

**Black and White Manhattan:
The History of Racial
Formation in Colonial
New York City**

THELMA WILLS FOOTE

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

BLACK AND WHITE MANHATTAN

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for Michael Goodwin (1961–2002)

Here's to life, here's to love, here's to you . . .

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BLACK AND WHITE MANHATTAN

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Introduction

“The Angel Would Like to Stay, Awaken the Dead, and Make Whole What Has Been Smashed”

AWAKING TO HISTORY ON MANHATTAN ISLAND

 Present-day New York City is one of several command posts of the global economy, a vital relay point in the current capitalist world system in which digitalized telecommunications technologies enable the geographic dispersal of economic activity and, increasingly, the disarticulation of finance from material production.¹ Although today's global economy has no fixed nucleus, globalization has given rise to relatively stable clusters of concentration, agglomeration, and integration that convene in the central business districts of a few cities—for example, London, Tokyo, and New York City.² Despite the dramatic structural shifts of the late twentieth century, much of New York City's business district and the headquarters of major transnational firms are still located in lower Manhattan and thus stand, quite literally, on the multilayered foundation of the city's colonial past and sedimented legacy of social and racial inequality. With the exception of a few historic landmarks, the visible traces of the city's colonial history of violent conquest, appropriation of Native American lands, and black slavery were buried beneath the city's infrastructure during the rapid conurbation and construction booms of the Industrial Revolution and subsequent economic transformations. Of course, an abundance of well-preserved written records document New York City's early sociocultural development. But on the whole, the dominant U.S. liberal nationalist historiography slights the city's colonial entailments.

A contribution to the fields of colonial studies, urban studies, immigration history, and historical studies on race and racism, this book excavates New York City's colonial past. Specifically, this study offers a historical analysis of the project of colony building on Manhattan Island from 1624 to 1783 and, in doing so,

maps points of articulation between the ideal and material relations of colonial domination that together overdetermined racial formation in the port town erected at the island's southernmost extreme. For the purposes of this study, the project of colony building designates the early modern phase of colonial expansionism in which European colonizers transported enslaved Africans and European immigrants to overseas territories, where the transplanted populations gradually displaced the native populations and built permanent settler colonies that served European maritime nations as launch sites for military operations, suppliers of raw materials, markets for European exports, and asylums for Europe's surplus population.³ In this study, racial formation (or racialization) not only refers to the discursive construction of race, but also to the identificatory process by which an individual (1) assumes (or occupies) a racial subject-position in relation to other racialized subjects and in articulation with other constituents of social subjectivity—for example, language, religion, birthplace, sexuality, gender, and class—(2) contests the hierarchical ranking of humankind into inferior and superior races in the context of a racist culture, calls into question the value ascribed to race, and even redefines the prevailing conception of race.⁴

By the early sixteenth century, the French word *race* had been adopted by or had a cognate in each of the other major European languages.⁵ At that time Western European elites regarded Christianity as the kernel of civilization and assimilated the emergent conception of race to their ideal of civilization. In this respect they forged race into a culturalist concept that asserted the hierarchical ranking of civilizations and the superiority of Western European culture, especially its Christian religion. Although Christendom promoted the notion of a single creation and the unity of humankind, early modern European elites grouped and then ranked people on the basis of their closeness to and remoteness from an idealized Christian norm: Christians were assigned to the rank of the superior civilized race while non-Christians (so-called heathens) were relegated to the rank of inferior uncivilized races.⁶ The latter groups included precisely those peoples whom, according to biblical authority as they saw it, Christians could legitimately dispossess of their lands and enslave. However, the binarism Christian/heathen proved to be an unreliable schema for imposing order on the wide range of human diversity that Europeans encountered during the early modern era of territorial conquest and colonial expansionism. Over time, the movement of populations to foreign lands, sustained contact between previously isolated peoples, the permeability of cultural boundaries, and the malleability of culture itself rendered culturalist conceptions of race, along with the categories of Christian and heathen, unstable and open to amendment. Beset with the contingencies of uncertainty and change, the project of colony building required ever more fixed identificatory boundaries, including increasingly rigid constructions of race.

The era of European colonial expansion demarcates a historic juncture in the process of racial formation—namely, the commencement of a shift in the conception of race from an ascribed identity defined by the nonbiological criteria of religion and other alterable cultural traits to one defined by the biological criteria of seemingly immutable heritable traits.⁷ Although the biological concep-


tion of race did not congeal into a coherent construct until the late nineteenth century, the inauguration of this conceptual shift is evident in the early modern discourse of natural history, wherein “race” became a term denoting a major division of the human species whose members share certain stable, if not unchanging, heritable traits that they do not share with members of the other major divisions of the human species. For naturalists of the early modern era, taxonomies of race, along with other categories of classification, rendered the mounting and polysemous corpus of information on the plant and animal kingdoms less perplexing. “In the midst of extreme confusion,” the Swedish naturalist Carolus Linnaeus (1707–78) asserted, “there is revealed the sovereign order of nature.”⁸ Linnaeus is best known as the inventor of the binomial system of nomenclature by which categories of plants and animals are given a unique name, consisting of a generic and a specific component. While the Swedish naturalist did not use the term *race* in his writings, he did subdivide the human species into seven varieties,⁹ which the German naturalist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840) and the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) would use as a template for subdivisions of humankind called “races.” Whereas Linnaeus used the criteria “culture” and “situation” for establishing distinct divisions of the human species, Blumenbach and Kant used more stable traits of human physiognomy, along with changeable cultural traits and environmental factors, as the criteria for dividing humankind into separate categories. In this way, Blumenbach and Kant contributed to the construction of ever more fixed categories of race, whose discursive construction discloses the desire to establish a ruling natural order for humankind firmly grounded in the surface, bodily appearance of human physiognomy and later, by the late nineteenth century, in the interior, biological mechanisms of the human organism.

Of paramount importance to the discursive construction of increasingly rigid taxonomies of race is the binary logic of natural history’s procedure of classification. According to the protocol of natural history, the naturalist discerns the governing natural order of things by filtering out the confusing complexity of nature and selecting a few privileged traits of the objects under observation as the basis of comparisons that yield distinct categories of beings. Focusing on a narrow range of preselected traits and, within that delimited scope of investigation, the similarities that appear among individual specimens, the naturalist establishes a principle of inclusion and exclusion for constructing a category of classification that ultimately coheres as a group of individuals that share common traits that they do not share with others. A binary logic of identity and difference thus structures this procedure of classification. Importantly, the protocol of natural history abstracts things (i.e. plants and animals) from the semantic thicket of sedimented meanings that supposedly veils their essential, eternal being. The naturalist is thereby liberated from the encumbrance of the baffling multiplicity of sensory data—for example, the infinite array of colors, smells, tastes, and textures that emanates from nature—and, finally, is empowered to observe only the surface, contour, line, and angle of things that leave a pure impression on the mind and reveal intrinsic, timeless truths to human understanding. Human physiognomy—for example, facial angle, the contour of

the nose, the shape of the lips, and other surface features of the human body—supplied the naturalist with such relatively stable, visual data for grouping humankind into distinct racial categories. Hence, the discourse of natural history increasingly shunned the manifold, constantly changing phenomena of culture and habitat, preferring instead to focus on the seemingly purer, less complex and changeable, bodily surface of people to establish the categories called races.¹⁰ More generally, the discourse of natural history applied this procedure of classification to all living beings that came within its scope and constructed, as the historian Michel Foucault has put it, “a flat world of animals and plants, engraved in black and white.”¹¹ Writing about natural history’s “observing gaze,” Foucault notes: “Natural history did not become possible because men looked harder and more closely. One might say, strictly speaking, that the Classical age used its ingenuity, if not to see as little as possible, at least to restrict deliberately the area of its experience. . . . To observe, then, is to be content with seeing—with seeing a few things systematically. . . . With seeing what, in the rather confused wealth of representation, can be analyzed, recognized by all, and thus given a name that everyone will be able to understand.”¹² In this way Foucault aptly summarizes the episteme of natural history and its goal of reducing complexity to simple, manageable taxonomies. Remarking on the merit of his racial classification schema, Blumenbach stated that “it will be found serviceable to the memory to have constituted certain classes into which the men of our planet may be divided.”¹³ Likewise, Kant found the grouping of humankind into distinct categories called “races” useful as an aid to “memorization,” “understanding,” “bringing creatures under headings,” and “bringing them under laws.”¹⁴ Whereas earlier naturalists obtained information about human variation from classical texts, Kant, Blumenbach, and other naturalists of their generation increasingly relied on contemporary European travel and exploration literature for their primary source of data on human diversity. Hence, the history of the construction of racial taxonomies in the early modern discourse of natural history was an elaboration of the knowledge-producing activity of European expansion. As Europeans from various maritime nations left the shores of their homelands and colonized overseas territories, they required a system of representation—a schema of naming, classifying, cataloguing, and enumerating—that would render newly encountered varieties of humankind intelligible to European colonizers and thus subject to colonial domination. Forged under the colonialist imperative to systematize and rule, *race* became a name invested with a seemingly stable, universally recognizable meaning, an expression of the “sovereign order of nature.”

Although shifting historical and political contexts have altered the meaning and valence imputed to the discursive category “race”¹⁵ and the present-day science of biogenetics has demonstrated that, as an objective category, “race” has no biological validity,¹⁶ the concept “race” remains a powerful commonsensical way of giving meaning to, naturalizing, and legitimating ways of acting in the world.¹⁷ Whether as an abstract concept of scientific discourse or as an element of vernacular, “race” has seldom, if ever, been deployed apart from the diffusion of power and the individual’s subjection to the disciplinary mechanisms that

regulate everyday life. This book demonstrates that racialized subjects are formations that arise out of historically specific projects and strategic relations of power—in this case study, the early modern project of colony building on Manhattan Island and its relations of colonial domination.¹⁸

 During the early modern era of European expansion and the emergence of the capitalist world system, Manhattan Island became a crossroads for the articulation of the ideal and material relations of colonial domination that produced relationally constituted and differentially valued racialized subjects—for example, civilized and savage, colonizer and colonized, enslaver and enslaved, black and white. Charged with the task of implementing Holland's plan of colonial expansion in the Western Hemisphere, the quasi-military trading monopoly known as the Dutch West India Company built the first colonial outpost on Manhattan Island. For the jacket and frontispiece of this book, I have chosen a black-and-white engraving, circa 1643, in which two allegorical figures personify the ideal relation between Holland and its colonies in the Western Hemisphere—or, as the caption announces, *Cum Privilegio Ordinum Hollandie et West-Indiæ*. In the foreground of that engraving, a domineering burgher clutches a parcel of fur pelts in one hand and, with the other empty, outstretched hand, commands a demure maiden to surrender a basket of colonial produce. Though the maiden peers at the burgher with a reluctant gaze, she seems, nonetheless, willing to obey his directive; both the angle of her posture and the flow of her skirt indicate she is in the midst of performing a pirouette of compliance. Moreover, the packed cargo of colonial produce at the burgher's feet suggests that this is not the first time the maiden has relinquished her bounty to him. In any case, this scene aptly allegorizes the colonialist project of a European power in the act of subjugating a foreign land. Here, the ideal relation between nation and colony finds its paradigm in the gendered relation of male domination and female submission. Importantly, the engraving's oblique reference to Adam and Eve in the prelapsarian state of nature slyly naturalizes that asymmetrical relation of power and thereby places the colonialist project outside the space of history and its material relations of domination.

Whereas the engraving's foregrounded allegorical scene offers an idealized vision of the relation between nation and colony, the figures and scenery in its background provide a literal depiction of the material exploitation of enslaved black laborers, which enabled the extraction of wealth from overseas colonies and made Holland, leading carrier of colonial produce in world trade during the seventeenth century,¹⁹ the envy of other European maritime powers. In the background of the engraving, directly behind the allegorical figures of the well-clad burgher and maiden, half-naked black laborers haul raw produce across a crude landscape. An *object in the midst of other objects*²⁰ in the engraving's background, the partially exposed, muscular body of the black laborer bears the burden of extracting material wealth from a miserly colonial frontier. Farther in the background Dutch sailing vessels, laden with the fruits of exploited black labor,

engage in the transatlantic carrying trade. Finally, on the horizon, just before the engraving's vanishing point, appears New Amsterdam, a booming colonial seaport at the tip of Manhattan Island. At this point the engraving's depiction of New Amsterdam reverts to fantasy and becomes a phantasmatic projection of Holland's colonialist aspiration to build on the North American frontier a permanent settler colony that obediently serves the emerging nation-state's imperial interests. However, in 1643, New Amsterdam was hardly the bustling seaport depicted in the engraving. Having, in reality, not yet recovered from a destructive Indian war, New Amsterdam was on the brink of collapse and faced an uncertain future. The absence of Native Americans in the engraving is both a symptom of the colonialist disavowal of the damages that the frontier outpost had sustained from desperate Indian reprisals and a reflection of the near extermination of the island's native population by 1643.

Within scarcely more than two decades, Holland's rival, England, would conquer New Amsterdam and rename that colonial outpost in honor of the Duke of York, later King James II. Following the Conquest of 1664, the English colonizers, like the supplanted Dutch colonizers, transported European settlers and enslaved Africans to Manhattan Island and enlisted them in the project of colony building. On that island-peninsula, the settler population established numerical, cultural, and institutional dominance over the sparse native population and the increasingly numerous enslaved African population. Over time, the English colonizers, along with the transplanted settlers and slaves, transformed the fledgling colonial outpost named New York City into a flourishing entrepôt or transshipment site for regional and international commerce, the seat of the colonial government, a garrison town, and the locus of cultural institutions.²¹ The personnel of colony building also gradually developed the adjacent countryside into a prosperous hinterland of commercial farming that raised livestock and produced mixed crops of grain, fruit, and other foodstuffs.

While the plans of early modern colony builders anticipate the role Manhattan Island would play as a staging ground for merchant capitalism in the Western Hemisphere and as a strategic military stronghold for the European powers that claimed that corner of the globe, they offer few hints that the project of colony building, together with the relations of colonial domination that enabled the destruction of the island's indigenous population and the exploitation of enslaved African laborers, was laying the foundation for a city that during the late modern era would become a citadel of global capitalism. Buried beneath the subterranean basements of the formidable skyscrapers that grace present-day lower Manhattan's skyline, nearly all material manifestations of that formative stage in New York City's history were consigned to oblivion until one day in June 1991, when an archeological team, working in the midst of the construction of the Federal office building at 290 Broadway, unearthed an assemblage of slave burials dating back to colonial times. Except for a handful of highly specialized scholars, the public was amazed to discover that in the shadow of the twin towers of New York City's World Trade Center the skeletal remains of an estimated 20,000 enslaved laborers were buried under nearly 25 feet of landfill, stretching across roughly six acres of prime Manhattan real estate.

Greeted with amazement, as an unrecognizable image of New York City's past, the discovery of the colonial slave burial ground in lower Manhattan calls into question the pervasive myth of American exceptionalism—namely, the liberal nationalist narrative that ascribes the unique attributes of the U.S. national character to the averred democratic culture and widespread material prosperity of the settler colonies that eventually comprised the northeastern United States.²² Even though scholars from a broad range of academic disciplines have contested this myth,²³ the academic field of early American history has, for the most part, persistently represented its object of study in ways that perpetuate the ideal of an exceptional American cultural identity and elide hemispheric and global perspectives on the centrality of racial domination and other legacies of colonialism to the formation of U.S. national culture. The historian Jack P. Greene writes, “No less than other arbiters of American culture, American historians seem to have found it difficult to come to terms with its slave origins. As long as they could continue to believe that New England, the region of colonial British America in which black slavery was least well entrenched, was indeed the most direct and important source of later American sociocultural patterns, historians could continue to perpetuate the comforting illusion that slavery, that blatant anomaly in republican and egalitarian America, had never been central to American culture but had always been only a marginal institution confined to the cultural peripheries of the colonial British American world.”²⁴ In his perspicacious rebuttal to the marginalization of racial slavery and the colonial South in some of the most influential historiography on British North America, Greene demonstrates that prior to 1800 the southern colonies and the institution of racial slavery epitomized U.S. social and cultural development, while colonial New England and the marginality of racial slavery in that region deviated from the mainstream. According to Greene, New England did not remain an aberrant cultural zone within British North America. Rather, his developmental model posits the “emergence of a common cultural core as a result of a steady process of social amalgamation” that culminated in an “astonishing similarity” between the British North American colonies. This shared culture, Greene argues, consisted of the modern ideal of possessive individualism and formed the marrow of the U.S. national character.²⁵

Although the northern and southern colonies in British North America underwent a common developmental process of modernization, the northeastern seaboard, especially New York City, is the privileged signifier of modernity, representing, within the U.S. national imaginary, the twin triumphs of capitalism and freedom.²⁶ A celebrated fixture of present-day New York City's iconography perpetuates this image: With gigantic torch in hand, the Statue of Liberty watches over the citadel of global capitalism and illumines the progress of freedom across the nation and the world. Substituting the euphemism “early American history” for the term *colonialism*, liberal nationalist historiography reinforces this idealized representation of U.S. sociocultural development and constructs a useable past largely disarticulated from the history of colonialism and the relations of domination that subtended the founding of the United States. Although scholars working in the academic fields of colonial and post-

colonial studies have focused attention on the structures of inequality that traverse and transcend national borders,²⁷ the evolution of democracy within the geopolitical boundaries of the United States, rather than colonialism and slavery in hemispheric and global perspectives, remains the defining telos of the regnant historiography on the antecedents of U.S. society and culture. The myth of American exceptionalism has proved to be an effective strategy of narration for dissociating national history from the colonial past. Yet, as Etienne Balibar points out, “In a sense, every modern nation is a product of colonization: it has always been to some degree colonized or colonizing, and sometimes both at the same time.”²⁸ Inhabited by the descendants of both the colonizers and the colonized, the United States is inextricably linked to the history of colonialism. While the liberal nationalist historiographical tradition largely disavows the integrality of colonialism, the displacement of Native American populations, and the institution of black slavery to the creation of the U.S. national character, the history of New York City during the early modern era confirms their formative role in the social and cultural development of the northeastern United States and hence in the evolution of the United States as a modern nation-state.

Nearly four centuries ago, European colony builders dislodged Manhattan Island’s indigenous population and assembled a multicultural, polyglot immigrant population of settlers and slaves at the island’s tip. On that site freedom and material prosperity coexisted with black slavery and other colonial relations of domination. As the enslaved population grew and fear of slave insurrection mounted, the slaves were subjected to increasingly coercive measures of racial subordination, and by 1712 social equilibrium in New York City and the adjacent hinterland was predicated on the suppression of the entire black population, enslaved and free. In colonial New York City, black slavery and antiblack racism served the political interests of the ruling elite by fostering a bond of racial solidarity between the colonial rulers and the majority settler population—the large and small merchants, shopkeepers, and artisans of diverse birthplaces, languages, and religious confessions—and by minimizing the antagonisms that, for example, divided rich from poor, English from Dutch, and Anglicans from Calvinists and other dissenting congregations. Although the solidarities of racial whiteness proved to be an imperfect solvent for the antagonisms that divided the city’s diverse and factious settler population, the biracial division of society offered the ruling elite a seemingly less volatile field of conflict than a social terrain fractured along the fault lines of class, religious, and linguistic differences. “Race” thus assumed a crucial political dimension in colonial New York City, where a large free settler population, if not given sufficient incentive to accept the rulership of the governing elite, might one day rise in insurrection.

In the early modern colonial port town on Manhattan Island, as in the ancient Greco-Roman city-states,²⁹ the enslavement of alien others proved to be politically serviceable to the ruling elite. In exchange for the settler population’s loyalty to the colonial government, New York City’s ruling elite granted Protestant settlers of European descent liberties and privileges that exempted them from enslavement. English rights became the exclusive property of the white Anglo-

Saxon Protestants, who were a majority of the settler population, while the social death of perpetual bondage became the sole inheritance of most black Africans and their descendants. Even impoverished white indentured servants held a firm claim to the rights of British subjecthood, whereas free blacks, even those who owned land, were so severely circumscribed that they were prevented from enjoying the basic privileges of freedom. For colonial New York City's ruling elite, antiblack racism became a vital disciplinary mechanism, a means of governing the whites as well as the blacks. And, as was the case for the Athenian demos and the Roman citizens, the institution of slavery nourished the settlers' esteem for freedom. Except for the poorest immigrants among them, the settlers, in town and in the surrounding countryside, not only exercised the rights of British subjects but also acquired land, established independent households, and became prosperous merchants, shopkeepers, artisans, or farmers who held black Africans in lifelong, heritable bondage. In this way the complementarity of freedom and slavery, which first arose in ancient Western civilization, gained renewed vigor.


Moreover, in colonial New York City and the farming districts within the city's orbit, the importation and exploitation of slave labor became an expedient solution to the shortage of indentured servants and free laborers that resulted from unmanageable contingencies, such as the sudden curtailment of immigration flows from Europe during outbreaks of international war between rival European powers.³⁰ In contrast to the staple-crop colonies, slave labor never became indispensable to that northern port town's maritime commerce and the adjacent hinterland's economy of mixed agricultural production. Nevertheless, "slaveholders in such societies," the historian Ira Berlin has pointed out, "could act with extraordinary brutality precisely because their slaves were extraneous to their main business. They could limit their slaves' access to freedom expressly because they desired to set themselves apart from their slaves."³¹ In colonial New York City, the ruling elite constructed a biracial social order in which the legal institution of racial slavery and the disciplinary mechanism of antiblack racism separated, as far as possible, the black population from the white population. A shared interest in the violent subjugation of blacks, enslaved and free, became the glue that cemented a politically efficacious though precarious solidarity between the ruling elite and the city's diverse and factious settler population. In this respect, colonial New York City resembled colonial Virginia, where black slavery and antiblack racism became a political solution to the threat that the intermediate stratum of restive settlers posed to that southern colony's ruling elite.³² The historian Edmund S. Morgan writes, "Virginia's small farmers could perceive a common identity with the large because . . . neither was a slave. And both were equal in not being slaves."³³ To be sure, other commonalities—for example, a shared material culture based on the cultivation of the staple crop tobacco—also served to foster a solidarity of interest among planters in colonial Virginia.³⁴ Nonetheless, it was the institution of black slavery and antiblack racism that most effectively dampened the social antagonisms dividing colonial Virginia's ruling elite from its numerous free settler

population. Unlike the English gentry, the large planters of tidewater Virginia, Morgan notes, no longer needed to base their prosperity primarily on the exploitation of poor Englishmen, since they derived their wealth less from collecting rents from tenants, or taxes from freemen, than from exploiting enslaved black laborers.³⁵ In a similar way, colonial New York City's governing elite minimized cultural differences and subordinated social antagonisms within the city's settler community by enslaving black Africans and their offspring while reserving the status and privileges of freedom for the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant settlers and their descendants. Although rarely acknowledged in the historiography on British North America, black slavery and antiblack racism were perhaps nowhere more serviceable to the ruling elite than in colonial New York City. In that northern seaport, they not only served as instruments for regulating the black population but also offered the ruling elite a means of rendering more manageable—that is, less complex—the problem of governing the diverse and factious majority settler population. Thus in colonial New York City, racial formation, black slavery, and antiblack racism had an enormous impact on the individual settler's experience and the broader settler community.

While an ample number of community studies examine the communal life of the northern settlers³⁶ and several more recent studies investigate the northern slave experience during colonial times,³⁷ the available historiography on the colonial North, taken as a whole, does not fully appreciate the momentous effects colonial relations of racial domination had on both settlers and slaves.³⁸ Instead, much of the scholarship on the colonial North accepts two largely untenable suppositions: First, black slavery in the northern colonies was a benign institution; second, black slavery was marginal to the northern settler experience. A few basic considerations relating to colonial New York City cast doubt on these assumptions. To begin with, the laws of slavery and the municipal ordinances for the regulation of the city's black urban population were as restrictive as the black codes in the colonial South and, for that matter, any slave society.³⁹ Moreover, the custom of granting informal privileges to slaves was in no way unique to colonial New York City and other northern settler colonies. Everywhere in the Americas, slaveowners endeavored to cloak, whenever possible, the fundamental relation of domination inherent to chattel slavery through acts of benevolence that served to counteract slave discontent.⁴⁰ Equally important, the labor conditions for slaves in colonial New York City were scarcely less harsh than the work settings for the enslaved labor force on the staple-crop plantations in the colonial South. At the port of New York, slaves performed back-breaking labor in an intemperate climate of extreme cold and heat. Though the urban setting afforded the city's enslaved workforce with a degree of mobility unavailable to rural slaves in the southern colonies,⁴¹ the northern urban slaves of colonial New York City generally lived in their masters' houses and in this respect led more confined, closely monitored lives than their counterparts in the rural South, who more often lived in separate slave quarters. By 1703, approximately 41 percent of New York City householders owned at least one slave, whereas 6.6 percent of householders in colonial Philadelphia and only 2 percent

in colonial Boston kept one or more slaves.⁴² Overlooking this significant difference between these port towns, historical studies on slavery in British North America tend to lump the northern seaports together and to draw an overly simplistic contrast between the colonial North and the colonial South. Yet during the colonial era, slaveholdings in Philadelphia and Boston closely resembled the pattern of slave ownership in the market towns of the Chesapeake region—for example, Port Tobacco and Benedict in Maryland, where, as Jean Butenhoff Lee has shown, a small proportion of townspeople owned slaves, usually in small lots.⁴³ Furthermore, the wide dispersal of slaves among the townspeople in colonial New York City set that port town apart from other towns in both the northern and southern colonies of British North America, except Charleston, South Carolina, which resembled New York City with regard to the broad distribution of slaves among the townspeople.⁴⁴ Last, the pattern of widespread slave ownership among colonial New York City's settler population had a direct and immediate impact on the settler's individual and collective experiences there. In that densely populated northern port town, the lives of the settlers and the slaves were tightly intertwined, so much so that it is impossible to comprehend the life-world of one group in isolation from the other. The historian Joyce Goodfriend notes that "social life and cultural forms reflected African as well as European influences." Goodfriend adds, "No one has yet examined the city's sizable black community in counterpoint to the European subcommunities that comprised the city's white society. Only by doing so can the nature of colonial New York City's pluralism be appreciated."⁴⁵

Of course, an appreciation of the sociocultural complexities that characterized colonial New York City requires more than merely enlarging the frame of reference to include multiple experiences and simply studying interactions between the settlers and the slaves. It also crucially involves interrogating the history of racial formation in that northern port town and its connection to colonial relations of domination. Yet the available historiography on the colonial North rarely considers the historic processes that installed the inhabitants of the northern colonies in racial subject-positions. Even studies that provide an analysis of the symbiosis between black slavery and freedom in British North America tend to reinscribe rather than problematize binary racial categories. For example, the eminent historian Edmund S. Morgan writes: "In Virginia neither badges nor philosophers were needed. It was not necessary to pretend or to prove that the enslaved were a different race, because they were. Anyone could tell black from white, even if black was actually brown and red."⁴⁶ This study interrogates the commonsensical assumptions that made such confidence possible. Hence, it departs from much of the historiography on British North America not only by calling into question the apartheid narrative of U.S. socio-cultural development, which separates the history of the white settlers from the history of the enslaved blacks, but also by providing a historical account of the identificatory process of racialization, which, during the early modern era, emerged out of the project of colony building and its ideal and material relations of domination.

 Divided into two chapters, part I of this study investigates the project of colony building on Manhattan Island. According to mercantilist theory of the early modern era, overseas colonies were supposed to strengthen the colonizing nation by diminishing its costly economic reliance on other nations and thus enabling the accumulation of national wealth, which could be counted on to finance the buildup of large, well-armed military forces in an epoch of increasingly frequent domestic conflict and international war. These and other motives propelled European maritime nations to explore foreign lands and build overseas colonies.⁴⁷ It was in the context of an escalating international rivalry that England and Holland founded overseas colonies in North America. The colonization of Manhattan Island was, then, primarily a power maneuver in the scramble for empire between the two European rivals.⁴⁸ Asserting the doctrine of right to possession by exploration, these maritime nations claimed title to overlapping North American territories that encompassed Manhattan Island: England claimed all the land in North America between 34° and 48° north latitude by virtue of Henry Hudson's English-sponsored explorations in 1607 and 1608, and Holland claimed the entire region north of the Chesapeake Bay between 40° and 44° north latitude in view of Hudson's Dutch-sponsored exploration in 1610. These claims were tenuous at best. Any colonizing nation hoping to secure its title to such a massive territory would not only have to repel encroaching European rivals but also conquer and permanently occupy a remote frontier already inhabited by an indigenous population whose villages were dispersed across a rugged terrain.

Part I of this study shows that the colonization of that North American territory involved the relocation of populations from one place to another and from one task to another. This population movement coincided with the extraction of diverse peoples from the traditional relations of feudal society and their installation in the nascent social relations of capitalist production, a repositioning that announced the advent of modernity, the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie, and the early modern formation of race. Performing the role of key articulators in the emerging capitalist world economy, merchants and ship captains orchestrated the transportation of commodities and laborers from transshipment centers along the Atlantic littoral to Manhattan Island.⁴⁹ Over time, the transplanted personnel of colony building—settlers, servants, and slaves—displaced the island's native population, transformed the colonial frontier outpost at the island's tip into a thriving entrepôt, and converted the largely fallow hinterland into a prosperous region of commercial agricultural production. In addition to these features of colonization, part I of this study highlights several variables that affected the project of colony building on Manhattan Island: Amerindian-European relations during the early phase of colonization, the availability of preferred workers from Holland and the British Isles, the impact of international war on the flow of laborers across the Atlantic Ocean, the advantages and

disadvantages of free versus slave labor, and colonial policies for the encouragement of European immigration and the slave trade.

Chapter 1 tracks the Dutch colonization project on Manhattan Island from 1624 to 1664 and shows that following the Dutch invasion Manhattan Island became a dynamic zone of cross-cultural contact and polyvalent relations of power between WIC officials, natives, settlers, and slaves. Chapter 2 tracks the project of colony building on Manhattan Island following the English takeover of the North American territory previously called New Netherland and renamed New York.⁵⁰ The chapter shows that the labor imperatives of colony building produced a pattern of widespread slave ownership. Moreover, the colonization project on Manhattan Island, in town and in the surrounding countryside, resulted in a mixed system of labor that combined slavery, indentured servitude, and wage labor and brought a diverse population from various birthplaces, religions, and languages to the island-peninsula. Chapters 1 and 2 thus reveal that colonial New York City's pluralism—its demographic and sociocultural diversity—was a direct product of the project of colony building.

Just as the colonizing nations' initial claim to the land was tenuous, so too was the colonial rulers' claim to the loyalty and obedience of the newly transplanted and heterogeneous peoples who wrested the land from the native inhabitants. Part II of this study is divided into three chapters that highlight the problem of governance in colonial New York City; the efforts of the English rulers to cultivate a shared sense of belonging to the English nation among the city's mostly foreign-born settler population; the articulation of whiteness, Anglo-Saxon ancestry, and adherence to the doctrines of Protestantism in the construction of Englishness; and the role that antiblack racism played in uniting the English rulers and the settlers, who increasingly perceived the city's black population as an alien and dangerous race. In this way, part II provides a historical account of the political stakes involved in the racialization of the northern port town's constituent peoples, showing that the transplantation of uprooted peoples in a strange land and the task of colony building on Manhattan Island required the imposition of disciplinary mechanisms for the effective governance of a majority settler population that was largely disconnected from the sources of authority in England.

Chapter 3 points out that the English Crown relied on surrogates to project its sovereignty to the English overseas colonies. Colonial administrators, clergymen, missionaries, and schoolmasters undertook the assignment of transplanting English institutions of governance and English-derived cultural institutions and systems of representation in the colonial frontier. Yet neither the English colonial administration nor the Anglican missionary organizations proved to be capable of securely extending the reach of the English territorial monarchy and its legitimating religious and cultural institutions to the growing multitude of foreigners dispersed throughout the first British Empire. This was especially true for colonial New York City, where competing loyalties divided the heterogeneous, mostly foreign-born settler population. Chapter 4 demonstrates that the disciplinary mechanism of antiblack racism became a key instrument of governance in colonial New York City. Drawn from various localities on the

West African coast, the Congo-Angola region of Africa, Madagascar, and the Caribbean basin, the city's black population was a diverse yet markedly alien presence in the midst of the northern settler colony and thus became the constitutive outside border that delimited the city's majority settler population. Chapter 4 shows that New York City's Slave Revolt of 1712 was the act of unacculturated native Africans and other slaves who, from their own distinctive worldviews, regarded colonial New York's institution of slavery as an unjust social relation. In colonial New York City, the moral economy of slaveowner paternalism failed to secure absolute obedience from the slaves. Although the well-armed settler majority quickly suppressed the slave uprising, the environment of the colonial port town—for example, the city's docks, markets, and taverns—afforded restive slaves with daily opportunities to spread the contagion of rebellion. In response to the Slave Revolt of 1712, the ruling elite and the broader settler population united to affirm their shared interest in the violent subjugation of the city's black population, enslaved and free. With the enactment of the Black Code of 1712, enslaved blacks were forced to submit to an institution of bondage as harsh as any slave regime in the English overseas colonies, and free blacks were denied fundamental English liberties, such as the right to bequeath land to their heirs. Drawn from various linguistic, religious, and clan groups in the Atlantic world, colonial New York City's black population now shared a common experience of subjection to colonial relations of racial domination in the guise of antiblack racism. Correspondingly, antiblack racism temporarily united white settlers of every rank, who now regarded the alien black presence in their midst as a dangerous domestic enemy against which the settler colony must be defended. Finally, chapter 4 shows that the specter of interracial sexual desire, especially in households where slaveowners and their families lived under the same roof with black Africans, imperiled the ideal of a racially pure settler community. Within the domain of sociosexual relations of power, an internalized taboo against miscegenation, rather than an antimiscegenation law, functioned as a prophylaxis against racial contamination. In this respect, colonial New York City began to resemble a normative society, in which self-disciplined individuals govern themselves without overt intervention on the part of the state. Whereas the English rulers used the threat of violence to regulate the city's black population, nonviolent mechanisms of hegemonic domination governed the city's settler population of propertied white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Chapter 5 reveals that, by the 1740s, interracial socializing among colonial New York City's subaltern population of enslaved blacks, propertyless white servants, and transients troubled the ruling elite and its binary racial division of society. With the additional threat of an impending Spanish invasion, the aggravation of an unsolved crime wave, and the outbreak of a mysterious rash of fires during the winter of 1741–42, fear of the city's dangerous classes crystallized in the discovery of the “plot of 1741–42,” an alleged conspiracy among enslaved blacks and several white outsiders accused of plotting together in secret to overthrow English rule, murder the city's white male settler population, enslave white females in harems, and establish a “Negro regime” under the protection of Catholic Spain. By discovering this conspiracy,

the English colonial rulers foreclosed, for a brief time, the challenge that a hostile political faction posed to its government. However, antiblack racism, even when supplemented by the fear of an interracial conspiracy from below, could not permanently eradicate the antagonisms that divided the colonial elite and the broader settler population. Thus chapters 3, 4, and 5 disclose the political stakes involved in the binary formation of race in colonial New York City and the complex ways in which racial formation impacted both the settlers and the slaves as they assumed racial subject-positions.

Part III of this study consists of two chapters that spotlight subaltern insurgency and the collapse of colonial governance. Importantly, part III credits the lower stratum of colonial New York City's social hierarchy—propertyless slaves, servants, and outsiders—with engaging in sustained resistance to colonial relations of domination, but shows that during colonial times subaltern insurgency in New York City generally took the guise of individual acts of insubordination, rarely involved collective action, and never coalesced into a coherent social movement. With its victory over the British military forces, the colony-wide white settler revolt known as the American War for Independence brought about the demise of English colonial rule in New York State and the other revolutionary North American republics. Undertaken to protect the white settlers' liberty, which essentially consisted of the capacity to exercise rights, including the right to property in black slaves, the white settler revolt opened a split between the American patriots and the English colonial rulers through which tens of thousands of enslaved blacks escaped from bondage. This unpredictable reality of the Anglo-American War lent new gravity to the partial, finite, and fluid emancipatory practices of black subaltern insurgency, which were beginning to dilate the exclusionary boundaries that limited "the happiness of liberty" to propertied white males.

Chapter 6 investigates examples of insubordination, ranging from the unruly behavior of the city's laboring class in the streets, marketplaces, dock areas, and taverns to the remarkable bids for freedom on the part of runaway servants and slaves. Chapter 6 points out that the largely unregulated population flows moving in and out of the port of New York compounded the problem of policing the city's servile population. Strangers entered the colonial port town, often without notifying the authorities of their arrival, while runaway servants and slaves left the seaport, largely undetected by official surveillance. Importantly, newspaper advertisements for fugitive servants and slaves encouraged the captains of sailing vessels embarking from the port of New York to keep on the lookout for runaways. These ads usually provided a detailed description of the peculiar bodily marks and other visible indexes to the servile condition of each fugitive. By using this tactic of individualizing description, the newspaper ads for runaways not only enlisted mariners in the task of surveilling the city's servile population. These ads also aspired to produce an all-pervasive, captivating vigilance on the part of the broader settler population by educating the gaze of ordinary settlers and training it away from the reductive black-and-white regime of visibility that allowed far too many servants and slaves to escape. In this regard, eighteenth-century print culture offered masters and colonial offi-

cial a means of enlisting the public in the task of apprehending fugitives. An unintended consequence of the production of a vigilant public was the upward rotation of the settlers' vigilance toward the Crown-appointed authorities who, following the French and Indian War (1756–63), implemented unpopular colonial policies that in the eyes of many settlers amounted to a dangerous conspiracy to deprive them of liberty. During the seventh and eighth decades of the eighteenth century, a broad segment of the settler population became ever more discontented with English colonial rule. By 1775, disaffected settlers of every rank perceived a conspiracy from above and commenced an armed rebellion against English colonial rule, which ended with the American patriots' victory over the British military forces sent to subdue them and the founding of independent republics in New York and other former British North American colonies. Facing the collapse of colonial governance and the impending loss of England's most valuable colonial possessions in North America, British military commanders enlisted the black population in the British war effort and granted enslaved blacks freedom as a reward for their loyal service to the British cause. This British war policy marked the abandonment of the long-standing disciplinary mechanism of governing the majority settler population by cultivating a shared interest between the rulers and the ruled in the subjugation of the black population. Chapter 7 shows that the final split between the English colonial rulers and the settlers in British North America provided passports to freedom for runaway slaves, who during the white American War for Independence deserted their patriot masters, joined the British side in exchange for freedom, and eventually removed to the British military headquarters at New York City. Whereas for nearly a century the English colonial rulers had promoted the institution of black slavery and the disciplinary mechanism of antiblack racism as a means of securing settler consent to their government, during the white settler revolt against English colonial rule, British military commanders endeavored to subdue that rebellion by threatening to emancipate as many of the patriots' slaves as were capable of escaping to the British side. During the white American War for Independence, New York City became an asylum for thousands of runaway slaves from throughout British America. Responding to the several British wartime proclamations addressed to the enslaved population, fugitive slaves relocated to British-occupied New York City, where they labored in a variety of tasks associated with the British war effort, earned wages, formed new family units, reconstituted old ones, and received certificates of freedom from British military officers. At the conclusion of the war, 3,000 recently emancipated blacks embarked from the port of New York with the evacuating British military forces on sailing vessels headed for maritime Canada. The exodus of these ex-slaves from the shores of Manhattan Island marked a rarely noted denouement to the breakdown of colonial governance in New York City.

Many of the free black exodusters left behind family and friends who remained in bondage in the infant republics that initially comprised the United States. The epilogue of this study comments on the legacy of colonialism and its relations of racial domination—namely, black slavery and antiblack racism—that constituted a foundation of U.S. national culture and would become the ob-

ject of protracted contestation between the racialized subjects who inhabited the nation. Importantly, the entailments of the nation's history of colonialism were not confined to the southern states but were also sedimented features of society and culture in the northern states. The legendary Mason-Dixon line, which so neatly divides north from south, freedom from slavery, modernity from feudalism, and the history of nation from the history of colonialism, is therefore more a phantasm of the U.S. political imaginary, a symptom of the disavowal of the deeply engraved social and racial divisions that traverse and transcend the geopolitical borders of nation, than a real geographical boundary. Yet, as Edward Said has pointed out, "No one can escape dealing with, if not the East/West division, then the North/South one, the have/have-not one, the imperialist/anti-imperialist one, the white/colored one. We cannot get around them all by pretending they do not exist; on the contrary, contemporary orientalism teaches us a great deal about the intellectual dishonesty of dissembling on that score, the result of which is to intensify the divisions and make them both vicious and permanent."⁵¹ This book offers a historical analysis of the formation of the binary racial division that arose out of the project of colony building on Manhattan Island during the early modern era and took shape in articulation with divisions of class, religion, birthplace, gender, sexuality, and language. Last, the title of this book, *Black and White Manhattan*, announces its overarching goal—namely, to place the nostalgia for a simplified, clearly delimited past under erasure by mapping the binary logic that disavows the irreducible complexities of history and confines the past to the somnolent realm of timeless myth located outside the temporality of a living and open history. This book rummages through the pile of debris left behind by the violent storm of progress that elevated New York City to the status of global city. Souvenirs from that debris disclose the city's foundational history of colonialism, black slavery, and antiblack racism.

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PART I

*From Frontier Outpost
to Settler Colony*

The Project of Colony Building
on Manhattan Island

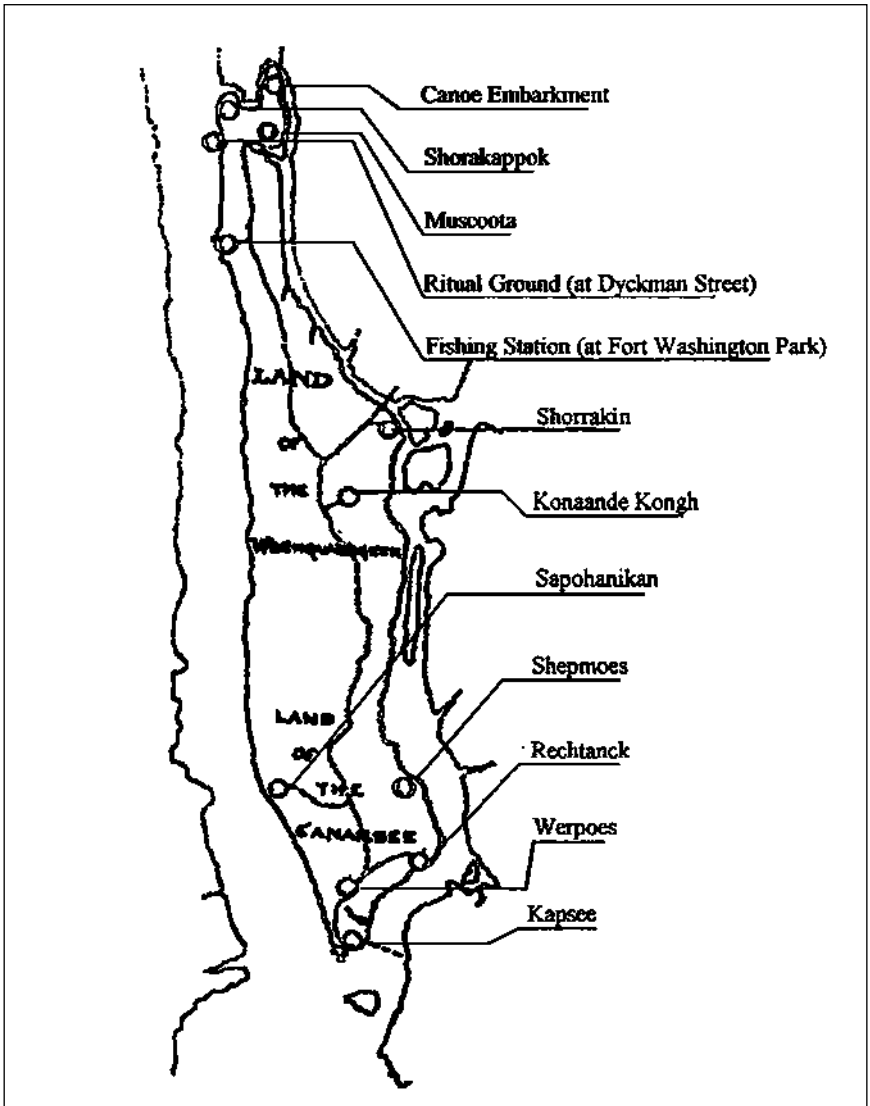



Figure 1.1. Indian Sites on Manhattan Island. Adapted from Reginald Pelham Bolton, *Indian Life of Long Ago in New York City* (New York: Schoen Press, 1934), 132–34.

“To Better People Their Land, and to Bring the Country to Produce More Abundantly”

TERRITORY, TRADE, CONQUEST, AND THE PROJECT
OF COLONY BUILDING ON MANHATTAN ISLAND
UNDER DUTCH RULE, 1624–1664

 Approximately two miles wide and fifteen miles long, Manhattan is an island-peninsula located at the confluence of two rivers that pour into an ample bay; its southernmost tip, overlooking the narrows of that sheltered harbor, is within a few miles of the open Atlantic Ocean. Of course, islands connote isolation. Yet during the early modern era, Manhattan Island became the scene of intense contact between previously unacquainted peoples—Amerindian, European, and African. By the time European explorers reached Manhattan, that island-peninsula had supported the self-sufficient life of the Wappinger for at least 500 years. A subdivision of the Algonquian-speaking Lenape (or Delaware) who roamed the river valley that extends through present-day New Jersey, Delaware, eastern Pennsylvania, and southeastern New York, the Wappinger migrated to Manhattan each summer, assembled seasonal camps in the northern area of the island, cultivated maize on communal land, and fished in the waters nearby. In addition to its abundant food supplies, the island attracted these nomadic people because they maintained ancestral burial grounds there.¹ The Wappinger’s Manhattan was, therefore, hardly a *terra nullius* of the sort that the maps and the papal bulls of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries described. When the European explorer Henry Hudson first laid eyes on Manhattan, he did not discover a vacant land but instead observed a wooded landscape, interrupted by Wappinger housing compounds, burnt clearings, cornfields, canoe embarkments, and ancient burial sites.

In the reconnaissance report on his expedition to Manhattan and other parts of North America, Hudson described that territory as a “pleasant and fruitful country,” certainly no paradise yet rich enough in natural resources to whet the

appetite of his sponsors. Measuring everything he encountered against Western European standards, Hudson surveyed the inhabitants of what for him was a strange new world and concluded that the natives lacked the basic cultural traits and moral disposition of a “civilized” people. “They have no religion, whatever, nor any divine worship,” Hudson reported. “They are revengeful and very suspicious, but with mild and proper treatment, and especially by intercourse with Christians, this people might be civilized and brought under better regulation; particularly if a sober and discreet population were brought over and good order preserved.”² Hudson thus conjectured that European colonization of North America would benefit the natives by bringing Christian government and true religion to an untamed and godless people. Deploying a culturalist conception of superior and inferior races as a conceptual tool in the activity of cognitive mapping, of rendering the New World of difference on Manhattan Island not only meaningful but also manageable for the purposes of colony building, Hudson’s report not only reflected the gaps in his knowledge about the indigenous population but also preemptively denigrated the natives’ culture in preparation for the European invasion and occupation of their land. Only slightly less fanciful than the *mappamundi* that emanated from the imagination of European cartographers who never traveled abroad, Hudson’s eyewitness travel account performed a procedure of erasure and inscription that transfigured Manhattan Island into a tabula rasa on which covetous European maritime nations projected their desire to render foreign lands available for conquest, the extraction of natural wealth, and colonization.

Hudson’s Dutch sponsors coveted the island-peninsula for its strategic military value and advantages for trade. Situated midway between the major seaports in Europe and the burgeoning staple-producing colonies in the Caribbean basin, and downriver from an ample source of fur pelts in the North American interior, the Wappinger’s Manhattan presented an ideal launch site for the military operations of the United Provinces of the Free Netherlands (also referred to as the Dutch Republic and Holland) in the Western Hemisphere and a promising opportunity for the expansion of trade under the management of that maritime nation’s rising bourgeoisie.³ With the termination of the truce with Spain in 1609, the United Provinces commenced another war against its Catholic enemy. The Dutch Republic’s Estates General performed the executive functions of government, including foreign policy making, and that governmental body entrusted Holland’s oceanic carrying trade, depredations against enemy sailing vessels, and colonization schemes to an oligarchy of Dutch merchants, who were not only shrewd businessmen but also zealous Calvinists and inveterate foes of Catholic Spain. To be sure, the lure of profit attracted these merchants and other wealthy Netherlanders to investment opportunities in overseas commerce. With state support in the guise of monopoly trading privileges, Dutch investors combined their financial resources and established joint-stock companies for undertaking business ventures in distant territories. This corporate structure became the primary vehicle for Dutch colonial expansion in North America.⁴

A few Dutch trading vessels visited the Hudson River between 1611 and 1614.

But Dutch entrepreneurs made no attempt to occupy the North American territory they named New Netherland until 1613, when, on behalf of the New Netherland Company (1613–18), Adrian Block built Fort Nassau (later Fort Orange) on Castle Island, a spot of land on the Hudson River only a few miles south of present-day Albany. Nearly eight years later, the Dutch sailing vessel *Jonge Tobias* arrived at Manhattan Island and deposited Jan (Juan) Rodrigues, a seafarer of African descent from Hispaniola. Though his shipmates had abandoned him on a remote island, he hardly lived an isolated life there. Rodrigues soon established a trade relation with the natives, married an Indian woman from Rockaway, and eventually produced several children with her. One of the first middlemen in the early Amerindian-European trade, Rodrigues negotiated exchanges with the natives for any European mariner who was willing to pay his commission fee.⁵

Following the expiration of the New Netherland Company's charter in 1618, the Estates General awarded the Dutch West India Company (WIC, 1621–1815) a monopoly on the trade in the territories of the Americas and West Africa that the United Provinces claimed by right of exploration. The Estates General also granted the WIC nearly unlimited authority over the development and governance of colonial outposts in these lands. An ad hoc, opportunistic, and quasi-military joint-stock company, the WIC at first engaged in privateering assaults against Spanish and Portuguese ships that sailed in the Caribbean Sea. In this way, the WIC contributed to the Dutch Republic's war effort against its Catholic rivals. Beginning in 1624, the WIC turned its attention to establishing trade relations with Native Americans and erected widely dispersed outposts of a dozen or so traders along the Hudson River—at Fort Orange in 1624, at New Amsterdam in 1624, at Beverwyck (later Albany) in 1652, and at Wiltwyck (later Esopus) in 1661.⁶ Except for New Amsterdam, where 30 Walloon farming families cultivated the land just outside the Dutch fort, these outposts served as storehouses for trade goods and little else. Navigable for a 120-mile distance between New Amsterdam and Beverwyck, the Hudson River offered a superb natural travel route. When news about the arrival of newcomers spread to the North American Indian communities, Indian traders journeyed along the Hudson, contacted European traders who occupied crude outposts on the riverbank, and exchanged fur pelts and other native produce from the North American interior for hatchets, axes, knives, kettles, firearms, gunpowder, and other European manufactured goods.⁷

Besides metal utensils, guns, and ammunition, the European traders introduced the indigenes to strong liquor.⁸ During his 1610 expedition to North America, Henry Hudson distributed free samples of wine and aqua vitae to the natives. Hudson's gift to the Indians was no altruistic gesture of good will but a means of discerning their inner moral disposition, of discovering, as Robert Juet explained, "whether [the natives] had any treacherie in them."⁹ Much like a present-day scientist might conduct a laboratory experiment on the effects of alcohol on human subjects, Hudson contrived to intoxicate the natives with strong liquor, lower their inhibitions, and thereby come to know the worst in their character. In a short time the ritual of giving gifts of strong liquor to the

natives became a custom at treaty-signing ceremonies and official negotiations that involved the transfer of Indian lands to European newcomers, who perhaps gained an advantage in these deals by impairing the judgment of Indian sachems with the aid of intoxicating drinks. Not all Amerindian-European encounters involving alcohol were laden with ulterior motives. European traders sold strong liquor to the natives in the frank pursuit of profit, and alcohol quickly became an important trade good in North America.¹⁰

The Indians' desire for the addictive liquor grew as they discovered that the new libation induced vivid dreams, which, the natives believed, offered spiritual guidance. The natives drank the strong spirits not to forget, as the European newcomers sometimes did, but to remember and to take counsel from the omens that appeared in their dreams.¹¹ The assimilation of this new sacramental libation into the Indians' ritual practices was largely unintelligible to Europeans, who, for the most part, remained unaware of the complexities of the indigenous culture. Alcohol had to be imbibed in large quantities to induce the revelatory (or hallucinogenic) effect that the natives desired. Some European outsiders regarded the Indians' drinking habits as excessive, as a mark of lawlessness and confirmation of the lack of civility that they attributed to the indigenous culture as a whole.¹²

Even though they complained that drunken Indians sometimes made troublesome neighbors, the European settlers, whom the WIC transplanted to the jurisdiction of New Netherland during the early years of colony building, were eager to trade with the natives and sold strong liquor to the indigenes in violation of the WIC's monopoly on trade. Insisting that the natives would find alternative suppliers, if they did not sell alcohol to them, these settlers were ready with an alibi that absolved them of any responsibility for the Indians' growing addiction to strong liquor. The Dutch traveler Jasper Danckaerts blamed the epidemic of alcoholism among the natives on the settlers who sold them addictive liquor. Castigating the settlers for their reckless behavior, Danckaerts wrote: "They brought forward the excuse, that if they did not do it, others would, and then they would have the trouble and others the profit; but if they must have the trouble, they ought to have the profits, and so they all said, and for the most part falsely, for they all solicit the Indians as much as they can."¹³ In Danckaerts's view, the single-minded pursuit of profit led the settlers to deny the imprudence of providing the natives with limitless quantities of alcohol, not to mention as many firearms and as much gunpowder as the Indians could carry. Other WIC officials warned that under the influence of strong liquor the indigenous population posed a grave security threat to the vulnerable Dutch outposts along the Hudson River. Although the WIC authorities predicted that in the event of war the Indians would be better outfitted with guns and ammunition than the settlers, they were unable to defuse this potentially explosive situation.

In addition to the exchange of alcohol, firearms, gunpowder, fur peltries, and other commodities, the European invasion inaugurated an era of sexual commerce between male Europeans and female natives. The WIC officials and the Dutch Calvinist clergy in New Netherland associated this sexual mingling be-

tween formerly separate peoples with the erosion of Christian morality in the colony's European population. No longer conducting themselves in a manner befitting a civilized people, the European newcomers were, the colonial authorities warned, losing their mooring in Christian identity and degenerating to a savage condition. In an effort to reinscribe the boundary that ostensibly divided the Europeans from the natives, the "civilized" from the "savage," the WIC enacted a law that prohibited natives from visiting its outposts after sunset, a common occurrence prior to the promulgation of that prohibition in 1638. The same law also criminalized sexual contact between male Europeans and female natives.¹⁴

Living on the colonial frontier without the companionship of European women, some male settlers and WIC soldiers ignored the prohibition against sexual relations with female natives and under the cover of darkness smuggled illicit sex partners into the WIC's outposts. An official document reports that on numerous occasions Sergeant Nicolaes Coorn, a WIC soldier, had female natives "sleep entire nights with him in his bed, in the presence of the other soldiers."¹⁵ Because the WIC military commanders could not afford to estrange this valuable soldier, whose service was crucial to the security of the Dutch North American territory, they verbally reprimanded Sergeant Coorn for behaving in a manner unbecoming a Dutch soldier and Christian, instead of imposing a more severe punishment on him. Pointing to the example of the WIC's secretary Cornelius van Tienhoven, who was rumored to have been frolicking about "the same as an Indian, with a little covering and a small patch in front from lust"¹⁶ after the female natives, the WIC officials acknowledged that self-mastery of sexual passion was a test of manliness and civility that some European males failed while living on the North American frontier. Adriaen van der Donck confessed that he and other male Netherlanders found Indian women to be "well favored and fascinating." Commenting on the enduring bonds between male Netherlanders and female natives, he reported in 1655: "Several of our Netherlanders were connected with them before our women came over, and remain firm in their attachments."¹⁷ These Dutch-speaking male foreigners no doubt benefited from matrimonial ties to Algonquian-speaking female natives. Admitted to native kinship networks through marriage to Indian women, they gained access to insider information and obtained assistance in dressing furs, translation, and negotiating exchanges, all of which proved to be indispensable to their success in the fur trade. Doubtless, these and other advantages encouraged male settlers to remain faithful to their Indian wives.

Whereas some male settlers maintained lifelong conjugal unions with female natives, others believed that Indian women were unsuitable for anything more than furtive sexual encounters. A male settler alleged: "Indian women are very much given to promiscuous intercourse."¹⁸ Using this misrepresentation of female natives as an alibi, some male settlers and WIC soldiers sexually exploited Indian women, as if they were merely another natural resource. In this respect, the sexual conquest of female natives became a corollary to the masculinized project of European domination over feminized foreign lands and integral to

the colonialist fantasy of unobstructed territorial expansion. Dominie Johannes Megapolensis denied that female natives could be sexually exploited, explaining that Indian women prostituted themselves for trifles and easily seduced male settlers. "These women," the Dutch Calvinist clergyman alleged, "are exceedingly addicted to whoring; they will lie with a man for the value of one, two, or three *schillings*, and our Dutchmen run after them very much."¹⁹ Megapolensis and other European newcomers had slender knowledge of Native American communities, which regulated gender roles and sexual practices according to rules that were not readily legible to Western Europeans.²⁰ Following the European invasion, North America became an eroticized danger zone, filled with temptation and peril for Indian women. Female natives sometimes bore the burden of harsh communal chastisement for transgressive sexual behavior, even though European males had enticed or perhaps coerced these women to engage in unauthorized sexual acts with them. A WIC document reports that an Indian woman who had slept with a male settler after he had seduced her with the promise of a gift for sexual favors was left to wander the countryside with her hair cut off, denounced and exiled from her husband's support and protection.²¹ Few European males fully comprehended the risk of natal alienation to which female natives were exposed when they engaged in unsanctioned sexual relations with strangers.

Despite the WIC's efforts to curb contact between the settlers and the natives, both parties continued to trade, drink, and even sleep together. Yet in many crucial respects, the natives and the settlers remained strangers to one another. The Amerindian-European trade involved exchanges between newly acquainted people who entered into negotiations without a common language and often under the haze of intoxicating drinks, which lowered inhibitions on both sides. From the beginning, Amerindian-European encounters were precarious affairs; the potential for violence was as great as the potential for profitable trade and amicable cross-cultural exchange. Over time, the semblance of intimacy between the European newcomers and the natives proved to be a dangerous illusion. This circumstance led a contemporary observer to warn that the greedy settler too often "withdrew himself from his comrades, sought communication with the Indians from where it appeared his profit would be derived, . . . produced altogether too much familiarity with the Indians which in short time brought forth contempt, usually the father of hate."²² It was precisely this scenario that propelled the natives and the European invaders along the path to war.

Before his death at the hands of a young male native, Claes Smits, a Dutch settler, wheelwright, and occasional fur trader, befriended the neighboring Indians, who from time to time brought beaver pelts to his isolated camp on the shore of Turtle Bay, a strand of land along a small creek that ran into the East River. In the autumn of 1641, Smits entertained an Indian guest, a young man from Konaande Konch, the island's principal Wappinger village. On the surface there was nothing unusual about this encounter. Then suddenly, the Indian youth struck Smits on the neck with an ax, inflicting a mortal wound. It was later reported that the assailant had committed the homicide in revenge for the

murder of his uncle, whom a party of European traders had killed some time earlier.²³ The bloody episode at Turtle Bay demonstrated how seemingly peaceful interactions between the European newcomers and the natives could, in a flash, become deadly affairs. Neither the settlers nor the indigenes fully appreciated the volatility of the early Amerindian-European encounters; few practical lessons of caution were drawn from the misadventure at Turtle Bay. Instead, leaders on both sides brought their people closer to the brink of war.

Incommensurable ideals of justice prevented the Wappinger sachems and the WIC officials from negotiating a peaceful resolution to their dispute over the homicide at Turtle Bay. Director-General Willem Kieft, commander of the WIC's enterprise in New Netherland from 1637 to 1647, demanded that the Wappinger sachems remand the accused murderer to the custody of the WIC authorities at New Amsterdam. After explaining that the killer had run away, the sachems offered to compensate Smits's widow with a payment of wampum. They also excused their kinsman's action, stating that their young people were unaccustomed to strong liquor, which the European newcomers sold them, and that, once intoxicated, Indian youths often flew into passions, a pattern of behavior that was unknown before the Europeans arrived. The European outsiders, they added, were addicted to alcohol and, when intoxicated, fought among themselves with knives.²⁴ According to the Wappinger sachems, the European invaders were neither a sober nor discreet people, and their appearance in the region hardly augured an era of good order. Director-General Kieft could not accept the Wappinger's offer to compensate Smits's widow for the loss of her husband's life with a payment of wampum, nor could he agree with their unflattering description of his people. Convinced of the moral superiority of Christians and the righteousness of the WIC's mission in North America, Kieft became inflexible in his resolve to punish the young male native who had assassinated Smits. For their part, the Wappinger sachems regarded the homicide at Turtle Bay as a legitimate act of retributive justice. Like other Native American communities, the Wappinger required the men of their community to avenge the murder of a kinsman, an obligation that could be satisfied by taking the life of an adult male from the offender's community, even if he had no direct role in the commission of the murder.²⁵ This Wappinger custom and ideal of justice reinforced the WIC authorities' perception that the natives were a vengeful, lawless, and therefore "uncivilized" race. Although they needed only to refer to medieval European codes of honor and manliness for a familiar analogue to the young male native's act of revenge, the WIC authorities regarded the murder of Smits as a savage crime, as incontrovertible evidence that the native population must be subdued under the civilizing yoke of Christians.

Hoping to build a consensus on Indian policy among the settlers, Kieft convened a public meeting at New Amsterdam on August 28, 1641, and directed the settlers to elect a dozen representatives who would counsel him during the present emergency. Following their deliberations, the "Twelve Select Men" advised Kieft to make one last effort to avoid open warfare and, if persuasion failed, then exterminate the natives. Pressuring the Wappinger leaders with the threat of annihilation, Kieft again demanded that the individual responsible for the

bloodshed at Turtle Bay be brought before the WIC officials, who, he insisted, were competent to judge the accused by civilized standards of justice. The sachems never complied with the WIC leader's demand, however.²⁶

Kieft's directive fell on deaf ears because he and his interpreters were perhaps incapable of translating early modern Western European ideals of justice into words the Algonquian-speaking natives could comprehend. The Dutch Calvinist cleric Dominie Megapolensis wrote a report on his missionary work among the natives that exposed the European invaders' inaptitude with the Algonquian language. The natives have a "very difficult language," Megapolensis admitted, "and it costs me great pains to learn it, so as to be able to speak and preach in it fluently. There is no Christian here who understands the language thoroughly; those who have lived here long can use a kind of jargon just sufficient to carry on trade with it, but they do not understand the fundamentals of the language. I am making a vocabulary of the [Indians'] language, and when I am among them I ask them how things are called; but as they are very stupid, I sometimes cannot make them understand what I want."²⁷ Owing in part to their infelicities in speaking the Algonquian language, the WIC officials and the Calvinist clergymen were powerless to translate Dutch commands into Wappinger obedience.

In addition to miscommunication involving the concept "justice," incommensurable notions of the value and use of land and the care of livestock became sites of conflict between the European invaders and the natives. Whereas the Wappinger prized land principally as a means of meeting their subsistence needs and as communal property of tremendous symbolic value for cementing the bond of tribal identity over the generations, the WIC officials regarded land primarily as a commodity, whose worth lay not only in its unique use-value but also in its relation to other commodities in their system of exchange. Regarding Manhattan Island as a commodity, Director-General Willem Verhulst (1625–26) offered the Wappinger goods worth 60 florins, the equivalent of 11 fur pelts, in exchange for the entire island-peninsula. Although the Wappinger sachems accepted the WIC's offer, they had no concept akin to the capitalist notion of private ownership of land and probably never imagined that the WIC officials considered the transaction to be a permanent transfer of exclusive ownership of the island.²⁸ The Dutch settler Van der Donck summarized the natives' ideal respecting the disposal of land and other natural resources, or notion of the "right of nature," stating: "They take this to include the wind, rivers, woods, plains, sea, beaches, and banks. All these are open and freely accessible to every individual of all the nations with which they are not publicly engaged in quarrels. They may use these freely and enjoy these in as much freedom as though they were born there."²⁹ It is, then, unlikely that the Wappinger sachems intended to convey sole right to the use and ownership of Manhattan Island to the Dutch newcomers. More likely, the Wappinger agreed to share the island, viewing the tendered European manufactured goods as a tribute (or veneration present) to their ancestors, whom the Wappinger regarded as the original occupants of the island.

Having, in their view, purchased exclusive title to Manhattan Island and thereby obtained the right to extract a profit from that land, the WIC officials, in

early 1640, demanded a payment of rent from the Wappinger who occupied the northern part of the island. Also, these military officers perhaps regarded the compensation of rent from the Wappinger in the same way that medieval Europe's warlords looked on the extraction of tribute from European peasants, as an obligation of the weak to pay the powerful for military protection against foes and other safeguards.³⁰ However, the Wappinger sachems had their own system of clientage, now perceived the WIC and the settler population as a potential enemy, and refused to pay the Dutch-speaking invaders for the right to reside on ancestral land and to make use of it in accordance with their ancient customs. Ignoring the sachems' refusal or perhaps misinterpreting their answer, Director-General Kieft sent Captain Cornelius Pietersen to the northeastern shore of Manhattan Island to collect the demanded rent (or tribute) from the Wappinger. Mistaking a pile of Indian corn on the riverbank for the expected payment, Pietersen and his crew began loading the corn into their sailing vessel but were thwarted by an armed Indian assault and barely escaped death.³¹

The arming of the natives with firearms not only imperiled the lives of the European invaders but also endangered the region's wildlife. By 1639, the Indian hunters' use of firearms had led to the depletion of beaver, otter, and other fur-bearing animals in the lower Hudson River Valley. No longer the principal suppliers of fur pelts to the European traders, the Algonquian-speaking natives who inhabited that region and the coastal plain were now merely an obstacle to the permanent European occupation of these lands. At that time the WIC was enticing Europeans to migrate to the North American region called New Netherland with the promise that newcomers would receive substantial acres of land in that overseas territory.³² In an effort to avoid misunderstandings that might lead to violent altercations with the indigenous population, the WIC officials supervised all land transactions between the natives and the land-hungry Europeans who settled in New Netherland. But conflicting values regarding the use of land proved to be impossible to suppress. The natives and European settlers soon clashed over land usage practices.³³

Measured by the standards of the settlers, the natives were an unambitious, even lazy people who, neither improving nor making gainful use of the soil, lived a nomadic, seemingly indigent life, which disqualified them from being counted as rightful possessors of the land. The settler Johannes de Laet wrote: "Indians desire no riches."³⁴ Of course, the Wappinger were hardly an impoverished people and, for centuries, had managed to sustain a self-sufficient existence, free from scarcity, except in times of natural disaster and war. Complementing the European invaders' low estimation of the Native American moral character was their own high self-regard. The Christian settlers liked to think of themselves as a chosen people who now lived in a New Canaan in accordance with a renewed covenant with God, which required them to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."³⁵ However, New Netherland's early settler population neither enjoyed great success as tillers of the soil and fishers of the sea nor applied most of their energy to cultivating the earth and harvesting the fruits of their own

labor but, instead, devoted themselves to the trade in furs, firearms, ammunition, and liquor. Insofar as the settlers made use of the land, they did so in ways that the natives did not readily comprehend. For example, the settlers enclosed land in fences and persisted in their habit of allowing livestock to roam about the countryside, even though their grazing animals sometimes trampled the natives' unfenced cornfields. The natives found this mode of land usage and care of livestock to be an unfamiliar and destructive practice. In 1639, some natives on Staten Island burned a Dutch flag and killed a hog in protest against the foreigners who continued to permit their livestock to destroy their unprotected cornfields. Director-General Kieft retaliated by dispatching a military expedition to punish the Staten Island natives.³⁶

As a consequence of conflicting practices of land usage and care of livestock, incompatible notions of the value of land, and, above all, incommensurable ideals of justice, Amerindian-European relations deteriorated to open warfare. Any meaningful cross-cultural understanding between the European newcomers and the natives required a shared system of representation, mutually intelligible symbols, beliefs, and values of far greater sophistication than the trade jargon that served as a superficial mode of communication between the European traders and their Indian counterparts. Convinced that his people and the natives would never overcome the obstacles to mutual understanding, Director-General Kieft concluded that only a definitive show of force could achieve the goal of native submission to Dutch authority.³⁷ Henry Hudson's earlier prescription of "mild and proper treatment" thus gave way to brutal measures of military conquest.


In February 1643, Director-General Kieft sent soldiers to exterminate the natives at Konaande Konch, the main Wappinger village on Manhattan Island. Although this military expedition discovered that the Wappinger had evacuated that site, another WIC sortie, under the command of Captain John Underhill, slaughtered more than 80 natives at Pavonia (present-day Jersey City) and massacred another 50 natives at Rechtanch, near Corlears Hook in the lower East Side of Manhattan.³⁸ The settler David de Vries described the Massacre of Pavonia:

Infants were torn from their mothers' breasts, and hacked to pieces in the presence of the parents, and the pieces thrown into the fire and in the water, and other sucklings, being bound to small boards, were cut, stuck, and pierced, and miserably massacred in a manner to move a heart of stone. Some were thrown into the river, and when the fathers and mothers endeavored to save them, the soldiers would not let them come on land but made both parents and children drown—children from five to six years of age, and also some old and decrepit persons. Those who fled from this onslaught, and concealed themselves in a neighboring sedge, and when it was morning, came out to beg a piece of bread, and to be permitted to warm themselves, were murdered in cold blood and tossed into the fire or the water. Some came to our people in the country with their hands, some with their legs cut off, and some holding their entrails in their arms, and others had such horrible cuts and gashes, that worse than they were could never happen.³⁹

The natives responded to this vicious execution of women, children, and other noncombatants by committing atrocities of their own against defenseless settlers in the countryside. Some terrified settlers reproached Kieft for jeopardizing their lives and property by conducting war against the natives, while he, they pointed out, was “protected in a good fort, out of which he had not slept a single night.”⁴⁰ At that time the Narragansett sachem Miantonimo rallied the coastal and lower river Indians in northeastern North America to fight a war against all European invaders. Although the settlers in southern New England suffered hardships and fatalities, the Indian war had a more destructive impact on New Netherland, taking more European lives and severely demoralizing the surviving settlers in that Dutch North American colony. By 1644, only 200 European men and 250 family members and other dependents remained in New Netherland.⁴¹ During the war, European traders evacuated the outposts along the Hudson River and, together with the settlers who were once dispersed throughout the countryside, consolidated themselves at New Amsterdam at the tip of Manhattan Island, where they lived under the protection of the WIC’s soldiers and slaves. After several years of seemingly interminable warfare, some desperate settlers wrote to the WIC authorities in Holland: “Our fields lie fallow and waste; our dwellings and other buildings are burnt; not a handful can be planted or sown this fall on the deserted places; the crops which God the Lord permitted to come forth during the past summer, remain on the field standing and rotting in diverse places, in the same way as the hay, for the preservation of which we, poor people, cannot obtain one man. We are burdened with heavy families; we have no means to provide necessaries for wife and children; and we sit here amidst thousands of Indians and barbarians, from whom we find neither peace nor mercy.”⁴² Expansion into North America had at first appeared to be a sure path to riches for the European invaders, but the violent struggle with the natives served notice that wealth was not the certain outcome of their errand on the North American frontier. Also, while the war did not create an unbridgeable chasm between the natives and the settlers, the bloody conflict had lasting consequences for Amerindian-European relations. With the cessation of hostilities, the natives and the settlers returned to the traffic in furs, alcohol, firearms, and ammunition, but they now approached each other through a nimbus of disillusionment and distrust. War had shattered the phantasm of friendship between the natives and the European newcomers.

Even though the WIC’s outposts along the Hudson River had been reduced to a single fort on Manhattan Island, the company could take solace in the fact that its show of force had nearly rid the coveted island of its indigenous population. Combined with the *nova pestis* smallpox, the devastation of war destroyed nearly half of the coastal Indian population. The remnants of that people witnessed significant alterations in their traditional life of self-sufficiency, as they became trapped, like a modern Tantalus, above the capricious waters of monetized market exchanges and struggled to obtain things that they once considered to be freely accessible to all by the “right of nature.” The nomadic Wappinger gradually abandoned the seasonal migrations and mode of subsistence that they had known before the European invasion and increasingly focused on sedentary ac-

tivities, such as the production of wampum, now principally esteemed as a medium of exchange in the fur trade and as a means of making rent payments to the Dutch colonizers for the privilege of residing on parcels of Manhattan real estate that were once their communal lands.⁴³ As elsewhere along the eastern coast of North America, the shift from Native American to European dominance on Manhattan Island gave rise to historic changes in the land. If a sailor who had traveled to the island-peninsula with Henry Hudson in 1610 returned there in the middle of the seventeenth century, he would have noticed striking alterations in the island's landscape. As a consequence of the European occupation, the forested island, whose lower and upper shores were once dotted with Indian seasonal camps, burnt clearings, maize fields, canoe embarkments, and ancient burial grounds, had, by the late 1650s, been transformed into a colonized region of modest farms and a fledgling colonial port town with a stone fort and storehouse, streets and canals, a windmill, barracks for the WIC's soldiers and slaves, other dwellings, and gardens enclosed by fences.

 From the start, the WIC planned to develop the North American territory known as New Netherland into a permanent settler colony, which served the United Provinces' mercantilist agenda of national self-sufficiency by supplying that commerce-oriented maritime nation's rapidly expanding home market with agricultural produce that Hollanders previously imported from European rivals. To that end, the WIC hoped to transplant numerous Dutch farming families to New Netherland and employ them in the cultivation of crops that were largely unavailable through domestic producers and could be sold at a profit in Holland. But the project of colonization proved to be costly. As a consequence, the WIC revised its plan by shifting the expense of transporting settlers to New Netherland and cultivating the land to individual investors. Beginning in 1628, the WIC offered petty fiefdoms called *patroonschappen* (or patroonships) to its wealthiest shareholders on the condition that they transport at least 30 Dutch farmers to Manhattan Island or 60 Dutch farmers to other parts of New Netherland within three years. The patroonship proposal combined seigniorial institutions and capitalist values. Like a modern capitalist, the patroon was entitled to the profits from his financial investment in colony building and, like a feudal lord, was endowed with the prerogative to establish his own court of law on his North American estate.⁴⁴ The WIC shareholder Kilaen Van Rensselaer accepted an enormous land grant of 1 million acres and just before the outbreak of the Indian war founded a patroonship called Rensselaerswyck, an 18-mile stretch of land along the Hudson River and adjacent to Fort Orange. Van Rensselaer was unable to convince Dutch farming families to settle on his North American estate but transported 216 settlers from England, Norway, and the Rhine to Rensselaerswyck. Other WIC shareholders founded patroonships in New Netherland, but they could not recruit adequate numbers of farmers from the United Provinces and other parts of Europe to cultivate their North

American estates. Failing to realize a profit from their investments, these shareholders aborted their colonization projects.⁴⁵

The difficulty of attracting adequate numbers of obedient European farm laborers became a chief impediment against New Netherland's development into a profitable overseas colony. The WIC's monopoly on trade and its strict regulation of land transactions made New Netherland an unattractive final destination for Netherlanders and other Europeans who desired unencumbered title to land and the freedom to engage in trade. New Netherland's early settlers pursued quick profits in the trade with the natives. Except for a few dozen poor Walloon farming families, which the WIC transported to Manhattan between 1624 and 1626, European newcomers rarely cultivated the land. The WIC at first guarded its monopoly trading privileges by enacting laws that restricted the traffic in peltries to its own salaried employees and confined the retail business in vital provisions to its own storehouses.⁴⁶ Complaining that the WIC's monopoly on trade violated their liberties and that the company's employees engaged in profiteering at the expense of their survival, scores of disgruntled settlers, to the WIC's dismay, left New Netherland. In an effort to attract more settlers and retain them, the WIC in 1640 revised its policy and offered liberalized "freedoms and exemptions" to Netherlanders who were willing to migrate to Dutch North America. That list of privileges rewarded settlers with generous land grants, opened riverfront land previously reserved for patroons to ordinary settlers, promised settlers a supply of slaves at a 10 percent discount, abolished the WIC's monopoly on the fur trade, and repealed other restrictions on the settlers' liberties.⁴⁷ The WIC's land grant program resembled the Virginia Company's headright system in the Chesapeake region. According to the latter plan, English farming families received land in tidewater Virginia at no cost as a reward for migrating to that English overseas territory and cultivating the soil. Similarly, the WIC's plan awarded a bounty of 200 acres of land to Dutch settlers, with the stipulation that each settler must pay for his own transportation and the passage of five additional settlers to New Netherland. Netherlanders were, however, little disposed to leave their prosperous and tolerant homeland, and those who were willing to uproot themselves mostly migrated to Brazil and Curaçao or else trekked to the Cape of Good Hope at the tip of Africa and to Dutch colonial outposts in southeast Asia. Since adventurous Netherlanders preferred these Dutch overseas colonies to New Netherland, the WIC extended its offer to potential settlers from parts of Europe outside the United Provinces and, as a further enticement, provided free ocean passage, making migration to New Netherland one of the cheapest travel packages to the New World.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, few European farming families migrated to Dutch North America prior to the 1650s.

In 1628, the Dutch colony's total population numbered only 500 inhabitants.⁴⁹ Settler outmigration, along with the WIC's failure to recruit replacements, meant that New Netherland's settler population grew slowly. A contemporary observer concluded: "The land, being extensive and in many places full of weeds and wild growth could not be properly cultivated in consequence of the scanti-

ness of the population, the Dutch West India Company needed to better people their land, and bring the country to produce more abundantly.”⁵⁰ The Dutch Calvinist clergyman Dominie Jonas Michaëlius added: “the ground is fertile enough to reward labor, but they must clear it well and till it just as our lands require.”⁵¹ Writing from New Netherland to the WIC officials in Holland, some farmers pleaded: “Were their High Mightinesses please to equip some ships for a few years, for the free conveyance and transportation of people principally Boors and farm servants with their poverty hither, together with some necessary maintenance until the poor people had obtained something *in ease*, their High Mightinesses would not only relieve many encumbered men, but also expect from God, through their intercession, luck, blessing, and prosperity.”⁵² The WIC was unable to satisfy this and other requests for farm servants, because even impoverished European peasants shunned New Netherland.

Finding that Netherlanders and other Europeans were unlikely to migrate to New Netherland in sufficient numbers to secure, permanently occupy, and cultivate its vast North American territory, the WIC acquired enslaved laborers from various parts of the Atlantic world as substitutes for European farm servants. Director-General Kieft endorsed this strategy, stating: “Negroes would accomplish more work for their masters and at less expense, than farm servants, who must be bribed to go thither by a great deal of money and promises.”⁵³ The leading carrier in the transatlantic slave trade during most of the seventeenth century,⁵⁴ the WIC ordered the diversion of some of its human cargo from slave markets in the Caribbean basin to New Netherland. Because Curaçao was the main transshipment center for the WIC’s African slave trade in the Western Hemisphere,⁵⁵ enslaved Africans were likely transported to that Dutch Caribbean entrepôt before being shipped to Manhattan Island.⁵⁶ Small cargoes and also a few relatively large shipments of enslaved Africans were added to Manhattan’s population during the Dutch colonial era (Table 1.1). In addition, Dutch privateers occasionally captured enemy sailing vessels, seized free black and mulatto sailors, and sold these captives (or human prize goods) into slavery at New Amsterdam.⁵⁷ Enslaving the indigenous population was never a viable solution to the colony’s labor shortage, though prior to and during the Indian war the WIC and some settlers enslaved a few natives.⁵⁸ The imperative of maintaining harmonious trade relations with the indigenous communities, the difficulty of preventing enslaved natives from making successful escapes into the interior, and finally the dwindling coastal Indian population meant that the European invaders could keep only a small number of natives in bondage.⁵⁹ The WIC thus relied on imported sources of slave labor.

Although the exact number is unknown, at least 467 slaves were brought to New Amsterdam between 1626 and 1664.⁶⁰ The first documented cargo of slaves arrived at Manhattan Island in 1626, two years after the founding of New Amsterdam. There were approximately 11 men in this inaugural shipment, and the WIC kept these slaves for its own use in New Amsterdam. In 1628, a Dutch trading vessel brought three enslaved women to Manhattan. The WIC records state that these female slaves had been purchased for the “comfort of the Company’s Negro men” and that the WIC’s slaves produced offspring.⁶¹ Male slaves out-

TABLE I.I Documented Slave Imports to New Amsterdam, 1626–1664

<i>Date</i>	<i>Ship Name</i>	
1626	Unknown	11
1628	Unknown	3
1642	La Grace	Unknown
1646	Tamandere	Unknown
1652	St. Anthoni	44
1655	Wittepaert	Unknown
1659	Speramundi	5
1660	Speramundi	3
1660	Eyeckenboom	20
1660	New Netherland Indian	10
1661	New Netherland Indian	40
1664	Sparrow	40
1664	Gideon	291

Source: Compiled from Donnan, *Documents Illustrative*, 3:444.

numbered female slaves in New Netherland,⁶² and the relative dearth of enslaved adult females retarded the natural increase of the colony's enslaved population, limiting the number of slaves born in the Dutch North American outposts to a small number. The majority of New Netherland's enslaved population were probably natives from the Gold Coast of Africa, the Congo, and Angola. By 1637, the WIC had captured the slave trading fort called El Mina from the Portuguese and, along with that commanding fortress, control over the transatlantic slave trade between the West African coast and the Americas.⁶³ In 1641, the WIC seized Luanda and Benguela, displaced the Portuguese slave traders in Angola and the Congo, and took over the transatlantic traffic in Angolan and Congolese slaves.⁶⁴ Brazil absorbed the lion's share of the enslaved native Africans that WIC sailing vessels transported to the Americas, whereas New Netherland received only a tiny fraction of this human cargo.⁶⁵ Independent slave traders and privateers carried enslaved laborers from the Gold Coast, the Kongo-Angola region, and other parts of the Atlantic world to the Dutch colonial outpost on Manhattan Island.⁶⁶ As the place-names of the first involuntary immigrants indicate, São Tomé and Portugal, as well as Angola and the Congo, supplied slaves to New Amsterdam.⁶⁷ Dutch slave traders also brought a few slaves from Brazil to that colonial seaport.⁶⁸ Of the slaves acquired from Portugal, São Tomé, and other conquered Portuguese territories in the Western Hemisphere, most were probably somewhat acculturated native Africans and American-born (or creole) blacks who, unlike recent native African captives, had already undergone the process of adaptation to the conditions of enslavement in the Americas. Some slaves among the enslaved human cargo brought to New Amsterdam perhaps spoke Portuguese, if only imperfectly, while a few perhaps

comprehended a small number of Dutch words well enough to execute the orders of Dutch-speaking masters.⁶⁹

The WIC relied on enslaved laborers to occupy, protect, improve, and cultivate the Dutch North American territory. Utilized as both a labor and military force, slaves became a vital stratum of New Netherland's population. For its operations in New Netherland, the WIC required an enslaved population of robust men. "In regard to negroes," a WIC officer explained, "they ought to be stout and strong fellows, fit for immediate employment on this fortress and other works; also, if required, in war against the savage natives, either to pursue them when retreating, or else to carry some of the soldiers' baggage."⁷⁰ The WIC enlisted its male slaves in military campaigns against the natives during the Indian war. These slaves did not bear firearms but instead wielded small axes and half-pikes.⁷¹ Making the North American frontier safe for trade and colonization was foremost on the minds of the Dutch colony builders. Hence slaves also labored on the construction of a palisade, built on Manhattan Island along present-day Wall Street for protection against Indian attacks, and on other fortifications that enhanced the security of the frontier outposts along the Hudson River.⁷² On Manhattan Island the WIC's slaves were shackled together and forced to work in gangs under the supervision of the WIC "Overseer of Negroes" Jacob Stoffelson and his successor, Paulus Heymans.⁷³ The WIC at first housed its male slaves in a separate same-sex barrack, located on present-day Fleet Street in lower Manhattan. By 1639, the WIC had moved the slave barrack northward to the vicinity of present-day Seventy-second Street and the East River.⁷⁴ With the removal of its male slaves to that northern area of the island, the WIC established a buffer zone against Indian invasion.

In addition to laboring on fortifications and serving as praetorian-like protectors of the vulnerable Dutch colonial outpost on Manhattan Island, slaves cultivated the WIC's six *bouweries* (or farms) on the island during the early Dutch colonial period. At that pivotal stage, the agricultural produce from these farms fed New Amsterdam's population and allowed that Dutch outpost to avoid the starving times that had plagued the first English outposts in North America. Except for the largest company farm, which encompassed an area of 100 acres, the WIC's *bouweries*, along with the slaves on the land, were eventually leased to European farmers.⁷⁵ The WIC lent slaves to its employees and sometimes transferred ownership of slaves to them as in-kind salary payments for service. Throughout the Dutch colonial period, slaves tended the farms of WIC employees.⁷⁶ Because the WIC's "freedoms and exemptions of 1640" granted European settlers a monopoly on lucrative trades, such as bricklayer and carpenter, few slaves were trained and employed in the skilled occupations.⁷⁷

Even though the WIC extended some attractive liberties to European settlers and kept Africans in bondage, the joint-stock company did not establish a rigid racial hierarchy of rights-bearing white settlers and enslaved blacks with no rights. In New Netherland enslaved blacks enjoyed the right to testify in court, including cases involving white settlers.⁷⁸ Also, the WIC remitted wages to at least five slaves who, in 1635, petitioned the metropolitan authorities in Holland


to order the WIC to pay them for their labor.⁷⁹ Although several laws and other official papers implicitly recognized chattel slavery in New Netherland, the Dutch colonial authorities never created, the historian Joyce Goodfriend has noted, a “legally and ideologically consistent slave system.”⁸⁰ According to the historian Leon Higginbotham, slavery in Dutch North America was more a matter of custom than a mandate of law.⁸¹ Importantly, no statute prevented the WIC from elevating slaves to the status of free men and women when circumstances dictated such action.

The Indian war presented a set of contingencies that required the WIC to upgrade the status of some slaves. During that war, the Dutch outposts in North America were under the constant threat of Indian attack. Yet at that time the WIC employed fewer than 40 soldiers.⁸² Moreover, that costly war nearly depleted the company’s resources, and food supplies ran dangerously low. At that moment of crisis, 11 WIC slaves, some of the same enslaved males brought to New Amsterdam in 1626, demanded freedom for themselves and their families. The WIC could not dismiss this petition as an unreasonable request, for the slaves’ services were now more crucial than ever. The WIC had already enlisted its male slaves in military campaigns against the natives.⁸³ WIC officers knew that these slaves would be needed in the near future and therefore offered “half-freedom” to the slaves who were astute enough to take advantage of the escalating Indian war by petitioning for freedom. A written agreement stated that the black petitioners were “free and at liberty on the same footing as other free people here in New Netherland.” But according to the “half-freedom” bargain, the WIC manumitted the 11 enslaved male petitioners and their wives on the condition that they were obligated to labor for the WIC when called on to serve and that their offspring were the WIC’s property. This arrangement also stipulated that the WIC must pay the half-free blacks wages for their labor and that, during periods when the WIC did not require their services, these blacks were at liberty to provide for their own subsistence, as long as they paid the WIC an annual tribute of one hog, 23 bushels of corn, wampum, or fur pelts worth 20 guilders.⁸⁴ Following the Indian war, the WIC granted half-freedom to another two dozen or so slaves as a reward for their allegiance during the conflict with the Indians and for loyal service during peacetime.⁸⁵

The liminal status of half-freedom proved to be a bridge to full freedom. Shortly before the WIC surrendered Manhattan Island to English invaders in August 1664, the company was forced to consider a petition from some half-free blacks who now demanded the removal of the remaining restrictions on their liberty and the emancipation of their offspring. Eager to secure their allegiance, the WIC acceded to the petitioners’ request.⁸⁶ In addition to obtaining full freedom for themselves and their children, the petitioners acquired land on Manhattan Island. These black landowners cultivated the so-called free Negro lots, approximately 15 small parcels of farmland that the WIC subtracted from its *bouwerie* east of Hudson Street.⁸⁷ Like the *colonus* of the late Roman Empire, Dutch colonial Manhattan’s black landowners tended their own farmland on the condition that they pay a yearly tribute of produce to the colonial rulers.⁸⁸

Besides some WIC slaves, a few slaves of individual slaveowners managed to attain freedom. For example, in 1649, Manuel de Spanje purchased his freedom from Phillip Jansz Ringo for 300 guilders, to be paid over three years, and in 1654, Captain Pieter Jacobsz and Jan de Graue manumitted Bastiaen d'Angola, whom they had captured during a privateering venture in the Caribbean Sea but freed as a reward for faithful service.⁸⁹ During the decade and a half prior to the English conquest, most slaves brought to New Netherland were sold to individual settlers rather than to the WIC.⁹⁰ Even though slaves found it more difficult to obtain freedom from individual owners than from the company, the rise of individual slave ownership did not completely foreclose the possibility of manumission.⁹¹ While a few free blacks in New Amsterdam entered into indentureship and apprenticeship agreements with settlers to avoid privation, most managed to maintain their independence and obtain a modest subsistence from their farmland during the Dutch colonial era.⁹² The free blacks of New Amsterdam were never a pariah class. They strived to integrate themselves into the settler community, joining the Dutch Reformed Church,⁹³ having Dutch Calvinist ministers consecrate their marriages and baptize their children,⁹⁴ and organizing a weekly market and an annual fair.⁹⁵

In 1664, New Amsterdam's population included approximately 75 free blacks and 300 enslaved blacks.⁹⁶ Even though slaves accounted for a majority of New Amsterdam's African-descended population, the WIC officials in that Dutch colonial port town were less concerned with establishing a rigid biracial social order than with securing the loyalty of the entire colonial population. The Indians (or *wilden*) posed a grave threat to the Dutch colony's survival. In New Netherland anti-Amerindian racism was far more pronounced than antiblack racism. However, losses to the settler population, due to the devastation of war and outmigration, meant that black slavery became more crucial than ever to the Dutch project of colony building in North America. A vital source of labor and military manpower, enslaved laborers were so valuable that on one occasion the WIC authorities commuted the death penalty on several enslaved black men who had committed a capital crime.⁹⁷ For the WIC officials in New Amsterdam, the imperatives of colony building outweighed any ethical considerations respecting slaves. Grasping for an expedient solution to the Dutch colony's labor shortage, they imported supplies of enslaved African laborers and kept most Africans and their descendants in lifelong bondage. By 1664, enslaved people of African descent were approximately 20 percent of New Amsterdam's total population of 1,500 inhabitants. This demographic factor gave New Amsterdam the distinction of having the largest proportion of slaves of any North American colony at that time.⁹⁸ Like other European colony builders in the Americas, the Dutch colonizers in New Netherland imported involuntary African immigrants without fully appreciating the social and political implications of introducing enslaved Africans into the embryonic colony. The Dutch colony builders were only dimly aware, if at all, that they were laying the foundations for an enduring social order predicated on the subordination of Africans and their descendants.

 More evident to the Dutch colonial authorities was the heterogeneity of New Netherland's settler population. Multicultural, polyglot populations were, in fact, spawned everywhere the United Provinces planted colonies. Over time, a diverse assortment of settlers from various societies and cultures trickled into the Dutch colonial outpost on Manhattan Island. During the early phase of colony building, the WIC officials welcomed fellow Calvinists, including Walloons (or French-speaking Calvinists from southern Netherlands), to New Netherland, but banished Lutherans, Quakers, and other religious outsiders from the Dutch colony. Other than a small number of Walloon families, most Calvinists were, however, unwilling to migrate to the WIC's outposts along the Hudson River. Faced with this unforeseen contingency, the WIC rescinded its exclusionary immigration policy, by which the joint-stock company intended to prevent all but adherents to Calvinism from migrating to New Netherland. Gradually, Lutherans, Quakers, Baptists, Mennonites, Anabaptists, and other lesser-known sects were added to the Dutch overseas colony's settler population.⁹⁹ As early as 1636, the Dutch Calvinist clergyman Dominie Megapolensis complained that New Amsterdam was becoming a "Babel of Confusion."¹⁰⁰ In 1644, the Catholic priest Father Isaac Jogues reported that in New Netherland "there may well be four or five hundred men of different sects and nations; the Director-General told me that there were persons there of eighteen different languages."¹⁰¹ George Baxter, the WIC's English translator, later noted that New Netherland's population was "made up of various nations from divers quarters of the globe."¹⁰² New Amsterdam's diverse population doubtless included some peoples of mixed ancestry. Historical records indicate that a free person of Dutch and Moroccan ancestry named Anthony Jansen Van Salee settled in New Amsterdam in 1633 and eventually moved to Breuckelen (later Brooklyn), where he leased 200 acres of land from the WIC. As his place-name suggests, Van Salee was born in Salee, Morocco. His father, Jan Janse, was a Dutch pirate who, for a time, lived in Salee and, during his stay there, had a child with a Moroccan woman. Born of a Dutch father, Van Salee held a claim to natal belonging among the Dutch people, but his dark skin color and adherence to the Islamic faith distinguished him from New Netherland's predominantly Protestant, light-skinned settler population. Settling in New Netherland during the early stage of colonization, when that Dutch colony's labor shortage was most acute, Van Salee was allowed to cultivate his land. The official records, however, note Van Salee's presence in the Dutch North American outpost, referring to him as the "black Mohammedan."¹⁰³

During his tenure as commander of the WIC operations in the Western Hemisphere, Director-General Petrus Stuyvesant (1647–64) bemoaned the WIC's failure to people New Netherland with numerous loyal Dutch settlers and complained to the Estates General that the Dutch overseas colony's diverse settler population hindered the WIC's project of colony building in North

America: “the *English* and *French* colonies are continued and populated by their own nation and countrymen and consequently bound together firmly and united, while your Honors’ colonies in New-Netherland are only gradually and slowly peopled by the scrapings of all sorts of nationalities (few excepted) who consequently have the least interest in the welfare and maintenance of the commonwealth.”¹⁰⁴ In 1647, at the time Stuyvesant arrived in New Netherland, that Dutch overseas colony’s population included few settlers from the affluent region of northern Holland. Nearly 30 percent of the European settlers who migrated to New Netherland between 1630 and 1644 were from the Province of Utrecht, a region ailing from the decline in the linen industry, but the majority of the settlers in Dutch North America were Protestant refugees from the southern Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, England, and the northern Germanic principalities and the Hansa cities to the east, such as Danzig and Königsberg. During the upheaval of the Thirty Years War (1618–48), these Protestants fled their homelands and with their families traveled first to Holland and then to the Dutch North American outposts.¹⁰⁵ The heterogeneity of New Netherland’s settler population was, in large part, a consequence of the fact that the United Provinces and its overseas colonies had become havens for victims of religious persecution and refugees of war from outside Holland.

