, and the *Creole* crew. This covert operation aimed to "rescue the [*Creole*] from the British officers then in command, and conduct her to Indian Key, where there was a United States vessel of war." The US captains and portions of their crew would board the *Creole* "with arms" and retake the brig. On the morning of November 12, this irregular US force rowed to the *Creole* with their "arms wrapped in the American flag, and concealed in the bottom of the boat." The deposition's image of this clandestine operation's use of the US flag to conceal its weapons emblematizes the falsity of the US consul, who used his diplomatic station to cover an extralegal attack. Yet again Black surveillance proves more acute, however, as "a negro in a boat, who had watched the loading of the [armed] boat, followed her, and gave the alarm to the British officer in command on board the Creole." Throughout the actual deposition, the *Creole* crew reveals the fallacy of white oversight through their depiction of superior Black surveillance.

When Douglass fictionalizes the deposition in Grant's recollection of the rebellion, however, he elides all the evidence of the reversal of watcher and watched. As I argued in my readings of the *Confessions* and *Benito Cereno*, this upending of the racialized dialectic of white surveillance and Black sousveillance destabilizes reconstructions of historical events, a problem that Douglass also signals in the rupture of the established narrative form for Parts 1 through 3. Douglass restabilizes the narrative by depicting a white witness who does not testify to the destruction of white oversight; indeed, Grant's testimony, unlike Benito Cereno's, ignores the reality of Black sousveillance that enabled the rebellion. Instead, he routes his testimony through the discourse of American revolutionary rhetoric. Maggie Sale argues that "Douglass asserted a new meaning for revolutionary rhetoric, not simply the abolition of U.S. slavery, but the *equivalence* of the struggle of enslaved men with that of the republic's

masculine founders."[55] By syllogistically equating the Black rebels' struggle to a framework that is already within his worldview, Grant preserves his epistemic authority. This logic does not overturn or challenge anything in Grant's espistemic framework—it merely adds another case to a preexisting belief. Grant therefore does not have to face the shattering consequences of a qualitatively different worldview, one that would challenge his presumption of white supremacy. Albeit begrudgingly, Grant acknowledges that Washington's "principles are the principles of 1776. But I could not bring myself to recognize their application to one whom I deemed my inferior" (163). Grant's language here repudiates the exchange of looks that signaled Listwell's abandonment of the illusion of white oversight. Because Grant maintains his racial superiority, he "could not bring himself to recognize" Washington—to recognize a Black look. Unlike Listwell, therefore, Grant can provide testimony about the rebellion, relying on his white oversight to stabilize his reconstruction of the past.

In their fictionalizations of historical slave rebellions, Melville and Douglass replicate the rupture in narrative form generated by the destruction of white oversight that I identified in the nonfiction *Confessions*. When white surveillants recognize that they are not invisible but are objects of the Black gaze, the epistemological authority of white oversight breaks down. Melville and Douglass represent the problem of reconstructing narratives about the past when the stabilizing authority of white oversight has been lost. Whereas the conspicuous detective in Poe's Dupin tales provides an authoritative retrospective account that insists that the white surveillant is invisible, Melville and Douglass engage with the consequences of white surveillants' realization that they are being watched from below. Because Cereno and Listwell both confront this fact, one through force and the other voluntarily, neither can provide credible testimony, a problem that Melville and Douglass register in the fragmented form of their texts. Melville and Douglass also present white surveillants who deny the reality of the Black gaze despite their experience as objects of its scrutiny. Delano willfully chooses to forget his experience, leaving the mystery unsolved. Grant frames his experience of subordination in terms that allow him to maintain white supremacy and thus retains the credibility to testify about the crime of slave rebellion. In the next chapter I turn from reconstructions of the past to speculations about the future.

4

Speculation Fiction: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and *The Bondwoman's Narrative*

Since Mark Dery coined the term "Afrofuturism" in 1994, critical interest in the genre of "speculative fiction that treats African-American themes and addresses African-American concerns in the context of … a prosthetically enhanced future" has flourished.[1] Madhu Dubey explains that "the break from narrative realism can release African American writers from established protocols of racial representation in literature, freeing them to invent unexpected new futures."[2] As Britt Rusert has shown, this genre emerged with the earliest African American fiction, since Martin Delany's *Blake; or The Huts of America* (1859–1862) "imagines the formation of a utopian speculative science to be used in the struggle against slavery."[3] While speculative fiction names a genre that is particularly concerned with imagining alternative futures mediated through technology, in this chapter I examine texts that wrestle with the problem of envisioning possible futures in the context of the crisis of speculation exacerbated by the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850.

Two novelized autobiographies, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), by Harriet Jacobs, and *The Bondwoman's Narrative,* by Hannah Crafts (holograph manuscript; composed ca. 1853–1860), portray the way in which enslaved women speculate in order to negotiate the conditions of their own and their loved ones' enslavement. Though Jacobs's and Crafts's texts, like Delany's, are speculative in the sense of conjecturing alternative futures, they are not engaged with the scientific topoi of speculative fiction. Rather, Jacobs's and Crafts's speculation fictions bring together two additional meanings of speculation: spying—its earliest denotation—and financial risk-taking—a denotation that was particularly salient in the nineteenth century. "Speculation" comes from the Latin *speculārī:* "to spy out, watch, examine, observe." The original meaning of speculation was "the … power of seeing, … esp. intelligent or comprehending vision," and a secondary meaning was "an observer or watcher; a spy" (*OED*). This ocular definition of speculation has particular resonance for Black women because they have historically been made hypervisible as a result of their oversurveillance.

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Privacy—the right not to be seen—has long been a key term in surveillance studies, but scholars have recently emphasized the ways in which race and gender structure access to privacy.[4] In her powerful analysis of racial inequality in the United States, *More Beautiful and More Terrible,* Imani Perry argues that "while privacy has been a signature feature of American citizenship," people of color have suffered "alienation from the right to privacy."[5] Similarly, feminist surveillance studies scholars Rachel E. Dubrofsky and Shoshana A. Magnet point out that privacy is "a limited lens for thinking about surveillance, since it is a right not granted equally to all, a fact that needs to be taken into account in such investigations."[6] Though Perry's study focuses on the contemporary United States, she opens her chapter on racialized surveillance with the indelible image of Harriet Jacobs cramped in her garret, hiding from her enslaver, in order to demonstrate that this unequal access to the right of privacy has its roots in the slave system.[7] As Jasmine Nichole Cobb explains, slavery constructed "the Black body as intrinsically visible."[8]

Given the hypervisibility of the Black female body, Black women's strategies for resisting surveillance add another dimension to the dialectic of racialized surveillance and sousveillance that I have been analyzing. Jacobs's and Crafts's speculative texts reveal how enslaved women are the especial objects of white male surveillance. The white male gaze in these texts works not just to control enslaved women's mobility and exploit their labor, as is the case with the surveillance of enslaved people more generally, but to facilitate the sexual abuse of enslaved women.[9] Though Linda Brent and Hannah, the female protagonists of Jacobs's and Crafts's books respectively, resist that surveillance through sousveillance, they also harness the power of surveillance to protect themselves and others. Counterintuitively, for Brent and Hannah surveillance affords a measure of privacy. Their tactics are not simply dialectically opposed to surveillance, therefore, but rather mobilize and strategically amplify the scopic methods of enslavers.

Moreover, Jacobs and Crafts highlight the brutal effects of slave speculation, which was fundamental to the slave economy, as scholars including Ian Baucom, Jonathan Levy, Michael Tadman, and Ed Baptist have demonstrated. This second meaning of speculation, a "commercial venture of an enterprising nature, esp. one involving considerable financial risk on the chance of unusual profit," fueled the Atlantic slave trade and subsequently the domestic US slave trade.[10] The finance capitalist logic of slave speculation, grounded in a "monetarizing anatomization of the body," was "capable of converting anything it touche[d] into a monetary equivalent."[11] In the United States, slave speculation was stimulated by violent annexation and settlement of vast territories west of

the Mississippi from the 1820s onward. Speculators purchased enslaved people in the east and forced them to march overland to the new territories, where the speculator could obtain high sales prices. In addition to this internal slave trade, Baptist shows, enslaved people were converted into financial instruments, like real-estate mortgages, so that southwestern enslavers could expand their empires on credit, but as these "entrepreneurs … sought out more and more risk … [, they] planted the seeds for a cycle of boom and bust."[12] The domestic slave trade destroyed enslaved families and forced enslaved people into a relentless, grinding labor system that maximized efficiency.

As Stephen Best explains, the Fugitive Slave Law sparked fears "of an expanded speculation in slaves—a fear not only that the market would now extend from the New Orleans auction block to all parts north but that it would also absorb both escaped slaves and blacks incapable of defending their freedom." In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe responds to "the moral crisis of slave market activity—an 'immoral economy' exemplified by the errantry and inconstancy of slave speculation." Despite her sentimental project to inspire white readers to "*feel right*," Best argues, for Stowe "slaves stand alongside slaveholders and speculators as figures of fiscal and linguistic 'imprudence.'" Even in her critique of the market, Stowe's Protestant ethos of frugality wins out over her sympathy for enslaved people so that "the idle vassals of … *Uncle Tom's Cabin* offer aesthetic figures for credit economy."[13] Whereas Stowe implicitly faults her enslaved characters for their abstraction into figures of credit, Jacobs and Crafts, writing from the perspective of enslaved people who have suffered the harms of this abstraction of their bodies and souls into exchange value, reveal that adopting the methods and logic of speculation can be a form of resistance against enslavement.

Slave speculation's "monetarization" of enslaved bodies, whether through insurance underwriting, estate valuation, or mortgaging, epitomized the dehumanizing logic of slavery. The threat of being sold to speculators pervades both Jacobs's and Crafts's texts, as it does much antislavery writing. Though Brent and Hannah mobilize different responses to this threat, both texts parse the complex relationship among the multiple valences of speculation, demonstrating how their enslaved women protagonists spy and use their observations to facilitate their protective speculation. In *Incidents,* Brent recognizes the protective function of surveillance in her small North Carolina town, where everyone knows her and her grandmother, and the public eye restrains the worst abuses of her lecherous enslaver. If she were sold to a slave speculator and transported to "a distant plantation," she would lose this protection. When Brent can no longer leverage white surveillants to protect herself, she

turns to the methods and logic of slave speculation to negotiate the conditions of her and her children's enslavement. Ultimately, she literalizes the "monetarization" of her own body, abstracting herself into bare life in order to convert herself into an exchange value in the eyes of her enslaver. Yet unlike speculators in slaves, Jacobs never lets her readers forget the physical and mental toll of this abstraction on the enslaved subject. In *The Bondwoman's Narrative,* Crafts details the surveillant methods of the "slave speculator" Trappe.[14] Trappe exemplifies what Janet Neary terms "racial speculation," the "spectacularization of blackness tied to the anticipation of future value."[15] Hannah is Trappe's counterpart in surveillance, figured throughout the novel as a careful observer, who "needs to use the tools of a Trappe to resist his traps," as Robert Levine neatly puts it.[16] Unlike Trappe's profit-seeking speculation, Hannah's protective speculation uses secret information she gains from her spying to facilitate intimacy between herself and the women she wants to purchase her so that they will be motivated to buy her.

Subject to the commodifying logic and the surveillance of the slave system, Brent's and Hannah's lives are structured by slave speculation, which returns profits from assuming the risk of an enslaved person's future. As Levy has shown in his analysis of the legal debates surrounding early-nineteenth-century insurance law, "to be *unfree* was for another man to own your risk, while to be *free* was to own that risk yourself."[17] Because slavery denies personhood to enslaved people, they cannot claim the "ability to assume one's risk" within captivity. Thus, Johannes Voelz contends, enslaved people must take the "*meta-risk*" of escape: "flight amounts to the assumption of risk. … The slave risks access to risk."[18] Building on Voelz's argument, I explore the ways in which enslaved women's experiences complicate this binary of free/unfree that structures enslaved people's choice to run away. For numerous reasons including familial bonds and lack of access to work that took them off the plantation (and thus facilitated escape), enslaved women were less likely to run away than enslaved men.[19] As Frances Smith Foster argues, "Harriet Jacobs's treatment of conflict, dominion, and power is more complex and varied than that of male narrators. As in most narratives, the resisting protagonist does flee to the North, but in Harriet Jacobs's version flight is neither the first nor the only available option for resistance."[20] Jacobs and Crafts portray the varied ways that their women protagonists try to manage risk *without* taking the meta-risk of flight. Brent and Hannah develop a future-oriented sousveillance—their careful observation and "spying out" of information that they can turn to their advantage—in order to manage risk within the surveillance regime of the slave South.

In their narratives, Jacobs and Crafts not only depict the brutal effects of slave speculation but also explicitly figure their resistance to enslavement as an alternative form of speculation, aimed not at seeking economic profit, but rather at minimizing harm to themselves and their loved ones. I use the term "speculate" purposely to contrast Jacobs's and Crafts's protective speculation with profit-seeking speculation in slaves. Whereas racial speculation is transactional and intended to create economic value, the calculated risks that Brent and Hannah undertake are to their bodies, rather than to their ability to turn a profit. By depicting Brent and Hannah taking up the logic and methods of slave speculation in order to resist their own dehumanization, Jacobs and Crafts call our attention to the pathos of their speculation and thereby condemn the harms that slave speculation inflicts.

The outcomes of Brent's and Hannah's speculation are extremely circumscribed—in the case of *Incidents* Brent delineates the continuation of her struggle despite her escape from the South, while in the case of *The Bondwoman's Narrative* Crafts marks the ending of Hannah's story as patently implausible. Nevertheless, the orientation to the future that they claim in their speculation (*OED*: "a conjectural consideration or meditation. … As opposed to practice, fact, action, etc.") opens up the conjectural, imaginative field that Jacobs and Crafts engage in their turn to fictionalization. Carla L. Peterson notes that "the 1850s constitute a significant moment in the history of African-American literary production as they were the first decade to bear witness to the publication of full-length fictional narratives written by blacks, both male and female." Fictional narrative, according to Peterson, "tends to make its appearance at those moments of crisis when, in Bakhtin's words, a national culture is decentralized and loses 'its sealed-off and self-sufficient character.'"[21] The crisis of speculation provoked by the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 was such a moment, as illustrated by the turn to fictionalization in Jacobs's and Crafts's novelized autobiographies.

While both *Incidents* and *The Bondwoman's Narrative* are based on the life stories of two formerly enslaved Black women, they foreground their relationship to fiction rather than presenting themselves as documents of fact. Jacobs assigns pseudonyms to all the people in *Incidents,* including the first-person narrator, whom she calls Linda Brent. She also omits her own name from the title page of the book, leading many twentieth-century scholars to believe *Incidents* was a novel until Jean Fagan Yellin authenticated Jacobs's authorship in 1981.[22] Scholars have demonstrated that Jacobs adapted the conventions of sentimental fiction as well as the gothic and urban gothic.[23] Similarly, Hannah Bond, whom Gregg Hecimovich has identified as the author of *The*

Bondwoman's Narrative, adopted the pen name "Hannah Crafts" and fictionalized her life story.[24] Rather than write a nonfiction slave narrative, Bond, an enslaved women born in North Carolina who escaped to the North in 1857, overtly patterns her narrative on, and borrows liberally from, popular novels of her era including Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*, the first novel to feature a police detective. Critics have also "situate[d] Crafts's novel in an emerging subgenre that can be called African American gothic."[25] As this extensive engagement with fictional genres suggests, Jacobs and Crafts claim a speculative orientation that liberates them from the facticity required of the slave narrative.[26] Jacobs, whose polemic antislavery purpose more clearly undergirds her novelized autobiography, uses this literary freedom to shape her text but does not offer an optimistic alternative future. Crafts, on the other hand, envisions an "unexpected new future" for her heroine, in which she reverses slave speculation's separation of mothers and children with a loving (and wholly implausible) reunion of Hannah and her mother.[27]

Hypercommodification in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl offers one of the most dramatic expositions of watching and being watched in the antislavery archive. Brent details the scopic irony of her view from her infamous "loophole of retreat" in her grandmother's garret. She "overturns the optics of slavery" by positioning herself as an unseen voyeur watching those who had previously surveilled her.[28] Literally watching from above, she blurs the racialized dialectic of surveillance and sousveillance. Brent lacks access to the surveillant's power, however; her elevated view is not supervisory but impotent, as for example when she sees her "son covered with blood" from a vicious dog's bite but cannot go to him.[29] She trades total invisibility for the ability to "peep[] at my children's faces" from the center of her self-imposed panopticon (Jacobs, *Incidents,* 148). Brent literalizes conspicuous detection's fantasy of unreciprocated surveillance in order to protect her children.

In the garret section and throughout the narrative, Brent strategically mobilizes and amplifies the very practices of enslavement that inflict unbearable harm: surveillance and slave speculation. Brent's unusual position as a house servant in a small town with free relatives who are beloved members of the community gives her the ability to leverage white surveillants to protect herself and her family. When Flint threatens to remove Brent's protective surveillance, however, Brent speculates by entering into a relationship with another white

man in exchange for the expectation that he will protect her and her children. When this speculation does not yield the hoped-for result, Brent again speculates, this time by placing herself into such extreme captivity that she essentially abstracts herself to force Flint to convert her into exchange value rather than fetishizing her as a commodity for his use. In this way, Jacobs performs on her own body the dehumanizing commodification of human beings into financial instruments that underwrote speculation in slaves. Brent's speculation harnesses the sexual and commercial logics of enslavement to her own ends, yet Jacobs never allows the reader to lose sight of Brent's embodiment and the physical toll this speculation takes on her.

Managing surveillants rather than escaping surveillance is a theme Jacobs returns to often in the first section of the narrative. Brent lacks the privacy of a domestic space that would screen her and her children from the hypervisibility imposed by enslavement. For Brent, freedom is incomplete without "the dream of my life," "a home of my own," to protect herself and her children (Jacobs, *Incidents,* 201).[30] Mark Rifkin notes that Jacobs's "explicit politicization of domesticity" "presents access to domesticity as the product of specific government decisions and elisions that shape the choices and life chances of African Americans."[31] In a direct address to her white women readers, Brent asserts that their homes are "shielded by the laws" of the United States, and this statutory protection in turn shields white women from assault. William Gleason finds in Hannah Crafts's *The Bondwoman's Narrative* a similar "'cottage desire': a powerful yearning for independent black homeownership."[32] Both Jacobs and Crafts underscore that Black women are denied the privacy of domestic space that would screen them from the pervasive surveillance of the slave system.