Holland had long been an asylum for Jewish exiles. With the aid of northern Holland’s well-established Jewish community, 25 Jews from Pernambuco, Brazil, migrated to New Amsterdam in 1654.¹⁰⁶ At that time, Dutch Calvinist clergymen in New Amsterdam called for the deportation of these Jewish immigrants, complaining that too many heretics already resided in New Netherland. Dominie Megapolensis reported to the ecclesiastical authorities in Holland: “We have here Papists, Mennonites and Lutherans among the Dutch; also many Puritans or Independents, and many atheists and various other servants of Baal among the English under this Government, who conceal themselves under the name of Christians; it would create a still greater confusion, if the obstinate and immovable Jews came to settle here.”¹⁰⁷ The imperious Director-General Stuyvesant despised Jews, who, he believed, would “infect and trouble” New Netherland with “their customary usury and deceitful trading with Christians.”¹⁰⁸ Despite the WIC’s official policy of extending religious tolerance to settlers, Stuyvesant attempted to expel the Jewish newcomers from New Amsterdam. But a group of Jewish stockholders in Amsterdam used their influence with the WIC officials in Holland to defeat Stuyvesant’s deportation plan, reminding the WIC of the Jews’ loyalty to the Dutch Republic, the enmity against Catholics that both the Jews and the Dutch Calvinists shared, and the service that the Jews rendered to the United Provinces following the Dutch conquest of the Portuguese overseas colony called Brazil. They argued that Jews ought to be allowed to settle in New Amsterdam and other parts of New Netherland in peace because “yonder land is extensive and spacious. The more of loyal people that go to live there, the better it is in regard to the population of the country.” Recounting the Jews’ history of alliance with the Dutch Calvinists, they insisted that the Jewish presence in the Dutch overseas colonies strengthened rather than weakened the Dutch Empire. WIC officials in Amsterdam recognized the

merit of these arguments and, in 1655, granted the Jewish newcomers in New Amsterdam permission to permanently settle and trade in New Netherland.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, Stuyvesant remained hostile to the Jewish settlers and attached numerous restrictions to their privileges: The New Amsterdam Jews were prohibited from owning land, exercising the vote, holding public office, worshipping in public, and possessing firearms.¹¹⁰ Even so, the Jewish newcomers managed to establish themselves in finance, overseas trade, and modest retail businesses.

When, in 1663, the zealous Calvinist Director-General Stuyvesant renewed his campaign against religious outsiders, such as the Quaker John Browne, and ordered all inhabitants in New Netherland to attend the worship services of the Dutch Reformed Church or else leave the Dutch Calvinist colony, the Estates General reminded him that the WIC must pursue a policy of religious tolerance in order to attract as many settlers as possible to the underpopulated Dutch colonial outposts in North America. The Estates General informed Stuyvesant: "We doubt very much whether we can proceed against [religious heretics] rigourously without diminishing the population and stopping immigration, which must be favoured at a so tender stage of the country's existence. You may therefore shut your eyes, at least not force people's consciences, but allow every one to have his own belief, as long as he behaves quietly and legally, gives no offense to his neighbors and does not oppose the government."¹¹¹ With this reaffirmation of the Dutch colonial policy of granting liberty of conscience to the settlers, sundry Protestant denominations and other religious sects found asylum in New Netherland and amplified the heterogeneity of that colony's settler population.

Viewing the linguistic and religious diversity of the settler population as a liability rather than an asset, the WIC officials and the Dutch Calvinist clergy determined to unite New Netherland's diverse settler population around the shared Christian duty of converting the natives and other so-called heathens to Christianity. Hence the Christian "civilizing" mission in North America not only offered the WIC a means of legitimating the project of colony building in an alien land but also provided the trading company with a disciplinary mechanism that could anchor the settlers' collective identity in the common Christian calling of service to God. In this respect, the missionary feature of the WIC's colonization project was principally designed for the promotion of communal cohesion among the settlers and only secondarily for the salvation of the Native Americans and the enslaved Africans. With the goal of encouraging settler solidarity foremost in mind, the WIC commanded the settlers to provide the natives and the slaves with examples of Christian virtue or, as Article Two of the Provisional Conditions of 1624 stated, "by their Christian life and conduct seek to draw Indians and other blind people to the knowledge of God and His Word."¹¹² Also, the Dutch Reformed Church insisted that the Dutch Calvinist slaveowners in New Netherland should be "responsible for instructing their Negroes in the Christian Religion and that time should be provided for all Negroes to assemble in a suitable place in order to receive instruction from a catechist."¹¹³ For its part, the WIC pledged to take "effectuall care of the propagation of the Gospel in the several Foreign Plantacons, by providing that there be

good encouragement settled for the invitation and maintenance of learned and orthodox ministers, and . . . to consider how such of the natives or such as are purchased from other parts to be servants and slaves may be best invited to the Christian Faith, and be made capable of being baptised thereunto; it being the honor of our . . . Protestant Religion that all persons in any of our Dominions should be taught the knowledge of God.”¹¹⁴ More interested in making profits than saving souls, the joint-stock company never fulfilled this pledge.

Distracted by border disputes, Indian wars, and other emergencies, the WIC all but abandoned its missionary agenda. As a consequence, the primary responsibility for carrying out the work of converting so-called heathens to Christianity fell to the Classis of Amsterdam, the chief governing body of the Dutch Reformed Church. Writing from New Amsterdam, Dominie Evarudus Bogardus begged the Classis to send more ministers to New Netherland, but that ecclesiastical organization dispatched few clergymen to North America. Furthermore, the ministers who migrated to New Netherland rarely traveled beyond New Amsterdam, and those clergymen who did so made only a slight impression on the indigenous people. The records for the entire Dutch colonial period document only one Indian convert to Christianity in New Netherland. According to an extant report, that proselyte could recite the Ten Commandments, read and write Dutch, and give a public testimony of his conversion to Christianity. After two years of captivity, the Indian convert returned to his village, where he was supposed to proselytize among his people. But instead of leading an exemplary Christian life, the Indian soon pawned his Bible for some brandy, the imported liquor for which he had acquired a taste while living among the Christian settlers. This unexpected twist of events prompted Dominie Megapolensis to remark that his protégé had “turned into a regular beast, doing more harm than good among the Indians.”¹¹⁵ Overall, Christianity made only narrow inroads into New Netherland’s Indian communities. As late as 1656, Megapolensis wrote: “We can say but little of the conversion of the heathens here, . . . and see no way to accomplish it, until they are subdued by the numbers and powers of our people, and reduced to some sort of civilization.”¹¹⁶ Megapolensis saw no contradiction in linking Christendom’s “civilizing” mission to the military conquest of the natives and the occupation of their lands.

Even though the natives experienced devastating military defeats and sweeping transformations in their material culture,¹¹⁷ they persisted in following their own religious beliefs and practices. In 1655, Adriaen Van der Donck reported that Indian women continued to mourn the dead in accordance with their ancient custom, entering Indian burial grounds with “dreadful and wonderful wailing, naming the dead, smiting upon their breasts, scratching and disfiguring their faces, and showing all possible signs of grief.”¹¹⁸ Van der Donck interpreted these “signs of grief” as the mark of a savage people, whom Christians could legitimately subjugate and dispossess of their lands “on account of their religion, of which,” he concluded, “they have very little, and that is very strange.”¹¹⁹ Although Van der Donck admitted that the “savages are not at all excessive, wasteful, wanton, or affluent in their eating and drinking—even during their feast days,”¹²⁰ he nevertheless likened the natives, whom the Dutch-

speaking invaders called *wilden* after the Latin cognate “savage,” to Western Christendom’s age-old models of wild men—for example, the Turks, Mamelukes, Tartars, Scythians, and barbarians.¹²¹

Van der Donck also noted that the Native Americans’ skin color resembled that of the ancient Tartars and Scythians.¹²² Unaware of the biogenetic mechanism of heredity and its relation to environmental conditions, early modern Europeans relied on available sources of knowledge about the effects of climate and cultural practices on the appearance of human beings to invent explanations for the variation of skin color in humankind. Climatic theories attributed the Native Americans’ “olive” or “tawny” skin complexion and the sub-Saharan Africans’ “black” skin color to overexposure to the sun, whereas anthropological theories attributed such deviations from the presumed epidermal norm of “white” skin pigment to particularistic cultural practices, like the Picts of Scotland’s custom of painting their skin blue and the sub-Saharan Africans’ alleged habit of putting turbid oil on their skin. In their encounters with Native Americans, early Dutch newcomers to North America, like Megapolensis and Van der Donck, were struck by the differences both of the indigenes’ bodily appearance and customs. Importantly, they, like other early modern Europeans, applied a combination of cultural and physiognomic traits as the criteria for assigning individuals to distinct racial categories. In this respect, individuals and groups were “multiply racialized,”¹²³ as the criteria for defining racial typologies were drawn from multiple fields of perception and cognition.

The era of European colonial expansionism was a formative yet transitional moment in the history of the construction of “race.” That concept remained polyvalent for much longer than many scholars have recognized. The historian Colin Kidd reminds us that as late as the eighteenth century “racial discourse remained transitional, a hodgepodge of biological, climatic, and stadialist interpretations of racial and cultural differences.”¹²⁴ The cultural studies scholar Robert Young writes, “Racial theory was never simply scientific or biogenetic.”¹²⁵ The historian and anthropologist Anne Stoler adds: “There is good evidence that discourses of race did not have to wait mid-nineteenth-century science for their verification. Distinctions of color joined with those of religion and culture to distinguish the rulers from the ruled, invoked in varied measures in the governing strategies of colonial states.”¹²⁶ The imperatives of European colonial expansionism—the subjugation of the natives, the arrogation of their lands for European occupation, the enslavement of sub-Saharan Africans, and the extension of colonial rule over foreign territories—involved the construction of legitimating discourses of race, grounded in the various knowledge bases available to early modern Europeans, including interpretations of the Bible.

While most Christians of the early modern period accepted the idea of a single act of creation and the notion of the original unity of humankind, by the late sixteenth century influential interpretations of the Bible traced the division of humankind to the postdiluvian migration of the tribes of Shem, Ham, and Japheth to different parts of the world, where they each achieved a distinct level of civi-

lization, ranging from a wanton, lawless existence to an organized mode of life, characterized by language, religion, laws, and political institutions. These readings of the Bible encouraged Christians to regard themselves as the members of a superior subdivision of humankind, which lived and prospered in a renewed covenant with God, and to view the Native Americans and the sub-Saharan Africans as inferior categories of humanity, which Christians could lawfully enslave and divest of their lands. Early modern biblical exegesis also encouraged Christians to believe that Native Americans, sub-Saharan Africans, and other so-called heathens would dwell in spiritual darkness forever, unless they renounced false idols and worshiped the one true God. Confident in their own moral superiority yet acting on the belief that all human beings had souls worthy of saving, the European colonizers embarked on a “civilizing” mission of converting the “heathens” in foreign lands to Christianity.

A supplement to the WIC’s project of colony building in North America, missionary colonialism involved the transplantation of Christianity in the hearts and minds of the natives. But few natives embraced the Calvinist version of Christianity. Here, the lack of a common yet sophisticated spoken language obstructed the Dutch Calvinist proselytizing mission among the natives. The Dutch Calvinist clergyman Dominie Jonas Michaëlius pointed out that he and other Christian missionaries communicated with the indigenes “as much by signs with the thumb and finger as by speaking, and this cannot be done in religious matters.”¹²⁷ Frustrated by the apparent futility of his missionary work, Michaëlius concluded that the natives were incapable of comprehending the basic tenets of the Christian belief system. “If we speak to them of God,” he reported, “it appears to them as a dream.”¹²⁸ Like the early European explorer Henry Hudson, Dominie Michaëlius perceived the indigenous population through an ethnocentric lens, which rendered him unable to recognize Native American culture as a civilized mode of life, with its own laws and legitimate religious institutions, beliefs, and practices. The Dutch Calvinist minister stated:

As to the natives of this country, I find them entirely savage and wild, strangers to all decency, yea, uncivil and stupid as garden poles, proficient in all wickedness and godlessness; devilish men, who serve nobody but the Devil, that is, the spirit which in their language they call Menetto; under which title they comprehend everything that is subtle and crafty and beyond human will and power. They have so much witchcraft, divination, sorcery, and wicked arts, that they can hardly be held in by bands and locks. They are as thievish and treacherous as they are tall; and in cruelty they are altogether inhuman more than barbarous, far exceeding the Africans.¹²⁹

For the most part, Michaëlius’s commentary on Native Americans focused on descriptions of their religion and culture. But he also mentioned the natives’ surface bodily appearance when he thought it served as an index to their inner moral disposition. For instance, the Dutch Calvinist cleric drew a correlation between the natives’ “tall” stature and their “thievish and treacherous” character. Here, the imputed indexicality of a visible bodily trait to an invisible moral disposition calls attention to the integrality of the regime of visibility to the his-

tory of racial formation and to the multiple registers in which the process of racialization takes place. As Michaëlius saw it, the natives' tallness, a visible physiognomic trait, in combination with their untrustworthiness, an invisible moral trait, made it possible to assign the indigenes to a classification of human beings whose members shared that unique ensemble of traits. Perhaps Michaëlius drew a correlation between the Indians' "tallness" and their putative "thievish and treacherous" behavior because the two traits are deviations from the classical Western European aesthetic values of balance, symmetry, virtue, and moderation. Ultimately, Michaëlius perceived Native American culture as a site of excess and the entire indigenous population as monstrous savages whose cruelty was "altogether inhuman" and "more than barbarous, far exceeding the Africans." With this assessment, he exiled the natives to the remote frontier of abject inhumanity. In this respect, Michaëlius's views on Native Americans already express the logical extreme of racism, not some neutral commentary on cultural alterity or a benign classification schema. This same pattern of perception and cognition structured and enabled the Dutch colonialist war of extermination against the coastal Indian population during the 1640s.

At the precise moment Amerindian-European relations in New Netherland deteriorated into bloody warfare, the Dutch Calvinist clergymen quit their proselytizing activities among the natives and turned their attention to the enslaved Africans, who, because of their enslavement, were considered to be less incorrigible than the indigenes.¹³⁰ These clergymen agreed with a Calvinist church elder when, in 1641, he wrote: "The Americans (Indians) come not yet to the right knowledge of God; but the Negroes, living among the settlers, come nearer thereto, and give better hope."¹³¹ Believing that enslaved Africans possessed souls worthy of saving, Dominie Hendrick Selijns baptized several slaves during the early phase of his career in New Netherland.¹³² Upon finding that Selijns had christened adult slaves without first providing them with instruction in Christian doctrine and obtaining a testimony of faith from each candidate, the Classis of Amsterdam began to worry that the Dutch Calvinist "civilizing" mission in New Netherland would result in the erosion of the hard-won distinction between Reformed Protestants and Papists. Importantly, Christendom of the post-Reformation era included several Reformed churches, each grounded in the emphasis placed on a laity that could comprehend the word of God.¹³³ In sharp contrast to the Roman Catholic practice of performing indiscriminate mass baptisms of adult slaves, the Dutch Reformed Church required all adult candidates to submit a profession of faith that demonstrated a correct understanding of the basic tenets of Protestantism before they were admitted to the sacrament of baptism.¹³⁴ With the objective of preserving the strict doctrines of Calvinism, outlined in the Heidelberg Confession (1562) and reaffirmed in the Canons of Dort (1619), firmly in mind, the Classis of Amsterdam informed Selijns that its rules pertained to enslaved Africans and other so-called heathens also: "The Classis deems it necessary that you observe the good rule of the church here in this land, where no one, who is an adult, is admitted to baptism without previous confession of faith. Accordingly, the adult Negroes and Indians must also be previously instructed and make a confession of their faith be-

fore Holy Baptism may be administered to them. As to their children, the *Classis* answers, that as long as the parents are actually heathens, although they were baptised in the gross (by wholesale, by Papists), the children may not be baptised, unless the parents pass over to Christianity, and abandon heathenism.”¹³⁵ As a consequence of these restrictions, few adults of African descent were baptized and admitted to membership in New Amsterdam’s Dutch Reformed Church. Between 1639 and 1655, the Dutch Calvinist ministers baptized only 57 converts of African descent; of that number, 49 converts were children. Conspicuously, they baptized no African-descended people between 1656 and 1664.¹³⁶ A visibly distinctive and culturally alien presence, the enslaved black African population served as a counterpoint for the settlers’ self-identification as Christians and, more specifically, as post-Reformation Protestants.

Though largely a fruitless endeavor, the Dutch Calvinist “civilizing” mission of converting slaves to Christianity, combined with the Dutch Republic’s avowed commitment to the principle of liberty, rendered the binarism of free Christian/enslaved heathen open to contestation. Since the thirteenth century, wage labor and various forms of temporary servitude had, in most parts of Western Europe including the Netherlands, gradually replaced the condition of bondage known as serfdom.¹³⁷ Early modern Hollanders took enormous pride in their liberty, zealously guarded it, and even refused to condone the enslavement of black Africans in the Dutch Republic.¹³⁸ Although Dutch privateers had been seizing African-descended people from enemy sailing vessels and selling them in the Americas since around 1609, the directors of the WIC, known as the *Heeren XIX*, were for a time divided over the question of the legitimacy of enslaving black Africans and their descendants. It was not until the WIC captured Recife, Brazil, in 1635 and gradually expanded into much of Pernambuco that the imperatives of developing that valuable overseas territory and the profits from the lucrative Brazilian slave market became an irresistible argument for the formulation of an unequivocal company policy sanctioning the transatlantic slave trade. At that time the *Heeren XIX* decided that, if the WIC were going to benefit from its enterprises in the Western Hemisphere, it must not only actively engage in the slave traffic but also exploit enslaved laborers in its own colony-building projects. At about the same time the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius, citing Roman and Hebrew laws, endorsed the institution of slavery. Other pundits at the University of Leiden offered specific justification for the enslavement of sub-Saharan Africans, citing Genesis, Leviticus, and other biblical texts.¹³⁹ By the end of the 1630s, the authorities in Holland had sanctioned black slavery in the Dutch overseas colonies but not in the Dutch Republic. This elite consensus did not end all controversy over the enslavement of black Africans and their descendants, however.


The status of several slave children became the object of controversy, when, in 1649, some Protestant settlers in New Netherland sent a remonstrance to Holland, calling on the Estates General to ban the WIC from enslaving the offspring of the free black Christians who inhabited the Dutch outposts in North America. The WIC enslaved these children, the petitioners asserted, “though it is contrary to the laws of every Christian people that anyone born of a free

Christian mother should be a slave and be compelled to remain in servitude.”¹⁴⁰ In defense of its actions, the WIC replied that there were only three such slave children in New Netherland and that all lived in Christian households and received humane treatment from their masters. Black Africans benefited from their enslavement, the WIC argued, because it placed them under the civilizing influence of Christians.¹⁴¹ The Dutch Calvinist clergy’s dismal slave conversion record belied the WIC’s claims, however. Dominie Selijns explained that the Classis of Amsterdam required him to follow its restrictive rules of admission to the sacrament of baptism and that he now refused to baptize adult slaves, “partly on account of their lack of knowledge and of faith, and partly because of the worldly and perverse aims on the part of said negroes.” “They wanted nothing else,” he added, “than to deliver their children from bodily slavery, without striving for piety and christian virtues.”¹⁴² By excluding these adult slaves from the baptismal rite, Dominie Selijns obeyed the “good rule” of the Dutch Reformed Church. But the Estates General never issued a clear statement on the WIC’s practice of enslaving the offspring of free black Christians. Compounding that ambiguity, neither the Estates General nor the WIC ever promulgated a civil law that explicitly sanctioned the institution of slavery in New Netherland. For this and other reasons, the status of black Africans and their offspring remained open to contestation, as the 1649 remonstrance and the successful petitions of the free blacks of New Amsterdam demonstrate.

In 1657, some Protestant settlers in Flushing, Queens, sent a remonstrance to the Estates General, accusing the WIC of violating the Dutch Republic’s avowed principle of extending liberty and Christian brotherhood to all people. That complaint raised fundamental objections against the enslavement of black Africans and their descendants in the Dutch overseas colonies. “The law of love, peace and liberty in the States [United Provinces],” the settlers wrote, “extends to the Jews, Turks, and Egyptians, as they are considered the sons of Adam, which is the glory of the outward state of Holland.”¹⁴³ With this reference to the “sons of Adam,” the Flushing settlers dismissed proslavery arguments that defended the enslavement of black Africans on the grounds that these dark-skinned people bore the Noachidian curse on the sons of Ham and were therefore lawfully enslaved. Asserting the notion of the essential unity and single origin of humankind, the settlers tacitly countered that, while sub-Saharan Africans could not be definitively traced to Ham and his descendants, they were irrefutably the sons of Adam, as were all human beings, and therefore ought to be treated like the rest of Adam’s lineage. In its defense, the WIC offered no elaborate justification for its enslavement of black Africans and merely noted that the joint-stock company followed the well-known example of other European colony builders in New Spain, Brazil, and the Caribbean.¹⁴⁴

As a result of the Dutch colonization projects in the Western Hemisphere and engagement in the transatlantic slave trade, enslaved Africans could be found laboring at Dutch outposts throughout the Atlantic world, in military regiments that protected Dutch colonial possessions in that part of the globe, and on Dutch ships that sailed the oceans. Importantly, the slave trade and the exploitation of slave labor in the overseas colonies underwrote the high standard of liv-

ing that made seventeenth-century Holland the envy of rival nations. Sugar, tobacco, coffee, and other colonial produce cultivated by enslaved African laborers were among the “embarrassment of riches” daily consumed in the affluent United Provinces during the early modern era.¹⁴⁵

 Despite their enviable record in extracting wealth from foreign lands, the Dutch colonizers discovered that the realities of the North American frontier seldom, if ever, matched their ideal vision of the New World, which beguiled even the cautious Dutch Calvinist burgher in Amsterdam. The erection of forts for security and trade in a distant territory, the subjugation of hostile natives, and the recruitment of settlers and the importation of a slave labor force for the permanent occupation and improvement of conquered lands made the project of colonization a costly venture. Because the WIC’s business enterprise in North America was only a small component of the broader network of supply and market zones that comprised its commercial empire, that joint-stock company invested meager resources in developing New Netherland into a viable settler colony and directed most of its personnel, as well as the greatest part of its venture capital, toward the development of its lucrative trading forts along the Amazon River and the African littoral. By the 1650s, the WIC sent only two ships each year to New Amsterdam.¹⁴⁶

Moreover, the WIC proved ill equipped to exercise the art of colonial governance. The veteran military officers whom the WIC sent to rule New Netherland not only plunged that Dutch North American colony into a ruinous war against the natives and mishandled border disputes with the settlers in the neighboring colonies of rival nations but also estranged New Netherland’s settler population from the colonial government by curtailing the settlers’ liberties. Some Dutch Calvinist clerics believed that life on the colonial frontier had transformed the settlers into a lawless people who resembled savages. Writing 30 years after the founding of New Amsterdam, Dominie Johannes Cornelissen Backerus reported on the moral degeneracy of the settlers: “Most of [the settlers] are very ignorant in regard to true religion [Christianity], and very much given to drink.”¹⁴⁷ When, in 1638, the WIC banned the sale of guns and ammunition to the natives and, in 1648, outlawed the traffic in alcohol,¹⁴⁸ the settlers ignored these regulations and continued to supply the natives with firearms, gunpowder, and strong liquor. Reviewing the settlers’ record of violating the WIC’s laws, Director-General Stuyvesant concluded that the settler population must be subjected to stricter measures of discipline. Endowed with broad judicial and governmental powers, Stuyvesant ruled New Netherland by martial law, which he deemed suitable for the project of colony building. His government imposed order by closing New Amsterdam’s taverns after nine o’clock at night, punishing public drunkenness and breaking the Sabbath, jailing outspoken critics, and commissioning a police force, known as the Rattle Watch, to monitor New Amsterdam’s population and enforce the law. Stuyvesant’s policy of law and order widened the rift between the settler population and the WIC.

In 1649, a group of settlers, known as the Nine Men, sent the Estates General a petition, protesting Stuyvesant's autocratic rule and demanding political reforms, including local autonomy for towns, a court system based on the Amsterdam model, and the regular election of public officials in which eligible settlers exercised the right to vote. Following three years of deliberations, the Estates General ordered Stuyvesant to implement the requested reforms. Although other towns in New Netherland had already won a large measure of autonomy—for example, Gravesend in 1645, Breuckelen in 1646, and Hempstead in 1646—the WIC remained reluctant to relinquish its governmental powers, especially concerning New Amsterdam, its most valuable outpost in North America. In the case of New Amsterdam, Stuyvesant had circumvented popular participation in governmental affairs by installing a clique of colonial elites that ruled the fledgling port town as the WIC's puppet government until 1652, when New Amsterdam's settler population won the right to hold municipal elections without interference from the WIC. This political reform came too late to placate disgruntled settlers. Years of hardship under the WIC's quasi-military government had eroded settler loyalty at the United Provinces' only fortress in North America with any chance of repelling foreign invaders.¹⁴⁹


Internal discord eventually rendered New Amsterdam vulnerable to the rival European nations pressing against New Netherland's borders. Stuyvesant perceived the Swedish colony Fort Christina along the Delaware River as a potential threat to the integrity of New Netherland's southern border, and in 1655 he dispatched a military expedition to subdue the Swedish Lutherans.¹⁵⁰ Some natives seized the strategic advantage presented by the split between competing European invaders and, while the Dutch military forces were away fighting the Swedes, attacked vulnerable Dutch outposts, vandalized houses on Manhattan Island, burned twenty-eight farms in the Pavonia area, and killed fifty settlers along the Hudson River. Faced with this new crisis, known as the Peach Tree War, Stuyvesant appealed to all Europeans in the region—Swedes, Dutch, and English—to resolve their differences and band together in "Christian unity . . . in drawing a line to keep the barbarians in submission or at least quiet."¹⁵¹ However, Stuyvesant's call for Christian solidarity produced no enduring agreement of interest between the rival European colonizers in North America.

At the time of the restoration of Charles II to the English throne in 1660, England, the United Provinces' most aggressive challenger in the international competition among the European maritime powers, cast a covetous gaze toward the Dutch outposts situated in the midst of the British North American colonies. Despite many setbacks and false starts, the WIC had managed to transform New Amsterdam into an embryonic port town with a stone fort, palisades, windmill, counting house, canals, two rustic churches, and 120 dwellings. The Dutch colony builders were also beginning to develop the surrounding countryside into a productive agricultural hinterland, with the help of European farming families that, during the 1650s, migrated to New Netherland in larger numbers than in previous years.¹⁵² Nevertheless, by 1664, Dutch occupation of the expansive territory of New Netherland was slight, especially compared with the more populous English colonies to the north and the south. For

example, at that time Virginia had 40,000 inhabitants and New England had 50,000 inhabitants, while New Netherland had at most 9,000 inhabitants. The United Provinces' claim to New Netherland was tenuous at best, based as it was on the slender occupation of a vast territorial domain. England's King Charles II claimed the region that encompassed New Netherland and, in 1663, granted that territory to his younger brother, the Duke of York. Encouraged by Dutch impassivity toward the English presence within the jurisdiction of New Netherland—for example, on the eastern shore of Long Island and the Hudson Valley frontier—England determined to dislodge the Dutch Republic from its desirable but weakly held North American territory. On August 8, 1664, Richard Nicolls, Charles II's commissioner, entered Nyack Bay and, with the backing of four warships, obtained the bloodless surrender of New Amsterdam on Manhattan Island and the rest of New Netherland.¹⁵³ Unanticipated obstacles and unforeseen antagonisms had dissolved the Dutch colony builders' utopian dream of unobstructed conquest, occupation, and exploitation of foreign lands.

“Nothing That Is Necessary Is to Be Discouraged”

IMMIGRATION, LABOR, AND THE PROJECT OF COLONY BUILDING
UNDER ENGLISH RULE, 1664–1774

 Instead of placing the project of occupying and developing the recently conquered territory, formerly known as New Netherland and renamed New York, in the hands of a trading company, as the Estates General of the United Provinces had done, the English monarch, King Charles II (1660–85), entrusted that task to his brother, the Duke of York. In its entirety, the Duke’s North American province included a tract of land stretching from the Connecticut River to the Delaware River, a coastal area along Long Island, Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket, and part of the present state of Maine between the St. Croix and Kennebec rivers. At the time of the English conquest of New Netherland in 1664, there were only a few colonial outposts in that area, and these settler enclaves—in the Hudson Valley, Long Island, Westchester County, and Manhattan Island—were scarcely sufficient to secure England’s claim to such an extensive territorial domain. To establish an incontestable hold on New York, the early English colony builders planned to people that thinly populated region with loyal British subjects. Based on the feudalistic model of colonial Ireland, England’s first overseas colony,¹ the initial colonization scheme for New York called for the transportation of numerous British tenants to the North American manorial estates of favored landlords, who had received enormous allotments of land in New York as a reward for their allegiance to the Stuart monarchy. But other than some English colonial officials, adventurers, and traders, few migrants from the British Isles permanently settled in New York during the early years of English rule. The historian Joyce Goodfriend has noted that the high rate of outmigration among these newcomers retarded the growth of the colony’s settler population.² New York’s first colonial governor, Richard

Nicolls (1665–72), explained that British settlers “are blowne up with large designs, but not knowing the knack of trading here to differ from most places, they meet with discouragements and stay not to become wiser.”³ If, as Nicolls suggested, British settlers left New York after only a short stay because they lacked the patience that would have enabled them to learn the colony’s particular trading customs and thereby prosper, British newcomers, nonetheless, understood that New York offered them fewer opportunities for an independent life than other British North American colonies, where the transformative dynamics of modernity were elevating penniless peasants, who had been uprooted by the devastations of war, the enclosure of land, high rents, and the deterioration of the cottage industries in their homeland, to the level of independent landowners. However much the early English colony builders hoped to recruit loyal British subjects to occupy and develop the land in New York, they could not rely on their own countrymen to people that overseas colony. To their dismay, nothing like the numerous tenants of the sort that English colony builders had transported to colonial Ireland permanently settled in the Duke of York’s North American province.

England valued New York and the other English overseas colonies as vehicles for achieving the mercantilist goal of national self-sufficiency in the context of domestic upheaval, intensifying economic competition, and international war. Writing about the ideal relation between the nation and the colonies, the Bristol merchant John Carey remarked: “I take England and all its plantations to be one great Body, those being so many limbs or countries belonging to it, therefore when we consume their growth we do as it were spend the Fruits of our own Land, and what thereof we sell to our Neighbours for Bullion, or such commodities as must pay for therein, brings a second Profit to the Nation. . . . This was the first design of settling Plantations abroad, that the People of England might better maintain a Commerce and Trade among themselves, the chief Profit whereof was to redound to the centre.”⁴ According to Carey, the English overseas colonies were subordinate appendages of the nation and should, therefore, serve England’s national interest by contributing to the accumulation of wealth in the metropolitan core. To ensure that England’s colonial possessions fulfilled their purpose, the English Parliament of the Restoration Era passed several laws that excluded rival maritime nations from the carrying trade to and from the English overseas colonies: The Navigation Act of 1660 granted English merchants a monopoly on the shipping and the marketing of a list of colonial goods; the Staple Act of 1663 ordered that all European manufactured goods must be carried in English sailing vessels and pass through an English port before being shipped to any part of the British Empire; and the Navigation Act of 1673 required merchants in the English overseas colonies to post a bond of indemnity against violations of the commerce laws, as well as pay a “plantation duty” on produce shipped from colonial seaports.⁵ In addition, England’s Privy Council devised an administrative apparatus for enforcing these regulations and implementing colonial policy. However, the imperial administration lacked effective centralized controls. The result was an absence of coor-

dination on the part of various overlapping and ill-organized jurisdictions, confused policies, opposing agendas, and the rapid turnover of colonial officials, all of which made the cumbersome task of managing the English overseas colonies more, rather than less, unwieldy.

England's Glorious Revolution of 1688–89 and the demise of the Restoration monarchy marked a shift from the social relations of feudalism and the

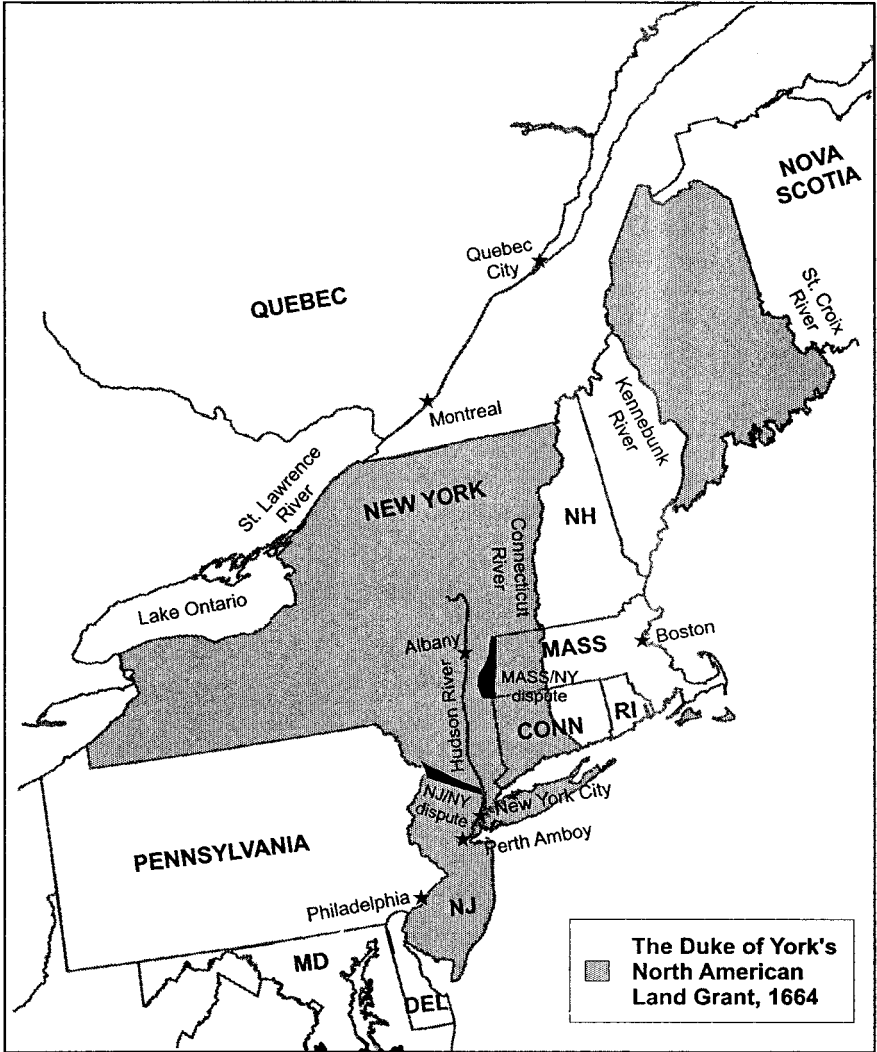



Figure 2.1. Duke of York's North American Land Grant: The Colony of New York

seigniorial values of the English aristocracy toward the social relations of capitalist production and the laissez-faire values of the rising English bourgeoisie. Though they remained partly feudalistic in design, the English overseas colonies increasingly became an investment outlet for English capitalists, who now played an influential role in shaping England's domestic and colonial policies. Providing vital services, such as the shipment of goods, the transportation of people, and the transfer of money from one place to another, independent English merchants and their ships, wharves, warehouses, counting houses, and financial networks became the principal articulators linking the scattered territories of the first British Empire.⁶

English colony builders of the post-Restoration era continued to promote British emigration to New York. But prior to the 1770s, most British migrants preferred to settle in other British North American colonies, where they, many believed, had a better chance of attaining personal autonomy than in New York. Consequently, the promoters of colonization had to rely on people from various societies outside the British metropolitan core to populate New York. Stressing the sharp contrast between the population movements that shaped colonial New England and those that molded colonial New York, the historian Bernard Bailyn notes that, by 1700, New England's relatively homogeneous communities had developed out of a single, largely uniform demographic process, while New York's more heterogeneous communities were the product of "diversity of the most extreme kind, and not a single expanding network of communities impelled outward by the dynamic of a distinctive demographic process, but half a dozen different demographic processes moving in different phases at different speeds."⁷ Populated by a diverse assortment of people deposited by multiple Eurodiasporic and Afrodiasporic population movements, colonial New York was, as the historian Michael Kammen has noted, unique among the English overseas colonies.⁸ Especially notable was the heterogeneity of colonial New York City's population. According to a description of that port town, written in 1670, Dutch, Walloons, English, French, Africans, Swedes, Finns, Germans, and Irish inhabited the seaport at the tip of Manhattan Island. In addition to many Protestant congregations, an untold number of Dunkers, Quakers, Anabaptists, and other sects, as well as a few Jews, Catholics, African conjurers, and atheists, resided in colonial New York City.⁹

Over time, an international labor force of free, indentured, and enslaved laborers transformed colonial New York City from a frontier outpost into a bustling entrepôt. Also, this mixed labor force gradually developed the surrounding hinterland into a commercial farming district, which produced a variety of foodstuffs and other provisions for the city market and for export to England's major seaports, southern Europe, the staple-producing colonies in the English and foreign West Indies, the coast of British North America, Suriname, and Madeira.¹⁰ With its multicultural, polyglot settler population of independent merchants, artisans, and farmers, whose identity was, in large part, anchored in property ownership, including the ownership of enslaved blacks, colonial Manhattan and the adjacent territory scarcely resembled the early English

colony builders' initial feudalistic vision of a culturally homogeneous overseas settler colony of numerous loyal British tenants who paid rents to a clique of privileged landlords.

 The idea that settlers from a single source—namely, the British Isles—would be a majority of New York's population became less and less realistic, as immigrants from various parts of Europe arrived at the port of New York in numbers that far exceeded the influx of British migrants. In 1687, Governor Thomas Dongan (1682–88) remarked: "I believe for these 7 years past, there has not come over into this province twenty English Scotch or Irish families. But of French there have since my coming here several familys . . . & a great many more are expected . . . which is another great argument of the necessity of adding to this Government that a more equal ballance may be kept here between his Majesty's naturall born subjects and Foreigners which latter are the most prevailing part of this Government."¹¹ As Governor Dongan indicated, immigration flows into New York's seaport during the 1680s deposited mostly French-speaking Protestants, also known as Huguenots. Following Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, these Protestants were forced to flee France to escape persecution under Catholic rule. Before migrating to New York, Huguenot refugees resided for a time in Amsterdam, Geneva, London, and other Protestant strongholds in Europe. Of the several French Protestant exile communities, London's Huguenot enclave contributed the largest number of French Protestants who settled in colonial New York City.¹²

In addition to the Huguenot settlers, several well-to-do families from Jewish exile communities in London, Suriname, and Curaçao disembarked at the port of New York during the early English colonial period, between 1690 and 1710.¹³ Descendants of the Sephardim, whom Catholic rulers expelled from Portugal and Spain in 1492, these Jewish immigrants—for example, the Gomez and the Pachecos families—joined the earlier Sephardic settlers—the Levy, the Lucena, and the Israel families—who left Brazil and migrated to Manhattan Island in 1654. Included in the flow of Jewish immigrants from London were some Ashkenazic Jews, such as the Franks and Simson families. Additionally, German-speaking and Polish-speaking Ashkenazim from central Europe arrived at the port of New York during King George's War (1744–48). A final installment of Jewish immigrants, a dozen or so Venetian Jews, settled in New York City on the eve of the American Revolution.¹⁴ Although New York City attracted the largest number of Jewish immigrants of any port town in British North America, there was no massive, sustained influx of Jewish sojourners into New York's seaport during the English colonial era. Jewish immigration flows contributed no more than 200 to 300 settlers to colonial New York's total population; by 1775, only 400 Jews resided in New York City. Like the Dutch colonial authorities in New Netherland, the English colonial rulers in New York imposed political and economic restraints on the Jews. But these restrictions were not the main deterrents to the relocation of

Jews to New York. So few Jews settled in that English overseas colony and other parts of British North America largely because the expansion of commerce in European cities and business opportunities in the Caribbean basin proved to be powerful anchors keeping Jews close to the older Jewish exile communities.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the Jewish shopkeepers, merchants, shippers, and moneylenders who ventured to colonial New York City thrived in that colonial port town and established a small but well-to-do Jewish community, which contributed to the diversity of the city's population.

Besides the Ashkenazic Jews, central Europe yielded another, more substantial influx of immigrants into the port of New York. A considerable number of Protestants from the Palatinate, Mainz, Baden, and Württemberg principalities of Germany and from Kraków, Poland, arrived at New York's seaport during the English colonial period. These newcomers were destitute refugees whose homelands had been devastated by two destructive wars—the War of the League of Augsburg (1689–97),¹⁶ or King William's War, and the War of Spanish Succession (1702–13),¹⁷ or Queen Anne's War. The severe winter of 1708–9 and religious persecution accelerated the Protestant exodus from Europe. Owing to Queen Anne's gift of free passage to the English overseas settler colonies, Protestant refugees from the Rhenish Palatinate looked to British North America as a sanctuary where they might enjoy liberty of conscience without fear of harassment from tyrannical Catholic princes.¹⁸ A sudden and heavy influx of nearly 2,400 Palatines arrived at the port of New York in 1709–10. Disease had overtaken these German-speaking travelers during their transatlantic voyage, and they arrived at New York's seaport in wretched physical condition. New York City's municipal government was ill prepared to attend to the wants of so many distressed newcomers. Citing the health threat that these ailing immigrants posed to the port town, the municipal government prevented the Palatines from entering the city and quarantined them on Governor's Island.¹⁹ During the first month of their confinement, the Palatines lived in tents without proper heating and drainage, a setting that led to the spread of contagious diseases. Some Palatine newcomers never recovered from the maladies that they contracted during the transatlantic passage to New York City and during their internment on Governor's Island. Within a year of their arrival at the port of New York, no fewer than 226 Palatines died of typhus and other ailments. To alleviate the burden of caring for the surviving newcomers, the municipal government sold Palatine orphans and indigent adults into indentured servitude.²⁰

Although recruiters assured prospective European immigrants that they would be well treated once they arrived in the English overseas settler colonies, news about the degrading treatment that the German-speaking immigrants received in colonial New York City eventually made its way to the Rhenish Palatinate.²¹ It was not until 1722, nearly 15 years after the initial Palatines disembarked at the port of New York, that New York City witnessed another influx of immigrants from the Rhineland—a total of only 40 Palatines. Most of these German-speaking Lutherans soon left the city and removed to the remote Mohawk Valley with their pastor, Reverend John James Ehlig.²² Between January 1738 and April 1739, just before the War of Jenkin's Ear (1739–43) curtailed

the flow of European immigrants across the Atlantic Ocean,²³ 534 German-speaking Lutherans from Swabia arrived at New York's seaport.²⁴ Some of these newcomers eventually moved to Pennsylvania, while others stayed in New York City. Between October 1753 and October 1754, the port of New York received a heavy influx of 2,006 Palatines.²⁵ This was the final documented installment of Palatines that entered New York's seaport during the English colonial period. For the most part, these German speakers settled in Pennsylvania, where they became independent farmers, though some were sold into indentured servitude at New York City.²⁶

Intermittent flows of Scots-Irish migrants from two northern ports of colonial Ireland—Londonderry and Newry—joined the sporadic influx of immigrants from Europe.²⁷ Often confused with the indigenous Gaelic-speaking Irish, whom the English colonizers drove from the Ulster plains following victory in the Tyrone War (1594–1603) and the aftermath of a defeated Irish uprising in 1641, the Scots-Irish or Ulster Scots were the Irish-born descendants of Scottish tenants who, beginning around 1609, occupied the lands of the vanquished Celt and Catholic natives.²⁸ By 1715, the deterioration of the linen industry and ruinous rents prompted an exodus of tenant weavers from Ulster. Although a small number of Gaelic-speaking Catholics migrated to colonial New York City, most newcomers from Ulster were Scots-Irish. In addition to the impetus of economic hardship, Anglican efforts to obstruct the establishment of a presbytery in colonial Ireland precipitated the migration of Scots-Irish Presbyterians to British North America, where Ulster Presbyterians hoped to found their own churches without interference from the Church of England.²⁹ Writing from New York City in 1737, James Murray, a Scots-Irish settler, asked a kinsman in Ulster to inform the impoverished tenants and weavers in Tyrone County that “God has open'd a Door for their Deliverance” in New York.³⁰ New York City needed skilled workers, and the *Belfast News Letter* announced: “Sundry artificers—a gunsmith, house carpenter, blacksmith, cooper, brick layer, and a leather dresser”³¹ were wanted in that colonial North American port town. When recruiters visited Ulster, they assured the rapidly growing and burdened population that they would find ample opportunities to pursue an independent livelihood and to worship according to the dictates of their consciences, if they settled in New York. Between 1728 and 1754, nearly 900 Ulster Scots responded to these promises and exchanged the proceeds from the sale of their meager belongings for the price of a ticket to New York City.³² In 1763, nearly two dozen Scots-Irish migrants from Newry and environs disembarked at the seaport of New York; and one year later another 300 Scots-Irish migrants, led by the Presbyterian minister and physician Thomas Clark, arrived at the port town on Manhattan Island. Except for the craftsmen whose skills were at that time in great demand in New York City, these Scots-Irish migrants soon left New York and removed to colonies that offered them better opportunities to become independent farmers. In Ulster, recruiting agents and printed notices advertised the advantages of relocation to Pennsylvania and North Carolina. These British North American colonies successfully recruited Scots-Irish settlers with the enticement of liberal land policies and other attractive incentives.

In contrast, New York remained an unattractive final destination for British migrants prior to the 1770s. In that colony a small number of prominent families—for example, the Bayards, the Livingstons, the Philipases, and the Van Cortlandts—engrossed huge tracts of land, which New York's colonial governors bestowed on them in exchange for their loyalty to the English Crown. As a rule, these landlords preferred to keep their estates intact and leased, instead of sold, land to tenants.³³ Since most British newcomers preferred to cultivate their own farmland rather than work leaseholds, these migrants mostly shunned New York. Although many more immigrants from Europe passed through the port of New York, they, too, mainly resettled outside New York, in British North American colonies that offered them better opportunities to purchase cheap land.

During the years immediately preceding the War for Independence, New York suddenly became a popular destination for British migrants. The British Isles, not Europe, then supplied that colony with permanent settlers. According to Bernard Bailyn, of the total number of British migrants that removed to the settler colonies in British North America between 1773 and 1775, nearly 20 percent settled in New York, of which less than 2 percent came from England and approximately 85 percent came from Scotland.³⁴ The majority of the migrants from England were Yorkshire farming families. Only 40 migrants came from London and the Thames Valley, a location that, in general, contributed mostly young, unmarried men to the flow of British migrants into British North America. Very few artisans from London and the Thames Valley removed to New York City. A majority of the British artisans who arrived at the port of New York on the eve of the Revolution came from the West Lowlands of Scotland, where the decay of the textile industry caused high unemployment rates among Scottish weavers. This circumstance inspired these West Lowlanders to leave their homeland and travel to colonial New York City in search of employment.³⁵ Inhabitants from other regions of Scotland also found removal to New York to be an attractive prospect. Nearly all British migrants who disembarked at the port of New York between 1773 and 1775 were members of farming families from the Highlands and Hebrides of Scotland. Scottish farming families removed to New York to escape straitened economic conditions and dim personal futures in their homeland. They, along with other British migrants, eventually flocked into up-country New York and settled on farmland in the newly opened colonial frontier that encompassed the Mohawk, Schoharie, and Upper Susquehanna river valleys.³⁶ In December 1773, Daniel M'Leod, Esq. of Killmorrie, solicited proposals from New York landlords who wished to recruit Scottish settlers to occupy and cultivate their large parcels of upcountry farmland.³⁷ By the outbreak of the War for Independence, approximately 6,000 to 7,000 tenants, mostly from Scotland, lived in New York. Most tenants obtained favorable leasehold terms and, since tenancy was generally a temporary condition for settlers in New York, many eventually achieved freeholder status.³⁸ All told, the main result of the British migration flow of the 1770s was to transform up-country New York's virgin lands into a flourishing agricultural region. In addition, the arrival of large numbers of British migrants at the port of New York during the

1770s transformed New York City into what Bernard Bailyn calls a “staging center for the distribution of immigrants into the far northern frontier.”³⁹ Although only a small fraction of the total number of British migrants that disembarked at New York’s seaport just before the onset of the War for Independence settled in the city, British newcomers doubtless added to the growing ranks of propertyless town dwellers and contributed to the accretion of New York City’s permanent population from approximately 22, 000 inhabitants in 1771 to nearly 25,000 inhabitants in 1775.⁴⁰

In contrast to emigrants from London and the Thames Valley, who generally sailed in cargo vessels that carried relatively few passengers, perhaps no more than 20 or 30 travelers,⁴¹ Scottish emigrants were more likely to travel on sailing vessels that specialized in the transport of settlers to the English overseas colonies, seldom carried fewer than 50 passengers, and, on occasion, transported as many as 500 passengers.⁴² For some Scottish emigrants, the transatlantic passage was a traumatic adventure, since the merchants who were engaged in the business of transporting British laborers across the Atlantic Ocean did not always hire vessels outfitted with adequate living space and sufficient provisions. Furthermore, the captains and crews sometimes displayed little concern for the welfare of their passengers and at times treated them no better than slaves. On September 17, 1773, approximately 300 migrants from the Highlands of Scotland boarded a brig called the *Nancy* and, from the harbor of Muckle Ferry in the vicinity of Dornoch in Sutherland, began an overseas journey to the port of New York. The newspaper accounts of the *Nancy*’s voyage reported several instances of the mistreatment of the Scottish passengers during their 10-week voyage:

One Woman, who with a little skillet, was warming some of her Meal and Water at the Fire, by the tossing of the Ship, or some other Accident, happen to spill some of it on Deck, was seized by the shoulders, and dragged over it to wipe it up with her clothes, and the Rest of her Meals thrown over board. Another Woman was struck on the Breast by one of the Men, and so much hurt, that her life [was] in Danger. A poor sick Child, who could not drink the Water afforded them, which stunk intolerably, earnestly begged for a little good warm Water, and not being able to obtain it, continued to call for it till he died. Another poor Child having got to the Fire, the Mate took him up, and dashed him against the Deck, where by he was much hurt, and confined to his bed till he died, about a fortnight after. A young Man who used sometimes to assist the Seamen in working the Vessel, being wanted for that Purpose when he was below, eating his unsavory Meal, the Captain ran to him, seized the Hair of his Head, and by it dragged Him up four Steps to the Deck, throwing him to the Wind a handful of the hair which was left in his Hand.⁴³

The Scottish voyagers were tightly packed into a brig that was far too small to accommodate 15 score passengers. Also, that sailing vessel was, in other respects, poorly outfitted for the transatlantic voyage, having inadequate sanitation and cooking facilities on board. During the journey, the Scots were sometimes forced to eat raw meat and to drink putrid water. Because the door

adjoining the hold and upper deck was nailed shut, the Scots had no fresh air, except what flowed through the hatches that remained open and during rough seas allowed water to pour into the hold, where the Scots were obliged to lodge on the floor without beds. Due to stormy weather, the *Nancy* made slow progress against a tempestuous sea. Provisions became scarce, and the Scottish Highlanders nearly starved for want of adequate rations. While the captain and his crew enjoyed wholesome victuals, they taunted the starving Scots and, after satiating themselves with food and drink, "order the Bones and Leavings of their Meals to be thrown down into the Hold" to the passengers, whom the crew derisively labeled "the Scotch Negroes." The Scottish passengers' health deteriorated, as they struggled to survive between decks. Approximately a third of the nearly 300 Scottish migrants who began the transatlantic passage perished during the crossing; seven infants were born during the voyage but died at sea. In traversing the border between the old and new worlds, in making the transatlantic passage from Muckle Ferry, Scotland, to the port of New York, the Scottish migrants learned what it could mean to be a "Negro," a slave, a member of a despised and exploited race. For the Scottish Highlanders, their traumatic voyage on the *Nancy* was a harsh introduction to a world in which human beings were subjected to the absolute will of others who had little regard for their humanity.

Miraculously, nearly 200 of the abused Scots survived to tell the story of their ordeal on board the *Nancy*. When the brig finally reached the harbor of New York, many of the passengers were ill with contagious diseases and for this reason were quarantined on Andrew's Island for 10 days. Shortly before Christmas, the Scottish newcomers were allowed to enter New York City; they landed at the city's dock late at night. According to the newspaper reports, the Scots were "weak and emaciated, thinly clad, some of them sickly, most of them without Money, and none knowing where to go, or how to obtain Necessaries, or shelter themselves from the inclemency of the Weather, which was freezing cold, and the Ground covered with Snow, their condition appeared to be truly deplorable." The spectacle of such a large number of distressed Scottish newcomers incited the compassion of the townspeople, who rallied to support the unfortunate migrants with alms until arrangements could be made for the Scots' assimilation into the settler community.

Despite disquieting reports about the mistreatment of the Scottish passengers on board the *Nancy*, Scottish families continued to undertake the hazardous voyage to the port of New York. Constituting the largest group of immigrants entering that seaport on the eve of the American Revolution, Scottish emigrants understood that, although the shippers who specialized in the transportation of settlers to British North America did not always treat their passengers more humanely than slave traders treated their human cargoes, immigrants from the British Isles and Europe, regardless of their social origins, occupied a status in the English overseas settler colonies that was superior to black Africans and their descendants. As white settlers, they occupied an ennobled racial position. That much was guaranteed to the British and European immigrants who ventured to colonial New York.⁴⁴ Although during their passage

to the port of New York the Scots on board the *Nancy* had been vilified with the epithet “Scotch Negroes” and treated no better than slaves, once they disembarked at colonial New York’s seaport, these Scottish newcomers acquired the privileges that obtained to *whiteness*. This meant, among other things, that they had a reasonable opportunity of achieving an independent life in the colonial frontier and, even, of becoming the owners of slaves.

In addition to the erratic influx of British and European immigrants, periodic waves of involuntary immigrants from various parts of the Atlantic world entered the port of New York during the English colonial period and added to the city’s diverse constituent peoples. The early New York City slave trader Jacobus Van Cortlandt received small lots of West Indian slaves and sold them on consignment to townspeople and farmers from the surrounding countryside.⁴⁵ These human cargoes included some infirm and aged slaves, even though Van Cortlandt advised his West Indian business associates that old and defective slaves were unwanted in colonial New York. On May 16, 1698, Van Cortlandt wrote Miles Mayhew about a female slave whom he was unable to sell for his West Indian correspondent: “I have been very often in despair of Ever selling the woman for our Country-people do not Care to buy old slaves; therefore would advise you or any of your friends to Send no Slaves to this place that exceed 25 Years of age.”⁴⁶ In another letter, Van Cortlandt informed Barnabas Jenkins that a male West Indian slave with a “distemper about his throat” would not find a ready buyer in New York.⁴⁷ The practice of dumping such refuse West Indian slaves on New York City’s slave market became so troublesome that, in 1702, the colonial assembly imposed a prohibitive duty on human cargo from the West Indies.⁴⁸

In addition to the traffic in small lots of slaves from the West Indies, the haphazard and illicit trade between pirates and New York City merchants accounts for some of the human cargo that arrived at the port of New York during the early English colonial era. This was the age of piracy, the heyday of plunder for profit. During King William’s War (1689–97), New York City became a favorite haunt for pirates, such as the infamous Captain Kidd.⁴⁹ Because of the scarcity of capital for financing legitimate commercial ventures, New York City merchants purchased African slaves, along with spices, satins, silks, and other exotic goods, from freebooters at low black market prices and then sold these commodities in the city, sometimes at a substantial profit. Opportunistic New York City merchants—for example, Frederick Philipse, Thomas Marston, Robert Glover, and John Johnson—profited from the piratical traffic in slaves during King William’s War, when the threat of naval attacks prevented laborers from the British Isles and Europe from crossing the Atlantic Ocean and the attendant labor shortage in New York and throughout colonial America spiked the price of slaves.⁵⁰ Piracy did not always enrich New York City merchants, however. On occasion, they became the hapless victims of crime on the high seas. For example, a newspaper report announced that, in September 1730, a New York City brigantine returned home in ballast after “a crew of Spanish mulatto and Negro pirates” had boarded the vessel and seized its cargo as it sailed from Jamaica through the Windward Passage.⁵¹

Dependent as it was on mercurial personalities and felonious methods, the piratical traffic in slaves proved to be an unpredictable business involving considerable risk. The slave-trading activities of Frederick Philipse disclose the irregular provenance of the human cargo that entered New York's seaport during the early years of English colonial rule, as well as the gamble that New York City merchants took when they purchased contraband slaves. In 1698, Philipse acquired two shipments of enslaved East Africans through his contacts with Samuel Burgess, an inhabitant of the notorious pirate colony on the island of Madagascar. Philipse exchanged provisions, arms, and munitions for whatever loot the pirate had on hand, including slaves. Although the exact size of the human cargo that Philipse acquired in this deal is unknown, they were large by New York City standards and glutted the city's slave market. Philipse could not find buyers for both shipments of East African slaves and sent one parcel to his manor in Westchester County.⁵² Reporting on market conditions at the port of New York in 1698, Jacobus Van Cortlandt wrote a West Indian business correspondent that "the great quantity of slaves are come from Madagascar makes slaves to sell very slow."⁵³ In addition to the inordinate size of Philipse's enslaved East African cargoes, the abrupt resumption of European immigration flows across the Atlantic Ocean, following the cessation of King William's War and the attendant increase in the availability of laborers from the British Isles and Europe, account for the dull market for slaves in 1698.

New Yorkers preferred British and European laborers. But frequent seasons of war, which repeatedly curtailed the supply of laborers from the British Isles and Europe, produced a cyclical demand for slaves in New York. Between 1715 and 1772, independent merchants delivered no fewer than 4,949 slaves to New York's seaport. Sailing vessels returning from the West Indies brought at a minimum 3,260 slaves in separate shipments of 5 to 6 slaves on average, slavers returning from the African coast carried at least 1,478 slaves in individual shipments of nearly 55 slaves on average, and cargo vessels returning from the Azores, the Spanish colonies, Suriname, coastal North America, and London transported another 211 or so slaves in single shipments of 2 or 3 slaves on average (Table 2.1). Added to the total flow of involuntary immigrants into the port of New York were approximately 40 human prizes, whom privateers seized from enemy sailing vessels, and an estimated 609 slaves, whom slave traders smuggled overland from the seaport at Perth Amboy, New Jersey, and other ports.⁵⁴ Forcibly removed from their various homelands and sold into slavery at New York City, these human cargoes augmented the diversity of colonial Manhattan's population.

Sporadic influxes of enslaved human cargoes entered the port of New York during wartime. Queen Anne's War (1702–13) disrupted the transportation of British and European immigrants to the port of New York, and during that war slave traders took advantage of the accompanying labor shortage and rising price of slaves. Between 1701 and 1714, slave traders carried a documented total of 487 slaves to New York's seaport: Slavers returning from the African littoral brought 209 slaves, and sailing vessels returning from the West Indies brought 278 slaves.⁵⁵ War sometimes presented an opportunity for slave traders to profit,

TABLE 2.1 Estimated Slave Imports to Port of New York, 1715–1772

<i>Origin</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Shipments</i>	<i>Average size</i>	<i>% of total</i>
Africa	1,478	27	54.74	30.0
West Indies	3,260	556	5.86	66.0
Antigua	349	63	5.54	7.0
Barbados	566	90	6.29	12.0
Bermuda	70	33	2.12	1.0
Curaçao	108	38	2.84	2.0
Eustatius	64	9	7.11	1.0
Jamaica	1,384	201	6.98	28.0
St. Christoph	62	15	4.13	1.0
St. Thomas	95	42	2.26	2.0
Other Islands	232	65	3.57	5.0
Unknown	330	64	5.15	7.0
North America	156	52	3.00	3.0
Suriname	16	8	2.00	0.30
New Spain	11	8	1.37	0.20
Compeche	4	1	4.00	
Cartegena	1	1	1.00	
Honduras	4	1	4.00	
Other	2	1	2.00	
Azores	25	8	3.12	0.50
Cape Verde	3	1	3.00	
Madeira	22	7	3.14	
London	3	3	1.00	

Source: Naval Officer's Shipping List and American Inspector General's Ledger.

but more often it obstructed trade of all kinds. In a letter to the London merchant John White, James Van Horne complained about the depressed condition of trade at the port of New York, owing to the frequency of war. "We are in this place much Tir'd with war," Van Horne wrote. "Trade is Intirely stagnated, nothing goes on Among us but privateering."⁵⁶ When international war completely blocked the flow of regular commerce through the seaport, including the traffic in slaves, New York City merchants pooled their capital and invested in privateering ventures, which sometimes seized valuable cargo from enemy sailing vessels. A quasi-piratical mode of wealth accumulation and a state-sanctioned contribution to England's national interest in harassing rival nations, privateering operations required a relatively low capital investment and promised a sizeable return in profit. Like New Amsterdam under Dutch colonial rule, English colonial New York City received small lots of human contraband seized from enemy sailing vessels. The Vice-Admiralty Court, the judicial body created in 1686 to adjudicate cases that involved contraband from captured enemy sailing vessels, condemned Negroes, mulattos, and Indians from New Spain as lawful prizes on the principle that their dark skin color constituted *prima facie* evi-

dence of their slave status, even though some Spanish-speaking captives swore they were free subjects of Spain.⁵⁷ Reporting on the sale of Spanish-speaking captives at the port of New York during Queen Anne's War, Governor Robert Hunter (1710–19) remarked: "by reason of their colour which is swarthy, they were said to be slaves and as such were sold among many others of the same colour and country."⁵⁸ In this manner, Spanish-speaking slaves were added to colonial Manhattan's increasingly diverse black population, which included a considerable number of East Africans.

Besides the relatively large cargoes of enslaved East Africans that freebooters from Madagascar brought to New York's seaport, few enslaved native Africans disembarked at the port of New York prior to the second decade of the eighteenth century. The Royal African Company (RAC, 1663–98) held a monopoly on the shipment of slaves to English ports, including the English colonial seaports in the Western Hemisphere. However, that trading company brought no slaves to New York. A shareholder in the RAC, the Duke of York, later King James II (1685–88), promoted policies especially designed to encourage the importation and sale of African slaves in colonial New York. But because of the inefficiency of the imperial administration, colonial policies sometimes took several years to actualize, if they were implemented at all. It was not until 1702 that, upon the request of Governor Cornbury (1702–8), the colonial assembly encouraged the sale of African slaves in New York by enacting a discriminatory import duty, setting the impost on slaves from Africa at half the rate collected on slaves from the West Indies.⁵⁹ With the cessation of Queen Anne's War and the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, England acquired the *asiento*, the coveted contract that granted a single maritime nation the monopoly to the shipping of slaves to New Spain. This award, along with the rising demand for slaves in the Antilles, the nullification of the RAC's trade monopoly on the west coast of Africa in 1689, and the termination of the English East India Company's (1600–1874) monopoly on trade along the East African coast in 1715,⁶⁰ paved the way for the ascendancy of independent merchants from England and the English overseas colonies in the transatlantic slave trade.

Following Queen Anne's War, a few independent New York City merchants financed slaving ventures for the purpose of supplying the lucrative slave markets in Brazil, New Spain, and the English West Indies with enslaved native Africans. New York City slaving vessels sometimes reached the Caribbean basin behind other slavers, whose cargoes glutted the target slave markets,⁶¹ and therefore returned to the port of New York with cargoes of surplus native Africans. In 1721, the New York City slaver *Crown Galley* sailed to Madagascar, where it collected 254 East Africans and then departed for Brazil, where it deposited a portion of its human cargo. From Brazil, that slaving vessel sailed to Barbados, its last port of call in the Caribbean basin, where it deposited more slaves before returning to its home port with 117 surplus East African slaves, nearly half of its original cargo.⁶² Between 1715 and 1721, New York City merchants brought no fewer than 534 native African slaves to the port of New York.⁶³ Many, if not most, of these imported slaves were surplus African slaves from human cargo originally intended for sale in the Caribbean basin. Largely

because of the importation of these slaves, New York City's black population more than doubled, increasing from 603 in 1703 to 1,362 in 1723.⁶⁴

The Atlantic merchant community received encouraging reports on the transatlantic slave trade. In 1730, a New York City newspaper printed the following inviting prospectus: "The African trade had been the most gainful trade to the English and Dutch, that it was possible for them to find in any part of the world, the returns of Gold and Slaves being had for the meanest Trifles imaginable, such as Bits of Iron, painted Glass, Knives, Hatches, Glass Beads. And the like."⁶⁵ Such news doubtless captured the attention of New York City merchants, who were always alert for lucrative trading investments. But for the most part, these merchants waited for more positive incentives to appear in the slave market before entering the capricious business of transporting enslaved African cargoes across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas. The historian James G. Lydon has noted: "All in all New Yorkers did not seriously enter the African trade until the late 1740s."⁶⁶ As the demand for slaves in the burgeoning sugar-producing islands of the English West Indies skyrocketed during the mid-eighteenth century, peaking in the largest islands during the 1760s,⁶⁷ New York City merchants began to take a more active part in the traffic in African slaves, undertaking polygonal voyages in which slave traders sailed for the West African coast with guns and provisions, exchanged these goods for African slaves at the trading forts along the Gold Coast—for example, at Elmina, Cape Coast, and Whydah—raced back across the Atlantic to the English West Indies sugar islands, which absorbed enslaved Africans at an astounding rate, then sailed to the Chesapeake region in North America, whose tobacco farmers eagerly awaited shipments of slaves, and finally returned to the port of New York with cargoes of sugar, dyewoods, indigo, tobacco, and incidental lots of slaves.⁶⁸ This polygonal trade involved considerable risk to investment capital, and the New York City merchants who participated in the slave traffic were sometimes stuck with African-born slaves who had been intended for sale in the English West Indies, other ports in the Caribbean basin, or the Chesapeake region but found no buyers there. These surplus slaves were eventually carried to New York City. As a consequence, the number of native Africans brought to the port of New York was probably greater than the extant port records of direct shipments from Africa indicate. Throughout the English colonial era, shipments of slaves from

TABLE 2.2 Documented African Slave Imports to the Port of New York, 1715–1721

<i>Date</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Merchants</i>
1715	38	Anthony Lynch, Alex. Moore, Anthony Rutgers, & Rip Van Dam
1716	43	Frances Gerbrausen, Alex Moore, Anthony Rutgers, & Rip Van Dam
1717	100	Richard Janeway, Nathaniel Simpson, & William Walton
1717	166	Andrew Fresneau, Abraham, Garrett, & John Van Horne
1718	64	Andrew Fresneau, Abraham, Garrett, & John Van Horne
1718	6	Adolph Phillipse
1721	117	Richard Janeway, Isaac Levy, William Walton, & Nathaniel Simpson

Source: NOSL.

the West Indies brought to New York's seaport by slaving vessels probably included leftover native Africans, whom New York City slave traders could not sell at a Caribbean port of call or in the Chesapeake colonies. Owing in large part to the importation of slaves, people of African descent were 20 percent of New York City's total population by 1746.⁶⁹

Because of the severe business contractions in 1714–16, 1737–44, and 1751–55, New York City witnessed relatively slight economic development until the mid-1750s, when the city and the surrounding countryside experienced a transformative economic boom due to the windfall of income from military expenditures that poured into the region during the French and Indian War (1756–63).⁷⁰ New York City now required a reliable source of laborers to handle the swelling volume of tonnage that passed through its port and to boost agricultural production in the nearby farming districts in the context of increased demand for foodstuffs in the city, which was now an overpopulated garrison town that housed hundreds of English troops. However, the imperial administration was incapable of exercising effective control over the British migrants and European immigrants who circulated throughout the first British Empire and was, therefore, unable to direct these labor supplies to New York City and the surrounding countryside, where labor scarcities threatened to stall the economic upturn. Instead of settling in New York, the lion's share of the supply of laborers from the British Isles and Europe settled in other regions of British North America, where newcomers could purchase cheap land. Hence these preferred laborers were seldom available in sufficient numbers to meet the labor demand in New York City and its environs.


During the era of rapid economic development, New Yorkers turned to the seemingly inexhaustible supply of slaves from Africa to satisfy their labor needs. Whereas prior to the late 1740s nearly three of four slaves who arrived at the port of New York were carried in vessels returning from the West Indies, after the late 1740s close to 70 percent of the slaves who entered colonial New York's seaport were transported in slaving vessels returning directly from Africa.⁷¹ Hoping to take advantage of the favorable tariff on native African slaves and to capitalize on the rise in the demand for laborers in New York City and the adjacent farming districts, New York City merchants—for example, Samuel Bridge and John Dwightwith—undertook bilateral slaving voyages between the port of New York and West Africa's Gold Coast. Bridge imported 23 enslaved West Africans in 1754; he and Dwightwith imported another 103 slaves from West Africa in 1763.⁷² A rare report documents the middle passage from the West African coast to the port of New York and offers a glimpse at the hardships endured by involuntary African voyagers who were destined for enslavement in colonial New York City and the surrounding countryside. A sailor named Charles Sorisco gave the following description of the harsh treatment that a cargo of enslaved West Africans received while on board the *York*, a New York City slaving vessel. "John Lovel the Chief Mate," Sorisco reported, "beat the Negro slaves on board the said [slaving vessel] in a Cruel Manner with ropes, staves, Hedding, the handle of a broom, and particularly one Walker who afterwards died & a Negro woman, named Neura, who Lovel tied up to the Main

shroud and beat her with a tail full of Notches, in a very inhuman manner.”⁷³ Enslaved Africans were not always passive victims. In 1761, the West Africans on board Captain John Nicoll’s brig the *Agnes* staged a bloody mutiny shortly after the slaving vessel cleared the Gold Coast. The crewmen killed two score Africans in putting down that uprising. Once order on the brig had been restored, Captain Nicoll resumed his return voyage to the port of New York, only to be captured by a French privateer just off the North American coast.⁷⁴

The New York City slaving vessels that participated in the bilateral African carrying trade usually embarked on voyages in early spring and arrived on the west coast of Africa in six to eight weeks, before the start of the West African littoral’s deadly malaria season. On the West African coast, ship captains exchanged rum, firearms, ammunition, and other manufactured goods for slaves, African produce, and, if they were lucky, gold. Departing the coast of West Africa in early summer, the slaving vessels typically returned to the port of New York in July or August.⁷⁵ This was fortuitous timing, for it gave native sub-Saharan Africans a lengthy period to acclimate to their new environment before the onset of winter on the eastern seaboard of North America. Nevertheless, the dense concentration of townspeople, combined with the humid climate, made New York City an ideal setting for the spread of contagious diseases. When enslaved newcomers, whose health had been compromised during arduous transatlantic journeys, were introduced to the city’s disease environment, they sometimes succumbed to fatal illnesses within a few weeks of their arrival at New York’s seaport. Moreover, the spread of communicable diseases gave rise to lethal epidemics—for example, the outbreak of yellow fever in 1702 and the contagion of smallpox in 1756—that depressed overall population growth and, importantly, led to high infant mortality rates. A recent study of the skeletal remains from a portion of colonial New York City’s burial ground for its African-descended inhabitants shows that 30 percent of the sample burial population were infants below the age of 2 years and another 10 percent were children between the ages 2 and 12 years. Approximately 60 percent of the sample infant-child burial population displayed dental hypoplasia, a defect of the deciduous dentition or “baby teeth,” indicating serious illness during infancy.⁷⁶ Colonial New York City’s African-descended population did not begin to reproduce at a rate that outpaced deaths until the 1740s, with a modest rate of natural increase during the 1740s and slight rates of natural increase during the 1750s and 1760s.⁷⁷ Consequently, slaves born in New York City could not have been a majority of the northern colonial port town’s African-descended population much earlier than the 1760s. Unlike the Chesapeake region, where the early and steady natural increase of the African-descended population produced a slave labor force in which American-born slaves comprised a majority by the 1730s,⁷⁸ New York City remained dependent on imported slave labor supplies for most of the colonial era. The nearly fivefold increase in the city’s African-descended population between 1703 and 1771 was due, almost entirely, to the importation of slaves born outside New York.⁷⁹

During the severe economic contraction of 1764 to 1769, New York City’s slave labor market underwent a precipitous decline, especially when compared with

the robust demand for slaves in the English West Indies at that time. Although a few New York City merchants continued to invest in slaving ventures to Africa, they now typically sold their enslaved African cargoes in the West Indies. As late as 1774, Governor William Tryon wrote: "There are a few vessels employed annually in the African Trade, their Outward Cargoes are chiefly Rum and some British Manufactures.—The high price and ready sale they meet with for their Slaves in the West Indies induce them always to dispose of the cargoes among the Islands."⁸⁰ Few enslaved human cargoes arrived at the port of New York following the French and Indian War. Between 1770 and 1772, sailing vessels brought 86 enslaved West Africans to the city's docks, but no officially documented shipments of slaves arrived at New York's seaport between 1773 and the outbreak of the War for Independence.⁸¹ As a consequence of the considerable influx of British migrants into the port of New York and the curtailment of the colony's slave trade during the early 1770s, the proportion of African-descended people in the city's total population declined from 17 percent in 1756 to 14 percent in 1771.⁸² Nevertheless, enslaved labor remained a significant component of the colonial port town's workforce. In 1774, the Scottish visitor Patrick M'Robert wrote that "it rather hurts an European eye to see so many negro slaves upon the streets."⁸³ The slave traders who sold enslaved blacks at New York City during the English colonial era had laid the foundation for an enduring legacy of racial domination in that northern port town.⁸⁴

 The English colony builders debated the advantages and the disadvantages of slave versus free labor and in doing so broached the issue of the ethnic and racial composition of the colony's labor force. On one side, the advocates of free labor clung to the dream of peopling New York with numerous British tenants or, if British sources of labor proved insufficient to match the colony's labor needs, European immigrants. Free labor proponents argued that the presence of slaves made New York an unattractive final destination for laborers from the British Isles and Europe, who esteemed freedom, sought an independent life in British North America, and increasingly regarded competition from slave labor to be a threat to their livelihood and a debasement of work. The advocates of free labor therefore called on the colonial state to impose a prohibitive duty on slave imports, which would reduce the number of slaves in New York and thereby render that English overseas colony more attractive to British and European settlers. On the other side, some advocates of slave labor insisted that the seemingly inexhaustible pool of slaves from Africa was the only source of laborers that could satisfy New York's unmet labor needs. They therefore argued that as long as the colony faced a labor deficit, the colonial state should do everything in its power to encourage the importation of slaves to the port of New York. This last position was in keeping with the policies of the English Crown and some colonial officials. In a 1726 pamphlet titled *The Interest of the Country in Laying Duties*, the colonial officeholder Cadwallader Colden announced his opposition to a proposed import duty on slaves and made a case for

the exploitation of slave labor in New York. Although Colden registered his belief that in the long run a free labor force would benefit New York more than an enslaved labor force, he argued: "It is true that it were better for the Country, if there were no Negroes in it, and that all could be carried on by Freemen who have greater Interest in promoting the Good of a Country, and who strengthen it more than any number of Slaves can do: Dearness of the Wages of hired Servants makes Slaves at this Time, necessary, nothing that is necessary is to be discouraged."⁸⁵ Colden's use of the term "Negroes" references slave labor and does not suggest that an antiblack bias subtends his remarks. Colden framed his discussion on New York's labor needs primarily in terms of the relative cheapness of slave labor versus the high cost of wage laborers. To be sure, English convicts offered another cheap alternative labor supply, but they presented certain disadvantages. Remarking on the character of English convicts, a colonial customs officer warned that "the worst in the world come out of Bridewell and Newgate."⁸⁶ In 1734, Governor William Cosby (1732–36) bemoaned New York's failure to compete successfully with adjoining colonies to recruit virtuous white settlers. "I see with concern," Cosby wrote, "that whilst the neighboring Provinces are filled with honest, useful and laborious white people, the truest riches and surest strength of a country, this Province seems, regardless of the vast advantage which such acquisitions might bring them and of the disadvantages that attend the too great importation of [enslaved blacks], to be filled with Negroes and convicts."⁸⁷ Cosby assigned a differential value to white laborers, on the one hand, and black laborers, on the other, placing the latter in the category of undesirable laborers, such as convicts, and implicitly endorsing the notion that, with respect to moral disposition, white laborers, excepting the notable anomaly of white criminals, were more desirable than black laborers, who were summarily devalued in being lumped together with convict laborers. In his remarks, Governor Cosby overlooked the invaluable contributions that black workers had already made to the project of colony building in New York, while he wistfully speculated about the value a more numerous white settler population might add to the colony. Cosby thus introduced a racial bias, a high esteem for racial whiteness, in his statement on colonial New York's labor problem.

Yet prior to the 1770s, New York City experienced a chronic shortage of white laborers, as most newcomers from the British Isles and Europe, even those who stayed in New York, settled outside the city, mainly in remote frontier regions, where they had a reasonable opportunity to purchase inexpensive farmland and lead an independent life. Late in the colonial era, Governor Henry Moore observed that most white settlers preferred to pursue a life of "abject poverty" as farmers on the colonial frontier than to live a comfortable life in New York City "by working at the Trades in which they were brought up." Moore added that these white settlers lived, for many years, deplorable lives, but during that time took immense pride in the fact that they were independent American farmers.⁸⁸

The English colony builders who watched the flow of British migrants and European immigrants pass through the port of New York on their way to other parts of British North America remained pessimistic about New York's ability to

attract and retain desirable white laborers. These observers understood that some method of compelling white workers to remain in New York would benefit the colony. For this reason, British and European servants, laborers who were white yet bonded to their masters for a prescribed number of years, were regarded as the best solution to New York's labor shortage. But owing to the dearth of laborers, even the poorest white servants were usually able to negotiate contracts that limited their length of service to only a few years. Though a typical indenture agreement required from four to seven years of service, servants and apprentices seldom completed a full term of service.⁸⁹ In 1711, the municipal authorities responded to complaints from master craftsmen and lengthened the minimum term of service for New York City apprentices to seven years.⁹⁰ However, the continued scarcity of apprentices from the British Isles and Europe made it nearly impossible to enforce that law. Noting the brief terms of service and the high rate of outmigration among servants and apprentices, some colonizers advocated the use of slave labor, pointing out that slaves, unlike other workers, could be forced to labor in New York for as long as they were needed. Thus, even as these English colony builders expressed a preference for peopling New York with settlers from the British Isles and Europe, they continued to encourage the importation of enslaved Africans as a vital necessity. Because of this policy and the fact that prior to the 1770s British migrants and European immigrants were unavailable in sufficient numbers to satisfy New York's labor needs, slave labor remained an integral component of New York's labor system.

In New York City, enslaved porters and stevedores labored at the colonial port town's docks, wharves, slips, and warehouses. These enslaved dockworkers hoisted ponderous cargo, often without the aid of mechanical lifts. A recent analysis of the skeletal remains of a portion of colonial New York City's African-descended population identified injuries that typify humans who regularly haul heavy loads—for example, fractures to the spinous process of the lumbar vertebrae (or lower back) and the thoracic vertebrae (or middle to lower back). In one case, an examination of the skeletal structure of a male who died in his early thirties revealed a hairline fracture of the first cervical vertebra (or neck).⁹¹ This adult male, whose skeletal remains are the only testimony to his life, probably sustained that injury as a consequence of repeated axial overloading, which suggests that he engaged in the practice of head carrying, a common method of transporting materials of moderate to light weight in many West African societies that, when utilized to transport heavy cargo of the kind that entered New York's seaport, could result in serious injury to the neck.⁹²

Enslaved West Africans, so-called Guinea Negroes, were a significant component of colonial New York City's labor force by the mid-1750s. Writing from the port of New York during the French and Indian War, a British naval officer observed: "The laborious people in general are the Guinea Negroes, who lie under particular restraints."⁹³ These enslaved West Africans helped to keep the busy colonial port town moving and could be found loading and unloading cargo at the city's port facilities.

During the French and Indian War, New York City witnessed a boom in the

shipbuilding industry and ancillary enterprises.⁹⁴ At that time the building, repair, and outfitting of sailing vessels became a lucrative business in the colonial port town. By 1770, New York City merchants owned 60 percent of the ocean-going vessels that passed through the port of New York.⁹⁵ Most of these sailing vessels were built at the city's shipyard. Master craftsmen and slaves worked side by side in the city's shipbuilding industry. With the aid of his slave, the New York City ship carpenter Henry Cruger repaired sailing vessels of every class. Together, master and slave earned £3 2s. 6d. for seven days' labor on the repair of the sloop *William & Elizabeth* and another £8 3s. 6d. for a similar job on the *General Gage*, a New York City brig that participated in the provision trade with St. Croix.⁹⁶ In addition to the exploitation of slave labor in the city's shipbuilding industry, New York City slaveowners hired out their slaves to work on the construction and repair of port facilities. On March 22, 1770, William and Abraham Beekman engaged two master carpenters, James Reade and William Hutchins, to repair their damaged wharf along the East River. By the terms of their contract with the Beekmans, Reade and Hutchins had "to raise the wharf and restore it to good condition." This demolition and construction job took more than a year to complete. During that time, Reade and Hutchins hired several slaves to aid them in pulling down and rebuilding Beekman's wharf.⁹⁷ Male slaves, physically robust and in the prime of life, were needed to undertake such physically strenuous tasks. The New York City slave trader John Watt described the basic characteristics that made a slave suitable for the colonial port town's labor market: "For this market they must be young, if not quite children, those advanced in years will never do. . . . Males are best."⁹⁸ The townspeople prized male slaves who had survived childhood diseases yet were young and physically fit enough to merit the initial investment in purchase costs and additional expenditures on feeding and clothing human chattel. For this reason, "seasoned slaves," whose immune systems had made a successful adjustment to New York City's disease environment,⁹⁹ were preferred to "new Negroes," recent arrivals who had no acquired immunity to the lethal pathogens that were endemic to the colonial port town.

Cultural factors were an important consideration for New York City artisans who contemplated purchasing slaves and training them in their crafts. Because of the direct relationship between cultural literacy and production efficiency in the skilled trades, master craftsmen preferred to purchase young American-born male slaves who were proficient in a European language and already somewhat familiar with European standards of measurement. Most native Africans could not speak a European language and were generally unfamiliar with European-derived techniques of artisanal production. For this reason, master craftsmen were reluctant to purchase "new Negroes," whose training in the skilled trades involved considerable inefficiency. In colonial New York City, the training of enslaved laborers in the skilled trades brought master craftsmen and slaves into frequent and intimate contact. Slaveowning artisans typically lived under the same roof with their slaves and labored alongside them at work sites about town and in the shops that they usually kept on the street level of their living quarters. Doubtless, some native African newcomers learned European

languages at the workshops of New York City artisans and at other work sites. The anthropologist Melville Herskovitz has argued that in the Americas enslaved native Africans who were trained in European-derived crafts underwent an accelerated process of acculturation as a consequence of intensive interaction with artisans from Europe.¹⁰⁰ Of course, months of instruction were required before a novice slave displayed dexterity in an unfamiliar craft, and several years would pass before a master craftsman would begin to receive a return on his investment in slave property. Yet slaves proved to be capable of acquiring artisanal skills, and some became master craftsmen who excelled in the skilled trades.¹⁰¹ These skilled slaves were not merely “living tools” but were unmistakably “thinking things,” capable of mastering complex tasks. Once a young male slave mastered a skilled trade, he became valuable property that produced high-priced finished goods. Apart from the purchase of arable land, ownership of a youthful skilled slave was perhaps the best long-term investment for ambitious settlers. This circumstance enhanced the viability of slavery in port towns like colonial New York City, where skilled journeymen and apprentices from the British Isles and Europe were scarce and commanded high wages.

In colonial New York City, weekly slave auctions were held at the Merchants’ Coffee House, the Fly Market, and Proctor’s Vendue House. Because slaves typically lived in their masters’ houses, prospective buyers were reluctant to purchase slaves of unknown character. Newspaper notices routinely reassured dubious buyers, whenever possible, by vouching for the moral disposition, linguistic competency, and intellectual capacity of advertised slaves.¹⁰² However, as the absence of an informative description of the advertised “new Negro” in the following newspaper notice indicates, it was not always possible to obtain information about enslaved newcomers: “A Likely Negro Girl about 18 Years of Age, and a likely Negro Boy about 16 Years, both born in this City. They can speak good English and Dutch, and are also bred up to all sorts of House-work, and also a new Negro Man. Enquire at the Post-office in New-York.”¹⁰³ The townspeople were wise to exercise caution when purchasing enslaved newcomers, since unruly slaves who had participated in slave revolts in the West Indies were sometimes transported to the port of New York.¹⁰⁴ For this reason, the settlers preferred to purchase slaves who had been born in New York (or at least raised from childhood in the colony) and were, therefore, familiar with the local customs and presumably well adapted to their life of enslavement. Of course, the purchase of human chattel always involved risk. Two lawsuits aptly illustrate this point. In October 1751, Nathan Levy sued Henry Shaver for trespass on a debt. In his complaint, Levy claimed that Shaver had promised to pay him the sum of £10 (New York currency) for “one Negro Wench.” In his answer, Shaver explained that he refused to pay Levy because the slave delivered to him was “infirm and unsound of Mind and Memory” and hence had “neither use nor Value.”¹⁰⁵ Several years later, in a similar lawsuit, Richard Hale sued Moses Franks for breach of contract in the sale of a slave. Hale claimed that he had agreed to buy “a Negro Girl Slave that was Compas Montis & Could speak the Language of her native Country.” (Bilingual slaves who spoke English in addition to Spanish or a West African language were valuable property in colonial

New York City, whose merchant community engaged in overseas trade in Spanish America and along the West African littoral).¹⁰⁶ According to Hale, the slave he had purchased from Franks turned out to be “unsound & Dumb and Labouring under Great infirmity of mind . . . & could not speak her native Country Tongue.”¹⁰⁷ Although both lawsuits were settled in the purchaser’s favor, the trials lasted several weeks. Given the length of such lawsuits and the uncertainty of their outcome, most New York City townspeople probably inspected slaves carefully before making purchases.

Living in relatively small dwellings and in a densely populated port town, the townspeople were particularly wary of acquiring female slaves, who were generally assumed to be sexually promiscuous and therefore prone to bring unwanted infants into settler households. Lacking biotechnologies, such as the ones used in present-day neocolonialist campaigns of birth control and sterilization in so-called Third World nations, the colonial state of the early modern era was incapable of regulating female fertility in overseas colonies. Colonial New York City slaveowners were sometimes burdened with the costly expense of feeding and clothing the unwanted offspring of their female slaves. Slave traders were attuned to the concerns of prospective New York City buyers who wished to purchase a single female slave but could not afford to care for unwanted slave children. For this reason, the following newspaper notice announced that the advertised female slave could bear no children: “To Be Sold, a likely barren Negro Wench about 24 years of age, enquire of the Printer hereof.”¹⁰⁸ Another advertisement announced: “To Be Sold, a young Wench about 29 years old, that drinks no strong Drink, and gets no Children, a very good Drudge.”¹⁰⁹ For some New York City slaveowners, fecundity in producing offspring was such an undesirable trait in female slaves that otherwise exemplary cooks and drudges were sold because of that troublesome characteristic. One newspaper ad stated: “To Be Sold, an excellent Negro Wench, about 20 Years old, with a male Child, about three Months old; the Wench has had the Small-Pox, can cook, wash, and iron, can be well recommended, and is sold for no other Fault than being too fruitful.”¹¹⁰ Owing to the gendered division of labor in colonial New York City, most enslaved women labored in the city’s household mode of production, as drudges, cooks, and nurses within the confines of their masters’ houses. Female slaves generally acquired skills deemed appropriate to their gender. With early training, young female slaves became accomplished seamstresses, whose dexterity with a needle proved to be an asset in household industries.¹¹¹ On market days, female slaves ventured outside the domestic sphere to the marts along the East River, at Coenties slip and Clarke’s ferry, where fish, oysters, and country produce were sold.¹¹² Female slaves were sometimes employed as vendors at these city markets, a practice that would have been familiar to slaves from West Africa, where women typically controlled village markets.

In contrast to enslaved women who, except for market days, were confined to their master’s houses, enslaved men were a highly mobile component of colonial New York City’s labor force. Male slaves circulated from work site to work site about town and piloted market boats between the city and the farming villages in Long Island and New Jersey. As part of the crews on board oceangoing

vessels embarking from the port of New York, some enslaved males traveled overseas. Two male slaves named Bon and Noice sailed on the New York City privateer ship *Duke of Cumberland* during its tour in the Caribbean Sea in the spring and summer of 1759. Free black sailors also belonged to the crews on New York City privateer vessels. Richard Richardson, a free black sailor, took his share of the prize money from a successful privateering venture, when, in 1766, the *Harlequin* returned to New York's seaport after a Caribbean cruise.¹¹³ Ordinary vessels of trade employed enslaved crewmen. In 1775, Captain Samuel Gifford hired Thomas Vardill's male slave, who in that same year sailed with Gifford to Bristol, England, and back to the port of New York on the brigantine *Cornelia's Portage*. That brigantine's crew also included a free black sailor named Colevain.¹¹⁴

Besides laboring on board sailing vessels, at the city's port facilities, in artisans' shops, and at construction sites about town, male slaves cultivated farmland in the countryside. Female slaves probably labored alongside male slaves and other male farm laborers, cultivating and harvesting crops, in addition to laboring at the household tasks of cooking, cleaning, and caring for children. During the French and Indian War, New York City became an overcrowded garrison town housing numerous English soldiers. The sudden accretion of the city's population during that war created a great demand for foodstuffs and other country produce. At that time, victualing (or selling food supplies to the army) became an especially lucrative business. Most slaves who disembarked at the port of New York during the French and Indian War were probably employed as farm laborers in the nearby farming district and helped transform the countryside within the city's orbit into a prosperous region of commercial agricultural production. By 1756, 10,000 to 20,000 slaves lived within a 50-mile radius of New York City.¹¹⁵ At that time slaves comprised 20 to 27 percent of the total population in rural Kings, Queens, Richmond, Westchester, and Suffolk counties, as well as in Bergen County in eastern New Jersey. Male slaves accounted for nearly 60 percent of the total enslaved population in these agricultural regions.¹¹⁶

The imperatives of colony building, of transforming the fledgling port town into a thriving entrepôt and its hinterland into flourishing units of commercial agricultural production, necessitated bringing together an assortment of laborers—free, indentured, and enslaved laborers—at work sites in town and country.¹¹⁷ White workers and enslaved black workers labored side by side in both the agricultural and commercial sectors of the economy. In this mixed labor system, no racialized division of labor protected white laborers from the competition of black laborers. In colonial New York City, most black laborers were slaves. Enslaved laborers who could be rented on a daily, monthly, or even yearly basis for odd jobs and seasonal employment were particularly well suited to the colonial port town's need for a flexible labor force. Published in 1711, the following public notice indicates that the hiring-out system was already an established mechanism of New York City's labor market: "All negro . . . slaves that are let out to hire, within this city, do take up their standing in order to be hired at the market-house [Meal Market] at Wall Street Slip, until such time as

they are hired, whereby all persons may know where to hire slaves as their occasion shall require, and all masters discover where their slaves are so hired.”¹¹⁸ The white workingmen of colonial New York City complained that the practice of hiring out slaves endangered their livelihoods. As early as 1686, the city’s cartmen submitted a petition to protest that the use of hired slaves in the removal of trash from the city streets and in the carting of goods at the weigh house and markets violated their monopoly on hauling the city’s garbage and other materials. The cartmen further complained that competition from hired slave labor threatened to reduce them to poverty. The municipal government redressed the cartmen’s grievance by mandating that no hired “Negro or Slave be suffered to work on the [weigh house] as a Porter about any Goods either imported or Exported from or into this City.” Finding it cheaper to hire enslaved drayers and porters to haul their goods than to pay the city’s cartmen at the fixed rate of 6d. per load, town dwellers ignored this regulation.¹¹⁹ Although Adam Smith asserted that “the work done by freemen comes cheaper in the end than that performed by slaves. It is found to do so even at Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, where the wages of common labour are so very high,”¹²⁰ in colonial New York City hiring slaves proved to be less costly than employing cartmen, whose artificial monopoly, fixed wages, and other archaic privileges rendered them vulnerable to competition from hired slave labor.¹²¹


Skilled white workers also complained that competition from slave labor diminished their wages. The premium wages paid to craftsmen in colonial New York City drew some journeymen from the British Isles and Europe to the port of New York but never in numbers sufficient to meet the city’s demand for skilled workers. Journeymen were so scarce and the wages paid to them so costly that master craftsmen turned to enslaved laborers as a substitute labor force. In colonial New York City, the average price of an adult male slave was, in 1700, approximately £40 and, in 1760, nearly £100, while, as late as 1772, white journeymen earned daily wages of 8s.6d., making slave ownership a cheaper option in the long run than hiring journeymen.¹²² For a higher initial expenditure than the cost to hire a journeyman, a master craftsman could purchase a slave who was bonded to him for life, train that slave in his craft, and eventually sell or over time hire out his skilled slave at a profit. In colonial New York City, a substantial proportion of artisans, many more than in colonial Boston and colonial Philadelphia, owned slaves.¹²³ By 1743, the practice of training slaves in a skilled craft was so common among the artisans of New York City that journeymen in the cooper trade signed a petition that called on the municipal government to prohibit master coopers from training slaves in their craft.¹²⁴ At that time a severe economic depression reduced the wages of journeymen, and competition from slave labor threatened to undermine their wages even further. Hoping to offer journeymen some relief, New York’s interim Governor George Clarke (1736–43) directed New York’s colonial assembly to establish a law that would protect skilled journeymen from the detrimental competition that followed from the practice of training slaves in the skilled trades. Clarke chided the members of that legislative body, some of whom were slaveowners: “The artificers complain and with too much reason of the pernicious custom of breeding

slaves to trades whereby the honest and industrious tradesmen are reduced to poverty for want of employ and many of them forced to leave us to seek their living in other countries.”¹²⁵ Judging from Clarke’s statement, the use of slaves in the skilled trades was damaging the material welfare of New York City journeymen and precipitating the outmigration of these tradesmen. Though journeymen suffered from the competition of slave labor, widespread slave ownership among artisans and the practice of hiring out slaves probably had the greatest adverse impact on the livelihood of unskilled white day laborers. By the early decades of the eighteenth century, the typical wage of these workers was approximately 3s. each day, and by the late decades approximately 6s. But as the typical rent of from 2s.6d. to 3s.6d. each day for an unskilled slave indicates,¹²⁶ New York City slaveowners were hiring out slaves at a rate that was competitive with, if not ruinous to, the wages of unskilled day laborers.