However, Jacobs also exposes the racialized and gendered facets of privacy, complicating any simplistic dichotomy between surveillance and privacy. Privacy, Jacobs insists, can be dangerous for Black women. Anticipating the critiques of privacy made by contemporary scholars such as Catharine MacKinnon, who states "In the United States, one meaning privacy has effectively come to have is the right to dominate free of public scrutiny," Brent repeatedly documents the way that her enslaver's worst abuses hinge on his ability to get her out of the public's sight.[33] She perhaps learns this lesson from her grandmother, who prevents Dr. Flint from selling her in a "private sale" because "if [Flint] was base enough to sell her, when her mistress intended she should be free, she was determined the public should know it" (Jacobs, *Incidents*, 11). By forcing her sale into public, Jacobs's grandmother shames Flint in the eyes of the white townspeople and provokes the sister of her enslaver to

purchase her at a low price and manumit her. Brent's grandmother thus harnesses the public display of the auction block—that most emblematic site of racialized surveillance—to her own ends. Rather than evading surveillance, Brent's grandmother manipulates the surveillance of the larger white community in order to redirect its gaze at her enslaver and thereby protect herself from the harm he wished to commit in private.[34]

White surveillance, surprisingly, can thus have a protective function under certain circumstances, particularly for women who would be vulnerable to assault in private spaces. Brent reiterates, in nearly identical language, the restraint that white surveillance imposes on Flint: "How often did I rejoice that I lived in a town where all the inhabitants knew each other! If I had been on a remote plantation, or lost among the multitude of a crowded city, I should not be a living woman at this day" (35, see also 29).[35] Extending this restraint to white men besides Flint, she also details her family's ability to leverage white surveillance in order to protect themselves after the Nat Turner rebellion produced a wave of fear among the white population. Wealthy whites have enlisted poor whites to conduct searches of enslaved and free Blacks' houses, and these poor white people are taking advantage of the situation "to exercise a little brief authority" (64). Seeing that the white men searching her grandmother's house are eager to confiscate loose change and other property, Brent asks "a white gentleman who was friendly to us … to come in and stay until the search was over" (65). Brent does not try to evade the surveillance of the searchers, which would be futile, but rather brings in a more powerful surveillant who can watch the watchers and thereby protect Brent and her family.

Brent's discernment of the power dynamics of surveillance enables her to tactically manipulate white surveillants to protect herself from Flint's sexual assaults. Using language that highlights the perverse protection of white oversight, in contrast to its more typical punitive function for enslaved people, Brent describes her efforts to "keep within sight of people" in order to prevent Flint's efforts to force her to submit to him sexually (32). Flint has arranged to have Brent sleep in his room as a nurse for his child, knowing that their isolation will eliminate this protective white oversight. However, Brent informs Flint's wife of his designs, inciting Mrs. Flint's jealousy in order to protect herself from Flint's machinations. The trade off, for Brent, means that she becomes an object of Mrs. Flint's intense and cruel surveillance, rather than Dr. Flint's, but Brent chooses this "terrible … experience" to prevent "one more terrible" at the hands of Dr. Flint (34). Mrs. Flint "spent many a sleepless night to watch over me," Brent reports (34). Choosing Mrs. Flint's "vigils" over Dr. Flint's

abuse, Brent increases the surveillance to which she is subjected in order to protect herself from the worst effects of her hypervisibility.

Not only does Jacobs depict Brent's strategic intensification of slavery's scopic regime, but Jacobs also portrays Brent's mobilization of the logic and methods of slave speculation. Brent's ability to leverage surveillants fails when Dr. Flint tells her he is building a house for her "in a secluded place," thereby removing the possibility of any protective surveillance. At this point, Brent makes the "deliberate calculation" (54) based on "calculations of interest" (55) to have an affair with Mr. Sands, another white man who is not her enslaver. Jacobs's repetition of economic and rational language in describing Brent's decision emphasizes that Brent is engaging in speculation, undertaking a calculated risk with the expectation that she can leverage her relationship with Sands to protect her and her children from Flint. Based on her calculations, Brent decides to invest in Mr. Sands. As Houston A. Baker, Jr., argues, Brent "creates the commodifying conditions for her children's disposition."[36] Maurice Lee has shown that slave narrators use the language of risk and probabilistic reasoning when describing their escape attempts in order to "demonstrate that they can assess the probable outcome of their actions."[37] Similarly, Brent uses the language of "probabilistic reasoning" to demonstrate her ability to manage risk, not in order to escape but in order to protect herself and her children as best she can.[38]

Jacobs discloses Flint's calculations as well as Brent's, contrasting the values implicit in their two methods of speculation. Though Flint's calculations regarding Brent's children include the priceless "power of revenge" (105), they primarily assess his financial risk, unlike Brent's calculations, which assess the risk of assault to herself and her loved ones. Before deciding to sell Brent's children, Flint weighs the risk that Brent's daughter "might die, or might be stolen away" before he could "sell her for a high price" (105). Brent's speculation pays off as Flint, who "was hard pressed for money," sells her brother and her children (105). Brent uses her credit with Sands to facilitate her brother and children's sale. Sands puts up the money, but sends a "speculator" (105) to Flint to disguise the purchaser and create the impression that Brent's family members will be sold out of state. By orchestrating this performance of the domestic slave trade, Brent thus becomes a speculator in slaves, not for profit but in order to protect her loved ones.

Though Brent's speculation in her children succeeds, Flint's fetishization of her precludes him from appraising her solely on the basis of her financial value, and thus his calculations are irrational.[39] He values his power over her incommensurately with her economic value: he "cared even more for revenge

than he did for money" (101). In order to compel Flint to sell her, therefore, Brent must monetarize herself. She reduces herself to the point of bare life, abstracting her physical being in a perverse enactment of the process of financialization that underwrote slave speculation. Brent's seven-year captivity in her grandmother's garret, a space so small she could not even stand upright, "enacts the conditions of slavery on a hyperbolic scale," in Michelle Burnham's words.[40] As when Brent sought additional surveillance rather than attempting to evade surveillance, Brent is thus not trying to escape captivity; rather she is intensifying the conditions of captivity as a form of protection. Whereas Brent orchestrated a slave speculation in order to protect her children, for herself she hyperbolically dramatizes the process of abstraction on which the financialization of enslaved bodies depended. Jacobs depicts Brent harnessing what Best has described as "a simple function of the abstraction implicit in property. … Some fluctuating measure of 'souls' plus some fluctuating measure of 'bodies' yields 'an equivalent to money.'"[41] Ironically, in a text that forcefully condemns the slave system, Brent's captivity in the garret is intended to achieve the very transaction at the foundation of that system: the conversion of herself from an individual into an exchange value.[42]

Yet even as Brent details her objectification, Jacobs's text simultaneously foregrounds Brent's subjectivity through its focus on the intense suffering that her body undergoes in the process of abstraction. As opposed to the pro-slavery rhetoric that denied the trauma that slave speculation visited on African Americans in the form of family separations as well as the physical hardships of forced migration, Brent continually specifies her physical discomfort, from the cramping in her limbs to the lack of fresh air to her exposure to the elements.[43] Her confinement nearly "cripple[s her] for life" (127), and years later she reflects "my body still suffers from the effects of that long imprisonment" (148). Jacobs's text thus holds two contradictory ideas in conjunction: the real bodily harm that she endured in order to convert herself into a saleable commodity (rather than a fetish), and the dehumanizing economic rhetoric of slave speculation, which effaces its own physical effects on African Americans' bodies.

Protective Speculation in *The Bondwoman's Narrative*

Crafts also contrasts two speculators in *The Bondwoman's Narrative*: Trappe, a "slave speculator" (Crafts, *Bondwoman's Narrative*, 116), and Hannah, an enslaved speculator. Trappe "scent[s] out" (239), like a bloodhound, the

genealogies of people with hidden African American ancestry and then uses this information to blackmail or sell them as enslaved people. Throughout the novel, Crafts synecdochally reduces Trappe to his "keen black eye," indicating that he exemplifies the "speculative gaze," which Neary has defined as "captur[ing] the relationship between conjecture, objectification, and value at work in a racializing gaze."[44] Trappe's speculation returns a profit: thanks to his "prying into secrets, and watching his chance, he has all the opportunity in the world to make great bargains" (113). Hannah, on the other hand, speculates not for financial reward, but to negotiate the best conditions she can within the system of slavery. Crafts depicts Hannah engaging in a series of speculations, in which she trades on the currency of secret information in order to protect herself. By structuring the novel around two contrasting "speculators," Crafts provides an alternative model of protective speculation that underscores the harms caused by profit-seeking slave speculators.

Both Trappe's and Hannah's speculation is grounded in their ability to "spy out" secret information. Though Crafts ultimately differentiates between Trappe's surveillance and Hannah's sousveillance, she repeatedly links them through their powers of observation and detection. In the novel's first paragraph, Hannah describes herself as having "a silent unobtrusive way of observing things and events" (5), and she repeats this description to compare herself to Trappe, her rival in observation, when he enters the household (27). Levine points out that "the character [Hannah] most resembles in the novel is Trappe. … Like Trappe, she watches over characters as she attempts to make sense of their (racial) identities, and she experiences a certain gratification in the powers of surveillance."[45] However, Trappe's surveillance is punitive, penetrative, and sadistic: he "loved to probe the human heart to its inmost depths, and watch the manifestations of its living agony" (108).[46] Hannah, on the other hand, watches in order to safeguard herself and other women—especially other women who can in turn protect her. Crafts thus indicates that the creation of sentimental bonds depends on sousveillance.

Trappe's and Hannah's contrasting ways of looking, and the divergent types of speculation they permit, are exemplified by their opposing relationships to portraiture. Trappe uses a portrait of a white-appearing woman's enslaved mother to reveal the woman's hidden African American heritage and establish his claim to her as property, enabling his profiteering speculation. Sarah Blackwood argues that Trappe thereby relies on "portraiture's power to reveal, which is here figured as commensurate with its consolidation of white power and authority." Hannah, by contrast, gazes at the pictures of her enslaver's ancestors in his portrait gallery and finds them animated by the fading light of the setting

sun. Blackwood emphasizes that this experience of looking "authorizes Hannah's mind": "the portrait's surface invites an imagination of depth that in turn constitutes the viewing subjectivity."[47] Building on Blackwood's argument, I want to attend to the way that Hannah describes this experience as freeing her mind to "speculate." Celebrating the imaginative freedom her viewership affords, Hannah specifies that "I seemed suddenly … to have entered a new world of thoughts, and feelings and sentiment. I was not a slave with these pictured memorials of the past. … As their companion I could think and *speculate*. In their presence my mind seemed to run riotous and exult in its freedom as a rational being" (17–18, emphasis mine). Where Trappe uses the portrait to reconstruct the past, detecting evidence in his case against Mistress's freedom, Hannah's relationship to the portraits is future-oriented, as she imagines what they could be rather than ascertaining evidence of what they were. It is this ability to "think and speculate" that Hannah tries to employ over the course of the novel.

Throughout *The Bondwoman's Narrative,* Crafts inverts the speculations of slave traders, depicting Hannah—the merchandise, according to slavery's logic of fungibility—attempting to negotiate her own sale. In her speculations, Hannah conjectures the future she is likely to have under the control of different enslavers. Hannah's calculations of the future are based on her sousveillance: she uses the secret information she gains from her spying to facilitate intimacy between herself and the women she wants to purchase her so that they will be motivated to buy her. Hannah's language in the portrait gallery resonates with Lee's contention that vindications of Black intelligence in antislavery writing stressed "the ability to strategize and calculate under conditions of uncertainty."[48] As Crafts repeatedly demonstrates, however, Hannah's speculations fail because her risk calculations are rendered specious by enslavement's foreclosure of futurity. Summarizing this problem of uncertainty, Hannah states "There can be no certainty, no abiding confidence in the possession of any good thing. The indulgent master may die, or fail in business … and the consciousness of this embitters [enslaved people's] lot" (97–98). Speculation is based on the assumption of risk in exchange for the potential of future gains. Voelz explains that "[r]isk describes an active stance of seeking out uncertainty for the possible gains contained in it." Enslaved people cannot undertake this stance because "a life in slavery is a life divested of futurity." For the enslaved "it is the open future that must be regained from a power constellation built on the foreclosure of the slave's future," and the "meta-risk" of flight is what allows enslaved people to regain an open future.[49] The moral crisis of the expanded speculation in slaves triggered by the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 epitomized

this lack of futurity, as enslaved families, the generational markers that connect past to future, were torn apart. Denied her personhood and thus the ability to assume risk, Hannah's speculations fail until she undertakes this meta-risk: fleeing to the North, alone.

While Hannah eventually does decide to undertake this meta-risk, it is not the focus of the novel; rather, *The Bondwoman's Narrative* highlights Hannah's reliance on bonds based on gender in her multiple, unsuccessful speculations. Hannah tries to negotiate the marketplace by investing emotional energy in women whom she hopes will buy her, and she works to strengthen these relationships through sharing secrets she has discovered through sousveillance. However, Crafts reveals that slavery continually renders these ties worthless in the market, whether because the woman Hannah has tried to bond with is herself marginalized and cannot protect Hannah, or because the woman's primary allegiance is to race rather than gender. Crafts draws on the discourse of sentiment in her depictions of the bonds between women, particularly as it is routed through Crafts's most significant literary influence, Dickens's *Bleak House*. In Dickens's novel, Esther Summerson's goodness depends upon her ability to avoid the temptation of economic self-interest to which Richard Carstone falls prey in his devotion to the *Jarndyce and Jarndyce* Chancery suit. As Best says of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, "the gospel of nineteenth-century sentimental ideology [is the] obligation to feel when 'in' the market."[50] Hannah's self-serving calculations are in tension with the sentimental discourse that Crafts employs in the novel, highlighting the problem of "feel[ing] 'in' the market" from the perspective of the commodity. Whereas Stowe's market critique aims to get the buyer to "*feel right*"—that is, to ensure that emotional and moral concerns restrain speculative profiteering—Crafts's critique of sentimental ideology underscores the way that Hannah's attempts to bring feeling into the market continually fail.

In keeping with this critique of sentimentalism, Crafts highlights the limits of sentimental looks in a Gothic set piece presented early in the novel. The legend of the linden tree draws a gendered distinction between punitive surveillance and an intimate look that provides solace. The founding patriarch of Hannah's enslaver's estate, Sir Clifford de Vincent, emblematizes the cruel surveillance associated with the slave system, while an enslaved woman, Rose, whom Sir Clifford punishes, presents a model of intimate and protective looking. Rose's gaze offers sympathy and affection to her child-substitute while they both suffer, but it is ultimately impotent to shield them from the power of their enslaver. Sir Clifford has planted a linden tree outside his drawing room

window and "chosen [it] as the scene where the tortures and punishments [of enslaved people] were inflicted. … On such occasions, Sir Clifford, … within the full sight and hearing of their agonies, would drink wine, or coolly discuss the politics of the day with some acquaintance, pausing … to give directions to the executioner, or order some mitigation of the torture only to prolong it" (20). Foregrounding the cruel pleasure Sir Clifford takes in watching the torture of enslaved people, Crafts situates him as a surveillant, keeping a close supervisory eye on brutality.

By contrast, Rose not only looks back at Sir Clifford with a defiant oppositional gaze, but she also uses her power of looking to provide comfort in the midst of torture. In Sir Clifford's "direst act of cruelty" (21), both Rose and her dog—the only memento she has of her daughter, whom Sir Clifford has sold away from her—are, at Sir Clifford's command, "gibbet[ed]" to the linden, with the dog "within [Rose's] sight, but beyond her reach" (23). The pair are kept there for three days, without food or water, and each morning "the master … would fix his cold cruel eyes with appalling indifference on her agonized countenance, and calmly inquire whether or not she was ready to be the minister of his vengeance on the dog" (23). Rose looks back at her enslaver to the very end. Each day of her punishment, even when "her eyes seemed starting from their sockets," Rose refuses Sir Clifford's request to kill the dog; at the moment of her death, "she open[s] her blood-shotten lack-lustre eyes" and curses the De Vincent family in perpetuity.

Not only does Rose match her enslaver's gaze with her own, however; she also uses her gaze to comfort her canine companion: "she would turn her eyes with looks of unutterable tenderness on her equally failing companion, and who shall say that he did not perceive and appreciate the glance" (23–24). Emphasizing the deep emotional connection between Rose and her dog, Crafts notes that the dog, with its "great speaking eyes, full of intelligence, and bearing a strong resemblance to those of a child" (21) became like a "grandchild" to Rose (22). The language of vision in this passage, from the dog's "intelligent eyes" to Rose's "looks of tenderness" calls attention to intimate looking, looking that comforts rather than oppresses. In these paired scenes, Crafts explores the power of the gaze as a problem and a possibility. In contrast to Sir Clifford's surveillant eye, Rose's maternal gaze provides solace within the brutal conditions of enslavement.[51] Nevertheless, Rose can neither protect her daughter's dog from being killed nor can she protect her daughter from being sold to "a life of bondage … toiling in the rice swamps of Alabama" (21). The legend of the linden tree compresses the plot of *The Bondwoman's Narrative,*

demonstrating what Hannah will eventually come to realize: the fungibility of bodies within the speculative economy of slavery renders sentimental bonds null.

The novel is structured as a series of episodes, each focused on Hannah's relationship with a more privileged woman. Each episode depicts another of Hannah's speculations, aimed at orchestrating her sale to an "indulgent" woman so that she is not purchased by male slave traders whose profiteering will entail Hannah's suffering. Hannah first bonds with a non-slaveholding white woman named Aunt Hetty, who teaches her to read and provides her with a respite from her enslavement. Although Hannah begs Hetty to purchase her, Hetty and her husband, Siah, are too poor. Hannah next turns to the new wife of her enslaver, Mr. Vincent, a kind woman referred to throughout the text as "Mistress."[52] However, Mistress is under the power of Trappe, who knows that her mother was an enslaved woman. After eavesdropping on Trappe and Mistress, Hannah decides to help Mistress escape, but Mistress eventually becomes deranged and the two women are returned to Trappe's possession. After Mistress dies, Trappe employs a slave speculator to sell Hannah. A wagon accident kills the speculator and leaves Hannah in limbo at the home of a compassionate white woman named Mrs. Henry. Again, Hannah begs Mrs. Henry to purchase her, but Mrs. Henry refuses due to a vow she made her father. Instead, Mrs. Henry offers to arrange for her friend, Mrs. Wheeler, to purchase Hannah. Mrs. Wheeler turns out to be a cruel, selfish woman, who sentences Hannah to work in the field and marry another enslaved man because she believes that Hannah has betrayed a humiliating secret about her.

Hannah emphasizes the importance of covert observation to ascertain whether or not an enslaver will be "indulgent." Since Hannah, like many enslaved women, initially rejects the idea of running away as too dangerous, the primary way in which she can shield herself from the worst abuses of enslavement is to attach herself to a "motherly" (9) or "indulgent mistress" (27). For example, while Mistress is examining her new home, Hannah states "I had full leisure to examine and inspect her. … I was studying her, and making out a mental inventory of her foibles, and weaknesses, and caprices, and whether or not she was likely to prove an *indulgent* mistress" (27, emphasis mine). In language that evokes the close scrutiny of a potential buyer examining merchandise, Hannah ironically reminds the reader, as she does several times throughout the novel, that enslaved people sharply "inspect" and evaluate each new or potential enslaver. Hannah repeatedly addresses Mistress as "my dear indulgent, mistress" (52, see also 45) and notes that Mistress, "unknown to

Master[,] … indulged me in reading whenever I desired" (37). Similarly, Hannah notes that Mrs. Henry "loved to indulge her servants" (122), and Hannah is confused about why another enslaved woman would "conceal her tears from [Mrs. Henry]," since Mrs. Henry "was kind and indulgent" (134). Hannah uses the intelligence she has gathered to negotiate for the best enslaver possible given the conditions of her enslavement. She begs the women she identifies as "motherly" or "indulgent" to purchase her. Her sousveillance, like a sort of due diligence, facilitates her calculation of the risk that she would undertake with a given enslaver.