From the petitions against the slave hiring-out system and the practice of training slaves in the skilled trades, we learn that the historic conflict between the economic interests of slaveowners and white workingmen dates back to the colonial period. At that juncture in New York City’s history, white workingmen valued their wages as much as their whiteness. To be sure, white workingmen assumed (or occupied) the subject-position of “not black” and therefore “not slave.” In their petitions, white workingmen demanded that the colonial state protect the privileges promised to white settlers—for example, high wages and, in some cases, a monopoly on certain trades.¹²⁷ Yet unlike their nineteenth-century counterparts, the white workingmen of colonial New York City instigated no race riots in protest against competition from black workers in the labor market.¹²⁸ As a social group, these white workingmen never engaged in overt acts of violence against black laborers, because they understood that such action would have, in most cases, amounted to an assault on the property of slaveowners, a crime that the colonial state was sure to punish.¹²⁹ Moreover, these white workingmen understood that the slaveowners, not the slaves, benefited from the exploitation of slave labor. For this reason, their petitions condemned slaveowners who trained slaves in the skilled trades and hired out slaves at rates that proved damaging to the welfare of white workingmen. These remonstrances stopped short of demanding the abolition of slavery, yet evident in them were the stirrings of social antagonisms that during the nineteenth century would develop into a free labor movement that was dedicated to preserving the privileges of white workingmen.¹³⁰

To be sure, class and race were interrelated ingredients of social identity in colonial New York City. The ownership of enslaved blacks was an important basis of social stratification within the settler population; at the same time, a white-black binary marked the distinction between workers who were forced to labor without consent or contract and those workers who labored because they were promised limited terms of indenture and apprenticeship, high wages, and other attractive incentives.¹³¹ Although it was not unusual for white settlers to pass through a period of temporary servitude, most newcomers from the British Isles and Europe, especially those who disembarked at the port of New York prior to the 1770s, managed to become the head of an independent house-

hold. “Every servant in the old social world,” Peter Laslett has noted, “was probably quite confident that he or she would some day get married and be at the head of a new family, keeping others in subordination.”¹³² Although many British migrants and European immigrants doubted that colonial New York City was a likely place for them to obtain a life of independence, Laslett’s statement also applies to colonial New York City, where a broad segment of the white settler population, artisans as well as wealthy merchants, established independent households and owned slaves.

 Located at the southernmost extreme of Manhattan Island, colonial New York City encompassed an area of approximately two and one-half square miles. Because of the density of population and the scarcity of housing, only a few slaveowners provided their slaves with separate living quarters, known as “Negro kitchens” and usually located in the masters’ backyards. Together with other household members, most masters and slaves lived under the same roof, in cramped dwellings of no more than two stories, with each floor partitioned into two rooms.¹³³ At the time of the English takeover in 1664 relatively few adult town dwellers, only 12.5 percent of household heads, owned slaves.¹³⁴ By 1703, approximately 41 percent of household heads in New York City owned at least one slave. The census of 1703, wills, inventories, and other household records make possible an informative, though somewhat static, ward-by-ward survey of slave ownership patterns in colonial New York City.¹³⁵

The most instructive place to begin this survey is the East Ward, a municipal jurisdiction bounded by Burgher’s Path to the south, Wall Street to the north, Smith Street to the west, and William Street to the east. Located in the East Ward along the East River were the city’s shipyard, Beekman’s and Schuyler’s wharves, Frederick Philipse’s warehouse on Queen Street, the crane at the east end of Wall Street (also known as “the Fly”), and the Fly Market at the intersection of Pearl Street and Maiden Lane. Dockworkers, sailors, and transients roamed the wharves along the East River by day and by night. Seafarers generally found temporary lodging in the East Ward boardinghouses that catered to sailors and other travelers. Permanent residents—for example, ship carpenters, sail makers, and mariners—inhabited that ward’s maze of crooked streets and narrow alleyways. A few wealthy merchants—for example, Jacobus Van Cortlandt, Stephen Van Cortlandt, and Abraham Van Horne—resided along the southern end of Queen Street near Burgher’s Path. Most East Ward residents made a livelihood from maritime occupations and related jobs.¹³⁶ Because of the intensive use of slave labor at the port facilities along the East River, the East Ward contained the largest absolute number of black inhabitants of any ward. By 1703, a quarter of the city’s total black population lived in East Ward households. In that same year, the East Ward’s total population was approximately 883 inhabitants, of whom approximately 665 were white inhabitants and 218 (25 percent) were enslaved blacks. Nearly half of the East Ward households (96 of 212) held at least one slave. Whereas 105 adult male slaves lived in East Ward house-

holds, only 60 adult male slaves and 57 adult male slaves lived in Dock Ward and South Ward households, respectively. Male adults were approximately half of the East Ward's total black population. The need for a physically robust labor force that could handle the heavy cargo arriving at the port facilities along the East River explains the preponderance of adult males in that ward's black population. During an ordinary workday, the number of slaves in the East Ward was temporarily augmented by enslaved men who resided in other city wards but were sent to labor at the port facilities along the East River. According to the census of 1703, white inhabitants outnumbered enslaved blacks by three to one in the East Ward. But when the presence of hired slaves and other enslaved laborers who frequented that area of the city in the execution of their masters' business is considered, a closer balance between white workingmen and enslaved black laborers was probably characteristic of the East Ward's demographic landscape during a typical workday.

New York City mariners lived in the East Ward near the city's port facilities. Captain John Theobald resided in the East Ward with two adult white males, three white female children, two adult male slaves, and one adult female slave. Like other East Ward slaveowners, Theobald probably employed his adult male slaves at the port facilities when they did not accompany him on overseas voyages. Since no adult white females lived in the mariner's house, the adult female slave in his household probably performed child-rearing duties as well as house-keeping chores. Theobald's male slaves doubtless had daily contact with other enslaved men who worked in the East Ward, whereas his female slave probably had fewer occasions to interact with slaves outside the domestic space of her master's house. Also located in the East Ward was the dwelling of Captain Nicholas Dumaresq, the son of Elias Dumaresq, a French Huguenot who, in the 1580s, fled religious persecution in France, took temporary asylum in Amsterdam, and, finally, settled in New Amsterdam. In 1701, four children—a daughter named Sarah, an eldest son named Nicholas, a son named Jacob, and a son named John—lived with the widower Nicholas Dumaresq. At that time an enslaved girl also lived in the Dumaresq household.¹³⁷ Like the female slave in the Theobald household, Dumaresq's slave girl probably labored in her master's house as a drudge and cook. She also probably performed the duties of nursemaid to her master's motherless children. The English mariner Captain Giles Shelly lived in the East Ward with his wife and an exceptionally large lot of six slaves—one enslaved black woman named Hagar, one enslaved Indian man named Venture, and another enslaved Indian man named Symon, his wife, and his two children.¹³⁸ In 1679, the colonial state outlawed the enslavement of members of New York's Indian communities,¹³⁹ but Indians from outside New York and their offspring were held in lifelong hereditary bondage. With respect to their living and working conditions, the lives of these enslaved Indians probably differed little from the lives of enslaved blacks.

While the city's East Ward became a multicultural, polyglot neighborhood, which reflected the port of New York's function as a gateway for multiple immigration flows from throughout the Atlantic world, the city's South Ward remained the locus of a close-knit, aging, and relatively homogeneous commu-

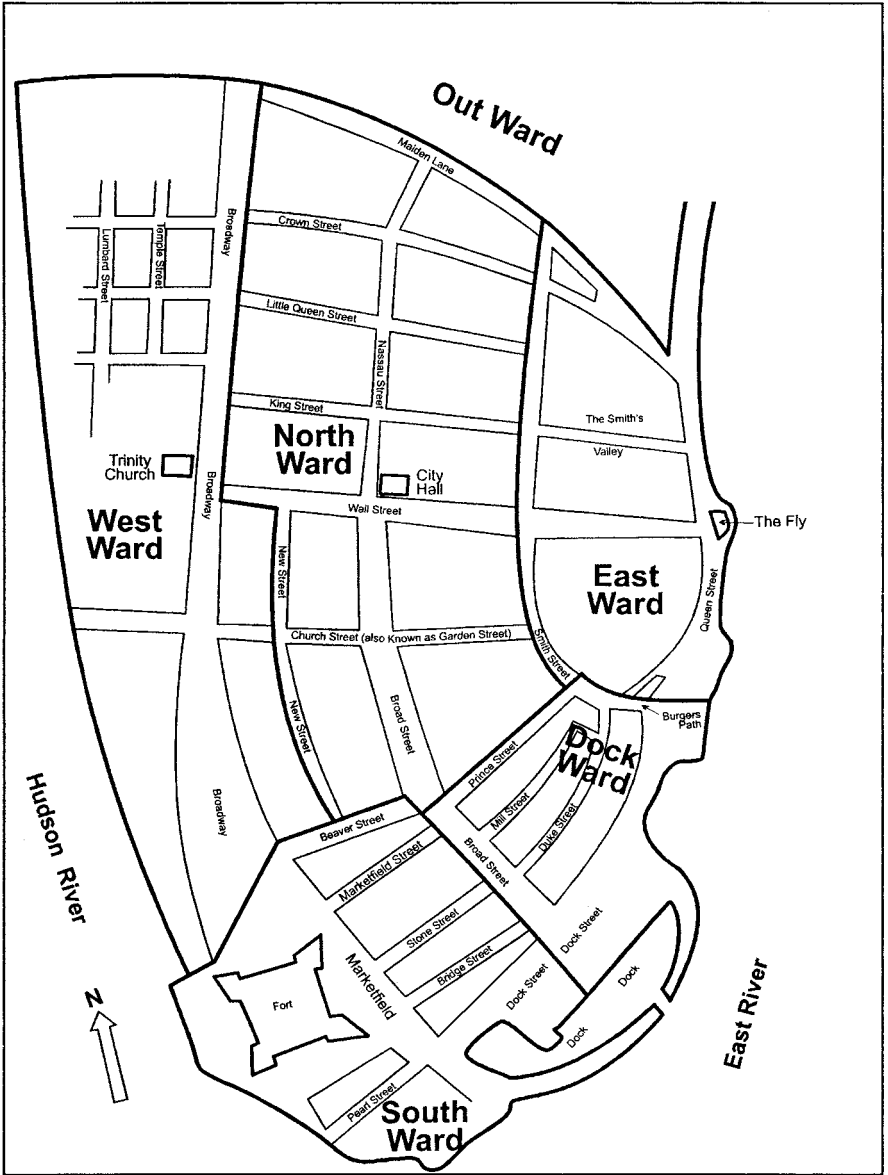


Figure 2.2. Ward Map, New York City, 1703

nity of long-established Dutch-speaking settlers. The site of the early Dutch colonial outpost, known as New Amsterdam and situated at the tip of Manhattan Island, the South Ward was bounded by the Hudson River to the south and to the west, Beaver Street to north, and Broad Street to the east. Located in that ward were the city's oldest landmarks, the fort and the bowling green.¹⁴⁰ Approximately 50 percent of South Ward householders (62 of 118) owned at least

one slave. In 1624, Aeffie Peternela Ten Eyck, the widow of an early Dutch-speaking settler named Derrick Ten Eyck, lived in the South Ward on Stone Street, the first paved street in New York City. Aeffie Ten Eyck inhabited a brick dwelling and owned one elderly slave woman.¹⁴¹ South Ward slaveowners were more likely to own aged slaves than slaveowners in the other city wards. In 1703, approximately 15 percent of the South Ward's slaveowning households kept slaves over the age of 60 years, whereas only 5 percent of the slaveowning households in each of the other wards contained slaves in that age cohort. The elderly South Ward slaves were probably long-time Manhattan residents who had arrived at the colonial seaport before the rise in population density abetted the outbreak of lethal epidemics that resulted in high infant mortality rates. Surviving childhood diseases as youngsters, these slaves enjoyed greater longevity than slaves who disembarked at the port of New York during the period in which the accretion of the city's population produced overcrowding and the environmental conditions for the easy spread of deadly microbes. The households of South Ward slaveowners contained relatively large lots of slaves, three to four on average as opposed to an average of one or two slaves held in other city slaveowning households. Rip Van Dam lived in the South Ward on Stone Street, just a short walk from Aeffie Ten Eyck's house. A wealthy colonial Netherlander, politician, and slave trader, Van Dam prospered under English rule and served as a member of the Governor's Council from 1702 to 1732 and as acting governor from 1731 to 1732.¹⁴² By 1749, Van Dam's household included his second wife, an unmarried adult son and daughter, three sons and two daughters under the age of 16 years, and six slaves—three men, two women, and one boy.¹⁴³ The relatively large lot of slaves in Van Dam's household represented a portion of the wealth that the prosperous merchant had accumulated over the years.

By 1703 some of the city's wealthiest merchants, a combination of Anglo, Dutch, and French colonial elites, maintained residences in the Dock Ward, the municipal jurisdiction bounded by Burgher's Path to the east, Broad Street to the west, Prince Street to the north, and the East River to the south. During the English colonial period, the area around the City Dock and the marketplace at Hanover Square in the Dock Ward gradually became the port town's principal business center.¹⁴⁴ In 1703, approximately 731 inhabitants resided in the Dock Ward, with white settlers comprising 75 percent and enslaved blacks accounting for 25 percent of that ward's total population. Each workday, a relatively large slave labor force assembled at the City Dock and Hanover Square. Nearly 70 percent of Dock Ward householders (80 of 124) owned at least one slave, the largest proportion of slaveholding of any ward. The merchant Elias Boudinot, a descendant of Huguenots who fled France to Antigua in the 1680s and then settled in New York City, resided on Dock Street. Elias participated in the provision trade to the West Indies, and he maintained a lasting partnership with his brother, John Boudinot, who lived in Antigua. Elias Boudinot's household contained two slaves,¹⁴⁵ a grouping that corresponded to the pattern of slaveholdings in the Dock Ward and in the city as a whole.

Bounded by Beaver and Prince streets to the south and Maiden Lane to the north, with its westernmost limit at New Street and Broadway and its eastern-

most extreme at Smith Street,¹⁴⁶ the North Ward was colonial New York City's least affluent neighborhood. The majority of North Ward households were probably headed by white workingmen who could not afford to purchase and maintain slaves. In 1703, approximately 20 percent of North Ward householders owned slaves. Of the 848 inhabitants of the North Ward, only 58 were enslaved blacks. The modest but by no means impoverished households of artisans dominated the southernmost area of the North Ward. The greater part of that ward's black population probably lived in the households of the master craftsmen who resided south of Crown Street. The cordwainer Abraham Kip lived on New Street, a corridor of dwellings that demarcated the northerly movement of the South Ward's Dutch and Walloon populations. Kip was a descendant of French Walloons who, in the fourteenth century, fled their native land and settled in Amsterdam. His grandfather, Hendrick Kip, sailed with Henry Hudson on his 1610 voyage to North America and in 1635 settled in New Amsterdam. By 1703, Abraham Kip had established an independent household, which included his wife, Catalina (née de la Noy), a son and a daughter, and an enslaved family.¹⁴⁷ Kip obtained a grant of land, known as Kip's Bay Farm and located along present-day Thirty-fifth Street between the East River and Second Avenue. As the value of real estate on Manhattan Island soared with population growth and the northward expansion of residential housing, especially during the era of the Industrial Revolution, Kip's Bay Farm became the principal source of the Kip family's wealth.¹⁴⁸

Bounded by Maiden Lane to the north, Beaver Street to the south, New Street to the east, and the Hudson River to the west, the West Ward remained sparsely populated for much of the English colonial period. Located in the West Ward on the west side of Broadway near the corner of Broadway and Wall Street, Trinity Church, the Anglican house of worship, stood at the crossroads of town and country on Manhattan Island. Trinity Church Farm encompassed most of the land north of King Street and west of Broadway between present-day Chambers and Fulton streets.¹⁴⁹ The Anglican vestry did not commence selling parcels of that farmland until the 1730s, a decision that kept population density low in the West Ward before that time.¹⁵⁰ In 1703, only 622 residents lived in the West Ward, and black town dwellers were no more than 15 percent of that ward's total population. Most West Ward residents were tenant farmers who cultivated Trinity Church Farm.¹⁵¹ Reverend Pierre Peiret, pastor for the city's French Calvinist congregation from 1688 to 1704, also resided on Trinity Church Farm. For many years, the Anglican vestry supplemented the salaries of the city's Protestant ministers by allowing them to occupy and cultivate parcels of the church's farmland in the West Ward. In 1703, Pieret maintained a relatively large household that included his wife, adult son and daughter, a son under the age of 16 years, and four slaves. Pieret's parcel of land on Trinity Church Farm was probably larger than most city lots and hence allowed the French Calvinist minister to keep more slaves than most New York City slaveowners, who typically lived on small plots of land in a densely populated section of the colonial port town. Travelers who trekked southward through the West Ward along Broadway encountered an increasingly congested landscape. The wealthy mer-

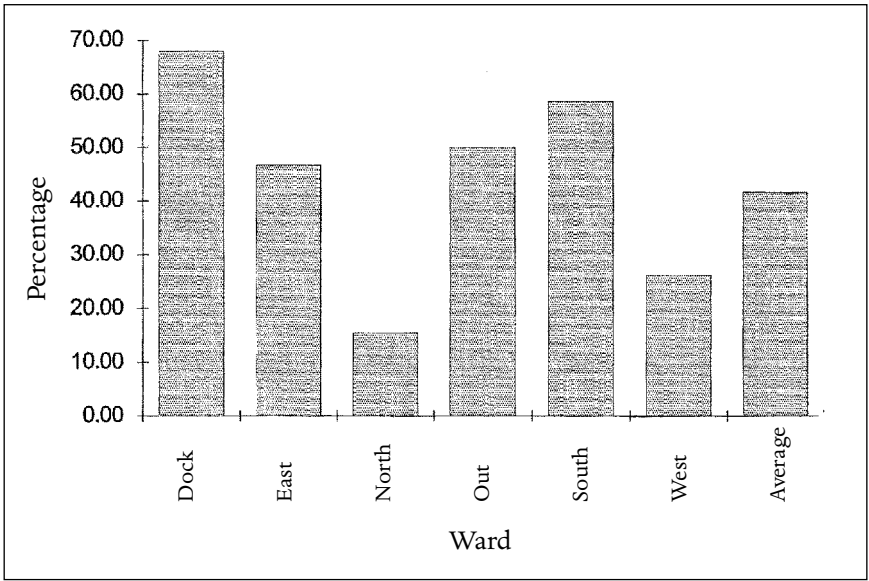


Figure 2.3. Percentage of Slaveowning Households, 1703

chant Peter Bayard resided in the southern sector of the West Ward, at One Broadway on the corner of Broadway and Exchange Place. Bayard's household included his wife, two daughters, and one female slave,¹⁵² a grouping that closely resembled the typical slaveowning household in colonial New York City.

Until the early decades of the nineteenth century, the area on Manhattan Island outside the city limit remained countryside, interrupted by independent family farms and the country seats of wealthy townspeople.¹⁵³ The municipal government assigned this underpopulated rural district, which included two farming villages, the Bowery and Harlem, to the loosely defined jurisdiction called the Outward. Established by Peter Stuyvesant in 1651, the Bowery consisted of contiguous farm lots bounded by present-day Fourth Avenue and extending as far north as Eighteenth Street. Originally settled by Dutch and Walloon farmers in 1636 and named Nieuw Haarlem after the Dutch town nearby Amsterdam, English colonial Harlem included a village and a string of farm lots that the settlers laid out from the East River to the Hudson River and northward from its southern boundary at present-day Seventy-fourth Street.¹⁵⁴ In 1703, only 339 inhabitants lived in the Outward. Farmers and their families, many of whom were the descendants of the early Dutch and Walloon settlers, were three-quarters of the Outward's total population, while black inhabitants comprised one-quarter of its total population. Half of the Outward households held slaves. Because the area's agricultural economy placed a premium on the physical strength of farm laborers, men outnumbered women and children in

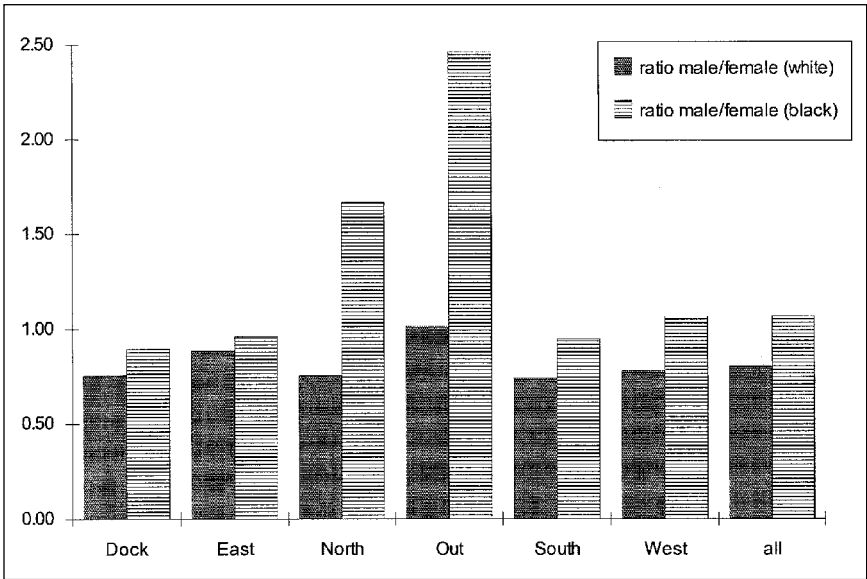


Figure 2.4. Ward-by-Ward Gender Ratios

the Outward's black population. According to the census of 1703, there were only 13 women and 2 children out of a total of 84 black inhabitants in that rural district.

By the first decade of the eighteenth century, long-established settlers had already purchased most of the arable land in the Outward, and these landowners were reluctant to sell this land to newcomers, preferring instead to make gifts of these rural landholdings to their heirs. By 1703, the colonial Netherlander Hendrickus Brevoort had purchased a tract of farmland in the Bowery between present-day Tenth and Eighteenth streets. Upon his death, his eldest son, Hendrickus the younger, inherited his Bowery landholdings. This Hendrickus became a prosperous farmer and eventually built a brick dwelling on the Brevoort farm near present-day Eleventh Street. In addition to farming, he practiced the wheelwright trade and kept a shop in his barn.¹⁵⁵ His two male slaves labored by his side during the early years of his career, at a time when he was improving his farmland and laying the groundwork for his offspring's future prosperity.¹⁵⁶ When Hendrickus the younger died in 1782, his son, Abraham, inherited the Brevoort farm.¹⁵⁶ The Brevoort family pattern of patriarchal land control, of keeping family land intact until the death of the male head of household, resembled the practice of New England patriachs, which the historian Philip J. Greven documents in his path-breaking study on landholding patterns in colonial Andover, Massachusetts.¹⁵⁷ In colonial New York City and the surrounding farming districts, the practice of patriarchal land control and other customs of

traditional patrimonial societies existed alongside capitalist property relations and the bourgeois value of possessive individualism. A general characteristic of colonialism, the coexistence of the archaic and the modern remained a salient feature of colonial Manhattan until the dynamics of modernity finally catapulted its inhabitants into the age of the democratic and industrial revolutions.

Much like the farming districts of eighteenth-century Europe, brewhouses, sawmills, gristmills, slaughterhouses, and bake ovens dotted colonial Manhattan's rural landscape. Outward farmers typically combined commercial agricultural production with food-processing industries, such as bolting, meatpacking, and brewing, as well as the processing of timber into lumber, casks, staves, and naval stores. By the first decade of the eighteenth century, Thomas Codington operated a brewery on his Harlem farm, where he and his eight slaves raised barley and other raw ingredients, which they later processed into beer.¹⁵⁸ While partly produced for household consumption, the bulk of the beer that Codington and his slaves brewed on his farm was probably transported to the city market for sale. The Outward's increasing orientation toward commercial farming and the processing of agricultural produce for the nearby city market reflected the strengthening of the economic link between town and country during the eighteenth century.

Members of the Rutgers family lived in both town and country. Harmanus Rutgers was a descendant of early Dutch settlers who arrived at Manhattan Island in 1646. According to the census of 1703, Harmanus II, an adult male, lived with his father, Harmanus the elder, and two adult male slaves on the north side of Stone Street in the South Ward. In that year his younger adult brother, Anthony Rutgers, lived with one adult female slave in the Dock Ward on Broad Street. Harmanus II eventually left his father's house and moved to the Rutgers family brewery on the north side of Maiden Lane. Upon his father's death, Harmanus II inherited the Rutgers brewery and in his will bequeathed that property, which included a storehouse, malthouse, millhouse, three slaves, and a "Negro kitchen," to his eldest son, Harmanus III. Harmanus II had also purchased Outward farmland, a tract of more than 1,000 acres near present-day Chatham Square. Upon his death, he gave that property to his son Hendrick, who built a brick house on the land and over time made other improvements to the homestead. Like his brother, Anthony Rutgers accumulated property in both town and country. Anthony built a dwelling on Maiden Lane near his brother's house and later moved to a farm located northwest of City Hall, at the intersection of Broadway and present-day Chambers Street. Anthony also inherited Outward farmland, which he leased to white tenants who cultivated barley and sold a share of the harvest to their landlord. At the Rutgers brewery, that grain was distilled into beer and then transported to the city for sale. Over the years, the Rutgers family, which included the founder of Rutgers University, Colonel Henry Rutgers, accumulated a sizeable fortune through market-oriented purchases of real estate in both town and country, the operation of a successful brewery business, and the exploitation of white tenants and enslaved black laborers.¹⁵⁹

Strung along the Hudson River as far north as Fort Orange, were the manorial estates of wealthy New York gentlemen.¹⁶⁰ New York's royal governors dispensed these large tracts of land to prominent settlers in exchange for their loyalty to the English Crown.¹⁶¹ These governors also used various forms of patronage to entice men of accomplishment to settle in New York. Lured to New York by the promise of land, prestige, and political influence, Doctor Cadwallader Colden (1688–1776) became a member of the colony's landed elite. Born in Ireland to Scottish parents, Colden had studied medicine in London, considered himself a man of science, and carried on a correspondence with leading intellectuals in Europe, such as the renowned Swedish naturalist Linnaeus. Like Cotton Mather of colonial Massachusetts, Colden defied popular superstition by advocating smallpox inoculation and immunizing his own family. At the invitation of Governor Hunter, Colden left his physician's practice in Philadelphia and, in 1718, settled in New York City. An influential figure in colonial New York politics, Colden was a zealous defender of the Crown's prerogative powers and was rewarded for his loyalty with a number of coveted offices in the colonial government. From 1736 until his death in 1776, Colden held the successive posts of surveyor-general, member of the Governor's Council, and lieutenant governor.¹⁶²

One year after Colden's arrival at New York City, Governor Hunter endowed the Scots-Irish physician with a land grant of 2,000 acres in Orange County, New York. Colden soon purchased an additional 1,000 acres and named his manorial estate Coldenham. Colden moved his wife, Alice, and their children to Coldenham, where he intended to pursue the secure life of a country gentleman on the rental income that he intended to collect from British tenants. Preferring to settle on land they owned, most British migrants shunned leaseholds, however. As his dream of obtaining ample rental income from numerous British tenants proved to be an unrealizable fantasy, Colden turned to enslaved black laborers who, by 1756, cultivated part of his farmland.¹⁶³ The owner of slaves and the lord of a manorial estate, Colden was a member of the British colonial elite, which Benedict Anderson has characterized as capitalists in aristocratic drag who were allowed "to play aristocrat off center court: i.e. anywhere in the empire except at home."¹⁶⁴ By the 1720s, the metropolitan government in London had abolished the feudal privileges of New York's colonial elite of wealthy landlords in order to make New York more attractive to settlers from the British Isles and Europe. Colden managed his manorial estate less like a feudal lord and more like a shrewd American businessman. Like other prominent settlers—for example, Frederick Philipse, Robert Livingston, and Stephanus DeLancey—he profited from the English Crown's patronage system of expansive land grants and lucrative monopoly contracts. Whether as landowners, overseas traders, or victuallers for the Royal troops, New York's colonial elite had an economic interest in the colony's commercial development. However much its members wrapped themselves in the trappings of an aristocracy, all but a few owed their social status to wealth alone, which typically consisted of land and slaves.



Enslaved blacks comprised a proportion of the wealth of colonial New York's ruling elite and also of the New York City artisans and the small, independent farmers in the hinterland. These colonists of diverse birthplaces, languages, and religions not only shared a common economic interest in the ownership and exploitation of enslaved labor, but also came to share a sense of communal belonging to a single, distinct race, set apart from the culturally alien race of African descent whose condition of servitude was heritable and perpetual bondage. The multiple population movements that flowed into the port of New York deposited a diverse assemblage of newcomers on Manhattan Island. The project of colony building on that island-peninsula, especially the need for a reliable labor force, involved installing uprooted newcomers in relationally constituted and differentially valued racialized subject-positions. Most Bantu, Malagasy, Akan, and other people from sub-Saharan Africa came to occupy the subject-position "enslaved black," while most English, Dutch, German, and other Western Europeans came to occupy the subject-position "white settler." The following three chapters discuss the process of racial formation and the emergence of antiblack racism as a disciplinary mechanism of colonial governance in the heterogeneous and sometimes volatile port town at the tip of Manhattan Island.



PART II

*Racial Formation and
the Art of Colonial
Governance*

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“A Difference amongst Ourselves”

DIVISIONS OF RELIGION AND LANGUAGE,
SOLIDARITIES OF RACE AND NATION IN
COLONIAL NEW YORK CITY’S SETTLER POPULATION



Colonial New York City’s multicultural, polyglot settler population was the product of multiple transatlantic population movements originating in the European diasporas of the post-Reformation era. Religious persecution, war, poverty, and the dislocations accompanying the advent of modernity brought to the colonial port town at the tip of Manhattan Island intermittent flows of sojourners from a wide geographical arch across Europe and the British Isles, reaching as far east as Kraków, as far west and north as the Hebrides, and as far south as Baden-Württemberg. Enlisted in the project of colony building on Manhattan Island and in the surrounding countryside as part of a vital labor force, these immigrants were, of course, more than mere constituents of labor in colonial development; they were, importantly, bearers of cultures and ideologies that on the colonial frontier competed for dominance over the settler population, especially the American-born youth.

Minimizing the articulated antagonisms of linguistic, confessional, natal, and social differences among the settlers while, at the same time, forging a shared sense of belonging to the English nation from the real and imaginary affinities between colonial Netherlanders, German-speaking immigrants, French Protestants, and British migrants became the most difficult task confronting the English rulers. For them, practicing the art of colonial governance involved the extension of English rights to the mainly foreign-born Protestant settler population, the incorporation of these peoples into the political community of loyal English subjects, and the transplantation of legitimating institutions of English culture for the cultivation of English civilities in the settlers. This expansion of

the communal boundaries of the English nation amounted to a reterritorialization of Englishness—that is, a movement from defining Englishness as primarily consisting of the external trait of having been born on the soil of England to positing certain internal traits of innate racial disposition as the essence of Englishness. Crucial to this shift was the myth of the Anglo-Saxon race, which legitimated the incorporation of Germanic peoples, including colonial Netherlanders, German speakers from the Rhineland, and even French Protestants, into the English nation. Importantly, the reterritorialization of Englishness gave rise to the privileging of racial purity as the decisive principle of boundary maintenance, for determining not only who would be excluded from but also who would be included in the English nation. Most studies of racial formation stress the process of exclusion, often to the neglect of inclusionary processes. This study departs from that methodology by giving attention to the criteria of inclusion in the racial formation of colonial New York City's settler population and to the problem of self-difference within the city's diverse and factious settler population that together prompted the formation of racial whiteness as an essential ingredient of Englishness in the colonial port town.

Inhabited by a collection of foreigners, speaking all kind of languages and professing many types of religious belief, colonial New York City scarcely conformed to the new English rulers' conception of an ideal society. Reporting on the variety of religions in the colonial port town, Governor Edmund Andros (1674–77 and 1681) wrote in 1678: "There are Religions of all sorts, one Church of England, Several Presbyterians & Independents, Quakers & Anabaptists of Several sects, some Jews but presbyterians & Independents most numerous & substantiall."¹ In 1686, Governor Dongan called attention to the numerical weakness of the major Christian congregations, the comparatively large number of minor religious sects, and the absence of religiosity among most settlers: "Here bee not many of the Church of England, few Catholicks; abundance of Quakers preachers men and Women especially; Singing Quakers; Ranting Quakers; Sabbatarians; Antisabbatarians; some Anabaptists; some Independents; some Jews; in short all sorts of opinions there are some, and the most part, of none at all."² Writing from the city in 1692, Charles Lodwick complained: "Our chiefest unhappyness here is too great a mixture of nations."³ And as late as 1760, an English visitor reported that the city's settler population was comprised of so many "different nations, different languages and different religions . . . it is impossible to give them any precise or determinate character."⁴

Significantly, most settlers had little or no previous experience of allegiance to a centralized governmental authority. This characteristic described the settlers who arrived at Manhattan Island during the Dutch colonial period: The colonial Netherlanders came from the Dutch Republic, a geopolitical jurisdiction that more closely resembled a loose confederation of provinces than a single, consolidated, territorial nation-state, and the Walloon settlers originated in the Burgundian or southern Netherlands (present-day Belgium), a war-torn territory and object of a protracted contest between the United Provinces and Spain during the early modern era. Disembarking at the port of New York during the early years of English rule, the French-speaking Huguenot settlers were Protes-

tant refugees who had fled religious persecution at the hands of France's Catholic monarch, and the German-speaking settlers that flowed into New York's seaport were mostly militant Protestants from various fragmented European provinces ruled by Catholic princes but not yet incorporated into a nation-state or a comparable governmental unit.

The English rulers in colonial New York City had few models to guide them in governing such a culturally varied and politically estranged settler population, which included not only different linguistic and religious groups but also numerous uprooted people who were largely disconnected from the sources of authority in England. Arguably, the New England colonies offered the most successful example of English colonization in North America. But unlike colonial New York City's settler population, colonial New Englanders were mainly English-speaking migrants from the British Isles. In New York City, the art of colonial governance became a matter of making loyal British subjects out of the port town's diverse foreign-born settler population. The English Crown relied on surrogates to fulfill that goal and to project its sovereignty to that distant seaport. Colonial administrators, clergymen, missionaries, and schoolmasters undertook the task of transplanting English cultural institutions and systems of representation, as well as English institutions of governance, in New York City. Yet during the early stages of English rule, neither the English colonial administration nor the Church of England proved to be capable of effectively extending the reach of the English territorial monarchy and its legitimating religious and cultural institutions to that remote colonial port town.

Not surprisingly, the arrival of the news of England's Glorious Revolution (1688–89) in New York City precipitated a crisis of colonial governance that resulted in an uprising known as Leisler's Rebellion (1689–92), a settler revolt that began with the removal of the Crown-appointed colonial officials who ruled New York in the name of the Stuart monarchy and ended in the execution of the rebel leaders. In the wake of Leisler's Rebellion, the English rulers, again, confronted the task of securing the undivided loyalty of the city's factious foreign-born settler population. Endeavoring to minimize linguistic, confessional, and natal differences among the settlers and to foster a shared sense of communal belonging to the English nation among them, the English Parliament eliminated the political disabilities imposed on foreign-born Protestant settlers, while the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the Church of England's overseas missionary organization, cultivated the civilities and competencies of Englishness among the settlers by providing them with English-language schooling and instruction in the doctrines of Anglicanism. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the rise in conversions to Anglicanism and the nearly universal use of the English language among American-born settlers, along with the widespread practice of settler intermarriage, had produced a relatively homogeneous Anglicized settler population. However, Englishness stood in an uneasy relation to competing bonds of group identity. As late as the 1740s, confessional, linguistic, and natal differences remained sources of antagonism both within the city's settler population and between the English rulers and the settlers.



With the capture of the Dutch fort at the tip of Manhattan Island, the English conquerors confronted the task of peaceably ruling a foreign settler population. The terms of the English takeover, first outlined in the Articles of Capitulation (1664),⁵ were designed to appease colonial Netherlanders who, along with other Dutch speakers, were nearly 80 percent of New York City's settler population at the time of the English conquest.⁶ The provisions of the Dutch surrender declared colonial Netherlanders to be free denizens with the right to trade within the British Empire, extended liberty of conscience to Dutch Calvinists, promised to respect Dutch customs of inheritance, and released colonial Netherlanders from the obligation to bear arms against England's enemy, the United Provinces. However, the groundwork for what appeared to be an amicable changeover from Dutch to English rule was nearly spoiled when some roguish English soldiers asserted their status as conquerors by seizing the property of Dutch-speaking townspeople and arrogantly defying the authority of the colonial Netherlanders whom the new English rulers had appointed to governmental posts. In retaliation, colonial Netherlanders communicated their hatred of the English military presence by hailing the Royal troops with the epithet "English dogs" or, when their English vocabulary failed them, by raising their fists in anger. On June 19, 1665, mounting antagonisms between Dutch-speaking settlers and English-speaking newcomers erupted into a violent altercation, in which a colonial Netherlander and New York City constable named Hendrick Obe suffered serious bodily injury. Although overt hostility toward the new English rulers had subsided by 1670, some colonial Netherlanders did not conceal their desire to rid themselves of the English conquerors, when Dutch military forces recaptured Manhattan Island in 1673.⁷ The Dutch Reconquest was short-lived, however. After only 15 months under the restored Dutch colonial government, Manhattan Island, together with the rest of New York, reverted to England by stipulation of the Treaty of Westminster, which concluded the third Anglo-Dutch War.⁸

Alarmed at the colonial Netherlanders' collaboration with Dutch officials during the Reconquest of 1673 and the refusal of some to pledge an oath of allegiance to the English Crown, New York's Governor Edmund Andros considered a plan for the removal of colonial Netherlanders from New York City and the resettlement of that population to the territory in and around Albany. This scheme also envisioned replacing the relocated population of colonial Netherlanders with loyal settlers from the British Isles. The English colonial government never realized this plan, though some disaffected colonial Netherlanders voluntarily left New York following the Retrocession of 1674. Instead of forcefully relocating potentially disloyal settlers to remote parts of New York, Andros reiterated the English conquerors' demand that colonial Netherlanders submit a pledge of allegiance to the English Crown. When several Dutch merchants refused to swear fidelity to the English monarch unless Andros confirmed the exemptions listed in the Articles of Capitulation, the English gover-

nor brought them to court and tried them as alien interlopers who traded in New York City in violation of the English Navigation Acts. Whereas in previous trials involving Dutch defendants the English colonial authorities had impaneled juries composed of both Dutch and English settlers and, in some cases, took care to convene all-Dutch juries, in the trial against the obstinate Dutch merchants a panel comprised entirely of Englishmen convicted the accused of trespass against the Crown's revenues. As punishment for their crime, the Dutch merchants forfeited their property in England and in the English overseas colonies. This action served as a warning to colonial Netherlanders and other foreigners who resided within the first British Empire: Submit to English rule or lose the liberties granted to them, including the right to own property. To allay growing fears that the English rulers intended to divest all colonial Netherlanders of their liberty, Governor Andros promised that in New York the "Inhabitants of the Dutch nation . . . should participate in the same privileges as those of the English nation."⁹ However, implicit in this assurance was a principle of reciprocity—that along with the privilege of English liberties came the obligation to obey English law, disavow all competing political loyalties, and recognize the sovereignty of the English Crown. If the "Dutch nation," a majority of New York City's settler population, refused to submit to English rule, they would be treated as aliens with no claim to English liberties. However, the imperatives of colony building, especially the urgency of attracting and retaining settlers, meant that the English authorities had to expand rather than retract the liberties of colonial New York's settler population.

Although the Duke of York retained his prerogative powers of rule over colonial New York and its inhabitants, in 1683 he granted the settlers a charter of liberties and an elective colonial assembly.¹⁰ As its first piece of business, New York's newly established legislative body enacted a law that extended a range of individual rights and political privileges to all Christian settlers of foreign birth who had resided in New York for at least six years and willingly pledged an oath of fidelity to the English Crown. These liberties included the freedom to conduct trade and practice crafts in New York, as well as the right to own, alienate, and inherit property in the colony, vote in New York elections, and hold public offices. Known as the "Act for Naturalizing all these foreign Nations at Present Inhabiting within this Province and Professing Christianity, and for Encouragement of Others to Come and Settle within the Same" (1683),¹¹ that law eradicated most political distinctions between foreign-born and English-born settlers. However, the privileges that it bestowed on the Christian settlers of foreign birth did not extend beyond colonial New York's borders. In England, the law maintained a clear distinction between rights-bearing subjects and aliens without rights, and it further divided the rights-bearing population into finer categories of subjecthood—for example, native-born subjects, naturalized subjects, and denizens—with different rights and privileges or, alternatively, varying disabilities. Some foreign-born settlers applied for and received patents of English denizenship, and thereby obtained the right to trade at all English ports; own, devise, and inherit land within the English realm, including England; and bring legal actions before most English courts, but not the right to vote and hold pub-

lic office in England. Importantly, no political disabilities distinguished the *post-nati* children of denizens from native Englishmen.¹² However, English law limited most rights and privileges of English subjecthood to Christians only. In England, all Jews were barred from voting, holding public office, owning land, and bearing arms in the English realm. Because the extensive intercontinental network of Jewish merchants and moneylenders provided invaluable financial services to the first British Empire, the English state allowed Jews to do business within England's commercial sphere and to reside in England and in the English overseas colonies without interference.¹³

In New York, the early English colonial authorities extended liberty of conscience to all settlers, including the Jewish settlers. The Duke's instructions to Governor Andros stated: "Permit all persons of what Religion soever, quietly to inhabit within the precincts of your jurisdiction, without giving them any disturbance or disquiet whatsoever, for or by reason of their differing opinions in matters of Religion; Provided they give no disturbance to the publique peace, nor doe molest or disquiet others in the free exercise of their religion."¹⁴ New York's Charter of Liberties of 1683 further stipulated that each county would have its own tax-supported church, with that privilege going to the Protestant congregation whose representatives were a majority of the parish vestry. According to the charter, minority Protestant congregations received no tax support but were granted the privilege of holding public worship services and paying their ministers from voluntary donations. The English rulers thus struck a compromise between the extension of religious liberty to all settlers and the establishment of a state church in the amended form of plural tax-supported Protestant churches. While official colonial policy denied Catholic settlers the privilege of holding public worship services, the early English colonial officials tolerated the presence of professing Catholic laypeople but not Catholic priests within the jurisdiction of New York. By permitting the settlers, including Catholics and Jews, to exercise individual liberty of conscience, the English rulers hoped to avoid popular unrest as well as make New York an attractive destination for diverse religious refugees from Europe. But that policy soon reopened the field of contestation in which debate over religious tolerance and the state-church relation divided post-Reformation Englishmen.

With the accession of Charles II to the English throne in 1660, the Episcopacy of London molded the Church of England into a sacral institution for legitimating and extending the dynastic rule of the Stuart monarchy. Catholic-leaning clerics now controlled that ecclesiastical body. Claiming the authority to govern all churches within the English realm and attempting to impose Anglican ministers on dissenting independent congregations throughout the British Isles, the Episcopacy of London ignited a firestorm of popular protest against the Church of England establishment. Once again, dissenting Protestants refused to recognize the authority of the Episcopacy of London over their congregations and defended their independence by continuing to hire ministers of their own choosing, without seeking approval from the Anglican officials.¹⁵ Acting in the name of the English Crown, the Episcopacy of London took on the task of governing souls in the English overseas colonies during an era of internal turbu-

lence in England. Reverend Thomas Bray, founder of several Anglican missionary organizations and rector of St. Botolph in London, wrote the following assessment of the urgent mission facing the Church of England in the overseas territories of the first British Empire: "Some colonies and plantations wholly destitute and unprovided of a maintenance of ministers, many of the subjects of this realm want the administration of God's word and sacraments, and seemed to be abandoned to atheism and infidelity."¹⁶ Church of England officials pledged to fortify the feeble foundations of institutionalized religion on the colonial frontier, but the protests of dissenting congregations in the British Isles and the revolutionary upheavals that followed from them proved to be such a consuming distraction that the English state church was unable to devote much attention to colonial affairs. At the time of the English conquest of New Netherland in 1664, the Episcopacy of London superseded the Classis of Amsterdam as the chief ecclesiastical authority in the conquered territory that the English Crown renamed New York. But that ecclesiastical body sent few ministers to New York during the early years of English rule. It was not until 1694, fully 30 years after the English takeover, that the city's Anglican congregation built its own house of worship. And it was not until 1702, approximately 40 years after the restoration of the Stuart monarchy and more than a decade after the Glorious Revolution, that Bray's Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), an Anglican missionary organization charged with the duty of transplanting Anglicanism in the English overseas colonies, sent missionaries to New York City.

Reverend John Miller, the first Anglican clergyman called to New York City, bemoaned the spiritual condition of that colonial port town's settler population and considered the "wickedness and irreligion of the white settlers to be the foremost evil in the province."¹⁷ In a letter to the Anglican officials in London, written four decades after the English Conquest, Colonel Caleb Heathcote reported on the frailty of institutionalized religion in New York: "I cannot omitt giving you the State of this Country in relation to the Church," he wrote, "& shall begin the History therefore from the Time I first came amongst them, which was about twelve years ago when I found it the most rude & Heathenish country I ever saw in my whole Life, which call'd themselves Christians, there being not so much as the least marks or footsteps of religion of any sort, Sundays being the only time sett apart by them for all manner of vain sports & Lewd Diversions, & they were grown to such a Degree of rudeness that it was Intolerable."¹⁸ Reproaching the SPG missionaries for neglecting the Christian settlers' spiritual well being and devoting a disproportionate share of their attention to the enslaved Africans, an English newcomer warned: "While the very Negroes may be washed and become White by the Gospel, the Christians may be turned into Negroes and become black and polluted."¹⁹ In colonial New York City, where light-skinned Europeans lived in close proximity to dark-skinned Africans, the Manichean dualism, which equated *blackness* with moral pollution and *whiteness* with moral purity, was projected onto the colonial population. In this respect, the medieval Christian symbolism of darkness and light became the basis of reified, binary categories of humankind. Sub-Saharan Africans thus became the living embodiments of

blackness, ever-present reminders of what the settlers were in danger of becoming: godless savages who dwelled in spiritual darkness.

For the English colonial authorities, the imposition of universal conformity to the Church of England offered one method of establishing a government over the souls of the settlers and saving them from the peril of degenerating to savagery. However, the English rulers worried that the sudden imposition of compulsory adherence to the Church of England would ignite widespread settler opposition to the English colonial government. For this reason, the English state initially pursued a policy of religious tolerance and ordered New York's colonial authorities to refrain from interfering in the settlers' religious affairs. Some zealous Anglicans regarded this policy as an unacceptable concession to the dissenting congregations and an obstacle to the spread of Anglicanism in the newly conquered colony. Finding himself living in a strange land, where Protestant dissenters were a majority of the settler population, an Anglican newcomer lamented: "Though the English grew numerous, the government in their hands and the national laws took place, yet for want of a Temple for the public Worship according to the English Church, this seemed rather like a Foreign Province, than an English Colony, possessed and settled by people of our own Nation."²⁰ According to the Anglican newcomer, the Church of England was a desperately needed institution of English culture, without which New York would remain an alien country.

New York Anglicans received no immediate remedy from the Episcopacy of London, but the English Crown did take action. Convinced that tolerance of religious pluralism in the English overseas colonies posed a threat to his sovereignty, King James II, previously the Duke of York and successor to the English throne following the death of Charles II in 1685, vetoed New York's Charter of Liberties and advised the colony's royal governor: "Our will and pleasure is that noe minister be preferred by you to any Ecclesiastical Benefice in that our Province, without a Certificat from ye most Reverend the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury of his being conformable to ye Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England."²¹ James II further commanded all New York churches to conform to the Church of England liturgy. Specifically, the Stuart monarch ordered the *Book of Common Prayer* read each Sunday and holiday in every church and the sacraments administered according to Anglican practice. An innovation of Elizabeth I, the *Book of Common Prayer* (1559) set out, in detail, uniform rituals and prayers that were to be performed in all English churches according to a fixed calendar.²² Each Sunday and holiday all congregations, though scattered throughout the English realm, were expected to recite the same supplications from the *Book of Common Prayer*. Some prayers—for example, the Litany and the Thanksgiving Prayer on the Anniversary of the Monarch's Coronation—were recited in the form of a call-and-response that reinforced the confessional bond between the clerical leader, who delivered the beginning of each line of the prayer, and the members of the congregation, who replied in unison with its ending. In this and other respects, the Church of England's forms of worship iterated the hierarchical order of English society. In addition, the *Book of Common Prayer's* "Calendar of Lessons" assigned, for each day of the year, a moral principle and two sets of correlative biblical pas-

sages that all devout Anglicans were expected to contemplate at morning and evening prayers. From its inception, the primary task of the Church of England and its *Book of Common Prayer* was the production and maintenance of horizontal and vertical identifications that were supposed to cement the bond of national community and secure universal loyalty to the English Crown among disciplined English subjects. Like Elizabeth I, the Stuart monarchs of the Restoration era regarded the national church, which subjected its adherents to the discipline of uniform and regular rituals of worship, as an indispensable institution of governance. When King James II, embattled monarch of England, endeavored to impose universal conformity to the Church of England liturgy on colonial New York's settler population, he did so as a means of extending his sovereignty to the distant and recently conquered colony that his brother, the former king of England, had named in his honor.

James II did, however, respect the proviso of the English takeover that allowed the Classis of Amsterdam to retain authority over the Dutch Reformed churches in British North America. In effect, that provision of the Dutch surrender exempted New York's Dutch Calvinist congregations from James II's imposition of the Church of England liturgy and Anglican ministers on the colony's churches.²³ In view of that special exemption, Dominie Selijns, New York City's Dutch Calvinist minister, reminded his congregation of their exceptional privileges and preached obedience to the English civil authorities: "We are in a foreign country, and also governed by the English nation. . . . We must exercise much prudence in order to preserve the liberties granted us," he advised.²⁴ Having witnessed the stern punishment that Governor Andros meted out to refractory Dutch merchants in 1675, most wealthy congregants heeded the Dutch Calvinist clergyman's advice. These colonial Netherlanders had already reconciled themselves to the political realities of English rule, submitted oaths of loyalty to the English Crown, and agreed to obey the English Navigation Acts in exchange for English liberties.

Additionally, the English Crown bestowed gifts of patronage on influential colonial Netherlanders—for example, the Bayards, the Philipses, and the Van Cortlandts—as reward for their collaboration in governing New York. As a result of this system of favoritism, a rift of social inequality emerged within New York City's settler population during the years following the English Conquest, "a cleavage felt nowhere more strongly," the historian Randall Balmer has noted, "than in the Dutch community."²⁵ While a privileged segment of colonial Netherlanders prospered during the early years of English rule, most Dutch-speaking Calvinist settlers were never admitted to the colonial ruling class. By the late 1680s, a clique of Anglo-Dutch elites monopolized appointed offices and other forms of Crown patronage, such as generous land grants and lucrative government contracts. The growing political clout and social prestige of that upper stratum of New York City's population could not be easily disarticulated from the exclusion of most Dutch-speaking Calvinists from the city's narrow circle of privilege, influence, and wealth. Now positioned as a conquered and increasingly marginalized population with respect to determining the political and economic affairs of the colony that they helped build, some

long-established colonial Netherlanders suspected King James II, and the Catholic-leaning officials he sent to New York to rule on his behalf, of plotting to install a despotic government over them.

The Stuart monarch seemed to confirm these suspicions when, in 1686, he asserted his claim to the divine right of absolute rule by vetoing New York's Charter of Liberties, vacating the separate charters of the New England colonies, dissolving the colonial assemblies, placing all powers of colonial governance in the hands of Crown-appointed officials, consolidating the New England colonies into a supracolony called the Dominion of New England, and, later, annexing New York to that jurisdiction. By these sweeping autocratic acts, James II aimed to bring the English overseas colonies under stricter control and, through the better regulation of colonial trade, increase the Crown's revenues from the collection of duties on tobacco, sugar, and other colonial produce.²⁶ The settlers protested against James II's colonial policy and the abrogation of the liberties that the English state had promised them. Writing from New York City, Governor Thomas Dongan observed with alarm: "The people growing every day more numerous & they generally of a turbulent disposition."²⁷ Meanwhile, a combination of the Stuart monarch's adversaries in England launched a decisive challenge to his sovereignty.

In 1688, James II's enemies, many of whom had opposed his accession to the English throne, invited Prince William of Orange and his wife, Mary, James II's daughter, to invade England and seize the English Crown. With the landing of Prince William's army at Trobay in Devonshire and the desertion of his own troops, James II fled to Catholic France. Known as the Glorious Revolution (1688–89), the flight of James II and the installation of the Protestants William III and Mary II as joint sovereigns of England resulted in historic constitutional reforms, including the prohibition against the accession of any Catholic to the English throne, the English Declaration of Rights and Bill of Rights, the abolition of the royal prerogative to nullify English law and suspend the English Parliament, and the elimination of the monarch's right to levy taxes and maintain a standing army without parliamentary consent. In this respect, the Glorious Revolution marked a shift from feudal to modern institutions of governance and announced the ascendancy of the Lockean conception of sovereignty. The ideals of the Glorious Revolution resonated throughout the settler colonies of British North America. Once news of England's Glorious Revolution radiated outward from the metropolitan center to the colonial frontier, restive settlers defied the authority of colonial officeholders who owed their appointments to the recently deposed Stuart monarch, James II.²⁸



While elsewhere in British North America the settlers quickly united to seize the colonial governments, the disunited settlers in New York quarreled over the issue of who should lead. By the late 1680s, the proliferation of social and religious antagonisms had created a fault line that divided New York City's settler population into two opposing political camps. On the one

side, the city's privileged clique of Anglo-Dutch elites reluctantly recognized the accession of William of Orange to the English throne but insisted that James II's appointees remain at their colonial posts, unless recalled by the new monarch. This group consisted of the lieutenant governor and his council, the heads of New York City's municipal government, prominent clergymen, including Dutch Calvinist ministers, and the wealthy merchants and landlords who had materially benefited from the patronage that James II had bestowed on his loyal supporters. On the other side, their opponents insisted that the overthrow of James II meant that his colonial appointees no longer ruled New York. This faction consisted of a cross section of the city's settler population—for example, common laborers, artisans, ambitious shopkeepers, and a few wealthy merchants. Even though it is impossible to ascertain the precise linguistic and religious composition of the opposition faction, the historian Thomas Archdeacon has argued that New York City's Dutch-speaking Calvinist majority, two-thirds of the city's total population on the eve of the Glorious Revolution, supported the overthrow of James II's colonial appointees.²⁹ In New York City, the settlers from Holland welcomed the accession of their countryman, William of Orange, to the English throne. Not all of the early Dutch-speaking Calvinist settlers were, however, natives of Holland; nearly half had been born elsewhere, mainly in the areas of Europe that witnessed bloody battles between Catholics and Protestants during the Thirty Years War (1618–48).³⁰ Displaced by the devastation of that war, these Protestant refugees fled to Calvinist strongholds in the Netherlands, where they lived for some time. In the Netherlands, Protestant exiles, especially the younger generation, mastered the Dutch language and adopted other Dutch habits. They also learned to cherish their deliverance from Catholic tyranny and the liberties that they enjoyed under the protection of the Dutch Republic and the Dutch Reformed Church. The Dutch West India Company transported a segment of the United Provinces' Protestant refugee community to New Netherland, and when England captured that Dutch colony, the English conquerors inherited a settler population with a Dutch-speaking Calvinist majority. Although originating from different homelands, these settlers shared a common language and, above all, a common antipathy against Roman Catholicism.

Not surprisingly, New York City's Dutch-speaking Calvinist majority viewed the world through the optic of post-Reformation politics and regarded any alliance with papists as a betrayal of the Protestant cause. When these anti-Catholic settlers observed the incipient alliance between the clique of wealthy Anglo-Dutch elites and the colonial officeholders who owed their appointments to the professed Catholic James II, they perceived a dangerous conspiracy to impose Catholic tyranny on New York.³¹ For this reason, they called for the removal of the deposed Stuart monarch's colonial surrogates, whom they now openly accused of infecting New York with the pestilence of Roman Catholicism. Prominent New York Anglicans were, these settlers alleged, false Protestants who secretly worshiped idols and perpetuated popery. In addition, anti-Catholic alarmists circulated the rumor that James II intended to retain control over New York by joining with Catholic France to invade and conquer the

colony. Questioning Lieutenant Governor Francis Nicholson's loyalty to England's new monarch, supporters of the Glorious Revolution in New York City demanded that Nicholson read a public proclamation acknowledging the accession of William of Orange to the English throne. Nicholson reluctantly acquiesced to this ultimatum but soon fled New York for fear that, if he remained in the colony, he would be imprisoned as a papist conspirator. The lieutenant governor's sudden exit set the stage for Leisler's Rebellion (1689–91), a coup d'état against New York City's colonial officeholders and Anglo-Dutch ruling elite.

On October 23, 1689, some restive settlers seized the fort at the tip of Manhattan Island, declared martial law, jailed James II's royal designees, and installed the militia captain and zealous Dutch-speaking Calvinist Jacob Leisler as head of the interim military government. The son of a Palatine minister and born in Frankfurt am Main in 1640, Leisler migrated to New Amsterdam in 1660 and served as a military officer for the Dutch West India Company until the English Conquest of 1664. While in the WIC's employ, Leisler engaged in trading ventures for his own profit and eventually married the widow of a prominent colonial Netherlander. In this and other matters, Leisler followed the typical path of early settlers who began their careers in Manhattan under Dutch rule. Although Leisler assisted the restored Dutch colonial government during the Reconquest of 1673, he remained on favorable terms with the English rulers following the Retrocession of 1674. The English takeover did not hamper Leisler in his ambition to become a wealthy merchant. Rather, the Dutch-speaking Calvinist from Frankfurt am Main and former officer in the WIC military forces prospered under English colonial rule. As a naturalized English subject, Leisler took advantage of new business opportunities within the English commercial sphere and shifted the focus of his maritime trading ventures to the British North American coast, specifically the lucrative Chesapeake tobacco trade. All told, Leisler held no grievances against the English rulers on account of any damage that he sustained to his material estate as a consequence of the English conquest. At the time of the Glorious Revolution, Leisler was one of New York City's wealthiest merchants. In consideration of his social status, the English rulers attempted to recruit him into the ranks of New York's Anglo-Dutch ruling class. Leisler accepted appointments to minor government posts, but for the most part he maintained a guarded distance from the narrow circle of Anglo-Dutch placeholders that ruled New York.³²

"Governance, for Leisler," the historian David Voorhees has stressed, "was a spiritual as well as civic duty."³³ It was at the intersection of politics and religion that Leisler distinguished himself from New York City's Anglo-Dutch elite. Around 1685, Leisler left the city's Dutch Calvinist Church in protest against Dominie Selijns's refusal to condemn the preaching of heterodoxy in New York. Instead of joining the city's Anglican Church, as other wealthy Calvinist merchants had done, Leisler joined the city's French Calvinist Church, where he worshiped with Huguenot congregants who had recently fled France to escape Louis XIV's persecution of Protestants following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685). Leisler's family had ties to the Huguenot congregation in Frankfurt, and Leisler himself had spent a portion of his personal fortune to finance the relocation of

Huguenot refugees from Europe to New York City. A zealous Calvinist and generous benefactor to the Protestant victims of Catholic tyranny, Leisler remained alert to the threat that the Catholic monarch King James II posed to Protestantism in the English overseas colonies, as well as in England. As Captain Leisler later explained, he and his followers commandeered the colonial government in order to extend the Protestant victories of the Glorious Revolution to New York.³⁴ It was on behalf of England's new Protestant monarch and the greater Protestant cause against Catholic despotism that Leisler agreed to lead New York City's settler revolt against James II's placemen.

In December 1689, a vessel arrived at the port of New York with instructions from England's new monarch. These orders were addressed to Francis Nicholson or, as the documents stated, "such as for the time being take care of Preserving the Peace and administrating the Lawes in our said Province of New York in America."³⁵ Because Nicholson no longer resided in New York, Jacob Leisler interpreted the royal missive to mean that he, as commander of the military forces at Fort William, should remain in charge of the colony's interim military government until King William III appointed a new governor. The ousted members of Nicholson's council objected to Leisler's interpretation of the king's instructions, decried his assumption of authority, and declared that the militia captain and his associates were in rebellion against the English Crown. Although Leisler's loudest enemies had earlier fled New York City and retreated to Albany to avoid imprisonment, some of his foes had returned to the city by 1690. At that time, Leisler incarcerated two of his most vocal opponents, Nicholas Bayard and William Nicolls, on the charge of fomenting a riot and, later that same year, claimed to have discovered a "popish plot" to incinerate the city.³⁶

During the course of addressing these and other internal intrigues against his government, Leisler all but neglected the important political deliberations on New York's future that were taking place in London. Leisler's enemies had sent emissaries to the metropolis to denounce him. In their meeting with King William III, Leisler's adversaries accused him of ruining New York's trade, revoking the liberties of the English Crown's loyal subjects in New York, and usurping the monarch's authority. They even broadcast the rumor that Leisler, a Dutch-speaking Calvinist and ex-military officer for the WIC, intended to exterminate the English settlers and surrender New York to the United Provinces. Seeking confirmation of his government, Leisler eventually sent two supporters, Joost Stol and Benjamin Blagge, to London to lobby on his behalf. Leisler's ambassadors were strangers to English metropolitan politics and in their interview with William III did an inadequate job of defending Leisler's government. Ultimately, the new Protestant monarch refused to condone the overthrow of James II's appointed officials in New York, even if such action had been taken to secure his own accession to the English throne. The new monarch's colonial policy was clear. While England's Glorious Revolution announced a shift from the investiture of absolute power in the person of a single monarch unbound by law to a new governmental economy of the supremacy of law over autocratic rulers and a balanced constitution of shared governmental powers between the

Crown, Parliament, and common lawyers in which the governed participated in the formulation of law, the achievements of the Glorious Revolution did not annul the lawful authority of the Crown's designated surrogates in the British Empire; on no occasion were the settlers to take the law into their own hands and forcibly remove Crown-appointed officials from their colonial posts. Leisler and his supporters had misjudged the temper of the Glorious Revolution, King William III, and the Compromise of 1689. They would soon pay a severe price for their miscalculation.

When, in 1691, New York's newly appointed royal governor, Henry Sloughter, arrived at the port of New York, he immediately ordered Captain Leisler to deliver the fort at the tip of Manhattan Island to him. Leisler at first refused to obey Sloughter's directive but eventually surrendered the fortress, which he had renamed Fort William in honor of England's new Protestant monarch. Acting on the advice of Leisler's enemies, who now occupied seats on the governor's council, Sloughter arrested Leisler and several of his followers on the charge of treason. Leisler and his son-in-law, John Milbourne, were soon convicted of that capital crime. Following the sentencing, Leisler's wife and other members of his family begged Sloughter to spare the lives of the condemned men. But the governor remained unmoved by their pleas for leniency and, as a warning to disaffected settlers of what would happen to them should they dare to defy New York's English colonial rulers, executed the two overzealous supporters of the Glorious Revolution.³⁷ Governor Sloughter performed this bloody deed in the name of the English monarch, who, despite the constitutional limitations on his authority in England, still possessed the sovereign power "to *take* life or *let* live" within the realm of empire.³⁸

On May 16, 1691, a large crowd assembled to witness Leisler's execution. At the appointed hour, English soldiers carted Leisler to the gallows, where an executioner hanged the convicted traitor by the neck and then beheaded him.³⁹ With this public spectacle of punishment, the English colonial rulers intended to pacify widespread opposition to their government. But the brutal execution served only to redouble the resentment of Leisler's numerous supporters. In his last statement from the gallows, Leisler called for an end to the discord that divided New York City's settler population from the city's ruling elite.⁴⁰ Yet as the final deathblow extinguished his life, the onlookers could be heard uttering recriminations against the English colonial rulers. Before dispersing, the crowd sang Psalm 79 in unison. With that mass performance of psalmody, Leisler's supporters achieved an "unisonality" that at that moment constituted them as a community united against a common oppressor.⁴¹ The mass singing of Psalm 79 was an especially resonant mode of protest against the colonial officeholders, whom many settlers regarded as the enemies of true religion. That passage from the Bible recalled the heathens' destruction of Jerusalem, the biblical Jacob's martyrdom, and God's impending wrath.⁴² Leisler's mourners seemed to be warning that God would surely punish colonial New York's bloodthirsty rulers for the injustice that they had done to their martyred hero.

Leisler's Rebellion and its aftermath exposed the volatility of a settler population that was riven by confessional, linguistic, natal, and social antagonisms. In

view of this precarious situation, the English colonial rulers soon took steps to appease the restive settlers and, in 1692, acquiesced to the demands of English-speaking settlers who clamored for a new charter of liberties and the reinstatement of the elective colonial assembly.⁴³ Other settlers also coveted English liberties. For the settlers from Europe who had experienced unjust taxation and religious persecution in their homelands, English liberties appeared in an especially favorable light. Colonial Netherlanders were, of course, eager to preserve their liberties. But instead of referring to English rights, some pointed with pride to the Dutch revolt against tyrannical Catholic Spain in 1568, the founding of the Dutch Republic in 1580, and the unique freedom of the people in the United Provinces. Moreover, these colonial Netherlanders regarded the English colonial rulers as usurpers of liberty, who ruled New York by right of violent conquest rather than popular consent. As the historian John Murrin has noted, some colonial Netherlanders interpreted the restoration of New York's Charter of Liberties and its colonial assembly as an act of "ethnic aggression,"⁴⁴ the gift horse of English Trojans who used the lure of English rights to further a secret despotic design to impose a corrupted Church of England establishment on New York's dissenting congregations.

Governor Benjamin Fletcher (1692–98), a William and Mary appointee, seemed to confirm this suspicion when he launched an attack against religious pluralism in New York by securing the passage of the Ministry Act (1693) from the newly reconvened colonial assembly, now dominated by prominent New York Anglicans. That statute obliged all taxpayers in New York, Richmond, Queens, and Westchester counties to support the Church of England and the Anglican clergymen whom the Episcopacy of London sent to New York.⁴⁵ A steadfast supporter of England's national church, Governor Fletcher equated religious pluralism with disorder and expressed his contempt for New York City's factious settler population, remarking: "I find them a divided, contentious, impoverished people."⁴⁶ Fletcher soon provoked a renewed surge of settler opposition to New York's English colonial government when, in 1694, he named Reverend John Miller, the Anglican chaplain for the English soldiers at the fort on Manhattan Island, to the coveted post of New York City's tax-supported minister. Like Fletcher, Reverend Miller harbored contempt for the city's settler population and in his description of the townspeople wrote: "As to their religion, they are very much divided; few of them intelligent and sincere, but the most part ignorant and conceited, fickle and regardless as to their wealth and disposition thereto. . . ."⁴⁷ Comprised of dissenting Protestants who chafed under the government of Jacob Leisler's state executioners, New York City's vestry opposed Miller's appointment and insisted on hiring their own candidate. Hoping to appease his opponents and to avert another settler revolt, Fletcher agreed to appoint a compromise candidate.⁴⁸

Fallout from Leisler's Rebellion polarized New York City's political life for more than a decade after Leisler's execution. Writing from the city in 1695, Reverend Miller observed: "These injuries done by either side to their opposites have made a most unhappy division & breach among them which will hardly of a long time admit a cure."⁴⁹ Hostility between the Leislerians and the anti-

Leislerians or, as they were sometimes called, the “Black Party” and the “White Party” persisted until the 1710s.⁵⁰ Lord Cornbury, royal governor of New York from 1702 to 1708, opined that the Leslerians (or “Black Party”) “will never be reconciled to an English governor, unless they can find one who will betray the English laws . . . and interest to the Dutch.”⁵¹ New York City’s Dutch Reformed Church became the arena for acts of revenge against the Leislerians’ most despised enemies—namely, Calvinists who had sided with Governor Sloughter and joined the Anglo-Dutch ruling elite in calling for Leisler’s execution. On that score, nobody was more detested than Dominie Selijns, the city’s Dutch Reformed minister. In retaliation against Selijns, the Leislerian majority in the city’s Dutch Calvinist congregation arranged to withhold his salary. Outrage against Selijns was so vehement and pervasive that as late as 1698 nearly 90 percent of the city’s Dutch Calvinist congregation abstained from the Lord’s Supper that Selijns officiated over at the Dutch Reformed Church.⁵² Political fallout from Leisler’s execution and the punishment of his supporters extended far beyond New York City and eventually reached across the Atlantic Ocean. In London, the Leislerians’ emissaries demanded that Parliament repeal the writ of attainder against their victimized leader and order the return of the property that Governor Sloughter had confiscated from Leisler’s family and followers. Connected to influential Hollanders by the bonds of kinship and marriage, the Leislerians used transatlantic networks to enlist ambassadors at The Hague to negotiate on their behalf. The use of diplomacy proved to be an effective strategy for obtaining redress of their grievances. In 1694, England’s Privy Council pardoned Leisler’s followers and ordered the return of their estates. The following year, the English Parliament annulled the writ that charged Leisler and his son-in-law Jacob Milbourne with treason.⁵³


After a delay of several years, the Privy Council finally ordered New York’s royal governor to permit the Leislerians to stage a public funeral in honor of Leisler and Milbourne, whose corpses had been buried in a remote area of New York City that the municipal government reserved for the burial of paupers, strangers, criminals, and slaves. In 1698, a delegation of Leislerians exhumed the physical remains of their heroes from that ignominious burial place and prepared them for a dignified reburial. During the weeks immediately preceding the reinterment ceremony, the physical remains lay in state at the Dutch Reformed Church. Outside that house of worship, throngs of mourners waited in line to pay tribute to Leisler and Milbourne. On Sunday, October 20, 1698, nearly six years after the execution of Jacob Leisler and his son-in-law, no fewer than 1,200 mourners gathered at the Dutch Calvinist churchyard to witness the reinterment of two members of their community whom the English rulers had executed as traitors. The assembly of such a large crowd of Leislerians so alarmed the ruling elite that during the days of mourning they and their families absented the city for fear that the outpouring of grief would incite another rebellion.⁵⁴ In 1698, New York City’s Dutch-speaking Calvinist settler majority and the English colonial rulers were no more united than they had been at the time of the Glorious Revolution.

Soon after his arrival at the port of New York, Governor Robert Bellomont

(1698–1699) wrote about the Anglo-Dutch division and the role his predecessor played in perpetuating that divide:

the late Governor [Fletcher] made advantage to divide the people by supposing a Dutch and English interest to be different here . . . , he supported a few rascally English who are a scandall to their nation and the Protestant religion, and here great opposers to the Protestant religion, and who joined him in the worst methods of gain and severely used the Dutch except some few merchants, whose trade he favoured. . . . I discourage all I can these distinctions of Dutch and English which is set on foot by the factious people of this town [New York City], and I tell 'em those are only to be acknowledged Englishmen that live in obedience to the laws of England.⁵⁵

With this last pronouncement, Bellomont, like Governor Andros before him, promoted a political order in which all settlers were called on to transcend their differences and unite as obedient English subjects. But with the recall of Bellomont and the appointment of Edward Hyde, Viscount Cornbury, to the office of royal governor of New York, an Anglican zealot headed the colonial government. Governor Cornbury (1702–8) soon imposed Anglican clergymen on several independent Protestant congregations in New York and some time later refused to recognize the ordination credentials of Reverend Francis Mackemie, who had moved to New York City to organize a presbytery, the elected consistory of church elders that govern the Presbyterian churches in a particular district.⁵⁶ Seeking redress before colonial New York's Court of Chancery, Reverend Mackemie accused Governor Cornbury of violating the Presbyterian settlers' right to liberty of conscience, which, he argued, included the right to found congregations and select ministers without interference from the Church of England and state authorities. After hearing Mackemie's complaint, the court declared that New York's royal governors held authority over the colony's Anglican congregations only. To render the meaning of its ruling perfectly clear, the court affirmed the settlers' privilege to call ministers of their own choosing, as long as those clergymen could present credentials that verified their ordination in a Protestant church.⁵⁷ This court decision was an important victory for colonial New York's independent congregations and the principle of religious pluralism. However, the Church of England faction in New York's colonial assembly later defeated a bill that would have allocated a portion of the Crown's revenues for the support of all Protestant clergymen called to New York.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the court's earlier ruling had secured liberty of conscience for all Protestant settlers. A multiplicity of independent Protestant denominations remained a leading feature of colonial New York City's religious and cultural landscape.⁵⁹

 Whereas some settlers brought the sectarian antagonisms of post-Reformation Europe with them to colonial New York City, other settlers, perhaps a majority, desired nothing more ardently than to coexist in peace with

their fellow Protestants and to follow the dictates of individual conscience, free from the molestation of the Roman Catholic Church and other centralized ecclesiastical authorities. Enticed by the promise of religious freedom, some Protestant exiles from Europe settled on Manhattan Island and in other parts of colonial New York. Although this circumstance did not conform to the English colonizers' plan for peopling that conquered territory with migrants from the British Isles, some observers maintained that European Protestants made model settlers. Writing in the 1750s, William Smith praised the contributions that Protestant refugees from the Rhineland had made to the project of colony building in New York. "Queen Anne's liberty to these people, was not more beneficial to them, than serviceable to this colony," Smith wrote. "They have behave themselves peaceably and lived with great industry. Many are rich, all are Protestants, and well affected to the government."⁶⁰ In Smith's judgment, these foreign-born Protestants had proved to be a great benefit to the English colonization scheme in New York and therefore had earned the rights and privileges that New York's Naturalization Act of 1683 granted to Christian settlers of foreign birth who met the New York residency requirement and had sworn an oath of allegiance to the English Crown.

Because the rights and privileges listed in that law extended no farther than the borders of colonial New York, some foreign-born settlers applied for English denizenship, a political status that allowed them to exercise a limited set of freedoms within the entire English realm, including England. Moreover, the Stuart monarchs granted individual patents of English denizenship to Christian settlers of foreign birth, including Catholics. However, this ad hoc procedure was not part of any overarching naturalization plan. A more systematic policy of incorporating foreign-born Protestant settlers into the national community began during Queen Anne's reign. Combining political and confessional conceptions of national identity, this naturalization policy took shape in the context of the parliamentary deliberations on the Act of Union of 1707⁶¹ and in consideration of the task of colonial governance.⁶² In 1706, Parliament passed "An Act for Naturalizing Foreign Protestants," which granted English liberties to all foreign-born Protestants who had resided in the English realm, including the English overseas colonies, for at least seven years, verified that they were true Protestants by passing a sacramental test, and willingly pledged allegiance to the English Crown. Determined to govern a subject population no longer confined to the territory of England but dispersed throughout the British Isles and the far-flung colonies of the first British Empire, Parliament, for the most part now purged of Roman Catholic officeholders,⁶³ promoted a conception of national identity predicated in no small measure on the presumption that Protestantism and English liberties constituted a foundation of shared values uniting the settler population in the distant overseas colonies with the population in England, Wales, and Scotland. Although debates over the proper form of church polity, the meaning of grace, the doctrine of predestination, and the relevance of the sacraments divided Protestants into several denominations,⁶⁴ more fundamental Protestant precepts—for example, belief in the individual worshiper's direct relationship with God and the primacy of the Scripture—united them. Furthermore, the provi-

sions in the English Bill of Rights (1689) and the Act of Settlement of 1701 that guaranteed a Protestant succession to the English throne forged a bond of shared confessional identity between the English Crown and its rights-bearing Protestant subjects. Even though England's Naturalization Act of 1706 did not provide Protestant settlers of foreign birth and other settlers in the English overseas colonies with representation in the national Parliament and therefore did not fully incorporate them into the emergent political community of British subjects,⁶⁵ it did minimize the political distinctions between the Protestant subjects who inhabited the British Isles, soon to be consolidated, with the notable exception of Ireland, into the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and other Protestant subjects who were scattered throughout the first British Empire. Moreover, the Naturalization Act of 1706 also minimized the political distinctions that divided the Protestant settlers in the English overseas colonies. The elimination of the political disabilities imposed on Protestant settlers of foreign birth meant that a broad segment of colonial New York City's mostly Protestant population now shared a common political status.

In addition, the high frequency of cross-denominational marriage minimized the importance of the confessional divisions that differentiated the city's several Protestant congregations. Although determining a ritual affiliation for a cross-denominational marriage was a potential source of conflict, disagreement, when it did arise, was usually resolved through interfamilial negotiation, which served as the first step toward uniting the families of the bride and the groom as an extended family. The city's privileged circle of Anglo-Dutch elites formed a close-knit network of extended family units. This colonial ruling class maintained their status and wealth by marrying among themselves. Likewise, the bonds of kinship and marriage united the wider settler population. Because of the widespread practice of settler endogamy, a broad segment of the city's settler population came to share common ancestors, if traceable only through one or two generations.

Early modern racial mythology encouraged the practice of settler endogamy by promoting the belief that the city's settler population of British migrants, German immigrants, and long-established colonial Netherlanders were descendants of the same ancient Germanic stock and naturally coalesced because of primordial affinities. Well suited to cultivating a shared sense of communal belonging among the settlers who colonized Manhattan Island, the myth of the Anglo-Saxon race traced the origin of the English people to ancient Germanic tribes and therefore established a consanguineous bond between Englishmen and the branches of Germanic people in Europe—for example, the inhabitants of the Rhineland and the Netherlands. According to legend, the Germanic tribes known as the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes colonized England during the fifth century and, marrying among themselves only while living in that alien land, propagated a pure and noble race on England's shores.⁶⁶ The practice of endogamy among the Germanic invaders who conquered fifth-century England presumably accounted for the apparent resemblance between the English people and the Germanic people of Europe. From the Venerable Bede to John Hare, antiquarian historians crafted legends that taught Englishmen to take

pride in their pure Germanic ancestry and the innate gifts of that racial inheritance.⁶⁷ Writing in 1647, the English Saxonist John Hare extolled the virtues of the ancient Germanic ancestors: “Our Progenitors that transplanted themselves from Germany hither, did not commixe themselves with the ancient inhabitants of the Countrey the Britaines (as other Colonies did with the Natives in those places where they came) but totally expelling them, they took the sole possession of the Land to themselves, thereby preserving their blood, lawes, and languages uncorrupted.”⁶⁸ According to Hare’s version of the Anglo-Saxon legend, the English people had lived in a state of freedom under the ideal political institutions that their Germanic progenitors had bequeathed to them until 1066, when Norman conquerors imported the foreign institution of autocratic rule. With the extraction of the Magna Charta from King John in 1215, the English people regained their liberties and proved that they were a race innately endowed with the capacity to preserve their freedom against the innovations of tyrannical rulers. The descendants of the ancient German tribes, true Englishmen were a racially pure, culturally homogeneous, and free people.⁶⁹ Disavowing the mixed character of the English people, Hare’s Anglo-Saxonist chronicle excluded both the Norman conquerors and the aboriginal Britons from the English lineage. To that end, he cast the Normans in the role of villainous corruptors of English liberty and banished the native Britons from the annals of English history on the pretext of their putative paganism. Additionally, the Gothicist version of the Anglo-Saxon myth not only denied that the English nation was a mixture of various peoples but also claimed that the English people followed the true religion of Noachidian monotheism and were, in fact, the direct descendants of Gotar, the grandson of the progenitor of the isles of Gentiles, Japheth, none other than the son of Noah. In 1605, the English Gothicist chronicler Richard Verstegan wrote: “And whereas some do call us a mixed nation by reason of these Danes and Normans coming among us, I answer . . . that the Danes and the Normans were once one same people with the Germans, as were also the Saxons; and we not to be accompted mixed by having only some such joined unto us again, as sometimes had one same language, and one same original with us.”⁷⁰ Verstegan’s Gothicist account of the origin of the English people acknowledged that the Romans, the Danes, and the Normans had conquered England but insisted that these conquerors were Germanic peoples, with the exception of the Roman pagans, who had been swept away by the ancient Germanic tribes (i.e., the Goths—the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes). With the fifth-century invasion of the so-called Goths and the expulsion of the Romans, England became a clean slate for the propagation of a pure race cleansed of paganism and tyranny.

The articulation of racial purity, true religion (Noachidian monotheism), and free political institutions structured the discourse of English national identity during much of the early modern era. At that time, England’s imperial tasks of peopling its overseas colonies and governing its settler populations, such as colonial New York City’s mostly foreign-born settler population, involved the forging of a national community that imagined itself as racially pure yet open to the assimilation of similar peoples from other lands.

The myth of the Anglo-Saxon race posited a culturalist conception of race, which assigned Germanic peoples, including the English people, to a distinct (or pure) racial category whose members share unique hereditary traits—especially the capacity to preserve liberty uncorrupted by tyranny and the moral disposition of devotion to true religion (or Noachidian monotheism). Drawing on that myth during an epoch of colonial expansion into foreign territories, the discourse of English national identity no longer privileged birth in England as the primary criterion for defining a rights-bearing English subject but now advanced a revised conception of “Englishness,” a set of unique, internalized traits, to define membership in the national community. In this respect, the imperative of reconciling empire and nation found resolution in the reterritorialization of Englishness. English national identity now migrated from the external frontiers of soil (or geography) to the internal frontiers of race, language, religion, and political values.⁷¹ In this way, Englishness became an internalized condition of being. Affirming that Englishness was rooted less in being born on the soil of England than in innate racial qualities, early modern representations of the English people relied on earthy metaphors of arborescent racial descent, which sustained the value of rootedness in English heritage in the face of the challenges of displacement, diaspora, and exile. Carrying a portable, interiorized Englishness within them during a period of domestic turbulence and overseas expansion, early modern Englishmen could be confident that they would always remain English in essence, whether they lived in England or in a foreign land and regardless of the external vicissitudes that beset them. Moreover, this conception of Englishness opened the boundaries of the English national community to the influx of peoples who were not born on English soil but allegedly shared common Germanic ancestors and inborn traits with the English people. The Anglo-Saxon legend enabled the project of colony building on Manhattan Island, for that myth accommodated the incorporation of the colony’s majority foreign-born Protestant settler population of colonial Netherlanders, immigrants from the Rhineland, and other Protestants of Germanic descent into the English nation without compromising the putative racial purity of the English people.

However, in the long run the project of colony building and the task of colonial governance severely tested idealized, essentialist notions of Englishness and primordial racial affinity. While the English people might be thought of as carrying an immutable natural disposition within them, Englishness was hardly *an autogenetic trait passed down from one generation to the next like some kind of eternal omnium*. If the distinctive traits of the English national character were to be preserved in the Englishmen who transplanted themselves in the foreign soil of empire, the sustaining institutions of English culture had also to be transplanted with them. Moreover, cultivating a sense of national belonging among the settlers who had been born outside the British Isles and clung to the particular languages and customs of their birthplaces required the zeal of dedicated missionaries. For these reasons, the English colony builders enlisted the SPG, the Church of England’s chief missionary organization, in the task of inculcating English civilities in the overseas settler populations.

From 1702 through to the outbreak of the War for Independence, the SPG sent missionaries to New York City. Their chief assigned task was to proselytize among the settlers, convert as many as possible to Anglicanism, and in the process of doing so teach them the English language. SPG missionaries used printed manuals of religious instruction known as catechisms to educate youths and win converts.⁷² Potential converts who could not comprehend English sometimes received Anglican catechisms printed in their native languages. Nevertheless, the Church of England valued an informed laity that could read the English language and comprehend the King James Bible, the *Book of Common Prayer*, and other devotional texts printed in English. Hence, teaching proselytes whose native tongue was not English how to read the English language was one of the primary goals of the SPG missionaries. In the SPG classroom at New York City, missionaries taught English as a second language from elementary textbooks such as *The English and Low-Dutch School-Master* (1730), *A Complete Guide to the English Tongue* (1745), and *The New-York Primer* (1746).⁷³ In polyglot New York City, English-language schooling became a means of shaping American-born and other foreign-born youths into model British subjects. According to the early modern conception of Englishness, a common English language would weld empire and nation into a unitary linguistic community, as the everyday practice of speaking the English language brought English-speakers into unbroken communication with other English-speakers regardless of where they lived. The city's Anglican Chaplain, John Sharpe, advocated the extension of England's nascent system of national education to the English overseas settler colonies. Mastery of the English language gave youngsters in the colonies a sense of belonging to the English nation and even encouraged them to join the Church of England. In his proposal for improving English-language schooling in New York City, Sharpe observed: "There is hardly anything which is more wanted in this Colony than learning there being no place I know in America where it is either less encouraged or regarded. This City is so conveniently situated for Trade and the Genius of the people so inclined to merchandise, that they generally seek no other Education for their children than writing and Arithmetick." New York City youths ought to be given a standardized English education, Sharpe advised, for "the Regular or Academical formation of their principles and manners. This would reconcile them early to the National Church and we might hope that in the rising Generation there would be Unity, Uniformity, Loyalty, and Brotherly Love."⁷⁴ Sharpe's proposal thus reflected the dream of creating a uniform British culture that would compact the settler populations scattered throughout the first British Empire with the national community in England. The Anglicization programs of Reverend Sharpe and the SPG did not achieve overnight success, however.

In colonial Manhattan, the English takeover did not result in the immediate ascendancy of the English language and other expressions of English culture. As the historian David Narrett has noted, the English "might command the government but they were not a dominant social or cultural presence for many years."⁷⁵ English culture asserted itself gradually and, at first, in the limited sphere of state affairs. In the multicultural, polyglot port town at the tip of the

island, competing cultures vied with English culture in a contest for sovereignty over American-born youths. While most settlers were willing to obey English law in order to merit the rights and privileges of British subjecthood, some clung to the traditions of their forefathers and endeavored to hand down their particular religion, language, and customs to their offspring. Even though the United Provinces relinquished political control over the territory renamed New York in 1664, Dutch-speaking Calvinists were a majority of New York City's settler population until the 1730s; some colonial Netherlanders and foreign-born settlers strove to retain their particular traditions.⁷⁶

Catechetical schooling became a crucial yet controversial institutional vehicle for the process of English enculturation as well as preserving the distinctive competing cultures of colonial New York City's diverse settler population. In 1633, the Dutch Reformed Church founded a short-lived school for teaching American-born youths the Dutch language and the doctrines of Calvinism. But the Dutch school received meager financial support from the Classis of Amsterdam, the central ecclesiastical governing body of the Dutch Reformed Church, and as a consequence of inadequate funding closed its doors in 1637, just four years after its founding.⁷⁷ For several decades thereafter, the settler youths, except for the few who had private tutors, received little formal education of any kind. The opening of the SPG school around 1702 changed that situation. Voluntary contributions and income derived from sugar plantations in Barbados supported the SPG schools in the English overseas colonies,⁷⁸ but their chief source of funding came from the financial allocations of the colonial assemblies and tuition payments.⁷⁹ In 1723, Dr. Bray's Associates, a state-funded SPG organization, opened an English-language charity school, for the benefit of children whose parents could not afford to pay the SPG's modest tuition fees, let alone hire private tutors to educate their children. At that time, some colonial Netherlanders in New York City opposed the SPG's English-language curriculum, insisting that state-funded schooling should not be limited to English-language instruction, since Dutch-speakers comprised a majority of the city's taxpayers. Several Dutch-speaking townspeople demanded that the English rulers hire a schoolmaster charged with the duty of teaching their children the Dutch language. Because financing Dutch-language instruction did not serve the English state's agenda of cultivating English civilities in the city's settler population, the English rulers rejected the Dutch-speakers' petition. Recognizing that the English rulers would not provide state funding for Dutch-language schooling, the city's Dutch Reformed Church commenced a fund-raising campaign and with the aid of private donations reopened its school in 1725. Dutch-speaking Lutherans enrolled their children in the Calvinist-sponsored Dutch school. But it was not long before the Lutheran parents accused the Dutch Calvinist schoolmaster of inculcating the doctrines of Calvinism in their children without parental approval. These parents threatened to withdraw their children from his care and found their own school, whose curriculum would include instruction in the doctrines of Lutheranism as well as the Dutch language. However, the Lutheran Dutch-speakers were too poor to hire their own schoolmaster and never acted on their threat. In contrast, the city's Jewish community, though

only a tiny fraction of the colonial port town's settler population, had sufficient financial resources to maintain a Hebrew school without state and other outside support. Although New York's colonial assembly imposed numerous political disabilities on the Jewish settlers, that discriminatory policy did not prevent the city's synagogue, Temple Shearith Israel, from opening, in 1682, a school for instructing children in Hebrew.⁸⁰ Private contributions from wealthy Jewish settlers and Jewish enclaves outside New York City sustained the city's Hebrew school and thus compensated for the absence of a Jewish state that supported institutions of Jewish culture.

The English takeover and the attendant loss of financial support from the United Provinces, without adequate offsetting donations of colonial Netherlanders, undermined the ability of New York City's Dutch Reformed Church to minister to the needs of its congregants. As the historian John Murrin has shown, "No institution suffered more from the [English] conquest than the Dutch Reformed Church."⁸¹ In part because of the frailty of the Dutch Reformed Church and other institutions of Dutch culture, especially Dutch-language schooling, the American-born offspring of colonial Netherlanders gradually abandoned the traditions of their forefathers. Reverend Henry Mühlberg explained: "Dutch children forget their mother tongue and learn English. Since they cannot hear English in their own church [Dutch Reformed Church] they go over to the other [the Anglican Church] to hear what they understand and like."⁸² By the middle of the eighteenth century, English was not only the official state language but also the lingua franca of the city's counting-houses, taverns, marketplaces, and most settler households. According to the historian Joyce Goodfriend, the gradual decline of Dutch cultural institutions and the progressive ascendancy of English institutions of culture in colonial New York City gave rise to heightened "ethnic consciousness" among some colonial Netherlanders.⁸³ As Dutch-speaking Calvinists witnessed their children master the English language, join the Anglican Church, and adopt other English customs, they became aware that the preservation of the particular customs of a people who had transplanted themselves in a foreign land depended upon the active transmission of culturally learned behavior to their descendants. For this reason, the city's Dutch Reformed Church reopened its Dutch school after a suspension of nearly 90 years.⁸⁴ But the colonial Netherlanders had, in a contemporary observer's opinion, acted too late and were guilty of "a wretched carelessness of necessary things, [and] have now for some years neglected to have their children receive instruction in the Netherlandish tongue."⁸⁵

In a defensive response to the erosion of Dutch cultural influence over their American-born offspring and the city's broader settler population, some colonial Netherlanders entrenched themselves in sectarian exclusivism. Citing fidelity to their parent culture and the preservation of the distinctive doctrines and practices of the Dutch Calvinist Church as its goal, the church council banned, in 1727, the use of the Lutheran and the Anglican burial rituals at the Dutch Calvinist cemetery. Although that exclusionary policy marked a departure from the spirit of cooperation between the city's several Protestant churches regarding burials, the city's Anglican ministers agreed to abide by the

new rule and quietly discontinued the practice of performing the Church of England sacrament for Anglicans who were buried alongside family members at the Dutch Calvinist burial ground. Contrastingly, Reverend Wilhelm Christoph Berkenmeyer, the city's Lutheran pastor, ordered his entire congregation, including those Lutherans who had married members of the Dutch Reformed Church, to abstain from using the Calvinist cemetery altogether.⁸⁶ In defense of his act of retaliation, Reverend Berkenmeyer argued:

If they allow us to make use of their churchyard, bells and grave-digger, how can they forbid us the use of our service? If it be said: By your acting this way, friendship and peace are broken, then we answer: We enjoy little friendship from them. They were not willing to help in the erection of our church building, [an action] which is the opposite of universal love and Christian duty. Their ministers forbade the schoolteachers to teach our Lutheran children from Lutheran books. Now they refuse us to use our burial service, with the result that our dead are not accepted [in their churchyard]. For it is certain that one thing follows another. Consequently, it is the Reformed who break the peace, not we, and this [way of acting] is certainly very poor evidence of friendship. It cannot be respected, and knowledge of it will get around in the Christian community.⁸⁷

Besides disturbing the peace within New York City's broader Protestant community, the Dutch-speaking elders who controlled the Dutch Calvinist church council were party to the outbreak of factionalism within their own congregation. In 1740, an unmistakable shift in the linguistic composition of the city's Calvinist congregation gave rise to an internal schism—involving, on the one side, a vocal majority who demanded that their ministers conduct a portion of the Calvinist services in the English language and, on the other side, an inflexible minority of Dutch-speaking elders who refused to submit to the majority's will. The English-speaking Calvinists had historical precedent on their side. During the 1680s, qualified ministers performed separate French-language and English-language services at the Dutch Reformed Church without opposition from the Dutch-speaking congregants, who at that time were a majority of the city's Calvinist congregation. In 1683, Dominie Selijns described the spirit of collegiality that existed among the city's Calvinist ministers: "Pierre Daillé, former professor at Salmurs (Saumur, France) has become my colleague. He exercises his ministry in the French Church here. He is full of zeal, learning and piety. Exiled for the sake of his religion, he now devotes himself here to the cause of Christ with untiring energy. Rev. John Gordon has come over from England to perform service for the English. His English service is after my morning service, and the French service is after my afternoon service."⁸⁸ For Dominie Selijns, the qualities of "zeal, learning and piety," not proficiency in the Dutch language, were the most important criteria for evaluating a clergyman's fitness to occupy the post of Calvinist minister in New York City. By the 1740s, a majority in the city's Dutch Reformed Church congregation understood the English language perfectly but could barely, if at all, comprehend the Dutch language. Nevertheless, the culturally embattled Dutch-speaking elders refused to permit the rein-

roduction of English-language services in the city's Dutch Reformed Church. The elders' exclusionary policy gave expression to the anxieties of colonial Netherlanders who witnessed the decline of Dutch cultural authority over the Calvinist congregation and the city that Dutch-speaking Calvinists once dominated.