Once Hannah has identified a woman as indulgent, she works to build intimacy with her by sharing secrets. This intimacy, Hannah speculates, will deepen their bond and motivate the more privileged woman to purchase Hannah, thus protecting Hannah from the predations of male slave speculators. Hannah first uses this strategy with Aunt Hetty. When Hannah confides in Hetty that she is trying to learn to read, an activity that Hannah's enslaver has "interdicted" (7), Hetty "inquired why I concealed my book, and with childlike artlessness I told her all" (7). Hannah's confession reaps rewards when Hetty not only teaches Hannah to read but opens her home to her as a safe haven. In sharing these secret lessons and visits with Hetty, Hannah develops their intimacy, making herself nearly a part of Hetty and Siah's family. Presuming that this intimacy will motivate them to protect her, Hannah "entreated them to buy me, but in vain. They had not the means" (10). Realizing that she cannot negotiate her sale to Hetty and Siah, Hannah ceases to keep their secret.

Crafts shows that Hannah's secret-keeping is instrumental to her speculation, as Hannah abandons it once she has no prospect of negotiating her sale to her preferred owner. Hetty has risked her own safety to nurture Hannah's intellectual and moral development. Hetty and Siah recognize the importance of hiding their antislavery actions from the slaveholding society that surrounds them: "their conversation on [slavery] was tempered with the utmost discretion and judgement" (10). Hannah, on the other hand, is not adequately surreptitious. She confesses that her lack of "circumspect[ion]" may have been the cause of Hetty and Siah's punishment when the overseer eventually discovers their secret meetings: "Our intercourse had remained so long undiscovered that I had almost ceased to fear disclosure. Probably I had grown less circumspect though not intentionally" (12). Hannah's indiscretion results in Hetty and Siah's imprisonment and loss of their home and property, while Hannah receives no punishment. Though Hannah is "inconsolable" for a time, she is soon able to convince herself that "they were happy whatever might be their condition" (13). In this episode, Crafts shows that Hannah understands

secrecy as a means to an end; when that end is unachievable, she becomes less scrupulous about keeping secrets. The intimacy Hannah aims to foster by sharing secrets is not sentimentalism's idealistic, self-sacrificing love; rather it is self-serving. Hannah invests in women who can help her, and when they can no longer help her, she withdraws her investment.

Again, in the section of the novel depicting Hannah's relationship with Mistress, Crafts portrays Hannah using secrets to deepen her intimacy with a woman who is of a higher status. Hidden behind a curtain, Hannah eavesdrops on a conversation between Mistress and Trappe and discovers Mistress's secret: Mistress is the daughter of an enslaved woman and was substituted for the dead child of a white mother. Trappe, who has discovered Mistress's lineage, is blackmailing her. Hannah subsequently tells Mistress that "I know all. … I overheard your conversation with [Trappe] just now … and … I implore you to confide in me, to entrust me with this dreadful secret, that knowing I may more deeply sympathize with your woes and wrongs" (45). Jacobs and Crafts both contrast auditory surveillance with more penetrative visual surveillance. In *Incidents,* as Chaney argues, the transformation of Brent's "unseen look-out post into an auditorium from which visual perception is impeded and thus superseded by listening … has gendered implications in that it shifts emphasis from autonomous, invasive watching to intersubjective, receptive listening."[53] For Jacobs and Crafts, eavesdropping is akin to listening, which facilitates intimacy, while spying is figured as prying and invasive. Whereas Trappe's surveillance aims to punish Mistress, Hannah's sousveillance deepens her sympathy for Mistress and leads her to help Mistress escape Trappe's control.

Yet although Hannah is motivated by sympathy and love for Mistress and a desire to protect her, the escape plan also protects Hannah. Rather than negotiating a sale to an enslaver, here Hannah speculates that the potential reward of fleeing with Mistress outweighs the risk of remaining and being subject to Trappe's control. Crafts emphasizes Hannah's strategic reasoning throughout the chapters dedicated to her escape attempt with Mistress. Hannah does the "thinking and acting" (50), in contrast to Mistress's emotional paralysis: "My mistress for the time seemed incapable of action or decision" (56). Moreover, escaping with another person, especially one as white-appearing as Mistress, aids her chances of success. Mistress rewards Hannah's commitment to escaping with Mistress by insisting that Hannah is now to her "a very dear sister" (49) rather than her slave. However, as with Hetty, Hannah betrays Mistress's secret when Mistress can no longer benefit Hannah. When Mistress finally becomes "decidedly insane" as a result of months of starvation and exposure

and begins accusing Hannah of conspiring against her, Hannah reveals the "mystery" of Mistress to three men who discover their hiding place (71). Hannah's disclosure brings them both back to the possession of Trappe, who insinuates that he will sell them as "fancy girls." As it did with Hetty, therefore, Hannah's speculation to engage Mistress's protection also fails because Hetty's and Mistress's marginalized positions—Hetty's due to poverty, Mistress's due to race—prevent them from providing security to Hannah.

Following these two unsuccessful speculations, Crafts links Hannah more closely to Trappe's methods, showing that Hannah is willing to trade on the currency of other enslaved peoples' secrets in order to negotiate her sale to the "indulgent" Mrs. Henry. Whereas Hannah's eavesdropping on Mistress and Trappe's conversation was accidental, thus absolving Hannah of responsibility for invading Mistress's privacy, Hannah intentionally spies on two enslaved people at Mrs. Henry's: Charlotte and William. By peering into Charlotte's window, prying into her domestic space, Hannah exemplifies the model of vision delineated in early-nineteenth-century detective fiction by Poe and Dickens, which figures the conspicuous detective's gaze as penetrating into private spaces. This prying visual surveillance, emblematized by Dupin's claim that "most men, in respect to himself, wore windows in their bosoms" (Poe, "Murders," 533), is embodied by Tulkinghorn in Dickens's *Bleak House*.

Bleak House, one of Crafts's main sources for *The Bondwoman's Narrative,* has long been recognized within the literary history of detection as the first novel with a police detective character.[54] However, Dickens goes beyond the official police detective, Inspector Bucket, to depict several amateur detectives including Guppy, Tulkinghorn, and Esther Summerson.[55] Ian Ousby identifies a dynamic of ethical and unethical detection in *Bleak House*, noting that Dickens presents "two radically different approaches to detection" in the figures of Esther Summerson, who "represents an ideal of good detection," and Tulkinghorn, whose detection is "harmful to others."[56] Trappe's prying, profit-seeking surveillance is closely patterned on Dickens's depiction of Tulkinghorn. Like Trappe, Tulkinghorn investigates and exploits a woman's secret: Tulkinghorn discovers that Lady Dedlock gave birth to a child, Esther Summerson, outside of her marriage. To Lady Dedlock, Tulkinghorn is "[a]lways at hand. Haunting every place. No relief or security from him for a moment," and the narrator notes that Lady Dedlock would prefer to have "five thousand pairs of fashionable eyes upon her, in distrustful vigilance, than the two eyes of this rusty lawyer," indicating the penetrative power of Tulkinghorn's eyes.[57] Moreover, like Dupin, both Trappe and Tulkinghorn are figured as panoptical,

seemingly able to conceal their own subjectivity from the objects of their gaze and thus practice nonreciprocal surveillance.

In *Bondwoman's Narrative*, Trappe is most strongly associated with this prying visual surveillance throughout the novel, but Crafts also depicts another white character, Mrs. Cosgrove, practicing this type of surveillance, which harms the object of scrutiny. Trappe and Mrs. Cosgrove peer into windows to spy on the private interior of a domestic space, seeking to detect the secrets of enslaved people. At a cottage where they have sought refuge while on the run, Hannah and Mistress watch in terror as Trappe's face appears at their window and his "keen black eyes tak[e] in the room and us at a glance" (Crafts, *Bondwoman's Narrative*, 64). Later, Mrs. Cosgrove, a white woman who suspects her husband of keeping an enslaved concubine hidden in some part of their mansion, becomes fixated on watching her husband and "explor[ing] the house in its remotest corners" (184). Her "espionage" (184) leads her to discover a room locked from within, with no keyhole to peep through. Consequently, Mrs. Cosgrove goes outside, climbs a ladder, and peers in through the window at the enslaved woman and her two children. Trappe and Mrs. Cosgrove use their spying to punish the subjects of their investigation: Trappe eventually recaptures Hannah and Mistress and imprisons them, while Mrs. Cosgrove exiles the enslaved woman and her children.

Hannah also performs this prying surveillance to detect the secrets of enslaved people, linking her to the punitive watching of Trappe and Mrs. Cosgrove. Like these white observers, Hannah peers into a window, attempting to invade a private domestic space. While Hannah is staying at the Henrys' home, waiting for her current enslaver to come claim her, the other enslaved people become terrified of a ghost whom they believe is haunting the house.[58] Suspecting that the ghost is actually a runaway enslaved man, William, who is hiding in the room of his wife, Charlotte, Hannah goes outside to look into Charlotte's window. Though Hannah's sight into the room is blocked by paper hangings, she takes this as evidence that William is indeed "concealed inside," and the extra hangings are there "to court security" (139). Hannah then follows and spies on Charlotte and William as they leave the estate. Hannah is thus able "to penetrate the mystery" (137) of the haunting that has puzzled the other enslaved people. In all of these cases, visual surveillance is figured as penetrating into something that should be private. Although Hannah is herself enslaved, her adoption of the methods of white surveillants in the novel—Trappe and Mrs. Cosgrove—places her in a position of power over her fellow enslaved people, as she can detect their secrets and use them to her advantage. Crafts, like Jacobs, thus blurs the racialized dialectic of surveillance and

sousveillance, representing Hannah as a Black surveillant of other enslaved people.

While Crafts links Hannah to white surveillants, she nevertheless indicates that Hannah is not as blameworthy as Trappe and Mrs. Cosgrove. Whereas Trappe and Mrs. Cosgrove were able to see through the window into private, domestic space, Crafts lessens Hannah's guilt by blocking her gaze with the hangings rather than giving her an unobstructed view of the room's interior, so that Hannah has to deduce William's presence from the evidence of the hangings rather than seeing him directly. Moreover, Hannah changes her mind about informing Mr. Henry about Charlotte and William after reflecting on her actions. In a long series of questions about "the use … of my instituting an espionage on the actions of one every way my equal, perhaps my superior," Hannah comes to feel ashamed of herself for her surveillance, asking, "How could I acquit my conscience of cruelty and wrong if through discoveries made and information given by me the happiness of Charlotte and her husband should be destroyed[?]" (140). Unlike Trappe, who surveils for profit, and Mrs. Cosgrove, who surveils out of jealousy, Hannah recognizes that spying imposes an ethical burden, as her reference to her "conscience" indicates, and she chooses to desist, despite her curiosity, rather than cause harm to others. Whereas Trappe and Mrs. Cosgrove surveil in order to wield power over the objects of their scrutiny, Hannah casts Charlotte as her "equal" and refuses to seize the power that would allow her to subjugate Charlotte.

Nevertheless, Hannah does betray Charlotte in a bid to deepen Hannah's intimacy with Mrs. Henry. Hannah's conscience stops her from telling Mr. Henry, but not from divulging Charlotte's secret to Mrs. Henry.[59] Hannah desperately wants Mrs. Henry, who treats her kindly, to purchase her and give her the "certainty that I have a home, that some one cares for me, and that I am beyond the gripe [grip] of these merciless slave-traders and speculators" (130). Hannah has been kept at a distance by Mrs. Henry, forcing Hannah to conjecture what she can do to overcome Mrs. Henry's "reserve":

> It would be a difficult matter to tell what station I filled in this lovely family. I was not considered a servant, neither was I treated exactly as a guest, though with quite as much kindness and consideration. There was a pleasant familiarity in their manner towards me that a visitor could scarcely have expected, mingled with a sort of reserve that continually reminded me I was not one of them. (128)

Hannah at first tries to build intimacy with Mrs. Henry by sharing her own secrets. Realizing that since her enslaver has been killed Mrs. Henry does not know she is enslaved, she wonders whether to "perpetuate the delusion," but instead confesses to Mrs. Henry that she is enslaved and that the man she was travelling with was her enslaver (120). Though this secret stirs Mrs. Henry's sympathy, it does not achieve Hannah's goal of securing her "station … in this lovely family." Despite Hannah's attempts to foster intimacy, Mrs. Henry's priority is her white family, namely her father, rather than Hannah. Mrs. Henry refuses to break her vow to her father never "to buy or sell a servant" (131), even though, as Hannah notes, she is violating the spirit of the vow by adhering to its letter. When Hannah's attempts to persuade Mrs. Henry to purchase her based on intimacy are thwarted by Mrs. Henry's sentimental promise, she shifts to speculation based on surveillance.

Whereas Hetty and Mistress occupied marginalized positions and thus their status was closer to Hannah's, Mrs. Henry is a privileged, wealthy white woman. As her insistence on upholding her vow indicates, Mrs. Henry's allegiance is to her family and her race, not to her gender. Recognizing this, Hannah calculates that she cannot rely on bonds based on gender and deepened through intimacy. Instead, in her effort to negotiate her own sale, Hannah mimics the methods of Trappe, who also trades on the currency of secrets. Charlotte has been Mrs. Henry's favorite, and Hannah's revelation that she has been harboring a fugitive enslaved man harms Charlotte's standing with Mrs. Henry, who notes that she will caution Charlotte that William "must not come here. I must and do pity them both, but I cannot harbor him" (144). Hannah emphasizes her superior rationality to the other enslaved people in the way she presents her information about Charlotte and William to Mrs. Henry, deriding her fellow enslaved people for their credulity. By betraying Charlotte's secret and elevating herself in relation to Charlotte, Hannah seeks to persuade Mrs. Henry to purchase her so that she can join the Henry household, to become "one of them." However, Mrs. Henry rejects Hannah's bid to join the Henry household and offers instead to act as her speculator, arranging Hannah's sale to her friend, Mrs. Wheeler. Through Hannah's experience with Mrs. Henry, Crafts critiques the veil of sentiment based on intimate bonds with women that had previously obscured the underlying economic logic that governed Hannah's life.

Moving from sharing secrets to revealing secrets signals that self-interest has completely supplanted intimacy. Hannah has held these two motivations in tension throughout the book, allowing her self-interest to take over when her intimacy with Hetty and Mistress could no longer benefit her. Whereas

Hannah has acted as her own speculator up to this point in the novel, trying to negotiate the conditions of her enslavement based on intimate bonds deepened through secrets gained from her spying, Mrs. Henry forecloses this possibility. Reinscribing the racial hierarchy in which her commitment to her white family trumps her sympathy for an enslaved woman, Mrs. Henry removes Hannah's ability to finesse her situation through speculation. Instead, Mrs. Henry usurps the role of speculator, albeit in a gentle way that obscures the operations of market logic. Arranging a private sale to her friend, Mrs. Henry seems less vulgar and heartless than Trappe, who planned to sell Hannah at a public auction. Nevertheless, as Crafts demonstrates in the final episode of the novel, Mrs. Henry's speculation places Hannah in the worst position she has experienced, with a cruel woman who repudiates the possibility of intimacy with Hannah. Crafts thus critiques the proposition that sentiment ameliorates market logic. Mrs. Henry's sympathetic speculation illustrates the futility of "feel[ing] 'in' the market." No longer able to rely on intimacy, Hannah turns to self-interest in her relationship with Mrs. Wheeler, calculating how best to protect herself from the abuses of her enslaver.

To underscore this alteration, Crafts constructs the final episode in the novel, which focuses on Hannah's relationship with Mrs. Wheeler, as an inversion of Hannah's relationship with Mistress. As she did with Mistress, Hannah carefully and covertly observes Mrs. Wheeler upon first meeting her, but concludes that Mrs. Wheeler is not indulgent; she is instead "a hard mistress" (159), "a spoiled child" (158) who must be indulged rather than indulging others. Nevertheless, after "weigh[ing] deliberately" all her options, Hannah ultimately "conclude[s]" not to reveal to Mrs. Henry Mrs. Wheeler's "deception, and almost open falsehood" that "my intimacy with her had discovered" (159). Hannah's diction indicates that she is calculating and assessing her future with Mrs. Wheeler. Whereas she previously tried to encourage intimacy by sharing secrets, here Hannah decides to keep Mrs. Wheeler's secret because it would bring her no advantage to betray it. Moreover, Hannah portrays the intimacy as one-sided—"my intimacy with her," rather than our intimacy—indicating that secrets she has "discovered" do not induce her sympathy, as they did with Mistress.

Hannah discovers both Mistress's and Mrs. Wheeler's secrets inadvertently, through eavesdropping, as opposed to the prying visual surveillance linked to conspicuous detection that she practiced with Charlotte. Hannah notes that Mrs. Wheeler's selfish impatience produces the conditions that enable Hannah to eavesdrop, since she wants Hannah to be able to hear her little bell, "so that when summoned I could come on the instant" (165). Mrs. Wheeler's

white oversight prevents her from recognizing that if Hannah can hear the bell, she can also hear "every word of conversation repeated in the other [room]" (165), and thus does not recognize that Hannah knows all of her private affairs. Whereas Hannah immediately tells Mistress that she overheard her conversation and implores her to let her help, Hannah does not tell Mrs. Wheeler that she can hear her.

Moreover, Mrs. Wheeler's secret inverts Mistress's secret. An accident with a new face powder, much sought after for its ability to conceal the evidence of aging, transforms Mrs. Wheeler's white complexion into blackface.[60] Without realizing that her skin has been blackened, Mrs. Wheeler supplicates a federal official for a position for her husband. Mrs. Wheeler's vanity leads to her humiliation, as the official and his entourage believe Mrs. Wheeler to be Mr. Wheeler's Black concubine. Whereas Mistress was a woman with African American ancestry passing as white, Mrs. Wheeler is a white woman who "passes" as Black. While Mistress welcomes Hannah's knowledge of her secret and is grateful for the protective intimacy it induces, Mrs. Wheeler repudiates any intimacy that the secret engenders between her and Hannah. Commanding Hannah not to "dare to mention" her secret, she further warns "You needn't make a merit of that as much as to say Mrs [*sic*] Wheeler has a secret I am keeping it for her, and she is much obliged, and bound to be thankful, indulgent, and what not" (200). Hannah's keyword, "indulgent," reappears here, only to signal the contrast between Mistress and Mrs. Wheeler. By structuring Hannah's relationship with Mrs. Wheeler as a reversal of her relationship with Mistress, Crafts underscores the shift from sentiment to economics.

Hannah notes that her enslavement to Mrs. Wheeler is of a different kind than she has ever experienced before: "I never felt so poor, so weak, so utterly subjected to the authority of another as when that woman … told me that I was hers body and soul" (159–160). Mrs. Wheeler's claim to own Hannah's "soul" as well as her body is uniquely horrifying for Hannah because it conflates "the slave's two bodies"; in Best's terms, the "alienable (property) and the inalienable (self)."[61] In so doing, Mrs. Wheeler forecloses Hannah's speculation, as that is the domain of her inalienable self or soul. Previously Hannah had believed she had possession of her soul if not her body, and thus tried to speculate to recover the property in herself that had been alienated from her. However, Mrs. Wheeler's claim to possess what Hannah had heretofore believed nonfungible—her soul—narrows Hannah's options to the binary of free/unfree that Voelz describes: "[r]isk is a meaningful idiom for the subjectivity of the slave because it emphasizes the binary structure of either/or. From the slave's perspective, life presents itself as either enslaved or free."[62]

Stripping away the sentimental relations that Hannah had previously relied on to finesse conditions within the structure of enslavement, Mrs. Wheeler's callousness forces Hannah to recognize that her future is closed under Mrs. Wheeler's power and thus to choose to run away in order to claim ownership of her own risk.