The language controversy embroiled New York City Calvinists in a dispute of several years' duration. During the 1740s, so many English-speaking settlers left the factious Dutch Reformed congregation and converted to Anglicanism that, by 1751, a single house of worship could no longer hold the city's entire Anglican congregation. William Smith explained that the increase in the number of Anglicans in the city could be accounted for "partly by the arrival of strangers from Europe, but principally by proselytes from the Dutch church."⁸⁹ Watching the split within his congregation widen and defections to the Anglican Church mount, the city's Calvinist minister pleaded with the feuding factions to set aside their differences and unite: "We enjoy the free exercise of our religious services in every respect, although there is not the least provision made for our church by the civil authority. Hence mutual affection, and unity in faith and piety are the only means of preserving our Christian churches, and of making them prosperous."⁹⁰ Declining membership rolls and the need to placate the English-speaking majority of congregants finally forced the church council to hire a minister who could deliver Calvinist services in the English language. In 1764, Pastor Archibald Laidlie, a Scottish Calvinist who had received his ordination credentials from the Classis of Amsterdam, accepted the call to minister to New York City's Dutch Reformed congregation. Laidlie resuscitated that flagging congregation and, within five years of his arrival, officiated at a public ceremony commemorating the completion of the city's second Dutch Reformed house of worship, named the Dutch North Church and located on the west side of William Street between Fulton and Ann streets. Pastor John Henry Livingston, a New Yorker who had studied Calvinist theology in Holland, now presided over the old Dutch Church, and Laidlie ministered to the new Dutch North Church. Although these Calvinist churches retained the name "Dutch" in their official monikers, that term functioned as a vestigial placeholder of little meaningful connection to the unique traditions of Holland. Laidlie and Livingston now performed Calvinist services in the English language for an English-speaking majority of congregants whose Psalter, catechism, and liturgy were printed in English.⁹¹ "Once the common dialect of this Province," William Livingston observed, "[the Dutch language] is now scarcely understood, except by its most ancient inhabitants."⁹² By accommodating the majority's demand for English-language services, the Dutch-speaking elders rescued New York City's Dutch Reformed Church from total collapse—but in doing so, they acknowledged the termination of Dutch cultural dominance over the city's Calvinist congregations, as well as its broader settler population. In the city some members of the Dutch Reformed congregation had married members of the Anglican congregation, and increasing numbers of the American-born offspring of the colonial Netherlanders joined the Anglican Church. The widespread adoption of the English language, along with the pervasive practice of

endogamy among the settler population and mounting defections to the Anglican Church, gradually eroded the cultural particularities that had once delimited the group boundary of the city's Dutch-speaking Calvinist community.

A history of exile in England made the city's Huguenot population especially prone to assimilate English ways. As refugees in London and other English towns, these French-speaking Calvinists began a process of Anglicanization (or conversion to Anglicanism) and a broader process of Anglicization (or adoption of English customs) later completed in the English overseas settler colonies. In colonial New York City, a schism within the French Reformed Church precipitated a wave of Huguenot defections to the city's Anglican Church, but that split had little to do with a defensive reaction against the decline of French culture among New York City Huguenots. The rupture occurred in 1724, when, one year after his first wife's death, the French Calvinist minister Reverend Louis Rou announced that he intended to wed 14-year-old Renée Marie Gougeon. The Huguenot elders raised doubts about the propriety of the proposed marriage, citing Renée Marie's relatively young age as their principal objection to the union. When Jean Joseph de Moulinaar, Rou's assistant at le Temple du Saint-Esprit, sided with the church elders and refused to marry the couple, Rou turned to his Dutch Calvinist colleague, who agreed to solemnize the union and married the Huguenot minister and his youthful bride in a wedding ceremony held at the Dutch Reformed Church. Later, during the French Reformed Church council elections, Rou campaigned against the aged parishioners who had opposed his second marriage. Triumphant in their reelection bid, the church elders retaliated against Rou by revoking his salary and appointing his assistant to the post of head minister. In response, Rou rallied the women and the poor in the French Reformed congregation to his defense. Additionally, Rou asked Governor William Burnet (1720–28) to intervene on his behalf in his salary dispute with the Huguenot elders. At this juncture, the elders suggested that the feuding factions engage the city's Dutch Calvinist minister to act as a mediator. When Rou rejected their proposal, his enemies accused him of promising to impose the Anglican mode of worship on the French Calvinist congregation in exchange for an official order of reinstatement from the English colonial rulers. Finally, Governor Burnet forced the Huguenot church council to reinstate Rou and pay his salary. Declaring their unwillingness to accept Reverend Rou as their spiritual leader, the Huguenot elders and their followers left the French Calvinist congregation and defected to the Anglican Church.⁹³ By merging with the Anglicans, instead of joining the declining Dutch Calvinist Church or, alternatively, remaining in the French Calvinist Church with the poor and the female parishioners, the Huguenot elders and their wealthy supporters confirmed the ascendancy of English institutions of culture in colonial New York City. The Huguenot elders, unlike the Dutch Calvinist elders, readily adopted English ways. Their earlier condemnation of Rou's alleged plan to impose the Anglican form of worship on the French Calvinist congregation proved to be a mere tactic in their campaign against a minister whom they deemed morally unfit to lead them.

New York City's French Calvinist Church never recovered from the exodus of

its wealthiest members, even though Reverend Rou faithfully ministered to the city's French-speaking Calvinists until his death in 1750. Nearly four years later, Reverend Jean Carle, a Calvinist minister and a native of France, undertook the duties of pastor for the floundering Huguenot congregation, now mostly elderly women and the poor. Carle soon discovered that the membership subscriptions to *le Temple du Saint-Esprit* were insufficient to pay his salary and, in view of that fact, advised his congregation to join the Anglican Church, which, he observed, was stronger in numbers and could support his ministry. Although Carle assured his parishioners that the Anglicans were eager to have Huguenots join their congregation and that the Anglican vestrymen had agreed to allow him to hold French-language services at the Anglican house of worship, the remnants of the French Calvinist congregation rejected his advice. In 1763, Carle finally tired of struggling to survive on a meager salary and deserted New York City's French Calvinist congregation. Lacking adequate resources to hire a permanent minister, much less to employ a schoolmaster to teach the French language to their American-born offspring, the Huguenot townspeople drifted away from the particular traditions of their forefathers. Writing in the middle of the eighteenth century, William Smith Jr. observed: "The French church by the contentions of 1724, and the disuse of the [French] language, is now reduced to an inconsiderable handful."⁹⁴ By the eve of the War for Independence, only a few aged parishioners remained in the city's French Calvinist Church.⁹⁵

German-speaking immigrants achieved greater success in transmitting their native language and particular traditions to their American-born offspring than any other group of settlers from outside the British Isles. According to the historian A. G. Roeber, the establishment of the German-language press in the British North American colonies was an important contributing factor to that accomplishment. The German-language newspapers provided German-speaking immigrants from fragmented central Europe with a regular conduit of communication and a common cultural resource previously unavailable to them. "The *mélange* of German-speakers," Roeber has pointed out, "eventually enjoyed a more unified experience in North America than they had known in Europe."⁹⁶ Even though German-speaking immigrants constituted a distinct linguistic community and endeavored to preserve the traditions of their forefathers, they were keenly aware that the achievement of prosperity in a foreign land required successful adaptation to novel conditions of life. Some German-speakers who disembarked at the port of New York were destitute refugees of war,⁹⁷ penniless "redemptioners" who sold themselves into servitude in exchange for passage to New York City. As a consequence of their poverty, these German-speakers were scarcely in a position to reject the dominant culture of the host colony. Prior to 1730, Dutch customs dominated New York City's cultural life, and the German-speaking immigrants who at that time settled in the city learned some Dutch and adopted some Dutch habits to ensure their material survival. The German-speaking newcomers who settled in New York City after 1730 also faced pressures to adopt foreign customs. By that time, however, there was little doubt that the assimilation of English ways held greater social advantages for newcomers than the adoption of the once dominant but increasingly marginal Dutch culture.

Between January 1738 and April 1739, just before the outbreak of the war of Jenkins Ear (1739–1743), nearly 540 Lutherans from Swabia (i.e. Baden-Württemberg, a southwestern state of present-day Germany) settled in New York City. Like earlier German-speaking immigrants, the Swabian newcomers endeavored, as best they could, to preserve their traditions while adapting to their new life in a foreign land. Upon arriving at New York City, the German-speaking Lutherans from Swabia joined the city's Lutheran church. In doing so, they altered the linguistic composition of that congregation and transformed it from one with a Dutch-speaking majority of long-established settlers to one with a German-speaking majority of recent immigrants. The shift in the linguistic balance of the city's Lutheran congregation led to an internal schism known as the Lutheran language controversy. Whereas prior to the 1730s a German-speaking minority quietly abided by the will of a Dutch-speaking majority to offer Lutheran services in the Dutch language only, by the 1740s a German-speaking majority protested that practice. Given the pressures to adopt foreign customs in the arena of worldly affairs, the use of German-language services in the city's Lutheran church became a privileged index of group boundary maintenance for the Lutheran newcomers from Swabia.⁹⁸ The use of Dutch-language services was just as crucial to the preservation of group identity among long-established Dutch-speaking Lutherans, who, during the 1730s and 1740s, witnessed the decline of Dutch culture in New York City. Importantly, the church-language link sustained group cohesion in the case of the monolingual Lutheran congregations in Baden, Württemberg, and nearby principalities. But the nexus of language and church became a site of rupture in the case of colonial New York City's Lutheran congregation, with its two competing linguistic groups.

An irreparable schism within the Lutheran congregation erupted in 1742, when the Lutheran German-speakers asked their pastor to deliver half of the Lutheran services in the German language. Before migrating to New York City, some German-speaking Lutherans had lived for a time in Amsterdam, and they now justified a request for German-language services by pointing out that Amsterdam's Lutheran church held Dutch-language and German-language services alternately. Lending his support to the German-speakers in his congregation, New York City's Lutheran pastor, Reverend Michael Christian Knoll, explained: "Since this province was formerly under the Dutch, and also that as late as 20 years ago most everything was still Dutch, the Germans had little trouble in learning the Dutch language. But since that time everything seems to have turned to English. . . . From among the Germans who have been settling in these parts in the past ten years, more than 100 souls could have come to the Holy Supper, but they have neither here nor in the country the opportunity to learn Dutch, since even in the homes of the Dutch only English is spoken."⁹⁹ Knoll warned that if German-language services were not offered at the city's Lutheran church, the Swabian newcomers would desert Lutheranism and join the Anglican Church, where they would at least benefit from learning the language of the ruling elite. Although Dutch-speaking elders controlled the Lutheran Church council, that governing body agreed to a compromise and permitted Knoll to deliver one-third of the Lutheran services in the German

language. But after a trial period, the Lutheran church council canceled the German-language services on the pretext that too few parishioners attended these services. The Swabian parishioners begged the Dutch-speaking church elders to reinstate the German-language services but were told that they must learn Dutch as earlier German-speaking Lutherans had done.

In 1749, following several years of futile protests, the Lutheran German-speakers threatened to found their own church. Fearing that a mass exodus from his congregation would result in the reduction of his salary, Reverend Knoll made one last attempt to broker a lasting compromise that would satisfy the entire Lutheran congregation. After reaching an impasse in his negotiations, Knoll informed the Lutheran church council that, in the event of a permanent schism, he would preserve his livelihood by serving both the German-speaking and the Dutch-speaking congregations in their separate houses of worship. Outraged at Knoll's plan, the church elders reminded the Lutheran pastor that the original terms of his employment called him to minister to the city's Dutch-speaking Lutheran congregation only and, furthermore, required him to preach in the Dutch language. They warned that, if he elected to serve another congregation, they were no longer obliged to pay any part of his salary. This admonition opened an unbridgeable breach between the Lutheran pastor and the elders. And in 1750, Knoll resigned his post. In that same year, the German-speaking Lutherans founded their own church named the Christian Lutheran Church. The newly organized congregation hired Reverend Johann Ries, a German-speaking minister who had received Lutheran ordination at Halle University. In founding their own Lutheran congregation, the German-speakers echoed Martin Luther's declaration: "I thank God that I am able to hear and find my God in the German language, whom neither I nor you would ever find in Latin or Greek or Hebrew."¹⁰⁰ To be sure, neither Luther nor New York City's German-speaking Lutherans believed that only German-speakers could find salvation. Rather, they expressed a belief shared by all Lutherans, that the individual members of a linguistic community found God through hearing his Word in the vernacular (or native language) of their homeland.

By 1751, the "Old Lutherans" (or Dutch-speaking Lutheran congregation) had hired Reverend Melchior Mühlenberg to preach to them in the Dutch language for a few months each year. Although the long-established Dutch-speaking Lutherans managed to retain Dutch-language services in their church and the Swabian newcomers founded their own separate German-speaking Lutheran congregation, these accomplishments were achieved at the cost of dividing New York City Lutherans into two hostile camps. Commenting on the incessant bickering among New York City Lutherans, Mühlenberg complained: "It is a deplorable thing when such strifes arise in congregations, since the members are almost without exception interwoven with one another by marriage, relationships, and the like, and the disaffected will not rest, but continue to agitate to gain a following."¹⁰¹ Mühlenberg soon tired of his parishioners' waspish temperament and, after only two years of ministering to a quarrelsome congregation, abandoned his part-time post in New York City. Increasingly, American-


born Lutherans left the city's contentious Lutheran churches. Over time, the offspring of long-time Dutch-speaking Lutheran settlers, as well as the children of German-speaking Lutheran newcomers, learned the English language, intermarried with other English-speakers, and abandoned the Lutheran congregations to join the Anglican congregations or, more often, shunned institutionalized religion altogether. Reverend Berkenmeyer expressed his dismay at the spiritual condition of "Lutherans" in chattel-oriented, English-ruled colonial New York City and the spirit of possessive individualism among the "Lutheran" settlers when he observed:

They work only for a livelihood, for fields, for property. Occupied with these troubles and, like depraved people, craving for other [material] goods and chattel, they did not know or had forgotten how to seek for heavenly things. Now that they have been supplied with an abundance of food, and while even their situation as slaves has changed to that of masters, they bear so little any yoke that they are not at all ashamed to throw off the yoke of Christ. . . . Life to them is, so to speak, simply like the sun going down and coming up again at daybreak. The children of these people (also the children of those who are considered the pillars of the Church and who expected it least of all from their own children) are lured by the convenience of the strange ruling English language or rejoice over the idle hope of certainly becoming happier through it. They are set in motion like a spinning top by a kind of twist of the evil spirit within them, which is unfathomable to me. They publicly get rid of the pastor of the religion of their fathers, or, if shame prevents them in doing this, they give next to nothing to support the Church, by using the excuse of a mixed marriage. . . . Through this they claim not to be Lutherans at all. . . . Here in this country there is no community of Lutherans; by far the majority are merely a crowd of fickle people. They are the people who, when asked if this one or that one is a Lutheran by birth, have a ready answer: "He is nothing."¹⁰²

Dominie Gualthrus Du Bois discovered that the factious New York City Calvinists were also abandoning their religious traditions. Du Bois complained: "So many conventicles exist. Hence so many are perplexed and misled; while others neglect and scoff at the divine service not to speak of those who, on various pretexts, entirely abstain from the Lord's Supper."¹⁰³ Though Dominie Du Bois bemoaned the decline of the Dutch Reformed religion in New York City, he openly advocated accommodation to English cultural ascendancy in other arenas of life and warned his Dutch Calvinist colleagues that in a colonial port town, where English was the common language of the settler population and so many Dutch Reformed congregants had intermarried with Anglicans, the reassertion of sectarian exclusivism would result in families being "torn asunder, where now, for the most part hands are joined."¹⁰⁴ Even as Du Bois remarked on the familial and linguistic ties that by the middle of the eighteenth century united Anglicans and Calvinists, he remained mindful of the fragility of these bonds.

While the social and political advantages of religious fellowship with the

English-speaking ruling elite led increasing numbers of American-born settlers to join the Anglican Church,¹⁰⁵ the eruption of internal schisms within the city's dissenting Protestant congregations led others to seek sanctuary from sectarian antagonisms in the quietude of indifference to institutionalized religion. As the settlers struggled to transform the frontier outpost on Manhattan Island into a thriving entrepôt surrounded by a prosperous hinterland of commercial agricultural production, religion appeared to be gradually receding into the background of daily life. New York City ministers, especially clergymen who had been educated at the centers of pietism in Europe, deplored the apparent decline of religious piety in the colonial port town and endeavored to rekindle the flame of faith within the townspeople.¹⁰⁶ Between 1739 and 1741, the movement of evangelical Protestantism known as the Great Awakening sparked brief religious revivals throughout British America. In New York City, revival meetings attracted thousands of townspeople and rural folk, though, as the historian Michael Kammen has pointed out, "The Awakening may have had less impact in New York than in any colony north of the Carolinas."¹⁰⁷ The city's orthodox ministers condemned the intrusion of pietistic outsiders and banned the evangelist George Whitefield from preaching in their houses of worship during his visit to the city in 1739. But Whitefield secured a podium when Reverend Ebenezer Pemberton broke ranks with his colleagues and invited the controversial evangelist to deliver a sermon at the Presbyterian meetinghouse. Internal opposition to the invitation that Reverend Pemberton had extended to Whitefield created a disturbance within the city's English-speaking Presbyterian congregation, now divided between pietistic parishioners, called "New Lights," and orthodox parishioners, called "Old Lights." The spectacle of the crowd that packed into the Presbyterian house of worship to hear Whitefield preach vindicated Pemberton and the New Light Presbyterians. Later, during two visits to New York City in 1740, Whitefield preached to outdoor gatherings, reaching a total of 5,000 to 7,000 eager souls. Remarking on the spiritual starvation of the townspeople, Whitefield wrote, "I find that little of the work of God has been in it [New York City] for many years."¹⁰⁸ The pietistic minister Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghusen placed the blame for the settlers' spiritual impoverishment on his Dutch Calvinist colleagues, who, he claimed, preached the doctrine of justification (or the achievement of spiritual salvation through worldly deeds) and in doing so discouraged their parishioners from trusting in the power of God's irresistible grace.¹⁰⁹ Noting the spiritual lethargy of the city's Dutch-speaking Lutheran congregation, Reverend Melchior Mühlenberg remarked: "These poor souls have been lulled and consoled for so many years that they consider a two-hour service in church on Sunday as quite sufficient for justification . . . whatever is said that does not sound like the old doctrine, but which urges conversion to God and living faith in the Lord Jesus, seems dangerous to them."¹¹⁰ Orthodox clergymen dismissed these unfavorable assessments of their ministry, complaining that pietistic preachers from outside New York City had fueled anticlerical hostilities and renewed baleful factionalism within the city's Protestant congregations.

 A shared faith in the basic doctrines of Protestantism, along with a common English language, political status, and Germanic ancestry, proved to be insufficient to unite colonial New York City's settler population, which remained divided by, as a member of the Anglo-Dutch colonial elite put it, "a difference amongst ourselves."¹¹¹ To be sure, sectarian conflicts of the post-Reformation era faded with the passage of time, for the elimination of political distinctions between settlers of foreign birth and native-born English settlers, the Anglo-Saxon myth, settler endogamy, the pervasive use of the English language, and widespread conversion to Anglicanism set in motion a process of Anglicization that gradually minimized and subordinated confessional, natal, and linguistic differences among the settlers. But as Leisler's Rebellion and the schisms within the city's several Protestant congregations revealed, sectarian antagonisms involving natal, religious, and linguistic differences could resurface and, once reanimated, were articulated with volatile political and social antagonisms. It was precisely the problem of forging the colonial port town's internally riven Anglo-Saxon Protestant settler population into a fully sutured national community of loyal British subjects that accounts for the role that antiblack racism played in colonial governance.

“One and the Same Interest”

ANTIBLACK RACISM AND COLONIAL DOMINATION
WITH AND WITHOUT HEGEMONY



Fighting among themselves and defying church and state authorities, colonial New York City's settler population proved to be difficult to govern and rarely united around a common cause, except when frightened by some perceived threat. In the wake of the Slave Revolt of 1712, the city's black population became such a phobogenic object. At that time, the English rulers, the Anglo-Dutch colonial elite, and the broader settler population united around a shared interest in the violent subjugation of enslaved blacks and free blacks.¹ The art of colonial governance now combined the incorporation of foreign-born Protestant settlers into a community of loyal, rights-bearing British subjects with antiblack racism, which became a disciplinary mechanism that not only minimized the black population's opportunities to foment and execute a successful rebellion but also became integral to governing the city's settler population. Whereas before a deep cleavage existed between the English rulers and the broader settler population, which was divided within itself by confessional, linguistic, natal, and social distinctions, solidarity now prevailed between the English colonial authorities and the settlers and, importantly, within the settler community. Whereas the colonial state was once broadly perceived as the tyrannical foe that had committed the crime of judicial murder against a respected member of the settler community, it was now widely regarded as the vigilant protector that exercised the legitimate use of violence against the city's black population, a dangerous and alien presence that for the most part had not converted to Christianity and, though living in close physical proximity to the settlers, remained strangers in their midst.



Colonial New York City's black population was at once an object of fear and an object of benevolence. The early English colonizers considered the "civilizing" mission of converting the so-called heathens to Christianity to be a primary goal of colonial expansionism. In *A Discourse Concerning Western Planting*, published in 1584, Richard Hakluyt, a leading propagandist for English colonization schemes, cited biblical authority in proposing that the personnel of English colony building in the Americas include missionaries who would proselytize among the natives. Hakluyt wrote:

The blessed Apostle Paule, the converter of the Gentiles, Rom: 10. writeth in this manner: Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lorde shall be saved. But howe shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and howe shall they believe in him of whom they have not hearde? and how shall they heare withoute a preacher? and howe shall they preache excepte they be sente? Then it is necessary for the salvation of those poore people which have sitt so long in darkenes and in the shadowe of death, that preachers should be sent unto them.²

It was not until the first decade of the eighteenth century that the Church of England dispatched Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) missionaries to New York City, however.³ These missionaries at first worked among the remnants of the coastal Indian population but, like the Dutch Calvinist clergymen who preceded them, shifted their attention to the city's black population, which held the promise of becoming a numerous flock of converts because of the influx of involuntary immigrants from Africa and other parts of the black Atlantic world into the port of New York. Reporting from New York City in 1721, a SPG missionary observed: "A ship from Madagascar hath brought 120 of them [enslaved Malagasy] since three weeks. The number doth increase daily and the spiritual harvest would be great."⁴

Although New York City was a promising site for the SPG's missionary work,⁵ an average of only 13 black converts received the Anglican baptism each year for a 69-year period between 1704 and 1773.⁶ Slaveowner opposition partly explains the SPG's unimpressive slave conversion record. In addition to a small number of free blacks, colonial New York City's black population was comprised of slaves whose masters, for the most part, refused to have their slaves baptized because too many uncertainties surrounded the status of Christianized slaves. The question of whether Christians ought to be enslaved was a moral dilemma dating back to the founding of the first Christian churches. That question was resolved in most regions of Western Europe with the decline of slavery in that part of the world during the early Middle Ages. In addition to socio-economic factors, such as transformations in the rural economy⁷ and the collapse of centralized authority,⁸ the biblical injunction that prohibited Christians from enslaving their coreligionists accounts for the demise of slavery and the rise of serfdom in Western Europe between the sixth and the eleventh centuries.⁹ As increasing numbers of peasants submitted to externally imposed

codes of “civilized” behavior, including professing, if not practicing, Christianity, the enslavement of the European peasantry became untenable. In keeping with Christendom’s prohibition against the enslavement of fellow Christians and their offspring, the Christian colony builders of the seventeenth century claimed to enslave only non-Christians, so-called heathens. Even though Christendom acknowledged the shared humanity of all people, the discourse of missionary colonialism assigned the Christian colonizers to the rank of superior race and relegated the non-Christians to the rank of inferior race. During the early modern era, the averred cultural and moral superiority of Christians legitimated New World slavery, an ostensibly benevolent institution that was supposed to benefit the enslaved by bringing them under the government of Christian enslavers.¹⁰ In this respect, Christendom’s “civilizing” mission among the heathens in foreign lands was an extension of the process of pacification that Christendom imposed on the European peasantry during medieval times.¹¹

Modeled on Leviticus 25:38, 45–46 and intended principally as a means of assuring prospective settlers from the British Isles and Europe that they would not be subjected to enslavement upon arrival at the port of New York, colonial New York’s law of slavery reiterated the biblical injunction against Christians enslaving coreligionists and simply stated: “No Christian shall be kept in Bondslavery.”¹² That statute would have been sufficient to seal the fate of the involuntary immigrants from the West Indies and Africa who disembarked at New York’s seaport, but for the fact that it failed to anticipate the contingency of slave conversion, which produced the undecidable category “Christian slave” and threatened to undo the binarism free Christian/enslaved heathen inscribed in the colonial law.¹³ The colonialist goal of slave conversion thus transferred to the New World the very dilemma that had contributed to the demise of slavery in Western Europe. New York City slaveowners worried that the colonial institution of slavery might go the way of slavery in Europe and for this reason resisted the SPG’s efforts to convert their slaves to Christianity.

As part of a broader pattern of slaveowner disapproval of the SPG’s proselytizing activities among the black populations in British North America, opposition to the SPG’s missionary work in colonial New York City mounted with the rise of slave ownership in the city’s settler population.¹⁴ Most New York City slaveowners were Christians whose religious obligations included the duty of converting their slaves to Christianity. However, these slaveowners were hardly exemplary Christians. Writing from the city, Governor Dongan noted: “It is the endeavor of all persons here to bring up their children & servants in that opinion which themselves profess; But this I observe that they take no care of the conversion of their slaves.”¹⁵ Recognizing that colonial New York’s institution of slavery was predicated on the presumption that slaves were not Christians, most slaveowners renounced their Christian duty and prevented SPG missionaries and other clergymen from proselytizing among their slaves and baptizing slaves who had converted to Christianity. An SPG missionary explained that his labor among the slaves was pointless unless the city’s slaveowners received a guarantee from the English rulers that conversion to Christianity would not

alter the slave's condition of lifelong bondage. "I know very well that many people—look upon it as a very Great Difficulty that when they [Negroes] are Baptised, they will cease to be Slaves. . . . If there were a law which permitted the Inhabitants to cause their Negroes to be Instructed and Baptised," he advised, "I believe that would be great Advantage provided nevertheless that the slaves might have no right to pretend to a Temporal Liberty because that would be a great Injury to the Plantations which are only supported by the Labour of those People."¹⁶ In an effort to remove the main cause of slaveowner opposition to its Christian "civilizing" mission, the SPG successfully lobbied New York's colonial assembly to pass a law ensuring that enslaved converts remained in bondage for their entire lives.

Enacted in 1706 and titled "An Act to Encourage the Baptising of Negro, Indian and Mulatto Slaves," that statute unequivocally stated: "Be it Exacted by the Governour, Council and Assembly, and it is hereby Enacted by the Authority of the same, That in the Baptizing of any Negro, Indian, Mulatto or Mestee Slave shall not be any cause or reason for the setting them or any of them at liberty."¹⁷ In a final coup de grâce, colonial New York's amended law of slavery comprehensively defined a slave as "all and every Negro, Indian, Mulatto and Mestee Bastard Child and Children who is, are, and shall be born of any Negro, Indian, Mulatto or Mestee, shall follow ye State and Condition of the Mother and be esteemed reputed taken and adjudged a Slave and Slaves to all intents and purposes whatsoever."¹⁸ The term *Negro*, along with the terms *Indian*, *Mulatto*, and *Mestee*, now supplanted the phrase *no Christian* in the legal construction of the category *slave*. By precisely enumerating the people who were lawfully held in the condition of lifelong bondage, something that the earlier law defined solely in negative relation to the term *Christian*, the Law of 1706 acknowledged the unreliability of the binarism free Christian/enslaved heathen. The category *slave* now shifted from an ascribed identity principally defined by the criterion of religion to one defined by the criterion of heredity—specifically, matrilineal descent. Invoking the ancient Roman law dictum *partus sequitur ventrum* to construct a hereditary condition of bondage determined by matrilineal descent, the Law of 1706 thus replaced a potentially contestable condition of bond-slavery with a seemingly incontrovertible condition of bondage.

Of course, no law could anticipate all the contingencies that might render the institution of chattel slavery vulnerable to contestation. Nevertheless, each term and combination of terms in colonial New York's amended law of slavery was calculated to close loopholes and eradicate ambiguities that threatened to undermine the slaveowner's right to slave property. For example, whereas prior to the enactment of the Law of 1706 the terms *Mulatto* (a person of European and African ancestry) and *Mestee* (a person of European and Amerindian ancestry) were anomalous categories, they now specified the intermixtures of peoples eligible for enslavement. In this way, the revised law of slavery eliminated many, but not all, uncertainties regarding the status of children born of mixed unions.¹⁹ In addition, the term *bastard* confirmed the exclusion of the conjugal bonds of slaves from the legally recognized institution of marriage and, importantly, divested all fathers, enslaved and free, of paternal rights over offspring

born of a slave woman.²⁰ Lastly, the term *Mulatto* paired with the term *bastard*, as well as the term *Mestee* coupled with the term *bastard*, made it clear that all children born of a union between a Negro slave woman and a Caucasian male (or, alternatively, between an Indian slave woman and a Caucasian male) were slaves and hence the uncontested property of the mother's owner. In this way, the Law of 1706 replaced the permeable boundary that previously separated free Christians from enslaved heathens with a seemingly impervious boundary grounded in the presumably infallible rule of making the individual's assignment to the category *slave* dependent on being born of an enslaved woman. Enslaved women thus became the progenitors of a servile lineage, which over the generations no longer necessarily displayed any of the particular cultural and physiognomic traits originally ascribed to the enslaved—for example, heathenism and dark skin color. While an offspring of a slave woman might convert to Christianity and exhibit none of the visible bodily characteristics ascribed to, for example, the category “Negro” in the racial classification system of early-modern natural history, no individual could alter the fact of having been born of a slave woman. By defining lifelong bondage as a heritable condition transmitted from mother to child, the Law of 1706 smuggled in the imprimatur of Mother Nature and in doing so naturalized the legal institution of chattel slavery and its social relation of property. The “Negro, Indian, Mulatto, and Mestee,” the law insinuated, did not become slaves as a result of any historical process, but were natural-born slaves. Importantly, the use of the criterion of heredity in the legal construction of colonial New York's institution of slavery marks a crucial juncture in the history of racial formation, a point at which the discursive construction of *race* began to take on its modern biologized form under a racist state apparatus. In colonial New York, the legal condition of perpetual hereditary bondage was made to resemble an innate, immutable condition of the “Negro, Indian, Mulatto, and Mestee.”²¹ In this respect, the making of the modern institution of slavery was continuous with the making of the modern conception of race.

On the whole, the Law of 1706 solved the problem of slave conversion and eradicated many of the ambiguities surrounding the status of mulattoes and mestees. However, that law did not reassure slaveowners who worried that the SPG's recognition of the slaves' spiritual equality encouraged slaves to abhor their enslavement and rebel against their worldly masters. Hoping to persuade skeptical slaveowners that baptizing the slaves, and thereby bringing them into the spiritual community of Christians, was a prudent course of action, England's influential Anglican Bishop William Fleetwood argued: “What a security will this be to their masters when those [slaves] that they [slaveowners] now fear more than an enemy are in one and the same interest, when there will be a mutual trust and confidence, and they that are now watched and guarded for fear of doing mischief will be safeguarded to their masters for preventing it.”²² In New York City, Governor Hunter endorsed the missionary work of SPG catechist Elias Neau and issued the following proclamation: “That in the City of New-York, where the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts have in their Zeal for the Enlargement of Christ's Church appointed Mr. Elias

Neau, a person well qualified with Piety and Knowledge, to Catechize and Instruct Children, Servants, Negro and Indian Slaves in the Knowledge of Jesus Christ, That all parents Masters and Mistresses of Families be assisting in the accomplishing of a Work so good and commendable, by sending and encouraging to go to such School of Instruction, their Children and Servants, Negro and Indian Slaves.”²³ Having secured a law that encouraged masters to have their slaves baptized and obtained endorsements from an Anglican official in England and New York’s royal governor, the SPG had cleared the way for Neau’s missionary work in colonial New York City, except for the notable obstruction of lingering slaveowner opposition to slave conversion.

Neau began his career as New York City’s first SPG catechist in 1703, even though he did not receive his official appointment to that post until 1705.²⁴ Writing from the colonial port town to the SPG authorities in London, Neau observed: “There are here a great number of slaves which we call Negroes of both sexes & of all ages, who are without God in the world and of whom there is no manner of Care taken, `tis worthy of the Charity of the Glorious Body of the Society to Endeavour to find out some methods for their instruction.”²⁵ Neau’s black pupils attended rudimentary worship services, where they heard his sermons on biblical texts, such as the Gospel of St. John, and listened to his exhortations on the doctrines of Protestantism and the reformation of the “true church.”²⁶ Neau reported: “I also read to them from time to time the principal stories of the Holy Scriptures that I may give them an Historical notion of the Creation and redemption of the World. In a word I conceal nothing from them that is proper to bring them to Salvation: I set before their eyes the promises and threatenings. God grant them Grace to make good use thereof. . . .”²⁷ Neau’s method of preparing catechumens for baptism also consisted of having his pupils memorize and recite basic Christian tenets. For example, his black pupils memorized the Lord’s Prayer and recited the correct responses to a simple question-and-answer catechism, all in the English language.²⁸ Neau briefly experimented with a pedagogic method that probably appealed to these catechumens, many of whom had been raised in the vibrant oral cultures of sub-Saharan Africa and the West Indies. Neau explained: “I have changed the method I took in the beginning a little, or rather changed nothing, but have added a few things as prayers and singing of Psalms, that encourages both them and me, for I represent to them that God placed them in the World only for his Glory; and that in praying and singing those divine Praises one doth in part obey his commands. I observe with pleasure that they strive who shall sing best.”²⁹ Neau’s singing Negroes attracted curious townspeople, who gathered outside the SPG classroom to enjoy the Negroes’ performance of the Psalms.

However, the SPG authorities in London opposed Neau’s experimental teaching methods, insisting that the Lord’s Prayer and the 39 Articles of the Church of England Confession “ought not to be Invoked by a people who know it not.”³⁰ The Episcopacy of London insisted that an understanding of Christian doctrine must precede any testament of faith and that the rote recitation of prayers and the Anglican catechism was by itself insufficient evidence that catechumens, including enslaved blacks, fully comprehended the Scripture, had ob-

tained God's grace, and thus qualified for admission to the holy sacrament of Baptism. In this respect, the Anglican authorities rejected the notion that the mere utterance of a statement, such as "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth," is somehow identical to the speaker actually doing the act the statement implies—in this case, believing that the Christian God is the single, omnipotent creator. In response to the criticism of his superiors, Neau defended his method of pedagogy but agreed that "knowledge ought to go before the Invokation [and] tis necessary that God should intervene by his Grace in the Instructions that shall be given to those people." "I believe," he added, "that in representing to them before I make them pray, that God is their Father by the right of their Creation & Protection that I may very well teach them this Prayer without any Danger."³¹ The Anglican authorities perceived a grave danger, however. In their view, Neau's teaching practices ran the risk of giving the slaves the false impression that a profession of faith was identical to faith itself. After receiving a final rebuke from his superiors, Neau returned to a more conventional pedagogic method, which emphasized teaching his pupils how to read and comprehend English and encouraging them to study the Bible and Anglican devotional texts printed in the English language as preparation for salvation or the infusion of God's grace.

For the most part, New York City's SPG catechists acceded to the SPG authorities' standards for admission to the sacrament of Baptism and therefore privileged mastery of reading skills and study of the written word over memorization and recitation in instructing their black pupils. Neau ordered Akan-language and Mandingo-language transcriptions of the Lord's Prayer to aid him in his labors among native Africans.³² In addition, the SPG catechist ordered Dutch-language, Spanish-language, and French-language editions of the Lord's Prayer and the Anglican catechism, because some black catechumens could read one or more of these languages. However, the SPG authorities in London insisted that the ability to read English was the most important prerequisite to a sound Anglican catechism. Hence, teaching the black catechumen how to read English well enough to study the English-language Bible, Anglican catechism, and other devotional texts was a primary duty of the SPG catechists. Using Dyche's *Spelling Book*, the SPG catechists instructed their black pupils in the rudiments of reading the English language. Once these pupils had mastered English sufficiently to read elementary English-language texts, the catechists introduced them to simplified statements of Anglican doctrine such as Lewis's *Exposition of the Church Catechism, Or the Church-Catechism Broke into Short Questions*, Worthington's *Scripture Catechism*, and Doctor Woodward's *Short Catechism*.³³ The SPG catechists also encouraged their pupils to take the beginner's catechism, with the alphabet printed on the back cover, home for private study.³⁴ Once these texts left the SPG classroom, the means of acquiring the cultural tool of English literacy became available to a larger proportion of New York City's black population than the tiny fraction that regularly attended the SPG classes. Neau suspected that some black pupils attended the SPG catechism "only for the books."³⁵

Nevertheless, Neau predicted that his missionary work would yield a "good

harvest” of black converts.³⁶ Anticipating a large flock of black proselytes, the SPG catechist furnished a classroom on the second floor of his dwelling with benches sufficient to seat 200 to 300 pupils.³⁷ Actual attendance rates fell far short of Neau’s initial expectation, however. The number of black catechumens who attended the SPG classes rarely exceeded 60 pupils—in two years only, 1708 and 1771, when it was reported that in each of these years there were more than 200 black catechumens in attendance.³⁸ Some enslaved blacks wished to convert to Christianity but, as Neau complained, “upon desiring the approbation of their Masters to be baptised they [the slaves] are either threatened to be sold to Virginia or else to be sent into the Country if they come any more to School; Good God! What sort of religion have these people [the masters]? For my part I can’t help saying that they have none at all.”³⁹ Many New York City slaveowners remained unconvinced that Christianized slaves made more tractable servants than enslaved “heathens” and therefore prohibited their slaves from attending the SPG catechism, this time on the pretext that the SPG catechist scheduled classes at times that interfered with their slaves’ work routine. Initially, Neau held his classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 4 P.M. but soon re-scheduled them for Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 5 P.M. The revised schedule resulted in no significant increase in attendance rates, however. In the long run, perhaps so few blacks attended the SPG catechism because enslaved blacks could no longer hope that by converting to Christianity they would be liberated from bondage.

In his history of the SPG’s overseas missionary work, the SPG secretary David Humphreys gave the following account of the settler population’s lack of concern for the spiritual condition of New York City’s black population:

The Negroes were much discouraged from embracing the Christian religion, upon account on the very little regard shewn them in any religious respect. Their marriages were performed by mutual consent only, without the blessings of the Church: they were buried by those of their owne country or Complexion in the common field, without any Christian office; perhaps some ridiculous Heathen rites were performed at the Grave by some of their own people. No notice was given of their being sick, that they might be visited, on the contrary, frequent Discourses were made in Conversation that they had no souls and perished as the Beasts.⁴⁰

In 1712, Reverend John Sharpe reported that “not above ye tenth” of the city’s black population attended the SPG catechism.⁴¹ Neau eventually despaired at the slow progress that his black pilgrims were making on the road to salvation and conceded that while he endeavored “to make them comprehend the necessity of baptism, . . . their hearts [were] desperately corrupted.” “I observe with sorrow,” he added, “that the knowledge they acquire makes but little Impression, that corruption reigns and which, like a Torrent overflows all our Country, serves only to strengthen them in the unfortunate practice of vice.”⁴² Investing years of tireless labor in his missionary work among the black town dwellers, Neau had saved few souls and reported in 1712: “The greatest part of the black people in New York remain unbaptised.”⁴³



For most of the English colonial period, unacculturated foreign-born slaves from the East African coast, Madagascar, the Guinea coast of West Africa, Angola, the Congo, and the West Indies were a majority of New York City's diverse black population. Opponents of the importation and exploitation of enslaved black laborers feared that the culturally alien and increasingly numerous African population posed a threat to the city's safety and for that reason supported schemes for the encouragement of the importation of laborers from the British Isles and Europe to replace the enslaved Africans. The fear of black insurgency materialized on Sunday, April 1, 1712, at around 2 A.M., when roughly two dozen black town dwellers, armed with guns, hatchets, knives, and other stolen weapons, gathered in the orchard at the rear of a house in the city's East Ward, broke into a nearby outhouse, set fire to that building, and ambushed the settlers who rushed to extinguish the blaze. With the aid of reinforcements, the settlers soon prevailed in the ensuing skirmish, but not before 8 of their number had been killed and 12 others wounded. While the settlers appraised the damage from the early morning battle, the rebels took refuge in hiding places about town and in the woods outside the city's limit. Governor Hunter ordered the militia to pursue the fugitives, and before long the search party captured the rebels who remained inside the city. Preferring death to capture, the rebels who had escaped to the countryside committed suicide before the armed settlers could arrest them.⁴⁴

The English colonial authorities jailed a total of 70 suspected rebels, and during a two-month period following the rebellion, special courts tried and convicted 21 accused rebels. Governor Hunter pardoned three convicted insurrectionaries, arguing that one convicted black man named Mars had been judged guilty on insufficient evidence and that two condemned Spanish-speaking Indians named José and Juan deserved reprieves because the uncertainty surrounding the lawfulness of their enslavement and the possibility that they were free subjects of Spain amounted to an extenuating circumstance. Swayed by these arguments, the English Crown confirmed Hunter's pardons. Even though vengeful townspeople clamored for mass retaliation and some municipal authorities suspected many more slaves of conspiracy, the English colonial rulers executed only 18 convicted rebels, who were subjected to horrific exemplary punishments intended to instill terror in the city's broader black population. The executioners burned some condemned rebels at the stake, hanged others, beheaded all, and left their mutilated bodies outdoors to rot from exposure.⁴⁵

Shortly after the revolt, Governor Hunter addressed New York's colonial assembly and advised that legislative body to enact more effective laws for policing the enslaved population. "The Late Hellish Attempt of yor Slaves," he remarked, "is sufficient to convince you of the necessity of putting that sort of men [the slaves] under better regulation by Some good law for that Purpose, and to take away the Root of that Evill to Encourage the Importation of White Servants."⁴⁶ The colonial assembly heeded Governor Hunter's advice and en-

acted the Black Code of 1712, which codified a series of statutes first promulgated between 1682 and 1707.⁴⁷ The Black Code (1) reiterated that slaves had no claim to freedom by virtue of conversion to Christianity and that the status of slave was a lifelong heritable condition of bondage transmitted from slave mother to her offspring; (2) reconfirmed the separate slave penal code that outlined special procedures by which slaves were to be tried, convicted, and punished; (3) reaffirmed the prohibition against many types of social and economic intercourse between slaves and free men and women; and (4) restated the statutory restrictions on the manumission of slaves.⁴⁸ The Black Code also reiterated the disabilities imposed on free blacks, including the statutory prohibition, enacted in 1707, against recently emancipated blacks owning, devising, and inheriting land. Governor Hunter vetoed the restrictions on the free blacks' property rights, and the Privy Council later approved a revision of the Black Code that omitted the prohibition against free blacks' owning land but included the interdiction against recently manumitted blacks inheriting and devising land to their heirs.⁴⁹ In colonial New York, both enslaved blacks and free blacks were now subjected to severe regulations.⁵⁰

In the wake of New York City's Slave Revolt of 1712, some settlers accused the SPG catechist Elias Neau of introducing the slaves to incendiary ideas and thereby inspiring them to revolt against their masters.⁵¹ Writing from New York City in June 1712, Chaplain John Sharpe reported: "This barbarian Conspiracy of the Negroes, which was first thought to be general, opened the mouth of many against Negroes being made Christians. Mr. Neau durst hardly appear; his School was blamed as the main occasion of it."⁵² Pointing out that only two of the convicted insurrectionaries were Christianized slaves, Sharpe vigorously defended Neau and the SPG's proselytizing activities among the black town dwellers. As in the case of most New World slave rebellions prior to the 1760s, unacculturated native Africans were the leaders and principal participants in the New York City Slave Revolt of 1712. Sharpe reported that native Akan had led the revolt in New York City: "Some Negro Slaves here of ye Nations of Coromantee [Coromantee] & Pappa [Pawpaw] plotted to destroy all the whites in order to obtain their freedom and kept their Conspiracy secret that there was not the least suspicion of it (as formerly there had been) till it came to its execution."⁵³ A subdivision of the Akan people, the Coromantees, resided at Koromantin, the site of an English trading fort located on the Gold Coast of Africa (or present-day Ghana) between Elmina and Accra and several miles down the coast from Moree. The Pawpaws, also a subdivision of the Akan, lived up the coast from Whydah, at Great and Little Popo, the site of two English trading forts.⁵⁴ Although the exact date of entry is unknown, the Coromantee and Pawpaw rebels probably arrived at the port of New York City between 1710 and 1712, a period when a total of 185 involuntary immigrants from the Gold Coast of West Africa disembarked at New York's seaport.⁵⁵ Thousands of miles separated Manhattan Island from Koromantin and Popo, and this geographical distance mirrored the cultural estrangement that the Coromantee and Pawpaw strangers doubtless experienced in their new environment. For these enslaved native Africans, forced migration to New York City involved a traumatic rup-

ture from the familiar old world of Akan culture and violent integration into the strange new world of an English-ruled settler colony.

The Akan newcomers would have found little odd in the settlers' practice of enslaving strangers, exchanging persons as articles of trade, and determining slave status by matrilineal descent, since slavery on the Gold Coast displayed similar features.⁵⁶ But they would have found other fundamental features of colonial New York's institution of slavery incompatible with their own culturally ingrained values concerning human bondage. Most West African cultures had a set of well-defined laws prescribing the legitimate master-slave relation and the just treatment of slaves. Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff have written: "Africa stands out *par excellence* in the legal precision, the multiplicity of detail and variation, and degree of cultural explicitness" of its laws of slavery.⁵⁷ In Akan society, there was a finely differentiated continuum of slave statuses. The lowest rank was the *akyere*, a convicted criminal who served as a slave because his or her capital punishment had been postponed until there arose a need for a human sacrifice at the funeral of a dignitary. Next to the *akyere* was the *odonko*, or foreign-born slave. Because the *odonko* was a kinless stranger, he or she could be sold as an article of trade. Describing the *odonko*, A. Norman Klein has written, "Having no lineage membership, hence no corporate protection, he was an isolated 'solitary creature' who could be depersonalized and treated as a commodity."⁵⁸ With regard to status and treatment, the *odonko* resembled the condition of the slave under colonial New York's law of slavery. However, unlike the slave in New York, the faithful *odonko* in Akan society was entitled to an endowment of land and the products of his or her own labor. On the next rung up from the *odonko* was the *awowa* or pawn, a clan member who had been temporarily forfeited to another clan to work off a communal liability or as collateral against a debt. Akan clans sometimes made restitution for crimes or reparation for the ravages of war by transferring one or more of their own people to the injured party. Clans could not always redeem pawned lineage members. In such cases, the unfortunate *awowa* was debased to the status of kinless stranger and became what was known as an *akao pa*. The status of the *akao pa* was now identical to the *odonko*, for both had become kinless slaves who could be sold and whose offspring were also slaves. Like the obedient *odonko*, the loyal *akao pa* was also entitled to land, as well as to the fruits of his or her own labor. An Akan proverb prescribes the "just" treatment of the faithful *akao pa* as follows: *Akoa nim som a, ofa ne ti ade di*, or "When a slave knows how to serve [his master well], he is permitted to take his own earnings."⁵⁹ A slave who served well sometimes inherited part of his or her master's estate. Another Akan proverb stipulates: *Akoa onim som di ne wura ade*, or "A slave who knows how to serve succeeds to his master's estate." Although English translations are incapable of conveying the exact meaning of the Akan proverbs about slavery, they offer a useful approximation of the Akan-speaking peoples' normative expectations with respect to the "just" treatment of slaves and the "legitimate" exercise of authority over them. In their relations with unacculturated native Africans, New York City enslavers often struggled with the problem of translation. It was perhaps the impossibility of translating the English concepts "justice" and "legitimacy"

into the Akan language that proved to be an insurmountable obstacle to the establishment of slaveowner hegemony over the Coromantee and Pawpaw newcomers who, in 1712, revolted against their subjection to unfamiliar relations of domination.

In all likelihood, these Akan slaves rebelled against their masters not so much to overthrow colonial New York's institution of slavery and assert their belief in the value of freedom⁶⁰ as to restore themselves to familiar forms of Akan sociality or, failing that objective, to escape their enslavers through committing suicide, which, for them, meant reunion with their ancestors. Certainly, the condition of natal alienation that the Coromantee and Pawpaw rebels endured during their enslavement in colonial New York City was an affront to the value Akan people placed on communal belonging. On the Gold Coast, the offspring of enslaved strangers, beginning with the second or third generation, were adopted into the clan network of their enslavers through the system of kinship and marriage. With tribal adoption, enslaved foreigners ceased to be strangers. Moreover, slavery on the Gold Coast did not denigrate the cultural heritage of enslaved captives. When the Asante clans defeated the southern Akan and enslaved these conquered people, they incorporated elements of southern Akan culture. The end product of this fusion was a rich and complex culture.⁶¹ The culturally specific expectations of Coromantees, Pawpaws, and other Akan people with respect to the "legitimate" use and "just" treatment of slaves doubtless shaped their response to New World slavery. In a letter to the Lords of Trade, Christopher Codrington, an Antiguan planter, described how enslaved Coromantees comported themselves on his plantation:

They [Coromantees] are not only the best and most faithful of our slaves, but are really all born Heroes. There is a difference between them and all other Negroes beyond what 'tis possible for yr Lordships to conceive. There never was a raskal or coward of that nation, intrepid to the last degree, not a man of them but will stand to be cut to pieces without a sigh or groan, but implacably revengeful when ill treated. My father who had studied the genius and temper of all kinds of Negroes 45 years with a very nice observance, would say, noe man deserved a Corramante [Coromantee] that would not treat him like a friend rather than a slave.⁶²

Although Codrington had never visited the Gold Coast of Africa and therefore had no first-hand knowledge of Akan ethics concerning the master-slave relation, he correctly understood that Coromantee slaves expected to be rewarded for faithful service with "just" treatment.⁶³ Not only that, they expected specific entitlements, such as the right to the use of land, the products of their own labor, and even tribal adoption. Perhaps Codrington had a dim comprehension of these expectations when he stated that a Coromantee ought to be treated like a "friend rather than a slave."

In colonial New York City, the English rulers rarely enforced the laws against slave abuse. Thus the treatment of slaves varied according to the arbitrary will of individual slaveowners. A contemporary report on the Slave Revolt of 1712 stated that the Coromantee and Pawpaw rebels were motivated to revolt by

“some hard usage they apprehended to have received from their masters.”⁶⁴ From the perspective of these involuntary Akan immigrants, the slaves in New York City were subject to “hard usage,” for, even if they served their masters well, slaves were not entitled to land and the products of their own labor, and they received nothing like a tribal adoption into their masters’ families and the broader settler community. In short, the slaves “belonged to” individual settlers, but they did not “belong in” the settler community. In contrast to the slave in the Akan kingdom, the slave in colonial New York was not only held in perpetual and heritable bondage but also relegated to the condition that Orlando Patterson has called “social death.”⁶⁵ This condition of natal alienation was fundamentally at odds with the normative expectations of the Coromantee and Pawpaw rebels, who during their childhood and early adult years had been preparing for full integration into Akan society. No effort seems to have been made to provide these native African strangers with an adjustment (or seasoning) period, during which they would have been gradually introduced to colonial New York’s laws and customs and integrated into its labor system. Thrust into an unfamiliar world without the slightest preparation, the Coromantee and Pawpaw newcomers rebelled against their new masters within two years of their arrival at the port of New York.

Although the Coromantee and Pawpaw rebels were recent newcomers, these “New Negroes” did not act alone in rising against their enslavers. Other slaves, from equally distinctive societies and cultures, joined them. As in the case of the Akan-speaking rebels, ingrained, culturally specific ideals guided these slaves in their response to the unfamiliar relations of domination that they confronted in colonial New York City. The careers of two Spanish-speaking Indians named Juan and José illustrate this point. Sold into slavery as prize goods from a captured Spanish privateer in 1706, José and Juan participated in the Slave Revolt of 1712. Throughout their captivity, the two men claimed to be free subjects of Spain, members of the captured Spanish sailing vessel’s crew and not part of its human cargo. However, these Spanish-speaking Indians could not document their claim, and the Vice-Admiralty Court, whose duties included adjudicating disputes involving captives from enemy sailing vessels, condemned Juan and José to lifelong bondage. Having no nonviolent avenue of redress available to them, the Spanish-speaking Indians joined the slave uprising and on the morning of April 1, 1712, set fire to an outhouse owned by José’s master in protest against colonial New York City’s binary regime of black/white, slave/not slave, which had assigned them to a racial subject-position identical to the one enslaved blacks occupied.⁶⁶

Bilingual blacks probably acted as interpreters for the rebels, who, taken as a whole, shared no common language. During the trial proceedings following the revolt, the court engaged bilingual blacks to act as interpreters for the Spanish-speaking Indians and the Akan-speaking Africans accused of murdering their masters.⁶⁷ Colonial New York City newspaper advertisements document the presence of black town dwellers who spoke at least two languages. Black men who spoke both Spanish and English were hired on New York City privateering vessels headed for the Caribbean Sea, and others who spoke both Akan and En-

English were valuable members of the crews on board New York City slavers that sailed to the Gold Coast of Africa. Most New York City trading vessels visited ports of call where crewmembers encountered a variety of languages. The seafaring life encouraged sailors to learn a second and perhaps a third language and even to create new languages, such as pidgin, a simplified language invented to facilitate communication where initially there is no common language. After journeying several months at sea, sailors returned to their home ports and likely introduced pidgin to town dwellers who worked at the docks.⁶⁸ As Peter Linebaugh has noted, "By the mid-eighteenth century there were pidgin speaking communities in Philadelphia, New York, and Halifax. . . . Pidgin became an instrument, like the drum or the fiddle, of communication among the oppressed: scorned and not easily understood by 'polite' society."⁶⁹ Given the early emergence of colonial New York City's polyglot culture, it is likely that a pidgin community existed in that port town long before the middle of the eighteenth century.

In any event, the Slave Revolt of 1712 emerged out of the linguistic environment of a colonial seaport where some black town dwellers spoke more than one language. Bilingual blacks were more readily accessible at the port of New York than they were in the surrounding countryside, where the typical rural black was a slave who lived on a relatively isolated farm and therefore had few opportunities to acquire a European language other than the one spoken in his or her master's household. While traveling through rural New York in 1744, more than 30 years after the Slave Revolt of 1712, Alexander Hamilton, an English-speaking physician from Annapolis, Maryland, and his English-speaking slave named Dromo encountered a Dutch-speaking slave girl from the Long Island countryside. But because of the language barrier, Hamilton and his slave were unable to have any meaningful communication with her.⁷⁰ Had the two English-speaking travelers from Maryland encountered the slave girl in New York City, rather than in the countryside, they could have easily found a bilingual town dweller, as likely to be a black resident as a white townsman, who spoke both Dutch and English to act as a translator for them. Bilingual blacks doubtless facilitated communication across the linguistic borders of the city's polyglot black population. Historians often include the linguistic diversity of enslaved populations among the list of factors that deterred slave conspiracy in early America. But New York City provided an environment that allowed urban slaves to overcome the language barriers that divided them. In that colonial port town, urban slaves lived in densely populated polyglot neighborhoods and therefore had far greater opportunity than isolated rural slaves to learn a second and possibly a third language, which would aid rather than hamper them in spreading discontent and communicating plans for an uprising throughout the city's broader polyglot black population. Through the conduit of bilingual interpreters, some of whom had crisscrossed the Atlantic world, black town dwellers who had lived their entire lives in New York City perhaps learned about distant societies and cultures⁷¹—for example, that in New Spain Indians and Negroes could attain the rights of Spanish subjecthood and that in Akan society the slaves, beginning with the second or third generation, were adopted into

the clan network of their enslavers through the system of kinship and marriage. Such knowledge perhaps broadened the horizons of confined black town dwellers and motivated some to rebel against their masters.

The Slave Revolt of 1712 took place during a period when political fallout from Leisler's Rebellion had not yet abated and at a moment when new political antagonisms over the Crown's revenues and the governor's salary created further discord in the settler colony. Commenting on the political climate in colonial New York on the eve of the slave uprising, William Smith wrote, "Our publick affairs never wore a more melancholy aspect than at this juncture."⁷² The timing of the revolt suggests that acculturated blacks, who had been born in New York or at least had lived in the colony long enough to have acquired an understanding of the settlers' political affairs, contrived to take advantage of internal factionalism within the settler population. To be sure, other factors militated against the success of a slave revolt.⁷³ First, the settler population greatly outnumbered the enslaved population, by a margin of five to one for most of the colonial era. Second, in that eighteenth-century garrison town, the colonial authorities could quickly mobilize the English soldiers and the armed settler majority to defeat any slave uprising. Third, the city's slave labor force did not, as a rule, work in large gangs and live in segregated slave quarters. Under such conditions, restive black town dwellers could not easily organize and carry out a successful mass rebellion. Nevertheless, New York City's Slave Revolt of 1712 was the first slave uprising in British North America undertaken by more than three or four slaves. On two separate occasions—in 1702 and in 1708—a few New York slaves were executed for the murder of their masters, but no widespread conspiracy seems to have been part of these isolated attacks.⁷⁴ In contrast, at least 21 rebels secretly planned and carried out the 1712 uprising. Such an airtight conspiracy doubtless involved the cooperation of the city's broader black population.

In 1712, New York City's total population numbered at least 6,307 inhabitants, of whom no fewer than 945 or 15 percent were black town dwellers.⁷⁵ Most black town dwellers worked in crowded city neighborhoods. The Slave Revolt of 1712 took place in the East Ward, the city's most densely populated neighborhood, and all but three of the rebels lived in crowded parts of the city.⁷⁶ Like prisoners on work furloughs, the slaves left their masters' houses each morning and congregated in large numbers at work sites about town—for example, at the port facilities along the East River. In an effort to prevent slave conspiracy, the municipal authorities enacted, in 1683, an ordinance that prohibited the unsupervised assembly of more than four slaves at a single time and place within the city's limit,⁷⁷ and later, in 1702, the colonial authorities reduced the number of slaves allowed to congregate within the city's limit to three.⁷⁸ But given the labor-intensive activity at the city's docks, wharves, warehouses, and shipyard, that regulation proved impossible to enforce. Hence, restive black town dwellers had daily opportunities to spread the contagion of discontent to other black town dwellers. In addition to the colonial port town's everyday work environment, officially sanctioned holidays—for example, annual celebrations of the New Year, St. Patrick's Day, and the English

monarch's coronation and birthday—provided occasions for the unmonitored gathering of large crowds of slaves. The rebels of 1712 assembled to finalize the plan for their revolt during the city's New Year's Day festivities,⁷⁹ a fixed holiday when the municipal government temporarily suspended its restriction on the number of slaves allowed to amass within the city's limits. During such mass public festivals, dangerous conspirators could not be easily distinguished from harmless revelers.

The cultural practices of urban slaves resist the imposition of a single meaning on them and have proved to be difficult to interpret, not only for the contemporary enslavers who endeavored to suppress servile insurrection but also for present-day scholars who study the history of slave culture and its political implications. In separate studies, the historians Sterling Stuckey and Shane White offer opposing interpretations of the parades that the black populations in New York City and Albany held during the observance of Pentecost (or Whitsuntide), a vernal holiday that Dutch-speakers called Pinkster.⁸⁰ Pointing out that the black Pinkster pageants of kings and queens closely resembled processions staged by black communities in West Africa, Cuba, New England, and other parts of the black Atlantic world, Stuckey argues that the black Pinkster parades in New York City and Albany masked an African-derived cultural practice and therefore should be regarded as a mode of subaltern resistance to the imposition of the dominant culture of New York's ruling class.⁸¹ In contrast, White argues that in New York City and Albany the mock pageants of black royalty, though infused with some African elements, clearly resembled European-derived rituals of status inversion and expressed the "syncretization of African and Dutch culture," clear evidence, White adds, of the black population's assimilation of dominant cultural practices in the context of enslavement in a white settler colony.⁸² Both interpretations have substantial merit and, when considered together, not only disclose the resemblance between certain Africa-derived and European-derived folk traditions but also, importantly, call attention to the difficulty of determining with certainty whether the cultural practices of early black urban populations camouflaged resistance to the dominant culture or revealed accommodation to it.

When during fixed holidays the colonial rulers tolerated status inversion rituals, whether derived from Africa or Europe, they did so, as Ranajit Guha has noted, "precisely in order to prevent such inversions from occurring in real life."⁸³ Of course, officially sanctioned rituals of status inversion did not always contain subaltern insurgency within safe and predictable temporal intervals, such as fixed holidays; that mechanism of governance always involved the risk of servile unrest spilling over into everyday life and, without warning, igniting a violent revolt. A close analysis of the sudden and violent irruption of subaltern insurgency that awoke the settlers in New York City on Sunday morning, April 1, 1712, only one week after the city's mass New Year's Day celebration, reveals that a cross section of the city's black population could not accommodate an integral feature of the dominant culture and, from various perspectives, regarded the settler colony's institution of slavery as an intolerable injustice, an unbearable affront to their own ideals of "justice" and "legitimacy."



While New York City slaveowners accused the SPG catechist Elias Neau of fueling slave unrest and igniting the Slave Revolt of 1712, the SPG catechist James Wetmore later argued that the settlers shared the blame for the prevalence of insubordination among the black town dwellers. Noting that the deplorable example of errant Christian settlers had made a far deeper impression on the city's black population than the model of Christian virtue he and other SPG catechists had provided the black town dwellers, Wetmore concluded that the SPG was fighting a losing battle: "One doesn't notice any change. There is not one in ten that comes to the catechism. They [Negroes] are naturally libertines and those to whom they belong do not bother themselves much about their welfare so long as they serve well. Thus it is as much the fault of the masters as that of the Negroes if their Slaves are not good men. Furthermore, the bad examples of the whites confirm the Negroes only too much in their impenitence and in their corruption." Wetmore was far from convinced that the white settlers were a morally superior people who justly enslaved black Africans, and he questioned the theory that asserted black Africans (so-called Negroes) were slaves because they bore the Noachidian curse. He remarked: "I have been told that the Negroes bear on their foreheads the marks of the reprobation and that their color and their condition confirms that opinion. I always cry out against the temerity that dares fouiller in the impenetrables of God, and furthermore I do not see that the turpitude of their crimes is more atrocious than that of the whites because we are only too often scandalized by the horrors that the Christians commit. I know, sir, that the evil of one doesn't excuse that of the other, but at least these wretches are in some sort more excusable."⁸⁴ Wetmore's indignation at the "temerity that dares fouiller in the impenetrables of God" referenced the tortuous interpretations of postdiluvian history that construed dark skin color as a visible mark of Noah's blight on the descendants of Ham and, since the sixth century, designated parts of Africa as the homeland of Hamites.⁸⁵ Biblical genealogies, such as the Hamites, became an integral part of early modern discourses of race and antiblack racism, legitimating Christendom's fantasies about the inferiority of black Africans and the enslavement of these dark-skinned people. As was the case for other educated Europeans of the early modern era, Wetmore's encounter with black Africans filled him with contradictory feelings of sympathy and aversion. In this respect, Wetmore's ambivalence toward black Africans occupied what the historian Robin Blackburn has called the "meeting-point between prejudice and respectable learning."⁸⁶ Although the learned SPG catechist remained reluctant to attribute the myth of the Noachidian curse to black Africans and their descendants, he nevertheless subscribed to other popular antiblack prejudices. Writing about colonial New York City's black population, Wetmore remarked: "Most of them [Negroes] are so vicious that people don't care to trust them in companies together, and some have under the pretense of going to catechizing taken opportunity to [be] absent from their masters service many days."⁸⁷ Once regarded as a worthy object

of Christendom's "civilizing" mission, the colonial port town's black population was now viewed as an alien and untrustworthy presence that imperiled the safety of the settler colony.

Owing to the increase in the importation of enslaved native Africans beginning in the late 1740s and overall negligible rates of natural increase among black town dwellers, a shift from an unacculturated native African majority to an acculturated American-born majority in colonial New York City's black population probably occurred later than historians have generally supposed, probably no earlier than the 1760s.⁸⁸ Prior to that time, only a tiny fraction of the city's black population fully embraced the Christian belief system. This circumstance attests to the black town dwellers' generally low level of acculturation during the pre-1760s period. Excluded from the city's Christian community, most black town dwellers were denied a Christian burial and instead were buried at the Negroes Burial Ground, an isolated cemetery of approximately six acres, located on the common just north of present-day City Hall Park. Using current street designations, the borders of the Negroes Burial Ground included Duane Street on the north, Chambers Street on the south, Centre and Lafayette streets on the east, and Broadway on the west.⁸⁹ Whereas the colonial rulers deemed the area encompassing the Negroes Burial Ground to be a convenient location for the disposal of toxic waste and the burial of outsiders, such as paupers, criminals, and slaves,⁹⁰ black town dwellers valued that same land, with its wooded landscape of gradually sloping hills and adjacent pond, as a sacred burial place. In use for an 83-year period between 1712 and 1795 and perhaps longer,⁹¹ the Negroes Burial Ground provided the colonial port town's black population with a semi-autonomous social space, where several generations of black town dwellers performed a fundamental ritual of communal life, the veneration of the dead.⁹² The municipal government pursued a policy of minimal interference in the burial rites that the black town dwellers conducted at the Negroes Burial Ground. Although in 1722 the municipal authorities imposed an after-dark curfew on burials at the Negroes Burial Ground and restricted the number of black mourners permitted to attend funerals there to 12,⁹³ they never revoked the black town dwellers' customary privilege of burying their dead according to their own beliefs and practices. Reverend John Sharpe reported that in New York City "[Negroes] were buried in the Common by those of their country and complexion without office [i.e., without the supervision of a Christian clergyman]; on the contrary the Heathenish rites are performed at the grave by their countrymen."⁹⁴ The city's black population performed their own communal burial rituals and in doing so forged a distinct moral community set apart from the city's Christian settler community. Importantly, the racially segregated cemetery became an incubator for the retribalization of diverse African peoples who were brought together by the externally imposed and shared experience of forced migration and enslavement in a foreign land.⁹⁵ Put differently, the semi-autonomous space of colonial New York City's Negroes Burial Ground became the site of the formation of racial blackness, a process that involved a dialectic of inclusion and exclusion, centripetal and centrifugal forces in counterpoint to the formation of racial whiteness.

The historian Lawrence Levine has pointed out: "For Africans, as for other people, the journey to the New World did not inexorably sever all associations with the Old World; that with Africans, as with European and Asian immigrants, aspects of the traditional cultures and worldviews they came with may have continued to exist not as mere vestiges but as dynamic, living, creative parts of group life in the United States."⁹⁶ Colonial New York City's black population was closer to African cultures than the U.S. black populations that existed after 1807, when the official closure of the transatlantic slave trade curtailed the flow of native Africans to the United States. As long as native Africans continued to disembark at the port of New York, beliefs and practices of African derivation remained an available source of moral authority for the colonial port town's black population. African-derived ideals and customs probably cemented the bond between the diverse assortment of rebels that participated in the Slave Revolt of 1712. According to a contemporary report, an African conjuror, a free black man called "Peter the Doctor," officiated over a rite of invincibility in which he dusted the rebels' bodies with a white powder that, the insurrectionaries believed, protected them from bodily injury. That same document also states that the rebels symbolized their solidarity by cutting themselves, mixing together the blood that poured from their separate wounds, and ingesting the mixture.⁹⁷ These rituals resemble elements of the African-derived magico-religious practice known as obeah and performed among the black populations of the British West Indies and other English overseas colonies, where the continuous influx of native Africans supported the retention of Africanisms.⁹⁸

In addition to evidence of the practice of African-derived rituals on the part of the rebels of 1712, both written and archeological evidence indicates that the basic ritualistic features of the funerals that black town dwellers conducted at the Negroes Burial Ground, what Reverend Sharpe characterized as "Heathenish rites," were derived, at least in part, from traditional West African religious practices.⁹⁹ Prior to the prohibition against after-dark burials, some settlers complained that feverish drumming and chanting emanated from the Negroes Burial Ground late into the night and disturbed their sleep. To be sure, such ecstatic mourning rituals were hardly unique to West African burial ceremonies. However, material artifacts uncovered during the 1991 excavation of a portion of the Negroes Burial Ground¹⁰⁰ suggest that at least a segment of colonial New York City's black population were Akan peoples and that they not only followed African-derived burial practices but also at one time or another practiced particular burial customs derived from the Akan culture of the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana). For example, that archeological excavation found human skeletons whose incisors had been modified into an hourglass shape, an indication that the deceased had been captured from the Akan peoples, who were known for the practice of filing teeth into that distinctive pattern.¹⁰¹ In addition, the same archeological investigation unearthed corpses with coins placed over their eyes, human remains interred with glass beads, an infant with a string of eight white beads around the neck, an adult female skeleton with an elaborate girdle of glass beads and cowries wrapped around her hip, and other burial features that bear a resemblance to Akan and other West African burial customs.¹⁰²

Finally, the archeological excavation of the Negros Burial Ground discovered a coffin lid displaying the heart-shaped Sankofa symbol, sign for the Akan belief that a “return to the past is the path to the future.”¹⁰³ The appearance of Sankofa in the decorative art uncovered at the Negros Burial Ground indicates that a trace of the Akan belief system, if only as a dim vestige of that ancient African cosmology, survived the native Africans’ enslavement in colonial New York City.

The lack of affinity between African religious cosmologies and the city’s dominant Christian belief system militated against the penetration of Christianity into the city’s black population.¹⁰⁴ Dutch Calvinist ministers proselytized among Manhattan Island’s earliest black inhabitants, and the island’s free black population joined the Dutch Reformed Church. However, the particular interpretation of Christianity known as Calvinism made only a slight impression on the island’s mostly native African enslaved population. Calvinism attracted few adherents among native Africans partly because its foundational tenets—the doctrines of original sin and divine election—were incompatible with African religious beliefs. Calvinists believed that, since the time of Adam and Eve’s expulsion from paradise, the whole of humankind inherited their ancestors’ original sin and were doomed to endure a life of unceasing toil. While the general notion of an ancestral inheritance would have been familiar to native Africans, the Calvinist belief in the innate sinfulness of humankind was fundamentally at odds with the African conviction that all human beings entered the world without guilt or shame and that the imperfections of humankind, along with the hardships of the world in which they lived, reflected the original creation. Moreover, whereas Calvinism pointed to the judgment of a single, irate God when explaining the cause of human suffering, the African theory of causality accommodated a multiplicity of supernatural forces when accounting for the origin of human adversity. Writing from New Amsterdam in 1664, a Dutch cleric offered this characteristically Calvinist explanation for the English Conquest: “The Lord begins to deal in judgment with his people . . . it appears as if God were punishing this land for its sins—a terrible comet in the west.”¹⁰⁵ According to this Calvinist theory of causality, the calamities that had befallen the Dutch colonial outposts in North America were God’s retribution against sinners; the comet on the horizon was an awful portent of more punishment to come. Native Africans would have found this account of the Dutch colony’s demise to be a perfectly acceptable causal explanation—but, instead of passively submitting to the judgment of a single, angry God, native Africans appealed to a pantheon of deities. Each deity in its own unique sphere of influence held the power to intervene in the world on behalf of its devotees and reverse earthly misfortune.¹⁰⁶ The worship of a plurality of gods was absolute anathema to Calvinists, as was the African belief that worshipers could sway the will of the gods with lavish offerings and thereby achieve their own worldly ends. Importantly, Calvinism’s idealization of the transhistorical, providential authority of God to determine the course of worldly events and its doctrine of original sin narrowed the Calvinist conception of human agency. During the ruinous Indian war, a Dutch Calvinist clergyman implored the settlers “with one accord and low and humble hearts

[to] call on the name of the Lord, to pray and beseech His divine Majesty to cause the floods of His anger and clouds of his indignation . . . to cease and to change into streams of His antient favor and Mercies.”¹⁰⁷ During hard times, the ascetic Calvinists held no sumptuous feasts to appease angry deities, as native Africans might have done, but instead declared days of fasting and humiliation, meekly repented their sins, and begged God for mercy. Although native Africans acknowledged the existence of a Supreme Being,¹⁰⁸ the Calvinist doctrine of divine election—belief that a single, omnipotent God endowed only a select few with true grace and hence admitted only a small number of predestined, saved souls into heaven—directly contradicted the African conviction that all spirits return to a celestial homeland to which the dead, the living, and the not-yet born belonged. Finally, the encounter between African cosmologies, on the one hand, and Calvinism, on the other, amounted to a confrontation between fundamentally incommensurable worldviews. Although a few free blacks converted to Calvinism, the lack of affinity between these distinctive belief systems meant that few articulatory channels opened the way for the effective penetration of Calvinism into the religious life of the native Africans who were a majority of Dutch colonial Manhattan’s black population.

Following the English conquest of 1664, cargoes of native Africans continued to disembark at the port of New York, and each fresh infusion of slaves from Africa re-Africanized colonial New York City’s black population. To be sure, native Africans who had mastered the English language would have had little trouble comprehending the basic Christian beliefs redacted in Elias Neau’s short call-and-response catechism—namely, that God was the omnipotent, eternal Supreme Being, the creator and ruler of heaven and earth, that he makes himself known to humankind through his works on earth, and that true believers come to understand (or obtain faith in God) through the infusion of the Holy Spirit in them. However, a chief obstacle to the SPG’s proselytizing mission among native Africans was the Protestant concept of salvation, that only faithful Christians, who prepared for the infusion of grace by studying God’s Word (the Holy Scriptures), were admitted into heaven. Native Africans believed that after death the spirits (or souls) of all but a few people, not merely the “saved,” returned to the spirit world and joined the ancestors there. Some, perhaps most, native Africans shunned Calvinism and Anglicanism, because the particulars of these religious belief systems were fundamentally at odds with West African religious beliefs.

Religious practice and belief are mutually reinforcing foundations of culture. But when transplanted in foreign lands without institutional anchors, they seldom subsist in equal measure. Taking this and other factors into account, the historian Jon Butler has argued: “African slaves in the British mainland colonies experienced a spiritual holocaust that effectively destroyed traditional African religious *systems*, but not all particular or discrete religious practices.”¹⁰⁹ While some African religious practices survived the traumatic rupture of the middle passage, the absence of African institutional supports in New York City militated against the preservation of fully coherent African belief systems in that port town. Though the black town dwellers probably incorporated elements of

African cosmologies, such as Sankofa, into their religion, the deconstruction of traditional African religious systems made, in the long run, receptivity to new religious worldviews an ontological necessity for native Africans and their descendants.¹¹⁰ Neither entirely Christian nor the totality of any single African belief system, the religion of the city's black population was in the process of *becoming*. What native Africans and their descendants underwent during their enslavement in colonial New York City was not a "spiritual holocaust" but a spiritual transformation, arising out of their confrontation with novel conditions of life and loss. To the questions What shall we do? How shall we live? new prophets, new gods, and new values responded to the city's black population.

Christianity began to make inroads into the hearts and minds of the black town dwellers during the 1740s—roughly, at a time when the city's black population achieved a modest level of natural increase and acculturated American-born blacks began to be a significant segment, though far from a majority, of that population. In 1740, the SPG catechist Richard Carlton stated that some of his black pupils were creditable students and "might make many white people (who have had more happy opportunities of instruction) blush, were they present at their examinations."¹¹¹ Arriving at the port of New York in 1748, the SPG catechist Reverend Samuel Auchmuty obtained greater success in the task of converting black town dwellers to Christianity than did his predecessors, who had proselytized among a predominantly unacculturated native African population.¹¹² Whereas the early SPG catechist Elias Neau had complained that his black catechumens refused to accept the Christian God as the Supreme Being because they believed "the god of their country is as great as ours,"¹¹³ Auchmuty could boast that his black pupils readily accepted the Christian God. Auchmuty's black pupils probably spoke English, however imperfectly, and were probably better prepared to master English reading skills and comprehend the basic tenets of Christianity than native Africans and other unacculturated blacks. Reporting on the progress of his black pupils, Auchmuty wrote that they "read well" and "make no small proficiency in the Christian religion."¹¹⁴ In addition to teaching his black pupils how to read English well enough to study the Holy Scriptures, the Anglican catechism, and other devotional texts printed in English, Auchmuty organized a Sabbath-day worship service and lecture series for the black townspeople. Each Sunday a small congregation of black town dwellers heard an English-language sermon. When other duties prevented Auchmuty from officiating at these worship services, a trusted black convert substituted for him. In Auchmuty's estimation, many of the adult black converts would "soon become qualified to instruct their children."¹¹⁵ Auchmuty taught his black pupils that Christianity obligated all servants to obey their masters and had them memorize the following excerpt from an English-language primer: "ser-vants to be o-be-di-ent unto their Mas-ters. . . . Ser-vants o-bey in all things your master ac-cord-ing to the Flesh."¹¹⁶ Praising the Christianized blacks, Auchmuty wrote: "They are in general exemplary in their conduct and behavior. It affords me no small pleasure to reflect that not one single black that has been admitted by me to the Holy Communion has turned out bad."¹¹⁷


In 1764, the Episcopacy of London promoted Reverend Auchmuty to the rec-

torship of Trinity Church, New York City's Anglican house of worship. His successor to the post of SPG catechist for the city's black population, Reverend Charles Inglis, performed his duties until the War for Independence suspended the SPG's missionary work in North America. Inglis followed Auchmuty's example and each Sunday led some black townspeople in a public worship service, which included the singing of hymns as well as the recitation of the Anglican catechism, the Communion prayer, and a benediction.¹¹⁸ By the eve of the war, a cohort of acculturated blacks, who in all likelihood had been born in New York City, spoke English as their native tongue, and during childhood had perhaps attended the SPG catechism and Sabbath worship services, resided in New York City. Some of these black town dwellers had probably mastered the basic tenets of Christianity and the Anglican catechism well enough to merit baptism and Christian burial. Reverend Auchmuty officiated at the funeral of an Anglicanized slave girl named Mary. The slave girl's master, Evert Bancker, paid the expenses associated with her funeral, including the cost of a burial plot in the Anglican churchyard, a gravedigger, white gloves for the pallbearers, the ringing of the Anglican church bells, and other trappings of a burial befitting a member of the Anglican Church.¹¹⁹ Buried in the winter of 1773–74, Mary was one of the last black Anglicans interred at Trinity Churchyard. Soon after her funeral, the Anglican vestrymen decided to enforce a church ordinance authored nearly a century earlier. That rule stipulated: "no Negroes be buried within the bounds & Limits of the Church yard of Trinity Church."¹²⁰ In July 1774, the vestrymen finalized plans for opening a separate cemetery for black Anglicans near the Negro Burial Ground and to that end appropriated a piece of land bound by Church, Reade, and Chapel streets, along with a portion of Anthony Rutgers's adjacent landholdings.¹²¹ With the establishment of the "whites only" and "blacks only" burial grounds, the vestrymen inaugurated a policy of racial segregation that would lead to the founding of a separate black Anglican congregation in the early nineteenth century.¹²²

Anglicanism and Calvinism were not the only versions of Christianity available to black town dwellers. The presence of enslaved captives from New Spain in colonial New York City suggests that elements of Catholicism, perhaps already fused with African-derived religious beliefs and practices, might have been introduced to the port town's black population.¹²³ Apart from contact with slaves from New Spain, the city's black population had slight exposure to Catholicism because in 1691 the English rulers banished Roman Catholic priests from New York.¹²⁴ Of the various interpretations of Christianity transported to British North America, evangelical Protestantism harvested the largest number of black converts. Because few racially mixed congregations of evangelical Protestants existed during colonial times and black evangelical churches were not organized until the Revolutionary era,¹²⁵ these black converts had few opportunities to participate in institutionalized modes of evangelical Protestantism. During the series of regional revivals known as the Great Awakening, George Whitefield delivered sermons to huge outdoor gatherings at New York City in 1739, 1740, and 1741.¹²⁶ Although Whitefield did not advocate the abolition of slavery,¹²⁷ the evangelist introduced the black audience that gathered in

the open field outside the city's limits to a version of Christianity that displayed an affinity with the ideals of equality and freedom that would become the leading values of the age of democratic revolutions.¹²⁸ While the unique configuration of doctrines that made evangelical Protestantism a meaningful worldview could not have been completely understandable to native Africans who did not comprehend the English language, English-speaking, American-born blacks and acculturated native Africans were certainly capable of grasping the basic principles of the Christian belief system¹²⁹ and even of apprehending the fundamental distinction between the doctrines of ascetic Protestantism, which commanded the enslaved to "obey and suffer," and the doctrines of evangelical Protestantism, which privileged spiritual autonomy over absolute obedience to worldly authority figures.

Among the socially marginalized groups that were likely to embrace evangelical Protestantism were acculturated black youths who were born or at least raised in New York City during 1740s and reached adulthood two decades later. By the 1760s, American-born and other acculturated blacks were a larger proportion of New York City's black population than ever before. These black townspeople were probably better prepared to comprehend the essential doctrines of Christianity than their parents and grandparents. Nonetheless, language barriers and other obstacles continued to erect roadblocks that hampered the penetration of Christianity into the city's black population. The historian Ira Berlin reports that, of the runaway slaves whose language proficiency was described in New York City newspaper advertisements during the post-1760s period, in excess of one-quarter spoke "English badly, if at all."¹³⁰ At about the time that the numbers of American-born town dwellers in colonial New York City approached a historic high point, the city's black population underwent a process of re-Africanization because of the relatively large cargoes of enslaved native Africans that, beginning in the late 1740s, arrived at the port of New York. African-derived religious beliefs continued to be an available and competing source of moral authority for the city's black population.

 "What a slave child learned," the historian Herbert Gutman has noted, "always depended upon what that child was taught and who taught that child."¹³¹ In colonial New York City, slave children grew up in a world where Christian authority figures vied with black adults, some of whom were native Africans, for the decisive role in instructing young slaves on how to conduct themselves as moral subjects. In his classic study, *Slave and Citizen*, the historian Frank Tannenbaum writes, "Slavery was not merely a legal relation; it was a moral one."¹³² In *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, the historian Eugene Genovese argues that a "paternalistic compromise" between masters and slaves provided the moral basis for the master-slave relation in the antebellum plantation South. In that same study, Genovese contends that this bargain involved the slaves' acceptance of the obligation to obey their masters in exchange for the masters' recognition of the slaves' humanity, a concession that gave to the slaves certain customary

privileges, such as the privilege to choose their spouses, name their children, and tend, in their spare time, small garden plots. On the plantations of the antebellum South, slaveowner paternalism was a mechanism of hegemonic domination, which cloaked the violence inherent in the institution of slavery under a veil of benevolence and consent.¹³³ In *The Black Family, 1750–1820*, Herbert Gutman questions whether a “paternalistic ethos” among southern slaveowners could have existed early enough for the slave-owning class to establish hegemony over their slaves. Gutman argues: “But ‘the living space’ within which slaves—individually and collectively—asserted their identity and acted upon their beliefs existed before any ‘paternalistic compromise’ could have occurred. . . . Much in the behavior of slaves was affected and even determined by their regular interaction with owners and other whites, but these and other choices had their origins within the slave experience.”¹³⁴ According to Gutman, the master-slave relation was not the only social relation in the slave’s “experience”; other significant relationships, rooted in the black family of the segregated slave quarters, were integral to the slave’s experiential reality and provided the slaves in the plantation South with alternative models of moral authority, which successfully contested the slaveowners’ claim to represent the interest of the slaves. Genovese and Gutman have little to say about the master-slave relation in the colonial North. Yet, as Jon Butler has shown, the SPG promoted the twin ethics of paternalistic slave ownership and absolute slave obedience throughout the British North American colonies.¹³⁵ This moral economy was of paramount importance to the master-slave relation in colonial New York City, where masters, along with the members of their families, shared the same living space with household slaves.

In that colonial port town, the obligations of paternalistic slave ownership sometimes extended from the cradle to the grave. Inventories and account books indicate that New York City slaveowners looked after the basic material welfare of their slaves, supplying adult slaves, along with the slave children born in their households, with food, clothing, and shelter.¹³⁶ Besides these meager prerequisites of life, slaveowners also paid the cost of inexpensive yet decent burials for deceased slaves.¹³⁷ Few New York City slaveowners rewarded their slaves with the gift of freedom. In a rare act of voluntary manumission, the widow Christiana Cappaens stipulated in her will that after her death Isabell, her female slave, should be freed from bondage and receive manumission papers documenting her free status. Cappaens also left Isabell several items of modest value: one small gold hoop ring, one iron pot, one kettle, a bed, and pillows.¹³⁸ In his will, William Walton, a wealthy New York City merchant, made a more generous bequest to his household slaves, ordering that after his wife’s death they should receive their freedom papers, £25 for setting up in a trade, and an additional annual stipend of £14.¹³⁹ Another slaveowner, Teneke Bensen of Harlem, stipulated in his last testament that, if after his death his female slave named Lane did not wish to stay with his sister-in-law Elizabeth, she was to be sold to a new master meeting with her approval or, failing that, allowed to purchase her own freedom for a reasonable sum.¹⁴⁰ In this way, Bensen not only granted Lane a decisive role in any arrangements for her

sale after his death but also acknowledged the possibility that his slave wished to be a free woman.

Executors and heirs did not always honor such provisions in the wills of slave-owners. During the 1750s, Juan Miranda, a Spanish-speaking slave, sued his master's heirs, who kept him in bondage in violation of his master's last testament, which stipulated that the heirs allow Miranda to purchase his freedom. Miranda's case ambled through the court system for nearly a decade and was never brought to a final decision, at least as far as the extant records show.¹⁴¹ Miranda's lawyer, New York's Attorney-General John Tabor Kempe, handled at least two additional freedom suits, the cases of Manuel de Cumana, a Spanish-speaking Indian who claimed to be a free subject of Spain, and Simon Moore, an enslaved black man who claimed that he was born of a free woman and therefore unlawfully enslaved.¹⁴² During the early eighteenth century, colonial New York's Supreme Court advised lawyers to desist from representing slaves in freedom suits and further warned that such actions created unrest in the broader enslaved population.¹⁴³ However, international law required the colonial administration to consider petitions and freedom suits that lawyers presented on behalf of captives of war who claimed to be free subjects of rival nations. In accordance with the international law that governed the treatment of prisoners of war, England's Board of Trade ordered, in 1750, the release of 45 subjects of Spain who had been sold into slavery at the port of New York during King George's War.¹⁴⁴ Such intervention was rare and occurred only in the cases where the plaintiff's claim had been verified by documentary evidence and the testimony of diplomats. In colonial New York City, the majority of slaves had no access to freedom through voluntary manumission, self-purchase, petitions, court suits, and diplomatic channels. As a consequence, free blacks were only a tiny fraction of the city's total black population throughout the English colonial period.¹⁴⁵

A legacy of Dutch colonial rule and located north of present-day Prince Street and south of present-day Astor Place between the east side of Lafayette Street and the west side of a wagon road called Old Bowery Road, which ran diagonally from present-day Chatham Square to the intersection of Fourth Avenue and Eighth Street, the area known as the "Free Negro Lots" was the site of the only separate enclave of free black landowners on Manhattan Island during the colonial period.¹⁴⁶ In 1664–65, the early English colonial rulers confirmed the individual deeds of colonial Manhattan's free black landowners, a total of 30 deeds.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the English colonial government relegated free blacks, including the owners of the Free Negro Lots, to the status of aliens and denied them the political privileges of English subjecthood. At the time of the Dutch Reconquest of 1673, free blacks probably enjoyed a short-lived reprieve from the disadvantages imposed on them by English colonial law. With the return to English colonial rule in 1674, free blacks were again consigned to the status of aliens. Nearly a decade later, in 1683, some free black landowners sold their landholdings on Manhattan Island to white settlers—for example, the Tucker, Dyckman, Bleecker, and Hertzling families¹⁴⁸—departed the island with the outmigration of some colonial Netherlanders, and settled in Brooklyn, New Utrecht, and New Jersey.¹⁴⁹ Through the practice of intermarriage, godparent-

ing, and the adoption of orphans from their free black community,¹⁵⁰ the remaining black landowners on Manhattan Island managed to transmit their land to their heirs, who held on to the landholdings until the 1710s and 1720s. At the time of his death in 1694, Salomon Petersen bequeathed his land to his wife, Maritie, the daughter of Anthony Portugees, one of the first landholders in the Free Negro Lots. Except for £4, which he left to his eldest son, Salomon Peters, he divided the remainder of his humble estate, 18 shillings, some tools, and firearms, between his sons. For years, Maritie Petersen clung to the land conveyed to her by her husband, Salomon Petersen, a free black landowner in the Free Negro Lots and son of Pieter Santome, one of the first enslaved blacks brought to Manhattan Island in 1626 and one of the black petitioners to obtain freedom and land in 1644. In 1716, Maritie sold her land to John Horne, a white settler.¹⁵¹ By the late 1720s, all the parcels of land in the Free Negro Lots had fallen into the hands of white settlers.¹⁵² During the early decades of the eighteenth century, New York City's free black population became a pariah class, living outside the master-slave relation and sinking deeper and deeper into poverty. As if to ensure that free blacks became mired in a life of poverty, New York's colonial assembly enacted a law that prohibited ex-slaves, who were manumitted after 1702, from owning land.¹⁵³ In 1706, the metropolitan authorities in London disallowed that colonial statute. In response, the colonial assembly swiftly enacted a law that did not nullify the right of free blacks to own land but prohibited ex-slaves, who were manumitted after 1707, from inheriting land and devising land to their heirs.¹⁵⁴ Incorporated into the Black Code of 1712, that prohibition effectively prevented newly manumitted free blacks from passing on their land and independent status to their offspring. The colonial assembly also included in the Black Code of 1712 a statute that prohibited the manumission of aged and helpless slaves, whom callous slaveowners sometimes abandoned because they were no longer productive laborers.¹⁵⁵ The colonial assembly claimed that other restrictions on manumission and the free black population were necessary, asserting: "It is found by Experience that the free Negroes in this colony are an Idle Slothful people and prove very often a charge on the place where they are."¹⁵⁶ In September 1738, an example of the fate of free black families appeared before the city's churchwardens and vestrymen. Lucas Petersen, the son of Pieter Lucasse and the great-grandson of Pieter Santome, was born free in colonial New York City. By the late 1730s, he had been reduced to the condition of dire privation. No longer able to support his ailing wife, Lucas sent her to the vestrymen for alms.¹⁵⁷ Cases of indigence among the city's free black population seemed to substantiate the colonial assembly's claim that free blacks were incapable of leading independent lives.¹⁵⁸

The Black Code of 1712 required slaveowners who manumitted their slaves to post a £200 bond of surety and an additional £20 each year against the indigence of each emancipated slave.¹⁵⁹ That antimanumission measure placed a nearly insurmountable obstacle in the way of slaves who desired to purchase their freedom and of free blacks who wished to purchase their enslaved loved ones and thereby liberate them from bondage. Nevertheless, John Fortune, a free black cooper of New York City, had, by 1724, saved enough money to purchase an en-

slaved woman named Marya, whom he later married, and her son, perhaps his own offspring.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, the antimanumission law did not deter the mariner John Sarly from manumitting his slave woman, Janie. He, along with the merchant Samuel London and the baker John Bergen, paid the mandatory surety bond.¹⁶¹ Sarly liberated Janie in 1767, at a time when the settlers began to debate the merits of independence from England and when the rate of voluntary manumissions in British North America began a precipitous rise, owing to the pressure settlers felt to bring their behavior in alignment with their religious convictions and their ideological commitments to the ideals of republicanism and the Enlightenment. In colonial New York, voluntary manumissions were rare occurrences, even during the Revolutionary era.¹⁶² Slaves were costly investments, and except for some conscientious Quakers,¹⁶³ colonial New York City slaveowners seldom liberated valuable slaves.

Owing to the relatively high price that slaves commanded in the city's labor market, slaves were regularly subjected to sale, usually through private transactions and occasionally at public auctions.¹⁶⁴ Sale was not the only method by which slaves passed from one master to another. Slaveowners sometimes transferred slaves to their kin through the mechanism of gifts of inheritance. That legal device enabled slaveowners to keep household slaves within their families and to assign a slave or a group of slaves to a particular heir. In this manner, a tradition of slaveholding was, in some settler families, handed down from one generation to the next.¹⁶⁵ Over time, slaveholding became a tradition in the Colden family. In his will, dated December 16, 1774, Alexander Colden left his wife, Elizabeth, an enslaved woman named Florah, a female slave whom his father, Cadwallader Colden, had bequeathed to him in that same year, another enslaved woman named Nanny, an enslaved fellow named Dick, and six slave children—Mary, Ann, Sarah, Phebe (alias Cookoo), Magdalen (alias Monkey), and Peter. Alexander instructed his wife to distribute equal shares of his remaining estate to his offspring, except for several items set aside for his eldest son, John. Among these items were an enslaved fellow named Tom, an enslaved woman named Arnot, and an enslaved lad named Will.¹⁶⁶ In this way, Alexander kept his household slaves within the Colden clan.

To ensure that his household slaves would not be sold outside the family circle after his death, Abraham Van Horne arranged a private family auction of these slaves. His last testament stipulated: "Itemized in order to prevent my Negroes from falling into the hands of strangers or any other than my four—children (To witt) David and Samuel & Margaret & Anna Van Horne. I do hereby will—order and direct that all my Negro slaves as well as male as female shall be sold & bought amongst my four last aforementioned children and to the highest bidder or bidders to them in a private venue or sale to be had and held among themselves only."¹⁶⁷ By directing that his slaves were to be sold in a private auction among his four children only, Van Horne spared his household slaves the dehumanizing trauma of being sold to strangers whose character was unknown. The seemingly beneficent provision of Van Horne's will was probably his way of rewarding his household slaves for their faithful service. Yet, what in the estimation of Van Horne's slaves was the value of their master's reward?

From the perspective of these slaves, was a private family auction any more humane than a public auction? Although Van Horne's paternalistic gesture suggests that he considered his slaves to be members of his household, these same slaves experienced nothing like an adoption into their master's family. Rather, the slaves in Van Horne's estate were treated like cherished family heirlooms. In the Van Hornes' case, property in slaves constituted a large proportion of the family's wealth. Nevertheless, the long-term retention of household slaves within the Van Horne family provided the necessary stability for the formation of familial ties among the Van Horne household slaves, and these bonds were acknowledged and preserved in later transfers of slaves within the Van Horne clan. In his last testament James Van Horne, Abraham Van Horne's eldest son, recognized the familial bonds among his household slaves. James bequeathed one-half of his estate to his eldest son, John Van Horne, together with several slave families: "Old Dick and Betty his wife, Jack and Cattleen his wife, Mary her daughter, young Jack brother of Benjamin Morell, Bristol and Diana, and finally, Phil or the boy or man I shall exchange him for with his mother."¹⁶⁸

The Van Hornes were not the only slaveowners who acknowledged the familial attachments among their household slaves. When financial necessity required the sale of slave families, New York City slaveowners endeavored to preserve the mother-child bond by selling slave mothers with their offspring. Some benevolent slaveowners even granted their slaves a voice in the arrangement of their sale, which usually amounted to granting these slaves veto power over their sale to buyers who lived outside New York City and its environs. In 1763, the New York City slave trader John Watts complained: "It is an invariable indulgence here to permit slaves of any kind to chose those masters, there is no persuading them to leave their country (if I may call it so) their acquaintance & friends, to explore what to their narrow minds appears a new world."¹⁶⁹ After many years of experience as a slave trader, Watts had come to resent the limitations that local custom placed on the right of individual slaveowners to dispose of their slave property as they wished. But what that New York City slave trader perceived as an "indulgence" was, in fact, a necessity. Watts seems not to have understood what the Van Hornes, the Coldens, and other New York City slaveholding families knew well: that slaveowners must endeavor to temper the harshness inherent in the institution of chattel slavery, if they were to remain the masters of the slaves in their households. Put differently, these slaveowners understood that the gift of paternalistic benevolence was a means of imposing an obligation of obedience on their slaves.

The task of managing the domestic relations in his household was the penultimate test of the slaveowner-patriarch's moral authority. While away on business in New York City, Cadwallader Colden sent letters of instruction for the governance of his household to his wife at Coldenham Manor. In a letter dated August 29, 1744, Colden wrote: "Pray remember me affectionately to Jenny, Kathy, & David. Tell the last that I expect a great deal from him now in my absence because I hope he no longer looks on himself as a Child & that he'll be ashamed to play about the Doors with the Negro Children."¹⁷⁰ Like the Old

Testament patriarch Abraham, Colden forbade his son from mingling with the Ishmaels of his household. An attempt at distancing his family from the enslaved blacks on his manorial estate, Colden's commandment to his son betrays his anxiety over the specter of "creole degeneracy," which, according to European pundits such as Count Buffon, Abbé Raynal, and Cornelius De Pauw, rendered the American-born offspring of transplanted Europeans inferior to native-born Europeans in physical, intellectual, and moral capacities.¹⁷¹ Colden mapped the intersecting norms of gender and race on the spatial boundaries of his manor house. The doorway to that dwelling became a figure for the threshold marking his son's passage into white manhood, a passageway haunted by the enslaved black children who provoked in Colden the apprehension that life on the North American frontier had exposed his own son to the peril of arrested development or perpetual childhood. David Colden was 11 years of age when he received his father's commandment to cease his childlike relations with his black playmates. Putting childhood behind him, David eventually accepted the responsibilities of white manhood, which included assuming the role of slave master while his father was away on business. When Cadwallader Colden died in 1776, he left his Spring Hill mansion on Long Island to his son David, along with a voluminous library, some surveying instruments, a riding and hunting outfit, as well as several slaves—that is, all the appurtenances of a gentleman's life in colonial New York.¹⁷²

Having grown up in slave-owning households, the Colden and the Van Horne heirs were never truly first-time slaveowners, and they assumed the role of slave master as if it were a "natural" part of becoming an adult. By the time the Colden and the Van Horne children crossed the threshold to adulthood, they had already lived for many years with their families' household slaves. During their childhood years, these New York slaveowners established intimate relationships with household slaves that would be permanently altered when they reached adulthood, established their own slaveowning households, and, in some cases, became the masters of slaves who were once their childhood playmates and surrogate mothers. Such transitions involved the renegotiation of power relations. Living together under the same roof, slaveowner-patriarchs, their families, and their household slaves negotiated what Genovese calls "paternalistic compromises," invented codes of etiquette that allowed the enslavers and the enslaved to live side by side in apparent harmony.

However, the fusion of racial domination and sexual desire within the domestic space of these slave-owning households severely tested this moral economy. In the colonialist imaginary, the master-slave relation sometimes assumed the aspect of a fierce power struggle between rapist and victim, what Thomas Jefferson described as "the whole commerce between master and slave [that was] a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submission on the other."¹⁷³ Defined as an act of sexual violence against the person of another, rape has much in common with the institution of chattel slavery, which involves the violent seizure of a person's body. Because the relations of domination in colonial New York City's slave-owning households depended on the interlocking regimes of patri-

archy and white supremacy, the fear of slave rebellion intersected with the fantasy of the black male rapist and the exaggerated vulnerability of white womanhood to interracial rape.¹⁷⁴ When an enslaved black male was accused of rape, he was not uncommonly charged with directing the alleged sexual assault against a female member of his master's immediate family—for example, his master's wife or daughter.

On Monday, January 21, 1733, court proceedings began against Cato, an enslaved black man accused of raping his master's daughter.¹⁷⁵ Throughout his interrogation, Cato declared his innocence. Additionally, the testimony of white witnesses was introduced into evidence on both sides of the case. After two weeks of deliberation, a panel of five white male settlers and two or three justices of the peace acquitted Cato of the crime of rape. But owing to lingering suspicions, the court offered to have Cato transported out of New York at the colonial state's expense. Momentarily caught between the contending imperatives of his patriarchal obligation to protect his daughter, on the one hand, and his interest in preserving his financial investment in his male slave, on the other, the slaveowner-patriarch chose economic self-interest. Sylvester's decision to keep his male slave suggests that he remained confident in his authority to quiet any future tempest within his household on Shelter Island, where both Cato and his daughter continued to live. Endowed with sovereignty over his household, the patriarch-slaveholder Sylvester ruled a petty and sometimes turbulent kingdom within the larger kingdom of the first British Empire.

Another incident provides a striking example of the volatile fusion of interracial sexual desire and domestic violence in colonial New York City's slave-owning households. On July 20, 1737, Jonnoau, an enslaved black man, was indicted on the charge of attempting to rape Anne Carr, his master's wife. Then as now, evidence of rape was not always sufficient to convict accused rapists; attempted rape was even more difficult to prove. Lacking evidence to convict Jonnoau of attempted rape, the jury acquitted the accused of that crime but found him guilty of the lesser crime of battering.¹⁷⁶ Although the minutes of the court do not disclose the provocation for the alleged attack, William Carr, Jonnoau's master, later accused his wife of having a voluntary sexual liaison with his male slave. Carr's accusation suggests that the alleged assault was perhaps the result of a lovers' quarrel between his slave, Jonnoau, and his wife, Anne Carr. The following public announcement of William Carr's divorce from his wife appeared in the New York City newspaper:

Whereas Anne, the Wife of William Carr of the City of New York, has behaved herself in an indecent and Wicked manner, by being too familiar with a Negro Man, as was proved in Open Court on Wednesday last, whereby she has broken the Marriage Contract; and he being informed, that he is not under any Obligation to live with or support her in her wickedness and also drinking to excess. These are therefore to desire all shop-keepers Publick-House-keepers, and all other Persons, not to Trust nor to Give the said Anne Carr Credit on the said Carr's account. . . .¹⁷⁷

Such were the “boisterous passions” that destroyed the Carrs’ conjugal bond. As the alleged violation of the gendered and racialized codes of etiquette in the Carr household suggests, the specter of domestic violence and interracial sexual desire threatened to break through the “barriers of civility within which,” as Elizabeth Fox-Genovese has put it, “slaveholding conventions tried to contain it.”¹⁷⁸ In colonial New York City, where slaveowners and their families lived under the same roof with enslaved blacks, the volatile fusion of desire and violence seemed to present an ever-present danger to the settler family and the national community in that overseas settler colony.

Whereas in early colonial Virginia the uneven sex ratio in the settler population made an explicit law against interracial marriage vital to the establishment of white family units,¹⁷⁹ in early colonial New York an explicit statutory decree against miscegenation seemed unnecessary since the balanced sex ratio in the settler population promoted the establishment of white settler families. In colonial New York, an internalized taboo on miscegenation, rather than a law against interracial sex and marriage, became a vital mechanism for regulating society. In this respect, that northern settler colony began to resemble a normative society in which internalized controls are supposed to manage the behavior of self-disciplined individuals. Although it proved to be an imperfect disciplinary mechanism, the prohibition against miscegenation (i.e., the rule of endogamy) controlled, to some extent, interracial sexual desires that threatened to dismantle the boundary separating the white settler population from the black population. As the English rulers opened the border of national community and admitted all foreign-born Protestant settlers and their offspring to the English nation through a nearly boundless process of settler assimilation, the intergroup boundary of the settler population migrated to the threshold of nation. At that point, the taboo on miscegenation became the “principle of closure, of exclusion” that demarcated the limit of national belonging.¹⁸⁰ In this way, the application of the miscegenation taboo in colonial New York became integral to intergroup boundary maintenance in the settler population and, importantly, the racialization of the concept “nation” in that overseas settler colony.

The policing of white female sexuality became vital to intergroup boundary maintenance in the settler population. Endowed with the power of procreation, the white female settlers of childbearing age were charged with the responsibility of reproducing a racially pure national community on the foreign soil of empire. For their part, the adult white male settlers exercised a monopoly on the traffic in white females and performed the duty of confining that commerce within the barriers of civility that protected white settler families and, by extension, the national community from racial contamination. As the episode in the Sylvester household shows, slaveowner-patriarchs were not always willing to protect, at any cost, the white women in their households against the alleged sexual aggressions of black men.¹⁸¹ The white women who lived in the slave-owning households of colonial New York City learned that the relations of racial domination could not only sever the familial ties among slaves but could also damage the affinal bonds in their own families. To be sure, lurid episodes of

sexual and racial violence were not confined to the southern colonies. Doubtless, the grandmothers and great-grandmothers of nineteenth-century New York City abolitionist women had firsthand knowledge of the “monstrous system,” in which scandals of interracial desire rent the fabric of slave-owning families and harsh judgments ruined the reputations of white women, plunging them into the abyss of poverty and ill repute. As the Carr family intrigue indicates, white women who were merely suspected of engaging in voluntary sexual relations with black men were thought to have committed a crime against civilization. These women paid a high price for their alleged betrayal, banishment from the protection of white male authority figures and the nation. When the white female settler forgot that she was a member of the master race and, more important, the guarantor of its reproduction and racial purity, she was punished with a cruel reminder that she was also a member of the subjugated sex.

In colonial New York City, the black female was a member of both a subjugated sex and a subjugated race. Even though the balanced sex ratio in the adult cohort of the city’s settler population encouraged white men to establish respectable conjugal unions with white females of marriageable age and the gendered and racialized norms of the city’s settler community stigmatized concubinary relations between white males and black females,¹⁸² patriarchy and white supremacy combined to make black females vulnerable to sexual exploitation at the hands of white men. Colonial New York City newspaper advertisements for the sale of mulatto children born of enslaved black women offer evidence that such acts of sexual exploitation occurred in New York City and elsewhere in colonial New York.¹⁸³ In that northern settler colony, the colonial authorities and other white male authority figures fell under no obligation, either statutory or customary, to protect black females from sexual abuse, for popular representations of black female sexuality depicted black females as promiscuous creatures who were more likely to be the seducers of white men than the victims of sexual mistreatment.¹⁸⁴

Like the black female, the black male was a member of a subjugated race, but unlike her, he was a member of the dominant sex and a rival in the homosocial male contest of mastery over women. In the colonialist imaginary, the black male was a dangerous rebel and rapacious sexual predator. When convicted of either raping or attempting to rape a white female, the black male received the severest punishment. In 1743, a New York City court convicted an unnamed black man of the crime of attempted rape and sentenced him to burn alive. The New York City newspaper published an account of his public execution, reporting: “On Tuesday last he was burnt accordingly, in the presence of a numerous Company of Spectators, great part of which were of the Black Tribe. By the Inspection of the Justice inflicted on this Negro, it is hoped it may be a Means to deter others from attempting such wicked crimes for the Future.”¹⁸⁵ Thus, the colonial state intervened to punish a black male in a public spectacle of exemplary corporal punishment intended to terrorize the entire black population into submission.



With respect to governing colonial New York City's black population, the English colonial rulers exercised domination without hegemony. The repressive and negative aspect of the law, and the violence that subtended it, took over where the ostensibly benevolent civilizing activity of SPG missionaries and paternalistic slaveowners failed. To be sure, the SPG's effort to teach the ruling English language and Anglican doctrine to the black town dwellers remained crucial to the imposition of hegemonic domination over them. But only a tiny fraction of the city's black population attended the SPG classes. There could be no persuasion without a common language, and no hegemony, or "one and the same interest," without persuasion. If the black town dwellers did not comprehend the meaning of the word "o-bey," then the whip, the hangman's noose, and the stake would have to be employed to teach them. Racial domination in colonial New York City increasingly rested on harsh civil codes that prescribed severe corporal punishment for disobedient blacks, enslaved and free.¹⁸⁶ In contrast to the resort to overt physical violence in subjugating the city's black population, the English colonial rulers increasingly relied on nonviolent measures to govern the city's settler population and secure settler allegiance to the English Crown. This policy involved cultivating a sense of belonging to the English nation among the Protestant settlers of foreign birth. To that end, the Naturalization Act of 1706 granted most of the rights and privileges of British subjects to foreign-born Protestants who had resided in the British Empire, including British North America, for a stipulated number of years and pledged allegiance to the English Crown. Moreover, the Anglo-Saxon legend, which traced the origin of the English people to ancient Germanic tribes, forged a racial bond between the English rulers and the Germanic peoples from the Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe who were a majority of New York City's settler population for most of the colonial period. In addition, the Church of England's missionary organization, the SPG, provided the settlers' offspring with English-language schooling and indoctrination in the tenets of Anglicanism. Over time, the colonial policies of the English rulers forged the city's settler population into a relatively homogeneous Anglicized community. The English rulers even tolerated the presence of Jews and Catholics, as long as these minority settler populations obeyed English law and did not protest the political disabilities imposed on them.

As the natal, linguistic, and confessional antagonisms within the settler population drifted into the background, social conflict moved to the foreground. In an effort to make colonial New York a more attractive place of settlement for servants from the British Isles and Europe and, equally important, to minimize the danger of social unrest within the settler population and to promote the widest possible settler consent to English rule, the early English colonial rulers stripped indentured servitude of many of its harsh features and promulgated statutes that made a clear distinction between the status of white servants, on

the one hand, and enslaved blacks, on the other.¹⁸⁷ Later, in the same year of the enactment of the Naturalization Law of 1706, New York's colonial assembly revised the colony's law of slavery, transforming bond-slavery from a potentially alterable condition predicated on the unreliable criterion of the slave's religious difference to a seemingly immutable, heritable condition passed down from the enslaved Negro, mulatto, Indian, or mestee mother to her offspring. Moreover, with the promulgation of the Black Code of 1712, all blacks, enslaved and free, were firmly relegated to the status of permanent aliens. Although the city's free black population retained the right to own land, they were now prohibited from inheriting land and devising land to their heirs, a disability that hindered the ability of free blacks to transmit their independent status over several generations. In contrast, most white settlers, including propertyless white servants, were elevated to the status of rights-bearing English subjects who occupied an ennobled position above the subjugated black population. In this way, the English colonial rulers attempted to subordinate social conflict, as well as confessional, linguistic, and natal antagonisms, to racial difference. "Colonial racism," Benedict Anderson writes, "was a major element in the concept of 'Empire' which attempted to weld dynastic legitimacy and national community."¹⁸⁸ Whereas violent coercion became the means by which the English rulers governed the black population, persuasion, in the guise of antiblack racism, became a vital means by which they obtained settler consent to their colonial government and settler allegiance to the English Crown.¹⁸⁹ In this respect, the English rulers reformulated the obstacles against establishing hegemony over an alien black population as an advantage in obtaining hegemony over the white settler majority. For the English rulers in colonial New York City, governance meant securing domination with and without hegemony.

“The Most Natural View of the Whole”

DISCOVERING THE “PLOT OF 1741–42” AND THE
DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF THE “DANGEROUS OTHER”
IN THE COLONIALIST DISCOURSE OF CONSPIRACY




Even though the disciplinary mechanism of antiblack racism minimized and subordinated the differences that divided the city’s settler population, white solidarity was not something the English rulers could take for granted. Besides having to take precautions against servile insurrection, the English rulers also had to contend with the proliferation of political antagonisms within the ranks of the colonial elite. “Factional strife was,” the historian Patricia U. Bonomi has noted, “an almost endemic condition of the colony’s public life.”¹ The historian Carl L. Becker states, “Prior to 1765, the central fact in the political history of New York was the contest between opposing factions of the colonial elite.”² This political rivalry took the form of a competition for control over the colonial assembly, in which an opposition party of prominent settlers endeavored to gain a majority of the seats in the colony’s elective legislative body and to array its powers against the prerogatives of the Crown-appointed governor and the ruling party of influential settlers that supported the royal governor in exchange for lucrative land grants and appointments to governmental offices.

During the winter of 1741–42, rival factions within the colonial elite clashed in a bitter power struggle over who should govern New York. At the same time, rumors of a Spanish invasion and a general alarm over a disturbing crime wave weakened the ruling party’s support among the broader settler population—that is, the intermediate stratum of colonial New York’s population, a majority of the colony’s voters and therefore key to control over the colonial assembly and the colony’s political affairs. It was during this crisis that the ruling party claimed to have discovered a sinister plot against English colonial rule. This conspiracy, the colonial authorities alleged, involved a dangerous combination of

enslaved blacks, free blacks, and white outsiders who, together, planned to burn New York City, murder the respectable white townspeople, and establish a renegade regime under the protection of England's enemy, Catholic Spain. Through a series of arrests and showcase trials, the ruling party convinced anxious white town dwellers that recent unsolved crimes were not unconnected events, as they had been initially perceived, but instead were evidence of a deliberate design to destroy the settler colony. In view of the intensifying public alarm over this purported security threat, the colonial elite temporarily set aside their differences and, together with the broader settler population, now galvanized into a unified community that rallied behind the ruling party's program for purging traitors inside the colony. Since widespread belief in the existence of a conspiratorial menace to the public safety had effectively neutralized its political rivals, the ruling party endeavored to prolong the state of emergency. As late as December 1742, nearly 10 months after the initial investigation into the alleged plot began, prosecutors were bringing forth indictments against suspected traitors. By that time, factionalism within the ranks of the colonial elite had resurfaced. The opponents of the ruling party now began to criticize the court proceedings against the convicted conspirators, charging that the Crown-appointed magistrates of the court had rushed to judgment and, on inadequate evidence, ordered the execution of innocent slaves and white people. Hence, the charge of judicial murder became a leading issue in the reinvigorated opposition faction's campaign to remove members of the ruling party from governmental office.³

In a document entitled *Journal of the Proceedings in the Detection of the Conspiracy Formed by Some White People in Conjunction with Negro and Other Slaves for Burning the City of New-York in America and Murdering the Inhabitants*, Daniel Horsmanden, Crown-appointed justice of New York's Supreme Court from 1736 to 1747, defends the ruling party against the charge of judicial murder.⁴ Published in 1744, Horsmanden's *Journal* iterates the colonialist discourse of conspiracy, which during the emergency of 1741–42 aspired to install a permanent social war (or binary division of society) and thereby produce two vital ingredients of governance—consent and common sense.⁵ The colonialist discourse of conspiracy deployed a binary logic of identity and difference that established commonsensical criteria for distinguishing between, on the one side, "loyal subjects" who were united in allegiance to the English colonial rulers by their shared fear of subaltern insurgency and, on the other side, disloyal subjects whose deviance from the norms of whiteness, Protestantism, and property holding assigned them to the category "dangerous other." The discursive construction of that phobogenic object became a tool in the art of colonial governance, allowing the ruling elite to claim that it represented the interest of the broader settler population and enabling the ruling elite to gain voluntary acquiescence to its government from the city's rights-bearing white Anglo-Saxon Protestant settler majority of propertied merchants, mariners, artisans, and shopkeepers. Focused on the danger from below, this intermediate stratum of the city's settler population coalesced as a unified community along a horizontal axis of identification and as loyal subjects of the English Crown along a vertical

axis of identification. In brief, the fantasy of the “dangerous other” gave phantasmatic support to the horizontal and vertical identifications constitutive of colonial governance.

 The settlers were not always vigilant against the threat of conspiracy from below. Between 1735 and 1741, political factionalism within the ranks of the colonial elite monopolized their attention.⁶ In 1735, they were preoccupied with the Zenger trial, a dramatic court case that originated in a salary dispute between William Cosby, the royal governor of New York from 1732 to 1736, and Rip Van Dam, a prominent New York City merchant whom Governor Cosby had ousted from his council.⁷ The turbulence had not subsided from that contest when, in March 1736, the sudden death of Governor Cosby precipitated a political crisis that brought New York to the brink of civil war. When Cosby died, Van Dam claimed the post of interim governor. Lieutenant Governor George Clarke, a Crown appointee, also coveted the executive office. With the assistance of his supporters among the colonial elite, Clarke occupied the fort at the tip of Manhattan Island, as well as the government buildings inside that fortress, and took charge of the colony’s affairs. Challenging Clarke’s authority, Van Dam and his opposition faction accused the lieutenant governor of usurping the powers of government. Animosity between the Van Dam faction and the Clarke faction had neared the point of armed conflict when, in 1737, a vessel arrived at the port of New York with a letter from the English monarch, appointing Lieutenant Governor Clarke interim head of colonial New York’s government. According to the king’s instructions, Clarke was to continue as chief executive of the colony until Cosby’s permanent replacement could be named. The news of Clarke’s temporary appointment left Van Dam and his backers with no alternative but to yield to the Crown’s wishes. They remained, however, outspoken critics of the lieutenant governor and waited for an opportunity to bring public disfavor on him and his ruling party.⁸

By 1737, the fiscal powers of government in New York had shifted from the English Crown and its appointed officials to the popularly elected colonial assembly. Although the English Crown selected New York’s royal governor, an elected body of colonial representatives now controlled the allocation of his salary. This new balance of governmental powers meant that the Crown-appointed governor could no longer ignore the arena of popular politics, in which competing factions of the colonial elite vied for the support of the numerous intermediate stratum of property-holding adult white male settlers who exercised the vote and elected representatives to the colonial assembly.⁹ Nevertheless, the succession of governors who ruled colonial New York in the name of the English Crown shunned the practice of overt electioneering. In sharp contrast, factions within the colonial elite resembled nascent political parties and conducted vigorous election campaigns, which stimulated political participation on the part of the relatively large segment of adult white male property owners that voted in New York elections. As Bonomi has noted, the Van

Dam faction was foremost in the vanguard of devising techniques of popular politics.¹⁰ In an effort to establish an anti-Clarke majority in the colonial assembly and offset the interim governor's executive powers, the Van Dam faction (the opposition party) portrayed the Clarke administration (the ruling party) as the enemy of the common man, while styling itself as the protector of the public interest. The opposition party achieved a notable victory in the spring elections of 1737, when James Alexander and Garret Van Horne of the Van Dam faction defeated Adolph Philipse and Stephen DeLancey of the Clarke faction in a contest for the New York City seats in the colonial assembly.

Hoping to forestall further erosion of his political influence, interim Governor Clarke negotiated a rapprochement with the Van Dam camp and incorporated that faction within the ruling party. This new coalition was, however, based on a precarious alliance between long-standing political rivals. England's war against Spain and the attendant economic depression rendered that coalition all the more fragile. During the War of Jenkin's Ear (1739–42), New York City merchants suffered because of the disruption of the provisions trade to the West Indies, economic competition from Pennsylvania, and the scarcity of cash. At about the same time, the New York City coopers complained that the practice of hiring out slaves in the skilled trades was ruining their livelihood. Also, the city's dissenting Protestant churches were embroiled in internal controversies. Moreover, the harsh winter of 1740–41 and the subsequent bakers' strike in protest of the high price of wheat led to shortages of food that weighed heavily on impoverished town dwellers.¹¹ In addition to the material hardships visited on the poor, the deployment of military forces from Manhattan Island to the Caribbean theater of war left New York City vulnerable to servile insurrection and foreign invasion. (Many of the colonial port town's long-time residents could remember the Slave Revolt of 1712. In addition, local folklore doubtless preserved the memory of the English Conquest of 1664 and the Dutch Reconquest of 1673.) As hostilities against Spain mounted and rumors of a Spanish invasion circulated throughout British North America, the townspeople became anxious for their safety. In view of England's escalating war against Spain and the prospect of a Spanish assault against the nearly defenseless port town, interim Governor Clarke asked New York's colonial assembly to allocate public funds for financing the construction of desperately needed fortifications and other defense preparations. But the reanimated anti-Clarke majority in that legislative body denied Clarke's request.

Thus, the crises of war, economic depression, controversies within some Protestant churches, and the immiseration of the poor established the conditions for the return of internal antagonisms within the colonial elite and a renewed challenge to Clarke's ruling party. In his brief history of the Clarke administration Cadwallader Colden recalled that during this period of crisis Clarke's ruling party "lost every day ground with the people & [was] divided among themselves."¹² Suddenly, in the winter of 1741–42, an unsolved crime wave and a rash of mysterious fires struck New York City, adding to Clarke's troubles. It was in these disturbing yet seemingly unrelated events that the rul-

ing party perceived a dangerous conspiracy against English colonial rule and discovered the “plot of 1741–42.”

On February 28, 1741, the first unsettling event unfolded. Late that night, unknown culprits burglarized Robert Hogg’s shop in the city’s North Ward. Stolen from that shop were several coins, a couple of silver candlesticks, and some linen. A few days later, the colonial authorities arrested Caesar, a male slave of John Vaarck, for possession of Hogg’s stolen property. Vaarck had found the purloined items underneath the floor of the “Negro kitchen” in his back yard and remanded Caesar and the stolen goods to the sheriff in charge of the city jail. Because Prince, one of Caesar’s comrades, was a reputed ringleader of a black brotherhood, known as the “Geneva Club” after their conviction for stealing a barrel of Geneva gin from a New York City shopkeeper in 1736,¹³ the colonial authorities jailed that enslaved black man on suspicion of having burglarized Hogg’s shop and interrogated him about the recent break-in. Prince denied any involvement in that crime. Since the colonial authorities had no concrete evidence to implicate Prince in the Hogg burglary, they returned him to his owner, who had posted bail for the release of his slave. Caesar, on the other hand, remained in the city jail.

Because it was rumored that Caesar and Prince were patrons of a certain tavern in the city’s West Ward, the proprietor of that pub, John Hughson, and his wife, Sarah, were brought before the sheriff for questioning about the Hogg robbery. Popular resorts, such as Hughson’s tavern, had long been suspected of harboring black-market exchanges in stolen goods.¹⁴ Hughson, his wife, and his four daughters had migrated from Westchester County to New York City in 1739. At that time, Hughson opened a dry goods store in the city’s Montgomerie Ward and at that shop sold “penny drams” of liquor to slaves. The newcomer eventually moved to the city’s West Ward, where he leased a tavern at the upper end of Broadway. Settling on the fringes of New York City’s respectable community of merchants, shopkeepers, artisans, and other white settlers who conducted more reputable businesses, Hughson and his family soon became the object of town gossip. It was rumored that at Hughson’s tavern large numbers of slaves amused themselves with strong liquors, drumming, fiddling, and the company of white women. In 1740, the constables raided Hughson’s tavern and found that the proprietor was conducting a “disorderly house,” where enslaved blacks and white servants gathered without permission from their masters. The colonial authorities convicted Hughson of illegally “entertaining Negro slaves.” Because this infraction of the law was the tavern keeper’s first such offense, he received a warning from the court instead of a fine. In his second brush with the law, Hughson once again got off lightly. Even though the newcomer was suspected of involvement in the burglary of Hogg’s shop, he and his wife were freed after a search of their tavern and dwelling failed to uncover any incriminating evidence. As the investigation of John Hughson indicates, the colonial authorities devoted considerable effort to solving the Hogg burglary. But they initially perceived nothing extraordinary about that crime. In subsequent weeks, anxiety-ridden town dwellers witnessed an unnerving out-

break of fires, which aroused the authorities' suspicion that a more dangerous threat than some cunning burglars imperiled the city and its inhabitants.

On March 18, 1741, the day after a disorderly St. Patrick's Day celebration, the first in a series of mysterious fires destroyed most of the buildings inside the fort, including the chapel, the lieutenant governor's residence, and several barracks. The destruction of the fortress, the symbol of the English military presence in colonial New York, underscored the vulnerability of the tinderbox town. An official inquiry into the destructive fire established that the most likely cause of the combustion was the negligence of a plumber, who, on the morning before the blaze erupted, had repaired a leak at the chapel inside the fort and, in his haste to finish his work, left behind a live coal from his soldering equipment. This construction of events was deemed the most plausible explanation for the inferno, but the possibility of arson was not ruled out.¹⁵ During the following three weeks, the townspeople witnessed nine additional fires.¹⁶ Because slaves were the ready-made suspects for the crime of arson, the panic-stricken white town dwellers now cast a suspicious gaze over the city's enslaved black population, which included a significant number of fairly recent newcomers. Between 1732 and 1754, more than 35 percent of the immigrants who disembarked at the port of New York were slaves, mostly native Africans.¹⁷ As early as 1737, an anxious town dweller warned: "Too great a Number of that Unchristian and barbarous People [were] being imported."¹⁸ Although white New Yorkers were preoccupied with internal political divisions, they were not entirely insensible to the danger of servile insurrection.¹⁹ Some town dwellers recalled the Slave Revolt of 1712, which involved native African newcomers who set fire to some buildings and ambushed the townspeople who arrived at the scene of the fire in order to put out the blaze. Linking the recent arsons to slave revolt, some frightened white townspeople exclaimed that the Negroes were rising against them. In response to this alarm, white vigilantes seized slaves in the streets and carried them to the city jailer. In light of the current hostilities with Spain and the participation of enslaved Spanish-speakers in the Slave Revolt of 1712, some Spanish-speaking slaves of the city's East Ward—Antonio de San Bendito, Antonio de la Cruz, Augustine Gutierrez, Juan de la Sylva, and Pablo Ventura Angél—were also jailed.²⁰ These enslaved Spanish-speakers had arrived at the port of New York in 1740.²¹ Despite the physical evidence of arson found at several of the burnt buildings and the arrest of 20 or so slaves on suspicion of having intentionally set the recent fires, the colonial authorities made little progress on tying the combustions to a slave uprising. Nevertheless, they were now convinced that the mysterious blazes were somehow connected to more sinister crimes.

Twelve days after the conflagrations of April 6, the colonial authorities made several arrests in connection with the Hogg burglary. Acting on a tip from Mary Burton, John Hughson's indentured servant, the sheriff and several deputies searched Hughson's tavern and dwelling for a second time. That inspection uncovered stolen goods underneath the floor of Hughson's house. With this discovery, the colonial authorities imprisoned the tavern keeper and his wife. They also incarcerated Prince for possession of stolen goods—some beeswax and

indigo, allegedly pilfered from Abraham Meyers Cohen's house. By this time, Caesar, Prince's comrade, had spent nearly seven weeks in jail. The colonial authorities now quickly prosecuted Caesar, Prince, and the Hughsons on charges of burglary. But at this juncture in the official investigation, the colonial authorities had no tangible evidence to implicate the accused thieves in the crime of arson, which, they believed, was part of a more serious criminal plot. On May 1, 1742, Caesar and Prince were brought before the court on two counts of burglary each. The prosecuting attorney surmised that, on the instructions of their white accomplices, thievish slaves had used arson as a subterfuge to enter the homes of unsuspecting townspeople and steal valuable property on the pretext of saving these items from the flames. With these allegations, the colonial authorities proclaimed they had eradicated an organized burglary ring, a previously hidden part of the city's criminal underworld. The prosecution's only evidence against the accused was the stolen property from Hogg's shop and Cohen's house. But after a brief deliberation, the court found Caesar and Prince guilty of burglary. The court magistrates immediately sentenced the black men to hang by the neck until dead. Justice Frederick Philipse summoned the two condemned slaves before the bench and asserted his conviction that they were somehow involved in the recent outbreak of fires. Philipse advised them to tell what they knew for the salvation of their souls, but Caesar and Prince made no confession of guilt.

On May 11, 1742, the townspeople witnessed the execution of the condemned slaves. The object of exemplary punishment, Caesar's corpse was left outdoors until it had decomposed. Justice Horsmanden stated that the public display of Caesar's rotting body was intended "to break the knot [of silent conspirators], and to induce some of them to unfold this mystery of iniquity, in hopes of thereby recommending themselves to mercy." As a further inducement, the colonial authorities offered a reward of £100 to any settler who could provide useful information about the mysterious rash of arsons. Soon after, they advertised a reward of freedom to any slave who could name the arsonists.²² In the weeks following the executions and the publication of the rewards to informants, scores of slaves were brought before official examiners and interrogated. Under the pressure of examination, these slaves poured forth a cascade of incriminating and self-incriminating confessions. Doubtless, some informants committed perjury in order to obtain the reward of freedom, while others merely wished to save their lives. One informant told constable John Schultz that many slaves had made false confessions of grandiose dimension because they feared that "if they didn't they'd be hanged." The coerced nature of the confessions did not, however, invalidate the testimony of informants who confirmed the colonial authorities' belief that they had discovered an elaborate plot against English rule. The transcripts of coerced confessions and the trial testimony of terrified informants enabled the prosecution to convict and execute 31 enslaved blacks and four white outsiders for their putative roles in a grand conspiracy to burn New York City, murder the respectable white townspeople, and overthrow the English colonial government. Another 70 enslaved blacks and seven white outsiders were transported out of the colony as punishment for their alleged role in the conspiracy.²³

For 16 weeks after the execution of Caesar and Prince, from May 11 to August 31, 1742, the colonial authorities focused the attention of the townspeople on a series of showcase trials, in which the mysterious crime wave and series of fires were represented as a diabolic plot of Spanish origin. By placing this nefarious scheme before the numerous intermediate stratum of property-holding, voting white townspeople, Clarke's ruling party, which perhaps genuinely feared an intrigue against English colonial rule, forestalled popular protest against its government. Animosities that could have been directed upward against the ruling party were channeled downward toward New York City's increasingly numerous and alien black population, as well as white outsiders who consorted with blacks. During the court proceedings, the factious white settlers were temporarily united around the discovery and suppression of a dangerous conspiracy from below; their attention was diverted from the internal conflicts that divided them. Furthermore, the political enemies of the lieutenant governor dared not challenge his authority during the conspiracy trials for fear of being accused of putting self-interest ahead of the public interest or, worse, of being implicated in the plot itself.

Declaring a state of emergency and placing the city's entire populace under martial law, Clarke's ruling party reasserted its authority over colonial affairs. The colonial authorities also secretly determined to conduct a general search throughout the port town. In perhaps the most expansive exercise and coordination of police power in the history of New York prior to the Revolutionary era, the colonial rulers authorized the city's aldermen, councilmen, and constables to search and seize the property of ordinary white town dwellers. Daniel Horsmanden described the secret plan:

The proposal was approved of, and each alderman and his common councilman, with constables attending them, undertook to search his respective ward on the south side of the fresh water pond; and the Monday following was the day fixed upon for making the experiment. This scheme was communicated to the governor, and his honour thought fit to order the militia out that day in aid of the magistrates, who were to be dispersed through the city, and sentries of them posted at the ends of streets to guard all avenues, with orders to stop all suspected persons that should be observed carrying bags or bundles, or removing goods from house to house, in order for their examination; and all this was to be kept very secret till the project was put in execution.


The "general search" of May 13, 1742, uncovered no evidence of a plot against English colonial rule.²⁴

Throughout the summer of 1742, English troops maintained a regular military watch over the city, monitoring the comings and goings of long-time residents and newcomers alike.²⁵ During the summer months, the colonial authorities also began a crackdown on the city's numerous taverns, tipping houses, and dramshops, especially those establishments that catered to the city's enslaved population. During the conspiracy trials, one of the prosecutors, Joseph Murray, stated that the city's tavern life posed a threat to public order and that tavern keepers and shopkeepers who continued to sell strong liquor to slaves should be

punished, for “under the pretense of selling what they call a penny dram to a negro, [tavern keepers and shop owners] will sell to him as many quarts or gallons of rum, as he can steal money or goods to pay for.” Justice Horsmanden added: “The many fatal consequences flowing from the prevailing and wicked practice are so notorious and so nearly concern us all that one would be almost surprised to think there should be a necessity for a court to recommend a suppressing of such pernicious houses.” Horsmanden also noted that the unwarranted amount of leisure time and unregulated mobility of the port town’s slave labor force posed an additional danger. He pointed to the example of Cuffee, the enslaved man of the aged Adolph Philipse: “It was notorious Cuff had a great deal of idle time upon his hands, perhaps more than any negro in town, consequently was much at large for making frequent daily or nightly visits at Hughson’s, and therefore indeed must of course have become personally acquainted with a greater number of the conspirators, than others who had fewer of the like opportunities.” At another juncture in the conspiracy trials, the prosecutor William Smith remarked on the hazard presented by unsupervised gatherings of enslaved blacks in the streets on the Sabbath: “It appears that this horrid scene of iniquity has been chiefly contrived and promoted at meetings of negroes in great numbers on Sundays. This instructive circumstance may teach us many lessons, both of reproof and caution, which I only hint at, and shall leave the deduction of the particulars to every one’s reflection.” The correct deduction, which law-abiding townspeople were supposed to draw from the discovery of the “plot of 1741–42,” was that New York City’s enslaved population should be brought under stricter regulation and that effective methods should be devised to achieve that end. Yet the emergency measures of the summer of 1742 were temporary expedients only. The colonial authorities never instituted fully effective mechanisms for policing the city’s enslaved population. The bulk of the responsibility for disciplining the port town’s slave labor force continued to fall on the shoulders of individual slaveowners. For this reason, the preface to Horsmanden’s *Journal* reminds New York City slaveowners “to keep a very watchful eye over [their slaves], and not to indulge them with too great liberties, which we find they make use of to the worst purpose, caballing, and confederating together in mischief in great numbers.”

The city’s white servant population proved more difficult to police than its enslaved black labor force, for in an effort to attract white laborers to New York the colonial authorities granted white servants privileges and liberties that gave them greater freedom of movement and assembly than enslaved blacks and free blacks enjoyed. Although the War of Jenkin’s Ear curtailed the flow of immigrants from the British Isles and Europe into the port of New York, that war did not totally halt the haphazard influx of white strangers into the port town. While the colonial authorities worried that the unregulated assembly of transients, enslaved blacks, and white servants in the city’s streets, docks, and taverns posed a threat to the public safety, they were incapable of effectively monitoring the city’s subaltern population. Fear of an interracial conspiracy among the propertyless stratum of the colonial port town’s social hierarchy was hardly an irrational apprehension. Poor whites and enslaved blacks had ample oppor-

tunities to congregate in secret and plot against their superiors. Taking this undeniable factor into account, the colonial authorities surmised that the recent mysterious crime wave and rash of fires were not random, unrelated events but the manifestation of a conspiracy that existed among a dangerous combination of enslaved blacks and white outsiders.

 “Conspiratorial interpretations—attributing events to the concerted designs of willful individuals—became,” the historian Gordon Wood has noted, “a major means by which educated men in the early modern period ordered and gave meaning to their world.”²⁶ Daniel Horsmanden’s *Journal* (1744) provides an instructive example of the way in which educated men—in this instance, a party of politically embattled colonial elite in eighteenth-century New York City—constructed a meaningful world and disseminated their worldview to the common man. The following discussion analyzes the discursive conventions of narration deployed in Horsmanden’s *Journal* in order to discern how the ruling elite’s discourse of conspiracy became common sense.

A vehicle for legitimating the ruling party’s use of the death penalty to restore law and order during the emergency of 1741–42, Horsmanden’s *Journal* is first and foremost a political document. A member of the Governor’s Council, a justice of New York’s Supreme Court, and the recorder for that court from 1733 to 1747, Horsmanden had a political stake in defending the ruling party’s acts of judgment against the hostile counterjudgments of its political enemies. In addition to the ruling party’s political foes in New York, detractors from outside the colony also questioned the validity of the court proceedings against the suspects convicted of and executed for the crime of conspiracy. In a letter addressed to Cadwallader Colden and dated July 23, 1742, an anonymous New Englander accuses New York’s ruling party of staging a witch-hunt and likens New York City’s recent conspiracy trials to the Salem Witchcraft Trials of 1692. Casting doubt on the trustworthiness of the coerced confessions that New York’s colonial authorities extracted from terrified black town dwellers and used to convict accused conspirators, Colden’s correspondent remarks: “It makes me suspect that your present case, & ours heretofore are much the same, and that Negro & spectre evidence will turn out alike.”²⁷ In addition, appearing in New York City and Philadelphia around 1743 were several printed broadsides that characterized the Crown-appointed officials who presided over New York’s conspiracy trials as bloodthirsty executioners bent on destroying the lives of innocent slaves and white people.²⁸ Hence, the pressing political motive of defending the Clarke administration against the charge of judicial murder led Horsmanden to publish his *Journal*. Horsmanden’s *Journal* and the printed attacks that necessitated its publication disclose the rising force of public supervision over the English rulers in eighteenth-century New York City. As early as the 1690s, the political reforms of the Glorious Revolution allowed some New York City town dwellers to call into question the divine right of the monarch to take life and also enabled them to obtain the revocation of the writ of attainder

against the executed leaders of Leisler's Rebellion from the English Parliament. By the 1740s, the representation of the ruling party as an extension of monarchical sovereignty was hardly an unassailable defense against the accusation of judicial murder. By that time, the imperatives of popular politics in the settler colony required the ruling party to convince the public of the lawfulness of its actions.²⁹ Instead of sending an administrative report to the metropolitan authorities in London or writing a passionate rebuttal addressed to the ruling party's political enemies among the colonial elite, Horsmanden wisely appealed to the court of public opinion—that is, to the settler majority of literate freeholders who voted in colonial New York's elections.

The historian Thomas J. Davis has noted, "As a document of the time, [Horsmanden's *Journal*] stands on its internal structure and ought to be judged thereon."³⁰ In his *Journal*, Horsmanden adheres to the discursive conventions of eighteenth-century print culture, privileging impersonal utterance, the authoritative mode of public communication or publicity. Through the cultural matrix of the print medium, Horsmanden's unmarked narrator addresses an abstract public of undifferentiated readers that scrutinizes the ruling party's conduct of governmental affairs during the emergency of 1741–42. Cloaked in the veil of disinterested recorder of historical events, Horsmanden published a seemingly straightforward, day-by-day account of the events leading to the conspiracy trials and executions.³¹ In the preface to his *Journal*, the judge turned historian asserts the impartiality of the kind of text he has brought before the public:³²

A *journal* would give more satisfaction, inasmuch as in such a kind of process, the depositions and examinations themselves, which were the ground-work of the proceedings, would appear at large; which most probably would afford conviction to such as have a disposition to be convinced and have *in reality* doubted whether any particular convicts had justice done them or not, notwithstanding they had the opportunity of *seeing* and *hearing* a great deal concerning them; and others, who had no such opportunities, who were prejudiced at distance in their disfavour, by frivolous reports, might the reader be undeceived: for as the proceedings are set forth in the order of time they were produced, the reader will thereby be furnished with the most natural view of the whole and be better enabled to conceive the design and dangerous depth of this *hellish project*, as well as the justice of the several prosecutions.

While Horsmanden gives the impression of letting the evidence speak for itself, so that his readers can examine for themselves the unembellished facts, the depositions, interrogations, and other printed records appear in his text after an "Introduction" that offers his own narration of the events of 1741–42. The facts do not, then, "appear at large," as Horsmanden claims, but instead are framed by a historical narrative that confers meaning upon the unsystematic compilation of documents assembled during the official investigation and the conspiracy trials.³³ While a few scattered sources, such as brief newspaper reports and fragmentary records, provide bits and pieces of information on the disturbing burglaries and rash of fires, the official investigation into the mysterious crime wave, and the conspiracy trials,³⁴ Horsmanden's narrative is the only full

account of the alleged conspiracy. In short, Horsmanden's *Journal* is the "plot of 1741–42."

Horsmanden's narrative imposes a coherent meaning on the baffling events of 1741–42. As his narrative unfolds, the reader discovers the logical connection between seemingly random occurrences. Here, the production of knowledge is an effect of the power of narration: A single impersonal narrator performs the task of presenting the reader with *the gradual disclosure of meaning as the dispensation of a telos* or, as the narrator puts it, the "most natural view of the whole."³⁵ It is, then, the production of knowledge through narrative representation that invests Horsmanden's text with authority, prescience, and coherence. Narrative sentences—that is, the narration of events that could not have been witnessed (or perceived) in the manner described, because they reference integral future events that could not have been known to the observer at the time of the occurrence of the events being described³⁶—endow Horsmanden's narrator with the faculty of omniscience. In Horsmanden's text, such narrative sentences are accompanied by supplementary phrases of the following sort: "as was discovered and will appear more fully hereafter." In this way, Horsmanden underscores the device of omniscient narration by drawing attention to the imperfect knowledge of the common man—his implied reader—who attributed the outbreak of fires to a variety of causes, ranging from sheer caprice to arson, but did not apprehend the more sinister design against English colonial rule. Horsmanden's omniscient narrator observes:

The five several fires, viz. at the fort, captain Warren's house, Van Zandt's storehouse, Quick's stable, and Ben Thomas's kitchen, having happened in so short a time succeeding each other; and the attempt made of a sixth on Mr. Murray's haystack, it was natural for people of any reflection, to conclude that the fire was set on purpose by a combination of villains, and therefore occasioned great uneasiness to every one that had thought; but upon this supposition nobody imagined there could be any further design; than for some wicked wretches to have the opportunity of making a prey of their neighbor's goods, under pretence of assistance in removing them for security from the danger of flames; for upon these late instances, many of the sufferers had complained of great losses of their goods, and furniture, which had been removed from their houses upon these occasions.

While the anxious town dwellers perceived an ulterior and fraudulent motive in apparently altruistic gestures, they did not, according to Horsmanden's narrator, fathom the more ominous plot hidden still deeper beneath the surface of events. In contrast, Horsmanden's omniscient narrator assumes the position of an imperial subject that possesses knowledge that the ordinary town dweller does not possess.

Although Horsmanden's narrator calls attention to the incomplete knowledge of the bewildered townspeople, his narrative portrays them as a cohesive community of loyal subjects who rush to the lieutenant governor's aid when an inferno engulfs his residence inside the fort. "Upon the chapel bells ringing," the narrator tells the reader, "great numbers of people . . . came to the assistance

of the lieutenant governor and his family; and as the people of this city, to do them justice, are very active and diligent upon these occasions. . . .” At another point, the narrator describes a social drama in which a black villain is carried to jail “upon the people’s shoulders.” During the emergency of 1741–42, the factious hive of white town dwellers, the narrator reports, cast aside their quarrels and, drawing more closely together as the “people,” acted in a common interest against a common enemy. Horsmanden’s narrative thus depicts the vertical and horizontal identifications that bound the intermediate stratum of white settlers into a cohesive community of loyal subjects. When the evidence contradicts this idealized image of the city’s white settler community, it is dismissed. According to Horsmanden’s narrative, the colonial authorities reject the allegation of treason directed against John Romme, the cousin of a prominent city councilman. Having learned that Romme has been convicted of receiving stolen goods from the Hogg robbery and sentenced to hang, Mary Burton, an indentured servant from John Hughson’s household, makes what Horsmanden’s narrator calls an “ingenious confession.” Mary’s confession is “ingenious” in a double sense: First, it reveals knowledge of events unknown to the reader; second, it attempts to arrange the particulars of the “plot” in a fashion that displaces guilt from the Hughsons and herself and onto John Romme. To that end, Mary places the meetings of the conspiratorial cabal at Romme’s workplace, where he had operated a dramshop frequented by slaves, instead of at Hughson’s tavern, where she had lived. Luckily for Romme, his guilt in the crime of plotting to commit treason could not be assimilated in the colonial authorities’ theory of conspiracy, which portrayed the city’s intermediate stratum of propertied white settlers—artisans, merchants, and shopkeepers—as loyal subjects of the English Crown. The colonial authorities therefore dismiss Mary’s story about Romme’s central role in the conspiracy, and the examiners persuade the female servant to recant her accusations against the well-connected shopkeeper. Exonerated of the charge of conspiracy and instead convicted of the lesser crime of receiving stolen goods, Romme receives leniency from the court and is spared his life on the condition that he leave the colony. According to Horsmanden’s narrative, Mary also attempts to incriminate members of New York City’s colonial elite or, as she referred to them, “some people in *ruffles*.” The colonial authorities dismiss her accusations against these prominent settlers, whom they characterize as loyal British subjects “of known credit, fortunes and reputations, and of religious principles superior to a suspicion of being concerned in such detestable practices.”

With its unsolved crime wave and its constables and robbers, Horsmanden’s narrative reads like a detective mystery story. After retelling the mysterious events of 1741–42, the narrator announces: “Who did it was a question remained to be determined.” John Hughson, the tavern keeper, is eventually branded ringleader of the conspiracy. According to Horsmanden’s reprint of the trial records, a prosecutor points to Hughson and declares to the jury: “Gentlemen, behold the author and abettor of all the late conflagrations, terrors, and devastation that have befallen this city.” The prosecutor adds: “This is the man!—this that grand incendiary!—that arch rebel against God, his king, and

his country!—that devil incarnate, and chief agent of the old Abaddon of the infernal pit, and Geryon of darkness!” The prosecutor’s allusions to the apocalyptic visions told in the Book of Revelation³⁷ cast Hughson in the role of the chief agent of destruction. The tavern keeper’s disastrous career in colonial New York City becomes an instructive example of the destiny of those who succumb to the forces of evil in the Manichean struggle between darkness and light. During Hughson’s sentencing, Justice Philipse calls the condemned tavern keeper before the bench and asserts: “Miserable Wretch! How he has plunged himself and family into that pit which he had dug for others, and brought down upon his own pate that violent dealing which he contrived and in part executed against his neighbors. . . . I know not which is the more astonishing, the extreme folly, or wickedness of so base and shocking a conspiracy. . . . What could it be expected to end in, in the account of any rational and considerate person among you, but your own destruction.” The execution of Hughson and his wife cautioned other white townspeople against transgressing the racialized norms of bourgeois respectability. According to Horsmanden’s narrative, it is the Hughsons’ association with enslaved blacks that at first marks the tavern keeper and his wife as targets of suspicion.³⁸ At the Hughsons’ sentencing, Chief Justice James DeLancey remarks that “disorderly houses,” such as Hughson’s tavern, subvert the city’s biracial hierarchy of white over black and that the condemned white traitors are “guilty of not only making Negroes their equals but even their superiors by waiting upon, keeping with, and entertaining them.” Perhaps Hughson, his wife, and the other white outsiders who were executed for the crime of treason were guilty of nothing more.

An anti-Catholic bias subtended the colonialist discourse of conspiracy, and during the emergency of 1741–42 Roman Catholics became targets of suspicion. Accustomed to identifying Irishmen with Roman Catholicism and rebellion,³⁹ the colonial authorities arrested several Irish soldiers on suspicion of participating in the purported “popish” plot to murder the Protestant townspeople.⁴⁰ Although these Irish soldiers were never brought to trial, the prosecutors appealed to popular anti-Catholic sentiment during the court proceedings against other accused conspirators. In his address to the jury, a prosecutor stated: “They [Roman Catholics] hold it not only lawful but meritorious to kill and destroy all that differ in opinion from them, if it may any ways serve the interest of their detestable religion; the whole scheme of which seems to be a restless endeavour to extirpate all other religions whatsoever, but more especially the protestant religion, which they maliciously call the Northern heresy.” The prosecutor added, “Then they have their doctrine of transubstantiation, which is so big with absurdities that it is shocking to the common sense and reason of mankind; for were that doctrine true, their priests by a few words of their mouths, can make a God as often as they please: but then they eat him too, and this they have the impudence to call honouring and adoring him. . . . These and many other juggling tricks they have in their hocus pocus, bloody religion.” Denouncing the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and reputed belief in the magical power of words, the prosecutor draws an implicit identification between Catholicism and the “black arts”—for example, heathen superstition, magic,

witchcraft, and sorcery—that resonated with the anti-Catholic prejudices of the city’s white Protestant settler population and therefore served to bolster the ruling party’s claim that Roman Catholics had, in league with culturally alien blacks who also allegedly practiced magic, conspired to murder the white Protestant townspeople.

Horsmanden’s *Journal* calls attention to Catholic Spain’s long history of conspiring against Protestant nations and presents quotes from printed histories that relate the infamous papist plots against Protestant England’s Queen Elizabeth I and King William III. According to Horsmanden’s narrative, General James Oglethorpe of Georgia inflames the Catholic scare throughout British North America when, on May 16, 1742, he issues a security alert, warning the English colonial authorities that Catholic Spain has sent agents provocateurs to infiltrate the English overseas colonies and that “priests were employed [for this purpose], under pretended appellations of physicians, dancing-masters,” and the like. For colonial New York City’s Protestant majority, the Catholic priest was the perfect symbol of conspiracy. Horsmanden’s narrative casts John Ury, a white newcomer who allegedly held unorthodox religious views, in the role of conspiratorial Catholic priest. Like other young men of meager fortune, Ury had migrated to British North America to improve his lot in life. According to his diary, Ury arrived in New York City on November 2, 1741, after having traveled through Maryland and Pennsylvania. This stranger soon found himself in the wrong place at the wrong time. Following a brief period of unemployment in the city, Ury began to teach Greek and Latin to the children of wealthy townspeople. Town gossips circulated the rumor that the young schoolmaster and newcomer professed the Roman Catholic faith and since his arrival in the city had convened several secret meetings attended by crypto-Catholics. It was also alleged that Ury had quoted certain biblical texts upon which the Church of Rome based its claim that it was the only true church and that priests were authorized to forgive sin. When this news reached the colonial authorities, they immediately arrested Ury on suspicion of being a Catholic priest.⁴¹

Following his arrest, Ury and several informants were brought before colonial inquisitors, who conduct an official investigation into his religious beliefs and complicity in the suspected plot to overthrow English rule in colonial New York City and erect a “Negro regime” in alliance with Catholic Spain.⁴² Two informants, Sarah, John Hughson’s daughter, and William Kane, an Irish soldier, implicate Ury in the crime of conspiracy. These informants tell the colonial authorities that Ury is, in fact, a Catholic priest who had not only attempted to convert several poor whites and enslaved blacks to Catholicism but also endeavored to enlist them in a papist conspiracy to murder the Protestant townspeople. Both informants claim to have witnessed Ury perform the rite of a Roman Catholic Baptism, which allegedly served to seal the covenant among the conspirators who pledged to keep their plot secret. In her deposition, Sarah states: “He [John Ury] used to christen negroes there [in her father’s house], crossed them on the face, and had water and other things; and he told them he would absolve them from all their sins.” During his cross-examination of Sarah in court, Ury attempts to prove that the prosecution’s star witness cannot distinguish a Catholic

baptismal ceremony from an Anglican christening service. In reply to Ury's interrogation, Sarah recalls only faint images from the ritual that, she insists, the young stranger performed. Finally, Sarah admits that Ury had spoken in a language she could not comprehend. Sarah was no expert witness on the liturgical practices of the Catholic Church and was incompetent to identify the unique features of a Roman Catholic Baptism. Then as now, Baptism was so fundamental to the practice of Christianity that the ceremony was nearly identical in all Christian churches. The prosecutor John Chambers proves to be more learned than Sarah Hughson with regard to the unique liturgical practices and doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. In a statement before the jury, Chambers asserts that performing "his priest's office in latin, his baptising with salt, his use of the crucifix, his exposing the sacrament by lighted candles, his preaching upon those texts upon which papists pretend to found the Pope's supremacy, and his declared power to forgive sins as well as God Almighty will undoubtedly fix the brand of a Roman priest upon [Ury]." In his attempt to persuade the jury that Ury is beyond doubt a Catholic priest, Chambers correctly identifies elements of the Roman Catholic rite of Baptism that distinguish it from the Anglican sacrament of Baptism—specifically, the exhortation in Latin, the Jesuit tradition of using salt as a sacramental trapping, and the more general Catholic tradition of passing a lighted candle to the godparent or parent of the baptized infant.⁴³ None of the eyewitnesses to the Baptism that Ury was supposed to have performed could testify to the Catholic derivation of these particulars, however.

According to Horsmanden's narrative, some time before Ury's arrest, John Hildreth, an Anglican missionary, engaged in several theological disputations with the newcomer. In his deposition, Hildreth testifies that Ury "believed it was through the great encouragement the negroes had received from Mr. Whitefield [George Whitefield], we had all the disturbance, and that he believed Mr. Whitefield was more of a Roman than anything else, and he believed he [Whitefield] came abroad [in 1740] with no good design." Hildreth further testifies that Ury rejected the doctrine of free grace as well as the doctrine of predestination. Ury's opposition to these two extreme positions on the doctrinal spectrum of the post-Reformation era did not make him a Roman Catholic; along that continuum was a multiplicity of finely differentiated religious doctrines. During his trial, Ury insists that he is a nonjuring Anglican, not a Roman Catholic priest.⁴⁴ In his closing statement before the court, Ury argues that his is a case of mistaken identity. "Gentlemen," he argues, "the mistake the major part of the world lies under is their apprehending that a non-juring priest must be a popish priest whereas there is no truer protestant." With regard to the charge of conspiracy to murder the Protestant townspeople and to overthrow the English colonial rulers, Ury insists that "the doctrine they [nonjuring priests] assert and stand by is non-resistance and passive disobedience." He goes on to insist that there are "no truer subjects of King George" than nonjuring priests. This last speech of John Ury notwithstanding, the jury finds the young stranger guilty of treason and sentences him to hang by the neck until dead.

In addition to the white outsiders John Hughson, Mary Hughson, and John Ury, 31 enslaved blacks were executed for conspiring to destroy colonial New

York City. During the conspiracy trials, Sandy (or Sawney), Thomas Nisblet's slave and one of the prosecution's key witnesses, testifies that during clandestine meetings at Gerardus Comfort's dwelling house in the city's East Ward a separate all-black clique of conspirators had, without the encouragement and assistance of white agitators, concocted their own plan to set the town on fire and murder the white townspeople. Swearing themselves to secrecy, the black conspirators, Sandy reports, organized themselves into two incendiary units of 100 blacks each and then divided the town into two districts, which they intended to burn to the ground. According to Sandy's testimony, one unit included the members of the black brotherhood known as the Long Bridge Boys, and the other unit was comprised of the members of the Smith Fly Boys, also a black brotherhood. Although Sandy's disclosure of a separate plot among black town dwellers opened a window onto troubling aspects of the urban blacks' collective life that were largely hidden from the view of white authority figures, Horsmanden's narrative discounts this alarming contingency and refrains from representing the black town dwellers as having any agency of their own. Horsmanden's narrative presents instead a drama in which black town dwellers are transfigured into incendiary marionettes that are manipulated from behind the scene by the invisible hand of white saboteurs. For example, Horsmanden's account of the burglary into Hogg's shop credits a white lad named Wilson with masterminding that robbery. Moreover, Horsmanden's narrator describes the more dangerous conspiracy as "a scheme of villainy in which white people were confederated with negroes and most probably were the first movers and seducers of the slaves." Stressing this point, Horsmanden's narrator portrays the white traitors as the offspring of Belial, the fallen angel from Milton's *Paradise Lost* who mobilizes a dark legion of Satan's followers to do battle in the war of good against evil.⁴⁵ According to Horsmanden's narrator, the black town dwellers are motivated to act only "in combination with the most flagitious, degenerated, and abandoned, and scum and dregs of the white people, and others of the worst hearts, if possible, because of abler heads, who entitled themselves to be ten times more the children of Belial, than the negroes themselves." Thus in Horsmanden's "plot of 1741-42," white outsiders, like John Hughson, John Ury, and the youngster Wilson, are the primary agents of conspiracy. The black town dwellers are therefore not truly his *dramatis personae*. By depriving colonial New York City's mostly enslaved, black population of agency, Horsmanden's narrative attempts to disavow what the historian Eugene Genovese has called "the fundamental contradiction in chattel slavery" or "the impossibility of the slaves ever becoming the things they were supposed to be."⁴⁶ Horsmanden's account of the events of 1741-42 exposes this contradiction for, even as his narrative denies the enslaved blacks any volition of their own, it warns the reader about the danger posed by the unregulated movement and assembly of disloyal slaves who possess subtle intelligence and abuse the informal privileges that indulgent slaveowners granted them to conspire against their superiors.

Contradiction and heterogeneity play a crucial "facilitating role," Homi Bhabha points out, "in the construction of authoritarian practices and their strategic, discursive fixations."⁴⁷ Grappling to comprehend a world of contin-

gency, to confer a fixed meaning on the seemingly random events of 1741–42, the colonialist discourse of conspiracy imposes the terrifying name of monstrosity on the blacks of colonial New York City. According to Horsmanden's reprint of a conspiracy trial transcript, Joseph Murray, one of the prosecutors, questions the humanity of the black townspeople by stressing the monstrous nature of their alleged crimes: "No scheme more monstrous could have been invented," Murray declares, "nor can anything be thought of more foolish, than the motives that induced these wretches to enter into it! . . . It is hard to say whether the wickedness or the folly of this design is the greater; and had it not been in part executed before it was discovered, we should with great difficulty have been persuaded to believe it possible, that such a wicked and foolish plot could be contrived by any creatures in human shape." Furthermore, the imputation of bestiality to the blacks served to support the prosecution's contention that they are capable of monstrous acts of cruelty. According to Horsmanden's reprint of an interrogation transcript, an examiner describes a black woman named Sarah as "one of the oddest animals amongst the black confederates. . . . When she was first interrogated upon this examination about the conspiracy, she . . . threw herself into the most violent agitations; foamed at the mouth, and uttered the bitterest imprecations." During the court proceedings, a witness offered further proof of the inhumanity of the blacks, claiming that "Diana (Mr. Machado's negro woman) in a passion, because her mistress was angry with her, took her own young child from her breast, and laid it in the cold, that it froze to death." Such accusations of infanticide seemed to confirm that black women lacked the nurturing maternal instincts attributed to the female sex of the human species. During the sentencing phase in the trial of two condemned blacks, Justice Philipse betrays the court's tendency to conflate black criminality with monstrosity: "Crimes, gentlemen, so astonishingly cruel and detestable, that one would think they never could enter into the minds, much less the resolution of any but a conclave of devils to execute; and yet such monsters in iniquity are these two criminals and the rest of their confederates." Even though Philipse asserts that the condemned blacks are monsters, he refers to their souls and the punishment of everlasting damnation: "Yet [ye] cannot be so stupid, surely, as to imagine, that when ye leave this world, when your souls put off these bodies of clay, ye shall become like the beasts that perish, that your spirits shall only vanish into the soft air and cease to be. No, your souls are immortal, they will live forever, either to be eternally happy, or eternally miserable in the other world, where you are now going." Announcing his concern for the souls of black folks whose bodies he has just ordered destroyed and who during their enslavement in colonial New York City had been exploited like beasts of labor, Justice Philipse exposes his own ambivalent attitude toward the blacks. Such ambivalence did not, however, prevent the colonial authorities from acting swiftly and authoritatively in executing black town dwellers for conspiring against English rule.

The guilty verdicts in the cases of all but a few blacks were founded on coerced confessions of ambiguous meaning. In the preface to his *Journal*, Horsmanden complains that during the interrogation phase of the official investigation he and

other officers of the court were faced with the nearly insurmountable task of extracting the truth from black suspects who spoke English imperfectly and perhaps contrived to confuse their inquisitors with ambiguous speeches. "The difficulty of bringing and holding them to the truth, if by chance it starts through them," Horsmanden explains, "is not to be surmounted, but by the closest attention; many of them have a great deal of craft; their unintelligible jargon stands them in great stead, to conceal their meaning; so that the examiner must expect to encounter with much perplexity, grope through a maze of obscurity, be obliged to lay hold of broken hints, lay them carefully together, and thoroughly weigh and compare them with each other, before he can be able to see light, or fix those creatures to any certain determinate meaning." Owing to their inability to comprehend the fragmented speech patterns (or broken English) of some black town dwellers, the colonial officials sometimes engaged interpreters to aid them in extracting confessions from black suspects. During the interrogation session of a black man named Jack, the colonial authorities entrusted two white laborers with the grave duty of deciphering the meaning of the suspect's words. Horsmanden's narrator explains: "There were two young men, sons-in-law of Jack's master, who were aware Jack would not be understood without their aid, and they signified their desire of being by when he was examined, from a supposition that they might be of service in interpreting his meaning, as he had been used to them, having often worked in the same shop together at the cooper's trade, whereby he was so familiarized to them, they could make a shift to understand his language."⁴⁸ Doubtless, the official transcript of Jack's confession and the incriminating declarations of other black suspects were translations of dubious authority, which fixed a "certain determinate meaning" on ambiguous, puzzling words.

For New York City slaveowners, the ingratitude of their slaves presented the most perplexing puzzle of all. Certain that they had been benevolent masters, these slaveowners could not understand why there were not more Ariels and Fridays among the enslaved blacks of colonial New York City. Pondering that riddle, Justice Philipse opines:

The monstrous ingratitude of this black tribe is what exceedingly aggravates their guilt. Their slavery among us is generally softened with great indulgence: They live without care and are commonly better fed and clothed than the poor of most Christian Countries. They were indeed slaves, but under the protection of the law, none can hurt them with impunity. They are really more happy in this place than in the midst of the continual plunder, cruelty, and rapine of their native countries. Notwithstanding all the kindness and tenderness with which they have been treated among us, yet this is the second attempt of the same kind that this brutish and bloody species of mankind have made within one age.

Struggling to comprehend the disloyalty of slaves who, in his judgment, had been treated with kindness and lived under the mildest form of bondage, Philipse calls two condemned black men before the bench and asks them to explain why they had committed such horrific crimes. The magistrate asks, "What

then could prompt you to undertake so vile, so wicked, so monstrous, so execrable and hellish a scheme, as to murder and destroy your own masters and benefactors? Nay, to destroy root and branch, all the white people of this place, and to lay the whole town in ashes." Standing before the bench of judgment, the two black men offered no answer to Judge Philipse's question. They and other black town dwellers remained puzzling enigmas.

Nevertheless, Horsmanden's narrative strives to eliminate indeterminacy by imposing a fixed meaning on the ambiguous words and gestures of unacculturated blacks. His narrator relates the story of Quaco and two other black men who had been strolling up Broadway toward Trinity Church on Sunday, April 5, 1742, the same day that live coals were found in a haystack and only one day before the fort caught fire. Like many other unacculturated black town dwellers, these black men roamed the city streets on Sundays while the Christian settlers attended worship services. Upon looking out a window from the upper floor of a building fronting Broadway, a white woman named Abigail Earle spies the three black men and, Horsmanden's narrator reports, overhears Quaco "with a vaporeing sort of air [say], 'Fire, Fire, Scorch, Scorch, A LITTLE, damn it, BY-AND-BY,' and then throw up his hands and laughed." At that moment, the sentence fragments and abrupt gesticulation of the unacculturated black man cried out to be interpreted. According to Horsmanden's narrative, Mrs. Earle "conceives great jealousy" in Quaco's broken English. Determined to fill the gaps in the intercepted snatches of Quaco's conversation with his comrades, the colonial authorities assert that Mrs. Earle has placed "the natural construction upon her apprehensions" of the jargon and strange "airs and graces" of the black suspect and that Quaco is without doubt guilty of conspiracy. In other words, the colonial authorities conclude that although Quaco spoke the language of his English masters imperfectly, that Caliban of colonial New York City had, nonetheless, learned how to curse them with it.

During his trial, Quaco denied that his short speech held a conspiratorial meaning. A court reporter transcribed Quaco's declaration of innocence into proper English syntax. The printed transcript reports that the accused told the court that he and his comrades had been "talking of admiral Vernon's taking Porto Bello; and that he thereupon signified to his companions, that he thought that was but a small feat to what his brave officer would do by-and-by, to annoy the Spaniards, or words tantamount." Quaco's spoken testimony failed to establish, beyond doubt, his allegiance to England in its war against Spain. Subsequently, the court magistrates condemned the black man to death for the crime of conspiracy. The death sentence imposed on Quaco discloses the peril unacculturated black town dwellers faced when their fragmentary speech acts were exposed to the interpretation of English-speaking judges. At the time of Quaco's execution, unacculturated African-born slaves from a variety of African homelands were 30 percent of New York City's black population.⁴⁹ Although Quaco's birthplace is unknown, his name was in common usage among the Akan people and indicates that he, a parent, or other kin had ties to that part of West African society and through naming practices endeavored to retain some connection to West African culture. A pidgin-speaking community of black

town dwellers almost certainly existed in colonial New York City, and most native African newcomers and other unacculturated blacks, in fact, spoke poor English. This circumstance had grave consequences for these unacculturated blacks during the investigation into the alleged conspiracy of 1741–42. In *Black Skin, White Mask*, Frantz Fanon writes: “To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization.”⁵⁰ In Quaco’s case, his imperfect mastery of the English language rendered him incapable of persuading the English colonial court of his innocence, of assuming the position of a loyal British subject. In a fundamental respect, Quaco and other unacculturated black suspects were unable to speak in self-defense, for the colonialist discourse of conspiracy established the conditions for the intelligibility of speech and identified the foreign, broken speech patterns of unacculturated blacks with conspiracy. In sharp contrast, their judges possessed the power to speak, to constitute a meaningful world by virtue of their mastery over the ruling English language. Fanon writes: “A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language. What we are getting at becomes plain: Mastery of language affords remarkable power.”⁵¹ The power of Horsmanden’s narrative depended, in large part, on the deployment of language or the syntagmatic composition of a meaningful world expressed in seemingly natural (or common sense) constructions of thought.

Horsmanden’s narrative presents its implied reader, the baffled white town dweller of colonial New York City, with a commonsensical structure of explanation that confers a meaningful order on puzzling events—specifically, that for every effect there is a cause,⁵² that latent in mysterious events is a willful design, and that the hidden character of persons will be revealed in and through their deviance from the normal (or expected) sequence of human behavior. The historian Thomas J. Davis notes: “Random human behavior was not something most New Yorkers [white settlers] in 1741 accepted. In their worldview everything had a cause and purpose and happened for a reason. Either God was sending a message of good or ill, or evil was besieging them. . . . Perplexed and frustrated people visualized a common strand in their troubles.”⁵³ It was “common practice,” the historian Gordon Woods adds, “to look beneath the surface of persons and of things for hidden meaning.”⁵⁴ The narrative construction of apparent random events and human behavior into a coherent causal explanation made meaning and judgment possible. As Horsmanden’s narrative of conspiracy unfolds, the hidden design underlying the mysterious events of 1741–42 becomes manifest. Eventually, black town dwellers and white outsiders are exposed as a “villainous confederacy of latent enemies.”

Colonial New York City was part of the early modern world of disguise⁵⁵—and in that port town, people wore masks. The convicted conspirator Peggy Kerry assumed the alias Margaret Salingburgh when, sometime before the discovery of the “plot of 1741–42,” she disembarked at the port of New York. Peggy’s use of an alias typified the practice of assuming a fictive identity that gave untold numbers of European immigrants a new lease on life in the overseas colonies. Enslaved blacks also wore masks. Caesar, one of the slaves con-

victed of burglarizing Hogg's shop, was known by the alias John Gwin. In Caesar's case, an assumed name was perhaps used to hide his involvement in the city's criminal underworld. In addition, several other slaves convicted of participating in the conspiracy were known by more than one name, and they were not unusual in this habit. Runaway slaves often masked their identity by using aliases. These fugitives probably found it easier to fashion new identities amid colonial New York City's heterogeneous and dense population than in more homogeneous and less densely populated port towns. More broadly, the formation of racial alterity in colonial New York City imposed upon Africans and their descendants a veil of blackness that rendered them disturbing enigmas to the white townspeople. Throughout the official investigation into the purported conspiracy, the colonial authorities endeavor to penetrate that veil and to comprehend the mystery that, they suspected, lay beneath it.

Horsmanden's narrator relates a case of mistaken identity that discloses the pitfalls of relying on surface appearance to discern hidden truths. Yet far from rejecting the notion that there exists a correspondence between exterior aspect and interior moral disposition, Horsmanden's narrator wishes only to caution against hasty judgment. During the official investigation into the alleged conspiracy, an enslaved black man named Cork is, according to Horsmanden's narrative, mistaken for an enslaved black man named Patrick and imprisoned at the city jail for examination. A white female named Peggy Kerry, alias Margaret Saltingburgh, is brought before a lineup of black men and asked to identify Patrick, whom she has accused of joining in the conspiracy. Upon inspecting the lineup, Peggy immediately informs the colonial authorities that they have arrested the wrong black man. Horsmanden's narrator explains why Cork was taken into custody but promptly cleared of suspicion:

Cork was unfortunately of a countenance somewhat ill-favoured, naturally of a suspicious look and reckoned withal to be unlucky too. His being sent for before the magistrates in such a perilous season might be thought sufficient to alarm the most innocent of the negroes and occasion appearance of their being under some terrible apprehensions. But it was much otherwise with Cork, and notwithstanding the disadvantage of his natural aspect, upon being interrogated concerning the conspiracy, he showed such a cheerful, open, honest smile upon his countenance (none of your fictitious, hypocritical grins) that everyone that was by and observed it (and there were several in the room) jumped in the same observation and opinion, that they never saw a fellow look so handsome: Such an efficacy have truth and innocence that they even reflect beauty upon deformity!

The colonial authorities finally apprehend Patrick, the fugitive suspect, and imprison him in the city jail for examination. In the following passage, Horsmanden's narrator contrasts Cork's innocent appearance to Patrick's guilty countenance:

On the contrary, Patrick's visage betrayed his guilt. Those who are used to negroes may have experienced that some of them, when charged with any piece

of villainy they have been detected in, have an odd knack or (it is hard what to call or how to describe it) way of turning their eyes inwards, as it were, as if shocked at the consciousness of their own perfidy; their looks, at the same time, discovering all the symptoms of the most inveterate malice and resentment. This was Patrick's appearance, and such [was] his behavior upon examination, as served to induce one's credit to what Peggy had declared so far at least that he was present at a meeting when the conspiracy was talked of and was one of the persons consenting to act a part in that infernal scheme.

According to Horsmanden's tale of mistaken identity, the confessions of the flesh divulge Patrick's guilt. Likewise, visible and decipherable marks on Cork's bodily surface evince his innocence. Specifically, Cork's "handsome" face and "honest" smile save him from the hangman's noose. Cork's inner qualities of honesty and innocence even have the effect of rendering the "deformed" physiognomic traits that ostensibly typify the Negro race or, as the narrator puts it, the Negro's "natural aspect" beautiful in the eyes of the beholding colonial inquisitors. In judging Cork to be both deformed and beautiful, the colonial authorities betray their simultaneous aversion and attraction to the "colonized other."⁵⁶

Significantly, ambivalence, indeterminacy, and undecidability structure the colonialist discourse of conspiracy and enable its production of knowledge. For instance, the colonial authorities initially find themselves in the embarrassing situation of having failed to name and to classify Negroes correctly. That a servant girl calls attention to their error only adds to their chagrin. At this juncture, Horsmanden's narrative reconstitutes the authoritative knowledge of the colonial officials by diminishing the servant girl's role in pointing out their mistake and, more important, recuperates the imperial subject's power to impose a fixed meaning on the Negro's bodily surface by disavowing the problem of indeterminacy altogether. According to Horsmanden's story, the inspection of the Negro's bodily surface in lineups and interrogation rooms renders the inner character of the Negro perfectly legible. In this respect, Horsmanden's narrative anticipates the theory of Johann Caspar Lavater (1742–1801), who, believing that the soul impresses itself on the face and other regions of the bodily surface, studied human physiognomy in order to establish the inner moral and intellectual dispositions of human beings and on that basis assign them to distinct classifications.⁵⁷ Moreover, Horsmanden's narrative resonates with theories of biblical exegesis, later grouped under the term *hermeneutics*, and the episteme of British empiricism. The basic premise of biblical exegesis asserts that even seemingly enigmatic texts contain a determinate meaning whose recovery is made possible through a method of interpretation that decodes what is initially unintelligible into a meaningful pattern understandable to human intelligence, while the intellectual system of British empiricism is predicated on the assertion that human understanding comes about as the product of sensory experience leaving impressions on the mind.⁵⁸ As Horsmanden's story unfolds, inner truths, which initially reside beyond the horizon of human sensory perception, eventually become perceptible to the naked eye and hence accessible to human understanding.

Like the ecclesiastical authorities of an earlier era, the eighteenth-century jurist Daniel Horsmanden claims the authority to read signs and ascribe meaning to them. Referring to the *habitus* (or ingrained bodily disposition) that supposedly typifies guilty Negroes, Horsmanden, in sharp contrast to his admission that he is incapable of comprehending the speech fragments of unacculturated black suspects, boasts about his expertise in deciphering the meaning of the visible signs that allegedly appear on the Negro's bodily surface and in the Negro's bodily gestures. "When charged with any piece of villainy," Horsmanden's narrator observes, "[guilty Negroes] have an odd knack or . . . way of turning their eyes inwards." Finally, there are, according to Horsmanden's discourse of conspiracy, good and bad Negroes, handsome and grotesque Negroes, innocent and guilty Negroes. And this is certain because, under the regime of visual examination, all Negroes eventually become transparent. In this respect, Horsmanden's narrative produces what Homi Bhabha terms "the colonized as a social reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible."⁵⁹ In Horsmanden's *Journal*, the enigmatic bodily surface of the Negro becomes pure transparency and hence bears a fixed meaning. Thus, the Negro is denied the attribute of self-difference—that is, of true subjecthood. In this way, Horsmanden's narrative disavows the problem of indeterminacy not only as an integral condition of the process of giving meaning to the world but also as a source of subaltern agency.⁶⁰

For the colonial authorities, the solution to the problem of policing the city's population of enslaved blacks, free blacks, and propertyless white outsiders became a matter of subjecting individuals and their bodies, gestures, and speech to examination in lineups and interrogation rooms.⁶¹ Yet without a declared state of emergency, such access to the subaltern population would have been impossible to achieve. During the early modern era, the disciplinary mechanisms of surveillance remained limited in scope and therefore could not guarantee the effective penetration of power into the colonial port town's dense and opaque subaltern population. To be sure, there were schools, barracks, jails, and a few hospitals, but as yet no professional police, integral surveillance, and panopticism. Colonial New York City's ruling elite was just beginning to enter the Enlightenment dream of living in a totally "transparent society, visible and legible in each of its parts, the dream of there no longer existing any zones of darkness."⁶² Throughout the colonial period, the city's many alleyways, docks, taverns, and other dimly lit spaces continued to provide spawning grounds for a shadowy underworld populated by "dangerous others." To render the inhabitants of these dark zones visible, transparent, and legible, Horsmanden's *Journal* and the broader colonialist discourse of conspiracy drew a cognitive map that equated deviance from the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant bourgeois norm with conspiracy against English colonial rule, whether disloyalty qua difference is embodied in the form of Negroes, Catholic priests, or propertyless white outsiders.

Detecting white traitors proved to be a more difficult task than identifying black conspirators, whose dark skin immediately marked them as suspect. The rumor that agents of Spain, Catholic priests incognito, had secretly infiltrated

New York City with the intent to murder white Protestants alerts the anxious white townspeople to another hidden and sinister presence in their midst. In John Ury's case, religious heterodoxy, though more difficult to discern than dark skin color, becomes yet another sign of guilt. In the case of other condemned whites, no religious and surface bodily difference immediately mark them as disloyal subjects. Nonetheless, their guilt eventually becomes manifest, for their "fair" skin is revealed to be the disguise of dark agents of destruction. For example, Horsmanden's narrator informs the reader that Hughson's "crimes have made him blacker than a negro: the scandal of his complection, and the disgrace of human nature." In Horsmanden's narrative, Hughson's interior blackness or hidden moral depravity becomes manifest with the appearance of a legible form of blackness on his bodily surface. The reader is told that following Hughson's execution his corpse is displayed at the battery so that the townspeople can observe the fate of those who challenge the colonial rulers. As the result of many days of exposure outdoors, Hughson's body rapidly decays. Horsmanden's narrator reports, "The town was amused with a rumor that Hughson was turned Negro . . . [his] face, hands, and neck, and feet—were of a deep shining black, rather blacker than the Negro placed by him who was one of the darkest hue of his kind. The hair of Hughson's beard and neck—his head could not be seen for he had a cap on—was curling like the wool of a Negro's beard and head. And the features of his face were of the symmetry of a Negro beauty: the nose broad and flat, the nostrils open and extended, the mouth wide, lips full and thick." Taken for a visible confirmation of his guilt or moral blackness, Hughson's darkened and rotten corpse seemed to resemble the ideal Negro type (or "beauty").⁶³ Here, a logic of noncontradiction structures Horsmanden's narrative in that it disavows self-difference or the possibility that Hughson can be both guilty and truly white. Hence, the moral of Horsmanden's story is that the *bête noire* of colonial New York City might at first appear to be white but in time the truths hidden within the interior moral space of suspected conspirators will become visibly manifest as an exterior or legible form of blackness that, in the colonialist imaginary, is associated with guilt.

The theme of guilt by association with the city's black population structures the colonialist discourse of conspiracy and directs antiblack racism not only at enslaved blacks and free blacks but also as actively at the city's lowly stratum of propertyless white outsiders who mingled with blacks in the colonial port town's taverns, tippling houses, and dramshops. Moreover, Horsmanden's representation of the events of 1741–42 plays on the colonialist fear of miscegenation and the threat that interracial sexual desire posed to the racial purity of the colonial port town's white settler community. His narrator iterates this racist fantasy, reporting that black conspirators had plotted to destroy the colonial port town and exterminate the white settler population, except for the white women, whom the black conspirators intended to hold as captives in harems. Doubtless, the colonial authorities executed the unmarried white female named Peggy Kerry, alias Margaret Salingburgh, not only for the crime of conspiracy against the English colonial state but also as a punishment for her transgression of the prohibition against miscegenation. According to Horsmanden's narra-


tive, the fact that Peggy has been impregnated by Prince, the black man convicted of burglarizing Hogg's shop, and has given birth to a "babe largely partaking of a dark complexion" confirms her disloyalty. Peggy's dark-skinned offspring is thus taken as a visible omen that bears witness to her impure and traitorous inner disposition.

According to the Manichean symbolism of darkness and light, whiteness symbolizes moral purity, and blackness moral pollution. In medieval Europe, the criminalization of the laboring poor involved the imputation of blackness to the servile population. For example, it was said that the serfs harbored an inner blackness that was bone deep.⁶⁴ By the early modern era, the similes "black as Satan" and "black as Cham" were essential elements of the English vernacular, a basic part of the parole of the common man in the first British Empire. Moreover, the similes "black as a Moor" and "black as a Negro" signified something very real to the white Christian settlers in the English overseas colonies, for Western Christendom's encounter with the Berber and Arab people of Northwest Africa (the Moors) and the people of sub-Saharan Africa (the Negroes) provided them with phobogenic objects upon which they projected age-old beliefs that equate blackness with evil, guilt, and sin.⁶⁵ Even though the Enlightenment was beginning to discredit belief in omens, portents, and other superstitions, many educated men of the early modern era continued to subscribe to the Manichean symbolism of darkness and light, to equate blackness with moral degeneracy, and even to give scientific rationalizations for the belief in the inherent inferiority of dark-skinned people. As the historian David Brion Davis has persuasively argued, the culturally ingrained responses of early modern Europeans to dark-skinned people were among the several factors that account for the subjection of black Africans to forced migration and enslavement in the New World.⁶⁶ In colonial New York City and other English overseas settler colonies where white settlers lived in close proximity to enslaved blacks, the Negro became the living embodiment of blackness. Unlike the "scabby Negro" of Benedict Spinoza's dream, who held for that inhabitant of seventeenth-century Amsterdam little more than a phantom existence,⁶⁷ the presence of an increasingly numerous black population was an everyday reality for the white townspeople of colonial New York City, who also dreamed of dark specters yet awoke only to live their own worst nightmares. For these anxious town dwellers, blackness attained a certain facticity; the empirical realities of daily life seemed to approximate their nocturnal and fantastic fears of blackness.

Over time, vulgar similes that posited the Negro as a figure of comparison (or resemblance) in representations of evil, sin, and guilt were sublated in more powerful metaphors that held lethal consequences for dark-skinned people. "Metaphors," Hayden White writes, "are crucially necessary when a culture or social group encounters phenomena that either elude or run afoul of normal expectations or quotidian experiences."⁶⁸ For the anxious townspeople of colonial New York City, the Negro became a seductive metaphor for evil, corruption, and calamity, a key figure that, when subjected to interpretation, conferred meaning on the mysteries of 1741–42. That breach of routine led the colonial authorities to search for a hidden explanation woven into the fabric of puzzling

events. Dark skin color and other signs of deviance from the norms of whiteness, Protestantism, and property holding became the principal criteria for identifying “dangerous others” and determining the cause of the baffling crime wave and rash of fires. Here, the binary logic of sameness and difference managed ambiguity, indeterminacy, and ambivalence. By constructing Manichean oppositions of darkness and light and offering the bewildered townspeople a simplistic, black-and-white explanation for mysterious events, the colonialist discourse of conspiracy seemed to abolish the troubling complexity of social reality.

A tale suspended between the white settlers’ real and imaginary worlds, Horsmanden’s “plot of 1741–42” resonated with popular belief in omens, portents, and prodigies. The colonialist discourse of conspiracy borrows much of its vocabulary, as well as its logic and grammar, from the language of marvels and wonders dating back to the Middle Ages.⁶⁹ As the historian David Hall stresses in his influential study on popular religion in seventeenth-century New England, educated clergymen accommodated the folk beliefs of the common man. In doing so, that segment of the colonial elite, Hall demonstrates, took a leading role in interpreting bizarre events such as monster births, catastrophic storms, and destruction by fire.⁷⁰ In like manner, New York City’s ruling elite took up the task of interpreting the mysteries that beset the city during the emergency of 1741–42. Judge Daniel Horsmanden, along with other jurists and court officials, assimilated the common man’s beliefs in omens, marvels, and wonders to the colonialist discourse of conspiracy, bringing them into articulation with other popular prejudices—for example, anti-Catholicism and antiblack racism—and with ingrained patterns of perception and cognition, such as the Manichean dualism of darkness and light and the binary logic of identity and difference.⁷¹ In this way, colonial New York City’s ruling elite constructed the common sense of colonial governmentality, which allowed them to govern by consent of the governed, the intermediate stratum of propertied white freehold electors.

 By discovering the “plot of 1741–42”—namely, a dark threat to the city’s security in the guise of a dangerous combination of enslaved blacks, free blacks, Catholic priests, and white outsiders who had allegedly conspired to incinerate the city, exterminate the white Protestant townspeople, and found a renegade colony in alliance with England’s enemy, Catholic Spain—Lieutenant Governor Clarke and his ruling party claimed the leadership role of protector of the people, neutralized the opposition party, and united the broader white Protestant settler population during a time of internal political crisis and international war. The ruling party’s response to the emergency of 1741–42 reinforced the horizontal axis of identification among the property-holding white Protestant Anglo-Saxon settlers, as well as the vertical axis of identification of loyal British subjects with the English rulers. In doing so, the ruling party fortified the fragile structure of colonial governance in New York City and managed

to avert a settler revolt of the sort led by Jacob Leisler following the Glorious Revolution. By late 1742, however, the opposition party began to criticize the court proceedings against accused conspirators. At that juncture, the ruling party could not risk giving the appearance that it was governing too much and therefore terminated its showcase conspiracy trials and exercise of extraordinary police powers.⁷² Consequently, the primary responsibility for policing the city's subaltern population fell, once again, to the intermediate stratum of propertied white Protestant Anglo-Saxon settlers.




PART III


*Subaltern Insurgency and
the Breakdown of
Colonial Governance*

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“We Shall Never Be Quite Safe”

POLICING THE FUGITIVE BODY OF COLONIAL NEW YORK CITY'S SERVILE POPULATION

 During the colonial period, the port of New York remained a largely open gateway, through which outsiders could enter undetected. To be sure, the colonial authorities attempted to keep an account of the strangers who disembarked at the seaport, ordering the captains of sailing vessels to submit lists of passengers and requiring all newcomers who planned to stay in the city for more than a few weeks to register with the mayor.¹ These regulations advised strangers that they were being watched. But the compilation of passenger lists and the registration of newcomers alone could not solve the problem of everyday acts of subaltern insurgency—for example, petty theft, trafficking in stolen property, the appropriation of leisure time, unsupervised assembly, interracial socializing in the dramshops, taverns, and tippling houses, unauthorized visits to friends and loved ones, and running away. Over time, policing the city's servile population became more and more a matter of subjecting servants and slaves, their bodies and their movements, to a pervasive visual regime of individualizing surveillance. However, no single, centralized authority kept watch over the city's servile population, and the mobile body of fugitive servants and slaves often eluded the discontinuous gaze of the colonial state.