Whereas Hannah's promise to keep Mistress's secret prompts their joint escape attempt, Mrs. Wheeler's mistaken belief that Hannah has betrayed her secret compels Hannah to run away. Again, this reversal underscores the parallel between the two episodes, highlighting the way in which Hannah previously relied on intimacy generated by sharing secrets, an intimacy that is now turned against her. Mrs. Wheeler, swayed by the falsehoods of another enslaved women, believes that Hannah has divulged her secret humiliation with the face powder. In revenge, she banishes Hannah from her position as lady's maid and assigns her to work in the field. Moreover, she exposes Hannah to the imminent threat of sexual assault by sentencing her to marry an enslaved man whom Hannah has never met before, ultimately leaving Hannah with no other option but to flee. Forced to this meta-risk, Hannah's speculation finally pays off. To make her escape, Hannah relies on the sentiments of women as she makes her way North: the same strategy that had failed her when she was enslaved now works when she is disguised as a male orphan. Her cover story "greatly won the sympathies of all especially the women" and she facilitates the women's sympathies by "mak[ing] it a point to call at the houses at such times as I thought the men would probably be absent" (218–219). Her journey North reactivates the sentimental discourse that had been rendered null by the economic logic of slave speculation.

While Hannah's final, successful speculation depends upon her ability to spy and to calculate risks with the expectation of gain—the first two meanings of the word—Crafts foregrounds the imaginative, conjectural sense of the word once Hannah has escaped the slave system. As William Andrews has noted, the novel concludes with a "wish-fulfillment" ending in which Hannah marries a good man and is reunited with Hetty, Charlotte and William, and her long-lost mother.[63] Despite her mother's sale "during [Hannah's] infancy … to the owner of a plantation in Mississippi," she "never forgot me nor certain marks by which I might be identified in after years" (244). Crafts does not bother to invent a plausible story for the reunion, simply stating "We met accidentally, where or how it matters not" (245). In addition, she learns of Trappe's violent death at the hands of the brothers of the victims of his "recent speculations" (239). Sentiment triumphs over "love of gold" (239). The hyperbole of this fantastical ending underscores its fictionality, marking the novel as a

speculation fiction, imagining an alternative future not conceivable within the constraints of reality. Crafts's imaginative speculation in this happy ending recuperates the unbearable losses caused by slave speculation, reuniting the families and friendships severed by the domestic slave trade.

This future-oriented speculation, imagining the possibilities of an open future, is the opposite of the retrospective detection exemplified by Trappe in the novel, as well as by the conspicuous detection of Poe and Dickens. Whereas the authors I discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 were concerned with the way in which surveillance and sousveillance facilitated or undermined reconstructions of the past, Crafts's turn to fiction focuses on the way that sousveillance can open up a space to conceive the future. In this way, Crafts revises the Gothic emphasis on history, "changing its typical relation to temporality," as Priscilla Wald has argued: "The true 'horror' of slavery—the ghost that haunts the enslaved—is the shadow of a future subject to the arbitrariness of human oppressors."[64] With her patently fictional happy ending, then, Crafts reclaims Hannah's future.

Coda

In 2021, the Pulitzer Board awarded a special citation to Darnella Frazier "[f]or courageously recording the murder of George Floyd, a video that spurred protests against police brutality around the world, highlighting the crucial role of citizens in journalists' quest for truth and justice."[1] Frazier's sousveillant video made visible to the world police violence against African Americans, something that is rendered invisible to people who have the privilege of living in neighborhoods that are not over-policed.[2] In addition to fueling 2020's summer of Black Lives Matter protests, Frazier's video and her testimony in the trial led to the conviction of Derek Chauvin, Floyd's killer.[3] According to *Washington Post* reporter Holly Bailey, Chauvin's sentence of twenty-two-and-a-half years for murder is a "rarity in a country roiled by multiple high-profile cases of Black people being killed by police, [and] was praised by Floyd's family and activists as a historic moment of justice and a potential sign of change."[4]

Like other witnesses who have filmed police brutality, Frazier suffered trauma as a result of making her sousveillance visible. In a Facebook post reflecting on her experience a year after Floyd's death, Frazier details the anxiety caused both by seeing a man killed and by becoming an object of scrutiny herself:

> Having to up and leave because my home was no longer safe, waking up to reporters at my door, closing my eyes at night only to see a man who is brown like me, lifeless on the ground. I couldn't sleep properly for weeks. I used to shake so bad at night my mom had to rock me to sleep. Hopping from hotel to hotel because we didn't have a home and looking over our back every day in the process. Having panic and anxiety attacks every time I seen a police car.[5]

Frazier's experience is repeated in the archive of news coverage of bystanders who film police brutality, from Kianga Mwamba, who was charged with assault and resisting arrest when she filmed Baltimore police officers beating a man they had detained and handcuffed, to Feidin Santana, who feared for his life after recording a video of Michael Slager shooting Walter Scott.[6] As Alissa V. Richardson notes, "In each high-profile incident of police brutality that occurred between 2014 and 2018, the frontline black witness typically retreated from view. Many of them—like Ramsey Orta who filmed Eric

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Garner's death in New York—either expressed regret for coming forward or frustration with the media frenzy that invaded their privacy."[7] The Pulitzer Board is right to foreground the courage that it takes to make this evidence public and thereby to make the witness visible.

While Mann's theory of sousveillance offers a corrective to Foucault's excessive reliance on watching from above, it does not address the question of visibility. However, both surveillance and sousveillance can be conducted openly—for example, by a security guard—or invisibly—for example, with a hidden camera. A security guard at a bank is a visible surveillant, while a bystander openly filming police brutality is a visible sousveillant; a hidden camera operated by a corporation to watch its workers is nonvisible surveillance, while a hidden camera operated by a worker to document abusive labor practices is nonvisible sousveillance. Overreliance on Foucauldian panopticism as a universally explanatory theory collapses two separate issues: the power relations between watcher and watched and the visibility or nonvisibility of the watcher. The crucial difference is that whereas the visible surveillant is shielded by power, the visible sousveillant is put at risk. Recognizing, contra Foucault, that the "one [who] sees everything" can also be "one [who is] totally seen" allows us to understand the special risks for sousveillants of color, who are already more vulnerable because of their hypervisibility.

To disseminate the crucial evidence that they have gathered from their sousveillant stance, these witnesses relinquish the safety of invisibility, placing themselves in harm's way by becoming visible to an unsympathetic public. Invisibility shields sousveillants, but to make changes, whether individually or structurally, the information gathered by watching from below must be made public. In this relationship of evidence to individuals, we can see the critical differentiation between embodied seeing and detached seeing contrasted in Jacobs's and Poe's treatments of the camera obscura. Where Jacobs, like Frazier, emphasizes the corporeal toll that resistant looking takes, Poe depicts a dematerialized observer who does not suffer any effects of looking. As activists have long known, however, another way of de-corporealizing the individual is to locate her within a collective, thereby using the crowd to shield the individual. Numerous activist organizations aim to use digital technology to police the police, emphasizing the importance of collectivity and anonymization to protect the individual witness. The human rights organization Witness runs the website *Witness Media Lab*, for example, which offers tutorials on "Minimizing Harm While Exposing Abuse" and "Filming Police Violence in the United States."[8]

The antebellum literature of surveillance that I have examined in *Slavery, Surveillance, and Genre* can teach us about what it means to be seen and why people make this choice despite the harm it brings. As Frazier asserts, "If it weren't for my video, the world wouldn't have known the truth."[9] Using digital technology rather than print narrative, Frazier's and other contemporary versions of sousveillance bring to view evidence that has been hidden from mainstream reporting about the racialized surveillance of Black people. As this book and other scholars have shown, the roots of this racialized surveillance go back to the colonial period, when "the new American innovation in law enforcement during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the creation of racially focused law enforcement groups in the American South."[10] This innovation—slave patrols—reinforced the pervasive surveillance system that conscripted all white citizens to monitor African Americans, free or enslaved. In a US culture shaped by the afterlives of slavery, particularly in the realm of policing, viral videos are modern analogues to the sousveillant perspective ex-slave narrators offered on the reality of enslavement, a reality that was otherwise inaccessible to Northern white readers.

The ex-slave narrators I discussed in Chapter 1 pose a rigorous practice of Black vigilance against the top-down surveillance of African Americans. Their watching from below resists white supervision and defines the parameters of their autobiographical testimony as special, expert knowledge that is invisible to white readers. One way of responding to this expertise is to appropriate it, as Poe does, and claim the augmented vision without acknowledging the suffering that purchased it. However, as Douglass models through the relationship between Listwell and Washington, this knowledge can be taught to white allies and used collaboratively to oppose the systems that oppress Black people. If this vision of white fugitivity offers an optimistic account of the disillusionment of white oversight, Gray's and Melville's texts depict a more unsettling vision of white surveillants who are forced to recognize the reality of a Black gaze. Their experience of violence and captivity destabilizes their ability to testify credibly about past events. Sousveillance thus ruptures master narratives. While Melville treats this prospect as evidence of the incoherence and artifice of all historical narratives, Douglass sees it as creating space to imagine new stories. The knowledge that sousveillance makes visible offers new ways to envision the future, as Jacobs and Crafts demonstrate.

The literature that this book examines shows us an earlier incarnation of the conflict between racialized surveillance and sousveillance, which continues to be relevant at this moment of racial reckoning in the United States. As scholars including Imani Perry, Simone Browne, and Nicholas Mirzoeff have proven,

the study of surveillance is inadequate without attention to the historical structures that have made Blackness simultaneously hypervisible and invisible. In this study, I have argued that surveillance literature is inextricable from the archive of antebellum slavery literature. This literature destabilizes a clear-cut opposition between surveillance and sousveillance, portraying how a watcher can be simultaneously a surveillant and a sousveillant, or how the power reversal of enslaved rebellion upends the expected racialized positions of observers. Because of this fluidity, these texts teach us how to detect—how to read with a skeptical eye the story we are presented with, staying alert to information that is being concealed. Laying bare the narrowed vision of white oversight, they show us how conspicuous detection subverts the search for the truth and displaces it onto a quest for linguistic mastery. They instruct us in the value of sousveillance, in its ability to see aspects of the world that have been rendered invisible by the fantasy of white oversight. Bringing this evidence to light troubles the stories that the United States tells about its present and its past.

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Notes

Introduction

1. The young abolitionists image first appeared in the January 1837 issue, though the "New Frontispiece" note appeared in the February 1837 issue. "New Frontispiece," *Slave's Friend* 2, no. 2 (Feb. 1837): 2. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sla&AN=44279086&site=ehost-live.
2. See Christopher D. Geist, "The *Slave's Friend*: An Abolitionist Magazine for Children," *American Periodicals* 9 (1999): 27–35, for a history of the magazine.
3. For an account of the Information Awareness Office Logo, see Matt Kessler, "The Logo That Took Down a DARPA Surveillance Project," *The Atlantic*, https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/12/darpa-logos-information-awareness-office/421635/. Accessed Nov. 15, 2020.
4. The editors reinforced this message of divine surveillance through articles and poems such as "God Sees Me" (Jan. 1837, 2.1, p. 16), "God Hears, and Sees, and Knows Me" (Aug. 1837, 2.8, p. 3), and "God Will Know" and "God Sees" (both in Mar. 1838, 3.3, p. 16).
5. Steve Mann developed the notion of sousveillance—watching from below—by replacing the French prefix *sur-*, above, with *sous-*, below, to indicate an inversion of surveillance's power relations such that the observer is "not in a position of power or authority over the subject of the veillance." "Veillance and Reciprocal Transparency: Surveillance versus Sousveillance, AR Glass, Lifeglogging, and Wearable Computing," *2013 IEEE International Symposium on Technology and Society (ISTAS)*, (June 27–29, 2013): 3. Mann's terminology enables us to foreground the reciprocity of veillance rather than privileging top-down surveillance.
6. "From a Late Paper," *Genius of Universal Emancipation* (1821–1839); Mount Pleasant 3, no. 7 (Nov. 1823): 68. *Proquest.*
7. Teresa A. Goddu, *Selling Antislavery: Abolition and Mass Media in Antebellum America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 158.
8. Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 12. Racializing surveillance, for Browne, "is a technology of social control [in which] enactments of surveillance reify boundaries, borders, and bodies along racial lines" (*Dark Matters*, 16).
9. Jeremy Rosen, *Minor Characters Have Their Day: Genre and the Contemporary Literary Marketplace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 21–22. Wai Chee Dimock, "Genres as Fields of Knowledge," *PMLA* 122, no. 5 (Oct. 2007): 1377–1388.
10. Travis M. Foster, *Genre and White Supremacy in the Postemancipation United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 15.

11. Thomas Pavel argues that "The vocabulary of literary genres … includes 'content' terms, terms of art that have a simple formal definition (for example, 'sonnet'), and terms of art that refer to … 'extratextual properties' and therefore require from their users a certain level of hermeneutic dexterity ('fiction,' and … 'novel')." These "extratextual properties" are the genre's "cultural functions" (205). Pavel, "Literary Genres as Norms and Good Habits," *New Literary History* 34, no. 2, Theorizing Genres I (Spring, 2003): 201–210. Similarly, John Frow asserts that "different genres give a different weight to the formal, rhetorical, or thematic dimensions of their structure and have a characteristic configuration in each of them." Frow, "'Reproducibles, Rubrics, and Everything You Need': Genre Theory Today," *PMLA* 122, no. 5 (Oct. 2007): 1631.
12. As Pavel has argued about the novel, "the representational goals of [different] subgenres ha[ve] direct consequences for the techniques employed" ("Literary Genres as Norms," 207). See also Alastair Fowler, "Transformations of Genre," in *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), where he argues that a change in function alters the genre (173).
13. Fowler, "The Formation of Genres in the Renaissance and After," *New Literary History* 34, no. 2 (2003): 190. Frow, "'Reproducibles, Rubrics, and Everything You Need,'" 1629.
14. Bruce Robbins, "Afterword," *PMLA* 122, no. 5 (2007): 1646. See also, for example, Jacques Derrida, "The Law of Genre," *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 1980): 55–81, and Stephen Owen, "Genres in Motion," *PMLA* 122, no. 5 (2007): 1389–93.
15. Oscar Gandy, *The Panoptic Sort: A Political Economy of Personal Information* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1993). I am grateful to the anonymous Oxford University Press reader who suggested this formulation.
16. Rosen, *Minor Characters,* 38. Foster argues that "the politics of genre … cannot be determined in advance" (*Genre and White Supremacy,* 4).
17. See, for example, John Sekora, "Black Message/White Envelope: Genre, Authenticity, and Authority in the Antebellum Slave Narrative," *Callaloo* 32 (1987): 482–515; and William L. Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760–1865* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988). Robert S. Levine, in *The Lives of Frederick Douglass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016) details how Douglass revises his 1855 *My Bondage and My Freedom* to lessen the influence of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, replacing "the script of the slave narrative that served the ends of Garrison and his antislavery society" with an autobiography that "presents himself on his own terms" (163).
18. Pavel, "Literary Genres as Norms," 205.
19. Rosen, *Minor Characters,* 16.
20. The state of law enforcement in the antebellum United States was amorphous and varied widely by region. Some rural and frontier areas would not have police institutions until the end of the century. In the northern United States, official police forces were rare outside of major cities through the end of the nineteenth century. The official policing that did exist was focused on preventing crime via physical presence—patrolling—rather than detecting crime after the fact. In the United States, the first preventative police force was established in Boston in 1838, though they did not work

at night until 1851. See Matthew Pearl, "The Incredible Untold Story of America's First Police Detectives," *The Boston Globe* (April 28, 2016), https://www.bostonglobe.com/magazine/2016/04/28/the-incredible-untold-story-america-first-police-detectives/jewdTrdVzkQZJuVZEEc9TJ/story.html. The first round-the-clock police department was New York City's Municipal Police, established in 1845. Support for establishing the New York police was partially a response to the sensational murder case of Mary Cecilia Rogers, the basis for Poe's second Dupin tale. Before this time, policing in New York City was performed by two constables and a small number of Mayor's Marshals, all of whom worked only during the day. Like the civilian night watch, these officers patrolled the streets to prevent crime, but did not track down offenders. Keeping watch in neighborhoods affiliated with criminality, these police forces deterred crime through surveillance. See also Wilbur R. Miller, *Cops and Bobbies: Police Authority in New York and London, 1830–1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

21. Bryan Wagner, *Disturbing the Peace: Black Culture and the Police Power after Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 7, 5.
22. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978,* ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2009), 1. Nicholas Mirzoeff argues that the plantation system "maintained a delineated space in which all life and labor were directed from its central viewpoint because the production of colonial cash crops, especially sugar, required a precise discipline, centered on surveillance, while being dependent on spectacular and excessive physical punishment. While this may appear as a contradiction between traditional spectacular punishment and the discipline that Foucault argues succeeded it in the modern period, the modernity of oversight was precisely its combination of enforcement and discipline." *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 50.
23. Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, 2. Similarly, Christian Parenti argues, "the surveillance infrastructure of colonial America began … with the … accounts [and inventories] of the slave master." *The Soft Cage: Surveillance in America: From Slavery to the War on Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 15.
24. On overseers, see John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), especially Ch. 10, and William K. Scarborough, *The Overseer: Plantation Management in the Old South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984). On slave patrols, see Sally E. Hadden, *Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001). On slave catchers (or slave takers), see Hadden, Franklin and Schweninger, and Stanley W. Campbell, *The Slave Catchers: Enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, 1850–1860* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011).
25. On "negro dogs," see Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, 160–164; Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780–1865* (New York: Routledge, 2000); and John Campbell, "The Seminoles, the 'Bloodhound War,' and Abolitionism, 1796–1865," *The Journal of Southern History* 72, no. 2 (2006): 259–302.

26. Irus Braverman argues that given the highly specialized and costly breeding, training, and maintenance that police dogs require, the law should treat police dogs as "'biotechnologies': co-produced human-animal hybrids." "Passing the Sniff Test: Police Dogs as Surveillance Technology," *Buffalo Law Review* 61, no. 1 (Jan. 2013): 81–167.
27. Browne, *Dark Matters,* 70. The surveillance and policing of African Americans in the antebellum period was buttressed by laws that regulated Black mobility. In her survey of lantern laws in the early United States, Browne explains that New York City in 1713 prohibited "Negro or Indian slaves" from appearing in the street after sunset without a lit lantern or candle (78). These laws enforced the visibility of Black bodies: the lantern was a "technology that made it possible for the black body to be constantly illuminated from dusk to dawn, made knowable, locatable and contained within the city" (79).
28. See Browne, *Dark Matters*, 53–55 and Ch. 3. The creators of *Freedom on the Move,* a database compiling North American runaway slave ads, estimate that there are "100,000 or more runaway ads in newspapers that survive from the colonial and pre-Civil War U.S." *Freedom on the Move,* Cornell University (2013), http://freedomonthemove.org.
29. Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves,* 158.
30. Richard J. M. Blackett, *Making Freedom: The Underground Railroad and the Politics of Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 82.
31. Bell documents slave catchers' employment of African American accomplices to lure fugitive enslaved people and free Black children into the clutches of kidnappers with the promise of jobs or assistance. Fugitives would be more likely to trust other African Americans, and—given the racism and lack of opportunities in the North—African Americans were often in such dire circumstances that aiding kidnappers was a survival strategy that protected them from being trafficked themselves. Richard Bell, "Counterfeit Kin: Kidnappers of Color, the Reverse Underground Railroad, and the Origins of Practical Abolition," *Journal of the Early Republic* 38, no. 2 (2018): 201, 216. Slave catchers also bribed African Americans and others for information and "employed black spies to ferret out fugitives in the black community." Gerald G. Eggert, "The Impact of the Fugitive Slave Law on Harrisburg: A Case Study," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 109, no. 4 (1985): 563. See also Blackett, *Making Freedom.*
32. Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 28 and 30. See also Deborah Gray White on "The Nature of Female Slavery," Ch. 2, *Ar'n't I a Woman: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999).
33. Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 101.
34. See also David Rosen and Aaron Santesso, *The Watchman in Pieces: Surveillance, Literature, and Liberal Personhood* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013) for an account of the ways in which scholars misread Bentham's writings on the panopticon. Rosen and Santesso's book is an important study of surveillance in literature, but they focus on the psychological aspects of surveillance and race is not a central concern.
35. Browne, *Dark Matters*, 22.

36. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 201–202.
37. Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves,* 2. Earlier historians of slavery "order[ed] seemingly random acts from absconding and breaking tools to murder and rebellion along a spectrum from accommodation to resistance. Recent work on 'everyday resistance' upends this mechanistic structure, giving due weight to the power of rumor, clandestine socializing, and other forms of supposedly accommodationist transgressions." Anthony E. Kaye, *Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 8. See also Camp, *Closer to Freedom*.
38. Jasmine Nichole Cobb, *Picture Freedom: Remaking Black Visuality in the Early Nineteenth Centur*y (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 9.
39. Browne, *Dark Matters*, 22.
40. Eric Foner states "The picture [of the Underground Railroad] that emerges from recent studies is not of the highly organized system with tunnels, codes, and clearly defined routes and stations of popular lore, but of an interlocking series of local networks, each of whose fortunes rose and fell over time, but which together helped a substantial number of fugitives reach safety in the free states and Canada. … The 'underground railroad' should be understood not as a single entity but as an umbrella term for local groups that employed numerous methods to assist fugitives, some public and entirely legal, some flagrant violations of the law." *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015), 15. See also David G. Smith, *On the Edge of Freedom: The Fugitive Slave Issue in South Central Pennsylvania, 1820–1870* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013). On the grapevine telegraph, see Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm so Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Knopf, 1979), 23. For more on these informal communication networks, see Blackett, *Making Freedom*, 12 and 13, and Scott Christianson, *Freeing Charles: The Struggle to Free a Slave on the Eve of the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 25.
41. William Monroe Cockrum, *History of the Underground Railroad As It Was Conducted by the Anti-slavery League: Including Many Thrilling Encounters Between Those Aiding the Slaves to Escape And Those Trying to Recapture Them* (Oakland City, IN Press of J.W. Cockrum Printing Company, 1915), 13.
42. Cockrum, *History of the Underground Railroad,* 14–15.
43. William Still, *The Underground Rail Road* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1872), 647.
44. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, ed. Elizabeth Ammons (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994, 170). All subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.
45. See Lucy Maddox, *The Parker Sisters: A Border Kidnapping* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2016); Milt Diggins, *Stealing Freedom Along the Mason-Dixon Line: Thomas McCreary, the Notorious Slave Catcher from Maryland* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society Press, 2015); Richard Bell, "'Thence to Patty Cannon's': Gender, Family, and the Reverse Underground Railroad," *Slavery & Abolition* 37, no. 4 (2016): 661–679; Bell, "Counterfeit Kin"; Hank Trent, *The Secret Life of Bacon Tait, a White Slave Trader Married to a Free Woman of Color* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017); and Isaac T. Hopper, *Kidnappers in Philadelphia: Isaac Hopper's Tales*

of Oppression, 1780–1843, compiled by Daniel Meaders (Cherry Hill, NJ: Africana Homestead Legacy Publishers, 2009).

46. Johannes Voelz, "Aestheticizing Insecurity: A Response to *Security Studies and American Literary History*," *American Literary History* 29, no. 3 (Fall 2017): 616. Russ Castronovo, "James Fenimore Cooper and the NSA: Security, Property, Liberalism," *American Literary History* 28, no. 4 (Winter 2016): 677–701; Voelz, *The Poetics of Insecurity: American Fiction and the Uses of Threat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); and Matthew Potolsky, *The National Security Sublime: On the Aesthetics of Government Secrecy* (New York: Routledge, 2019). Eli Jelly-Schapiro has also persuasively traced the modern security state to the settler-colonization of the New World through the "parallel genealogies of security and terror," though his literary archive is contemporary. *Security and Terror: American Culture and the Long History of Colonial Modernity* (Oakland: The University of California Press, 2018), 2. Similarly, besides Castronovo's, the other essays in *American Literary History*'s 2016 special issue, *Security Studies and American Literary History,* which includes an introduction by David Watson, all analyze contemporary texts, but the issue as a whole provides a methodological framework for the poetics of securitization that Marc Botha outlines in "Toward a Critical Poetics of Securitization: A Response to Anker, Castronovo, Harkins, Masterson, and Williams," *American Literary History* 28, no. 4 (Winter 2016): 779–786.
47. In light of Toni Morrison's analysis of *Pym* as prime example of a text "made possible by, shaped by, activated by a complex awareness and employment of a constituted Africanism," I capitalize Black when referring to the Tsalalians to underscore their racialization. *Playing in in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 44.
48. Jeannine Marie DeLombard, "The *Dark* Transactions of a *Black*? Slave Narratives in the Crime Literature Tradition," in *A History of American Crime Fiction*, ed. Chris Raczkowski (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 70.
49. In *Black Looks: Race and Representation,* bell hooks argues that white people believe they are "invisible to black people since the power they have historically asserted, and even now collectively assert over black people, accorded them the right to control the black gaze." (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1992), 168. Sarah Blackwood terms this "white sight": "a set of viewing practices that claim an interpretive and epistemological authority that is fused with racial identity." "'Making Good Use of Our Eyes': Nineteenth-Century African Americans Write Visual Culture," *MELUS* 39, no. 2 (2014): 45.
50. See also Emily West, *Chains of Love: Slave Couples in Antebellum South Carolina* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004) for an assessment of slave narratives that focuses on familial relationships and social networks rather than the escape of an individual. More recently, Christopher S. Lewis has accentuated ways in which even male-authored texts resist gender normative associations of freedom with masculinity. Lewis, "Conjure Women, Root Men, and Normative Visions of Freedom in Antebellum Slave Narratives," *Arizona Quarterly* 74, no. 2 (2018): 113–141.
51. Stephanie Li, *Something Akin to Freedom: The Choice of Bondage in Narratives by African American Women* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 19.

52. For feminist critiques of this masculine bias in the scholarship on slave narratives, see, for example, Frances Smith Foster, "Resisting Incidents," *Harriet Jacobs and Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: New Critical Essays*, eds. Deborah M. Garfield and Rafia Zafar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 57–75, and Deborah McDowell, "In the First Place: Making Frederick Douglass and the Afro-American Narrative Tradition," in *African American Autobiography: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. William L. Andrews (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993), 36–58. Elsewhere, Foster points out that African American women's writing has been underrepresented in part due to the racial and gender disparity in extant texts: "the number of extent texts suggests there were more African American men and more Anglo-American women published than there were African American women. And again, compared to the writings by Anglo men, relatively few African American men or Anglo-American women were able to record their views." *Written by Herself: Literary Production by African American Women, 1746–1892* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 9.
53. Valerie Smith, *Self-Discovery and Authority in Afro-American Narrative* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 29.
54. Cobb argues that "slavery organized an omniscient White eye/I to police and manage Black bodies, constructing sight as a racially distinct experience, and as the sovereign domain of Whiteness" (*Picture Freedom,* 34).
55. Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 27 and 38–39.
56. Susan Elizabeth Sweeney, "The Magnifying Glass: Spectacular Distance in Poe's 'Man of the Crowd' and Beyond," *Poe Studies/Dark Romanticism*, vol. 36 (2003): 3–4. See also Sweeney, "Death, Decay, and the Daguerreotype's Influence on 'The Black Cat,'" *The Edgar Allan Poe Review* 19, no. 2 (Autumn 2018): 206–232, and "The Horror of Taking a Picture in Poe's 'Tell-Tale Heart,'" *The Edgar Allan Poe Review* 18, no. 2 (Autumn 2017): 142–162. Sweeney argues that Poe's "The Man of the Crowd" offers a different model of vision when the narrator steps out from behind his shielding glass window and closes the distance between himself and the subject of his observation.
57. Michael Chaney, *Fugitive Vision: Slave Image and Black Identity in Antebellum Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 166.
58. Chaney, *Fugitive Vision,* 174.
59. Hollis Robbins, "Blackening *Bleak House*: Hannah Crafts's *The Bondwoman's Narrative*," in *In Search of Hannah Crafts: Critical Essays on* The Bondwoman's Narrative, eds. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Hollis Robbins (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 71–86.
60. Stephen M. Best, *The Fugitive's Properties: Law and the Poetics of Possession* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 3.
61. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 50.
62. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection,* 38.
63. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection,* 35–36.
64. James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 136. Scott uses the terms "public transcript" and "hidden transcript" to describe the disconnect between the master narrative of a sustainable, smoothly-running slave system and the concealed narratives of both the varied acts of resistance engaged in by enslaved men and women and the violent

machinations required to keep men and women enslaved. While "the theatrical imperatives that normally prevail in situations of domination produce a public transcript in close conformity with how the dominant group would wish to have things appear," Scott explains, "every subordinate group creates, out of its ordeal, a 'hidden transcript' that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant. … The powerful, for their part, also develop a hidden transcript representing the practices and claims of their rule that cannot be openly avowed" (*Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 4 and xii).

65. See also Patricia Hill Collins's work on oppositional knowledges in *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
66. See Madeleine Bair, "Caught on Camera: Police Abuse in the US," *Witness Media Lab*, Witness, lab.witness.org/caught-on-camera-police-abuse-in-the-u-s/; Dragana Kaurin, "The Price of Filming Police Violence," *Motherboard*, Vice Media, April 27, 2018, motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/evqw9z/filming-police-brutality-retaliation; "Kianga Mwamba: Cops Try to Delete Video of Violent, Unwarranted Arrest, but Fortunately It's Backed Up to the Cloud," *Witness Media Lab*, Witness, lab.witness.org/portfolio_page/kianga-mwamba/; Oliver Laughland and Jon Swaine, "'I Dream about It Every Night': What Happens to Americans Who Film Police Violence?" *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, August 17, 2015, www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/aug/15/filming-police-violence-walter-scott-michael-brown-shooting; "Walter Scott: Bystander Video Released after Police Report of Fatal Shooting Results in Massive Media Attention and Immediate Arrest of Officer," *Witness Media Lab*, Witness, lab.witness.org/portfolio_page/walter-scott/; Yvonne Wenger, "Baltimore City to Pay $60,000 Settlement to Woman Who Recorded Arrest," *The Baltimore Sun*, Baltimore Sun Media Group, January 19, 2016, www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-settlements-20160119–story.html.

Chapter 1

1. DeLombard, "The *Dark* Transactions of a *Black*," 70.
2. William Lloyd Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison and the Fight against Slavery: Selections from The Liberator*, ed. William E. Cain (Boston, MA: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1995), 92.
3. Jeannine Marie DeLombard, *In the Shadow of the Gallows: Race, Crime, and American Civic Identity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 167.
4. William L. Andrews, "Introduction" to *Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave*, eds. William L. Andrews and Regina E. Mason (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3. I discuss the seven narratives listed for the 1820s and 1830s in Andrews's chronological bibliography of slave autobiographies on the University of North Carolina's *Documenting the American South* website: Solomon Bayley, *A Narrative of Some Remarkable Incidents, in the Life of Solomon Bayley* (London, 1825); William Grimes, *Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave. Written by Himself* (New York,

1825); Robert Voorhis, *Life and Adventures of Robert, the Hermit of Massachusetts* (Providence, RI, 1829); Charles Ball, *Slavery in the United States*, (Lewistown, PA, 1836); Moses Roper, *A Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper, from American Slavery* (London, 1837; Philadelphia, 1838); James Matthews, "Recollections of Slavery by a Runaway Slave," (serialized in *The Advocate of Freedom* [ME], reprinted in *The Emancipator*, August 23, September 13, September 20, October 11, October 18, 1838); and James Williams, *Narrative of James Williams* (New York, 1838). Of these, Bayley's, Grimes's, and Roper's narratives were "written by [them]sel[ves]"; Voorhis's, Ball's, Matthews's, and Williams's narratives were told to white amanuenses. There are no extant narratives authored by women enslaved in the United States in this period. Because my argument focuses on the formal effects of the institutionalization of US abolition, I have excluded narratives by people who were enslaved in British territories, such as Mary Prince's *History* and Ashton Warner's *Negro Slavery Described by a Negro*. Furthermore, although Richard Allen was enslaved in the United States, I do not focus on Allen's *Life* (1833) because he did not run away; his enslaver allowed him to hire his time and buy his freedom, and thus his narrative is not a fugitive slave narrative. *The Confessions of Nat Turner* falls within the date range, but I discuss it in detail in Chapter 2, so I do not discuss it here.

5. As John Sekora notes, "By the early 1830s at the latest, sponsors, printers, and reviewers were writing of a distinct literary genre" ("Black Message/White Envelope," 484). See also Goddu, *Selling Antislavery*. Andrews states that Ball, Roper, and Williams "represent the beginnings of the classic fugitive slave narrative genre in the United States," but he assimilates them to the narratives of the 1840s, arguing that they epitomize the "more restrictively empirical, or mimetic, narrative orientation. … [They] marshall the most forceful evidence in the battle against slavery, the testimony of eyewitnesses." Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story*, 62. While my work is indebted to Andrews's path-breaking research on slave narratives, I argue that there are significant differences between fugitive slave narratives of the 1830s and the 1840s.
6. Trish Loughran, *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770–1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 238. Andrews notes that slave narratives published in Great Britain had a stronger individual voice than those published in the United States. Discussing Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*, Andrews states "Perhaps because Equiano had grown up outside America's system of black conditioning and acculturation, … [he had the] intellectual and aesthetic freedom of the imagination that was Equiano's special triumph as a slave narrator" (*To Tell a Free Story,* 60).
7. Sekora, "Black Message/White Envelope," 506. While Sekora's ground-breaking argument about the "white envelope" in which slave narratives are enclosed has been formative for my work, I wish to take up his suggestion that "future literary history" will "illuminate … the nuances of difference in form between white- and black-sponsored stories" (511) by attending more precisely to the change in the genre from the 1820s to the 1840s. See also James Olney, "'I Was Born': Slave Narratives, Their Status as Autobiography and as Literature," in *The Slave's Narrative*, eds. Charles Davis and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 148–174; and Dwight A. McBride, *Impossible Witnesses: Truth, Abolitionism, and Slave Testimony* (New York: New York University Press, 2001).

8. In addition to the critics I cite in this chapter, other critics who have discussed these narratives include John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); Dickson D. Bruce, *The Origins of African American Literature, 1680–1865* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001); Susanna Ashton, "Slavery, Imprinted: The Life and Narrative of William Grimes," in *Early African American Print Culture*, eds. Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012) and "Re-Collecting Jim," *Common-Place* 15, no. 2 (2014); and Martha J. Cutter, *The Illustrated Slave: Empathy, Graphic Narrative, and the Visual Culture of the Transatlantic Abolition Movement, 1800–1852* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2017).
9. Eugene Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), 96. According to Ian Finseth, "the relatively nonconfrontational [rhetorical] strategies of collective uplift, moral suasion, and social integration" that characterize slave narratives before the 1820s gave way in the 1830s to "more assertive and in some cases even militant attitudes developed in the African American community." "Introduction," in *North Carolina Slave Narratives: The Lives of Moses Roper, Lunsford Lane, Moses Grandy, and Thomas H. Jones,* ed. William L. Andrews (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 29.
10. "Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner provoked waves of repression: restrictions on literacy, preaching, manumission, and much else" (Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution,* 113). Genovese notes that refugee planters from Saint-Domingue "spread all over the Caribbean, the northern coast of South America, and South Carolina and Louisiana, taking their slaves with them. Those slaves had seen and heard much during the revolutionary conflagration, and everywhere they became carriers of new doctrines" (94).
11. The "gradualist mentality dominated antislavery thought from the late eighteenth century to the 1820s." David Brion Davis, "The Emergence of Immediatism in British and American Antislavery Thought," in *From Homicide to Slavery: Studies in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 244. The reasons for this shift are complex and include the expansion of slavery to new territories in the Southwest, as well as antislavery activists' recognition by 1821 "that the American Colonization Society was founded on racial prejudice and offered no real promise of undermining slavery." Davis, "The Emergence of Immediatism," 253. See Richard S. Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002); and Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016). Jeffrey Insko relates "the divide between gradualist and immediatist abolitionism" to "antebellum American literature's investments in the present." *History, Abolition, and the Ever-Present Now in Antebellum American Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 5.
12. Philip Gould, "The Rise, Development, and Circulation of the Slave Narrative," in *The Cambridge Companion to the African American Slave Narrative*, ed. Audrey A. Fisch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 12. See also Frances Smith Foster, *Witnessing Slavery: The Development of Ante-Bellum Slave Narratives* (Westport, CT:

Greenwood Press, 1979), especially Ch. 3, "The Development of Slave Narratives," and William Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story*.

13. The three narratives published in the 1810s are Boyrereau Brinch, *The Blind African Slave, or Memoirs of Boyrereau Brinch, Nick-named Jeffrey Brace. Containing an Account of the Kingdom of Pow-Woo, in the Interior of Africa; with the Climate and Natural Productions, Laws, and Customs Peculiar to That Place. With an Account of His Captivity, Sufferings, Sales, Travels, Emancipation, Conversion to the Christian Religion, Knowledge of the Scriptures, &c. Interspersed with Strictures on Slavery, Speculative Observations on the Qualities of Human Nature, with Quotation from Scripture* (1810); George White, *A Brief Account of the Life, Experience, Travels, and Gospel Labours of George White, an African: Written by Himself, and Revised by a Friend* (1810); and John Jea, *The Life, History, and Unparalleled Sufferings of John Jea, the African Preacher, Compiled and Written by Himself* (1811). Of White's narrative, Sekora notes it "is a tract whose message is neither abolition nor rebellion. On the contrary, it is a paean to Methodism" ("Black Message/White Envelope," 490).
14. William Grimes, *Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave*, eds. William L. Andrews, and Regina E. Mason (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), iv. All subsequent references will be cited parenthetically. [James] [Matthews], "Recollections of Slavery by a Runaway Slave," (*The Emancipator*, August 23, September 13, September 20, October 11, October 18, 1838), http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/runaway/runaway.html, August 23, 1838. All subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.
15. Wagner, *Disturbing the Peace*, 5, 4, and 7.
16. Summarizing the generic conventions set for the form by the AASS, Goddu states "Nearly all antebellum slave narratives foreground punishments and cruelty and include in their appendices an array of corroborating evidence and supporting documents to verify their testimony" (*Selling Antislavery*, 79).
17. Critics have noted that Douglass emphasizes Covey's panoptical surveillance, but there is little scholarly attention to surveillance in earlier slave narratives. On Douglass, see Cynthia Nielsen, "Resistance Is Not Futile: Frederick Douglass on Panoptic Plantations and the Un-Making of Docile Bodies and Enslaved Souls," *Philosophy and Literature* 35, no. 2 (2011): 251–268; Felix Haase, "'Within the Circle': Space and Surveillance in Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave,*" *aspeers* 8 (2015): 71–88; and J.B.C. Axelrod and Rise B. Axelrod, "Reading Frederick Douglass through Foucault's Panoptic Lens: A Proposal for Teaching Close Reading," *Pacific Coast Philology* 39 (2004): 112–127.
18. Sinha, *The Slave's Cause,* 176–177.
19. Carol Wilson, *Freedom at Risk: The Kidnapping of Free Blacks in America, 1780–1865* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 104.
20. Bell, "Counterfeit Kin," 224.
21. See Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*.
22. Browne, *Dark Matters*, 21.
23. Jeannine Marie DeLombard, *Slavery on Trial: Law, Abolitionism, and Print Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 6–7.
24. DeLombard, *Slavery*, 27, 1.