 To a great extent, the detection of runaways depended on the vigilance of the free white townspeople. Most colonial New York City newspapers carried notices for runaway servants and slaves, and these printed advertisements aspired to inculcate the habit of watchfulness in the free white townspeople and

to constitute that intermediate stratum of the city's settler population as a vigilant public endowed with the capacity of supervision over the port town's servile population. Even though a small percentage of settler households subscribed to a newspaper, the casual circulation of broadsheets, coupled with the practice of reading published news aloud at home and in storefronts, taverns, coffeehouses, and other gathering places, meant that ads for runaways reached a much wider audience than the documented number of newspaper subscribers.² Because the fundamental basis of sociality in colonial New York City was face-to-face visual contact between town dwellers, public alertness to the distinguishing visible characteristics of individual runaways became indispensable to the task of apprehending fugitives. Although colonial New York City newspaper advertisements for runaways rarely included pictorial illustrations,³ they skillfully combined print technology's capacity for the dissemination of information with the mimetic capabilities of the written word to imitate visual observation. These newspaper ads were designed to conjure a visual image of the body of each advertised fugitive in the minds of the townspeople. This visual regime of individualizing surveillance produced a mind-body duality that assigned the faculty of rational intelligence to the free white settler population and ascribed the property of objectified corporeality to the fugitive population of runaway servants and slaves. Miming visual observation, printed newspaper advertisements for fugitives represent the servile population as objects, the chattel of possessive individual subjects. Just as the descriptions of individual items of personal property listed in wills and probate records served as a means of verifying the ownership of that chattel, the descriptions of runaway servants and slaves in newspaper notices provided crucial information for identifying a specific fugitive and establishing to whom that particular runaway belonged.⁴

Owing to the descriptive information contained in them, the newspaper ads for runaways reveal as much about the sex, age, and other visible characteristics of fugitives as they do about early modern techniques of individualizing surveillance. Colonial New York City newspaper advertisements for runaways indicate that the vast majority of fugitive servants and slaves were young male adults: males were approximately 90 percent of the runaway sample population for this study, and the median age of these runaways was 23.5 years.⁵ In addition to generic characteristics such as the fugitive's sex and age, the newspaper ads for runaways often included descriptions of visible infirmities, remarkable bodily dispositions, and other peculiar marks that served to individualize the fugitive body of each advertised runaway. On August 27, 1733, the following advertisement appeared in the *New-York Gazette*:

Ran away the 18th of August, 1733 from Jacobus Van Cortlandt of the city of New York, a Negro Man Slave, named Andrew Saxon, a very tall Fellow, walks lamish with his Left Leg; the Thumb of his left Hand is somewhat stiff by a wound he had in his Hand formerly: the shirts he had with him and on his Back are marked with a cross on the left Breast; He professeth himself to be a Roman Catholic, speaks very good English, is a Carpenter and Cooper by Trade, and has the Tools for both Trades with him; he had on a pair of

Trousers, but `tis uncertain what other clothes he has with him. Whoever takes up and secures the said Negro man, and gives Notice thereof to Said Master so as he may be had again shall have Forty Shillings if Taken within Ten miles of the city of New-York and Three pounds if further, as a reward, all reasonable charges paid by Jacobus Van Cortlandt.⁶

By drawing attention to the fugitive's visible bodily infirmities—for example, his crippled left leg and sickly left hand—this ad attempted to render the runaway legible against the background of the city's aggregate black population. Similarly, descriptive detail disaggregated individual white runaways from the city's white settler majority. A range of distinctive visible bodily characteristics individualized the fugitive body of a "lame" white servant named Timothy Sheels, who, according to the newspaper ad for his arrest, was "much pitted with the small-pox" and known for walking with a "down look" and "shutting his eyes" when he laughed.⁷ Physical infirmities and bodily idiosyncrasies did not exhaust the inventory of individualizing marks itemized in runaway ads. Like the newspaper advertisements for the sale of servants and slaves, advertisements for runaways often called attention to attributes of physique that attested to the fugitive's exceptional physical well-being. On January 9, 1735, the *New-York Weekly Journal* carried the following ad, highlighting a runaway's robust health, tall stature, and erect posture:

Runaway from Mary Bisset of the City of New-York, widow, a Negro Man named George (calls himself George Goldin) he is a lusty tall Fellow, very straight limb'd, and walks very upright, he had on when he went away, a light colour'd Great-Coat, and a blue Jacket, he formerly followed Chimney-Sweeping in this City. Whoever takes up and secures him, so that his mistress may have him again, shall have 20s.⁸

Runaway ads also included descriptions of noncorporeal peculiarities—for example, the fugitive's exceptional occupational skills and unorthodox religious beliefs. The newspaper advertisement for his capture indicated that the runaway slave Andrew Saxon had mastered two crafts during his enslavement in British America and, unlike his enslaver, adhered to the doctrines of Roman Catholicism. Besides noting the advertised fugitive's religious beliefs and occupational skills, the runaway ads sometimes referenced distinguishing personal habits—for example, the fugitive's fondness for strong drink, tobacco, cursing, or favorite pastimes, such as fiddling, dancing, or singing.⁹

Importantly, ads for runaway servants mention, whenever possible, the fugitive's birthplace and native language, particularistic marks of ethnicity that denied white runaway servants the invisibility that the camouflage of whiteness might have otherwise afforded them.¹⁰ A large proportion of fugitive servants, approximately 46 percent of the total documented runaway servant population, were natives of Ireland. Servants from England, Scotland, and Wales were approximately 23 percent of that runaway servant population, while servants from continental Europe and Scandinavia were another 16 percent. American-born servants accounted for 14 percent of advertised fugitive servants. The major

part of both the documented runaway English, Scottish, and Welsh servants (25 of 48) and American-born servants (20 of 30) appeared in newspaper advertisements published after 1765. Ads for runaway slaves rarely mention the fugitive's ethnicity, but the following colonial New York City newspaper announcement for the capture of an Angolan runaway suggests that particular cultural traits sometimes individualized fugitive slaves: "Runaway from Samuel Willis of Middletown in Connecticut, a well-set Angola, Negro fellow aged about 20 years, a Little bow-leg'd, and his Toes spread pretty much, he has small scratches each side of his face, sometimes has a Bobb in his Ear, and is a good Cook."¹¹ This ad describes arresting marks of both cultural and physical particularity—the fugitive's Angolan origin, the scratches, perhaps tribal markings,¹² on each side of his face, and his habit of wearing an earring, possibly an artifact of Angolan custom or the seafaring culture.¹³ Regardless of the origin and intended cultural significance of the Angolan's peculiar marks, they now identified him as a runaway slave. Native Africans were less than 10 percent of this study's sample runaway slave population. American-born slaves, who had lived in close contact with the settlers for many years and who spoke at least one European language, ran away in larger numbers than less acculturated native African slaves. Notably more unacculturated slaves seem to have absconded from their masters after 1760.¹⁴

Because the law required slaves to carry a pass or written permission from their masters when traveling beyond the city's limit,¹⁵ fugitives who could forge their masters' signatures on such documents had a better chance of escaping than fugitives who could not duplicate their masters' handwriting and produce forged passes.¹⁶ Some slaveowners suspected untrustworthy settlers and servants of forging passes for runaway slaves.¹⁷ Although most slaves could not write, most fugitive slaves spoke at least one European language, if only imperfectly. A majority of the documented runaway slave population spoke English, nearly 20 percent spoke Dutch, and 5 percent spoke another European language. Approximately 6 percent were bilingual and typically spoke both English and Dutch.¹⁸ A few runaway slaves spoke as many as three European languages with varying degrees of proficiency. Colonial New York City newspaper advertisements for runaways often rated the fugitive's oral language skills along a scale of "very good" (fluent) to "very broken" (poor) speaking proficiency.¹⁹ In the autumn of 1727, Captain Matthew Norris, resident of New York City, offered a 40-shilling reward for the capture and return of an adult male slave named John Henricus, who, Norris noted, spoke "very good" English in addition to the Welsh dialect.²⁰ In the spring of 1760, Captain William Fitzherbert offered a three-pound reward for the capture and return of a Negro boy named Glasgow who, Fitzherbert pointed out, spoke "very broken" English.²¹ By 1760, the documented runaway population was less rather than more acculturated with respect to English language skills, a trend that was largely the result of the influx of unacculturated enslaved native Africans into the port of New York from the late 1740s through to the early 1770s. The historian Ira Berlin has noted that during the post-1760 period more than 25 percent of the documented fugitive slaves spoke poor English, if any at all.²²

In colonial New York City newspapers, usage of the term *broken* to indicate poor proficiency in a spoken language was not limited to descriptions of black fugitives' language skills. Newspaper ads for runaways described white servants who spoke "broken" English, Dutch, German, and other European languages. White servants born in the British Isles were not always fluent English speakers. Daniel Macraw and John Ross, Scottish Highlanders who ran away from their master in 1746, spoke "broken English."²³ Primarily drawn from the multiethnic British Isles and Europe, colonial New York City's servant population exhibited linguistic diversity and bilingualism. Approximately 11 percent of the documented runaway servant population spoke two or more languages. Bilingual runaway servants, like bilingual runaway slaves, most often spoke English and Dutch. For many white servants in colonial New York City, English was not a native language but a second language acquired after several years of living in the English overseas colony. A New York City newspaper ad noted that the Danish runaway servant John Christophers spoke some English, while his accomplice and fellow countryman spoke no English.²⁴ The runaway ads generally used the terms *high Dutch* when referring to the German language. The term *low Dutch* became a linguistic marker indicating that the fugitive was born in the colonies, where colonial Netherlanders generally spoke a *lingua rustica* or provincial mode of the Dutch language.²⁵ Newspaper ads for fugitives included some Irish servants who spoke English with a distinctive accent or brogue,²⁶ as well as some Scottish Highlanders who spoke a dialect that even the English-speaking settlers found unintelligible.²⁷

Colonial New York City newspaper ads for runaways often included a detailed description of each advertised fugitive's habit of dress, as well as a complete itemization of the clothes the fugitive had on his back and carried away.²⁸ When Andrew Saxon absconded from his master, he was wearing a shirt embellished with a cross on the left breast. In addition to its meaning as a religious symbol, the cross on Saxon's shirt branded him as a runaway slave. In an era of sumptuary laws that stipulated the proper mode of attire for each social rank (e.g., plain clothes for the laboring classes and more elegant apparel for their social superiors), clothing became a visible code, differentiating gentlemen and masters from servants and slaves.²⁹ Slaveowners sometimes required unruly slaves, especially those who were habitual runaways, to wear clothing that displayed visible insignias of their servile status. Yet, as Anne McClintock has noted, "Clothes are the visible signs of social identity but are also permanently subject to disarrangement and symbolic theft."³⁰ In attempting to elude his enslavers, Saxon might have worn his shirt inside out or traded it for apparel befitting a free man.³¹

Runaway slaves could shed their clothing but not their skin. In ancient slave societies, brands, tattoos, and shaved heads differentiated the enslaved from the free population in a context where no visible physiognomic trait distinguished the slaves. In colonial British America, enslavers rarely inflicted such legible marks on the slave's bodily surface, though slaveowners sometimes branded habitual runaways with the mark RN.³² In British North America, dark skin color became *prima facie* evidence of slave status, as well as a justification for the en-

slavement of sub-Saharan Africans. European enslavers regarded, David Brion Davis has noted, “darkness of skin as a brand which God or nature impressed upon inferior people.”³³ Moreover, during the Enlightenment the increasingly influential scientific discourse of natural history selected dark skin color as a privileged trait for assigning individuals to its abstract racial typology designated “Negro” after the Spanish word for “black.” Written documents from the colonial period, including New York City newspaper advertisements, often used the designation *Negro* as a synonym for slave. In December 1737, the *New-York Gazette* printed the following notice: “Ran away from John Bell of the City of New York, Carpenter, one Negro Woman, named Jenney, aged about 14 or 15 years, she was born in New York, speaks English, and some Dutch. She has a flat Nose, thick Lips, and full Face.”³⁴ The use of the term *Negro* in this ad was all that was needed to indicate that Jenney was a slave. But, for added definition, the same newspaper notice cited visually observable facial features that the racial classification schema of the early modern era ascribed to the ideal Negro (or Ethiopian) type.³⁵ In this way, the colonial New York City newspaper advertisements for fugitive slaves did not merely describe. As media, they communicated, through iteration, ascriptive categories of race and servile status and, in complex and contradictory ways, contributed to the process of racial formation and its articulation with the exploitation of labor.

Importantly, the mysteries of human diversity rendered questionable the reliability of skin color and other visible physiognomic traits as signifiers of servile status and called into question the logic of sameness and difference that structured the early modern racial classification schema. In 1735, a New York City newspaper reported that a female slave had given birth to twins, one with “white” skin and the other with “black” skin.³⁶ Both father and mother were probably classified as Negroes, since, if the twins had been the product of a known interracial union, the newspaper report would have referred to them as mulattoes. The “white” sibling was likely an albino. Although albinos were scientific curiosities, for the general public the main wonder was the birth of twins of opposite skin types, one of perfect “white” and the other of perfect “black.” Such “miraculous births” troubled the logic of noncontradiction that mandated like must produce like; here was a perplexing case in which like produced both sameness and difference. Naturalists of the early modern era were uncertain whether the distinguishing marks of a particular racial type were immutable traits or whether they were the product of environmental conditions and hence likely to change when the descendants of a racial group moved to new climates. In any event, the binary logic of the classification system that separated humankind into distinct yet relationally constituted races could be misleading, since it constructed ideal taxonomies of race that eliminated the messy reality of human diversity.³⁷ Then as now, the permutations of the human genetic code produced a range of skin pigmentations between the two reductive extremes of “black” and “white.”³⁸ On July 3, 1738, the weekly edition of the New York City newspaper printed an advertisement for the arrest of a “lusty Madagascar Negro Man, of yellowish Complexion” and another ad for the return of a “lusty well-sett Negro Man, of Brownish complecion.”³⁹ Epidermal hetero-

genicity also characterized the documented runaway servant population, and the newspaper ads for these fugitives noted observable features of the runaway's bodily surface that deviated from the physiognomic norms ascribed to the ideal Caucasian type. On August 26, 1734, the New York City newspaper reported that two Irish servants had absconded from their master and that "the one named Michael Highland . . . is a tall lusty thick well set Fellow, brown complecion," while "the other named John Whilen . . . is of middle stature, fair complecion . . . and [has] thick lips."⁴⁰ Some newspaper advertisements for runaway servants and slaves thus reminded the settlers of the marvel of human variation and the puzzle of indeterminacy presented by the diverse human beings who populated colonial New York City. In this way, these newspaper ads alerted the public to the unreliability of skin color and other visible physiognomic traits as indexes to servile status and thus discouraged overconfidence in the use of simplistic stereotypes of "free white" and "enslaved black" to identify and apprehend fugitives.

Doubtless, some light-skinned slaves passed into the free white world.⁴¹ On October 9, 1738, the *New-York Gazette* printed the following advertisement:

Run-away on the 16th of September, from Charles Decker, of Richmond County upon Staten Island, a Mulatto Slave named Harry, about 24 Years of Age, of Middle Stature, blew eyes, blackish Hair, a Fair Skin for a Mulatto, he speaks good Dutch but his English is sometime Broken: He had on when he went away a lightish Duroy Coat, blew grey kersey Jacket, a narrow brimm'd Beaver Hat, gray wollen stockings, new round toe'd Shoes, and Silver Buckels.⁴²

The attention brought to Harry's "fair" skin and blue eyes suggests that instead of fleeing the white settler colony he might have attempted to pass into the realm of the master race. Harry's visible bodily surface provided him with a kind of camouflage that probably rendered him invisible against the background of colonial New York City's white settler majority. In this respect, the act of racial passing can be regarded as a disappearing act. David Theo Goldberg has noted that "visibility and invisibility each can serve contextually as weapons, as defensive or offensive strategy, as a mode of self-determination or denial of it."⁴³ In Harry's case, strategic invisibility offered the passport that he needed to gain entrance into the free world. It did not, however, fully guarantee his emancipation. For the light-skinned Harry, the feat of racial passing probably depended as heavily on his ability to narrate a credible autobiography of his life as a free man as on his strategic use of the invisibility that his light skin color afforded him. By necessity, such fictional self-fashioning would have to include a story of being born of a free woman, a tale of his accomplishment of self-purchase, or some other account of his emancipation that encouraged a *misrecognition*, whereby Harry's individualizing bodily marks, which in the runaway ad identify him as a light-skinned mulatto slave, become unremarkable. For Harry, successful escape depended, in the broadest sense, on his subjection to the norms of whiteness. Other mulatto fugitives doubtless took advantage of their anomalous position and escaped through the blind spots in the binary regime of visibility that coded bodies as either black and unfree or white and

free. The artful dodger Charles Roberts, a male mulatto servant known by the alias "German," ran away from his master on April 12, 1762. His master offered the following description of Roberts's talents at deception and mischief:

His behavior is excessively complaisant, obsequious, and insinuating; he speaks good English smoothly and plausibly, and generally with a cringe and a smile, he is extremely artful, and ready at inventing specious pretences to conceal villainous Actions and Designs. He plays on the Fiddle, can read and write tolerably well, and understands a Little Arithmetic and Accounts. I have reason to believe some evil-minded Persons in town have encouraged and been Accomplices in his villainous Designs; it is probable he will contrive the most specious forgeries to give him the appearance of a free man.⁴⁴

Notably, the visual regime of individualizing surveillance could not foreclose the threat of trespass that Harry, the talented Charles Roberts, and other light-skinned mulatto runaway servants and slaves posed to the settler colony's biracial social hierarchy.⁴⁵ A rigid binarism of free white/unfree black structured commonsensical patterns of seeing and knowing and admitted no contradiction. For precisely this reason, some light-skinned fugitive slaves, especially those who were verbally adept and skilled at manipulating the preconceptions of others, passed through the guarded yet permeable borders of the free white world, evading the imperfect disciplinary mechanisms created to contain them in their assigned subject-position.

Free blacks posed a greater threat to the settler colony's biracial social hierarchy than light-skinned slaves and the act of racial passing. The anomalous subject-position of free blacks called into question the reductive binarism of free white/enslaved black. An incident in the life of a young black girl suggests that the free black presence in colonial New York City opened an avenue of escape for enslaved blacks. In 1763, a dispute arose over the sale of a black girl who claimed that, although of dark complexion, she had been born free and unlawfully sold into slavery. The existence of free blacks in the colony lent credibility to her story, and as a consequence the colonial authorities could not dismiss the truth of her assertion without legally valid evidence to the contrary. The black girl's mere claim to having been born free entangled New York City slave traders in legal uncertainties for several months. Captain Isaac Youngblood insisted that, while he had no written proof that the black girl had been born to a slave woman, he had, in good faith, bought the female youth from Captain Hunter, who had sold her on consignment for Nicholas Bayard. Hoping to substantiate his property right in the person of the black girl in question, the mariner inquired to Nicholas Bayard about the black girl's mother, whose servile status was, by mandate of colonial New York's law of slavery, passed on to her daughter, regardless of the child's skin color and other physiognomic traits. Bayard hired a lawyer, Archibald Carey, to obtain proof that the black girl's mother was, in fact, a slave. On December 13, 1763, Carey wrote to his client: "You may be assured that she was Borne a slave, the father & mother are now Living in the same family, Mr. Bostherth, who lived near my father's

Country Seat & his best neighbors & friend. Brought her up. Also, born in his family. I could send you proofs of it." Once documentary evidence of her mother's slave status was submitted to the court, Captain Youngblood was certain to receive clear title to the black girl he had purchased from Captain Hunter.⁴⁶


Like most female slaves, that young black girl did not make a bid for freedom by running away from her master. Female slaves account for only 6 percent of the documented fugitive slave population. Confined to their masters' houses, except for weekly trips to the city markets, and subjected to almost constant surveillance, female slaves were presented with few opportunities to escape. Moreover, enslaved mothers bore the custodial responsibility of caring for their young offspring, and flight from slavery with a helpless infant diminished their chances of successful escape.⁴⁷ Female slaves sometimes eloped with adult male accomplices; and when female slaves fled alone, they sometimes impersonated males, as in the case of a female Indian slave named Kate, who, the newspaper ad for her capture stated, "in all probability will equip herself in men's clothes, and inlist for a soldier."⁴⁸ Female servants comprised only 4 percent of the documented fugitive servant population. Female servants rarely absconded alone; all but a few ran away in the company of men. By eloping with a male accomplice or, more boldly, assuming the identity of a male, female runaways enhanced their chances of escaping detection in a world where women who traveled without a male companion were instant objects of suspicion.

While men who traveled alone were less likely to attract suspicion than single female sojourners, a significant proportion of the documented male fugitive population—approximately 22 percent—eloped with accomplices. The daily gathering of the city's male labor force at urban work sites doubtless encouraged servants and slaves to conspire to run away in the company of other laborers. In 1689, around the time of Leisler's Rebellion, a group of fugitive slaves from New York City rampaged through the farming village of Harlem.⁴⁹ Although enslaved black males and white male servants labored side by side at New York City work sites, they seldom absconded together. The colonial penal code discouraged such collaboration. Any fugitive servant convicted of running away in consort with a slave paid a double penalty for his or her crime. Following his failed attempt to escape in the company of a runaway slave, Robert Bowman, a white indentured servant, was ordered to complete the term of five years' service that he owed his master. As punishment for his crime, Bowman received 39 lashes on his naked back and was required to labor six months for his accomplice's master in compensation for the labor time lost during the runaway slave's absence. The court took no action against Bowman's accomplice and instead remanded the ex-fugitive slave to his master for correction.⁵⁰ When white servants ran away in groups, they generally escaped in the company of other servants from their homelands. On Saturday evening, April 19, 1765, Timothy Sullivan, Timothy McCarthy, and Phillip McCardell, indentured servants and natives of Ireland, ran away from their masters after spending only five months in New York City;⁵¹ and on Friday evening, April 11, 1768, Johannes Finckenfor

absconded from his master in the company of two other German servants.⁵²

Indian runaways account for only a tiny fraction of the sample runaway population, approximately 3 percent of runaway slaves and less than 1 percent of runaway servants. These fugitives usually escaped alone and probably headed for the Northwest Territory, where they were likely to receive asylum from the native inhabitants of that remote region or from the renegades, vagabonds, and bandits who had established isolated maroon communities on the frontier. The French explorer *Sieur de Villiers* reported that, during his 1690 expedition southward from Lake Ontario into the Canisteo River valley, he discovered an "outlaw village of longhouses" inhabited by Indians, Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Englishmen, and runaway slaves. In 1762, Sir William Johnson sent a military expedition to destroy that maroon community and to apprehend a couple of its inhabitants, Long Coat and Squash Cutter, who had been accused of murdering two Englishmen.⁵³ After 1705, New York's penal code imposed the death penalty on runaways who were captured more than 40 miles north of Albany.⁵⁴ The colonial authorities deemed this harsh deterrent a vital security measure, for in times when England was at war against France, slaves and servants who escaped to the northwest frontier might carry military intelligence to the French enemies or their Indian allies and thus imperil the safety of the English colonies. During the French and Indian War, enslaved black males were enlisted in the New York militia through the substitution and hiring-out systems. Though few in number, black soldiers and other enslaved black males accompanied English troops to New York's distant frontier and were, therefore, familiar with that territory. In 1765, a male slave named Robbin and a pregnant female slave named Rose ran away from their master, who believed that the couple was headed for the northwest frontier because, some years earlier, Robbin had traveled with a military expedition to that region.⁵⁵

While the Northwest Territory attracted some runaways, the open Atlantic Ocean beckoned other fugitives. In 1749, four slaves from New Spain murdered the crew of a sloop moored at the port of New York, hijacked that sailing vessel, and escaped by sea.⁵⁶ In all likelihood, these Spanish-speaking runaways were sailors and therefore capable of navigating the commandeered sloop homeward. Because of the indiscriminate hiring practices of mariners, untold numbers of runaways secured passage on sailing vessels embarking from New York's seaport. Newspaper advertisements for runaways often included a warning reminding mariners that the law forbade "harboring, concealing or carrying off" fugitives.⁵⁷ Colonial New York City slaveowners sometimes hired out their male servants and slaves to mariners who employed hired laborers for voyages of varying durations, extending from a few weeks to more than a year. Newspaper advertisements for fugitives generally noted when a runaway had experience at sea, because servants and slaves who had tasted the seafaring life sometimes attempted to escape by sea after returning to New York City. Policing the revolving gateway of the port of New York, which not only allowed undetected strangers into the city but also enabled unknown numbers of the city's servants and slaves to escape, proved to be an impossible task.

 During the colonial period, no regular salaried police force monitored New York City.⁵⁸ Instead, a night watch, dating back to Dutch rule and drawn from the ranks of the adult white male property holders, conducted irregular patrols through the port town's neighborhoods. But the presence of night watchmen in the streets after sunset was an ineffective mechanism for policing the city's servile population. The colonial authorities relied on masters to keep a vigilant watch over their bondsmen and to punish insubordinate servants and slaves. At the same time, the colonial authorities urged masters to use restraint when punishing unruly bondsmen. The colonial laws made the murder of a slave a capital crime and imposed a fine of £40 on masters who mutilated their slaves.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, masters sometimes inflicted severe bodily damages on bond laborers. In a New York City newspaper announcement, several destitute white women publicized their misgivings about entering into contracts of indenture with abusive masters and appealed to public opinion and the moral authority of household mistresses for protection from mistreatment at the hands of brutal masters. "It is proper the World should know our Terms," the women wrote. "We think it reasonable we should not be beat by our Mistresses Husband, they being too strong, and perhaps may do tender Women mischief. If any Ladies want Servants, and will engage for their Husbands, they shall be soon supplied."⁶⁰ Unlike female servants, male servants could not lay claim to the vulnerabilities of the weaker sex when appealing to the public for protection from tyrannical masters, and abused slaves, regardless of their gender, had extremely limited recourse to public opinion. New York City slaveowners sometimes used lethal force when punishing their bondsmen. In December 1733, a newspaper report described the fatal beating that a New York City master inflicted on the body of his male slave: "Last night being the 21st the Jury of Inquest taken before the High Sheriff (in the Coroner's absence) found that said [William] Petit . . . with his Fists and Feet, beat, wounded, kick'd and bruised the Negro [Joe] on his Breast, Head, and other Parts of his Body to the Degree, that thereof he instantly died."⁶¹ Following this preliminary finding, a jury convicted Petit of manslaughter or recklessly taking the life of his slave. In a similar incident, the New York City blockmaker John Van Zandt horsewhipped his slave until his victim fell unconscious and died. The city coroner supported the medical opinion of Doctor Braine and Doctor DuPuy, the physicians who performed the initial autopsy of the deceased slave's corpse. In his final report, the coroner stated: "The correction given by the Master was not the cause of his Death, but it was by the visitation of God."⁶² By attributing the slave's death to "natural causes," to use the parlance of present-day forensic medicine, the coroner's report exempted Van Zandt from an indictment on the charge of murder.

Both Van Zandt and Petit had fatally injured their slaves in the act of punishing them for taking time off from work without permission. Colonial New York City offered servants and slaves numerous diversions from drudgery. The city

markets became popular gathering spots, where the port town's servile population congregated with the regularity of the conduct of trade. Each workday, dancing, drumming, fiddling, and singing intermingled with the din of maritime commerce. During the colonial period, the port of New York became a crucible for a vibrant black urban culture. Commerce stimulated cultural production and sometimes transformed the recreational activities of enslaved black laborers into a means of getting paid. Within the public space of the city markets and its matrix of exchange, slaves who had a talent for fiddling soon became street performers, earning income from the donations of appreciative town dwellers, who deposited coins in the fiddler's hat or cup and, in doing so, became consumers of black urban cultural production. Whereas black culture in the rural South took shape within the comparatively insular space of the racially segregated slave quarters, black culture in colonial New York City developed in the relatively open, multiethnic, market-oriented space of a port town and merged with the city's broader urban working-class culture. For urban black laborers, the value-making activity of commerce coincided with the value-making activity of the bricoleur, whose improvisational reworking of bits and pieces of everyday artifacts transformed material culture into cultural material for a poetry of the marketplace.

By the early nineteenth-century, New York City's black vendors shouted street cries dating back to the colonial period.⁶³ Like the work songs of the early slaves in the rural South, the cries of the city's black street vendors transformed routine labor activity into an expressive form that gave a measure of dignity to the lives of exploited workers. This functional similarity should not, however, obscure the dissimilarities of form and content between the rural work songs and the urban street cries. Whereas the formal structure of antiphony and the thematic stress on spiritual liberation from a life of strenuous labor in the work songs of rural slaves emerged from the conditions of gang labor and the seasonal work routine of agricultural production on the southern staple-crop plantations, the short refrains of solicitation and the thematic of consumption in the street cries of urban slave vendors reflected the process of commodification taking place at the urban marketplace. A peach was worth 10 pence on the city streets, the slave vendor cried, because its taste magically satisfied the appetite for fresh things. Although the street cries did not explicitly reference rural sites of agricultural production—for example, the nearby truck farms in the surrounding countryside and the distant sugar plantations in the West Indies where exploited laborers cultivated crops destined for consumption in urban centers throughout the Atlantic world—they did, for those passersby whose ears and eyes were open to it, call attention to exploitative labor practices in colonial port towns, where enslaved street vendors in tattered clothing and bare feet sold agricultural produce for their masters at inflated prices. Among the street vendors were enslaved females who escaped the tedium and confinement of housework by setting up carts and stalls at the city's outdoor markets. At the urban marketplace, otherwise isolated female slaves participated in the collective life of the city's servile population.

The urban market for agricultural produce brought rural blacks to the city, where they sold fruits and vegetables to the town dwellers. At the city markets,

these “country Negroes” interacted with urban blacks who frequented the outdoor marketplaces while on errands or during stolen leisure time. In addition to agricultural produce, rural blacks from Long Island and Eastern Jersey brought their own brand of culture to the city. Elements of rural black culture were doubtless incorporated into black urban culture. The reverse was also true, as the cultural practices of urban blacks probably made an impression on rural black culture. Both enslaved and free blacks from other parts of the Atlantic world also contributed to colonial New York City’s black urban culture and to the formation of a broader black Atlantic culture, whose fluid and hybrid expressive forms migrated from port town to port town and from these transshipment points of international commerce into the countryside. As already noted, the transatlantic slave trade brought native Africans to the port of New York, and these involuntary immigrants surely infused the city’s black culture with cultural idioms imported directly from Africa. The commingling of diverse cultures and their circulation make it difficult to state with certainty the exact provenance of many of the expressive forms urban blacks performed in the port towns of British North America. Thomas De Voe attributed a dance, known as the “jig or breakdown” and performed in the streets of early New York City, to rural slaves from Long Island.⁶⁴ But sailors and other maritime workers performed similar dances at the port of London.⁶⁵ An estimated 3,000 seaman were registered at the port of New York on the eve of the War for Independence.⁶⁶ More than a few of these sailors were black men; by the eighteenth century, black sailors were approximately 40 percent of the British merchant marine.⁶⁷ Constituted as a modern nomadic subject by a life of maritime travel, the black seafarer became a black Atlantic flâneur imbued with the attributes of hybridity and mobility that characterized the emergent cosmopolitan international maritime working class of the early modern era. Circumnavigating the Atlantic world, traveling from port town to port town along the Atlantic littoral and the Caribbean basin, endowed the black Atlantic flâneur with the panoramic perspective of a mobilized gaze. At seaports such as the port of New York, this black sailor and others like him narrated tales of their seafaring lives and adventures in distant lands, thus broadening the horizon of the relatively sedentary and confined black town dwellers whom they encountered during shore leave.⁶⁸ These black seafarers also brought new expressive forms to the port towns they visited. Just as the nexus of trade between town and country facilitated cultural exchange between urban and rural blacks, the integrally related and much wider overseas trade became the channel for the dissemination of various cultural styles between the port of New York and other seaports along the Atlantic littoral. Set afloat on the currents of maritime commerce, particularistic cultural expressions soon found their way to distant ports.⁶⁹ At these maritime theaters of cultural exchange, mimicry and appropriation quickly transformed exotic yet portable cultural practices into recognizable features of a cosmopolitan urban working-class culture. Colonial New York City’s black urban culture was not only an enduring feature of that port town’s working-class culture but also probably a component of the broader culture of the international working class of the early modern era.

During the summer months, the poorest segments of colonial New York City's laboring class, along with the large numbers of transient sailors who took shore leave at the port of New York during the late summer and early autumn, gathered at the docks along the East River, where they amused themselves far into the night. Some townspeople complained that this boisterous activity disturbed their sleep, but the colonial authorities seldom enforced the city curfew or otherwise curtailed the laborers' nighttime revelries. As the following episodes reveal, sailors had their own rules of decorum and methods of punishing offenders. One evening in July 1743, a black sailor, who had become unruly or "a little to[o] hot," received a dunking from his crew mates in order "to cool his Courage."⁷⁰ Two weeks later, some sailors discovered that a white woman had disguised herself in men's clothing and hired herself on board a privateering vessel named the *Castor and Pollux*. As punishment for attempting to appropriate the prerogatives of the masculine seafaring trade, the all-male crew subjected the unfortunate woman to the punishment of dunking and other corrections: "They seized upon the unhappy Wretch," the New York City newspaper reported, "and dunk'd her three Times from the Yard-Arm, and afterwards made their Negroes Tarr her all over from Head to Foot, by which cruel Treatment, and the Rope that let her into the Water having been indiscreetly fastened, the poor Woman was very much hurt, and continues now ill."⁷¹ Though female prostitutes were welcome companions to sailors and other transients who inhabited the docks, most women who ventured into the male-dominated waterfront along the East River risked public humiliation and bodily injury.⁷²

The street life around the East River waterfront fostered fraternal bonds among male slaves. Named for the dock-area landmarks where they ordinarily gathered, the Long Bridge Boys and the Smith Fly Boys were black brotherhoods that became notorious for their exploits. Resisting the biracial hierarchy that allowed black males few prerogatives of manhood, the members of these black confraternities demonstrated their manliness during nighttime adventures in which, as a colonial official reported, they "junket[ed] together at night . . . upon the produce of the spoils of their pilfering." Although the colonial penal code imposed the death penalty on defendants convicted of burglary, in some cases the colonial magistrates ordered lighter correction for valuable servants and slaves whose masters were willing to compensate the crime victims for the loss of their property and other damages.⁷³ Because criminal activity typically occurred under the cover of darkness, the colonial authorities imposed a curfew, requiring all blacks, enslaved and free, above the age of 14 years to carry a lantern or candle when on the streets after sunset.⁷⁴ This "Negro illumination law" and other measures for detecting and preventing the clandestine movement of slaves at night proved to be difficult to enforce in a colonial port town where there was no professional police force or regular military watch. To encourage individual masters to exercise greater control over their slaves, the colonial authorities fined slaveowners whose bondsmen were arrested for street brawling, insobriety, and other incidents of disturbing the peace and reckless behavior.⁷⁵ Slaveowners were not always vigilant overseers, however. Unruly

slaves continued to evade surveillance, roamed the city streets at night, and mingled with the servants, sailors, vagabonds, and other transients who populated the dock area.

The New York City clergy complained to the colonial authorities about the presence of rowdy slaves in the city streets on the Sabbath. The SPG catechist Elias Neau pointed out that “on Sundays while we are at our Devotions, the Streets are full of Negroes who dance & divert themselves. . . .”⁷⁶ This unsupervised activity disquieted the colonial authorities, who recognized that the city was especially vulnerable to slave revolt during the hours of Christian worship services. For this reason, they enacted a municipal ordinance that prohibited black town dwellers from breaking the Sabbath.⁷⁷ In addition to faulting their servants and slaves for Sabbath-breaking, New York City masters cited the servile population’s fondness for drink as the principal cause of insubordination, sloth, and criminal activity among servants and slaves. A New York City newspaper carried the following report on the alleged addiction of the laboring class to Geneva gin, a strong liquor imported from Holland: “It is with deepest Concern your Committee observe the Strong Inclination of the Inferior sort of People to these destructive Liquors . . . the constant use of strong-waters, and particularly Geneva, never fails to produce an invincible aversion to work and Labour. [It] raises the most violent and outrageous passions, renders them incapable of hard Labour . . . besides the fatal effects it has on their morals and religions.”⁷⁸ Suspecting that servants and slaves resorted to stealing and other crimes to support their drinking habits, New York’s colonial assembly prohibited tavern keepers from selling intoxicating drinks to unfree laborers.⁷⁹ Long known for its many taverns, colonial New York City witnessed the proliferation of drinking establishments with the military buildup that accompanied the French and Indian War.⁸⁰ Many of these taverns catered to the city’s servile population, even though colonial law prohibited that practice. Servants and slaves also frequented the city’s dramshops, typically located in dry goods stores, where shopkeepers sold liquor by the dram (or one-eighth ounce). At these storefronts, patrons could purchase as much liquor as they could imbibe at one sitting. Robert Livingston vowed to sell a troublesome slave from his New York City household into the countryside, explaining that “here [New York City] there are so many Little Dram Shops that ruin half the Negroes in town.”⁸¹ In addition to the taverns and dramshops, some free townspeople operated tippling houses, private residences where hosts sold liquor to their guests. Intended as a measure to reduce drunkenness and idleness among servants and slaves, a colonial law prohibited the keeping of such “disorderly houses,” as well as the practice of entertaining unfree laborers without permission from their masters. According to that statute, any white settler convicted of entertaining a servant or a slave without authorization paid a £5 fine.⁸² In 1716, the court convicted Thomas Noble, a free white resident of the South Ward, of keeping a tippling house and unlawfully entertaining two enslaved men, the slave of Cornelius Schulyer, resident of the South Ward, and the slave of August Jay, resident of the Dock Ward.⁸³ During the early years of English rule, the colonial law imposed harsh penalties on free blacks who entertained unfree la-

borers without permission from their masters. On March 7, 1671, Domingo and Manuel Angola were brought before the court and charged with illegally entertaining some servants and slaves. The court record stated: "The free Negroes were from time to time entertaining sundry of the servants and negroes belonging to the Burghers and inhabitants . . . to the great damage of their owners." The colonial magistrate warned the free blacks that they would forfeit their freedom should they again appear before the court on a similar charge. The magistrate also ordered Domingo and Manuel to communicate his warning to other free black town dwellers.⁸⁴ According to a subsequent law, free blacks convicted of illicitly entertaining servants and slaves no longer forfeited their freedom but instead paid a fine double the sum imposed on white settlers convicted of the same crime.⁸⁵ In February 1714, Peter the Doctor, a free black town dweller who two years earlier had been indicted for but later exonerated of participating in the Slave Revolt of 1712, was convicted of entertaining Sarah, the enslaved woman of William Wharton, a resident of the Dock Ward. Consistent with the law, a colonial magistrate ordered Peter to pay a fine in the amount of £10.⁸⁶ Despite these and similar convictions, free townspeople continued to entertain servants and slaves in their homes.

The prevalence of "disorderly houses," such as taverns, dramshops, and tippling houses, provided the city's servile population with a screen from surveillance and doubtless contributed to insobriety and tardiness among servants and slaves. The spatial and temporal structures of labor in the colonial port town militated against rigorous regulation of the city's workforce. The lack of rigid separation between work and leisure spaces made it impossible to enforce a strict work routine of the kind later imposed on the industrial labor force under the factory system. Although respectable society increasingly condemned the pursuit of idle amusements as a threat to the value of labor, colonial New York City's servants and slaves persistently and, to a large degree, successfully valorized leisure pastimes and transformed recreational activity into expressive forms of a vibrant urban working-class culture. In this way, servants and slaves evaded the colonial port town's exploitative labor system without ever leaving New York City. During the day, the city's servile population stole leisure time and amused themselves in the streets, at the city markets, and at the dramshops. After sunset and on Sundays, they haunted the docks along the East River, frequented the many taverns and tippling houses that catered to servants and slaves, and visited the homes of free townspeople. During these ephemeral interludes and within these compact spaces, the city's laboring class forged solidarities across the color line. The colonial authorities deemed interracial commingling among the city's servile population a particularly dangerous trend. But owing to the weaknesses of official surveillance and the poor resolution of its image of the densely populated port town's social body, they had little chance of eradicating the many dimly lit recesses within the city, where propertyless servants, slaves, and outsiders conducted illicit traffic of all sorts.

Unlike wage laborers, servants and slaves received no monetary reward for their labors and, as a consequence, had little or no access to cash. For unfree laborers, theft was one way of getting paid. Some laborers from the British Isles

and Europe regarded the act of appropriating small pieces of their masters' property as a customary privilege rather than outright theft. The colonial authorities surmised that the practice of allowing servants and slaves to conduct trade encouraged propertyless laborers to steal from their masters and other propertied town dwellers and to engage in black market exchanges of stolen goods. For this reason, the colonial assembly enacted an antitrafficking law that required any free person who had been convicted of purchasing stolen goods from a servant or a slave to pay the owner triple the value of the pilfered merchandise in addition to a fine of £5.⁸⁷ But this and other laws proved to be an ineffective deterrent against the crimes of theft and receiving stolen goods. Nevertheless, the colonial authorities continued to bring servants and slaves before the criminal court on the charge of petty larceny, as well as selling and holding stolen goods. When accused of crimes, white servants were entitled to due process of law, including a trial by 12 jurors. In this regard, they enjoyed the rights of British subjects. The Court of Quarter Sessions of the Justices of the Peace was the central apparatus of the criminal justice system in colonial New York, and that court had jurisdiction over criminal cases against servants. Slaves were not afforded the rights of British subjects; and according to the Black Code of 1712, three justices of the peace, along with five prominent freeholders, were empowered to sit as a special panel that rendered judgments in cases involving slaves charged with infractions of the law.⁸⁸ Slaveowners often punished their slaves without benefit of a court trial. Nonetheless, Douglas Greenberg's study on crime in colonial New York shows that enslaved blacks were brought to court for thievery almost twice as often as white settlers, including white servants and apprentices. In colonial New York, the court convicted 81 percent of black defendants, while it convicted less than 40 percent of white defendants.⁸⁹ Typically, both servants and slaves were convicted of stealing low-bulk valuables that could be pilfered and sold with ease. Defendants convicted of petty larceny, stealing goods valued under 10 pence, received from 9 to 29 lashes.⁹⁰ The colonial authorities usually administered this corporal punishment at the public whipping post, located just inside the palisade at the city's northern limit. On occasion, guards carted convicts through the city streets, stopping at the busiest intersections to inflict on the criminal's body the installment of lashes that the court had prescribed as punishment. With these and other public rituals of corporal punishment, the colonial authorities attempted to disperse power across the city landscape, but this diffusion of power was incapable of penetrating the hidden recesses where lawbreakers planned and often committed their crimes.


In colonial New York City, acts of theft rarely resulted in bodily injury to the crime victim. Violent crimes, such as assault and battery, were occasionally connected with acts of overt defiance against the ruling elite. According to Greenberg, colonial Netherlanders were charged with contempt of authority more often than any other segment of New York's population.⁹¹ Although colonial Englishmen generally pursued nonviolent, legalistic channels in seeking redress for their grievances against the ruling elite, unruly Englishmen sometimes tested the limits of the law by defying the authority of colonial Netherlanders who were members of the city's night watch. At two o'clock in the morning on

January 2, 1737, Abraham Van Horne Jr. and James Van Horne, colonial Netherlanders, long-time city residents, and night watchmen, discovered John Smith, an English newcomer, roaming the West Ward. Smith resisted their attempt to remove him from the street, and a minor brawl ensued. Later, Smith brought a lawsuit against the Van Hornes, charging them with assault and “abusing the Watch.”⁹² Smith’s initial defiance and subsequent accusations against the Van Hornes in court perhaps registered his contempt for colonial Netherlanders who presumed to exercise authority over Englishmen. Certainly, the English newcomer’s lawsuit reminded the Van Hornes and other colonial Netherlanders that they no longer ruled Manhattan and were now a conquered people who must submit to English law.

Free blacks did not enjoy the political and legal rights of British subjects and as a consequence had few protections against abusive authority figures. For the most part, free black town dwellers seem to have successfully avoided violent entanglements with the municipal authorities and other white townspeople. A rare but infamous case of assault occurred in 1696, when Prince, a male slave, struck, with his bare hand, New York City Mayor William Merritt during a confrontation between an illegal assembly of slaves and the municipal authorities who ordered the slaves to disperse. As punishment for his crime, Prince received a series of lashes on his naked back at every major street intersection in town.⁹³ This method of exemplary public punishment doubtless served as a deterrent to black town dwellers who, when provoked in some way, contemplated committing similar assaults. Another notable exception was the case of Shadrack, a free black man who, in 1774, was convicted of assault and battery on a white man with his bare hands.⁹⁴ Shadrack’s crime was typical in another respect, however, for on occasions when black town dwellers assaulted white townspeople they seldom used lethal weapons. Although both enslaved and free blacks were prohibited from owning and carrying firearms, some blacks who lived in the white settler households had access to guns. On April 25, 1743, a New York City newspaper carried the following report: “On Friday last, a Negro Boy belonging to Abraham Akerman of the Place, taking his Master’s Gun, and (as is supposed) thinking it not loaded, fired it off, and thereby shot one of his Master’s Children dead on the Spot, and wounded a Negro Boy (his own brother) in the Head so that `tis thought he can’t recover.”⁹⁵

Because colonial New York City was a tinderbox town, the townspeople were especially frightened of uncontrollable blazes.⁹⁶ Anxiety-ridden townspeople were quick to suspect enslaved blacks of intentionally setting fires, even though little or no evidence implicated them in the crime of arson.⁹⁷ Such suspicions were not entirely irrational apprehensions. The slaves who revolted in 1712 set fire to a building. In 1736, a suspicious blaze damaged John Roosevelt’s stable, bolting-house, and other buildings in the East Ward, where the Slave Revolt of 1712 had taken place. Newspaper coverage of that fire surmised that arsonists had used live coals to ignite the combustion. The news item explained that the alleged acts of arson were likely the design of disgruntled slaves, including a female slave who belonged to the owner of the charred buildings.⁹⁸ When a mysterious rash of fires erupted during the winter of 1741–42, the white townspeople

ple at first attributed the blazes to some restive slaves who planned to revolt against their masters. That explanation for the troubling series of fires reflected the trepidation of enslavers who lived in close quarters with enslaved people, whom they feared as domestic enemies and hostile property. The colonial authorities regarded the accretion of the city's black population as a grave threat to the public safety. During the emergency of 1741–42, William Smith expressed this worry when he remarked: "I fear, gentlemen, that we shall never be quite safe till that wicked race are under restraint or their number greatly reduced within the city."⁹⁹ The English colony builder's dream of reducing the number of enslaved blacks and peopling the colony with numerous loyal British settlers proved to be difficult to realize. New York City did not witness some relief from its reliance on the labor of enslaved blacks until the 1770s, when relatively large numbers of laborers from the British Isles disembarked at the port of New York. For much of the eighteenth century, New York City held the largest percentage and the second largest absolute number of enslaved blacks of any port town in British North America. For this reason, the colonial authorities continued to worry that the city's black population, in combination with poor white newcomers of doubtful loyalty to the English colonial government, would foment a conspiracy from below and undertake a violent revolt against their rulers.

 As early as 1766, the ruling elite complained that too many impoverished white newcomers were settling in New York. In the same year, the colonial assembly passed an "Act for the Regulation of Servants," reflecting the ruling elite's desire that only white people of property migrate to the settler colony.¹⁰⁰ However, some New Yorkers placed the blame for the rise in poverty in New York on the ruling elite, whom they characterized as a callous social class that profited from the labor of the working poor. In August 1767, an anonymous New Yorker wrote: "It is to the meaner Class of Mankind, the industrious Poor, that as many of us are indebted for these goodly Dwellings we inhabit, for that comfortable Substance we enjoy while others are languishing under disagreeable sensations of Penury and Want."¹⁰¹ Following the cessation of the French and Indian War in 1764, the port of New York suffered a severe postwar trade contraction. During the 1770s, New York City offered white newcomers few opportunities to improve their material circumstances, yet during the early years of that decade, large numbers of migrants from the British Isles disembarked at the port of New York. A majority of these newcomers soon moved to upcountry New York—but the poorest immigrants remained in New York City. More than ever, the English colonial rulers now gambled that the psychological benefits of whiteness would be incentive enough to command the loyalty of the city's population of propertyless newcomers from the British Isles and other parts of Europe.¹⁰²

At that time, the English Parliament and the Hanoverian monarchy boldly asserted sovereignty over the English overseas colonies, demanding, with the en-

actment of new strict regulations, that the settlers assume a subordinate position within the first British Empire and faithfully serve England's interest in the exploitation of its colonial possessions for the purpose of raising national revenues. In this respect, the white settlers in British mainland America occupied the subject-positions of both colonizer and colonized, of agent of colonialism and subjugated object of colonial domination.¹⁰³ The proliferation of political antagonisms between the settlers and the English colonial rulers over various new regulations of the English Parliament—for example, the Stamp Act of 1765, the Quartering Act of 1765, the Townshend Act of 1767, the Tea Act of 1773, and the Intolerable Acts of 1774—fostered a climate of unrest in the British North American colonies. In revolutionary New York City, unruly crowds, sometimes with the endorsement of wealthy merchants, defied the English troops garrisoned at the port town, erected liberty poles in support of the growing independence movement, burned effigies of English authority figures, dismantled the statue of King George III on the Bowling Green, damaged property, and threatened the lives of loyalists who collaborated with the English colonial government.¹⁰⁴ “Crowd action,” the historian Edward Countryman has noted, “stretched and rent the fabric of New York society.”¹⁰⁵ One of the frayed threads of colonial New York's social fabric, and of British North American society as a whole, was white solidarity. The solvent of antiblack racism and the fear of conspiracy from below could no longer avert the breakdown of colonial governance.


As early as the 1750s, an opposition faction of the colonial elite rallied the broader settler population against Crown-appointed colonial authorities and the segment of the colonial elite that supported them in exchange for lucrative rewards. This time, popular discontent against the colonial government would mature into a social movement for independence and the preservation of English liberties. Published in the first issue of New York City's *The Independent Reflector*, an editorial declared: “Vice and Folly ought to be attacked where-ever they are met; and especially when in high and conspicuous stations.”¹⁰⁶ Another editorial observed that settlers who voted for the clique of placemen in corrupt colonial elections were acting “more like a Herd of Slaves, than a Society of Freeman.” “When a People are reduced to such a miserable State of Depravity,” the anonymous author warned, “it is almost impossible they should long preserve that Love of Liberty, which always was, and I hope ever will be, the distinguishing Characteristic of *Englishmen*.” In a final appeal to the settlers, the author pleaded: “Dare to think for yourselves, and scorn to be bought and sold.”¹⁰⁷ For the proponents of American independence, the enslaved blacks presented, as Bernard Bailyn has noted, “only a more dramatic, more bizarre variation of the condition of all who lost the power of self-determination.”¹⁰⁸ Put differently, the enslaved blacks offered a magnified mirror image of what the white settlers were in danger of becoming. For white settlers who lived and worked among slaves, the condition of enslaved blacks closely approximated the nightmare of their own enslavement at the hands of tyrannical English rulers. Though not the debased condition of bondage imposed on black Africans and their descendants, political slavery was, the leaders of the mount-

ing white settler independence movement asserted, a detestable condition of utter incapacity and lack of desire to preserve liberty that would surely overtake the English people, once their secret enemies had destroyed the balance of their constitution.

By the seventh and eighth decades of the eighteenth century, the white settlers kept a close watch on the designs of corrupt ministers in England and Crown-appointed officials in the colonies who, the settlers increasingly believed, conspired to enslave them not only by destroying their material prosperity but also by taking away their liberties.¹⁰⁹ The discovery of a ministerial plot against the white settlers' liberties seemed credible to enslavers who themselves kept in captivity men and women who had only a dark skin, if that, to merit their subjection to lifelong and heritable bondage. This reformulation of common sense called into question the legitimacy of English colonial rule and finally propelled the white settlers into the War for Independence. In New York City, on July 9, 1776, the settlers gathered to hear a public reading of the Declaration of Independence, cheer the parade of the Continental troops, and affirm that New York had existed as an independent republic since April 20, 1775, the day after the Battle of Lexington. Focused on a conspiracy from above rather than from below, the city's intermediate stratum of respectable, propertied white Anglo-Saxon Protestant settlers joined the wider British North American settler revolt against English colonial rule.

“The Happiness of Liberty of Which I Knew Nothing Before”

PASSPORTS TO FREEDOM AND THE BLACK EXODUS
FROM POST-REVOLUTIONARY NEW YORK CITY

 At the time that the settlers were debating the merits of independence from England in colonial newspapers and pamphlets, literate slaves were pressing their own claim to freedom. Most notably, the writings of Phillis Wheatley (1753–84) and the 1773–77 petitions of her black contemporaries in Boston presented incisive remonstrances against the institution of racial slavery.¹ Exploiting the intensifying antagonism between the English rulers and the settlers, the Boston petitioners submitted their grievances to both sides of the Anglo-American conflict: the Massachusetts General Court and the commander in chief of the British military forces in North America. Illiterate slaves also took advantage of the political crisis and revolted against their masters. In 1774, amid violent scenes of loyalist reprisals against American patriots in the streets of New York City, two slaves murdered their masters, known “supporters of liberty,” and then ran away.² Servile insubordination had been building momentum since 1765 and, by the onset of the white American War for Independence (1775–83), the “contagion of rebellion” had spread among the enslaved masses throughout British America.³ Given its intercolonial scope and the considerable number of slaves involved, black insurgency during the Anglo-American war constituted one of the largest and most significant slave uprisings prior to the Haitian Revolution.⁴

Slave uprisings in the late eighteenth century differed from previous slave rebellions, whose ultimate aim, according to Eugene Genovese, was not so much to overthrow the institution of slavery in the New World as to restore the rebels to traditional forms of African communal life. Whereas the ideal of individual autonomy seldom, if ever, inspired the earlier “restorationist” slave revolts led

by native Africans, that liberal democratic value propelled acculturated native Africans, like Phillis Wheatley, and American-born blacks, who reached adulthood during the 1760s and 1770s, to expand and radicalize modern democratic culture.⁵ Prior to the age of democratic revolutions and the advent of modernity, black slavery went largely unquestioned and did not become a matter of sustained public debate until the Enlightenment intervened to reorient Western culture toward the ideal of human progress.⁶ Measuring the West against the yardstick of its own values, Phillis Wheatley called attention to the ethical dilemma posed by the perpetuation of slavery in modern times. A native West African who, at the age of eight years, was kidnapped from her homeland, shipped to Boston, and enslaved in that northern colonial port town, Wheatley is best known as the first African to publish a book of poems in the English language. The content of several poems and letters expressed Wheatley's opposition to racial slavery. In a letter to Reverend Samson Occom, dated February 11, 1774, Wheatley pointed out the "strange Absurdity" in the American philosophes' effort to reconcile human bondage with human emancipation. "How well the Cry of Liberty, and the reverse Disposition for the exercise of oppressive Power over others agree," she wrote, "I humbly think it does not require the Penetration of a Philosopher to determine."⁷ In Wheatley's view, the American philosophes more closely resembled ancient Egyptian pagans than modern men of enlightenment. Arguing that slavery is absolutely incompatible with the modern ideals of freedom and human progress, Wheatley was in the vanguard of radical political thinkers. She and other enslaved blacks of her generation embraced the newly emerging democratic values of modernity and in doing so forwarded the modern impulse toward human emancipation.⁸

Although most settlers did not anticipate the wave of unrest that would spread among the enslaved masses in British North America and then expand and radicalize the social movement that initially coalesced in the American Revolution, some perspicacious white Americans did predict such an outcome, variously figuring the rise of black insurgency as a "snowball, in rolling," a "wolf by the ears," and a "fire-bell in the night." As thousands of enslaved blacks absconded from patriot slaveowners and fled to the British side during the white American War for Independence, black insurgency became a palpable threat to the survival of the new republics. "Slave flight quickened during the War of Independence," the historians Graham Hodges and Allen E. Brown have noted. "Whether inspired by political debate, inspired by abolitionist appeals of the Society of Friends, opportunistically following the warring armies, slaves fled their masters in greater numbers than ever before."⁹ In British North America, the split between the American rebels and the English colonial rulers opened avenues of escape for thousands of enslaved blacks. According to the most reliable estimate, between 80,000 to 100,000 of the half million enslaved blacks that inhabited the 13 British mainland colonies—or, nearly one-fifth of British North America's total enslaved population—ran away from their masters during the Anglo-American war.¹⁰ Black insurgency threatened to push the American Revolution beyond the limits that the white settlers initially assigned to it.



Positioned at the center of mainland British America, the port of New York was the geographical linchpin tying the rebel colonies together; for this reason, holding that centrally located seaport became a key objective in the British war strategy of dividing the American patriots and achieving a speedy victory. After invading the surrounding countryside, the British army occupied New York City on September 15, 1776, and remained there until the end of the war.¹¹ Having earlier abandoned their homes in the wake of mob violence directed against them, loyalist residents returned to the city when news of the British military occupation reached them. Additional loyalists from nearby farming districts soon followed. This installment of war refugees was only a prelude to the flood of homeless sojourners that poured into the city during subsequent phases of the war. With each military defeat, the British army lost crucial ground, until it was finally reduced to a few strongholds, including its military headquarters at New York City.¹² The ensuing influx of military personnel, white loyalists, and fugitive slaves into the occupied port town enlarged the city's already swollen population of displaced people and converted the once bustling entrepôt into an overcrowded garrison town, loyalist refugee camp, and runaway slave community.¹³

Besides functioning as the British military headquarters and strategic stronghold, New York City became a haven for fugitive slaves from many parts of British America. According to a British military census of 1779, no fewer than 12,000 runaway slaves inhabited the city, where they found a temporary sanctuary and, at that time, constituted the largest fugitive slave community in North America, with the exception, perhaps, of East Florida. By 1782, at least 4,000 runaway slaves, including nearly 1,000 black soldiers, remained in New York City.¹⁴ An early wartime influx of runaway slaves into New York City was the result of Lord Dunmore's November 7, 1775, proclamation, declaring "all indentured Servants, Negroes, or others (appertaining to Rebels) free that are able, and willing to bear Arms, they joining His Majesty's Troops, as soon as may be, for the more speedily reducing the Colony to a proper sense of their duty, to his Majesty's Crown and Dignity."¹⁵ An estimated 800 tidewater slaves, of which the vast majority were fugitives from patriot plantations, responded to Dunmore's appeal. To the horror of the American rebels, Dunmore armed the able-bodied male runaways and enlisted them, along with white loyalists, in a military campaign against the patriots of the tidewater region. After months of skirmishes in open fields, guerilla warfare, and other intrigues, Dunmore's depleted and demoralized army could no longer muster a fight; and in November 1776, the exiled governor of Virginia, along with his band of white loyalists and runaway slaves, fled to New York City.¹⁶ Among the military personnel who embarked from the tidewater region with Dunmore were 100 black soldiers, the remnants of his Ethiopian Regiment.¹⁷ That military unit of runaway slaves was absorbed into the Black Brigade of New York City, a corps of black troops attached to the larger regiment of British regulars known as the Queen's Rangers.¹⁸

In British-occupied New York City, black soldiers, together with their families, lived in racially segregated barracks at 18 Broadway, 10 Church Street, 18 Great George Street, 8 Skinner Street, and 36 St. James Street.¹⁹ By the winter of 1776–77, an estimated 800 black soldiers were being trained for military service on Staten Island.²⁰ Discipline among the black troops proved less problematic than was the case for white soldiers, since many of the black recruits, unlike white enlisted men, had been enslaved laborers in the plantation South and were already accustomed to the routinization and group cooperation required of soldiers. Desertion among black soldiers on both sides of the war was a rare occurrence. Many of the same factors that made enslaved blacks a more dependable labor force than white servants—for example, the imposition of longer terms of service and more severe punishment for misconduct—made black soldiers a more reliable fighting force than white soldiers. Moreover, few black soldiers had farms of their own to tend during harvest season, a time when the desertion rate among the white troops in the state militias and Continental Army soared. Black soldiers fought for exceptionally high stakes. The Ethiopian Regiment’s slogan—“Liberty to Slaves”—declared the black soldiers’ motivation in taking up arms on the British side.²¹ By appropriating the guiding concept of the white American War for Independence, black soldiers, from the South and the North, expanded and radicalized the meaning of liberty to encompass the black struggle to abolish slavery.

Fearing just such a turn of events, New York patriots at first refused to arm slaves. According to a provision in New York’s Militia Act of 1775, enslaved blacks, but not free blacks, were excluded from the New York militias. As a consequence of this restriction, New York enlisted fewer than a dozen black soldiers during the early years of the war. But to meet its quota of fresh recruits, the New York State Assembly later revoked its initial prohibition against arming slaves. Despite the possibility that the enslaved black population, once armed, would convert the white American War for Independence into a struggle against racial slavery, the assembly accepted that risk as an expedient solution to the military manpower shortage that arose during the protracted war and passed a law granting freedom to adult male slaves who joined the state militia. The American patriot General Philip Schuyler of the New York militia later complained that the black recruits “disgrace our arms.”²² Some New York loyalists opposed the British wartime policy of arming black men. From the British headquarters in New York City, the loyalist military officer and slaveowner Brigadier General Oliver DeLancey issued an order declaring “all Negroes Mulattos and other Improper Persons who have been admitted to the Corps be immediately discharged.”²³ British officers ignored DeLancey’s directive and accepted volunteers from the lowest echelon of New York’s social hierarchy, including its black population. Denouncing the British practice of enlisting “irregular troops,” the patriot sympathizer Henry M. Mühlberg wrote that the “so-called Tories have assembled from various nationalities—for example, a regiment of Catholics, a regiment of Negroes, who are fitted for and inclined towards barbarities . . . lacking in human feeling and are familiar with every corner of the country.”²⁴ British military commanders

deployed black soldiers, alongside loyalist militia units, in military operations throughout Westchester County and eastern New Jersey. In 1777, the Black Brigade of New York City fought in the indecisive Battle of Monmouth. Many of the most intense battles of the war took place in the so-called neutral ground of eastern New Jersey, where a deep split between patriots and loyalists, guerrilla warfare, night raids, and other disruptions of war allowed New Jersey blacks to escape from slavery.²⁵ Colonel Tye, a “Jersey negro” and the leader of the Black Brigade, was more familiar with the territory of eastern New Jersey than his British commanders. In 1779 and 1780, Tye and his black troops raided patriot farms in eastern New Jersey, carried away badly needed provisions to the British side, and liberated dozens of slaves who followed their black emancipators to the environs of New York City, where they joined the community of black war refugees from other parts of British North America.²⁶

Alarmed by the epidemic of slave defections and rumors of slave insurrection, New York patriots heightened their vigilance over the rebel colony’s restive enslaved population.²⁷ Albany’s Committee on the Detection and Defeating of Conspiracies imposed severe penalties on captured runaways and offered rewards to anyone who apprehended fugitive slaves and to informants who reported slave conspiracies. On June 14, 1778, the committee received a letter from Robert Yates, stating that Thomas Anderson, a white blacksmith residing on Livingston Manor, had been accused of “encouraging Negroes to desert their masters and to go over to the enemy and was also forging passes for runaway slaves under the signature of Captain Solomon Strong.” The committee promptly issued a warrant for Anderson’s arrest; and by June 16, 1778, Anderson was confined in Albany’s jail. One year later, the committee received a rumor that Tom, the slave of Henry Hogan, was presently “endeavouring to Stir up the minds of the Negroes against their Masters and raising Insurrections among them.” According to another intelligence report, Tom had been some time earlier arrested for “seducing a number of Negro slaves to join the enemy” at New York City but was subsequently released from prison and remained at large. On June 4, 1779, the committee issued a warrant for Tom’s arrest, but the fugitive was never apprehended.²⁸

The actions of vigilance committees did little to stem the rise of black insurgency. As the Anglo-American conflict entered its fourth year, the battle between the American patriots and the British military for the loyalty of enslaved blacks became a crucial war front. The British tendered a comprehensive offer to enslaved blacks on June 30, 1779, when Sir Henry Clinton published his Phillipsburg Proclamation, calling on the slaves of American rebels to defect to the British side in exchange for security to take up gainful employment in the British occupied territories. Clinton’s declaration made an important distinction between contraband slaves who had been captured by the British army and runaway slaves who had voluntarily eloped from their patriot masters. According to that British wartime policy, the British government promised to purchase slaves who had been captured during British military campaigns and raids on patriot estates but stipulated that runaway slaves who voluntarily defected to the British

side could no longer be held in bondage or sold as slaves. The Phillipsburg Proclamation stated:

Whereas the enemy have adopted a practice of enrolling Negroes among their troops, I do hereby give Notice that all Negroes taken in Arms or upon any military Duty shall be purchased for the public service at a stated price; the money to be paid to the captors. But I do most strictly forbid any Person to sell or claim right over any Negroes the property of a Rebel who may take refuge with any part of this Army. And I do promise to every Negro who shall desert the Rebel Standard full Security to follow within the Lines any occupation which he may think proper.²⁹

Clinton's appeal to the slaves threatened to deprive American patriots of their most valuable property by precipitating the mass flight of enslaved blacks to British strongholds. In an effort to contain black insurgency, patriot slaveowners warned the enslaved black population that the Phillipsburg Proclamation was a subterfuge calculated to deceive them. But this warning fell on deaf ears. Enslaved blacks interpreted Clinton's decree as an emancipation proclamation and, whenever possible, rushed to join the British side. On November 27, 1780, the *New York Mercury* nervously reported that "a desire of obtaining freedom unhappily reigns throughout the generality of slaves at present."³⁰ The enslaved blacks, Henry Mühlenberg remarked, "secretly wished the British army might win, for then all Negro slaves will gain their freedom. It is said that sentiment is universal amongst all the Negroes in America."³¹ Although the Phillipsburg Proclamation posed no ethical objection to the institution of slavery,³² in practical terms the British policy of offering sanctuary to runaway slaves destabilized the long-standing colonial relation of domination that had confined slave revolts to untenable, sometimes suicidal, acts of defiance. While Clinton's appeal made no explicit reference to the abolition of slavery and the opprobrium of holding human beings in lifelong, heritable bondage, it had the effect of emancipating any enslaved blacks who voluntarily deserted their patriot masters and crossed over to the British side. Facing military manpower shortages and the possibility of mass slave defections to the British side, the American patriots determined that the best course of action would be to offer freedom to some in order to secure the subordination of many. In 1779, the American Congress therefore revoked its initial policy and offered enslaved black men individual grants of freedom as a reward for enlisting in the Continental Army.³³ By 1781, black troops comprised approximately one-quarter of the Continental forces at White Plains, New York.³⁴ Unlike British military officers, who made more sweeping overtures to the slaves, the American Congress never issued a wholesale appeal to the entire enslaved population, for such a policy, they feared, would have been tantamount to abolishing slavery.³⁵

A direct appeal to the entire enslaved population in the rebel colonies, Clinton's Phillipsburg Proclamation promised that once a fugitive slave arrived behind British lines the runaway could no longer be sold as chattel and was free to earn an independent livelihood. With this policy, the British military commander dramatically transformed the circumstances of runaway slaves. Instead

of living as outlaws, fugitive slaves now found an asylum in British-occupied strongholds, where they worked as wage laborers, reunited with kin, formed new affinal and consanguineal relationships, and established independent households. Following Clinton's decree, so many slaves absconded from their masters and fled to the already overcrowded British military camps and British-occupied port towns that the flood of black refugees of war soon threatened to cripple the British war effort. In response, British military officers in New York City ordered ferrymen to deny transportation to fugitive slaves seeking passage to the city and Refugeetown at Staten Island.³⁶ The majority of the runaway slaves residing in New York City during the Anglo-American conflict never fought for the British military but instead aided the British war effort as civilian laborers. The Phillipsburg Proclamation, inviting runaways to take up residence behind British lines and to pursue gainful employment there, was part of Clinton's attempt to remedy the city's wartime labor shortage. The occupying army needed workers to rebuild sections of the city that were damaged when, on September 21, 1776, American incendiaries infiltrated the tinderbox town and set fire to buildings in several locations. That conflagration destroyed one-quarter of the city, including Trinity Church, the Lutheran Church, and more than 1,000 other buildings in the West Ward.³⁷ In addition to rebuilding the city, black refugees improved the garrison town's fortifications and labored in other tasks that were crucial to the ongoing British military operations deployed from the port of New York. As teamsters, drivers, and wagoners, they carted armaments and provisions from the city docks to magazines and storehouses about town. During the winter months, when vital goods were in short supply, the British Commissary and the Forage and Provisions Departments sent "black pioneers" on foraging expeditions in the surrounding countryside. Black pilots, who were familiar with the rivers, narrows, and bay, steered small boats to landings along riverbanks, where foraging parties collected provisions and loaded them onto vessels returning to New York City.³⁸ For most black refugees, wartime employment presented their first opportunity to earn wages for their labors. Black civilian laborers generally received lower wages than their white counterparts, but black soldiers and English troops received equal pay by the war's end.³⁹

The contingencies of war brought together black families who had been separated under slavery and provided the conditions for the creation of new family units. With each military campaign, slaves living in the vicinity of battle took advantage of the attending confusion and escaped from their masters. A large number of runaway slaves were southerners who fled to the British strongholds of Norfolk, Savannah, and Charleston, during the disruptions of war and remained in those occupied port towns until the retreating British military forces transported them to various locations, including Bermuda, East Florida, Jamaica, maritime Canada, London, and New York City. The runaway slaves whom the British military relocated to the port of New York were housed on Staten Island in a tent city of temporary shelters known as Refugeetown and on Manhattan Island in another tent city known as "Canvas Town," located in the burnt area of the West Ward.

During the final months of the British evacuation of New York City, between April 23 and July 31, 1783, approximately 81 oceangoing vessels carried 3,000 black refugees of war from the harbor of New York.⁴⁰ The majority of these black refugees, roughly 74 percent, were transported to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, where they founded free black communities.⁴¹ Nearly half were southerners from the tidewater region of Virginia and Maryland and the coastal areas of South Carolina and Georgia; roughly 21 percent were from New York and New Jersey; another 9 percent were from other English colonies, mainly New England.⁴² Most of the adults were in the prime of life: The mean age of adult males was 28 years, and for adult females it was 22 years. Nearly one-third of the black refugees who migrated to maritime Canada traveled in family units, a remarkable proportion, given that these families had united or reunited during the chaos of war.⁴³ In crossing the border dividing patriots from loyalists, enslaved from free, the flow of black refugee families into Nova Scotia and New Brunswick following the American War for Independence marked a brief yet notable reversal of the African-descended people's history of forced migration to and enslavement in the Americas. During the British evacuation, New York City continued to serve the port town function of dispersal site for population movements, notable at that time the exodus of ex-slaves to maritime Canada.

On July 31, 1783, an exemplary group of black refugees—33 men, 53 women, and 44 children—left the harbor of New York for Port Roseway, Nova Scotia, aboard the HMS *L'Abondance*. These black refugees had journeyed along similar paths that during the war converged at British-occupied New York City and at the war's end took them to the wilderness of maritime Canada. The Moore family was one of the newly constructed black families that departed on *L'Abondance*. Daniel Moore, the family head, left North Carolina in 1776, soon after the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, in which a patriot militia defeated a regiment of British regulars and Governor Martin's band of white loyalists and runaway slaves.⁴⁴ At that time, the British transported Daniel, along with 238 other black refugees of war, to New York City. Although Daniel adopted the surname of his former master, John Moore, he embraced his new life of independence. Daniel, age 27, married Tina, age 22, soon after his arrival at the port of New York. His wife, a fugitive slave from Portsmouth, Virginia, had escaped from her master in 1776 and in that same year left the tidewater region with other evacuees the British carried to New York City. Born free behind British lines, their daughter, Elizabeth, was only 6 years old when she traveled to Nova Scotia with her parents in 1783. Sailing with the Moores on *L'Abondance* were Cyrus Speir and his family. Daniel Moore and Cyrus followed nearly identical itineraries during the war. Like Daniel, Cyrus took advantage of the disruptions of war and made a bid for freedom. At the age of 33, he fled to the British side during the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, a bloody skirmish that took place near his master's farm at Cross Creek, North Carolina, in 1776 and ended with a patriot victory over British troops, white loyalists, and slaves. Also like Daniel, Cyrus kept his former master's surname and married a tidewater refugee. Following the British evacuation of Wilmington, North Carolina, in November 1781, Cyrus, now age 38, moved to New York City, where he married Judith, a fugitive slave

who, at the age of 26, absconded from her master's estate near Nansemond, Virginia, during the Collier-Matthews invasion of tidewater Virginia in 1779 and in that same year traveled with her son, Frank, age 5, to New York City. In 1782, Cyrus and Judith had a daughter of their own named Patty.

A few elderly blacks sailed with the youthful black families on *L'Abondance*. Among the most noteworthy were the Hallsteads, James, age 65, and Sally, age 60, who were described as having "feeble" bodies. Responding to Lord Dunmore's appeal to the enslaved blacks of Virginia's tidewater region, James deserted his patriot master, Samuel Hallstead of Norfolk County, Virginia, and Sally left her owner, Edward Mosely of Princess Ann County, Virginia. Dunmore had addressed his appeal to able-bodied runaways who were capable of bearing arms, not elderly slaves like James and Sally Hallstead. The presence of aged and infirm runaway slaves within the British lines hampered the British war effort, as the British army was ill prepared to care for elderly and sickly refugees of war. Not surprisingly, nearly half of the total number of fugitive slaves who fled to the British side perished before the war's end. James and Sally were among the fortunate runaways who survived wartime hardships. In late 1776, the Hallsteads, possibly husband and wife or perhaps brother and sister, departed Virginia with Lord Dunmore, his army, and a cadre of loyalists, temporarily resettled in New York City, and nearly seven years later sailed from the port of New York to Port Roseway, Nova Scotia, with 128 other black refugees of war. The remarkable resilience of this elderly couple and their willingness to undertake hazardous journeys in the midst of war and in the twilight of their lives attest to their enduring desire for freedom.

Like the Hallsteads, Cloe Walker, a single mother and age 23, answered Dunmore's appeal and absconded from her master, James McKay, during the loyalist retreat from Norfolk in late 1776. Soon after, Cloe and her son, Sam, age 6, were transported to New York City, where Cloe gave birth to a female infant named Lydia. The Walker family was among the 11 percent of black female-headed families that departed the harbor of New York with the British military forces at the conclusion of the war. The relatively large proportion of women among the passengers sailing on *L'Abondance* was indicative of the rise in the proportion of women in the runaway slave population during the war. Approximately 30 percent of the black refugees listed in the passenger rolls of the British sailing vessels that left the port of New York during the final days of the British evacuation were female adults,⁴⁵ whereas adult females account for no more than 6 percent of this study's sample prewar runaway slave population. Cloe Walker, other single female adults, and their children joined the phalanx of male-headed black settler families that would struggle for survival in the wilderness of maritime Canada. As ex-slaves from the plantation South, the Walkers, the Moores, the Speirs, and the Hallsteads shared a common past—and they would share a common future as the founders of the Black Atlantic communities in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Northern blacks accompanied the black southerners on the voyage to maritime Canada. They, too, had constructed and reconstructed families during the Anglo-American war. The head of the Lawrence family, York, age 30, escaped

from Albany, seat of New York's rebel government in 1777; his wife, Dinah, age 26, ran away from the patriot slaveowner Peter Shanerhorn of New York in that same year. By the time the young couple left New York City in 1783, they had two daughters: Betsy, age 3, and Gabriel, age 18 months. In 1778, Cornelius Van Sayl and his wife, Catherine, ran away from their patriot masters and fled to British-occupied New York City. In all probability, these fugitive slaves from Monmouth County, New Jersey, absconded from their masters during the Battle of Monmouth, in late June 1778, or perhaps during one of the loyalist raids into eastern New Jersey. Unlike many of his southern counterparts, Cornelius discarded the surname of his former master, John Lloyd, and adopted instead the Dutch patronym Van Sayl. He likewise dispensed with his English first name, James, and took the name Cornelius, a first name in common usage among Dutch-speaking settlers. Like other blacks from eastern New Jersey, the Van Sayls had contact with Dutch-speaking settlers during their enslavement and probably spoke some Dutch, if only imperfectly. Catherine's former master, John van der Veer, was a descendant of early Dutch-speaking settlers. Some time before her escape, Catherine gave birth to a female infant named Mary. This child was, perhaps, the offspring of a previous union between Catherine and Cornelius, evidence of the conjugal bond they maintained while living in separate slave-owning households. Once behind British lines, the Van Sayls united as an independent family. Only two months before their departure for Nova Scotia, Cornelius, age 30, and Catherine, age 26, had a male infant named Peter.⁴⁶ The Van Sayls, the Lawrences, and other black families from the northern colonies joined their southern counterparts on the trek to the Canadian wilderness. While a common subjection to colonial relations of domination did not efface all differences of language, religion, and other cultural particularities between the ex-slaves who built the Black Atlantic communities in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, that shared history did forge a chain of equivalence uniting the black settlers. Finally, it was not so much *a condition in common as a consciousness in common*, a shared high regard for the value of freedom, that bound the black settlers of maritime Canada into cohesive communities.

How, then, did these ex-slaves conceptualize freedom? Published in 1798, the memoirs of Boston King—ex-slave, black refugee of war in British-occupied New York City, Methodist preacher, and leader of the Black Atlantic community at Birchtown, Nova Scotia, and, later, at Freetown, Sierra Leone—trace the journey of a modern black subject whose life intersected with the historic transformations attending the age of democratic revolutions. In this respect, his memoirs offer an insight into the concept of freedom embraced by fugitive slaves who made their way to British-occupied New York City during the war and sailed for maritime Canada at the war's end.⁴⁷ King was born in South Carolina around 1760, and by 1780 he was an enslaved apprentice living in the household of a master carpenter who moved from Charleston, South Carolina, to the countryside shortly before the British occupation of the southern port town. Not long after the British captured Charleston, a white indentured servant in his master's household rode away on a horse, which King had borrowed from a neighbor, and failed to return. King's life as a slave had taught him that

slaves were defenseless against arbitrary authority. He therefore feared that he would be accused of stealing the horse and unjustly punished. King reports: "This involved me in the greatest perplexity, and I expected the severest punishment, because the gentleman to whom the horse belonged was a very bad man, and knew not how to show mercy." Rather than accept punishment for a crime he did not commit, King ran away. "To escape his cruelty," King writes, "I determined to go to Charles-Town, and throw myself into the hands of the English. They received me readily, and I began to feel the happiness of liberty of which I knew nothing before." King was among the documented 7,163 blacks that the British military forces took with them during the British evacuation of Charleston in late 1782. The majority of these black refugees of war—no fewer than 6,540 blacks—were shipped to Jamaica and East Florida, where most remained in bondage.⁴⁸ King was more fortunate, for the British transported him to New York City, where, for the first time in his life, he earned a wage as a free laborer. Though his wages were meager and sometimes nonexistent, King managed to survive in the overcrowded port town. There, he met another runaway slave named Violet, whom he married. The couple established their own household, and on July 31, 1783, they sailed for Port Roseway, Nova Scotia, on *L'Abondance* with other recently emancipated black settler families.

King's life as a free man was interrupted when some time in 1782, one year prior to his departure to maritime Canada, patriot forces captured and reenslaved him. Writing about his life as a slave in the northern town of Brunswick, New Jersey, King reports: "My master used me well as I could expect; and indeed the slaves about Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New-York, have as good victuals as many of the English; for they have meat once a day, and milk for breakfast and supper; and what is better than all, many of the masters send their slaves to school at night, that they may learn to read the Scriptures. This is a privilege indeed. But alas, all these enjoyments could not satisfy me without Liberty!" The lesson of reenslavement in a northern town taught King to regard slavery, however mild, as the antithesis of freedom. In his memoirs, King insists that he preferred a life of liberty with all its hardships to the comfortable life of the most fortunate slave. Nevertheless, he sometimes wavered in his determination to regain his freedom. When wracked with doubts, King turned to God for guidance and awaited His instructions. "As I was at prayer one Sunday evening," King writes, "I thought the Lord heard me, and would mercifully deliver me. Therefore putting my confidence in him, about one o'clock in the morning I went down to the river side, and found the guards were either asleep or in the tavern." Interpreting this opportunity to escape as a sign of divine deliverance, King crossed the river and from the shore headed for New York City, where, a short time later, he was reunited with his wife. From that moment forward, King never faltered in his conviction that God had endowed him and all human beings with a natural and inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. King credited God alone, not enlightened men, with the dispensation of civil and religious liberty.

The ideals of evangelical Protestantism, in articulation with the ideals of the Enlightenment, informed King's conceptualization of freedom and that of other

acculturated American-born blacks, enslaved and free, who reached adulthood during the age of democratic revolutions.⁴⁹ The conceptualization of freedom as a divine dispensation and natural right of all humankind is iterated in nearly every slave narrative published prior to and after King's memoirs first appeared in print.⁵⁰ Importantly, the posture of humility assumed by King and other early black writers should not be confused with fatalism but was central to what Barbara Johnson calls "covert strategies of protest."⁵¹ Concealed under the cover of their self-effacing modesty was the secret agency of black writers whose sly civility laid bare the contradictions of enlightened enslavers who professed to value freedom while keeping one-half million blacks in bondage. Like King, a substantial proportion of the enslaved black population in British North America embarked upon a journey from slavery to freedom during the white American War for Independence. In discussing the metaphors of travel through which Phillis Wheatley's poems represent the history of Africans in British North America, Johnson observes: "The voyage from life to death, from Paganism to Christianity, and from English rule to American rule are all described in terms of a passage from slavery to freedom."⁵² King's memoirs replicate these homologous registers of transformative migration, except for one critical difference: The transition from English rule to American rule is no longer analogous to the passage from slavery to freedom. The geopolitical movements of runaway slaves during the white American War for Independence altered the neat parallelism structuring Wheatley's travel metaphors. For King and other black refugees of war like him, it was their relocation to the British side, not the long march toward the fulfillment of liberal democracy in the United States, that paralleled the passage from slavery to freedom. Tens of thousands of enslaved blacks were, as Wheatley had warned, "impatient of Oppression" at the hands of tyrannical slaveowners. Trusting that the Anglo-American conflict was God's sign that the moment of deliverance from bondage had arrived, they did not wait patiently for the American philosophes to manumit them but instead made their own bid for freedom by crossing over to the British side during the disruptions of war. Even blacks who were either born free or manumitted prior to the war elected to leave the new republics during the several British evacuations at the conclusion of the war rather than stay in a nation that claimed to esteem liberty yet perpetuated slavery.⁵³ To be sure, the black refugees of war who departed the shores of New York for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick could not be certain about their future under the English colonial government in maritime Canada and, in fact, confronted exclusionary barriers during their journey toward the attainment of full subject status in the British Commonwealth. Nevertheless, they were also acutely aware that the American victory had already brought about the reassertion of slaveowner control over the enslaved black population in the new republics.



With the American military victory, the legal status of black refugees of war became the object of controversy in the final contest of power between the Americans and the British. In the midst of the British evacuation of

New York City, patriot slaveowners rushed to the port of New York to claim runaway slaves who either had already boarded or were waiting to board British vessels scheduled to leave the shores of the new republic. The appearance of the American slaveowners, Boston King writes, “filled us with inexpressible anguish and terror, especially when we saw our old masters coming from Virginia, North-Carolina, and other parts, and seizing upon their slaves in the streets of New-York, or even dragging them from their beds. Many of the slaves had very cruel masters, so that the thoughts of returning home with them embittered life to us. For some days we lost our appetite for food, and sleep departed from our eyes.”⁵⁴ This violent seizure of black refugees threatened to turn the British evacuation of New York City into a drama of anarchy and despair. Demanding the return of the runaway slaves who were preparing to depart New York’s harbor on British sailing vessels, American slaveowners reminded the British military authorities that the Treaty of Paris forbade the British from removing any enslaved blacks belonging to American citizens. Article Seven of the Treaty of Paris stipulated: “His Brittanic Majesty shall with all convenient speed, and without causing any destruction or carrying away any Negroes or other property of the American inhabitants, withdraw all his armies, garrisons and fleets from the said United States, and from every port, place and harbour within the same.”⁵⁵ Though the terms of the evacuation were clear, they ran counter to the wartime proclamations that promised freedom to runaway slaves who voluntarily defected to the British side.⁵⁶ Writing from New York City on June 17, 1783, Adjutant General Carl Leopold Baurmeister of the Hessian forces reported: “General Clinton’s repeated proclamations while he was the chief in command permitted the negroes to leave their plantations and follow the army. Half of them are no longer alive, and the greater part of the rest have gone on board the ships. The small number still here refuse to be delivered in so unwarrantable a manner. They insist on their rights under the proclamation, and General Carleton protects these slaves, although those who desire to return may do so.”⁵⁷ Sir Guy Carleton, the Commander-in-Chief in charge of the British evacuation, insisted that all blacks who had taken up residence behind the British lines before November 30, 1782, the date on which the Americans and the British signed the preliminary provisions of the Treaty of Paris, were exempt from the peace accord’s stipulation requiring the British to return the Americans’ slave property. In short, Carleton maintained that the blacks in question had been emancipated by the several British proclamations before any pact between the Americans and the British had been signed.⁵⁸ Anticipating this policy, British military officers had already issued travel certificates (or passports) to blacks who stated that they had voluntarily fled to the British side before November 30, 1782. Known as “Birch Certificates,” these documents read: “This is to certify to whomsoever it may concern, that the Bearer hereof _____ a Negro, resorted to the British Lines, in consequence of the Proclamations of Sir William Howe, and Sir Henry Clinton, late Commanders in Chief in America; and that the said Negro has hereby his Excellency Sir Guy Carleton’s Permission to go to Nova-Scotia, or wherever else _____ may think proper. By Order of Brigadier General Birch.”⁵⁹

Having received several letters protesting the British intent to carry away runaway slaves, General George Washington, commander of the victorious Continental Army, requested a meeting with General Carleton. On May 6, 1783, the two military leaders met at Orangetown, New Jersey, to discuss the disputed runaway slaves. In that conference, General Washington complained about the indiscriminate distribution of passports allowing blacks to embark with the British fleet and demanded the return of runaway slaves whom American slaveowners claimed as their property. In response to Washington's ultimatum, Carleton insisted that the British army's liberation of runaway slaves conformed to recognized rules of war and reaffirmed his intention to honor the several British proclamations promising freedom to runaway slaves who escaped to the British lines, adding his assurance that, should the British government later repudiate his decision, American slaveowners would be compensated for the loss of their slave property.⁶⁰ Carleton had already convened a joint board of American and British commissioners empowered to hear and adjudicate the claims of slaveowners who alleged the British were protecting runaway slaves who had not arrived behind British lines before November 30, 1782, and were, nonetheless, preparing to leave with the British fleet. New York State Attorney-General Egbert Benson, Lieutenant-Colonel William Smith, and Daniel Parker Esq. represented the American slaveowners' interest; Captain Armstrong, Major Phillips, and Captain Coke represented the British interest in keeping their pledge to the black loyalists. The board of inquiry convened at Fraunces Tavern on Wednesdays between 10 and 2 o'clock.⁶¹

On July 24, 1783, Gerard Beeckman, an American patriot and resident of New York City, petitioned the board of inquiry for the return of his slave property—a boy named Peter and a girl named Elizabeth. These children, along with their father, Samuel Dobson, had boarded a British vessel waiting for permission to embark for Nova Scotia. Beeckman submitted a deed for the two children, substantiating his claim to ownership. The document showed that Beeckman's father-in-law, Pierre Van Cortlandt of the Manor Van Cortlandt in Westchester County, had, in 1777, given Peter and Elizabeth to his daughter Cornelia, the claimant's wife. Beeckman informed the board that, in April 1778, Samuel Dobson had kidnapped the children from Van Cortlandt Manor, where Beeckman's wife and slaves had resided during the war, and that Dobson had brought the youngsters to New York City. Because Beeckman presented a legal title to the black children and because Dobson confirmed that he had removed the youths from the Van Cortlandt estate, the board ordered that Beeckman be "permitted to take and dispose of them as he may think proper." In this summary manner, the Dobson family, only recently reunited, was separated once again.

Nine days earlier, Dobson was himself the object of a case before the board of inquiry. On July 15, 1783, Doctor Abraham Teller of Westchester County, New York, petitioned the board for the return of his slave, Samuel Dobson. Four witnesses appeared before the board on the claimant's behalf. Samuel Hake testified that, in April 1782, he had told Teller that he desired to purchase a slave and that Teller had responded that he owned a black man whom he wished to dispose of. Hake also testified that, one month later, he made a further inquiry to

the claimant's brothers regarding the legal status of the black man Teller had proposed to sell him and that the claimant's brothers, then loyalist residents of New York City, confirmed that Dobson was the claimant's property. A second witness, Stephen Stephens, stated that he had resided in the same house with Abraham Teller from 1778 to 1782, and during that time Dobson had lived under Teller's care and worked for the claimant as a slave. According to Stephens's testimony, Dobson had gone on a privateering cruise with the claimant's consent. Two of Abraham Teller's long-time acquaintances also testified that Dobson was the claimant's slave. One of these witnesses, William Miller, stated that nearly 12 years earlier he had inoculated Dobson against smallpox at Teller's farm in Westchester County and that he had "always looked upon [Dobson] to belong to the claimant [Teller]." Finally, Teller asserted that together, as master and slave, he and Dobson had moved to New York City and that he had later given his slave permission to join the crew of a British privateering vessel.

Dobson never denied that he had been a slave, but his narrative and, in particular, his account of how he arrived behind British lines differed from the claimant's story in several crucial details. Dobson explained that he was not the property of Abraham Teller but the slave of Teller's mother, Allida Teller of Teller's Point in Westchester County, New York. Dobson claimed that Abraham Teller departed Westchester County alone some time before April 1778. He also claimed that he had been left to care for the farm at Teller's Point and that he had been "ill used" by the local patriots and, as a consequence of these abuses, had determined to flee to the British lines at New York City. He further testified that his mistress had given him permission to quit Teller's Point and that, in April 1778, he had boarded a British galley commanded by Captain Clarke. Finding that the vessel was headed upriver, he later boarded a sloop tethered to the *Phoenix*, a British man-of-war headed downriver to the city. Dobson admitted that Abraham Teller happened to be on the same sloop but added that he had been on the vessel for three days before he became aware of Teller's presence there and that he had no communication with his ex-mistress's son during the trip to the city. Dobson's counternarrative thus rested on his assertion that he had left his former mistress on his own volition, that he had relocated to British-occupied New York City alone, not in the company of Abraham Teller, and that he had arrived behind the British lines before November 30, 1782. The contested facts of this case made a judgment difficult. After the witnesses had been heard, one of the American commissioners, Lieutenant-Colonel Smith, asked Teller whether he considered himself a subject of Great Britain or a citizen of the new republic. Teller answered that he considered himself a subject of the King of England. Upon hearing Teller's profession of loyalty to the English monarch, the American commissioners indicated that they had no interest in the claim of a loyalist. The board, then, referred the dispute to the discretion of Brigadier General Samuel Birch, the commandant of New York City under British occupation, who subsequently refused to nullify the passport previously issued to Samuel Dobson. The ex-slave was, therefore, free to leave New York—but, as the fate of young Peter and Elizabeth would have it, without his two children.

Black refugees also initiated cases brought before the joint commission. On

May 30, 1783, A. [Toney] Bartram petitioned the board of inquiry for the release of his daughter, Nancy, who at that time was being detained by Henry Rogers in a dwelling on Queen Street. Bartram and his two daughters—Nancy and Flora—held passports issued by Captain Nathan Hubell of the British army some time after July 1779, when the Bartram family fled to the British side. But in the summer of 1783, Rogers seized Nancy in order to return the girl to her former master in Connecticut. Rogers was one of the many opportunists who had taken up the occupation of “Negro catcher,” a lucrative vocation during the final months of the British evacuation.⁶² In view of the fact that Rogers presented no evidence to discredit the assumption that Nancy had arrived within the British lines prior to November 30, 1782, and that she had done so on her own volition, the commissioners ordered the slave catcher to set the black girl at liberty and “not to detain her any longer contrary to her Inclinations.” Far luckier was A. [Toney] Bartram than Samuel Dobson, who lost his children to an American slaveowner.⁶³

The criteria used in the validation of the coveted passports are also evident in cases initiated by white loyalists. For example, William Ferrer, a loyalist, claimed that Dinah Archer was his property and ought to be surrendered to him. At the hearing before the board of inquiry, Dinah submitted her passport, which stated: “The Bearer Dinah Archer being a free Negro has the Commandant’s permission to pass from this Garrison to whatever Place she may think Proper.” Upon examination by the members of the board of inquiry, Dinah confessed that she, in truth, had been formerly the slave of John Bayne of Crane Island in Norfolk County, Virginia, and that she had been sold to William Ferrer, the claimant, in whose household she had resided for nearly three years before Ferrer abandoned her and moved to England.⁶⁴ After Ferrer’s departure, Dinah inquired about her legal status to Bayne, her previous owner. Bayne informed Dinah that he had not given Ferrer a bill of sale for her and then compelled the black woman to return to his household, where she remained until 1780, when she ran away from her captor and fled to a nearby British camp. In 1779, Dinah, along with other tidewater blacks, left Virginia for New York City with Sir George Collier and General Matthews of the British army. After hearing Dinah’s revised story, the board of inquiry referred the dispute between the runaway slave and William Ferrer to the British commandant of New York City, who subsequently refused to invalidate Dinah’s passport. In accordance with British policy, Dinah was entitled to the benefits of the British proclamations regarding runaway slaves, because she now stated that she had left her master *proprio motu*, on her own volition, and had arrived behind British lines before November 30, 1782. Since Dinah had confessed to having lied about her previous condition of servitude, the British military authorities perhaps doubted the veracity of her most recent story. But the British commandant’s belief in Dinah’s credibility was a less decisive factor in his final judgment than the fact that Dinah’s narrative, whether true or false, conformed to the logic allowing the British military authorities to validate the passports granted to black refugees.⁶⁵

All of the cases before the board of inquiry turned on the issue of volition


and timing. If the black refugee could effectively narrate a tale of self-emancipation and of timely self-removal to the British side prior to November 30, 1782, then the passport granting the black refugee permission to leave the port of New York with the British fleet remained valid. It was, therefore, this generalizable narrative representation of the black wartime experience that secured fugitive slaves the benefits of the British proclamations and the travel certificates that would become their passports to freedom. During the final phase of the British evacuation of New York City, fugitive slaves became free subjects in and through the narration of stories of wartime flight from slavery that conformed to the legal-rational logic governing the validation of passports that the British military authorities issued to black refugees of war.⁶⁶ In this respect, fugitive slave narratives constituted an emancipatory discourse that installed the runaway slave as a modern subject endowed with the faculty of reason and hence the capacity for rational self-determination.