25. DeLombard, *Slavery*, 15. As DeLombard explains, the abolitionist movement drew on the legal distinction between criminal and civil injuries: according to an 1847 law dictionary, crimes are a "breach and violation of the public rights and duties due to the whole community, considered as such, in its social aggregate capacity; whereas the latter is merely an infringement or privation of the civil rights which belong to individuals considered merely in their individual capacity" (qtd. in DeLombard, *Slavery,* 15).
26. Loughran, *The Republic in Print*, 238; DeLombard, *In the Shadow*, 166.
27. Gould, "The Rise, Development, and Circulation of the Slave Narrative," 18–19.
28. Janet Neary, *Fugitive Testimony: On the Visual Logic of Slave Narratives* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 24, 25.
29. Ariela Gross, "Pandora's Box: Slave Character on Trial in the Antebellum Deep South," in *Slavery & the Law*, ed. Paul Finkelman (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 291.
30. DeLombard, *In the Shadow,* 164.
31. DeLombard*, Slavery,* 4.
32. Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 266.
33. DeLombard, *In the Shadow,* 168.
34. The spy novel had currency in the antebellum United States, as evidenced in texts such as Peter Markoe's *The Algerine Spy in Pennsylvania* (1787) and James Fenimore Cooper's *The Spy* (1821).
35. Charles Ball, *Slavery In the United States*, ed. Isaac Fisher (Lewistown, PA: J. W. Shugert, 1836), 5. All subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.
36. Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, 110.
37. Derrick R. Spires, *The Practice of Citizenship: Black Politics and Print Culture in the Early United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 3.
38. This aspect of Ball's life did not fit the conventions of antislavery literature in the 1850s and was excised from the text when Hiram Drayton, an opportunistic publisher, issued an abridged version of Ball's narrative in 1858, in which he reshaped Ball's story to fit the melodramatic conventions of the bestselling *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Drayton shortened the title to *Fifty Years in Chains, or, The Life of an American Slave*, and the corresponding section of the narrative was expunged. See Michaël Roy, "The Vanishing Slave: Publishing the Narrative of Charles Ball, from *Slavery in the United States* (1836) to *Fifty Years in Chains* (1858)," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 111, no. 4 (December 2017): 535–538.
39. Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, 502 and 144.
40. Roy, "The Vanishing Slave" 517. Roy, who has extensively researched the publication history of the narrative, concludes that it is "impossible to determine" when Ball is speaking and when Fisher is (519). In the "Introduction" to the 1837 Cabinet of Freedom edition, the editors note that Fisher "states, in a private communication, that many of the anecdotes in the book illustrative of southern society were not obtained from Ball, but from other and creditable sources; he avers, however, that all the facts which relate personally to the fugitive, were received from his own lips" (Charles Ball,

Slavery in the United States (New York: Published by John S. Taylor, 1837), i–ii. https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/ballslavery/ball.html).

41. John S. Taylor, "Prospectus of The Cabinet of Freedom," in *Of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the African Slave Trade by the British Parliament*, Vol. 1. (New York: Taylor, 1836), 2.
42. Roy, "The Vanishing Slave," 527, 532.
43. Ball, *Slavery* (1837), i.
44. In a letter to Smith, Jay wrote that the first edition of Ball's narrative "is deficient in proof of its authenticity" (qtd. in Roy, "The Vanishing Slave," 531).
45. Ball, *Slavery* (1837), v.
46. Goddu, *Selling Antislavery*, 58, 59, 63.
47. James Williams, *Narrative of James Williams, an American Slave*, ed. Hank Trent (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 3. All subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.
48. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 3.
49. Hank Trent notes that while Williams gave Whittier and other white abolitionists a "crafted story," he shared the "full secret truth of how he had spent the last two years" with his sister in a letter he sent in the midst of his interviews with Whittier. "Introduction" to *Narrative of James Williams, an American Slave*, ed. Hank Trent (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), xvi–xvii.
50. Qtd. in Trent, "Introduction" to *Narrative of James Williams*, xix.
51. Trent, "Introduction" to *Narrative of James Williams*, xxiv.
52. Trent, "Introduction" to *Narrative of James Williams*, xxxvii–xxxviii.
53. Trent, "Introduction" to *Narrative of James Williams*, xvi.
54. Trent, "Introduction" to *Narrative of James Williams*, xvi.
55. Though we now divide them into different categories, detection and spying were interchangeable terms in the nineteenth century. See Catherine Ross Nickerson, *The Web of Iniquity: Early Detective Fiction by American Women* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 52; Martin Kayman, *From Bow Street to Baker Street: Mystery, Detection and Narrative* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1992), 109, 120, and 130; and Marcus Klein, *Easterns, Westerns, and Private Eyes: American Matters, 1870–1900* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 137.
56. See Sally Hadden, *Slave Patrols*, for a historical account of the patrols' structure and methods.
57. Moses Roper, "A Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper, from American Slavery," in *North Carolina Slave Narratives: The Lives of Moses Roper, Lunsford Lane, Moses Grandy & Thomas H. Jones,* eds. William L. Andrews and David A. Davis (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 54. All subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.
58. Explaining "[t]he dialectic of disguise and surveillance that pervades power relations between the weak and the strong," James C. Scott states, "Subordinates offer a performance of deference and consent while attempting to discern, to read, the real intentions and mood of the potentially threatening powerholder. … The power figure, in turn, produces a performance of mastery and command while attempting to peer

behind the mask of subordinates to read their real intentions" (*Domination and the Arts of Resistance,* 3–4).

59. Robert Voorhis and Henry Trumbull, *Life and Adventures of Robert, the Hermit of Massachusetts: Who Has Lived 14 Years in a Cave, Secluded from Human Society: Comprising, an Account of His Birth, Parentage, Sufferings, and Providential Escape from Unjust and Cruel Bondage in Early Life, and His Reasons for Becoming a Recluse.* (Providence, RI: Printed for H. Trumbull, 1829), http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/robert/menu.html, 14. All subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.
60. Perhaps the most famous example of the mutual deception in slave narratives comes from Frederick Douglass's 1845 *Narrative,* when he describes an enslaver questioning an enslaved person whom he meets on the road without revealing that he is the enslaved man's owner. Not realizing the white man is his enslaver, the Black man tells the truth about his living conditions and is sold to a Georgia trader as a consequence; enslaved people quickly learn that "This is the penalty of telling the truth," Douglass says. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life* (1845) in *The Oxford Frederick Douglass Reader*, ed. William L. Andrews (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 40. This emphasis on strategic deception is characteristic of the slave narratives of the 1820s and 1830s as well, as for example when Matthews remarks "If we hated master ever so much, we did not dare to show it, but we must always look pleased when he saw us, and we were afraid to speak what we thought, because some would tell master" (October 11, 1838). Thanks to Paul Laurence Dunbar and W.E.B. DuBois, when these examples of sousveillance are discussed, they are described under the rubric of "masking" or "the veil." See, for example, Donald A. Petesch, "'A Spy in the Enemy's Country': 'Masking' in Black Literature," in *A Spy in the Enemy's Country: The Emergence of Modern Black Literature* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989); Robert Stepto, *From Behind the Veil*: *A Study of Afro-American Narrative* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991). See also Gilbert Osofsky, *Puttin' on Ole Massa: The Slave Narratives of Henry Bibb, William Wells Brown, and Solomon Northup* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969); Litwack, *Been in the Storm so Long*; Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*; Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*.
61. Sekora, "Black Message/White Envelope," 504.
62. Solomon Bayley, "A Narrative of Some Remarkable Incidents in the Life of Solomon Bayley, Formerly a Slave in the State of Delaware, North America; Written by Himself, and Published for His Benefit; to Which Are Prefixed, a Few Remarks by Robert Hurnard," 1825, http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bayley/bayley.html, 3. All subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.
63. Douglass, *Narrative,* 101–102.
64. Finseth, "Introduction," 30.
65. Goddu, *Selling Antislavery*, 179.
66. Ball also calculates time and distance by observing the sun, moon, and stars, especially the north star (320, 322, 323, 325, 342).
67. Jinny Huh, *The Arresting Eye: Race and the Anxiety of Detection* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 9.

68. Cobb, *Picture Freedom,* 36–37.
69. Cobb, *Picture Freedom*, 36.
70. Blackwood, "'Making Good Use of Our Eyes,'" 42–65.

Chapter 2

1. Maurice S. Lee, *Slavery, Philosophy, and American Literature, 1830–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 45–46. See also Colin Dayan's "Poe, Persons, and Property," in which she argues "Poe's obsession with possession, personal identity, and the will … is no empty philosophizing or haunting but an appeal to the paradoxes necessary to sustain slavery, to its specific forms of degradation and figurative death." In *Romancing the Shadow: Poe and Race,* eds. J. Gerald Kennedy and Liliane Weissberg (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 113.
2. Cindy Weinstein, *Time, Tense, and American Literature: When Is Now?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 59.
3. Scholars examining race and detection in "Murders" include Ed White, "The Ourang-Outang Situation," *College Literature* 30, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 88–108; Nancy A. Harrowitz, "Criminality and Poe's Orangutan: The Question of Race in Detection," in *Agonistics: Arenas of Creative Contest*, eds. Janet Lungstrum and Elizabeth Sauer (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 177-195; Lindon Barrett, "Presence of Mind: Detection and Racialization in 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue,'" in *Romancing the Shadow,* eds. Kennedy and Weissberg, 157-176; John Carlos Rowe, "Edgar Allan Poe's Imperial Fantasy and the American Frontier," in *Romancing the Shadow,* eds. Kennedy and Weissberg, 75-105; and Leonard Cassuto, "Poe the Crime Writer: Historicizing 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue,'" in *Approaches to Teaching Poe's Prose and Poetry*, eds. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock and Tony Magistrale (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2008), 33-38. Richard Kopley argues that in his anthropomorphized orangutan Poe conflated several articles published in 1838 in the *Philadelphia Saturday News and Literary Gazette*: a description of an orangutan in the London Zoo, an account of a fugitive ape that escaped in New York City, and an article on Edward Coleman, a Black man who slit his wife's throat with a razor. Richard Kopley, *Edgar Allan Poe and the Dupin Mysteries* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 32–37.
4. Here I am paraphrasing Lee's claim that Poe "prejudicially enacts a strategic philosophy of slavery and race" (*Slavery, Philosophy, and American Literature,* 16).
5. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, "Preface to the Sherlock Holmes Stories," orig. pub. in Author's Edition, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1903), reprinted in *The Uncollected Sherlock Holmes*, ed. Richard Lancelyn Green (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), 270. In conferring on Poe this patriarchal title, Doyle's acknowledgment of Poe's influence suggests that the detective story is another example of the way in which, as Eliza Richards has shown, "Poe receives credit for fathering mass culture." *Gender and the Poetics of Reception in Poe's Circle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 26.
6. A Google n-gram search produces the same results: the word does not begin appearing in print until about 1850.

7. Kayman, *From Bow Street to Baker Street*, 4. See also Karen Halttunnen, who understands "detective fiction as a fantasized solution to the problem of moral uncertainty in the world of true crime." *Murder Most Foul* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 131.
8. Jinny Huh has made a similar argument about Doyle, claiming that his encounter with Henry Highland Garnet "leads to (demands?) an entire genre known as detective fiction … [that] offer[s] the potential to contain and master [racial] anxiety." *The Arresting Eye,* 30.
9. Detection preoccupied many antebellum authors from Nathaniel Hawthorne to Harriet Jacobs. See, for example, Heather Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective in Early Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), and Sara Crosby, "Early American Crime Writing," in *The Cambridge Companion to American Crime Fiction*, ed. Catherine Ross Nickerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5–16, for examinations of crime writing before Poe. John Cullen Gruesser explores detection in Poe's contemporaries in *Race, Gender and Empire in American Detective Fiction* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2013) and *Edgar Allan Poe and His Nineteenth-Century American Counterparts* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019). See also Maurizio Ascari, *A Counter-History of Crime Fiction: Supernatural, Gothic, Sensational* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
10. Peter Thoms, *Detection and Its Designs: Narrative & Power in 19th-Century Detective Fiction* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1998), 1.
11. Charles Rzepka, *Detective Fiction* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2005), 19. Michele Robinson calls this device "backward construction" or "narrative retroversion." *Dreams for Dead Bodies: Blackness, Labor, and the Corpus of American Detective Fiction* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 4. See also Kayman, *From Bow Street to Baker Street*, 221.
12. Thoms, *Detection and Its Designs*, 1.
13. J. Gerald Kennedy, *Strange Nation: Literary Nationalism and Cultural Conflict in the Age of Poe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 295.
14. See Elise Lemire, "'The Murders in the Rue Morgue': Amalgamation Discourses and the Race Riots of 1838 in Poe's Philadelphia," in *Romancing the Shadow,* eds. Kennedy and Weissberg, 177–204.
15. While many Poe scholars have adopted Terrence Whalen's stance that Poe's writings express an "average racism" calculated to appease a national audience, I agree with Goddu that Whalen's "neutral term" elides the evidence of Poe's proslavery beliefs. Whalen, *Edgar Allan Poe and the Masses: The Political Economy of Literature in Antebellum America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Goddu, "Rethinking Race and Slavery in Poe Studies," *Poe Studies* 33, no. 1–2 (Jan. 2000): 15–18. See also *Romancing the Shadow,* eds. Kennedy and Weissberg.
16. John C. Havard, "'Trust to the Shrewdness and Common Sense of the Public: *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* as a Hoaxical Satire of Racist Epistemologies," in *Deciphering Poe: Subtexts, Contexts, Subversive Meanings*, ed. A. P. Urakova (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2013), 110; Kennedy, "*Pym* Pourri: Decomposing the Textual Body," in *Poe's Pym: Critical Explorations*, ed. Richard Kopley (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 167. *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* is, famously, a mess.

Before he was fired from his editorship of the *Southern Literary Messenger* in January 1837, Poe wrote a portion of what would later become the *Narrative* for publication in the *Messenger*. T.W. White, owner of the *Messenger*, rather haphazardly divided this material into two installments and published them in the *Messenger*'s January and February 1837 issues under the title *Arthur Gordon Pym,* crediting Poe with their authorship in the table of contents. Poe presumably continued writing the narrative during his stay in New York in 1837, but because this is the period of Poe's life for which the record is least extant, there is no solid evidence for the compositional timeline of the *Narrative.* However, J. V. Ridgely's archival research has resulted in a persuasive, though speculative, account of four independent stages of composition prior to the book's eventual publication by Harper & Brothers in July 1838. "The Growth of the Text," *Collected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe. Vol. 1: The Imaginary Voyages*, ed. Burton R. Pollin (New York: The Gordian Press, 1994), 29–36. The first three stages roughly correspond to the three sections of the novel that I discuss: (1) the portion published in the *Messenger,* in which Pym stows away in the hold of the *Grampus*, (2) the account of retaking the *Grampus* from mutineers, its subsequent destruction in a storm, and Pym's weeks of drifting on its hulk in the Atlantic ocean, and (3) Pym's rescue by the *Jane Guy*, their journey south, and their attempt to exploit the civilization of dark-skinned people they encounter on the island of Tsalal—an attempt that is foiled by the Tsalalians, who engineer a land-slide to massacre the *Jane Guy* sailors. The main additions Poe made in the fourth stage of composition, which I discuss briefly at the end of this chapter's section on *Pym,* are chapter twenty-three, which depicts the "indentures" carved in the wall of a cavern on Tsalal, and the concluding "Note," purportedly written by an unnamed editor (though in fact written by Poe). Composed at different times and with little evidence of the meticulous line-by-line revisions Poe often made on his manuscripts, *Pym*'s sections are internally inconsistent and lack the connective tissue that would suture them into a coherent narrative. These three more or less self-contained sections, which are held together by the recurring character named Arthur Gordon Pym, who narrates each of them, were written at different periods from May 1836 to May 1837. In each of these sections, I argue, Poe experiments formally with ways to tell a story about detection.

17. Weinstein, *Time, Tense, and American Literature,* 42.
18. Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, ed. Richard Kopley (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 23–26. All subsequent references will be cited parenthetically. Kennedy also notes that "Pym goes to sea hidden in a crate like an escaping slave" ("'Trust No Man': Poe, Douglass, and the Culture of Slavery," *Romancing the Shadow,* eds. Kennedy and Weissberg, 244.
19. Harold Beaver posits that for Poe, the name "'Augustus,' … evokes a classic sense of order, an imperial control," an observation that would also apply to C. Auguste Dupin. "Introduction," *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), 26.
20. Poe, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," in *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, Vol. 2, ed. Thomas O. Mabbott (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 532. All subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.

21. Bran Nicol, "Reading and Not Reading 'The Man of the Crowd': Poe, the City, and the Gothic Text, " *Philological Quarterly*, 91, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 478.
22. Thoms, *Detection and Its Designs,* 55.
23. Dana D. Nelson, *The Word in Black and White: Reading "Race" in American Literature, 1638–1867* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 98-99.
24. Nicol, "Reading and Not Reading," 478.
25. Many scholars have noted that the Tsalalian massacre and the *mutiny* on the *Grampus* are linked: Beaver notes, for example, that the "initial treachery (of mutiny and revenge on the *Grampus)* is mirrored by treachery and revenge on Tsalal; murderous Seymour, the black cook, by unscrupulous Too-wit, the black chief" ("Introduction," 29). I am arguing that the Tsalalians' insurrection in fact repeats the *counter*mutiny (rather than the initial mutiny) on the *Grampus*, though Pym does not recognize the parallel.
26. Kennedy, "'Trust No Man,'" 243.
27. Nelson, *The Word in Black and White*, 99. See also John T. Irwin, *The Mystery to a Solution: Poe, Borges, and the Analytic Detective Story* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 184.
28. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 8.
29. Poe, "The Purloined Letter," in *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, Vol. 3, ed. Thomas O. Mabbott (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978): 990.
30. See, for example, John Carlos Rowe, "Poe, Antebellum Slavery, and Modern Criticism," in *Poe's Pym: Critical Explorations*, ed. Richard Kopley (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 117–138.
31. Though, of course, Pym suddenly revises Peters's racial categorization once he realizes they are the only two of the *Jane Guy*'s crew who survived the landslide: "We were the only living white men upon the island" (*Pym*, 188). This homosocial pairing, like Pym and Augustus in the earlier section of the novella and the narrator and Dupin in the subsequent Dupin tales, seems particularly linked to detection for Poe.
32. The narrator repeats this description almost word for word later in the story: "I have already spoken of his abstract manner at such times. … His eyes, vacant in expression, regarded only the wall" ("Murders," 548).
33. Daniel Hoffman, *Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972), 269.
34. According to Ridgely, Poe added this chapter in the fourth and final stage of composition, at the same time that he added the concluding "Note" ("The Growth of the Text," 33).
35. The chasms and the hieroglyphs, which Poe helpfully presents to the reader as illustrated figures, signal Poe's long-standing fascination with cryptography and linguistics. These subjects were closely linked to Poe's interest in ratiocination, as Shawn Rosenheim has shown; Poe would later incorporate code-breaking into "The Gold-Bug," one of his non-Dupinian stories of detection. *The Cryptographic Imagination: Secret Writing from Edgar Poe to the Internet* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).
36. On Poe's linguistic sleight of hand in *Pym*, and in the "Note" in particular, see Shaindy Rudoff, "Written in Stone: Slavery and Authority in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*," *ATQ* 14, no. 1 (March 2000): 61–82.