The fugitive slaves who sided with the British during the Anglo-American conflict did so not principally out of loyalty to England or any other nation but out of a high esteem for the value of freedom forged during a history of enslavement and subjection to other relations of domination in the English overseas colonies. Though dubbed “followers of the Army and Flag,” these black war refugees belonged to no nation. The historical trajectory of the Black Atlantic communities that they founded in maritime Canada and later in Sierra Leone exceeded the boundaries of the modern nation-state even as, at crucial junctures, they crisscrossed and intersected with that emerging geopolitical formation. The recently emancipated black settlers who migrated to the Canadian wilderness at the war’s end were but a fraction of the tens of thousands of slaves who either defected to the British side, escaped over land to the northwest frontier, or fled on sailing vessels to unknown destinations during the Anglo-American war. Even though the British military leaders who authored the appeals addressed to the enslaved black population in British North America never intended to emancipate so many slaves, they were powerless to determine the meaning enslaved blacks would draw from their proclamations and to curtail the wave of black insurgency precipitated by the war. Similarly, the American patriots never intended their slogan of liberty to extend further than the white settler revolt against English colonial rule. Yet by taking up the cause of liberty, thousands of enslaved blacks disregarded the American patriots’ intention and pursued their own bid for freedom. Liberty, like a sponge not yet saturated with the plenitude of finite and fixed meaning, expanded to buoy the radical freedom struggle of enslaved blacks during the War for Independence and beyond. Because the victory of the white American independence movement did not result in the thorough dissolution of colonial relations of domination in the newly constituted republics that would soon become the United States, future emancipatory practices in that modern nation-state would crucially involve challenges to the perpetuation of black slavery, the binary racial formation of white over black, and other enduring legacies of the nation’s colonial past.

Epilogue

“What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?”

THE APORIA OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AND
THE PERMANENCE OF RACISM

 The ex-slaves who evacuated New York City at the war's end left behind kinfolk and friends who remained in bondage in the new republics that would become the United States of America. The perpetuation of slavery in the former British North American colonies called into question the fledgling nation's dedication to the Enlightenment values of freedom and human progress, and soon opened a field of hegemonic struggle between proslavery and anti-slavery blocs. Whereas Vermont swiftly outlawed human bondage in 1777, the other northern states, including New York, dismantled the institution of slavery gradually, over several decades and only after protracted deliberations. With the exception of Virginia, whose citizens debated doomed legislation for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade, the southern states firmly rejected proposals for the emancipation of the South's numerous and valuable slave property. Because separate state legislatures and, in the case of Massachusetts, a state court determined the status of slavery in the individual states, an undivisive national policy on slavery proved difficult to achieve.¹

During the summer of 1787, the states, except Rhode Island, sent representatives to Philadelphia, where the delegates drafted a federal constitution that guaranteed, its advocates argued, the nation's future stability. Of the several compromises reached at the Philadelphia convention, none revealed the aporia of American democracy, the contradictory gap between the philosophical premises of its foundational text and the statements contained in that same text, more aptly than the compromise inscribed in Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution. That article stipulated: The slaves counted as three-fifths of per-

sons in the formula for computing the numerical apportionment of state seats in the House of Representatives and three-fifths of property in the formula for determining direct taxes.² In the debate over the so-called three-fifths clause, Gouverneur Morris, delegate from Pennsylvania and opponent of slavery, pointed out the apparent illogic of the controversial article and in doing so underscored the contradiction of perpetuating slavery in an avowed modern democratic nation. "Upon what principle is it that the slaves be computed in the representation? Are they men?" he asked. "Then make them citizens & let them vote. Are they property? Why then is no other property included?"³ Recognizing the import of Morris's trenchant questions yet urging the ratification of the proposed federal constitution, James Madison defended the logic of the seemingly troublesome clause and exposed the fallacy of reductive arguments that assumed slaves must be either only chattel, having no personality under the law, or persons, having the right to vote as citizens: "But we must deny the fact that slaves are considered merely as property, and in no respect whatever persons. The true state of the case is that they partake of both these qualities: being considered by our laws, in some respect as persons, and in others as property."⁴ To assure the public that the authors of the Constitution had not compounded the national dilemma of slavery, Madison argued that Article I, Section 2 followed sound reasoning by applying the rule of context to resolve the apparent conundrum of the slaves' "mixed character." He pointed out that in the context of representation the article assigned the slaves to the single category "persons" and in the context of taxation to the distinct category "property." In this way, the article wisely included, Madison added, the opposing interests of the slave and the free states, a mechanism of "control and balance" that would guarantee, he predicted, the future stability of the nation.⁵ Madison's brilliant arguments in this and other constitutional debates prevailed; and by 1788, the states, except for North Carolina and Rhode Island, had ratified the U.S. Constitution. However, some prominent white Americans believed that by failing to abolish slavery the framers of the federal constitution had not only compounded a troubling contradiction but also tolerated a national sin that would be punished by a national disaster.

From the early national period through to the Civil War, an escalating crisis over the territorial expansion of human bondage in the United States and the specter of slave insurrection cast doubt on the survival of the nation and the credibility of American democracy. Moreover, the future geopolitical development of the United States involved the exclusion of free blacks from the rights of U.S. citizenship, the appropriation of Native American lands, and the conquest of Mexican territory with westward expansion, as well as the accumulation of wealth through the exploitation of enslaved black laborers. Thus the history of the United States in the guise of "manifest destiny" remained entangled with the history of colonialism and its relations of racial domination. Nevertheless, most white citizens confidently celebrated their freedom and prosperity, just as their forefathers had done during the earliest days of independence from English colonial rule.



A little-known commemorative engraving discloses the entailments of colonialism that patriotic celebrations of national independence ceremoniously disavowed.⁶ That engraving depicts a parade along Broadway, held on November 25, 1783, to welcome General Washington and the victorious Continental Army into New York City following the final British evacuation. At the engraving's center, a heroic George Washington, mounted on horseback, leads his troops down the "Great White Way."⁷ Assembled along each side of the street, a crowd of American patriots and their families frames the military procession. This scene would convey an uninterrupted image of a racially homogeneous nation, united in celebration of its unfettered freedom, but for two visible reminders of colonialism's legacy of the racial subordination of Native Americans and African Americans. Near the bottom left edge of the engraving, a lone Indian, clearly differentiated from the crowd by his native costume, squats on the street. This particularized image of the Native American—specifically, the representation of the Indian's dress and posture—recalls the native population's resistance to cultural assimilation and subsequent marginalization on the fringes of the dominant white society. In the midst of the crowd, on the opposite side of the street, stands another figure, dressed in ordinary workingmen's attire and differentiated from the mass assemblage of citizens only by his darker skin color. Representing the black presence in the United States, the figure of the black workingman disrupts the otherwise continuous image of white patriots rejoicing at the birth of a new nation. With these contrasting figures—the Indian and the Negro—the engraving suggests that the black population is insinuated within the nation in a way the native population is not. Consigned to the oblivion of timeless myth, the "(ig)noble savage" takes no active part in celebrating the nation's present and, by implication, creating its future.⁸ On the other hand, the black workingman is at once integral to yet potentially disruptive of the new nation and its unfolding destiny.

Interestingly, the Evacuation Day engraving anticipates famous passages from Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, in which the French aristocrat and social commentator expresses his misgivings about the future of a democratic society divided into three separate races—African, European, and Indian.⁹ "Chance has brought them together on the same soil," Tocqueville writes, "but they have mixed without combining, and each follows a separate destiny."¹⁰ Addressing the status of the Indian and the African in the United States, Tocqueville observes: "Both occupy an equally inferior position in the land where they dwell; both suffer the effects of tyranny, and, though their afflictions are different, they have the same people to blame for them." According to Tocqueville, the Indians successfully resisted cultural imperialism but sustained devastating military defeat and finally retreated to the margins of American society, where they spent a largely autonomous yet uncivilized life. "The moral and

physical condition of these peoples," he writes, "has constantly deteriorated, and in becoming more wretched, they have also become more barbarous. Nevertheless, the Europeans have not been able to change the character of the Indians entirely, and although they can destroy them, they have not been able to establish order or to subdue them." In Tocqueville's view, the African suffered a vastly different yet equally tragic fate: "The United States Negro has lost even the memory of his homeland; he has abjured their religion and forgotten their mores. Ceasing to belong to Africa, he has acquired no right to the blessings of Europe; he is left in suspense between two societies and isolated between two peoples, sold by one and repudiated by the other; in the whole world there is nothing but his master's hearth to provide him with some semblance of a homeland." For Tocqueville, the North American Indian was a race condemned to an abject existence outside the boundaries of the dominant white society and culture, while the U.S. Negro was a race stranded between two worlds.

Turning to the glaring contradiction of American democracy, Tocqueville insists that white Americans had erred in keeping the Negro race in bondage in the midst of a democratic society: "They first violated every right of humanity by their treatment of the Negro and then taught him the value and inviolability of those rights. They have opened their ranks to their slaves, but when they tried to come in, they drove them out again with ignominy. Wishing to have servitude, they have nevertheless been drawn against their will or unconsciously toward liberty, without the courage to be either completely wicked or entirely just." Alluding to the threat of slave insurrection and the impending national crisis of civil war, Tocqueville predicts that the United States cannot resolve the subversive aporia of the coexistence of slavery and freedom without violent conflict. "Slavery, amid the democratic liberty and enlightenment of our age," he writes, "is not an institution that can last. Either the slave or the master will put an end to it. In either case great misfortunes are to be anticipated." A witness to the French Revolution and its terror, Tocqueville was able to make a number of astute observations about the dangers facing democracies, including the difficulty of abolishing the artificial inequalities that were deeply sedimented in the mores of the people. Reasoning from analogy, Tocqueville draws a comparison between, on the one hand, the French aristocracy and, on the other, white Americans, whose superior privileges were not only codified in law and legitimated as age-old tradition but also grounded in naturalized racial hierarchies. "If inequality created by the law alone is so hard to eradicate, how is one to destroy that which also seems to have immovable foundations in nature herself?" he asks. "I plainly see," he adds, "that in some parts of the country [the United States] the legal barrier between the two races is tending to come down, but not that of mores. I see that slavery is in retreat, but the prejudice from which it arose is unmovable." If the citizens of the United States were to achieve an uncompromised democracy, they must, Tocqueville concludes, not only abolish the legal institution of slavery but also the customary privileges that conferred upon white Americans a status akin to a hereditary aristocracy.

Tocqueville published his famous passages on the U.S. racial dilemma in 1835. Eight years earlier, the New York State Assembly passed a statute outlawing slavery within the jurisdiction of New York. But in 1835 a black man named Caesar was still enslaved in a New York family whose custom of owning slaves was, like an aristocratic privilege, passed from one generation to the next. Caesar's condition of bondage was never merely a matter of law but was also a matter of the traditional prerogatives of a social class habituated to exercising mastery over racially subordinated others. Born a slave in 1737, on a manorial estate known as Bethlehem and located eight miles south of Albany, Caesar became a trusted household slave who, in addition to his daily chores, drove the sleigh that each year transported his master's family to New York City for the winter holiday. At age 30, Caesar was entrusted with the duty of caring for his master, who, at the age of 60, lapsed into senility and slept in a sturdy oak cradle over six feet long. After his master's accidental drowning, Caesar became the slave of his late master's eldest son, who died in 1817. By that time, Caesar was 80 years old. A quite elderly man yet robust in health, Caesar lived another 35 years as the slave of his first master's grandson. Caesar's third master relieved him of his duties but never informed him that an act of the New York State Assembly had freed him, effective July 4, 1827. Caesar lived out the rest of his life unaware of the demise of slavery in New York and in 1852, at the age of 115 years, died in the place of his birth.¹¹

Eleven years after Caesar's death, the U.S. Civil War brought about the emancipation of the nearly four million enslaved blacks who, by the 1860s, resided in the southern states. On April 14, 1865, when triumphant Union troops raised the federal flag over Fort Sumter, defeated citadel of the Confederacy, and marched through the streets of Charleston, South Carolina, that city's black population celebrated the long-awaited deliverance from bondage. That same day, Corporal C. J. Howard befriended a 109-year-old black man, who had been born a slave in the Carolina low country. A near contemporary of Caesar, the New York slave from Bethlehem Manor, the elderly black southerner told Corporal Howard that "he had served his master's children's children, that he had been praying 75 years for the war to come and God had answered his prayers at last."¹² Only 20 years old at the time of the publication of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, the date that white Americans commemorated during the annual celebrations of their freedom from British tyranny, he would have to wait four score and nine years to celebrate his own liberation from the tyranny of the white American slaveocracy.


What value, then, did slaves, like Caesar and Corporal Howard's southern friend, attach to patriotic celebrations of the nation's liberty prior to the abolition of slavery throughout the United States?

In a caustic oration, delivered in Rochester, New York, on July 5, 1852, to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the abolition of slavery in New York, Frederick Douglass, ex-slave and black abolitionist, posed the question: "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?"¹³ Putting himself in the position of the slave,¹⁴ Douglass stated: "I shall see this day and its popular characteristics from the slave's point of view. Standing here, identified with the American bondman,

making his wrongs mine, I do not hesitate to declare, with all my soul, that the character and conduct of the nation never looked blacker to me than on this Fourth of July. Whether we turn to the declarations of the past, or to the professions of the present, the conduct of the nation seems equally hideous and revolting. America is false to the past, false to the present, and solemnly binds herself to be false to the future.” Douglass thus observed that, from the slave’s vantage point, American democracy was a fraud perpetrated from the moment of its founding. It would remain so, he insisted, as long as the nation preserved slavery in any part of its territory. In his oration, Douglass invited the audience to follow his example and enter into a process of identification with the slave and, from the slave’s standpoint, critically assess the limits of the nation’s commitment to democratic principles.¹⁵ Refusing to lend dignity to the proslavery argument, which asserted that the Negro lacked the capacity to reason, was hence not truly a human being, and therefore justly enslaved, Douglass refrained from directly arguing the contrary and instead pointed out that the slave’s humanity had already been recognized in the laws of the southern states.¹⁶ Douglass noted: “It is admitted in the fact that Southern statute-books are covered with enactments, forbidding under severe fines and penalties, the teaching of the slave to read or write. When you can point to any such laws in reference to the beasts of the field, then I may consent to argue the manhood of the slave.” In this way, Douglass exposed the aporia of American democracy.

Regarded as *anticitizens*, whose presence at white Independence Day festivities was deemed to be a desecration of the pure body politic that enjoyed the pleasures of full national belonging,¹⁷ black New Yorkers transformed their exclusion from patriotic celebrations into a political weapon. Standing before the Rochester audience on July 5, Douglass delivered his oration as if he were speaking on the Fourth of July and thereby demonstrated that white Americans did not monopolize the capacity for holding freedom in high esteem and paying tribute to its blessings. Although the process of gradual emancipation in New York State commenced on July 4, 1799, and the abolition of slavery in New York was officially completed on July 4, 1827,¹⁸ black New Yorkers postponed by one day their annual freedom observances and set aside July fifth to celebrate and, importantly, to stage public critiques of a nation that professed to value liberty yet countenanced the enslavement of millions of southern blacks and the extension of slavery into newly organized territories of the United States. By doing so, they called attention to the deferral of universal freedom in the United States. Black New Yorkers of the antebellum era not only criticized the dominant white political culture but also displayed transnational identifications by holding annual celebrations of Haitian Independence Day (January 1, 1804), the abolition of the African slave trade by England, Denmark, and the United States (January 1, 1808), and the emancipation of the slaves in the British West Indies (August 1, 1834).¹⁹ Within nineteenth-century New York’s black political culture, watershed events in the expansion of democracy taking place outside the geopolitical borders of the United States were just as worthy of commemora-

tion as seemingly local events, such as the abolition of slavery in New York State and John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. In this respect, black New Yorkers linked their political struggle with a broader history of progress and human emancipation. This articulation of local and global democratic movements would become a hallmark of black radicalism in New York and throughout the Black Atlantic world.²⁰

 With the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which in 1865 abolished slavery in the entire territory of the United States, and subsequent civil rights amendments, which were promulgated to protect the liberty of recently emancipated black citizens and their descendants, many contemporaries believed that the nation had finally aligned its laws with its philosophical foundations and thereby eliminated the aporia of American democracy. Yet during the postemancipation period, evidence of the intransigence of antiblack racism—for example, the rise of lynching and the introduction of Jim Crow laws—engendered real doubts about the nation's devotion to democratic principles and set the stage for the proliferation of volatile political antagonisms during the twentieth century. By the 1960s, the United States, the same nation that had fought two costly wars to save democracy in Europe, was paradoxically engaged in an imperialist war in Vietnam and seemed reluctant to ensure the expansion of democracy at home. In an essay titled "Fifth Avenue, Uptown: A Letter from Harlem" and published in 1960, the black New Yorker and expatriate writer James Baldwin calls attention to the use of military manpower to enforce U.S. domestic and foreign policies of white supremacy. Drawing an analogy between the white policeman in Harlem and the invading U.S. soldier in a foreign territory, Baldwin writes: "He moves through Harlem, therefore, like an occupying soldier in a bitterly hostile country; which is precisely what, and where, he is, and is the reason he walks in two and threes. And he is not the only one who knows why he is always in company; the people who are watching him know why, too. Any street meeting, sacred or secular, which he and his colleagues uneasily cover, has as its explicit or implicit burden the cruelty of white domination. And these days, of course, in terms increasingly vivid and jubilant, it speaks of the end of that domination. The white policeman standing on a Harlem street corner finds himself at the center of the revolution now occurring in the world."²¹ In Baldwin's view, the white policeman in Harlem faced a native liberation movement against internal colonialism within U.S. domestic borders. Just as the black abolitionists of the antebellum era had linked the freedom struggle in the United States with the Haitian Revolution, Baldwin regarded the twentieth-century independence movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the U.S. black civil rights and black power movements of the post-World War II era as a continuous anticolonial revolution.

During his 1962 tour of six major West African cities, Baldwin became acutely

sensible to the complex and pervasive entailments of colonialism. After completing that trip, Baldwin wrote “Down on the Cross,” an essay condemning the West’s colonialist legacy of race-thinking and its obstruction of alternative formations of peoplehood throughout the world: “What one would not like to see again,” Baldwin writes, “is the consolidation of peoples on the basis of their color. But as long as we in the West place on color the value that we do, we make it impossible for the great unwashed to consolidate themselves according to any other principle. Color is not a human or a personal reality; it is a political reality. But this is a distinction so extremely hard to make that the West has not been able to make it yet.”²² Baldwin insisted that white Americans must first re-examine their values and undergo a radical transformation of consciousness amounting to the abolition of the racial binarism of white over black, before the United States could accomplish any good in undertaking its expansive role in world affairs. Baldwin believed that the color line, which W. E. B. Du Bois famously called the “problem of the twentieth century,” was a “fearful and delicate problem, which compromises, where it does not corrupt, all the American efforts to build a better world—here, there, or anywhere.” Convinced that racism had distorted American democracy in the realm of foreign as well as domestic policy, Baldwin lamented: “The American dream has therefore become something much more resembling a nightmare, on the private, domestic, and international levels.” Baldwin therefore urged Americans, both blacks and whites, “to end the racial nightmare, and achieve our country, and change the history of the world.”

Despite the achievements of the U.S. black civil rights and black power movements, the color line, grounded in centuries-old beliefs and customs, proved more difficult to abolish than racial domination, grounded in law alone. Whereas the legal institution of slavery and Jim Crow laws once assured white Americans, regardless of their class position, a status akin to an aristocracy of skin color, the customary privileges of whiteness, deeply rooted in the mores of the nation and transplanted everywhere the United States implemented imperialist policies, were now primarily maintained by a racist culture, not by statute. Ending what Baldwin called the “racial nightmare” thus appeared as an ever-receding horizon. The apparent intransigency of racist culture in the late twentieth century led some intellectuals of that era to conclude that antiblack racism is a permanent bulwark stabilizing U.S. liberal democracy in spite of gross imbalances in the distribution of wealth.²³ The eminent law professor Derrick Bell has written: “Racism in America is not a curable aberration—as all believed at some earlier point. Rather, it is a key component in this country’s stability. Identifying vicariously with those at the top, obsessed with barring blacks from eroding their racial priority for jobs and other resources, most whites accept their own relatively low social status. This acceptance is a major explanation why there is neither turmoil nor much concern about the tremendous disparity in income, wealth, and opportunity separating those at the top of the economic heap and the many, many down toward the bottom.”²⁴ Bell’s point is not that the permanence of racism reflects a natural disposition of humankind. Rather, antiblack racism is, in Bell’s

view, a disciplinary mechanism of elite rule, which sustains U.S. liberalism and its global expansion in the face of flagrant social inequality throughout the world. This is not to say that all conceptions of race are inescapably racist. After all, the discursive construction of a hierarchy of superior and inferior races that naturalizes social inequality is a contingent rather than a necessary feature of race-thinking. Antiracist movements have sometimes embraced the concept “race” as the foundation of their political struggles without endorsing racism. But, as Bell points out, “If we are to seek new goals for our struggles, we must first reassess the worth of the racial assumptions on which, without careful thought, we have presumed too much and relied on too long.”²⁵

Although the biological validity of race has been largely discredited, the political value of race remains severely inflated. It is, perhaps, precisely because race no longer means something biological but something political that race-thinking continues to operate as a seemingly indispensable way of knowing the world. Paul Gilroy writes, “Raciology has saturated the discourse in which it circulates. It cannot be readily re-signified or de-signified, and to imagine that its dangerous meanings can be easily re-articulated into benign, democratic forms would be to exaggerate the power of critical and oppositional interests. In contrast, the creative acts involved in destroying raciology and transcending ‘race’ are more than warranted by the goal of authentic democracy to which they point. The political will to liberate humankind from race-thinking must be complemented by precise historical reasons why these attempts are worth making.”²⁶ Problematizing the history of race-thinking is especially crucial to the prospects of emancipatory projects in liberal democracies that disavow the salience of race and consign racism to the past, even as it surreptitiously operates as a durable instrument of elite rule. Positioned at the exit of the twentieth century and gazing out at the opening of the twenty-first, the distinguished historian David Brion Davis observed, “Although political rhetoric often conceals this truth, as we complete the twentieth century and prepare to enter a new millennium, no issue in America is as sensitive, potentially explosive, and resistant to resolution as the issue of race. To understand the meaning of race in the future, we must first uncover the historical and cultural contexts of the past in which separate human races were conceived.”²⁷ In keeping with that project, the aim of this study has been to interrogate the history of racial formation in New York City during the early modern era of colonialist expansionism and the rise of merchant capitalism. This study shows that the enslavement of black Africans and the installation of the enslaver and the enslaved into relationally constituted racial subject-positions was not an “unthinking decision,” as Winthrop Jordan has characterized it,²⁸ but a failure to think in any terms except the reductive categories of black and white. The broader goal of this monograph has been to problematize that familiar way of knowing by disclosing how, historically, the commonsensical construction of superior and inferior races legitimated social inequality in colonial New York City and how antiblack racism operated as a disciplinary mechanism of governance that stabilized colonial rule in that factious port town.²⁹



Although the discourse of American exceptionalism disavows this fact, a historical stemma connects our neocolonial present to our colonial past. In contemporary New York City, the entailments of colonialism and its material and ideal relations of domination sustain a racist culture, in which a ruling elite exercises power on a truly global scale, governs according to the pure reason of capitalist profit, and obtains the consent of the governed through disciplinary mechanisms, some new and others centuries old. Although we have entered a new epoch of global capitalism and transnational migration, “the net of racial politics,” Arjun Appadurai observes, “is now cast wider than ever before on the streets of the urban United States.”³⁰ As the Haitian, Colombian, and West African immigrants of present-day New York City well know, compulsory identifications still assign newcomers to binary racial categories. Certainly, breaking the white/black binary, which has for so long structured much of U.S. race-thinking, requires more than plugging the nonwhite immigrants of the post-1960s period into the equation of U.S. multiculturalism or wrapping the old politics of liberal pluralism in a new hybridized ideological integument. Even alternative racial classification systems that posit intermediate and mixed racial positions produce their own binary formations.³¹ As Lewis Gordon points out, “Every ‘in-between’ is a whiteness or a blackness waiting to emerge. . . . Either one is categorized as white due to one’s apparent distance from blackness or one is categorized as black due to one’s apparent distance from whiteness.”³² Such are the historical entailments of the colonial past and its legacy of binary, black-and-white race-thinking. Given the hold binary race-thinking has on the political imaginary, it seems reasonable to propose that liberating the imagination from that way of knowing the world is one of the most urgent tasks of the twenty-first century. This emancipatory abolitionist project not only involves a critique of the systems of representation that structure word-object and word-image associations as polar oppositions but also requires a critical interrogation into the specific histories of colonialism that gave rise to racial hierarchies and the relations of racial domination that sustain today’s neocolonial racist cultures.

Of course, such hegemonic struggles will take place in a world where the old identificatory schema of racial classification has been upgraded. In the new millennium, the filmmaker in Hollywood and the digital game maker in Silicon Valley work in collaboration with the census taker in New York City and the INS officer in Miami to classify and contain the increasingly diverse inventory of phantasmagoric threats to the national security and the pure body politic—for example, the Arab terrorist, the Colombian drug smuggler, and the Chinese spy. For the transnational “others” of the late-modern political imaginary, the imagination has not only become a “social practice”³³ but also become an ever more hazardous terrain. The realm of the imagination has become such a perilous environment precisely because its processes of identification are, like a Nintendo game, now programmed to perform irrevocable judgments within a

fraction of a second.³⁴ So that, in the time it takes to discharge 41 rounds of ammunition from a rapid-fire pistol, certain irretrievable identifications have taken place while others have been foreclosed. Not enough time, perhaps, to think: That's a wallet, not a gun. Too late to ask: What's in that wallet? And to ascertain the answer: an identification card and money, two items no worldly citizen of present-day New York City would be caught dead without. Awakening to the murderous legacies of the global city's colonial past is a vital imperative of present-day emancipatory projects.

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Appendix A: Elias Neau's Short Question-and-Answer Catechism

(1)
 Q: How long is it since God has his beginning?
 A: From all eternity.

(2)
 Q: How long will He continue to be?
 A: For ever & ever.

(3)
 Q: By whom does He subsist?
 A: By himself.

(4)
 Q: On whom does he depend?
 A: On nobody.

(5)
 Q: Where is God?
 A: Everywhere.

(6)
 Q: Where is He Chiefly?
 A: In heaven.

(7)
 Q: What does He do there?
 A: He governs things.

(8)
 Q: Who is with him?
 A: The saints and the angels.

(9)
 Q: What is his throne?
 A: Heaven.

(10)
 Q: What is his footstool?
 A: Earth.

(11)
 Q: How did God make himself known at first?
 A: By his works.

(12)
 Q: How afterwards?
 A: By his words.

(13)
 Q: Who taught us to understand?
 A: The Holy Spirit.

(14)
 Q: How many works are there of God?
 A: Two amongst others.

(15)
 Q: What is the first?
 A: The work of creation.

(16)
 Q: What is the second?
 A: The work of redemption.

Source: Letter from Elias Neau to Dr. Woodward dated September 5, 1705 in Letterbook of the SPG. [Microfilm] Widener Library. Harvard University.

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Notes

Introduction

1. For two excellent studies on capitalism's realization of global supremacy, see Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space*, and Sassen, *Losing Control?* Of course, the phenomenon of globalization in our own time is the product of historical forces dating back to the early modern era. Stuart Hall writes, "Again, globalization is not new. European exploration, conquest and colonization were early forms of the same secular, historical process." See Hall, "Conclusion: The Multi-Cultural Question," 214. For the capitalist world-system theory, see Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, Vol. 1, and *The Capitalist World Economy*. For a critique of Wallerstein's world-system thesis on the grounds that it places the emergence of capitalism in the sixteenth century when it properly belongs in the eighteenth century, see Brenner, "Origins of Capitalism."

2. For an influential study on the new urban formation that arose with the most recent stage in globalization, see Sassen, *The Global City*.

3. In the ancient Greco-Roman world, colonialism referred to the transplantation of people in new territories for the purpose of bringing that land under cultivation. More recently defined as the conquest and occupation of a foreign territory and the subjugation of its native inhabitants in order to exploit its resources for the benefit of the invaders and their sponsors, colonialism has produced various structures of domination, ranging from colonies with native majority populations governed by foreign colonizers, in some cases, and the native elite, in others—for example, colonial South Africa and colonial India—to colonies with settler majority populations governed by colonial officials from the imperial center or, alternatively, by colonial elites drawn from the settler population, for example, colonial Australia and colonial Virginia. See Emerson, "Colonialism"; Verlinden, *The Beginnings of Modern Colonization*; and Denoon, "Understanding Settler Colonies."

Immanuel Wallerstein writes, "Colonialism in the age of capitalism differed from previous imperial systems in that it came to encompass the entire world. Launched from

Europe in the 15th century, it reached its zenith in the 19th century, by which time all nations and territories had been assigned a place in ‘the modern world system.’” See Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, 2:3. For a critique of world-systems theory, see Blussé, Wesseling, and Winius, *History and Underdevelopment*.

4. For influential theories of racial formation, see Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, and San Juan, *Racial Formations/Critical Transformations*.

5. For superb studies on the concept “race,” see Malik, *The Meaning of Race*; Smedley, *Race in North America*; Banton, *The Idea of Race*; Gould, *The Mismeasurement of Man*, esp. chapter 2; and Gossett, *Race*.

6. For nonbiological conceptions of race, see Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Even though the natives of Ireland were in surface bodily appearance indistinguishable from the English people, the early modern English colonizers regarded the indigenous population of Ireland as an alien and inferior race, whose religion and kinship and marriage customs were barbarous. See Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics*.

7. It was not until the late eighteenth century that physiognomic traits gained primacy over cultural and environmental criteria in the classificatory procedure that divided human beings into separate categories called races. Before that time, the set of truth claims asserted by the biological sciences were simply unavailable as a knowledge base for legitimating racial classifications. The historian Michel Foucault writes, “Historians want to write histories of biology in the eighteenth century; but they do not realize that biology did not exist, that the pattern of knowledge that has been familiar to us for a hundred and fifty years is not valid for a previous period.” See Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 127. Once scientific inquiry moved beyond the study of human anatomy to explore human biology and to discover the key biological mechanisms of human heredity, the term *race* assumed the guise of a biogenetic category and came to refer to a distinct group of people whose shared genetic traits are transmitted from one generation to the next. That is, *race* now denoted a distinct population (or gene pool) that exhibits a certain frequency of genetic markers. For general overviews of the history of the biological and biogenetic sciences and their relation to the ideological construction of race, see Lewontin, *Biology as Ideology*, and Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*. As genetically determined traits became the core content imputed to race, the displaced cultural content gradually came to define what is nowadays known as *ethnicity*, a term that first appeared in the English language around 1953. It is important to keep in mind that prior to the late nineteenth century, the concept “race” was scarcely dependent on the availability of the biological and biogenetic sciences for validation. Well before the founding of these sciences, theology and natural history produced discourses of race. For much of its history, the meaning of race encompassed nation, culture, language, tribe, and related categories. See Guillaumin, “The Idea of Race and Its Elevation to Autonomous Scientific and Legal Status,” and Tonkin, McDonald, and Chapman, “History and Ethnicity.”

8. Carolus Linnaeus, *System naturae* [1735]. Quoted in Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 159.

9. The earliest known use of taxonomies of race appears in a travel account of François Bernier (1620–88), “Nouvelle division de la Terre par les differerates espèces ou races d’hommes qui l’habitent, envoyée par un fameux voyageur.”

10. For a general account of the procedure of early modern natural history, see Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 125–62.

11. *Ibid.*, 138.

12. *Ibid.*, 132, 134.

13. Blumenbach, *On the Natural Variety of Mankind*, in Bernasconi and Lott, *The Idea of Race*, 27–37.

14. Although Kant was not the earliest Western European thinker to use taxonomies of race, he was the first to make a clear distinction between the categories *race* and *species*. Addressing the problem of reconciling the unity of the human species with the idea of separate races, Kant writes, "Proceeding in this way, Negroes and whites are clearly not different species of human beings (since they presumably belong to one line of descent), but they do comprise two different races." In Kant's classification schema, the term *race* is by no means an identity category ascribed to nonwhites only. Rather, the categories "Negro race," "Hun race (Mongol or Kalmuck)," and "Hindu or Hindustani race" are relationally constituted identities that derive their meaning in and through their apparent differences from the category "white race," which, according to Kant, diverges least from the "lineal root genus" of the human species and therefore logically serves as its proxy in the calibration of the degree to which all other categories of race deviate from the "original human form." See Kant, "Of the Different Human Races," in Bernasconi and Lott, *The Idea of Race*, 8–27.

15. For an influential essay on the historically contingent formation of race in the United States, see Fields, "Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States."

16. According to Elazar Barkan, scientific discourse began to repudiate the biological validity of race as early as the 1920s. See Barkan, *Retreat from Scientific Racism*, 4. The renowned anthropologist Ashley Montagu was in the forefront of Western intellectuals who, during World War II and the postwar era, discredited the biological validity of race and warned that further disastrous consequences would follow from the continued usage of that concept in the social sciences and social policy. See his *Man's Most Dangerous Myth* and his *Statement on Race*. For overviews of the changing fortunes of the concept *race* in the discourse of the biological sciences, see Steve Jones, *The Language of Genes*; Gilman and Stepan, "Appropriating the Idioms of Science"; and Shipman, *The Evolution of Racism*.

17. Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*, 60.

18. For a useful theoretical essay on relations of domination and racial formation, see Stuart Hall, "Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Domination."

19. The Dutch seaborne empire can be mapped along the overseas trading routes linking the Baltic, the Mediterranean, the Levant, Archangel in Russia, Africa, Southeast Asia, Nagasaki in Japan, Recife in Brazil, Curaçao, New Amsterdam on Manhattan Island, and the seaports of the Netherlands. See D. W. Davies, *A Primer of Dutch Seventeenth-Century Overseas Trade*; Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600–1800*; Aymard, *Dutch Capitalism and World Capitalism*; and Jonathan Israel, *Dutch Primacy in the World Trade, 1585–1740*.

20. See Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 109.

21. For colonial port town functions, see Price, "Economic Function and the Growth of American Port Towns in the Eighteenth Century," and Ross and Telkamp, *Colonial Cities*, esp. 1–6.

22. For the foundational texts of the American exceptionalism thesis in U.S. liberal nationalist historiography, see Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History*; Beard and Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization*; Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics*; Potter, *People of Plenty*; and Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America*. For recent debates over the American exceptionalism thesis, see Shafer, *Is America Different?* These texts often define American exceptionalism by way of a comparison: When compared with the history of Europe, the history of the United States is exceptionally free from class division, revolutionary upheaval, and authoritarianism.

23. For an overview of the scholarly debate over the merits of the American exceptionalism thesis, see Kammen, "The Problem of American Exceptionalism." The following offer noteworthy critiques of that dominant thesis in the historiography on U.S. society and culture: Veysey, "The Autonomy of American History Reconsidered"; Dorothy

Ross, "Historical Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century America"; Iriye, "The Internationalization of History"; and Tyrrell, "American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History." For two timely reflections on the myth of American exceptionalism and its role in enabling the new world order of global capitalism, see Spiro, "The New Sovereignists," and Fukuyama, "The End of American Exceptionalism."

24. Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness*, 3–4.

25. *Ibid.*, 5, 168, 138. James McPherson argues that until the Civil War era the northern states were generally regarded as anomalous sectors within the United States. See McPherson, "Antebellum Southern Exceptionalism."

26. Engaged in the competition between the descendants of Cavaliers, Yankees, and Knickerbockers over the title of progenitor of uniquely American political institutions and exceptional material prosperity, prominent nineteenth-century New Yorkers wrote histories that challenged the primacy of New England and Virginia as the source of the U.S. national character. See William Dunlap, *History of the New Netherlands Province of New York and State of New York*, and Curry, *New-York*.

27. Hopkins, "Back to the Future."

28. Balibar, "The Nation Form," 89.

29. Orlando Patterson has argued that the great importance attributed to freedom in Western culture was occasioned by the presence and proliferation of slavery. It was in the West, Patterson argues, that freedom first acquired an overriding social significance. Freedom attained an exalted value earlier in the West because it was there that the concept first served the political interest of a ruling elite who, by the expansion of slavery abroad, extended democracy at home. According to Patterson, it was during the imperial period of ancient Greek history that freedom initially emerged as the penultimate social value for the West. During the campaigns of conquest and the proliferation of slavery, from the Persian Wars to the era of Alexander, the exaltation of freedom became the basis of social identification between the masses of Athenian citizens and the ruling elite. At that time, the enslavement of alien others—in this case, Armenians, Arabs, Palestinians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians (but also Italians, Illyrians, Thracians, Scythians, and Phrygians)—fostered a shared high regard for freedom among the ancient Greeks. Freedom thus attained not only an exalted but also a hegemonic value, one that assisted the Athenian rulers in forestalling domestic unrest. Patterson writes: "The demos accepted the rulership of the traditional ruling class because they saw its members as kinsmen, kith and kin against a world of unfree barbarians. It was slavery that created this conception of the world, one shared by rulers and demos alike." In the same way, the enslavement of foreign-born others—Greeks, Sardinians, Spaniards, Gauls, Germans, Carthaginians, and many of the same people the Greeks had enslaved—assisted the ruling elite of the late Republican Era and Principate in securing the allegiance of Roman citizens. For the paradoxical connection between slavery and freedom in the ancient West, see Orlando Patterson, *Freedom*, Vol. 1. See also Westerman, "Slavery and the Elements of Freedom in Ancient Greece"; Fisher, *Slavery in Classical Greece*; and Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome*. For a skeptical yet tempered evaluation of Patterson's thesis, see Haskell, "Review of *Freedom*."

The paradoxical complicity between the valorization of freedom and the enslavement of alien others, which produced a bond of kinship among the demos of the Athenian city-state and, subsequently, the citizens of Rome, would, centuries later, be closely approximated by the bond of racial identification among citizens of the *herrenvolk* democracy eventually established in the United States. See Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*; and Oakes, *The Ruling Race and Slavery and Freedom*. For the concept of *herrenvolk* democracy (or the ideological-political regime that confers the political rights of citizenship on a "master race" while denying racialized others access to these rights), see van den Berghe, *Race and Ethnicity*. For the history of *herrenvolk*

democracy in the United States, see Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, esp. 90–94.

30. In this respect, colonial New York City and its hinterland was not quite a slave society but closely resembled one. The historian Ira Berlin writes: “In some places, the North itself took on the trappings of a slave society, with an economy that rested upon the labor of enslaved Africans and African Americans.” See Berlin, *Many Thousand Gone*, 177.

31. *Ibid.*, 8.

32. By shifting to an enslaved black labor force, wealthy planters in colonial Virginia reduced the southern staple-crop colony’s dependence on land-hungry settlers who resisted the colonial elite’s attempts to check settler expansion into Indian territory. At the same time, the colonial elite instituted a number of egalitarian reforms that gave the masses of settlers a voice in the colony’s political affairs. Colonial Virginia’s representative assembly promulgated, according to Edmund S. Morgan, “measures to align white men of every rank against colored men of every tent.” Ordinary settlers were “allowed not only to prosper,” Morgan adds, “but also to acquire social, psychological, and political advantages that turned the thrust of exploitation away from them and aligned them with the exploiters” of enslaved blacks. In this way, antiblack racism fostered white solidarity by erecting a “screen of racial contempt” that not only separated “dangerous free whites from dangerous slave blacks” but also obscured the social inequalities that divided white Virginians. See Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 346, 344, 328.

Carl Becker (*The History of Political Parties in the Province of New York, 1760–1776*), Patricia Bonomi (*A Factious People*), and Milton Klein (*The Politics of Diversity*) have written important books covering the influence of ethnic diversity and social stratification on the evolution of politics in colonial New York; but none of these studies considers, in depth, the impact of black slavery and antiblack racism on colonial governance in that northern settler colony. For a brief reference to the function of antiblack racism in minimizing ethnic conflict within colonial New York City’s settler population, see Archdeacon, *New York City, 1664–1710*, 145.

33. Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 381.

34. For an excellent study that draws important connections between the material culture of eighteenth-century tidewater Virginia and republicanism, see Breen, *Tobacco Culture*.

35. Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 368–69.

36. For foundational texts in British North American community studies, see Powell, *Puritan Village*; Rutman, *Winthrop’s Boston*; Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*; Lockridge, *A New England Town*; Greven, *Four Generations*; Zuckerman, *Peaceable Kingdoms*; Wolf, *Urban Village*; Kross, *The Evolution of an American Town*; and Heyrman, *Commerce and Culture*. For an overview of British North American community studies, see Rutman, “Assessing the Little Communities of Early America.”

37. Nash, *Forging Freedom*; Shane White, *Somewhat More Independent*; and Hodges, *Root and Branch*. These monographs augment earlier studies on the laws of slavery in the northern settler colonies. See Lorenzo J. Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England*; McManus, *A History of Negro Slavery in New York*; and Edward Raymond Turner, *The Negro in Pennsylvania*.

38. For an exception to the general neglect of in-depth analysis of master-slave interactions in the historiography of the northern settler colonies, see Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot*.

39. For the evolution of the laws of slavery in the British North American colonies, see Leon A. Higginbotham, *In a Matter of Color*.

40. For a superb analysis of slaveowner paternalism in the colonial South, see Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 284–96.

41. The historian Richard Wade (*Slavery in the Cities*) iterates Frederick Douglass's famous assertion that "slavery dislikes a dense population" and, therefore, the urban environment undermines the institution of slavery, whereas Claudia Goldin (*Urban Slavery in the American South*) has uncovered a good deal of evidence that refutes Douglass's claim. This study argues that slavery and the urban environment are hardly incompatible and that, although urban labor routines and demographic patterns in colonial New York City established conditions for contestation between masters and slaves, these factors by no means led to the demise of slavery in that colonial port town.

42. Archdeacon, *New York City*, 46–47; Nash, *Urban Crucible*, 108–9; "Slaves and Slaveowners in Colonial Philadelphia," 226; *Forging Freedom*, 33; and Lorenzo J. Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England*, 19.

43. Lee, "The Problem of Slave Community in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake," 344.

44. For colonial Charleston, South Carolina, see Philip D. Morgan, "Black Life in Eighteenth-Century Charleston." Charleston slaveowners held larger lots of slaves on average than their New York City counterparts. See Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 41, 78.

45. Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot*, 6.

46. Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 386.

47. Heckscher, *Mercantilism*; Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, Vol. 2; and Burawoy, "Race, Class, and Colonialism," 546.

48. The scramble for empire and competition in world trade between England and Holland precipitated the Anglo-Dutch Wars (1652–54, 1665–67, and 1672–74). See J. R. Jones, *The Anglo-Dutch Wars of the Seventeenth Century*.

49. For a general account of the role of independent merchants in the spread of capitalism and slavery, see Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *Fruits of Merchant Capitalism*.

50. In this study, the term *English* is used in contexts that antedate the 1707 Act of Union, except in the case of descriptions of migrants from the British Isles, excluding England, where the term *British* is used. The term *English rulers* refers to the metropolitan government in England and its surrogates in British America.

51. Said, *Orientalism*, 327.

Chapter 1

1. The Wappinger, also known as the Weckquaesgeek, were a chieftaincy within the Munsee, a subdivision of the loose Lenape confederation that also included the Unalachtigo and the Unami. At the time of the European invasion, the southernmost extreme of Manhattan Island was dotted with a few canoe embarkments and campsites of the Canarsee, who inhabited present-day Brooklyn and other parts of western Long Island. See Goddard, "Delaware"; Kraft, *The Lenape*; Bolton, *Indian Life of Long Ago in the City of New York*, 16; and Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 7.

2. For Hudson's expeditions in North America, see Asher, *Henry Hudson the Navigator*, 45–93. Besides Hudson, two earlier European explorers, Giovanni da Verrazano in 1524 and Esteban Gomez in 1525, made voyages to the region. It is also likely that fishermen from Newfoundland ventured as far south as Manhattan Island prior to Hudson's voyages. See Quinn, *North America from Earliest Discovery to the First Settlements*, 154–58, 380.

3. Following a successful revolt from Catholic Spain in 1580, the Protestants of northern Netherlands achieved independence. Organized as a confederation of seven provinces and eleven cities but dominated by the wealthy maritime provinces of Holland and Zeeland, the Dutch Republic, known as the United Provinces of the Free Netherlands, possessed a small territory and population yet accumulated enormous per

capita wealth through its engagement in overseas commerce. See Geyl, *The Revolt of the Netherlands, 1555–1609*, and Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic*.

4. The joint-stock company became the instrument of Dutch colonial expansionism in Asia also. The Estates General granted the Dutch East India Company (1602–1798) a monopoly on the Dutch overseas trade east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Strait of Magellan. From its headquarters in Batavia (present-day Jakarta, Indonesia), this joint-stock company conducted a trade in spices, silk, tea, and other exotic goods from Asia. For an overview of the role of merchant capitalism in Dutch colonial expansionism, see Boxer, *Dutch Seaborne Empire*.

5. Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 34, 42.

6. In North America the WIC also erected Swaanendael, Fort Nassau, and Fort Casimir along the Delaware River, Fort Hope along the Connecticut River, Eastdorp or Vreeland (later Westchester) along the Harlem River, Bergen on the Jersey shore, and Breuckelen (later Brooklyn), Ameersfoort, Midwout, and New Utrecht in western Long Island.

7. Because few European traders as yet spoke Algonquian, the language of the coastal, woodland, and river Indians, they became dependent on the expertise of Algonquian-speaking middlemen from the Mahican of the upper Hudson River. Although the Mahican enjoyed the privileged status of key articulators in the early Amerindian-European trade, the natives soon began to fight among themselves for primacy in the trade with the European newcomers. Using firearms that European traders sold to them, the assertive Haudenosaunee-speaking Mohawk expanded their control over the interior, where fur pelts were most plentiful, and eventually displaced the Mahican as the chief intermediaries in the Amerindian-European trade. For a description of the fur trade in New Netherland, see Condon, *New York Beginnings*, and Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*. For a recent comparative study on Amerindian-European relations, see Nan A. Rothschild, *Colonial Encounters in a Native American Landscape*.

8. For a superb study on the introduction of alcohol into Amerindian cultures, see Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*.

9. NNN, 22.

10. For ceremonial gift giving at treaty signings and other official meetings between Indian sachems and Dutch leaders, see Gehring and Grumet, “Observations of the Indians from Jasper Danckaerts’ Journal, 1679–80,” 108.

11. For the natives’ use of alcohol to induce dreams, see Tooker, *Native North American Spirituality of the Eastern Woodlands*, 120–25; and Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 64–65.

12. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 64–67, 70, 75. See also Hudson, *Black Drink*.

13. Quoted in Gehring and Grumet, “Observations of the Indians from Jasper Danckaerts’ Journal,” 108.

14. Fernow, *Records of New Amsterdam from 1653 to 1674 Anno Domini*, 1:22, 5:97; O’Callaghan, *Laws and Ordinances of New Netherland, 1638–1674*, 10–12.

15. Scott and Stryker-Rodda, *New York Historical Manuscripts*, 4:4 (hereafter cited as NYHM:D).

16. NNN, 340.

17. Van der Donck, *A Description of the New Netherlands*, 86–87; NNN, 109. For corrections to the English translation of van der Donck’s *Beschrijvinge van Nieuw Nederlandt* [1655], see van Gastel, “Van der Donck’s Description of the Indians,” 411–21.

18. NNN, 106.

19. *Ibid.*, 174.

20. For superb studies on gender and sexuality in Native American cultures, see Klein and Ackerman, *Women and Power in Native North America*; Jacobs, Thomas, and Lang, *Two-Spirited People*; Brown, “The Anglo-Algonquian Gender Frontier,” and Natalie Zemon Davis, “Iroquois Women, European Women.”

21. NNN, 108.

22. *Ibid.*, 273.
23. *Ibid.*, 213.
24. *Ibid.*, 216.
25. Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 12.
26. *NYHM:D*, 4:124–25.
27. Quoted in Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 61. For the trade jargon invented for the Dutch-Amerindian commerce, see Feister, “Linguistic Communication between the Dutch and Indians in New Netherland, 1609–1664.”
28. For a history of the transition from the precapitalist to the capitalist conception of property, see Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*.
29. Van Gastel, “Van der Donck’s Description of the Indians,” 418.
30. For the conception of protection and tribute (or rent), see Lane, *Profits from Power*.
31. Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 217.
32. O’Callaghan, *Documentary History of the State of New York*, 2:556–57 (hereafter cited as *DHNY*). *NNN*, 91, 94.
33. Trelease, *Indian Affairs in Colonial New York*.
34. *NNN*, 57.
35. *Genesis* 1:28 κ_{IV}.
36. O’Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York* (hereafter cited as *DRHNY*), 1:150.
37. *DRHNY*, 1:151.
38. *NNN*, 228, 280–82.
39. *Ibid.*, 283–84.
40. *Ibid.*, 214.
41. *DRHNY*, 1:190.
42. Quoted in Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 221.
43. For an archeological investigation into the changes in the coastal Indians’ material culture, see Ceci, *The Effect of European Contact and Trade on the Settlement Pattern of Indians in Coastal New York, 1524–1665*. In many respects, the Wappinger shared the fate of the native population along the coast of southern New England. See Cronon, *Changes in the Land*; Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 50, 116–17.
44. Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 99–100.
45. Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 33, 37, 46–47; Bachman, *Peltries or Plantations*.
46. *DRHNY*, 1:152.
47. For a discussion of the “Freedoms and Exemptions” [1628] and the revised list of privileges, see Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 100–101, 137.
48. *DRHNY*, 1:114, 119.
49. Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 158.
50. *NNN*, 89.
51. *Ibid.*, 132.
52. *DHNY*, 1:596.
53. *DRHNY*, 1:154. For the high cost of enticing indentured servants to New Netherland, see also van den Boogaart, “The Servant Migration to New Netherland, 1624–1664.”
54. For the Dutch slave trade, see Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600–1815*.
55. *Ibid.*, 19–20.
56. For documentation on the Dutch slave entrepôt at Curaçao, see Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade*, 3:406–10; Gehring and Schiltkamp, *Curacao Papers, 1640–1665*, Vol. 17.
57. For the capture of human cargo later sold in New Amsterdam as prize goods, see O’Callaghan, *Calendar of Historical Manuscripts in the Office of the Secretary of State of New York*, 1:73; Donnan, *Documents Illustrative*, 3:405, 416–17, 426–27.

58. DRHNY, 1:151, 182.
59. To eliminate a potential obstacle to the resumption of peaceful trade relations with the indigenous population, the WIC fined settlers who refused to pay wages to Indian laborers. See NYHM:D, 4:566.
60. Donnan, *Documents Illustrative*, 3:444.
61. Wagman, "Corporate Slavery in New Netherland"; Swan, "First Africans into New Netherland, 1625 or 1626?"
62. Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 16.
63. Kea, *Settlements, Trade, and Politics in the Seventeenth-Century Gold Coast, 1469–1682*, chap. 2.
64. Postma, *The Dutch Atlantic in the Atlantic Slave Trade*, 17–18; Emmer, "The Dutch and the Making of the Second Atlantic System."
65. Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery, From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492–1800*, 211.
66. For the successful petition of independent traders for the abolition of the WIC's monopoly on the African slave trade, see O'Callaghan, *Laws and Ordinances of New Netherland*, 81, 127; and Donnan, *Documents Illustrative*, 3:413–14.
67. Paulo d'Angola, Symon Congo, Pieter Santome, and Anthony Potugese were among the first slaves brought to New Amsterdam in 1626. See Donnan, *Documents Illustrative*, 3:405.
68. For the export of slaves from Brazil to New Amsterdam, see Donnan, *Documents Illustrative*, 3:406, 410.
69. For the use of interpreters in a case involving a slave named Jan Angola, see Fernow, *Records of New Amsterdam*, 5:337.
70. Quoted in Donnan, *Documents Illustrative*, 3:421.
71. McManus, *History of Negro Slavery in New York*, 4. Enslaved blacks also built the Dutch fort at Oyster Bay. See Cox, *Oyster Bay Town Records*, 2:697–98.
72. DRHNY, xiv:18; Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 9.
73. DRHNY, 1:415.
74. Stokes, *Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1648–1909*, 2:297–98, 408; 4:96; 6:73–77, 120–24, 136–37. See also Vingboom Map–Ejland Manatùs [1639] in Stokes, *Iconography*, 2:183–86; Wagman, "Corporate Slavery in New Netherland," 35; and DRHNY, 14:18.
75. NYHM:D, 1:123.
76. Wagman, "Corporate Slavery in New Netherland," 36–37.
77. DRHNY, 1:110–15.
78. NYHM:D, 1:23; 4:35, 53, 62, 208–9; Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 160–61.
79. Stokes, *Iconography*, 4:82; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 51–52. It is likely that these five slaves were the same enslaved workers who received wages for their labor on the fort in 1639. See Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 10.
80. Wagman, "Corporate Slavery in New Netherland," 38.
81. As in the case of the early Virginia colony, there was no single social position reserved for the African-descended people of New Netherland. See Leon A. Higginbotham, *In the Matter of Color*, 111.
82. DRHNY, 1:156.
83. *Ibid.*, 1:415.
84. The 11 male slaves granted half-freedom on February 25, 1644, were Paulo d'Angola, Groote Manuel, Little Manuel [aka Manuel Minuit], Manuel de Gerrit de Reus, Symon Congo, Anthony Potugees, Garcia Domingo, Pieter Santome, Jan Francisco, Little Anthony [aka Anthony Minuit], and Jan Fort Orange. For the confirmation of these grants of half-freedom, see O'Callaghan, *Laws and Ordinances of New Netherland*, 36–37, 60.
85. For additional grants of half-freedom to slaves in New Netherland, see O'Callaghan, *Calendar of Dutch Historical Manuscripts*, 1:256; NYHM:D, 4:326–28.

86. For the grants of full freedom, see O'Callaghan, *Calendar of Dutch Historical Manuscripts*, 1:242, 256, 269.
87. *Ibid.*, 1:87, 105, 269. The "free Negro lots" appear on the Vingboom Map–Ejland Manatùs [1639]. See Stokes, *Iconography*, 2:183–86. For additional references to these lots, see Stokes, *Iconography*, 4:99 and 6:71, 74, 123–24; Christoph, "The Freedmen of New Amsterdam"; Hoff, "A Colonial Black Family in New York and New Jersey."
88. For the Roman *colonus*, see Perry Anderson, *Passage from Antiquity to Feudalism*, 128–72; Wickman, "From the Ancient World to Feudalism," 34.
89. Christoph, "Freedmen of New Amsterdam," 142–43.
90. O'Callaghan, *Calendar of Dutch Historical Manuscripts*, 1:268, 289, 293, 307, 331.
91. Berlin, *From Creole to African*, 269.
92. *Ibid.*, 144.
93. Edwin T. Corwin, *Ecclesiastical Records, State of New York* (hereafter cited as *Ecclesiastical Records*), 1:488–89.
94. Of the documented 25 marriages of black couples performed by New Amsterdam's Dutch Calvinist clergy, all but one probably involved free blacks. See "Marriages in the Dutch Reformed Church of New Amsterdam and New York City, 1639 to 1801." Of the documented 49 black children baptized under the offices of the colonial outposts' Dutch Calvinist clergy, a majority were likely the offspring of free blacks. See "Baptisms in the Dutch Reformed Church of New Amsterdam and New York City, 1639 to 1730."
95. Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 15.
96. *DRHNY*, 2:248, 54.
97. For the commutation of death penalties in cases involving slaves convicted of capital crimes, see *NYHM:D*, 4:97–100, 326–28.
98. *DRHNY*, 2:248.
99. Quoted in Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 37.
100. Van den Boogaart, "The Servant Migration to New Netherland."
101. *Ibid.*
102. *Ibid.*, 52.
103. Robert J. Swan, "The Black Presence in Seventeenth-Century Brooklyn." For two additional inhabitants of mixed ancestry, see Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 10–11; and Hershkowitz, "The Troublesome Turk."
104. Quoted in Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 63.
105. Oliver Rink, "The People of New Netherland"; Cohen, "How Dutch Were the Dutch of New Netherland?" 54–55.
106. Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew, 1492–1776*, 1:216.
107. *NNN*, 392.
108. Quoted in Marcus, *The Colonial American Jews*, 1:217.
109. *Ibid.*, 1:218–19.
110. O'Callaghan, *Laws and Ordinances*, 12.
111. *Ecclesiastical Records*, 1:530.
112. *Ibid.*, 1:142.
113. Quoted in Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 59.
114. *Ecclesiastical Records*, 1:494.
115. *Ibid.*, 1:398–99.
116. *Ibid.*, 1:398.
117. Ceci, *Effect of European Contact*, 71–77, 83–86.
118. Van der Donck, *A Description of the New Netherlands*, 86–87. See also *NNN*, 223–24.
119. *Ibid.*, 73–74.
120. Quoted in van Gastel, "Van der Donck's Description of the Indians," 417.
121. For European perceptions of Native Americans and early modern discourses on

race, see Chaplin, "Natural Philosophy and an Early Racial Idiom in North America"; and Brown, "Native Americans and Early Modern Concepts of Race."

122. *Ibid.*

123. Stuart Hall, "Conclusion: The Multi-cultural Question," 223. See also Dirks, *Colonialism and Culture*.

124. Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism*, 24.

125. Young, *Colonial Desire*, 27.

126. Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, 27.

127. NNN, 128.

128. *Ibid.*, 127.

129. *Ibid.*, 126–27.

130. David Brion Davis writes: "A double standard in judging Negroes and Indians enabled colonists of various nationalities to channel moral concern toward the aborigine, whose freedom was often essential for commercial and military security, and to screen off the critical center of the American dilemma" (*The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, 10). While the colonizers in New Netherland enslaved few natives, a combination of military, labor, and logistical factors led them to direct moral concern toward the black Africans and away from the coastal Indians, whom they increasingly feared and eventually exterminated.

131. *Ecclesiastical Records*, 1:142.

132. NNN, 409.

133. The term "Reformed churches" refers to the Protestant communions originally founded on the doctrines of John Calvin and Huldreich Zwingli.

134. At the Dordrecht (Dort) meeting in 1618, the Reformed churches discussed "heathen baptism" and formulated a policy that gave slaveowners the power to deny their slaves access to baptism.

135. *Ecclesiastical Records*, 1:548.

136. "Baptisms in the Reformed Dutch Church."

137. Allison Blakey, *Blacks in the Dutch World*, 4–5.

138. Dutch sailing vessels brought occasional cargoes of slaves to Holland's ports, but slave traders never managed to establish a market for slaves in the Dutch Republic because of the Netherlanders' resistance to the introduction of African bondage in their homeland. As late as 1656, the municipal authorities in Middleburg freed a cargo of enslaved Africans that a Dutch sailing vessel brought to that Dutch port town. See Drescher, *Capitalism and Antislavery*, 15, 137.

139. Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, 189–90, 192–94; George I. Smith, *Religion and Trade in New Netherland*, 126–27.

140. DRHNY, 1:302, 343.

141. NNN, 329–30; DRHNY, 1:335, 343.

142. NNN, 408–9.

143. Quoted in Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 62.

144. Prior to 1589, there was, according to the historian Benjamin Braude, considerable disagreement and ambiguity in both the Christian and the Jewish interpretations of Genesis 9–10, which recounts the story of the curse of Ham. Between 1589 and 1625, proponents of the enslavement of black Africans, Braude argues, constructed an interpretation of these biblical passages in which they trace the lineage of sub-Saharan Africans to the sons of Ham, regard the sub-Saharan Africans' "black" skin color as the visible mark of the curse of Ham, and consider the black Africans' perpetual bondage as a punishment from God. Braude, "The Sons of Noah," esp. 135–38, 142.

145. The historian Thomas Holt has noted that the consumption of goods fabricated from the raw produce cultivated by enslaved black laborers in the overseas colonies engendered a heightened sense of racial consciousness among Western Europeans who

never traveled to Asia, Africa, or the Americas. Holt, "Marking"; Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*.

146. Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, 203.

147. Fernow, *Records of New Amsterdam*, 1:9–10; O'Callaghan, *Laws and Ordinances of New Netherland*, 34–35, 182–83.

148. *Ecclesiastical Record*, 1:142.

149. Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 52–55.

150. For a history of the Swedish colonial outposts along the Delaware River, see Amandus Johnson, *The Swedish Settlements on the Delaware, 1638–1664*.

151. Quoted in Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 67.

152. Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 165–68.

153. The WIC officially surrendered its fort on Manhattan Island on September 15, 1664. The English conquest of New Amsterdam was part of the challenge ambitious Englishmen of the Restoration era waged against the United Provinces' dominance in overseas commerce. British mercantilist policies, such as the Navigation Law of 1660, were intended to end the Dutch carrying trade to the British West Indies and precipitated three Anglo-Dutch wars.

Chapter 2

1. As the historian Nicholas Canny has shown, English colonization of Ulster and Munster provided models for the English project of colony building in North America. See his "The Ideology of English Colonization," *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland, and Kingdom and Colony*.

2. Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot*, 52.

3. Quoted in *ibid.*

4. Quoted in Sachs, *The Widening Gate*, 268–69.

5. The several English navigation acts precipitated the Anglo-Dutch wars of the seventeenth century. Enacted to eliminate the Dutch carrying trade with English ports, the earliest such law, the Navigation Act of 1651, codified England's mercantilist policy, which the overseas commerce laws of the Restoration era would later expand. See Farnell, "The Navigation Act of 1651, the First Dutch War, and the London Merchant Community."

6. Rabb, *Enterprise and Empire*; Hancock, *Citizens of the World*.

7. Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America*, 95.

8. Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 75.

9. Denton, *A Brief Description of New-York*; *DHNY*, 1:91; *DRHNY*, 3:415.

10. For general descriptions of colonial New York's overseas trade, see *DHNY*, 1:714–21, 727–28.

11. *DHNY*, 1:161.

12. Approximately 20,000 to 50,000 Huguenot refugees from northern and western France eventually crossed the English Channel to London and Bristol, and of these exiles nearly 2,000 eventually resettled in British North America. See Butler, *The Huguenots in America*, esp. 27, 46, 49, 55, 151, 177.

13. The English Crown expelled the Jews from England in 1290, but, beginning in the sixteenth century, economic competition with rival nations contributed to a climate of tolerance for Jews, whose international network of moneylenders and traders provided vital services to the first British Empire.

14. Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew*, 1:308–11, 284.

15. Fortune, *Merchants and Jews*.

16. England entered the War of the League of Augsburg to halt France in its bid to seize control over central Europe.

17. In the War of the Spanish Succession, England and the United Netherlands contested Louis XIV's claim to the Spanish Crown.
18. The Rhenish Palatinate included an area that stretched along both banks of the Rhine River and its branches, the Main and the Neckar rivers, from the confluence of the Moselle and the Rhine southward to Basle, Switzerland, from Zweibrücken, on the border of Lorraine, westward along the Main am Baireuth, flanking the Upper (or Bavarian) Palatinate. See Knittle, *The Early Eighteenth Century Palatine Emigration*, 2. In 1708, England's Queen Anne offered asylum to Protestant refugees from areas of Europe devastated by the War of Spanish Succession. Several thousand Swiss and Palatine refugees temporarily settled in England and later relocated to the colony of New York. In December 1708, approximately 58 Palatines from the areas of Landau and Frankfurt arrived at the port of New York. They spent the winter in the city, and in the spring Governor Lovelace (1708–10) resettled 15 German-speaking Lutherans from the Rhenish Palatinate on land grants 50 miles north of New York City, near the mouth of Quassaick Creek at the present-day site of Newburgh, New York. See *DHNY*, 3:543; and *Emigrants*, CO 323/6, 56, PRO.
19. For the quarantine of the Palatines on Governor's Island, see *DHNY*, 3:559.
20. For the apprenticing of Palatine orphans, see *DHNY*, 3:566–67. For the sale of indentured servants from the Rhenish Palatinate, see Knittle, *Early Eighteenth Century Palatine Emigration*, 111–42.
21. Sypher, "Voices in the Wilderness"; Roeber, "'The Origins of Whatever Is Not English among Us,'" 241; Benson, *Peter Kalm's Travels in North America*, 142–43.
22. Knittle, *Early Eighteenth Century Palatine Emigration*, 159.
23. Only one sailing vessel brought European immigrants to the port of New York during the War of Jenkin's Ear—60 Palatines in 1641. See Naval Officer's Shipping List for the Port of New York, 1715–1765, CO 5/1222–1229, PRO (hereafter cited as NOSL).
24. NOSL; *New York Gazette*, April 17 to April 23, 1739.
25. NOSL; *New York Mercury*, October 14 to October 20, 1754; *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, July 15 to July 21, 1754.
26. The *New York Weekly Post-Boy* announced: "To Be Sold, A German Servant man, with his Wife and Son, of about Six years old, who are to serve five Years, he is as compleat a Gardner as any in America; understands a Flower and Kitchen Garden to Perfection." Also cited in McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York, 1664–1776*, 107.
27. Dickson, *Ulster Emigration to Colonial America, 1718–1775*, 103–4.
28. By 1622, at least 8,000 Scottish tenants labored on Ulster plantations. For the history of the colonization of Ulster, see Perceval-Maxwell, *The Scottish Migration to Ulster in the Reign of James I*; Leyburn, *The Scots-Irish*.
29. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*.
30. Letter from James Murray to Rev. Baptist Boyd in *New York Gazette*, November 7 to November 13, 1737.
31. Quoted in Dickson, *Ulster Emigration*, 88.
32. Between June 1728 and April 1729, approximately 353 Scots-Irish migrants arrived at the port of New York; nearly a decade later, between May 1737 and April 1739, an additional 268 Scots-Irish settlers disembarked at the port; in 1741, shortly before the War of Jenkin's Ear hampered transatlantic travel from British ports, another 229 Scot-Irish servants landed at New York City; and on August 30, 1754, approximately 40 Ulster Scots made their way to New York before the start of the French and Indian War. See the *New York Weekly Journal*, June 4 to June 10, 1739; May 25 to May 31, 1741; and the *New York Mercury*, June 10 to June 16, 1754.
33. Favored families owned more than 2 million acres of colonial New York's most fertile farmland. See Kim, *Landlords and Tenants in Colonial New York: Manorial Society, 1665–1775*, esp. 4–43.

34. Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West*, 12–16, 204–18. Between 1773 and 1775, a total of 3,232 British migrants from England and Scotland arrived at the port of New York. See Register of Emigrants, 1773–76 (hereafter cited as Register). During that same period, New York City newspaper announcements document the arrival of an additional 1,278 passengers who traveled to the port of New York on 13 unregistered vessels from British ports. See Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West*, 206, 575.

35. A total of 365 West Lowlanders disembarked at the port of New York between 1773 and 1775. See Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 216–18.

36. *Ibid.*, 176, 582–85, 588–89, 597–600.

37. *New York Gazette*, December 20 to December 26, 1773.

38. Kim, *Landlords and Tenants in Colonial New York*, 129–280.

39. Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America*, 53.

40. Nash, *The Urban Crucible*; Mohl, “Poverty in Early America”; Rossiter, *A Century of Population Growth from the First Census of the United States to the Twelfth, 1790–1900*, 183.

41. For a newspaper notice announcing the arrival of a shipload of 30 English passengers, see the *New York Mercury*, January 3 to January 9, 1774. The bulk of the cargo space in English vessels departing from London was usually devoted to freight.

42. Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West*, 94–103.

43. *New York Weekly Journal*, January 13 to January 19, 1774; January 20 to January 26, 1774. Descriptions of the Nancy’s voyage were reported in the *Scots Magazine*, March 1774. See Bumsted, *The People’s Clearance*, 21.

44. To make life in New York attractive to prospective settlers, the English colonial rulers established laws that made a clear distinction between the status of enslaved Africans (or Negroes), on the one hand, and white servants and apprentices, on the other. For colonial New York’s law of slavery, see *Colonial Laws of New York from the Year 1664 to the Revolution*, 1:19–20; for the laws governing apprenticeships and indentured servitude, see 1:18, 47–48, 157–59.

45. Letter from Jacobus Van Cortlandt to Richard Heigh, New York, April 15, 1698; Letter from Jacobus Van Cortlandt to John Roe, New York, May 28, 1698; Letter from Jacobus Van Cortlandt to Mr. [Miles] Mayhew, New York, June 23, 1698; and Letter from Jacobus Van Cortlandt to William Sherwin, New York, July 14, 1698, in Letterbook of Jacobus Van Cortlandt, 1698–1700. For additional references to the difficulty of finding New York buyers for aged West Indian slaves, see Letter from Jacobus Van Cortlandt to Thomas Nicoll, New York, July 16, 1698, and Letter from Jacobus Van Cortlandt to Richard Heigh, New York, August 18, 1698.

46. Letter from Jacobus Van Cortlandt to Miles Mayhew, New York, July 16, 1698, in Letterbook of Jacobus Van Cortlandt, 1698–1700.

47. Letter from Jacobus Van Cortlandt to Barnabas Jenkins, New York, July 16, 1698, in Letterbook of Jacobus Van Cortlandt, 1698–1700.

48. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:675–77. New York’s colonial assembly reaffirmed this discriminatory duty in 1718. See O’Callaghan, *Journal of the Legislative Council of the Colony of New York*, 1:433.

49. Lydon, *Pirates, Privateers, and Profits*, 18, 36–59. Colonial New York City can be added to the list of societies where, as Marx has noted, “Merchant’s capital, when it holds a position of dominance, stands everywhere for a system of robbery, so that its development among the trading nations of old and modern times is always directly connected with plundering, piracy, kidnapping slaves, and colonial conquest.” Marx, *Capital*, 3:331.

50. Donnan, *Documents Illustrative*, 3:442. See also Judd, “Frederick Philipse and the Madagascar Trade.”

51. For the seizure of the brigantine, see *New York Gazette*, September 6 to September 12, 1730.

52. McManus, *History of Negro Slavery in New York*, 28. For an additional reference to the glutted New York City slave market resulting from two large shipments of slaves from Madagascar and another from the Guinea Coast, see Letter from Jacobus Van Cortlandt to Richard Heigh, New York, June 4, 1698, in Letterbook of Jacobus Van Cortlandt, 1698–1700.

53. Letter from Jacobus Van Cortlandt to Mr. [Barnabas] Jenkins, New York, April 15, 1698, in Letterbook of Jacobus Van Cortlandt, 1698–1700.

54. Donnan, *Documents Illustrative*, 3:444, 511–13; NOSL; American Inspector General's Ledgers for the Board of Customs and Excise Imports and Exports, America, 1768–73 (hereafter cited as AIGL). James Lydon's study on colonial New York's slave trade offers a higher overall estimate of the total number of slaves brought to the port of New York than the estimate presented in this study. See Lydon, "New York and the Slave Trade," 287. Lydon possibly double-counted some single shipments of slaves, which appear in the official port records under the actual date of arrival and, owing to delays in newspaper reporting, also in newspaper notices published on a later date. To avoid the problem of double-counting in calculating an estimated total number of slaves carried to the port of New York, I have omitted data on enslaved human cargoes contained in newspaper accounts. This procedure resulted in a conservative estimate, which in no way detracts from the historical significance of colonial New York's slave trade.

55. *DHNY*, 1:707; Donnan, *Documents Illustrative*, 3:444.

56. Letter from James Van Horne to John White (London). For Governor Robert Hunter's report on the stoppage of colonial New York's provisions trade to New Spain during and in the immediate aftermath of Queen Anne's War, see *DHNY*, 1:713.

57. Occasional cargoes of contraband slaves entered the port of New York during Queen Anne's War (1702–13), the War of Jenkin's Ear (1739–42), King George's War (1744–48), and the French and Indian War (1756–63). See List of Prize Goods. See also Hough, *Reports of Cases in the Vice Admiralty Court*, 29–32.

58. *DRHNY*, 5:342.

59. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:675–77. As already noted, this discriminatory duty also discouraged the dumping of "refuse" West Indian slaves on New York City's slave market. For an early directive ordering the governor of New York to encourage the African slave trade, see *DRHNY*, 5:136. That instruction made reference to the role the Royal African Company was supposed to play in supplying New York with slaves. The port of New York did not receive a single shipment of slaves from the RAC, however.

60. K. G. Davies, *The Royal African Company*; Platt, "The East India Company and the Madagascar Slave Trade."

61. As late as 1726, slave traders glutted the slave markets in Jamaica, Barbados, and Curaçao. See *New York Gazette*, March 13 to March 19, 1726.

62. NOSL; Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 78.

63. The New York City merchants Abraham Van Horne, John Van Horne, and Andrew Fresneau reexported 45 surplus East African slaves to Virginia. See NOSL.

64. For a general overview of colonial New York City's population growth, see Rosenwaike, *Population History of New York City*, 8; Greene and Harrington, *American Population before the Federal Census of 1790*, 88–112.

65. *New York Gazette*, July 20 to July 26, 1730.

66. Lydon, "New York and the Slave Trade," 377.

67. Curtin, *The Slave Trade*; Rawley, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade*.

68. Donnan, *Documents Illustrative*, 3:345.

69. Rossiter, *A Century of Population Growth*, 182.

70. By 1770, New York City still lagged behind Philadelphia, Boston, and Charleston in the amount of tonnage passing through its port. But the city's overseas commerce was

more diversified and evenly distributed than that of the other colonial port towns in British North America, allowing it to achieve a more favorable balance of trade. See Albion, *The Rise of the Port of New York, 1815–1860*, 5; Shepard and Walton, *Shipping, Maritime Trade and the Economic Development of Colonial North America*, 191.

71. Lydon, “New York and the Slave Trade,” 387.

72. NOSL.

73. Deposition of a Sailor Concerning the Cruel Treatment of Negro Slaves on Board the Snow York.

74. Donnan, *Documents Illustrative*, 3:452–53. For New York City newspaper reports on slave mutinies, see *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, April 30 to May 6, 1753; March 18 to March 24, 1754; August 21 to August 27, 1766.

75. While not the only pattern, direct trade with a single region was eighteenth-century New York City’s dominant pattern of commerce. See Davisson and Bradley, “New York Maritime Trade.”

76. Michael L. Blakey, “Notes from the Howard University Biological Anthropology Laboratory,” 6.

77. This study uses child-woman ratios (children per 100 women) as a proxy for natural increase. The child-woman ratio for New York City’s African-descended population reached 203 by 1746, indicating a modest natural increase during the 1740s. For previous decades, the child-woman ratios indicate that natural increase made no contribution to the growth of the city’s African-descended population. The child-woman ratio of 131 by 1756 and 103 by 1771 suggest slight natural increases during the 1750s and the 1760s. The smallpox epidemic of 1756 probably carried away many black infants and children, thus eradicating the gains in natural increase for the city’s black population during the 1750s. The child-woman ratios for this study are based on data drawn from Rossiter, *A Century of Population Growth*, 170, 181–83.

78. By the 1730s, a stable reproducing creole majority contributed to the natural increase of the Chesapeake region’s black population. See Kulikoff, “A ‘Prolifick’ People,” 405; Menard, “The Maryland Slave Population, 1658 to 1730,” 32.

79. Greene and Harrington, *American Population before the Federal Census of 1790*, 88–112.

80. *DHNY*, 1:757.

81. AIGL.

82. Greene and Harrington, *American Population before the Federal Census of 1790*, 88–112.

83. Quoted in Shane White, *Somewhat More Independent*, 3.

84. For information on individual New York City slave traders, see Matson, *Merchants and Empire*, 60–62, 202–3.

85. Colden, “The Interest of the Country in Laying Duties.”

86. Quoted in Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 79.

87. Quoted in McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 91.

88. *DRHNY*, 7:888.

89. “Indentures and Apprentices, 1694–1707”; “Indentures and Apprentices, 1718–1727.” See also Haar, “White Indentured Servants in Colonial New York.”

90. Osgood, *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1675–1776*, 1:454–55 (hereafter cited as MCC).

91. Mack and Hill, “Recent Research Findings Concerning the African Burial Ground Population.”

92. For a description of the practice of head carrying among enslaved black laborers in early New York City, see De Voe, *The Market Book*, 1:244–45.

93. Quoted in Bridenbaugh, *Cities in Revolt*, 88.

94. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 46.

95. Wilkenfeld, “New York City’s Shipowning Community,” 62.

96. John Cruger, Waste [Account] Book of Henry and John Cruger. See also John Taylor, Captain John Taylor's Account and Memoranda Book.
97. For the construction contract for Beekman's landing, see Beekman and Beekman, Receipts of William and Abraham Beekman for Sums Paid for the Repair of a Wharf, 1770.
98. Watt, "Letterbook of John Watt," 31.
99. The following newspaper advertisement in the *New York Gazette*, August 4 to August 10, 1729, offers a "seasoned" (adapted) slave for sale: "A Negro girl of about 17 or 18 years of Age who is well seasoned to the Country, and can do all sorts of House-work, is to be Sold. Enquire of the Printer here."
100. Herskovitz, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, esp. 101, 140–41.
101. In this study's sample population of slaves whose occupational expertise was reported in colonial New York City newspaper advertisements for slave sales, nearly 23 percent (78 of 342) were skilled slaves.
102. *New York Gazette*, August 30 to September 5, 1731.
103. *Ibid.*, October 12 to October 18, 1730.
104. For the practice of dumping unruly slaves at the port of New York, see McManus, *History of Negro Slavery in New York*, 35.
105. Minutes of the Mayor's Court, August 7, 1750–December 17, 1751, 474–76 (hereafter cited as Mayor's Court Records).
106. For Spanish-speaking slaves embarking on New York City privateering and other sailing vessels, see *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, October 2 to October 8, 1749; June 27 to July 4, 1748; *New York Mercury*, October 28 to November 3, 1776. For the presence of African seafarers on European sailing vessels that traversed the Atlantic Ocean during the eighteenth century, see Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 52–53, 56, 62.
107. Mayor's Court Records, August 7, 1750–December 17, 1751, 474–76.
108. *New York Mercury*, February 8 to February 14, 1768. Also cited in McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 123.
109. *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, December 19 to December 26, 1748. Also cited in McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 123. For a similar advertisement, see *New York Mercury*, April 8 to April 14, 1776. Quoted in McManus, *History of Negro Slavery in New York*, 45.
110. *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, May 27 to June 1, 1751. For a similar advertisement, see *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, May 17 to May 23, 1756. Quoted in McManus, *History of Negro Slavery in New York*, 45.
111. *New York Gazette*, October 8 to October 14, 1733. This newspaper advertisement indicates that from an early age female slaves began to master the art of sewing: "A very likely Negro Girl to be Sold, brought up here in Town, Speaks very good English, aged about Ten Years, has had the Small-pox and measles, and begins to handle her needle. Enquire of the Printer hereof."
112. For colonial New York City markets, see MCC, 1:139–40. See also De Voe, *The Market Book*, 1:242–335; Rothschild, *New York City Neighborhoods*, 56–66.
113. Logbook of a Privateer . . . the Duke of Cumberland; and Logbook of a Privateer . . . the Harlequin.
114. Samuel Gilford, Shipping and Personal Papers.
115. Hodges and Brown, "Pretends to Be Free," xix.
116. McManus, *History of Negro Slavery in New York*, 199.
117. For a general description of the system of labor in British America and the various conditions of servitude—slavery, indentured servitude, and apprenticeship—see Morris, *Government and Labor in Early America*, esp. 72–98.
118. MCC, 2:458. See also De Voe, *The Market Book*, 1:242; Booth, *The History of the City of New York*, 270–71; and McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 117–19, 129.

119. For the cartmen of the city of New York, see MCC, 1:179, 219–20, 224, 245, 376; 2:195, 196, 354; 3:4. See also Morris, *Government and Labor in Early America*, 183; Hodges, *The New York City Cartmen, 1664–1850*.
120. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 1:90.
121. For the cartmen's monopoly, see MCC, 1:137, 179, 219.
122. McManus, *A History of Negro Slavery in New York*, 43; McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 11–12, 21–61.
123. Archdeacon, *New York City*, 47.
124. Morris, *Government and Labor in Early America*, 159–60, 182–83.
125. Quoted in McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 127.
126. *Ibid.*, 25–26; Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 108.
127. Writing about the U.S. labor movement, W. E. B. Du Bois remarked: "It must be remembered that the white group of laborers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage." Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 700. For an elaboration of Du Bois's observation, see Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*. The white workingmen of colonial New York City seem to have found the "public and psychological" wages of racial whiteness inadequate compensation for low monetary wages. They did, however, seem to have considered the privileges that the colonial state granted to white settlers as a sort of property in whiteness. For an influential discussion of the right to property in whiteness, see Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property."
128. For contemporary reports on the violent assaults against black workingmen on the part of white laborers during the New York City dockworkers' strikes in 1855 and 1863 and the New York City draft riots in 1863, see *New York Tribune*, January 18, 1855, and April 14, 1863; *New York Herald*, January 18, 1855, and April 14, 1863. For historical analysis of these events, see Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City, 1852–1863*, 107–11; Man, "Labor Competition and the New York Draft Riots of 1863"; Berstein, *The New York City Draft Riots*, 25–42.
129. For the economic interest of slaveowners in protecting their slave property from white working-class violence and the vulnerability of black workingmen to brutal attacks in the post-Emancipation period, see Wells, "A Red Record," 7.
130. Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*.
131. For the early statutory regulation of indentureship contracts in colonial New York, see *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:18.
132. Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, 67.
133. For a description of the typical dwelling in early-eighteenth-century New York City, see Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness*, 308. By the mid-eighteenth century, New York City witnessed an acute housing shortage, and town dwellers lived in less and less commodious spaces. See *New York Journal, or General Advertiser*, October 16 to October 22, 1766.
134. Goodfriend, "Burghers and Blacks," 142–43; Archdeacon, *New York City*, 47.
135. The following discussion is primarily based on the 1703 household census for the County of New York, a jurisdiction that included New York City, two farming villages on Manhattan Island, the Bowery and Harlem, as well as the small islands in the East River. For the County of New York Census of 1703, see Rossiter, *A Century of Population Growth*, 170–81. The census of 1703 divides the population into three age cohorts: inhabitants 16 to 60 years of age, inhabitants under 16 years of age, and inhabitants over 60 years of age. In the following discussion, references to adults indicate inhabitants assigned to the age cohort of 16 to 60 years; references to children indicate inhabitants assigned to the age cohort of under 16 years; and references to the elderly indicate inhabitants assigned to the age cohort over 60 years. In the census of 1703, the designation "white" does not appear as a legible "identity category" but functions as an ex-

nominated (implicit) norm. The census assigns all inhabitants falling outside that norm to the category “Negro.” Importantly, this binarism Negro/not Negro renders mulattoes, mustees, and Indians illegible, though newspapers and other archival sources refer to these racial groupings. Historical records suggest that only a small number of free blacks and black indentured servants lived in New York City and the adjacent countryside during the colonial period. It is likely that all but a tiny fraction of the inhabitants assigned to the category “Negro” in the census were slaves. In the following discussion, inhabitants assigned to the category “Negro” are referred to as slaves and enslaved blacks. Finally, all entries in the census have a recorded head of household, and all but three entries strongly suggest that the household head falls in the category of either an adult white male or an adult white female 16 years of age or older.

136. For a description of the East Ward, see Stokes, *Iconography*, 5:658–59. The Dongan Charter of 1686 partitioned New York City into six wards: the South, Dock, East, North, West, and Outward. At that time Wall Street marked the city limit, though the city’s population eventually expanded northward beyond Wall Street to the City Common and later to Maiden Lane. With the Montgomerie Charter of 1730, the municipal government added a jurisdiction called Montgomerie Ward. See *MCC*, 1:102–13 and 2:108, 115, 122, 440; Stokes, *Iconography*, 1:192, 251–61 and 6:658; Rothschild, *New York City Neighborhoods*, 31–32, 68, 80; Carl Abbott, “The Neighborhoods of New York City, 1760–1775”; Wilkenfeld, “New York City Neighborhoods, 1730,” 171–72. Following the French and Indian War, a period when radically altered economic conditions called attention to the existence of social inequality within the city’s settler population, the wealthy townspeople were concentrated in the East, Dock, and South wards, while the poorest townspeople were mostly found north of Warren Street. The increasing concentration of poor townspeople in the colonial port town’s northernmost sector inaugurated a long-term trend of spatial segregation that separated rich and poor.

137. Will of Nicholas Dumaresq (1701) and Inventory of the Estate of Nicholas Dumaresq (NYC).

138. Will and Inventory of the Estate of Captain Giles Shelly (1718).

139. For the law abolishing Indian slavery, see *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:40–42.

140. Stokes, *Iconography*, 5:658–59.

141. Inventory of the Estate of Peternela, widow of Derrick Ten Eyck, dated November 15, 1724. For a history of the Ten Eyck family of New York, see Ten Eyck, *Ten Eyck Family Record*.

142. For a discussion of Van Dam’s political career and, in particular, his role in the salary dispute with Governor Cosby, see Katz, *Newcastle’s New York*, 63–70, 74–75, 89–90, 115–19; Bonomi, *A Factious People*, 106–10.

143. Inventory of the Estate of Rip Van Dam (1749). See also Inventory of the Goods & Chattels of Rip Van Dam dated September 1, 1753.

144. Stokes, *Iconography*, 5:658.

145. Helen Burr Smith, “Early American Silversmiths.”

146. Stokes, *Iconography*, 5:658.

147. See “Kip Family History”; *Historical Notes of the Family Kip of Kipsburg and Kip’s Bay*; Frederick Ellswork Kip, *History of the Kip Family in America*.

148. *Historical Notes of the Family Kip of Kipsburg and Kip’s Bay*, 127.

149. Queen Anne ceded the land that became Trinity Church Farm to New York City’s Anglican Church. See Stokes, *Iconography*, 5:659; Valentine, *History of the City of New York*, 69–70.

150. For population growth in the West Ward after 1730, see *MCC*, 3:475–76.

151. Trinity Parish Leases for the Church Farm, 1704, 1732, 1750–65.

152. General Jason Grant Wilson, “Colonel John Bayard (1738–1807) and Bayard Family of America: An Address.”

153. Country seats on Manhattan Island: Lady Warren's "Greenwich"; Oliver DeLancey's "Bloomingdale"; Colonel Clarke's "Chelsea"; John Morin Scott's "Hermitage"; and Charles Ward Anthon's "Elmwood."
154. Stokes, *Iconography*, 5:659–60.
155. Purple, "Contributions to the History of the Ancient Families of New York."
156. Will of Henry [Hendrickus] Brevoort.
157. For a pattern of patriarchal land control in a colonial New England town, see Greven, *Four Generations*.
158. Inventory of the Estate of Captain Thomas Codrington (1710).
159. Cosby, "The Rutgers Family of New York"; Will of Anthony Rutgers (1746). See also Bruckbauer, *The Kirk of Rutgers Farm*.
160. Kim, *Landlords and Tenants*, 188.
161. *DRHNY*, 1:749–50.
162. For a detailed portrait of Colden's career, see Keys, *Cadwallader Colden*. See also Purple, "Notes, Biographical and Genealogical of the Colden Family, and Some of its Collateral Branches in America."
163. Inventory of the Estate of Cadwallader Colden (1756).
164. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 150.
165. For a comparative analysis of the Spanish, English, and French models of colonization and their greater and lesser reliance on feudal institutions, see Pagden, *Lords of All the World*. For the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie and the rise of possessive individualism, see MacPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*.

Chapter 3

1. *DRHNY*, 2:262; and quoted in Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 86.
2. *DRHNY*, 1:423.
3. Letter from Charles Lodwick to the Royal Society.
4. Quoted in Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 245.
5. *DRHNY*, 2:250–53.
6. Archdeacon, *New York City*, 27.
7. For Anglo-Dutch relations in colonial New York following the English Conquest, see Fernow, *Records of New Amsterdam*, 5:208, 211–12, 232, 260–63, 338; and Murrin, "English Rights as Ethnic Aggression," 59–60.
8. An episode in the third Anglo-Dutch War (1672–74), the Dutch Reconquest lasted from July 30, 1673, to February 9, 1674.
9. Quoted in Murrin, "English Rights as Ethnic Aggression," 63.
10. *Colonial Laws of New York* 1:115; *DRHNY*, 3:317–18. For earlier efforts to obstruct the establishment of an elective colonial assembly in New York, see *DRHNY*, 2:230–31.
11. *Colonial Law of New York*, 1:123–24.
12. For a general historical account of naturalization law in British North America and the conceptualization of U.S. citizenship, see Kettner, *The Development of American Citizenship*, 4, 30–36. See also Carpenter, "Naturalization in England and the American Colonies"; and Hoyt, "Naturalization under the American Colonies."
13. In late-eighteenth-century England, proposals for incorporating Jews into the political community of rights-bearing British subjects aroused anti-Semitic prejudices. In response, Great Britain's Jewish community and their supporters reminded the British state of the Jew's loyal service to the British Empire. See Birnbaum and Katznelson, *Paths of Emancipation*; Liedtke and Wendehorst, *The Emancipation of Catholics, Jews, and Protestants*.
14. Quoted in Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 86.
15. Earlier, during the rule of Elizabeth I (1558–1603), the Church of England was called on to forge a consensus among post-Reformation Englishmen who were divided into

opposing factions of Protestants and Catholics. To that end, Queen Elizabeth I and her advisers crafted “Ecclesia Anglicana” out of a set of doctrinal and liturgical compromises between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Militant Protestants regarded the final settlement as a corruption of the true church and protested against the prerogatives of the Church of England establishment. Subsequent controversies over the church-state relation and religious tolerance became the source of an irremediable conflict between embattled English monarchs and their nonconformist foes. Finally, the tumult of the English Revolution (1642–48) and the Interregnum (1649–59) prevented the Church of England from fulfilling its task of uniting the English people. Hill, *A Century of Revolution, 1603–1714*.

16. Quoted in Humphreys, *An Account of the Endeavours Used By the Society For the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* (hereafter cited as Humphreys, *Account of the SPG*), 21.

17. Miller, *A Description of the Province and City of New York*, 208.

18. Letter from Colonel Heathcote to the Secretary, the Manor of Scarsdale, April 10, 1704 in Letterbooks of the SPG.

19. *Ecclesiastical Records*, 2:1118.

20. *DRHNY*, 4:526.

21. *Ibid.*, 3:372.

22. Lathbury, *A History of the Book of Common Prayer*.

23. *Ecclesiastical Records*, 2:952–53. Later, New York City’s Lutheran and French Protestant churches won similar exemptions. See *Ecclesiastical Records*, 2:884; and *DHNY*, 3:406.

24. *Ecclesiastical Records*, 2:755.

25. Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion*, 36.

26. Steele, *Politics of Colonial Policy*, 42–68.

27. *DRHNY*, 2:418.

28. For the political crisis in the British North American settler colonies attending the Glorious Revolution, see Lovejoy, *The Glorious Revolution in America*. Historians have offered different explanatory models for the response to the Glorious Revolution in colonial New York. Jerome Reich (*Leisler’s Rebellion*) attributes colonial New York’s initial political impasse to an ideological conflict between settlers dedicated to democracy and those dedicated to aristocratic rule, whereas Lawrence H. Leder (*Liberty and Authority*) attributes it to a contest between two competing factions of ambitious colonial elites who were more concerned with gaining social prestige and political influence for themselves than with the expansion of liberty. In separate studies Thomas Archdeacon (“‘Distinguished for Nation Sak’”) and Charles H. McCormick (*Leisler’s Rebellion*) have emphasized the competing economic interests that divided New York’s settler population on the eve of the Glorious Revolution. Other studies have recognized the importance of cultural differences among the settlers in colonial New York. John M. Murrin (“English Rights as Ethnic Aggression,” 57) argues, for example, that the split within New York’s settler population following the Glorious Revolution was fundamentally “an ethnic Dutch reaction to the English conquest.” Murrin’s study offers a persuasive account of the politics of culture in early colonial New York.

29. Archdeacon, “‘Distinguished for Nation Sak.’”

30. Cohen, “How Dutch Were the Dutch of New Netherland?” 54–55.

31. In 1672, the Duke of York, later King James II, publicly professed his adherence to Roman Catholicism. In 1682, the Duke appointed the Irish Catholic Thomas Dongan to the post of governor of New York.

32. Voorhees, “The ‘fervent Zeale’ of Jacob Leisler.”

33. *Ibid.*, 461.

34. *DHNY*, 2:378–89.

35. Quoted in Leder, “‘Like Madmen through the Streets.’”

36. Ibid.

37. Leder, "Records of the Trials of Jacob Leisler and His Associates."

38. Michel Foucault describes the powers of the absolute sovereign: "The sovereign exercised his right of life only by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing; he evidenced his power over life only through the death he was capable of requiring. The right which was formulated as the 'power of life and death' was in reality the right to *take* life or *let* live." Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 136.

39. The initial death sentence ordered that Leisler and Milbourne were to be "severall[y] hanged by the Neck and being Alive their bodys be Cutt Downe to the Earth that their Bowells be taken out and they being Alive burnt before their faces that their heads shall be struck off and their Bodys Cutt in four parts. . . ." Although the English penal code allowed multiple punishments for a single crime, especially in cases of high treason and regicide, such executions were scarcely ordinary occurrences. In the case of Leisler and Melbourne Governor Slougher commuted the most horrific punishments, perhaps out of trepidation that the prolonged torture of the condemned men would incite a riot. See Leder, "Records of the Trials of Jacob Leisler and His Associates," 454. See also Voorhees, "The 'fervent Zeale' of Jacob Leisler," 447.

40. *DHNY*, 2:380.

41. Benedict Anderson has suggested that the mass singing in unison of, for example, poetry, songs, and national anthems is constitutive of a "special kind of contemporaneous community." Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 145.

42. Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion*, 43.

43. First enacted in 1683, colonial New York's Charter of Liberties, along with its provision for a popularly elected colonial assembly, was disallowed by King James II in 1686. See *Colonial Law of New York* 1:226–31, 244–53, 255–57.

44. Murrin, "English Rights as Ethnic Aggression," 57.

45. For the Ministry Act of 1693, see *Colonial Laws of New York* 1:328–31.

46. Quoted in Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion*, 50.

47. Miller, *A Description of the Province and City of New York*, 69.

48. Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion*, 83–85.

49. Miller, *A Description of the Province and City of New York*, 69.

50. *DRHNY*, 4:1071.

51. Ibid.

52. *Ecclesiastical Records*, 2:1071–72, 1092, 1103. See also Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion*, 45, 50.

53. *DRHNY*, 4:83; *DHNY*, 2:435–37.

54. *DHNY*, 4:400–401, 523, 620–21; *Ecclesiastical Records*, 2:1242.