37. Similarly, Sam Worley places "the metacommentary by the unnamed editor of the note" at the top of an "abortive hierarchy of language," in which "each successive level" lacks "a measure of authority over the lower ones." "*The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* and the Ideology of Slavery," *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 40, no. 3 (1994): 239.
38. Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Winthrop Jordan explains that "[t]he animal called 'orang-outang' by contemporaries (actually the chimpanzee)" was linked in the Western imagination to African people. *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 28–30. See also Lindon Barrett, who notes "in both the learned and popular mind, the wild primitive state of the orangutan remains an important analogue for the natural condition of Africans and their descendants" ("Presence of Mind," 167),
39. White, "The Ourang-Outang Situation," 95, 88.
40. Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, 151.
41. DeLombard, *In the Shadow of the Gallows*, 200.
42. Poe, "The Man of the Crowd," in *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, Vol. 2, ed. Thomas O. Mabbott (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 515.
43. Dana Brand, *The Spectator and the City in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 88.
44. Qtd. in Daniel Stashower, *The Beautiful Cigar Girl: Mary Rogers, Edgar Allan Poe, and the Invention of Murder* (New York: Dutton, 2006), 249.
45. This scenario of self-analysis renders "The Purloined Letter" particularly well suited to psychoanalytic and deconstructionist criticism.
46. Qtd. in Thomas O. Mabbott, Headnote to "The Purloined Letter," in *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, Vol. 3, ed. Thomas O. Mabbott (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 972.
47. Robinson, *Dreams for Dead Bodies,* 65, 67, 130.
48. Frankie Y. Bailey, *Out of the Woodpile: Black Characters in Crime and Detective Fiction* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 5.
49. Scott Peeples, "Love and Theft in the Carolina Lowcountry," *Arizona Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (2004): 33–56.

Chapter 3

1. hooks, *Black Looks*, 116.
2. Blackwood, "'Making Good Use of Our Eyes,'" 45. hooks and Blackwood, along with other scholars of African American visual culture, attest that "black people were watching, and through this sight producing their own forms of interpretation, epistemology, and authority" (Blackwood, 45).
3. hooks, *Black Looks*, 168. See also Jasmine Nichole Cobb, *Picture Freedom*, on the "suppression of a Black gaze": "Whites socially mandated that people of African descent avoid issuing looks in service of the maintenance of slavery," (36–37).
4. Though indebted to Nicholas Mirzoeff's foundational work on countervisuality, my use of white oversight here is different from Mirzoeff's "oversight," which he defines as

the "combination of violent enforcement and visualized surveillance that sustained the new colonial order of things … the nomination of what was visible to the overseer on the plantation." *The Right to Look*, 49–50. To Mirzoeff's "oversight" and Blackwood's "white sight," I want to add the assumption of white invisibility that hooks and other Black feminist scholars have underscored.

5. The white crew of the *Jane Guy* in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* exemplify white oversight in their interactions with the Tsalalians.
6. Browne, *Dark Matters*, 21.
7. Gray claims that he "commit[ted Turner's] statements to writing, and publish[ed] them, with little or no variation, from his own words." Thomas R. Gray, *The Confessions of Nat Turner and Related Documents*, ed. Kenneth S. Greenberg (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996), 40. Critics disagree over the extent to which the voice in the "Confession" can be attributed to Turner. For instance, Anthony E. Kaye argues that the references to "blood" and exact counts of murder victims were likely Gray's editorial interventions, though they are attributed to Turner. "Neighborhoods and Nat Turner: The Making of a Slave Rebel and the Unmaking of a Slave Rebellion," *Journal of the Early Republic* 27, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 709. Summarizing the debate, Kenneth S. Greenburg acknowledges the evidence that Gray probably altered some of Turner's language, but concludes that the narrative is, on the whole, Turner's story. "Introduction," *The Confessions of Nat Turner and Related Documents*, ed. Kenneth S. Greenburg (Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1996), 1–35. Although Daniel S. Fabricant has argued that Gray is fully in control of the text and imposes his "white Southern racist" ideology onto Turner ("Thomas R. Gray and William Styron: Finally, A Critical Look at the 1831 *Confessions of Nat Turner,*" *American Journal of Legal History* 37 [July 1993]: 335), most literary critics lean more towards Andrews's interpretation of the text as a "diametric collaboration" (*To Tell a Free Story*, 72) between Gray and Turner. See Eric Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*: *Race in the Making of American Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993), Ch. 1; M. Cooper Harriss, "Where Is the Voice Coming From? Rhetoric, Religion, and Violence in *The Confessions of Nat Turner,*" *Soundings* 89, no. 1–2 (Spring-Summer 2006): 135–70; and Patrick H. Breen, *The Land Shall Be Deluged in Blood: A New History of the Nat Turner Revolt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 169–179, for overviews of critical accounts of the narrative's unreliability.
8. Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*, 38. Sundquist also asserts, "Turner was far more than Gray's equal, as a man certainly and also as an 'author'" (39). Andrews concludes that because Gray opposes, rather than denies Turner's significance, "This in itself constitutes a rhetorical victory for Turner" (*To Tell a Free Story,* 76). See Andrews and Sundquist for analyses of Gray's rhetorical strategies, including his use of Gothic and Romantic tropes.
9. Gray, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, 54. All subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.
10. Notice of *The Piazza Tales* in *The Knickerbocker* 48 (Sept. 1856): 330, reprinted in *Critical Essays on Herman Melville's "Benito Cereno,"* ed. Robert E. Burkholder (New York: G.K. Hall, 1992), 20. On detection in *Benito Cereno,* see James Fulcher, "Melville's 'Benito Cereno': An American Mystery," *Clues: A Journal of Detection* 2,

no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1981): 116–122; Brian Baaki, "African American Crime and Physiognomic Detection in Melville's *Benito Cereno*," *Clues*: *A Journal of Detection* 35, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 100–110); Helen Lock, "The Paradox of Slave Mutiny in Herman Melville, Charles Johnson, and Frederick Douglass," *College Literature* 30, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 56; and Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Noonday Press/ Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1998), 293–294.

11. Jeannine DeLombard, "Salvaging Legal Personhood: Melville's *Benito Cereno,*" *American Literature* 81, no. 1 (Jan. 2009): 40.
12. Frederick Douglass, *The Heroic Slave*, in *The Oxford Frederick Douglass Reader*, ed. William L. Andrews (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 132. All subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.
13. Robert Stepto, "Storytelling in Early Afro-American Fiction: Frederick Douglass' 'The Heroic Slave,'" *The Georgia Review* 36, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 364.
14. Dana Luciano, *Arranging Grief: Sacred Time and the Body in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 195. See also DeLombard, "Salvaging Legal Personhood," 37.
15. Breen conservatively estimates that "nearly five dozen whites" were killed (*The Land Shall be Deluged in Blood,* 1), "at least twenty-one slaves … joined the rebels" (presumably the seven original rebels, including Nat Turner, who gathered for a feast the day before the revolt) (51), "fewer than 148 Southampton slaves" were killed extralegally after the revolt (99), and "of the forty-five slaves charged in connection to the revolt, eighteen were hanged" (presumably not including Nat Turner, who was not recaptured until November) (122). Greenburg gives less conservative numbers: "At its height the revolt involved sixty to eighty active rebels. … [There were] fifty-seven to sixty white victims and … two dozen or so black victims who were killed in battle or hanged after trial" ("Introduction," vii). He numbers the Black people killed extralegally after the revolt as 120 at a minimum (19) and states that nineteen people were executed for their participation in the revolt (21).
16. Breen, *The Land Shall Be Deluged in Blood,* 1.
17. By the time Gray entered Turner's jail cell, he had spent three months investigating the rebellion. David F. Allmendinger, Jr., carefully documents the detective work that led up to Turner's trial on November 5, 1831. From August through mid-autumn, three men—James Trezvant, William C. Parker, and Thomas R. Gray—"gather[ed] and interpret[ed] evidence," interviewed witnesses, visited the sites of the murders, and examined the enslaved defendants. "The Construction of *The Confessions of Nat Turner*," in *Nat Turner: A Slave Rebellion in History and Memory*, ed. Kenneth S. Greenburg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 25. All three men were engaged in the trials of the accused insurrectionists: Trezvant was the presiding magistrate for most of the court sessions as well as Turner's primary examiner; Parker was the defense attorney for Turner and thirteen others of the accused; and Gray defended five people. Each of these three men periodically wrote letters, usually anonymously, to regional newspapers summarizing the results of the investigation. While the Southampton Court kept legal records of the inquiry in the form of evidence submission statements, depositions, and trial summaries, these letters publicized the men's detection in an extra-juridical register. For more on the Virginia legislature's response to the

Southampton revolt, see "Inquisitions" by historian Scot French, *The Rebellious Slave: Nat Turner in American Memory* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004).

18. DeLombard, *In the Shadow of the Gallows,* 178.
19. See, for example, Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story*; Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*; M. Cooper Harriss, "Where Is the Voice Coming From"; and Laura Scales, "Narrative Revolutions in Nat Turner and Joseph Smith," *American Literary History* 24, no. 2 (May 2012): 205–233.
20. Erik Nielson discusses the importance of the wilderness, a locale free from the supervisory white eye, for Turner's plans for insurrection. Erik Nielson "'Go in de Wilderness': Evading the 'Eyes of Others' in the Slave Songs," *Western Journal of Black Studies* 35, no. 2 (2011): 106–117.
21. Scales also makes this point in her argument about Turner's divine and narrative "mediumship" ("Narrative Revolutions in Nat Turner and Joseph Smith," 216). Sundquist argues that "Gray and Turner merge in their parasitic rhetoric relationship" (*To Wake the Nations*, 48).
22. Mary Kemp Davis, *Nat Turner Before the Bar of Judgment: Fictional Treatments of the Southampton Slave Insurrection* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 67; Greenburg, "Introduction," 13. Greenburg also asserts that "the entire document that Gray presents as a trial record was very likely his own creation" and notes that Gray's records of the whites killed and the Blacks prosecuted are incomplete ("Introduction," 13). Breen, on the other hand, argues that these inconsistencies are the result of the Southampton clerk's editorial decisions (*The Land Shall be Deluged in Blood,* 172).
23. After Gray secured the copyright in Washington, D.C., a Baltimore printer published 50,000 copies, which sold for twenty-five cents each. Thomas C. Parramore, "Covenant in Jerusalem," in *Nat Turner: A Slave Rebellion in History and Memory*, ed. Kenneth S. Greenburg (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 73.
24. Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno*, ed. Wyn Kelley (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2008), 36. All subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.
25. See Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer.*
26. See Margaret Y. Jackson, "Melville's Use of a Real Slave Mutiny in 'Benito Cereno,'" *CLA Journal* 57, no. 3 (2014): 165–176, for a detailed examination of Melville's changes to Delano's *Narrative.* See DeLombard, "Salvaging Legal Personhood" for the stakes of Delano's salvage of Cereno's ship.
27. Amasa Delano, *Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres: Comprising Three Voyages Round the World; Together with a Voyage of Survey and Discovery, in the Pacific Ocean and Oriental Islands,* Vol. 1 (Boston: E. G. House, 1817), 318–320, 337, 323–324.
28. See Christine Yao, "Visualizing Race Science in *Benito Cereno,*" *J19* 3, no. 1 (Spring, 2015): 130–137, for a related argument that Delano's gaze is grounded in nineteenth-century visual culture and visual sciences such as phrenology.
29. Matthew Rebhorn contends that Melville explores nonverbal, "embodied" communication, as Delano's "body's discourse offers a productive way of making sense of his surrounding" but Delano is unable to "pick up on what his own body is communicating." "Minding the Body: *Benito Cereno* and Melville's Embodied Reading Practice" *Studies in the Novel* 41, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 159.

30. Jean Fagan Yellin, *The Intricate Knot: Black Figures in American Literature, 1776–1863* (New York: New York University Press, 1972), 218.
31. DeLombard, "Salvaging Legal Personhood." See also Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*.
32. Shari Goldberg, "*Benito Cereno*'s Mute Testimony: On the Politics of Reading Melville's Silences," *The Arizona Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 11. The deposition, Goldberg states, "paradoxically foregrounds what cannot or will not be authored and what accordingly remains silent. But such an emphasis proves even more pressing as a commentary on what an individual's official testimony to suffering induced by the slave trade actually comprises" (12).
33. Trish Loughran, "Reading in the Present Tense: *Benito Cereno* and the Time of Reading" in *American Literature's Aesthetic Dimensions*, eds. Cindy Weinstein and Christopher Looby (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 220.
34. See Sheila Post-Lauria, *Correspondent Colorings: Melville in the Marketplace* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), on the "progressive political stance" of *Putnam's Monthly,* the magazine in which *Benito Cereno* was first published.
35. Cobb, *Picture Freedom*, 41.
36. The phrase "right to look" is Mirzoeff's.
37. William Bartley demonstrates that the novella is a "study in tyranny … in which the slave becomes master, [and] the slave, now master, is susceptible to all the temptations and corruptions of having absolute dominion over another human being." "'The Creature of His Own Tasteful Hands': Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno* and the 'Empire of Might,'" *Modern Philology* 93, no. 4 (May 1996): 450.
38. Roberta Jill Craven argues that Melville's rhetorical devices such as metaphor and simile, which are normally thought of as ornaments to the semantic meaning of a text, are the primary vehicles of meaning in *Benito Cereno*. "Melville's Signifyin(g) Shadows: The Mutiny of Form in Melville's 'Benito Cereno.'" *Short Story* 9, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 81–93.
39. Jeffrey Hole, "Enforcement on a Grand Scale: Fugitive Intelligence and the Literary Tactics of Douglass and Melville," *American Literature*, 85, no. 2 (Jan. 2013): 221.
40. Ellen Weinauer also compares Turner's rebellion to Douglass's *The Heroic Slave,* but she focuses on Black domesticity in Douglass's novella. See "Writing Revolt in the Wake of Nat Turner: Frederick Douglass and the Construction of Black Domesticity in 'The Heroic Slave,'" *Studies in American Fiction* 33, no. 2 (2005): 194.
41. Philine G. Vega, "Creole Case," in *Encyclopedia of Emancipation and Abolition in the Transatlantic World*, ed. Junius Rodriguez (Routledge, 2007). In Douglass's novella, the *Creole* departs from Richmond.
42. Cynthia S. Hamilton, "Models of Agency: Frederick Douglass and 'The Heroic Slave,'" *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 114, no. 1 (2005): 97. For more on the historical *Creole* mutiny, see Edward D. Jervey and C. Harold Huber, "The *Creole* Affair," *Journal of Negro History* 65 (1980): 196–211; Howard Jones, "The Peculiar Institution and National Honor: The Case of the *Creole* Slave Revolt," *Civil War History* 21 (March 1975): 28–50; and George Hendrick and Willene Hendrick, "Introduction" to *Two Slave Rebellions at Sea*, eds. George Hendrick and Willene Hendrick (St. James, NY: Brandywine Press, 2000), 1–20. Maggie Montesinos Sale's treatment of the case in *The Slumbering Volcano: American Slave Ship Revolts and the Production of Rebellious*

Masculinity (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997) deftly weaves readings of political, legal, and historical documents with an analysis of *The Heroic Slave*.

43. Before he fictionalized Washington's life in *The Heroic Slave*, Douglass drew on the *Creole* mutiny in several lectures, most notably "Slavery: The Slumbering Volcano." In this address, delivered in New York on April 23, 1849, Douglass gave a sketch of Washington's life based on articles in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* and the *Liberator*, as well as on Douglass's conversations with friends who had met Washington when he was in Canada. William Wells Brown wrote about Washington in *The Black Man: His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements* (1863) and *The Negro in the American Rebellion: His Heroism and His Fidelity* (1867). Lydia Maria Child included a biography of Washington in *The Freedmen's Book* (1865). Pauline Hopkins also wrote a short story about Washington, "A Dash for Liberty," in 1903. All three writers drew on Douglass's novella as a source. See Ivy Wilson, "On Native Ground: Transnationalism, Frederick Douglass, and 'The Heroic Slave,'" *PMLA* 121, no. 2 (March 2006): 453–468, for an analysis of Douglass's sources and his "inventions." See also Robert S. Levine, *Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, and the Politics of Representative Identity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), and William L. Andrews, "The Novelization of Voice in Early African American Narrative," *PMLA* 105, no. 1 (1990): 23–34.
44. One line of criticism on *The Heroic Slave* has focused on the possibilities for interracial cooperation suggested by Washington and Listwell's relationship. See, for example, John Stauffer, "Interracial Friendship and the Aesthetics of Freedom," in *Frederick Douglass & Herman Melville: Essays in Relation*, eds. Robert S. Levine and Samuel Otter (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 134–158.
45. Karin Hoepker, "Frederick Douglass's *The Heroic Slave* - Risk, Fiction, and Insurance in Antebellum America," *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 60, no. 4 (2015): 453. I am indebted to Hoepker's reading of the novella's form, though her argument focuses on Douglass's engagement with the logic of risk rather than the issue of surveillance.
46. Stafford Gregoire argues that "Listwell behind his log resemble[es] no one so much as Covey" in Douglass's autobiographies." "Blacks Seeing, Seeing Blacks: Surveillance and the Gaze in the Works of Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, and William Wells Brown." (Dissertation, University of California, 2004), 39.
47. Marianne Noble has argued that *The Heroic Slave* rejects the "scopic regime's" "sympathy grounded in visual signs of physical suffering" for an aural realm that promotes the establishment of "meaningful interracial connections … through listening." Though I agree with her argument about the transformative potential of listening, I would suggest that Listwell's eavesdropping in Part 1 is qualitatively different from the interpersonal conversation he and his wife have with Washington in Part 2. "Sympathetic Listening in Frederick Douglass's 'The Heroic Slave' and *My Bondage and My Freedom*," *Studies in American Fiction* 34, no. 1 (2006): 54. See also Shelley Fisher Fishkin and Carla L. Peterson, "'We Hold These Truths to Be Self-Evident': The Rhetoric of Frederick Douglass's Journalism," *Frederick Douglass: New Literary and Critical Essays*, ed. Eric J. Sundquist (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 198–200.