55. *DRHNY*, 4:312, 325.

56. Reverend Francis Mackemie founded the first presbytery in North America at Philadelphia in 1706.

57. Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 85–86, 136–37, 157.

58. Ibid., 221.

59. During the last half of the eighteenth century, members of evangelical denominations, large and small, built churches in New York City. For example, in 1752 the Moravians erected a house of worship at Fulton Street, and in 1770 the Methodist congregation erected a meetinghouse at John Street between Nassau and Williams streets.

60. William Smith, *History of the Province of New-York*, 1:138.

61. The Act of Union of 1536 had already united England and Wales. The Act of Union of 1707 consolidated England, Wales, and Scotland into the single geopolitical unit known as the United Kingdom of Great Britain. According to that act, Great Britain had uniform laws, its subjects obtained representation in a national Parliament, and English became the official state language. Ireland was not incorporated into Great Britain until the Act of

Union of 1801. Infamously, that act imposed political disabilities on Ireland's Catholic population. See Hugh F. Kearney, *The British Isles*; Linda Colley, *Britons*. Robert Young has argued that the term "British" betrays the asymmetrical power relation between nation and empire, the metropolitan and colonial societies. That term was coined "to mask the metonymic extension of English dominance over the other kingdoms with which," Young writes, "England had constructed illicit acts of union." See Young, *Colonial Desire*, 3.

62. Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People*; Steele, *Politics of Colonial Policy*, 42–68.

63. Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England*.

64. The Protestant churches trace their origin to the Reformation and are divided into two main branches: the Reformed churches founded on the doctrines of John Calvin and Huldreich Zwingli (e.g., the Calvinist Church) and the Evangelical churches founded on the doctrines of Martin Luther (e.g., the Lutheran Church).

65. During the sixth and seventh decades of the eighteenth century, the political distinction between subjects with representation in the national Parliament and subjects without such representation became an intractable constitutional controversy that gave rise to the settler revolt in British North America known as the American War for Independence. That settler uprising resulted in the founding of the 13 republics that initially comprised the United States.

66. The seventeenth-century chroniclers of the Anglo-Saxon legend relied on the works of the historian Cornelius Tacitus (55–117)—specifically, his *Germania* and *Agricola*—for their primary source of historical information on the ancient Germanic tribes. These classical texts, along with exegetical analysis of the biblical accounts of postdiluvian history, became the foundation of the Anglo-Saxon racial myth. By the late nineteenth century, a biologicized conception of race had displaced the historical-textual underpinnings of Anglo-Saxonism. Nevertheless, the construction of race in the discourse of the biological sciences has always been culturally determined and, in crucial respects, has legitimated rather than refuted the traditional historiographical foundations of racial mythologies, including the myth of the Anglo-Saxon race.

67. For the importance of racial mythology in the construction of early modern English national identity, see MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History*, 31–70. In contrast to MacDougall's account of the rise of nationalism, Martin Thom traces the emergence of nationalism in Western Europe to the transition from Enlightenment thinking to Romanticism and its reaction against the Terror of Thermidorian Paris. Largely based on late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century continental European sources, Thom's periodization of the rise of nationalism in Western Europe discounts earlier discourses of national identity, especially those arising from the nation-empire relation. See Thom, *Republics, Nations, and Tribes*.

68. Quoted in MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History*, 60; and in Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism*, 77.

69. Racial mythologies are apt to change with shifts in national and international politics. During England's late-nineteenth-century rivalry with Germany, English nationalists celebrated the hybridity of the English peoples and counterposed the culture of the reputedly mixed English people to the culture of the presumably pure German Saxon, which had stagnated, according to the English propagandists, because of its insularity. These English nationalists now insisted that the superiority of the English peoples derived from the mixture of Celts, Saxons, Normans, and Danes, which produced the superior racial hybrid known as the Anglo-Saxon race. See Young, *Colonial Desire*, 17.

70. Quoted in Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism*, 77.

71. For the centrality of language and religion in earlier European conceptions of peoplehood, see Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*.

72. During the early modern era, memorization and recitation of the state-church catechism was imposed on diverse peasant populations in central Europe to bring

- about the uniformity of culture integral to nation building. See Sabean, *Power in the Blood*, 111.
73. Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 248.
 74. Sharpe, "Proposals for Erecting a School," 341.
 75. David E. Narrett, "From Mutual Will to Male Prerogative," 1.
 76. For a study of inheritance practices in colonial New York, see Narrett, *Inheritance and Family in Colonial New York* and "From Mutual Will to Male Prerogative," 1–4.
 77. Kilpatrick, *The Dutch Schools of New Netherland and Colonial New York*, 39–40.
 78. Bennett, *Bondsmen and Bishops*.
 79. Letter from Mr. Huddleston to the Secretary, New York, February 23, 1711 in Letterbooks of the SPG.
 80. Founded in the same year, New York City's Temple Shearith Israel was originally located at present-day St. James Place.
 81. Murrin, "English Rights as Ethnic Aggression," 61. See also Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion*, 26.
 82. Henry M. Mühlberg, *Journals of Henry Mühlberg*, 1:278.
 83. Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot*, 6.
 84. Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 248.
 85. Quoted in *ibid.*, 236.
 86. *Protocol of the Lutheran Church in New York City, 1702–1750*, 110–14 (hereafter cited as *Lutheran Protocol*).
 87. *Lutheran Protocol*, 114.
 88. *Ecclesiastical Records*, 1:866–67. As early as 1628, the Dutch Calvinist minister in New Amsterdam offered French-language services to the Walloon settlers. See NNN, 125; and *Ecclesiastical Records*, 1:53–54.
 89. William Smith, *History of the Province of New-York*, 1:204–5.
 90. Quoted in Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 239.
 91. Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion*, 144; Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 236.
 92. Quoted in Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion*, 112.
 93. Butler, *Huguenots in America*, 192–93.
 94. William Smith, *History of the Province of New-York*, 1:208. See also Maynard, *The Huguenot Church of New York*, 301–3.
 95. Le Temple du Saint-Esprit, New York City's French Calvinist church, dissolved in 1833.
 96. Roeber, "'The Origin of Whatever Is Not English among Us,'" 221.
 97. Successive waves of impoverished German-speaking refugees arrived at Manhattan Island in the aftermath of the Thirty Years War (1618–48), the War of Palatine Succession (1688–97), and the War of Spanish Succession (1709–13).
 98. For influential theories of group boundary maintenance, see Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*; Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*.
 99. *Lutheran Protocol*, 323. The following discussion of the language controversy in colonial New York City's Lutheran Church is based on *Lutheran Protocol*, 269–70, 295–96, 305–13, 320–21.
 100. Quoted in MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History*, 44. An advocate of the use of the vernacular in Protestant worship services, Martin Luther had his Wittenberg Protest (1517) translated into German.
 101. Mühlberg, *Journals*, 1:251.
 102. *Lutheran Protocol*, 176–77.
 103. Quoted in Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion*, 122.
 104. Quoted in *ibid.*, 131.
 105. Whereas Anglicans were only 5 to 10 percent of New York City's total settler population in 1720, they were a near majority of that colonial port town's settler popula-

tion by 1775. See Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion*, 91, 93–94; Richard W. Pointer, *Protestant Pluralism and the New York Experience*, 146n.

106. For an excellent history of pietism in the middle colonies of British North America, see Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion*, esp. 120–30.

107. Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 230.

108. Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals*, 483–86.

109. Pietistic preachers alleged that clergymen preached the doctrine of justification when they encouraged their parishioners to believe that instead of relying on the infusion of God's free grace and faith alone they could achieve assurance of their salvation by diligently attending to their worldly callings.

110. Mühlenberg, *Journals*, 1:231.

111. Colden, "A Memorial to his Excellency."

Chapter 4

1. For brief references to the efficacy of antiblack racism in subordinating and minimizing divisiveness within the settler population, see Jordan, *White over Black*, 119–20; Archdeacon, *New York City*, 145–46; and Thomas J. Davis, "'These Enemies of Their Own Household,'" 133.

2. Hakluyt, "A Discourse Concerning Western Planting in the Year 1584."

3. See Klingberg, *Anglican Humanitarianism in Colonial New York*, for a historical overview of Anglican missionary activities in colonial New York.

4. Letter from Elias Neau to David Humphreys, New York, June 22, 1721 in Letterbooks of the SPG.

5. Klingberg, "The S.P.G. Program for Negroes in Colonial New York."

6. The annual average of slave conversions is calculated from the SPG catechists' reports: Letter from Reverend Vesey to the Secretary, New York, September 5, 1704; Letter from Elias Neau to John Chamberlayn, New York, November 16, 1714; Letter from Elias Neau to David Humphreys, New York, January 22, 1720; Letter from Thomas Colgan to David Humphreys, New York, May 20, 1727; Letter from Thomas Colgan to David Humphreys, New York, December 23, 1728; Letter from Richard Charlton to the Secretary, New York, June 5, 1733; Letter from Reverend Auchmuty to Daniel Burton, New York, April 25, 1771; and Letter from Joseph Hildreth to Richard Hind, New York, November 7, 1773, in Letterbooks of the SPG.

The city's Lutheran church converted a few black town dwellers. By 1705, Arie Van Guinee, a free black from Suriname, and his wife, Jora, were members of the city's Lutheran congregation, and in that same year the Lutheran minister baptized their daughter, Maria. In 1726, the Lutheran minister administered Holy Communion to two black town dwellers, Jan Louis and his wife. See Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot*, 126.

7. Bloch, *Slavery and Serfdom in the Middle Ages*; Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy*.

8. Dockès, *Medieval Slavery and Liberation*.

9. With the crucial exception of Latin Europe, the institution of slavery had disappeared from most parts of Western Europe by the twelfth century. Medieval legal scholars invented the institution of serfdom to take its place, but within three centuries even that mitigated form of bondage had all but vanished. See Bonnaisse, *From Slavery to Feudalism in South-Western Europe*.

10. For the early Spanish invasion of the Americas and its enabling discourse of missionary colonialism, see Todorov, *The Conquest of America*.

11. Elias, *The Civilizing Process*.

12. Leviticus 25:45–46 states: "Moreover of the children of the strangers that do so-

jour among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that *are* with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit *them* for a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour.” Following the model of Leviticus, colonial New York’s law of “Bond-slavery” states: “No Christian shall be kept in Bond-slavery, villenage or Captivity, except such who shall be Judged thereunto by Authority, or such as willingly have sould, or shall sell themselves.” See *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:18. Also modeled on Leviticus, the Massachusetts law of “Bond-slavery” (1641) states: “there shall never be any bond-slavery, villenage or captivitie amongst us; unless it be lawfull captives taken in just warrs, and such strangers as willingly sell themselves, or are solde to us.” See Farrand, *The Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts*, 4.

13. In this respect, the category “Christian slave” presented a dilemma akin to the problem of the *conversos* in Inquisition Spain, where the ecclesiastical authorities feared that the conversion of Jews and Muslims to Christianity destabilized the social hierarchy based on the dominance of the so-called Old Christians—or, Christians who claimed a seamless family tradition of adherence to the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. In sixteenth-century Spain, the problem of the *conversos* was ostensibly solved with the extension of the concept *limpieza de sangre* from a privileged criterion for establishing membership in the aristocracy to one that defined membership in the broader national community. For a discussion of the problem of the *conversos* in Inquisition Spain, see Kamen, *Inquisition and Society in Spain in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 100–133. Interestingly, the application of the criterion “purity of the blood” for determining national belonging in Inquisition Spain bears a close resemblance to the solution to the problem of slave conversion in colonial New York, where, together, the valorization of the racial purity of the settler population and the emphasis on biological heredity in defining the category “slave” established the boundaries of national community.

14. For a general overview of slaveowner opposition to the Anglican civilizing mission among the slaves of British North America, see Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven*, 16.

15. DRHNY, 2:156.

16. Letter from Elias Neau to the Secretary, New York, July 4, 1704, in Letterbooks of the SPG.

17. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:429, 597–98.

18. In an effort to construct an exhaustive, airtight law of slavery, New York’s colonial assembly included Indians in the list of peoples eligible for enslavement, even though the settlers enslaved few Indians as a consequence of the Law of 1679, which prohibited the enslavement of Indians born in New York. See *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:21, 40–42.

19. In 1677, William Corvan, a mulatto, took advantage of the ambiguity surrounding the status of mulattoes in colonial New York at that time. Corvan claimed that he was born free and that he was an indentured servant and not a slave, as his master claimed. See O’Callaghan, *Calendar of Historical Manuscripts*, 2:56.

20. Colonial Virginia’s 1662 law of slavery included a similar provision that, according to the feminist legal historian Kathleen Brown, “reflected significant innovations in English traditions of marriage, family, and paternal authority.” See Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*, 135. For a brilliant essay on the impact that the statutory denegation of the father’s paternal rights over his offspring born of an enslaved woman had on the historical development of African American culture, see Spillers, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Baby.”

21. For the construction of racial subjects in legal discourse, see Haney-López, *White by Law*. In *Butts v. Penny* (1677) and *Gelly v. Cleve* (1694), the English courts ruled that enslaved blacks were “lesser breeds without the law” and therefore excluded from the

- rights of Englishmen and lawfully held as chattel. See Shyllon, *Black Slaves in Britain*, 24–25.
22. William Fleetwood, *Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants*, 273, 277, 289, quoted in Klingberg, *Anglican Humanitarianism*, 16. For a superb analysis of the Anglican conception of “absolute obedience” and “slaveowner paternalism,” see Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith*, 135–49.
23. Quoted in Letter from Elias Neau to the Secretary, New York, February 21, 1711, in Letterbooks of the SPG.
24. Reverend William Vesey, rector of New York City’s Anglican church, delayed Neau’s appointment, objecting that because the French-speaking lay minister lacked sufficient English language skills and knowledge of Anglican doctrine he should not be entrusted with the duties of SPG catechist. After considering Vesey’s objections, the SPG authorities in London confirmed Neau’s appointment. See Letter from Reverend William Vesey to the Secretary, New York, October 26, 1704, in Letterbooks of the SPG. For a sketch of Neau’s life, see Cohen, “Elias Neau, Instructor of New York’s Slaves.”
25. Letter from Elias Neau to Mr. Hodges, New York, July 10, 1703, in Letterbooks of the SPG.
26. Letter from Elias Neau to Secretary, New York City, February 27, 1709, and Letter from Elias Neau to Secretary, New York City, July 5, 1709, in Letterbooks of the SPG.
27. Letter from Elias Neau to Secretary, New York, July 9, 1709, in Letterbooks of the SPG.
28. For Elias Neau’s Question-and-Answer Catechism, see Appendix A.
29. Letter from Elias Neau to John Chamberlain, New York, July 24, 1707, in Letterbooks.
30. Letter from Elias Neau to John Chamberlayn, New York, November 28, 1706, in Letterbooks of the SPG.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Klingberg, *Anglican Humanitarianism*, 144.
33. Letter from Elias Neau to the Secretary, New York, March 1, 1705–6, in Letterbooks of the SPG.
34. Letter of Elias Neau to Chamberlayne, New York, August 24, 1708, and Letter of Elias Neau to the Secretary [N.D.] in Letterbook of the SPG. William Huddleston, the SPG catechist for New York City’s black population following Neau’s death in 1722, reported: “Swarms of Negroes come about my door and asking if I would be pleased to teach them and build on Mr. Neau’s foundation.” Quoted in Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 85. Like Neau’s black pupils, these black town dwellers were as interested in acquiring literacy as a means of improving their worldly condition as they were in achieving spiritual salvation. Bray’s Associates, an SPG educational institution, sent schoolteachers to colonial New York City. At Bray’s School, black children received instruction in English-language reading and writing skills. In addition, black girls received instruction in sewing. For the school’s curriculum, see also Letter from Joseph Hildreth to the Secretary, New York, October 18, 1768, in Letterbooks of the SPG.
35. Letter of Elias Neau to the Secretary, New York, June 16, 1715, in Letterbook of the SPG.
36. Letter from Elias Neau to John Chamberlain, New York, July 24, 1707, in Letterbooks of the SPG.
37. Letter from Reverend Vesey to the Secretary, New York, September 5, 1704; Letter from Thomas Colgan to David Humphries, New York, May 20, 1727; Letter from Thomas Colgan to David Humphries, New York, December 23, 1728; Letter from Richard Charlton to the Secretary, New York, June 5, 1733; Letter from Reverend Auch-

- muty to Daniel Burton, New York, April 25, 1771; and Letter from Joseph Hildreth to Richard Hind, New York, November 7, 1773, in Letterbooks of the SPG.
38. Letter from Elias Neau to John Chamberlayn, New York, August 24, 1708, in Letterbooks of the SPG.
39. Humphreys, *An Account of the SPG*, 238.
40. Letter from John Sharpe to Secretary, New York, June 23, 1712, in Letterbooks of the SPG.
41. Letter from Elias Neau to John Chamberlayn, New York, June 11, 1719, in Letterbooks of the SPG.
42. Letter from Elias Neau to Secretary, New York City, February 21, 1712. in Letterbooks of the SPG.
43. For a detailed account of New York City's Slave Revolt of 1712, see Scott, "The Slave Insurrection in New York in 1712." See also Foote, "'Some Hard Usage.'" In other parts of the Americas, enslaved Coromantee committed suicide in the belief that after death their spirits returned to their homelands. See Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 641.
44. Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions, August 7, 1694, to 1731, 212–24, 228–48; Minutes of the Supreme Court of Judicature, June 6, 1710–June 5, 1714, 399–400, 417, 426, 429. See also Coroner's Inquisition, April 9, 1712; *DRHNY*, 5:356–57; and *Boston Weekly News-Letter*, April 7 to April 13 and April 14 to April 20, 1712. At the time of the revolt, the *Boston Weekly News-Letter* was the only newspaper published in British North America.
45. O'Callaghan, *Journal of the Legislative Council*, 1:133.
46. Leon A. Higginbotham, *In the Matter of Color*, 116–23.
47. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:761–67. See also Olson, "The Slave Code in Colonial New York," 147–65.
48. *DRHNY*, 5:357.
49. In contrast to colonial New York's Black Code of 1712, statutes in colonial Virginia, beginning in 1705, granted free blacks some privileges of British subjecthood. But with the rise of the free black population in the towns around 1723 and mounting fears of a conspiracy involving slaves and free blacks, Virginia's colonial assembly stripped free blacks of their privileges and enacted statutes for the strict regulation of free black men and women. See Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches*, 275–322.
50. Letter from Mr. Thomas Barclay to the Secretary, New York, May 31, 1712, in Letterbooks of the SPG; and Letter from Elias Neau to the Secretary, New York, October 15, 1712, in Letterbooks of the SPG.
51. Letter from John Sharpe to the Secretary, New York, June 23, 1712, in Letterbooks of the SPG.
52. Letter from John Sharpe to the Secretary, New York, June 23, 1712, in Letterbooks of the SPG. Enslaved Akan were notorious for instigating and carrying out slave rebellions, skill in the tactics of guerrilla warfare, and success in establishing maroon communities. In addition to the early slave uprisings in Antigua in 1701 and in New York City in 1712, enslaved Akan led at least five slave revolts in Jamaica between 1673 and 1690. See Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 57, 75.
53. Fage, "A New Check List of the Forts and Castles of Ghana," iv.
54. Between 1710 and 1712, all documented slaves brought to the port of New York, a total of 185 West African newcomers, were natives of the Gold Coast of Africa, also called Guinea. Captain Jarrat brought the 1711 shipment of slaves from the Gold Coast, but before he arrived at Manhattan he stopped at Boston, where he deposited 19 slaves. Donnan, *Documents Illustrative*, 3:444.
55. Eugene Genovese has argued that the differences between slavery in the Americas and human bondage in Africa likely registered with native Africans as differences of de-

gree rather than kind. See Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolt*, xiv. While acknowledging that the institutions of slavery in West Africa and in the Americas shared some common features, this study stresses the fundamental differences between the two systems of slavery.

57. Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*, 11. See also Rattray, *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, v.

58. Anatole Norman Klein, "West African Unfree Labor Before and After the Rise of the Atlantic Slave Trade," in Foner and Genovese, *Slavery in the New World*, 90.

59. This and other Akan proverbs, as well as their English translations, are drawn from Rattray, *Ashanti Proverbs*. The seventeenth-century Akwamu, an Akan Empire headquartered on the Gold Coast, preceded the Asante, another Akan Empire, and had earlier disseminated these proverbs. Osei Tutu and Okomfo Anokye, credited with founding the Asante state in the eighteenth century, learned statecraft from the Akwamu, including lawmaking. The laws of the Popo and Koromantin communities probably stemmed from long-term contact between the two groups and the Akwamu and were later reinforced by the Asante, whose hegemony as an imperial power later made them culturally influential on the Gold Coast. See Wilks, "The Mossi and Akan State, 1500 to 1800," 434; Hampton, "The Continuity Factor in Ga Music."

60. The sociologist Orlando Patterson writes, "There is nothing at all self-evident in the idea or, more properly, the high esteem in which we in the West hold freedom. For most of human history, and for nearly all of the non-Western world prior to Western contact, freedom was, and for many still remains, anything but an obvious or desirable goal. Other values and ideals were, or are, of far greater importance to them." Patterson *Freedom*, 1:ix.

61. Wilks, *Forests of Gold*.

62. Quoted in Kenneth Scott, "The Slave Insurrection of 1712," 46–47.

63. The historian Eugene Genovese has noted, "Africans brought with them as many commitments to and preconceptions of justice and legitimacy as their captors did." Genovese, *From Rebellion to Resistance*, xvi.

64. *DRHNY*, 5:341.

65. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, esp. 1–14.

66. Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions, August 7, 1694, to 1731, 214–46, 248.

67. *Ibid.*

68. Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*.

69. Linebaugh, "All the Atlantic Mountain Shook," 111.

70. Bridenbaugh, *Gentlemen's Progress*, 40–41. See also Warner, *The Letters of the Republic*, 13; Shane White, *Somewhat More Independent*, 190.

71. For the role of overseas news and rumors in fueling the Haitian Revolution, see Julius S. Scott, "The Common Wind."

72. William Smith, *History of the Province of New-York*, 1:147.

73. Richard Wade has argued that the urban environment was incompatible with the institution of chattel slavery. In contrast, Claudia Goldin has argued that the urban setting supported slavery and militated against the success of slave uprisings. See Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, and Goldin, *Urban Slavery in the American South*. This study shows that even though the density of the city's population and the slaves' flexible work routines gave rise to problems of slave control, the environment of colonial New York City in general did not undermine the institution of slavery, but instead generated a demand for slave labor and in this respect enhanced the viability of chattel slavery.

74. Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts*, 168–69. In 1702, New York's colonial assembly enacted the colony's first law exclusively aimed at the regulation of the enslaved population. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:519–21.

75. Rossiter, *A Century of Population Growth*, 181.

76. Only three convicted rebels had lived in the thinly populated West Ward, and none had lived in the sparsely populated North Ward and Outward. See Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions, August 7, 1694, to 1731, 212–24, 228–48; Minutes of the Supreme Court of Judicature, June 6, 1710–June 5, 1714, 399–400, 417, 426, 429.

77. MCC, 1:134.

78. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:519–21.

79. Letter from John Sharpe to the Secretary, New York, June 23, 1712, in Letterbooks of the SPG.

80. The black town dwellers continued to observe Pinkster well into the nineteenth century, long after the descendants of the colonial Netherlanders discontinued the practice. For a description of Albany's black Pinkster Day celebration, see Eights, "Pinkster Festivities in Albany Sixty Years Ago." For a fictional account of a New York City black Pinkster Day festival, see Cooper, *Satanstoe*, 50–78.

81. Stuckey, *Slave Culture*, 80–83. For a comparable interpretation of the black Pinkster parades, see Williams-Meyers, "Pinkster Carnival." For a discussion of similar black festivals, see Reidy, "'Negro Election Day' and Black Community Life in New England, 1750–1860"; Lorenzo J. Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England*, 245–48; and Reid, "The John Canoe Festival."

82. Shane White, *Somewhat More Independent*, 98. See also Shane White, "Pinkster in Albany, 1803"; "'It Was a Proud Day'"; and "Pinkster." For an influential study on status inversion rituals, see Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*, esp. chapters 3–5. For rituals of status reversal in early modern Europe, see Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern French Society*, esp. 128–29, 130–31, 143; and Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, esp. 183, 188–89, 199–204. For status inversion rituals in African cultures, see Gluckman, *Custom and Conflict in Africa*, esp. 109–36; *Rituals of Rebellion in South-East Africa*, esp. introduction and chapter 5.

83. Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, 30.

84. Letter from James Wetmore to the Secretary [n.d.] in Letterbooks of the SPG.

85. For the biblical passages most often cited as evidence that black Africans were the descendants of the sons of Ham, see Genesis 9:18–27; 10:6–14. For a useful discussion of early modern interpretations of postdiluvian history, see Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism*, 19–33.

86. Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, 72.

87. Letter from James Wetmore to the Secretary, New York, December 3, 1726, in Letterbooks of the SPG.

88. According to the historian Philip D. Morgan, native Africans comprised a majority in the Carolina low country's black population not much earlier than the 1770s. See Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," 89; *Slave Counterpoint*, 82–83. In contrast to the black populations in the colonial Carolina low country and in colonial New York City, American-born blacks comprised a majority of the colonial Chesapeake region's black population as early as the 1730s. See Kulikoff, "A 'Prolifick' People," 405; Menard, "The Maryland Slave Population, 1658 to 1730," 32. In the Caribbean basin, native Africans were a majority of the black population for a longer period than was the case for British mainland America. In Jamaica, the emergence of an American-born black majority most likely occurred between the 1770s and the 1820s, later than in most black populations of British mainland America. See Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770–1820*.

89. Another convenient way of locating the Negroes Burial Ground is to find block numbers 153, 154, and 155 on the official NYCMAP for the Borough of Manhattan, New York City.

90. Valentine, "History of Broadway," 567.

91. Though the exact date is unknown, colonial New York City's black population

probably began burying their dead at the Negroes Burial Ground no later than 1712. See Sharpe, "Proposals for Erecting a School," 355. The practice of burying the dead on the land called the Negroes Burial Ground probably ceased in 1795, when that parcel of real estate was divided among the heirs of the original landowners. See Liber Deeds and Conveyances. At that time the municipal government began to make arrangements for the establishment of a black cemetery on Chrystie Street. See *MCC*, 2:137.

92. The historian John S. Blassingame has emphasized the importance of semi-autonomous social space, such as separate slave quarters, in the formation of rural slave cultures on the plantations of the antebellum South. See Blassingame, *Slave Community*. In colonial cities, semi-autonomous social space—for example, Congo Square in New Orleans and the separate slave districts in Bridgetown, Barbados; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and Havana, Cuba, and the Negroes Burial Ground in colonial New York City—enabled the development of urban slave cultures.

93. *MCC*, 3:296, 4:447.

94. Sharpe, "Proposals for Erecting a School," 355. Conjurors (or root doctors)—for example, Peter the Doctor, a free black from New York City's East Ward, and Doctor Harry, a free black from Nassau, Long Island—may well have presided over these burial rites.

95. For an excellent study of the processes of detribalization and retribalization undergone by people of African descent in the southern colonies of British North America and the plantation South of the United States, see Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*.

96. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 5.

97. Letter from John Sharpe to the Secretary, New York, June 23, 1712, in Letter-books.

98. Williams, *Voodooes and Obeahs*; Hedrick and Stephens, *It's a Natural Fact*; Morrish, *Obeah, Christ and Rastaman*; and Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves*.

99. For black burial associations in nineteenth-century New York City and their retention of African-derived burial practices, see Craig Steven Wilder, *In the Company of Black Men*, 9–35.

100. In 1991, during the construction of the 34-story tower for the federal office building at 290 Broadway, a team of archeologists excavated 435 burials in the northeast portion of colonial New York City's Negroes Burial Ground (a segment of present-day Block 154 only). Protected for nearly three centuries by 16 to 25 feet of landfill, colonial New York City's Negroes Burial Ground is the best preserved and oldest urban black burial site uncovered in the Americas to date and is estimated to contain approximately 20,000 separate skeletal remains. Largely undisturbed burials lay underneath the building structures at 14–16 Reade Street, 51 Chambers Street, 21 Duane Street; the northern portion of the Court Square Building at the corner of Reade and Lafayette streets; and the northern portion of the A. T. Stewart Store Building at 280 Broadway. Some partially disturbed burials lay beneath other areas of Chambers, Reade, and Duane streets. The digging of subway tunnels along Centre Street, Lafayette Street, and Broadway destroyed many burials. For an overview of the 1991 excavation on Block 154, see Hansen and McGowan, *Breaking Ground, Breaking Silence*. St. Peter's Cemetery in New Orleans is the only other eighteenth-century urban black burial ground excavated in the Americas. Only 29 skeletal remains were uncovered at that site. See Owsley, "Demography and Pathology of an Urban Slave Population from New Orleans."

101. Of the 435 burials excavated from colonial New York City's Negroes Burial Ground, archeologists have identified 16 human remains with modified teeth, some displaying an hourglass pattern. For a textual reference to a black town dweller with filed teeth, see *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, October 14 to October 20, 1762. Archeologists have discovered evidence of the practice of tooth mutilation or filing in other slave burial

populations in the Americas. See Stewart and Groome, "The African Custom of Tooth Mutilation in America"; Handler, Corrucini, and Mutaw, "Tooth Mutilation in the Caribbean."

102. The people of West Africa interred burial goods with human remains. Burial goods have also been uncovered at slave graveyards in the Caribbean basin and in the southern United States. See Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 132–42; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 642.

103. For a discussion of Sankofa, see Tedla, *Sankofa*.

104. For affinities and incompatibilities between African cosmologies, on the one hand, and Western European cosmologies, on the other, see Horton, *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West*. No single, uniform religious cosmology dominated the cultures of sub-Saharan Africa during the era of the transatlantic slave trade. Rather, the various clan groups in that region of Africa each adhered to its own distinct belief system and worshiped its own particular pantheon of deities. For the diversity of African religions, see Ranger, "Recent Developments in the Study of African Religions and Cultural History and Their Relevance for the Historiography of the Diaspora," 21. Native Africans did, however, share some basic beliefs. See Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophies*; Mintz and Price, *An Anthropological Approach to the Afro-American Past*, 23.

105. Quoted in Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion*, 5.

106. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophies*, 57.

107. Fernow, *Records of New Amsterdam*, 2:41.

108. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 30–31.

109. Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith*, 153.

110. For the receptivity of African religious cosmologies to new worldviews, see Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 138.

111. Quoted in Klingberg, *Anglican Humanitarianism*, 144–45.

112. A review of the SPG's slave conversion record in colonial New York City indicates that as late as the 1730s its missionary work had reduced only slightly the cultural alienness of the city's black population; but, beginning in the 1740s, the SPG began to improve its conversion record, especially among black youths. See Letter from Reverend Vesey to the Secretary, New York, September 5, 1704; Letter from Elias Neau to John Chamberlayn [n.d.]; Letter from Elias Neau to John Chamberlayn, New York, August 24, 1708; Letter from Thomas Colgan to David Humphreys, New York, May 20, 1727; Letter from Thomas Colgan to David Humphreys, New York, December 23, 1728; Letter from Richard Charlton to the Secretary, New York, June 5, 1733; Letter from Reverend Auchmuty to the Secretary, New York, October 2, 1751; Letter from Reverend Auchmuty to Daniel Burton, New York, April 25, 1771; and Letter from Joseph Hildreth to Richard Hind, New York, November 7, 1773, in Letterbooks of the SPG.

113. Quoted in Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot*, 123.

114. Quoted in Klingberg, *Anglican Humanitarianism*, 149.

115. Quoted in Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 120.

116. Quoted in *ibid.*, 119.

117. Letter from Samuel Auchmuty to the Secretary, New York, August 22, 1748, in Letterbooks of the SPG.

118. Klingberg, *Anglican Humanitarianism*, 151.

119. House Expense Book of Evert Bancker, 1760 to 1775.

120. For the early prohibition against the burial of blacks in Trinity Churchyard, see Trinity Church Vestry Minutes, October 25, 1697, 1:11.

121. For the arrangements for opening the separate cemetery for black Anglicans, see Trinity Church Vestry Minutes, September 15, 1773, 1:377–78; Trinity Church Vestry Minutes, July 7, 1774, 1:385.

122. DeCosta, *Three Score and Ten*, 14–21.

123. Privateers sold Spanish-speaking Indian and mulatto captives into slavery at the port of New York during the War of Jenkin's Ear (1739–42), King George's War (1744–48), and the French and Indian War (1756–63). In the slave cultures of the Caribbean basin, the fusion of compatible African and Catholic religious beliefs and practices resulted in the formation of syncretic slave religions—for example, Candomblé in Brazil, Santería in Cuba, and Vodun in Haiti. For an influential discussion of syncretic New World slave religions, see Bastide, *African Civilisation in the New World*.

124. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:428–30.

125. For a reference to a few racially mixed evangelical congregations in colonial New York, see Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 86. For the early black evangelical congregations, see Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven*, 119; Boles, *Masters and Slaves In the House of the Lord*; Jackson, "Early Strivings of the Negro in Virginia"; and Frey, *Water from the Rock*, 37.

126. *New York Gazette*, November 12 to November 18, 1739. See also Whitefield, *George Whitefield's Journals*, 345–46.

127. Slaveowner opposition to the preaching of egalitarian ideals would force evangelical ministers to temper their emphasis on equality and formulate an accommodation to slavery. See Essig, *The Bonds of Wickedness*, 73–96; Oakes, *The Ruling Race*, 108.

128. George Whitefield did not advocate the abolition of slavery, but instead called for better treatment of slaves. See Stein, "George Whitefield on Slavery."

129. For the influence of evangelical Protestantism on an acculturated native African and his conversion experience, see Gronniosaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars*, 45–47.

130. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 184.

131. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925*, 261.

132. Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*, vii.

133. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, esp. 5.

134. Gutman, *Black Family*, 316.

135. Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith*, 137–44.

136. For receipts for the purchase of apparel for slaves, see House Expense Book of Evert Bancker, 1760 to 1775. See also Receipt Book of Nicholas Bayard, April 20, 1762–August 11, 1772; Ledger of Accounts of Charles Nicoll for the Sale and Repair of Shoes. Nicoll's business records show the accounts of 21 New York City slaveowners whose slaves frequented his shop: Captain James Creighton, John Watts, and Stephen Delancey were among the slaveowners who maintained accounts with Nicoll. Between 1759 and 1763, Nicoll took in a total of £37 for the sale and repair of "Negros' shoes."

137. Abraham Van Horne sold "Negro coffins" to New York City slaveowners. His busiest season occurred in 1756, when a smallpox epidemic struck the densely populated port town. The price of the coffins for enslaved adults ranged from 11s. to 14s. each, including rosin and screws. The price of an enslaved child's coffin ranged from 4s. 6d. to 10s. each, depending on its dimensions. See Day Book of Abraham Van Horne, 1753 to 1756.

A majority of the burial population from the excavated portion of colonial New York City's Negros Burial Ground had been wrapped in shrouds. Stain outlines in the earth indicate that at least 77 percent of the 435 burials uncovered during the 1991 excavation had been interred in inexpensive nondecorative hexagonal coffins made of woods native to the environment surrounding the city during colonial times—for example, pine, cedar, and spruce. The initial preparation of human remains for burial probably marked the limit of New York City slaveowners' involvement in most slave burials. Because decaying corpses presented a health hazard to the inhabitants of the densely populated port town, human remains were doubtless buried as expeditiously as possible. It is therefore likely that the owner of a deceased slave quickly transferred the human remains, al-

ready wrapped in a cerement and laid in a coffin, to the deceased slave's family and friends. Once in possession of the corpse, these mourners probably conveyed the human remains to the Negros Burial Ground, where a gathering of black town dwellers participated in the burial ceremony.

138. Inventory of the Estate of Christiana Cappoens [Goschersen], December 19, 1693.

139. Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 72.

140. Will of Teneke Bensen, February 21, 1753.

141. Petition of a Negro for Freedom; *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, July 24 to July 30, 1758.

A Spanish-speaking captive from New Spain, Juan Miranda had been seized from a Spanish sailing vessel, condemned as a prize good, and sold into slavery at New York City. Miranda was perhaps familiar with the system of *coartación*, a legal mechanism in New Spain that allowed master and slave to enter into an agreement, generally arbitrated through the court, whereby the slave arranged to purchase his or her freedom at a fixed price, often with installments paid over a set period of time. According to David Brion Davis, the system of *coartación* originated in Cuba and then migrated to other Spanish colonies. See Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, 266–67. See also Aimes, “Coartación.”

In 1746, New York's Vice-Admiralty Court judged six of nine Indians, mulattoes, and Negroes, earlier seized from a Spanish sailing vessel and brought to the port of New York for sale, to be lawful prize goods. At that time the court ordered that the condemned captives be allowed to purchase their freedom, perhaps in consideration of New Spain's system of *coartación*. See Hough, *Reports of Cases in the Vice Admiralty Court*, 29–33, 199; *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:429. Juan Miranda was perhaps one of the unlucky captives condemned to slavery in 1746. If this was the case, then, the Vice-Admiralty Court had promised Miranda that he would be allowed to purchase his freedom, a court order that Miranda's master perhaps attempted to honor in his last testament.

142. Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 130. For additional freedom suits, see Edwin V. Morgan, *Slavery in New York*, 11–12; *New-York Weekly Gazette*, July 18 to July 24, 1763.

143. Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot*, 125.

144. Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 130–31.

145. The historian Shane White guesses that no more than 100 free blacks lived in New York City during the colonial period. White, *Somewhat More Independent*, 153.

146. In 1659–60, WIC Director-General Petrus Stuyvesant confirmed the deeds of 10 free black landowners, who in 1644 acquired land as a reward for faithful service to the WIC during the Indian war, and another three free black landowners, who received land in 1647. These contiguous parcels of land became known as the “Free Negro Lots.” Beside the “Free Negro Lots” in the vicinity of present-day Astor Place, there were additional free black homesteads scattered about lower Manhattan. For example, free blacks resided on the city's Anglican Church farm. The 1703 household census for the County of New York does not include free black householders, though other historical records document the presence of free blacks on Manhattan Island. See Trinity Parish Leases for the Church Farm. Only seven censuses taken in New York before 1790 included the category “free Negro” or “free Black”: New Utrecht in 1698, Westchester in 1698, Eastchester in 1698, Fordham in 1698, Bedford in 1698, and Oysterbay in 1755 and 1781.

147. For the English confirmation of these separate deeds, see O'Callaghan, *Calendar of Historical Manuscripts*, 1:126, 128; Stokes, *Iconography*, 6:123.

148. Stokes, *Iconography*, 6:123.

149. Fabend, “The Yeoman Ideal,” 94; Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 35.

150. Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 17, 71; Christoph, “Freedmen of New Amsterdam,” 116–17; and O'Callaghan, *Calendar of Dutch Historical Manuscripts*, 1:222, 256.

151. For the landholdings and genealogical records of Pieter Santome and his descendants, see Hoff, “A Colonial Black Family in New York and New Jersey,” 101–34.

152. Christoph, "Freedmen of New Amsterdam," 148–49.
153. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:519–21.
154. New York's colonial assembly reintroduced the 1702 statute in the Black Code of 1712. The Privy Council again disallowed that statute, but allowed the colonial assembly to replace it with the 1707 statute. See *DRHNY*, 5:457; *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:761–67.
155. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:761.
156. Quoted in Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 67.
157. For the charity case involving Mary, Lucas Petersen's wife, see New York City, Charities, Church Wardens and Vestrymen. The record also indicates that the church wardens gave Mary a pauper's burial on September 14, 1738.
158. For court cases involving indigent free blacks, see Minutes of the Mayor's Court, November 28, 1710–May 17, 1715; Minutes of the Mayor's Court, June 22, 1714–December 24, 1717; Minutes of the Mayor's Court, May 6, 1718–November 23, 1720; and Minutes of the Mayor's Court, February 17, 1735/36–August 3, 1742.
159. For the decline in manumissions, see Kruger, "Born to Run," 593.
160. Yoshpee, "Record of Slave Manumission in New York during the Colonial and Early National Period."
161. Bond of Surety for Manumission, May 7, 1767. Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions, January 1, 1722–January 5, 1772.
162. Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 143.
163. Between 1718 and 1771, an antislavery movement gained influence among Quakers in New York. In 1718, the New York Quaker William Burling wrote an early antislavery tract, later published in Benjamin Lay's *All Slave-Keeper's That Keep the Innocent in Bondage Apostates*, 6–11. Before that time, the Burling family had participated in the slave trade and owned slaves. By the 1720s, the Burlings had renounced trafficking in slaves and had divested themselves of their slave property. In 1771, the New York Yearly Meeting announced that it would disown all Quakers who persisted in trading and keeping slaves. By 1782, New York Quakers had freed all but two slaves held captive in their community. See Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America*, 134, 170–72; Worrall, *Quakers in the Colonial Northeast*, 157–63.
164. The colonial New York City newspapers each issue printed an average of six notices advertising the sale of slaves. Account books and probate records also document the sale of slaves. See Journal of Evert Bancker Recording the Sales and Dry Goods; Inventory of the Estate of Captain Giles Shelly; and Inventory of the Estate of Rip Van Dam.
165. Will of Joseph Reade, July 23, 1761; Inventory of the Estate of Rip Van Dam.
166. Will of Alexander Colden, December 16, 1774; Will of Elizabeth Colden [n.d.].
167. Will of Abraham Van Horne.
168. Will of James Van Horne.
169. Letterbook of John Watts, 17.
170. Letters and Papers of Cadwallader Colden, 213.
171. In an effort to refute the theory of "creole degeneracy," the Americans Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and Aaron Burr sent specimens of American plant and animal life to European correspondents. Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World*; Ceaser, *Reconstructing America*.
172. Will of Cadwallader Colden, March 15, 1779. New York State Archives, Albany.
173. Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, 162.
174. For two excellent historical studies on the topic of rape in the southern slave regime, see Hodes, *Sex Across the Color Line*; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "'The Mind that Burns in Each Body.'" For an exceptionally insightful analysis of the much neglected topics of rape, gender, and race in the colonial North, see Dayton, *Women Before the Bar*, 265.
175. At that time Shelter Island was part of the legal jurisdiction of New York County. For the case against Cato, see Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions, August 7, 1694,

to 1731. See also *New York Gazette*, January 21 to January 27, 1733, and January 28 to February 3, 1733; and *New-York Weekly Journal*, January 28 to February 3, 1733.

176. *Dom Rex v. Jonnoau, a Negro Man Slave*, July 20, 1737, in Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions, May 2, 1732 to August 4, 1762.

177. *New York Gazette*, July 25 to July 31, 1737.

178. Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*, 263.

179. Colonial Virginia's Antimiscegenation Law of 1691 punished white settlers who married a Negro, mulatto, or Indian with banishment from the colony. See McIlwaine, *Legislative Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, 1:262; Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 335.

180. The sociologist Etienne Balibar has convincingly argued that a "principle of closure, exclusion" is always a necessary component of a cohesive national community. See Balibar, "The Nation Form," 100–102.

181. The slaveowner-patriarch's interest in preserving his slave property sometimes saved male slaves from the death penalty. In 1749, John Murray obstructed the official court proceedings charging his male slave with the rape of a white woman, a capital crime. See McManus, *A History of Negro Slavery in New York*, 96.

182. For colonial societies where concubinary relations were tolerated and even encouraged, see Verena Martinez-Alier, *Marriage, Class and Colour in Nineteenth-Century Cuba*; Stoler, "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power," in di Leonardo, *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge*; and Lovejoy, "Concubinage and the Status of Women Slaves in Early Colonial Northern Nigeria."

183. In this study's sample population of enslaved children advertised for sale in colonial New York City newspapers, nearly 13 percent (21 out of 164) were designated "mulattoes." The sample population does not include enslaved children from outside colonial New York.

184. For a brilliant analysis of the discursive construction of the black female seductress (or black "Jezebel" stereotype), see Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*.

185. *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, April 25 to May 1, 1743. In 1763, a bloodthirsty crowd of New York City townspeople stoned and dragged through the streets a black man named Tom, who was accused of the attempted rape of a white child. Tom was soon arrested, convicted of that crime, and executed. See *New York Mercury*, December 5 to December 11, 1763.

186. The historian Philip D. Morgan writes, "A defining characteristic of slavery was its highly personal mechanism of coercion: the whip, rather than the law, was its indispensable and ubiquitous instrument." Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 265. The sociologist Orlando Patterson adds, "Violence was the ultimate sanction." Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 12.

187. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:18, 47–48, 157–59; 4:924–25.

188. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 150.

189. For the deployment of antiblack racism as a disciplinary mechanism of elite rule over propertyless whites, see Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*, esp. 19, 23.

Chapter 5

1. Bonomi, *A Factious People*, 78.

2. Becker, *The History of Political Parties in the Province of New York*, 5.

3. For studies on this episode in colonial New York City's history, see Clarke, "The Negro Plot of 1741"; Szasz, "The New York Slave Revolt of 1741"; Thomas J. Davis, *Rumor of Revolt*; and Peter Hoffer, *The Great New York Conspiracy of 1741*.

4. Horsmanden, *Journal of the Proceedings in the Detection of the Conspiracy*. The follow-

- ing discussion relies on the reprint of Horsmanden's *Journal* in Thomas J. Davis, *The New York Conspiracy* by Daniel Horsmanden.
5. For an influential definition of *common sense* and its relation to *hegemony* (or the attainment of the consent of the governed to elite rule, involving a battle of conflicting social groups to determine what is historically true and culminating in the worldview of a particular group becoming dominant), see Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 325–43.
 6. Bonomi, *A Factious People*, 130–35.
 7. For a discussion of the Zenger Trial, see Levy, *Freedom of the Press from Zenger to Jefferson*, esp. xxvi–xxxvii.
 8. The rivalry between the Van Dam and Clarke factions was reminiscent of the internal divisions that gave rise to Leisler's Rebellion of 1689–92, the power struggle that followed the death of Governor Bellomont in 1701, and the dispute between New York's landed elite and merchants over the royal revenues and the allocation of the governor's salary in 1712. See Bonomi, *A Factious People*, 103–39.
 9. Colonial New York's law defined a voter (or freehold elector) as an adult white male inhabitant who possessed an unencumbered estate (land and/or tenements) worth at least £40 per annum. See *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:74.
 10. Bonomi, *A Factious People*, 91.
 11. Thomas J. Davis, *Rumor of Revolt*, 27–30.
 12. Colden, "History of Gov. William Cosby's Administration."
 13. Due to the dearth of documentary references to them, the black brotherhoods of colonial New York City have received scant scholarly attention, whereas colonial Brazil's black urban brotherhoods, known as *irmandades*, have been the focus of several detailed studies. These studies indicate that the black brotherhoods in the cities of Brazil date back to the eighteenth century and that these confraternities organized the burial of slaves and free blacks, as well as other mutual aid activities for colonial Brazil's black urban communities. See Russell-Wood, "Black and Mulatto Brotherhoods in Colonial Brazil"; Scaran, *Devoção e escravidão*; Mulvey, "The Black Lay Brotherhoods of Colonial Brazil"; and Boschi, *Os leigos e o poder*. Documentary references to colonial New York City's black brotherhoods do not indicate that they served as mutual aid organizations for the city's black community but instead tend to criminalize these confraternities, stressing the involvement of their leaders in burglaries and other infractions of the law. Black men did, however, organize mutual aid societies in nineteenth-century New York City. See Wilder, *In the Company of Black Men*, 9–35.
 14. The historian Douglas Greenberg suggests that before the crime wave of 1741–42 struck New York City a connection between theft and "disorderly houses," such as taverns, already existed in the minds of the settlers. See Greenberg, *Crime and Law Enforcement in the Colony of New York*, 52–53.
 15. For a description of the fire at the fort, see *New-York Weekly Journal*, March 23 to March 29, 1741–42.
 16. For a description of these fires, see *New-York Weekly Journal*, April 13 to April 19, 1742. See also *Boston Weekly News-Letter*, May 7 to May 13, 1742.
 17. McManus, *History of Negro Slavery in New York*, 25; Lydon, "New York and the Slave Trade," 387.
 18. *New-York Weekly Journal*, March 22 to March 28, 1737.
 19. New York City newspapers reported slave rebellions and conspiracies that occurred outside New York, as well as mutinies on slaving vessels. See *New York Gazette*, November 30 to December 6, 1730; September 4 to September 10, 1732; September 23 to September 29, 1734; February 22 to February 28, 1837; and *New-York Weekly Journal*, October 14 to October 20, 1734; July 29 to August 4, 1734; and May 28 to June 3, 1739.

20. Some witnesses in the conspiracy trials seem to have been familiar with the tactics of the enslaved rebels who during the Slave Revolt of 1712 set fire to buildings and ambushed white town dwellers in the night. For example, Sarah, an enslaved female informant, testified: “they [the alleged black conspirators] used to say that when they set fire to the town, they’d do it in the night and as the white people came to extinguish it, they’d kill and destroy them.”

21. Hough, *Reports of Cases in the Vice Admiralty Court*, 17.

22. For the announcement of the rewards offered to informants, see *New-York Weekly Journal*, April 18 to April 24, 1742. See also *MCC*, 5:16–18.

23. A List of White Persons Taken into Custody on Account of the Conspiracy and List of Negroes Committed on Account of the Conspiracy [1741] in Thomas J. Davis, *New York Conspiracy*, 467–673.

24. For a newspaper report on the “general search,” as well as Lieutenant Governor Clarke’s proclamation of a day of “public fasting and humiliation,” see *New-York Weekly Journal*, April 19 to April 25, 1742.

25. For the establishment of the military watch over New York City during the summer of 1742, see *MCC*, 5:43–44.

26. Gordon S. Wood, “Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style,” 411.

27. Letter from Province of the Massachusetts Bay to Cadwallader Colden, Boston, [July 23?], 1741 in “Letters and Papers of Cadwallader Colden,” 270–72.

28. Thomas J. Davis, *Rumor of Revolt*, 237.

29. This shift was symptomatic of the transformation of the public sphere, involving, on one hand, the contraction of the realm wherein a monarch represented himself as the embodiment of the divine authority of God and, on the other hand, the dilation of the domain wherein privatized individuals coalesced as an abstract public endowed with the capacity of supervision over governmental officials. The decisive mark of this “new domain of the public,” Jürgen Habermas has noted, was the published word. See Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, esp. 1–88.

30. Thomas J. Davis, *New York Conspiracy*, xxiii.

31. In commenting on the official documentation of subaltern conspiracy and rebellion in British colonial India, Ranajit Guha notes: “Drafted into the service of the regime as a direct instrument of its will it did not even bother to conceal its partisan character. Indeed, it often merged, both in its narrative and analytic forms, into what was explicitly official writing. For administrative practice turned it almost into a convention that a magistrate or a judge should construct his report on a local uprising as a historical narrative.” See Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*, 3. The colonial rulers in New York City also turned to the convention of historical narrative to document the “plot of 1741–42,” but the transformation of the public sphere in that white settler colony required that they follow the conventions of print culture and conceal, as much as possible, their partisan biases. For a superb discussion of print culture in British North America, see Warner, *The Letters of the Republic*.

32. For the discursive conventions, the logic of cause and effect, and the evidentiary protocols shared by judges and historians, see Ginzburg, “Checking the Evidence.”

33. Hayden White provides a useful review of the distinction modern historians generally make between three basic categories of historical representation—the annals, the chronicle, and history proper (historical narrative). White notes that for a historical representation to fall into the category of history proper, “events must be not only registered within the chronological framework of their original occurrence but narrated as well, that is to say, revealed as possessing a structure, an order of meaning, that they do not possess as mere sequence.” See White, *Content of the Form*, 5. Horsmanden’s “Introduction” offers just such a narration, for it confers a meaningful structure on the sequence of puzzling events that occurred during the winter of 1741–42. In his “Preface”

Horsmanden claims to forgo historical narration and announces that he will present instead a journal or diary, something akin to the annals. Yet only a few pages later, he acknowledges that he offers both a journal and a narrative. In this chapter, I use the phrase “Horsmanden’s narrative” to refer to the historical narration contained in his “Introduction.” I treat Horsmanden’s reprint of the official interrogations, confessions, and court proceedings as extended footnotes or supporting evidence for his narrative. These reprinted documents are, therefore, drawn into my analysis of Horsmanden’s narrative. The anthropologist Victor Turner has argued that “legal procedures generate narratives from brute facts.” See Turner, “Social Drama and Stories about Them,” 153. For important historical studies based on a narratological analysis of legal documents, see Ladurie, *Montaillou*; Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms* and *Night Battles*; and Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* and *Fiction in the Archives*.

34. The original court records and other official transcripts have been destroyed. For the newspaper coverage of the conspiracy trials, see *New-York Weekly Journal*, March 22 to March 28, 1741–42, September 14 to September 20, 1742; October 12 to October 18, 1742; and *Boston Weekly News-Letter*, May 7 to May 13, 1742; July 15 to July 21, 1742; and August 12 to August 18, 1742. See also English Manuscripts.

35. Fredric Jameson notes that conspiracy theories involve a claim to comprehending the whole. See Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 38.

36. Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, xii, 143–81.

37. Abaddon (in Hebrew) or Apollyon (in Greek): “angel of the bottomless pit.” See Rev. 9:11.

38. John Hughson’s father (pardoned on condition of departing the colony), his four brothers (pardoned on condition of departing the colony), his wife (convicted of conspiracy and hanged), and his daughter (pardoned) all fell under suspicion because of their familial ties to John Hughson and their alleged association with enslaved blacks.

39. In the wake of the Jacobite Uprising of 1715, New York’s colonial assembly enacted a law that imposed several restrictions on Catholics who resided within the colony, including prohibiting them from carrying firearms and requiring them to post a bond of surety for their good conduct and loyalty. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:858. See also *DRHNY*, 4:160.

40. The colonial authorities jailed four Irish soldiers—Edward Kelly, William Kane, Edward Murphey, and Andrew Ryan—but released them after the prosecution failed to uncover sufficient evidence to bring them to trial. See “A List of White Persons Taken into Custody on Account of the Conspiracy [1741]” in Thomas J. Davis, *New York Conspiracy*, 467. Earlier, in 1700, New York’s Royal Governor Bellomont, a William and Mary appointee, described recent immigrants from Ulster as the “very scum of the army in Ireland and several Irish papists amongst ’em.” *DRHNY*, 4:770.

41. Ury was reported to have preached on Matthew 16:18–19. See Thomas J. Davis, *Rumor of Revolt*, 200. For the statute that banished Catholic priests from colonial New York and imposed life imprisonment on Catholic priests who were discovered in the colony, see *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:428–30.

42. At this juncture, the official investigation into the “plot of 1741–42” begins to resemble the Spanish Inquisition and its localized auto-da-fé, whose goal was to eliminate heterodoxy among professed Christians—particularly among *conversos* (the suspect category of Jews and Muslims who had converted to Christianity). Like the Spanish inquisitors, the authorities in colonial New York City endeavored to purge hidden heretics—in this case, crypto-Catholics who could not be distinguished from the white Protestant settler population by any particular visible mark.

43. Kavanagh, *The Shape of Baptism*.

44. Following England’s Glorious Revolution, the term *nonjuring priest* referred to an Anglican cleric who, in 1689, refused to take an oath of allegiance to William and Mary

after James II had been deposed from the throne of England. At that time nonjuring priests asserted their belief in the divine right of monarchs to absolute rule and pledged to protest the new political order through passive disobedience only. See Ollard, *A Dictionary of English Church History*, 410–14.

45. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 2:108–15, 117–18, 226–27.

46. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 5. See also David Brion Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, 223, 248.

47. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 80.

48. The colonial port town's workplaces, especially the shops of New York City craftsmen, were sites of the acquisition of translation skills and the manufacture of cultural hybridity, as well as the acquisition of artisanal skills and the production of finished commodities.

49. Nash, "Forging Freedom," 294. Nash notes the use of West African day-names in eighteenth-century New York City's black population. For naming patterns in the southern black populations, see Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 325–26; and Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority*, 181–86.

50. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Mask*, 17–18.

51. *Ibid.*, 18.

52. For a useful discussion of the cultural logic of cause and effect, see Gasking, *Language, Logic, and Causation*.

53. Thomas J. Davis, *New York Conspiracy*, xix.

54. Gordon S. Wood, "Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style," 407.

55. For a discussion of the fear of deception, false identity, and theatricality in early modern Anglo-American culture, see Agnew, *Worlds Apart*.

56. For an influential theorization of the colonizer's ambivalent attitude toward the "colonized other," see Young, *Colonial Desire*.

57. Stemmler, "The Physiognomical Portraits of Johann Caspar Lavater"; Shookman, *The Faces of Physiognomy*.

58. For the significance of the hermeneutic tradition in Western European thought, see Palmer, *Hermeneutics*. For the intellectual tradition of British empiricism, see Thomas, *The British Empiricists*; Law, *The Rhetoric of Empiricism*. For empiricism as a condition of the formation of value, see Bracken, "Essence, Accident, and Race."

59. Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 70–71.

60. For the disavowal of subaltern agency in the discourse of conspiracy in colonial India, see Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*, 80.

61. Michel Foucault has noted in a more general context that the solution to the problem of disciplining populations is a matter of "gaining access to individuals themselves, to their bodies, their gestures and all their daily actions." See Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 151–52.

62. *Ibid.*, 152.

63. In Horsmanden's narrative, the term *beauty* operates simultaneously as both an aesthetic and a cognitive category.

64. Kolchin, *Unfree Labor*, 170.

65. For a recent debate about the disposition of Europeans toward darker-skinned people and the origin of antiblack racism, see Vaughan and Vaughan, "Before *Othello*"; Bartels, "*Othello* and Africa"; Braude, "The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods"; and Sweet, "The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought."

66. David Brion Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, 446.

67. For a description of Spinoza's dream, see Ferrer, "The Dream of Benedict de Spinoza." Although Amsterdam had a small but visible black population since the seventeenth century, it is unlikely that Spinoza ever actually encountered the Negro of his

dreams. For a general discussion of the black presence in early modern Amsterdam, see Allison Blakey, *Blacks in the Dutch World*.

68. Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse*, 184.

69. For the status of marvels and wonders in the Western intellectual tradition, see Burns, *The Great Debate on Miracles*; Daston, *Wonders and the Order of Nature*.

70. David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment*, esp. 71–116.

71. Following David Brion Davis's lead, this analysis has studied the colonialist discourse of conspiracy as "a special language or cultural form" that brings into articulation various strands of preexisting and emergent intellectual traditions and popular beliefs. See David Brion Davis, *The Fear of Conspiracy*, xv.

72. Admiral George Clinton arrived from England in 1743 and replaced George Clarke as interim Governor of New York. In the following year, Clinton removed Daniel Horsmanden from his post of Supreme Court justice. See Bonomi, *Factious People*, 149–66.

Chapter 6

1. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:507–8, 2:51–61.

2. For a survey of newspaper subscriptions in the British North American colonies, see Mott, *American Journalism*, 59.

3. For generic pictorial illustrations of runaways in colonial New York City newspaper advertisements, see *New-York Weekly Journal*, August 30 to September 5, 1756; *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, October 27 to November 2, 1763; and *New York Journal, or General Advertiser*, August 13 to August 19, 1767.

4. For a discussion of the resemblance of runaway ads to wills and probate records, see Prude, "To Look upon the 'Lower Sort,'" 137. The following analysis of colonial New York City newspaper advertisements for runaways is indebted to the example of Prude's superb study.

5. The sample runaway population for this study was compiled from 241 ads appearing in the following newspapers: *New York Gazette* (1726–41, 1744, and 1747–51); *New-York Weekly Journal* (1733–73); *New York Weekly Post-Boy* (1743–71); *New York Mercury* (1753–83); *New York Journal, or General Advertiser* (1766–75); and *Royal Gazette* (1777–82). This runaway sample population includes 249 fugitive slaves and 312 fugitive servants—a total of 561 runaways. Another 671 advertised runaways—fugitive slaves whose sex and/or age is unknown, fugitive servants whose sex and/or age and birthplace are unknown, and all runaways whose masters lived outside New York and the countryside surrounding New York City—are excluded from this study's runaway sample population. For reprints of 662 newspaper advertisements for runaways covering colonial New York and colonial New Jersey, see Hodges and Brown, "Pretends to Be Free."

6. *New-York Weekly Journal*, August 27 to September 2, 1733. For additional newspaper descriptions of physical infirmities, bodily dispositions, and other peculiar marks that individualized the fugitive body, see *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, July 10 to July 16, 1749; *New York Mercury*, July 1 to July 7, 1754, and July 17 to July 23, 1758.

7. *New York Mercury*, July 17 to July 23, 1758. Studies of runaway populations in the southern colonies generally attribute the peculiar bodily disposition known as the "down look" to enslaved blacks, but colonial New York City newspaper ads for runaways describe white servants who exhibited that same body posture. For the "down look" among the white runaway servants, see *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, August 28 to September 3, 1749; *New York Mercury*, June 26 to July 2, 1758, July 17 to July 23, 1758, July 2 to July 8, 1764; *New York Journal, or General Advertiser*, June 4 to June 10, 1768, July 9 to July 15, 1768, August 4 to August 10, 1768, March 23 to March 29, 1769, and March 25 to March 31, 1773.

8. *New-York Weekly Journal*, January 9 to January 15, 1735.

9. *New York Gazette*, May 17 to May 23, 1736; *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, April 10 to April

16, 1749; *New York Journal, or General Advertiser*, January 14 to January 20, 1768, August 4 to August 10, 1768; November 17 to November 23, 1768, August 22 to August 28, 1771; November 5 to November 11, 1772, and July 28 to August 3, 1774.

10. In the runaway servant sample for this study, only 1 percent of fugitive servants (2 out of 217) have no designated birthplace or nationality.

11. *New York Gazette*, October 29 to November 4, 1744.

12. For references to other runaway slaves who displayed tribal markings, sometimes referred to as “Guinea cuts,” see *New-York Weekly Journal*, August 24 to August 30, 1730; and *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, April 1 to April 7, 1754, July 28 to August 3, 1763, December 10 to December 16, 1770, and January 4 to January 10, 1773.

13. Customs of bodily adornment, including ear piercing, were hardly exclusive to African cultures. In maritime culture, for example, European sailors pierced their ears and sported earrings. For a fascinating overview of the history of ear piercing in the West, see Steinbach, *The Fashionable Ear*, chaps. 25–27. For an additional example of a runaway slave with a pierced ear, see *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, September 30 to November 6, 1762.

14. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 184.

15. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:94.

16. For runaway slaves suspected of carrying forged passes and indentures, see *New York Gazette*, August 12 to August 18, 1728, and June 23 to June 29, 1729; *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, May 1 to May 7, 1749; *New York Mercury*, July 31 to August 6, 1758, August 21 to August 27, 1758, and September 24 to September 30, 1764; and *New York Journal, or General Advertiser*, January 16 to January 22, 1772, May 6 to May 12, 1773, and November 3, to November 9, 1774.

17. *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, October 15 to October 11, 1753.

18. For the persistence of bilingualism among black New Yorkers during the early national period, see Shane White, *Somewhat More Independent*, 190. See also Kruger, “Born to Run,” 86–87.

19. For approximately 70 percent of the sample runaway slave population and nearly 75 percent of the sample runaway servant population, newspaper advertisements rated the fugitive’s proficiency in spoken language(s) along a scale of “very good” (fluent) to “broken” (poor) speaking proficiency.

20. *New York Gazette*, August 28 to September 3, 1727.

21. *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, March 17 to March 23, 1760.

22. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 184.

23. *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, October 13 to October 19, 1746. For additional examples of the usage of the term *broken* to describe the language skill of runaway servants in colonial New York City newspaper ads, see also *New York Journal, or General Advertiser*, March 14 to March 20, 1768, April 29 to May 4, 1773, and October 6 to October 12, 1774.

24. *New York Mercury*, July 8 to July 14, 1765. See also *New York Journal, or General Advertiser*, March 5 to March 11, 1767.

25. *New York Journal, or General Advertiser*, November 5 to November 11, 1772.

26. *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, August 15 to August 21, 1748; *New York Mercury*, April 22 to April 28, 1765, and September 16 to September 22, 1765; *New York Journal, or General Advertiser*, June 23 to June 29, 1768, and August 12 to August 18, 1773.

27. *New York Journal, or General Advertiser*, December 24 to December 30, 1772, and October 27 to November 2, 1774; *Royal Gazette*, May 15 to May 21, 1777.

28. In his study on advertisements for runaways from both the northern and southern colonies, Jonathan Prude concludes that runaway ads “did not depict body features consistently or meticulously” and that clothing was “the most powerful signifier in runaway ads.” However, Prude notes: “Northern runaways of all kinds were usually more elaborately described than their southern counterparts.” See Prude, “To Look upon the ‘Lower Sort,’” 142, 150–51.

29. Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, 69–74.
30. McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 67.
31. For ads indicating that runaways had changed their clothing, see *New York Mercury*, July 23 to July 29, 1753, and October 8 to October 14, 1764.
32. For a description of a runaway slave who had been branded with mark RN, see *New York Gazette*, August 24 to August 30, 1730. In addition to habitual runaways, other criminals were branded with marks signifying their particular crimes. For a description of a white female servant with the brand mark B for bigamy, see *New York Journal, or General Advertiser*, May 11 to May 17, 1769. For additional brands, see *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, June 26 to July 2, 1766; and *Royal Gazette*, January 3 to January 9, 1778.
33. David Brion Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, 49.
34. *New York Gazette*, December 12 to December 18, 1737.
35. For foundational primary sources in the eighteenth-century discourse of race and its racial classification schema, see Bernasconi, *Concepts of Race in the Eighteenth Century*.
36. *New-York Weekly Journal*, January 27 to February 2, 1734. For a reference to a similar “miraculous birth” in colonial New York City, see Jordan, *White over Black*, 250–51.
37. Because some visible bodily traits attributed to particular racial classifications were thought to be mutable, changing with climate and other environmental conditions, the category “race” was rendered unstable in the scientific discourse of the early modern era. See Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 308–9.
38. For a discussion of early modern theories about the original skin color of humankind and the causes of variation in skin pigmentation within the human species, see Jordan, *White over Black*, 248–52.
39. *New York Gazette*, July 3 to July 9, 1738.
40. *New-York Weekly Journal*, July 13 to July 19, 1730. For additional examples of the range of skin pigmentation among runaway servants, see also *New-York Weekly Journal*, August 26 to September 1, 1734; *New York Mercury*, November 24 to November 30, 1760, and April 19 to April 25, 1762; *New York Journal, or General Advertiser*, September 9 to September 16, 1769.
41. For newspaper ads describing light-skinned mulatto slaves who might be mistaken for free whites, see *New York Journal, or General Advertiser*, December 8 to December 14, 1774; and December 22 to December 28, 1774.
42. *New York Gazette*, October 2 to October 8, 1738. Harry remained at large in 1743. See *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, July 25 to July 31, 1743.
43. Goldberg, *Racial Subjects*, 82.
44. *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, April 29 to May 5, 1762.
45. For additional newspaper advertisements for the capture of mulatto runaway servants and slaves, see *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, August 27 to September 2, 1759, June 18 to 24, 1762, and March 18 to March 24, 1771.
46. Letter from Nicholas Bayard to Archibald Carey (attorny), New York, December 13, 1763, and Letter from Nicholas Bayard to Capt. Youngblood, New York, December 13, 1763, in Letterbook of Nicholas Bayard, 1763. Enslaved Indians also resisted enslavement by claiming to have been born free, as most Indians were. In 1711, an Indian woman named Sarah Robins[son] did just that. Like the claim of the young black girl in 1763, Sarah’s assertion to freedom entangled her would-be owner Captain Robert Walters, resident of New York City, in a protracted legal dispute. For details on this incident, see Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot*, 114–15.
47. For a rare example of an enslaved mother who ran away with an infant, presumably her own offspring, see *New York Mercury*, June 26 to July 2, 1758.
48. *New York Mercury*, June 12 to June 18, 1758.
49. Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 52.
50. Kenneth Scott, *Minutes of the Mayor’s Court of New York*, 40–50.

51. *New York Mercury*, April 22 to April 28, 1765.
52. *New York Journal and General Advertiser*, April 14 to April 20, 1768.
53. De Villier reported that the village was said to have existed for 40 years before he discovered it. See *Canisteco Centennial, 1873–1973*.
54. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:582–84.
55. *New York Mercury*, October 10 to October 16, 1765. See also *New York Journal, or General Advertiser*, September 24 to September 30, 1772.
56. *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, January 23 to January 29, 1749. For a later attempt by Spanish-speaking slaves to escape by sea, see *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, April 3 to April 9, 1749. See also McManus, *History of Negro Slavery in New York*, 88.
57. See *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, October 2 to October 8, 1749, June 18 to June 24, 1753, October 10 to October 16, 1757, March 6 to March 12, 1758, and December 18 to December 24, 1758; and *New York Mercury*, October 28 to November 3, 1778, for fugitives presumed to be headed for the sea.
58. New York City's professional police force was not founded until 1845. For a history of the professionalization of the NYPD, see Richardson, *The New York City Police*.
59. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:119, 157–59.
60. *New-York Weekly Journal*, January 28 to February 3, 1733.
61. *New York Gazette*, December 17 to December 23, 1733.
62. *New-York Weekly Journal*, January 5 to January 11, 1735. Present-day coroner's reports replace the phrase "a visitation by God" with the nomenclature "natural causes."
63. For watercolor paintings depicting New York City slave vendors and their street cries, see Prints Collection, New York Historical Society.
- The French scholar Claude Lévi-Strauss (*The Savage Mind*, esp. 16–36) first introduced the term *bricolage* to the field of anthropology. See also de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, esp. xiii–xv.
64. De Voe, *The Market Book*, 1:344. See also Watson, *Annals and Occurrences of New York City and State in the Olden Time*, 171.
65. Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*, 135.
66. Abbott, "Neighborhoods of New York City," 50.
67. Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*, 134.
68. For the concept of the "mobilized gaze" as a defining attribute of the flâneur, see Friedberg, *Widow Shopping*, esp. 2–5, 12–13. For the cosmopolitan working-class culture of the early modern era, see Linebaugh, "All the Atlantic Mountain Shook," and Linebaugh and Rediker, "The Many-Headed Hydra."
69. Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*.
70. *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, July 11 to July 17, 1743.
71. *Ibid.*, July 25 to July 31, 1743.
72. The historian Timothy Gilfoyle identifies the neighborhood surrounding George Street and located nearby the East River wharves as a late-eighteenth-century prostitution district. See Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*, 25.
73. *Dom Rex v. Fortuno*, a Negro Man Slave of John Yorworth, May 6, 1724, in Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions, August 4, 1694, to 1733; *Dom Rex v. Joseph Loggings*, a free Negro [mariner], May 16, 1738, in Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions, May 2, 1732–August 4, 1762; and *Dom Rex v. Juan*, a Negro Man Slave of Charles Beekman, December 4, 1751, in Minutes of the Supreme Court of Judicature, 1766–96.
74. MCC, 3:30–31; 4:51–52, 86–87, 254.
75. *Ibid.*, 9:89, 92.
76. Letter from Elias Neau to Mr. Hodges, July 10, 1703, in Letterbooks of the SPG.
77. MCC, 1:134, 276–77; *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:35–57. Other English overseas colonies also feared the Sunday uprising of slaves. In South Carolina, around the time of the Stono Rebellion of 1739, the colonial assembly enacted a statute requiring all white

men to carry a firearm to Sunday worship services. See Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority*, 313. No law required the white Christian settlers in colonial New York to take such precautions on the Sabbath. The demographic dominance of the settler population and the presence of a standing army at the fort perhaps gave white New Yorkers greater confidence in their ability to suppress a slave rebellion than their counterparts in South Carolina, who comprised a demographic minority.

78. *New York Gazette*, May 2 to May 8, 1726.

79. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:761–67, 519–21; 3:379–81, 756–60; and 5:583–84.

80. Bridenbaugh, *Cities in Revolt*, 157.

81. Quoted in Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 166.

82. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:147–48, 519–21.

83. *Dom Rex v. Thomas Noble*, November 1716, in Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions August 7, 1694, to 1733. For a similar case against Mary Weekham, tavernkeeper, see NYC Misc. Mss. [Box 4; #10], Manuscripts Collection, New York Historical Society. See also *Dom Rex v. Henry Slyck*, February 5, 1735, in Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions May 2, 1732, to August 4, 1762; *Dom Rex v. Catherine O'Neal* [N.D.] in Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions January 1, 1722–January 5, 1772.

84. Fernow, *Records of New Amsterdam*, 6:286.

85. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:761–67.

86. *Dom Rex v. Peter*, a Negro Man [alias Peter the Doctor], laborer, February 2, 1714, in Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions, August 7, 1694, to 1733. For a similar case against a free black, see also *Dom Rex v. Tom*, a Negro (commonly called Tom Franconeur) in Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions, January 1, 1772–January 5, 1742.

87. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 1:519–21, 3:679–88. See also MCC, 4:497. For court cases related to alleged infractions of these laws, see *Dom Rex v. Phillis & Lena*, two Infants & Slaves & Matthew Doadman, July 19, 1737, in Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions, August 7, 1694, to 1733; and *Dom Rex v. Dick*, a Negro Man Slave belonging to John Van Zandt, February 5, 1752; *Dom Rex v. John Van Zandt*, August 2, 1758; *Dom Rex v. John Van Zandt*, November 5, 1760, in Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions, May 2, 1732–August 4, 1762. The antitrafficking laws did not apply to selling fish, fruits, and other country produce. The colonial authorities suspected that gambling, a popular pastime among the slaves, encouraged slaves to steal from their masters and other townspeople. For the municipal ordinances that prohibited slaves from gambling, see MCC, 3:277–78.

88. Olson, “The Slave Code in Colonial New York,” 157.

89. Greenberg, *Crime and Law Enforcement*, 58 (Table 6), 89.

90. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 2:745–47, 5:644. For cases involving defendants indicted and convicted for petty larceny, see also *Dom Rex v. Betty*, a Negro Slave, August 4, 1719; *Dom Rex v. Franc*, a free Negro Woman, August 4, 1719; *Dom Rex v. William Norris*, Charles Arrowsmith, Thomas Lawrence, and Elinor Blackington, February 2, 1725, in Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions August 7, 1694, to 1733; and *Dom Rex v. James McKensey*, August 4, 1742, in Minutes of the Court of Quarter Sessions May 2, 1732–August 4, 1762.

91. Greenberg, *Crime and Law Enforcement*, 64–67. For violent confrontations between English newcomers and colonial Netherlanders, see DRHNY, 3:601–2, 747–48. See also Murrin, “English Rights as Ethnic Aggression,” 58–60.

92. *Dom Rex v. Abraham Van Horne, Jr. and James Van Horne*, April 7, 1737, in Minutes of the Court of Quarter Session, January 1, 1722–January 5, 1772.

93. Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 53.

94. *Dom Rex v. Shadrach*, a free Negro, August 5, 1774, in Minutes of the General Court of the Peace, November 4, 1760–February 6, 1772. For another violent altercation between a black man—in this case, a runaway slave—and a white settler, see Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot*, 118.

95. *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, April 25 to March 1, 1743.

96. For a concerned town dweller's plea that the colonial authorities purchase a fire engine for New York City, see *New York Gazette*, February 4 to February 10, 1728, and February 18 to February 24, 1728.

97. Olson, "The Slave Code in Colonial New York," 159.

98. *New York Gazette*, January 10 to January 16, 1736, and January 17 to January 23, 1736.

99. Quoted in Thomas J. Davis, *Rumor of Revolt*, 93.

100. *Colonial Laws of New York*, 4:924–25.

101. *New York Gazette*, August 13 to August 19, 1767.

102. For a general account of the rise of poverty and the deepening of social inequality in the port towns of British North America during the seventh and eighth decades of the eighteenth century, see Henretta and Nobles, *Evolution of American Society, 1600–1820*, 72; Nash, "Urban Wealth and Poverty in Pre-Revolutionary America."

103. For the relation of domination between the nation and the colonies and the "dialectical process of 'othering,'" see Spivak, "The Rani of Simur."

104. For a detailed discussion of the mounting social tensions in the port towns of British North America on the eve of the American Revolution, see Nash, *Urban Crucible*.

105. Countryman, *A People in Revolution*, 71.

106. *The Independent Reflector*, No. 1, November 30, 1752.

107. *Ibid.*, No. 32, July 5, 1753.

108. Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, 234. For a study that draws a direct relationship between the enslavement of black Africans and their descendants in British North America and the American pamphleteers' concept of political slavery, see Okoye, "Chattel Slavery as the Nightmare of the American Revolutionaries."

109. Bernard Bailyn has persuasively argued that belief in a secret ministerial plot against English liberty structured the white settlers' "logic of rebellion" against English colonial rule. See Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, esp. 94–159. For a related discussion of the Anglo-American political theory, see Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman*; and Pocock, "Machiavelli, Harrington, and English Political Ideologies in the Eighteenth Century."

Chapter 7

1. Wheatley, *The Collected Works*; Akers, "'Our Modern Egyptians'"; Aptheker, *Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*, 1:1–16; Kaplan, "The Domestic Insurrections of the Declaration of Independence"; and Thomas J. Davis, "Emancipation Rhetoric, Natural Rights, and Revolutionary New England."

2. Hodges, "Black Revolt in New York City and the Neutral Zone," 27.

3. For an overview of black insurgency during the white American War for Independence, see Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution*; Peter H. Wood, "The Dream Deferred" and "'Liberty is Sweet'"; and Frey, *Water from the Rock*.

4. Black insurgency during the age of democratic revolutions was by no means confined to British America. As C. L. R. James has shown, the enslaved blacks of San Domingo expanded and radicalized the French Revolution, first in overthrowing slavery on that sugar island and then by pressing Robespierre and the Mountain to have the abolition of slavery in the French colonies confirmed by the French National Assembly. See James, *Black Jacobins*.

5. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution*, xviii–xx. See also Mullin, *Africa in America*.

6. David Brion Davis, *Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, 13.

7. Wheatley, *The Poems of Phillis Wheatley*, 204.

8. "Black critiques of modernity," Paul Gilroy writes, "may also be, in some significant senses, its affirmation." Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 49. For excerpts from the writings of

- eighteenth-century blacks, see Potkay and Burr, *Black Atlantic Writers of the Eighteenth Century*.
9. Hodges and Brown, "Pretends to Be Free," xxxii.
 10. Frey, *Water from the Rock*, 211.
 11. For a brief account of the battles that resulted in the British military occupation of New York City and a discussion of the British military strategy during the Anglo-American conflict, see Bliven, *Battle of New York*.
 12. By the terms of the Treaty of Paris, England ceded East Florida to the Americans. That British-occupied territory was not evacuated until August 29, 1785. For the several British evacuations in British North America, see Frey, *Water from the Rock*, 172–93.
 13. On the eve of the war, 25,000 civilians lived in New York City, and nearly 33,000 civilians resided in that British stronghold at the conclusion of the war in 1783. Abbott, "Neighborhoods of New York City, 1760–1775"; Barck, *New York City during the War for Independence*, 76, 78.
 14. Hodges, "Black Revolt in New York City and the Neutral Zone."
 15. Quoted in Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 19.
 16. *Ibid.*, 28–31.
 17. Letter from Nathaniel Green to George Washington, July 21, 1776.
 18. Quarles, "Lord Dunmore as Liberator," 503.
 19. List of Barrack Houses in the Garrison of New York.
 20. Wallace, *Appeal to Arms*, 8–11; Don Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence*, 133.
 21. Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 28.
 22. Quoted in *ibid.*, 12. See also "Muster Rolls of the New York Provincial Troops, 1755–1764," 60, 182, 284, 364, 385, 398, 402, 406, 418, 420, 426, 427, 440, 442, 498. For a discussion of the use of black troops in the colonial militias, see Quarles, "The Colonial Militia and Negro Manpower." See also Don Higginbotham, *War of American Independence*, 394–97, 401, 416n.
 23. Quoted in Don Higginbotham, *War of Independence*, 395.
 24. Mühlenberg, *Journals of Henry Melchoir Mühlenberg*, 3:105.
 25. Hodges, "Black Revolt in New York City and the Neutral Zone," 24, 34–38.
 26. For Colonel Tye's raids into eastern New Jersey, see Hodges, "African-Americans in Monmouth County during the Age of the American Revolution." Some blacks from Bergen County, New Jersey, crossed the Hudson River from Bull's Ferry to Manhattan. See Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 152–53.
 27. For black unrest on the New York frontier during the Anglo-American conflict, see Simms, *The Frontiersmen of New York*, 2:176.
 28. Sullivan, *Minutes of the Albany Committee of Correspondence, 1775–1778*, 1:24, 649–50; and *Minutes of the Albany Committee on the Detection and Defeating of Conspiracies*, 1:70, 142–43, 146, 178, 202, 279, 304; 2:704.
 29. Quoted in Lindsay, "Diplomatic Relations between the United States and Great Britain Bearing on the Return of Negro Slaves, 1783–1828," 393.
 30. Quoted in Hodges, "Black Revolt in New York City and the Neutral Zone," 21.
 31. Mühlenberg, *Journals of Henry Melchoir Mühlenberg*, 3:53, 105.
 32. Frey, *Water from the Rock*, 114.
 33. Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 68–110.
 34. Wallace, *Appeal to Arms*, 53–54.
 35. Maslowski, "National Policy towards the Use of Black Troops in the Revolution"; Philip Foner, *Blacks in the American Revolution*, 42–46.
 36. Hodges, "Black Revolt in New York City and the Neutral Zone," 24.
 37. In the winter of 1777, another blaze incinerated much of New York City. See Barck, *New York City during the War for Independence*, 74.

38. Rolls of the Quarter Master General's Department for the Wagonmaster or the Forage and Provision Departments of the Army. See also Barck, *New York City during the War for Independence*, 85, 107, 110–11.

39. Hodges, "Black Revolt in New York City and the Neutral Zone," 32. See also Voucher in the Account of Negro Laborers' Employed in the Quarter Master & Commissary General's Department.

40. A total of 3,000 blacks—1,336 men, 914 women, and 750 children—are listed in the Book of Negroes Registered & Certified (hereafter cited as Book of Negroes), a port record documenting the exodus of black refugees of war who during the final days of the British evacuation of New York City, between April 23 and July 31, 1783, left the harbor of New York on British sailing vessels. Of the black émigrés whose condition of servitude is known, 1,135 blacks were declared free under the several British wartime proclamations, 366 blacks were the slaves of white loyalists and veterans of war, 29 blacks were indentured servants, another 620 blacks were either born free, manumitted by their masters, freed as reward for military service on the American side, or had obtained freedom upon their masters' death. Of the 30,000 loyalists resettled in Canada following the Anglo-American conflict, 10 percent were black refugees of war. See Winks, *The Black Loyalists in Canada*, 29–30; Frey, *Water from the Rock*, 193.

41. These black refugees of war founded the free black settler communities of Birchtown, Brindley Town, and Little Tracadie. In Preston near Halifax, Port Roseway (later Shelburne) along the rugged coastline, and other towns, black settlers coexisted alongside Nova Scotia's white settler population. Blacks faced overt antiblack prejudice in maritime Canada and were denied the full rights of British subjects. Only a fraction of the black war refugees received the 20-acre bounty of land that the British government promised them, and those who did obtained barren land. Due to these obstacles, some free black settlers were demoted to indentured servitude and even reenslaved, while others barely maintained their independence. For the story of the black settlers' travail, see Winks, *The Black Loyalists in Canada*, esp. 24–26; Ellen Gibson Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, esp. 135–256; and T. Watson Smith, "The Slave in Canada." Approximately 26 percent of the black refugees of war who departed from the port of New York during the British evacuation did not journey to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick but instead sailed for other destinations, including Cat Island and Abaco in the Bahamas, Quebec, the Downs in the English Channel between North Foreland and South Foreland, Spithead off the coast of England between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, and Germany. See Book of Negroes.

In 1792, a total of 1,196 free black settlers from maritime Canada migrated to the so-called Grain Coast of Africa, where, under the auspices of English opponents of the African slave trade, they founded Freetown, Sierra Leone. For a history of the free black settler migration to Sierra Leone, see Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*; Peterson, *Province of Freedom*; St. Walker, *The Black Loyalists*; Clifford, *From Slavery to Freetown*; and Pullis, *Moving On*.

42. No previous place of residence is documented for nearly 20 percent of the black refugees. Book of Negroes.

43. Ibid.

44. For a brief account of this military battle, see Rankin, "The Moore's Creek Bridge Campaign, 1776." See also Crow, *The Black Experience in Revolutionary North Carolina*, 27–28, 55–56.

45. Book of Negroes.

46. For another brief account of the Van Sayl family's wartime experience, see Hodges, *The Black Loyalist Directory*, xx.

47. The following discussion is based on King, "Memoirs of the Life of Boston King, a Black Preacher."

48. Frey, *Water from the Rock*, 63, 177–82.
49. Like Boston King, other black leaders of the ex-slave communities in maritime Canada—for example, David George and Thomas Peters—emerged out of the evangelical and the Enlightenment milieu. See George, “An Account of the Life of David George”; Grant Gordon, *From Slavery to Freedom, The Life of David George*; and Fyfe, “Thomas Peters.”
50. Several slave narratives appeared prior to the publication of Boston King’s memoirs—for example, Hammon, *A Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings, and Surprising Deliverance of Briton Hammon. A Negro Man*; Gronniosaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw*; Marrant, *A Narrative of the Lord’s Wonderful Dealings with Johan Marrant, a Black*; Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery*; Equiano, *The Interesting Narratives of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*; and Mountain, *Sketches of the Life of Joseph Mountain, a Negro*.
51. Barbara Johnson, *The Feminist Difference*, 91.
52. *Ibid.*, 97, 99.
53. Though a far larger number of free blacks probably left the new republics at the war’s end, no fewer than 409 black war refugees, either born free or manumitted before the onset of war, departed the port of New York on sailing vessels headed for maritime Canada and other destinations during the British evacuation of New York City. See Book of Negroes.
54. King, “Memoirs.”
55. Quoted in Lindsay, “Diplomatic Relations,” 395.
56. British nonobservance of Article Seven of the Treaty of Paris remained a topic of diplomatic correspondence between the United States and Great Britain until 1827, when the U.S. government agreed to accept more than \$1.2 million from the British government in compensation for the loss of slave property incurred by American slaveowners during the War for Independence. See Lindsay, “Diplomatic Relations,” 418–19.
57. Baurmeister, *The Revolution in America*, 569.
58. Carlton Papers.
59. Birch Certificate.
60. Letter from Sir Guy Carleton to Lord North, August 8, 1783 and Memo. See also Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 169–70.
61. The following discussion is based on the board of inquiry cases appended to the Book of Negroes. The board of inquiry heard a total of 14 cases before the American commissioners resigned in protest.
62. For the activity of Negro catchers in New York City during the British evacuation, see Hodges, *Black Loyalist Directory*, xvii.
63. At least, this is what the transcripts of the cases before the board of inquiry suggest. However, the list of black refugees aboard the British brig *Concord* indicates that on November 30, 1783, A. [Toney] Bartram sailed to Port Mattoon, Nova Scotia, without his daughters. See Book of Negroes.
64. Because slaveowners could not be certain of the legality of slavery in England, especially in the face of the Somerset Case of 1772, white loyalists who resolved to resettle in England sometimes abandoned or otherwise disposed of their slaves before leaving the British overseas colonies for England.
65. On September 22, 1783, Dinah Archer, age 42, sailed for Port Roseway, Nova Scotia, on the *Clinton*. See Book of Negroes.
66. The historian Joan Scott has pointed out that it is the “historical processes that, through discourse, position subjects and produce their experiences. It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience.” See Scott, ““Experience,”” 25–26.

Epilogue

1. Zilversmit, *The First Emancipation*.
2. This section of the U.S. Constitution, along with Article I, Sections 8, 9, and 10, Article IV, Sections 2 and 4, and Article V, have been interpreted as implicit endorsements of slavery. See Wiecek, *The Sources of Antislavery Constitutionalism*, 62–63.
3. Farrand, *The Records of the Federal Constitution of 1787*, 222.
4. Hamilton, Jay, and Madison, *The Federalist Papers*, 336–37. Separately authored but published under the single pseudonym “Publius,” the 85 letters known as the Federalist Papers first appeared in New York City newspapers between October 1787 and March 1788. They advocated the speedy ratification of the federal constitution drafted at the Philadelphia Convention during the summer of 1787.
5. *Federalist Papers*, 341.
6. Evacuation Day—Washington’s Entrance into New York, November 25, 1783. Prints Collection, New-York Historical Society. For recent studies on popular political culture during the early national era, see Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Streets*; Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth*; Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*; Ryan, “Ceremonial Spaces” and “The American Parade”; and Conzen, “Ethnicity as Festive Culture.”
7. The 1783 Evacuation Day parade took place along lower Broadway. Today, Broadway extends northward from Bowling Green at the tip of Manhattan Island to 262nd Street in the Bronx. Here, I use the term “Great White Way,” which ordinarily refers to the strip of theaters along the midtown section of present-day Broadway just above Time Square, as a figure for the continuation of white domination in postrevolutionary New York City. For a history of the most famous street in New York City, possibly the world, see David W. Dunlap, *On Broadway*; Jenkins, *The Greatest Street in the World*.
8. For an interesting study on the appropriation of Native American symbols and customs in the construction of white American national identity, see Deloria, *Playing Indian*. See also Berkhofer, *The White Man’s Indian*.
9. For two recent reassessments of Alexis de Tocqueville’s commentary on the U.S. racial dilemma, see Glazer, “Race and Ethnicity in America,” and Lieske, “Race and Democracy.”
10. The following discussion is based on Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1:317–63.
11. Biography of a Slave by Dunkin M. Sill, March 18, 1924.
12. Quoted in Shearer, “The Massachusetts 54th Colored Infantry.”
13. First published in 1852 as *Oration, Delivered in Corinthian Hall, Rochester, July 5th, 1852*. See also Douglass, “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” in Andrews, *The Oxford Frederick Douglass Reader*.
14. In this passage from his oration, Douglass uses the rhetorical device *ethopoeia*, or putting oneself in the place of another, so as to understand and express that person’s feelings more vividly.
15. When posing the question, “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” Douglass attempts to stimulate the moral faculty of the white citizenry and the related capacity for empathetic identification with the slave. But more than this, Douglass’s question seeks to motivate his audience to take an active role in the abolitionist struggle.
16. At this point in his oration, Douglass uses the rhetorical device *argumentum ex concessis*, or reasoning from the premises of one’s opponents.
17. Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, 57.
18. For New York’s Gradual Emancipation Act of 1799, see New York State, *Laws of New York State*, 22nd Session, chapter 62. That law freed all children born to slave women after July 4, 1799, but indentured them to their mothers’ masters until they reached the age of 28, if male, and 25, if female. According to a law enacted in 1817, all slaves born

- before July 4, 1799, were freed as of July 4, 1827. See New York State, *Laws of New York State*, 40th Session, chapter 137.
19. Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 316–17, 324–25. See also Horton and Horton, *In Hope of Liberty*; Gravelly, “The Dialectic of Double Consciousness in Black Freedom Celebrations, 1808–1863”; Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North*; Wiggins, *O’ Freedom!*; and Litwack, *North of Slavery*.
20. The articulatory practices of black radicalism encouraged both local and global identifications of black solidarity. For two important assessments of black radicalism, see Robinson, *Black Marxism*; and Stauffer, *The Black Hearts of Men*.
21. Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name*, 66–67. “Fifth Avenue, Uptown: A Letter from Harlem” was first published in the July 1960 issue of *Esquire*.
22. Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*, 103–4. “Down on the Cross” was originally published in the November 17, 1962, issue of *The New Yorker* under the title “Letter from a Region in My Mind.”
23. For the symbiosis of liberal democracy and racism in the United States, see Hochschild, *The New American Dilemma*; Goldberg, *Racist Culture*.
24. Bell, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well*, x. Bell echoes W. E. B. Du Bois, who in 1933 observed that instead of staging a “revolt against capitalism,” the white worker in the United States engaged in a “wild and ruthless scramble of labor groups over each other in order to climb to wealth on the backs of black labor and foreign immigrants.” See Du Bois, “Marxism and the Negro Problem.”
25. Bell, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well*, 14.
26. Gilroy, *Against Race*, 12.
27. David Brion Davis, “Constructing Race,” 7.
28. Jordan, *White over Black*, 44–98.
29. Zygmunt Bauman writes, “To classify, in other words, is to give the world a structure: to manipulate its possibilities; to make some events more likely than others.” See Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, 1. In this study I have argued that racial classification structured the world of colonial New York City, making racial domination in that settler colony possible and foreclosing other possibilities of alternative social and political developments.
30. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 170. See also Werbner and Modood, *Debating Cultural Hybridity*; Cordero-Guzmán, *Migration, Transnationalization and Race in a Changing New York*; Anthias and Hoyd, *Rethinking Anti-Racisms*; Bhattacharyya, Gabriel, and Small, *Race and Power*; and San Juan, *Racism and Cultural Studies*.
31. For example, binary race-thinking structures contemporary discourses on interracialism and multiracialism in that both discourses posit intermediate positions in relation to the polarities of black and white. For an astute analysis of the alternative racial classification schemes proposed in recent debates about revising the 2000 U.S. Census questionnaires, see Perlmann, “Reflecting the Changing Face of America.”
32. Lewis R. Gordon, *Her Majesty’s Other Children*, 5.
33. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 31.
34. Of course, humans are capable of performing cognitive operations many times faster than all but a few of the most sophisticated computers—for example, IBM’s Deep Thought and Deep Blue. Invented by the British mathematician Alan Turing in 1948, the Turing machine is the prototype of the electronic digital computer, which operates according to algorithmic computation logic (or base two number system). The binary logic of race-thinking resembles the algorithmic logic of the digital computer in that it copes with difference, exception, and indeterminacy by reducing such remainders to the nearest whole or identity. For the limitations of the algorithmic logic machine, see Penrose, *The Emperor’s New Mind*.

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