48. Stauffer, "Interracial Friendship and the Aesthetics of Freedom," 138. See also Richard Yarborough, "Race, Violence, and Manhood: The Masculine Ideal in Frederick Douglass's 'The Heroic Slave,'" in *Frederick Douglass: New Literary and Historical Essays*, ed. Eric J. Sundquist (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 179.
49. Goddu, *Selling Antislavery*, 176–177.
50. In *Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, and the Politics of Representative Identity,* Levine emphasizes the "instrumental value" of Listwell's "sympathetic response to suffering that crosses the lines of race" (84). While I argue that Douglass critiques sympathy without action, I agree with Levine that "sympathy allows for the possibility of dialogue and influence" (85).
51. Ivy Wilson, "On Native Ground," 466.
52. See Robert S. Levine, John Stauffer, and John R. McKivigan, Headnote to "Protest of the Officers and Crew of the American Brig Creole," in *The Heroic Slave*, eds. Robert S. Levine, John Stauffer, and John R. McKivigan (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 66. Documents relating to the *Creole* were subsequently collected by Daniel Webster in Senate Document 51, "Message from the President of the United States, Communicating … Copies of Correspondence in Relation to the Mutiny on Board the Brig Creole, and The Liberation of the Slaves Who Were Passengers in the Said Vessel, January 20, 1842. See Carrie Hyde, "The Climates of Liberty: Natural Rights in the *Creole* Case and 'The Heroic Slave,'" *American Literature* 85, no. 3 (Jan. 2013): 475–504, for a comparison between Webster's and Douglass's articulations of natural rights regarding the *Creole* case.
53. While the Louisiana Supreme Court ruled that the slave revolt voided the insurance contract, the enslavers eventually won $110,000 compensation from Great Britain for the value of the formerly enslaved because the mediator of the claims commission ruled that "the authorities at Nassau had violated 'the established law of nations.'" "Introduction" to *The Heroic Slave*, eds. Levine, Stauffer, and McKivigan, xxiv. See also Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 27–28.
54. All references to the deposition are from the reprinting in the *Liberator:* "Protest," *Liberator* XI, no. 53 (Dec. 31, 1841): 210.
55. Sale, *Slumbering Volcano*, 186. See also Krista Walter, "Trappings of Nationalism in Frederick Douglass's *The Heroic Slave,*" *African American Review* 34, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 233–47; and Richard Yarborough, "Race, Violence, and Manhood."

Chapter 4

1. Mark Dery, "Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose," in *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberculture*, ed. Mark Dery (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 180. See, especially, De Witt Douglas Kilgore, *Astrofuturism: Science, Race, and Visions of Utopia in Space* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); andré m. carrington, *Speculative Blackness: The Future of Race in Science Fiction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016); and

Ytasha L. Womack, *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill, 2013).

2. Madhu Dubey, "Speculative Fictions of Slavery," *American Literature* 82, no. 4 (2010), 779. Mark Rifkin clarifies that Afrofuturism "is less about the future per se—what actually lies beyond the present—than the patterns by which people conceptualize what is possible." Rifkin, *Fictions of Land and Flesh: Blackness, Indigeneity, Speculation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 65.
3. Britt Rusert, *Fugitive Science: Empiricism and Freedom in Early African American Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 153.
4. For example, Gary T. Marx notes that "surveillance is often wrongly seen to be the opposite of privacy" (736). "Surveillance Studies," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (Second Edition), ed. James D. Wright (Oxford: Elsevier, 2015): 733–741. On privacy in antebellum literature, see Justine S. Murison, *The Politics of Anxiety in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), especially Ch. 3, "Invasions of Privacy: Clairvoyance and Utopian Failure in Antebellum Romance," 76–106, and "'Nudity and Other Sensitive States': Counterprivacy in Herman Melville's Fiction," *American Literature* 89, no. 4 (Dec. 2017): 697–726.
5. Imani Perry, *More Beautiful and More Terrible: The Embrace and Transcendence of Racial Inequality in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 85–86.
6. Rachel E. Dubrofsky and Shoshana Magnet, "Introduction, Feminist Surveillance Studies: Critical Interventions," in *Feminist Surveillance Studies*, eds. Rachel E. Dubrofsky and Shoshana Magnet (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 4.
7. See also Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, on "the dominative imposition of transparency and the degrading hypervisibility of the enslaved" (36).
8. Cobb, *Picture Freedom*, 36.
9. See Houston A. Baker, Jr., who posits that "southern patriarchal economics … granted such bizarre power to white males that it might well have been designated an 'economics of rape.'" *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 54. See also Deborah Garfield, "Earwitness: Female Abolitionism, Sexuality, and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*," in *Harriet Jacobs and Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: New Critical Essays*, eds. Deborah M. Garfield and Rafia Zafar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 100–130.
10. In *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History*, Ian Baucom demonstrates that the "engine of [the Atlantic] speculative regime of accumulation was the trans-Atlantic slave trade," which was "as much a trade in credit as a trade in commodities" (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 59 and 15. Levy, *Freaks of Fortune*; Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996); Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2016).
11. Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic*, 7.

12. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 234. On the internal or domestic slave trade, see Steven Deyle, *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
13. Best, *The Fugitive's Properties*, 109, 198, and 197.
14. Hannah Crafts, *The Bondwoman's Narrative* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2014), 116. All subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.
15. Janet Neary, *Fugitive Testimony*, 181, n. 10.
16. Robert S. Levine, "Trappe(d): Race and Genealogical Haunting in *The Bondwoman's Narrative,*" in *In Search of Hannah Crafts: Critical Essays on The Bondwoman's Narrative*, eds. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Hollis Robbins (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2004), 288.
17. Levy, *Freaks of Fortune,* 49.
18. Voelz, *The Poetics of Insecurity*, 70.
19. See White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?*, 70–76.
20. Foster, *Written by Herself*, 95.
21. Carla L. Peterson, *Doers of the Word: African-American Women Speakers and Writers in the North (1830–1880)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 146–147.
22. Jean Fagan Yellin, "Introduction," to *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself*, by Harriet A. Jacobs, ed. Jean Fagan Yellin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), xxvii.
23. On Jacobs's engagement with sentimental fiction, see, for example, Peterson, *Doers of the Word*, Ch. 6; Krista Walter, "Surviving in the Garret: Harriet Jacobs and the Critique of Sentiment," *American Transcendental Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (Sept. 1994): 189–210; Franny Nudelman, "Harriet Jacobs and the Sentimental Politics of Female Suffering," *ELH* 59, no. 4 (1992): 939–964; Karen Sánchez-Eppler, *Touching Liberty: Abolition, Feminism, and the Politics of the Body* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1993); Valerie Smith, "'Loopholes of Retreat': Architecture and Ideology in Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*," in *Reading Black, Reading Feminist: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (New York: Meridian Book, 1990), 212–226; and Lori Merish, *Sentimental Materialism: Gender, Commodity Culture, and Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000). On Jacobs and the gothic, see Goddu, *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). On Jacobs's use of urban gothic conventions, see Jennifer Rae Greeson, "The 'Mysteries and Miseries' of North Carolina: New York City, Urban Gothic Fiction, and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*," *American Literature* 73, no. 2 (June 2001): 271–309.
24. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Gregg Hecimovich, "Preface," *The Bondwoman's Narrative*, by Hannah Crafts (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2014), xiii. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. bought the manuscript of "The Bondwoman's Narrative" at auction in 2001 and published it the following year, after engaging an expert in historical documents, Joe Nickell, to authenticate the narrative.
25. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Hollis Robbins, "Hannah Crafts, *The Bondswoman's Narrative*; Introduction to the Critical Essay Collection," in *In Search of Hannah Crafts,* eds. Gates and Robbins, xi. Russ Castronovo and Priscilla Wald focus on how Crafts

invokes the gothic only to reject it: in Wald's terms, "Crafts uses the form of the ghost story and other gothic conventions. But … she does so in order to refuse them—conspicuously" (213). Russ Castronovo, "The Art of Ghost-Writing: Memory, Materiality, and Slave Aesthetics" (195–212) and Priscilla Wald, "Hannah crafts" (213–230), both in *In Search of Hannah Crafts*, eds. Gates and Robbins. The other essays in *In Search of Hannah Crafts* that treat Crafts's use of the Gothic are Karen Sánchez-Eppler, "Gothic Liberties and Fugitive Novels: *The Bondwoman's Narrative* and the Fiction of Race" (254–275); Levine, "Trappe(d)"; Jean Fagan Yellin, "*The Bondwoman's Narrative* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*" (106–116); and John Stauffer, "The Problem of Freedom in *The Bondwoman's Narrative*" (53–68). Essays published elsewhere include Dale Townshend, "Speaking of Darkness: Gothic and the History of the African American Slave-Woman in Hannah Crafts's *The Bondwoman's Narrative* (1855–1861)" in *Victorian Gothic,* eds. Karen Sayer and Rosemary Mitchell (Horsforth, Leeds: Trinity and All Saints/Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies, 2003), 141–154; Gill Ballinger, Tim Lustig, and Dale Townshend, "Missing Intertexts: Hannah Crafts's *The Bondwoman's Narrative* and African American Literary History," *Journal of American Studies* 39, no. 2 (2005): 207–237; Jason Haslam, "'The Strange Ideas of Right and Justice': Prison, Slavery and Other Horrors in *The Bondswoman's Narrative*," *Gothic Studies* 7, no. 1 (May 2005): 29–40; Goddu, "American Gothic," in *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, eds. Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy (New York: Routledge, 2007), 63–72; and Bridget M. Marshall, "Slave Narrative and the Gothic Novel: Hannah Crafts's *The Bondwoman's Narrative*," in *The Transatlantic Gothic Novel and the Law, 1790—1860* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 123–151.

26. Rusert makes this argument in relation to Martin Delany in *Fugitive Science*, 176.
27. Daniel Hack, "Close Reading at a Distance: The African Americanization of *Bleak House*," *Critical Inquiry* 34, no. 4 (2008): 750.
28. Neary, *Fugitive Vision,* 42. See also Michelle Burnham, ""Loopholes of Resistance: Harriet Jacobs' Slave Narrative and the Critique of Agency in Foucault," *Arizona Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 53–73; Smith, "Loopholes of Retreat," 215; and Yellin, "Introduction," xxx.
29. Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, ed. Jean Fagan Yellin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 123. All subsequent references will be cited parenthetically.
30. On Jacobs's conjunction of domesticity and freedom see, for example, foundational readings by Yellin, "Introduction," and Hazel Carby, Ch. 3 of *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). More recently, Sally Gomaa has argued that Jacobs's narrative represents the enslaved women's "body as home." "Writing to 'Virtuous' and 'Gentle' Readers: The Problem of Pain in Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents* and Harriet Wilson's *Sketches,*" *African American Review* 43, no. 2/3 (2009): 372. See also Anne Bradford Warner, "Harriet Jacobs at Home in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*," *Southern Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (Spring 2008): 30–47.
31. Mark Rifkin, "'A Home Made Sacred by Protecting Laws': Black Activist Homemaking and Geographies of Citizenship in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*," *differences* 18, no. 2 (Sept. 2007): 77 and 75.

32. William A. Gleason, *Sites Unseen: Architecture, Race, and American Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 35.
33. Catharine A. Mackinnon, "Prostitution and Civil Rights," *Michigan Journal of Gender & Law* 1, no. 1 (1993): 14. See also Peterson, *Doers of the Word*, 153–159.
34. Neary makes a related argument about this scene in *Fugitive Vision*, stating that Jacobs "shift[s] the speculative gaze from enslaved women's bodies and sexuality to the spectacle of the institutional culture that sanctions this exploitation—aspects of racial slavery that collide in the scene of her grandmother's auction" (158).
35. Maria Holmgren Troy makes a similar argument about the protective function of the provincial town and the grandmother's house but she focuses on these sites as chronotopes, whereas I am interested in the way Jacobs and her grandmother leverage different surveillants. "Chronotopes in Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*," *African American Review* 49, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 19–34.
36. Baker, *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature*, 54.
37. Maurice S. Lee, *Uncertain Chances: Science, Skepticism, and Belief in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 97.
38. See Lee, *Uncertain Chances,* 96–98.
39. See Peterson, *Doers of the Word*, 155, on Flint's fetishization of Brent.
40. Burnham, "Loopholes," 58.
41. Best, *The Fugitive's Properties*, 17 and 4.
42. Fred Moten analyzes "the interarticulation of the resistance of the object with Marx's subjunctive figure of the commodity who speaks" in Frederick Douglass's *Narrative. In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 5. Merish argues that Jacobs rewrites the enslaved woman's "status as commodity" through her engagement with sentimental discourse. Merish, *Sentimental Materialism*, 195. Hortense Spillers argues that "the captive female body locates precisely a moment of converging political and social vectors that mark the flesh as a prime commodity of exchange." "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1987), 75 .
43. On Brent's physical pain in the garret, see Georgia Kreiger, "Playing Dead: Harriet Jacobs's Survival Strategy in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*," *African American Review* 42, no. 3–4 (Fall-Winter 2008): 607–621; and Gomaa, "Writing to 'Virtuous' and 'Gentle' Readers."
44. Neary, *Fugitive Testimony*, 181, n. 10.
45. Levine, "Trappe(d)," 288. See also Rudolph P. Byrd, "The Outsider Within: The Acquisition and Application of Forms of Oppositional Knowledge in Hannah Crafts's *The Bondwoman's Narrative*," in *In Search of Hannah Crafts*, eds. Gates and Robbins, 332–353. Byrd argues that "Hannah's highly developed powers of observation and her seemingly astute judgment of character are the foundation for the development of what Hill Collins terms 'an angle of vision' on the operations of power between master and slave within the plantation household. … [H]er survival in this complex and dangerous social order depends upon her ability to read and interpret the signs and symbols that signify her position as a slave, or as 'an outsider within'" (337).
46. Crafts's language also echoes Nathaniel Hawthorne's depiction of the villainous Roger Chillingworth in *The Scarlet Letter*, another figure of immoral detection who "violated,

in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart." *The Scarlet Letter* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 170. Levine examines the many parallels between Trappe and Chillingworth, arguing that "Crafts turned to *The Scarlet Letter* as a model for her representation of the sadistic uses of hidden knowledge" ("Trappe[d]" 279). See also Gruesser's analysis of Chillingworth as "Hawthorne's Malevolent, Deluded Detective" (*Edgar Allan Poe*, 83). Trappe's "insight," as Christopher Castiglia argues, "is a potent means of possession. … Using his 'insight' to produce for slaves an interior (always subject to his definitions), a realm of sentiment and desire beyond the physical labors commanded through the body, Trappe is able to take it away again." "'I found a life of freedom all my fancy had pictured it to be': Hannah Crafts's Visual Speculation and the Inner Life of Slavery," in *In Search of Hannah Crafts,* eds. Gates and Robbins, 236.

47. Sarah Blackwood, *The Portrait's Subject: Inventing Inner Life in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 72–73. Castiglia points out that this scene "tellingly inverts slavery's usual dynamic, making the owners the viewed, slaves the viewers" ("'I found a life of freedom all my fancy had pictured it to be,'" 239).
48. Lee, *Uncertain Chances*, 96.
49. Voelz, *Poetics of Insecurity*, 14, 69–70.
50. Best, *The Fugitive's Properties*, 110.
51. Indeed, Sir Clifford refuses his wife's tearful request to forgive Rose, or at the very least to "put [her] to death at once, as she declared that the sight of their agonies and the noise of their groans would haunt her to her dying day" (24).
52. Crafts names Hannah's first enslaver Mr. Vincent in the novel, though his ancestors are named "De Vincent." It's not clear whether dropping the "De" is an error or a change in the family's name over time. Mr. Vincent's wife, however, is never named; she is referred to only as "Mistress," which is how I will refer to her.
53. Chaney, *Fugitive Vision*, 168. See also Haryette Mullen on Jacobs as "earwitness" in "Runaway Tongue: Resistant Orality in *Uncle Tom's Cabin, Our Nig, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,* and *Beloved*," in *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Shirley Samuels (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 251–252.
54. Crafts's adaptation of Dickens has been explored by numerous critics, including Hack, who states "Crafts variously reworks, adopts, and lifts verbatim plot elements, dialogue, and characters, as well as scene-setting and descriptive passages" from *Bleak House* ("Close Reading at a Distance," 745). Other essays that treat Crafts's borrowings from *Bleak House* include Hollis Robbins, "Blackening *Bleak House*"; Ballinger, Lustig, and Townshend, "Missing Intertexts"; Rachel Teukolsky, "Pictures in Bleak Houses: Slavery and the Aesthetics of Transatlantic Reform," *ELH* 76, no. 2 (2009): 491–522; and Rebecca Soares, "Literary Graftings: Hannah Crafts's *The Bondwoman's Narrative* and the Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Reader," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 44, no. 1 (2011): 1–23.
55. As D.A. Miller argues in *The Novel and the Police,* the form of *Bleak House,* in its "shift in focus from the Court of Chancery to the Detective Police," encapsulates a larger generic shift in the nineteenth-century novel toward the detective story as a literary representation of Foucauldian disciplinary power. *The Novel and the Police*,

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 73. Peter Thoms contends, "so many of the novel's characters [are] depicted as investigators in quest of intimate knowledge." "'The Narrow Track of Blood': Detection and Storytelling in *Bleak House,*" *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 50, no. 2 (1995): 149. Ian Ousby similarly asserts that "in the world outside Bleak House the impulse to detection is everywhere apparent." *Bloodhounds of Heaven: The Detective in English Fiction from Godwin to Doyle* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 93.

56. Ousby, *Bloodhounds of Heaven*, 96, 92.
57. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 737 and 459.
58. As Castronovo argues in "The Art of Ghost-Writing," Hannah highlights her own rationality in this scene by contrasting her response with that of the other enslaved people. Castronovo and Yellin ("*The Bondwoman's Narrative* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*") connect this scene with Chapter 42, "An Authentic Ghost Story," in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
59. While the editors of *The Bondwoman's Narrative* suggest in a footnote to this passage that Hannah shares this information "to enlist Mrs. Henry as Charlotte's ally rather than to betray her, judging from Mrs. Henry's calm and circumspect reaction" (282), I would argue that Hannah tells Mrs. Henry the secret in order to foster the intimacy that Hannah hopes to create between her and Mrs. Henry. Indeed, Mrs. Henry states that she will tell Charlotte to find a different solution, as she pities them but refuses to "harbor him" since it will put her family at risk of criminal prosecution (144), and when Mr. Henry aids William's enslaver when he arrives with bloodhounds to track the fugitives, Mrs. Henry does nothing to stop them, making her a less-than-effective ally.
60. On this episode as blackface, see Yellin, "*The Bondwoman's Narrative* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," 111–112, and Levine, "Trappe(d)," 285–286. For an alternative reading of the scene as passing, rather than blackface, see Martha J. Cutter, "Skinship: Dialectical Passing Plots in Hannah Crafts' *The Bondwoman's Narrative*," *American Literary Realism* 46, no. 2 (2014): 116–36.
61. Best, *The Fugitive's Properties*, 17.
62. Voelz, *The Poetics of Insecurity*, 68.
63. William L. Andrews, ""Hannah Crafts's Sense of an Ending," *In Search of Hannah Crafts*, eds. Gates and Robbins, 40.
64. Wald, "Hannah crafts," 226.

Coda

1. Pulitzer Board, "Special Citations and Awards," *The Pulitzer Prizes,* https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/darnella-frazier
2. See Imani Perry, *More Beautiful and More Terrible*, Ch. 5, on the "disproportionate and racially motivated surveillance of African American and Latino citizens" (105).
3. Elahe Izadi, "Darnella Frazier, The Teen who Filmed George Floyd's Murder, Awarded a Pulitzer Citation," *Washington Post,* https://www.washingtonpost.com/media/2021/06/11/darnella-frazier-pulitzer-george-floyd-witness/.

4. Holly Bailey, "Derek Chauvin Sentenced to 22½ Years in Prison for the Murder of George Floyd," *Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/06/25/derek-chauvin-sentencing-george-floyd/.
5. Darnella Frazier, "1 Year Anniversary," *Facebook,* https://www.facebook.com/darnellareallprettymarie/posts/1727632277437871.
6. "Kianga Mwamba" and "Walter Scott."
7. Allissa V. Richardson, *Bearing Witness While Black: African Americans, Smartphones, and the New Protest #Journalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 54.
8. "About the Media Lab," *Witness Media Lab,* https://lab.witness.org/about/.
9. Frazier, "1 Year Anniversary."
10. Hadden, *Slave Patrols*, 4.

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