

The Memory of Slavery in Liverpool in Public Discourse from the Nineteenth Century to the Present Day

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Abstract

This thesis maps the public, collective memory of slavery in Liverpool from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present day. Using a discourse-analytic approach, the study draws on a wide range of 'source genres' to interrogate processes of collective memory across written histories, guidebooks, commemorative occasions and anniversaries, newspapers, internet forums, black history organisations and events, tours, museums, galleries and the built environment. By drawing on a range of material across a *longue durée*, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how this former 'slaving capital of the world' has remembered its exceptional involvement in transatlantic slavery across a two hundred year period.

This thesis demonstrates how Liverpool's memory of slavery has evolved through a chronological mapping (Chapter Two) which places memory in local, national and global context(s). The mapping of memory across source areas is reflected within the structure of the thesis, beginning with 'Mapping the Discursive Terrain' (Part One), which demonstrates the influence and *intertextuality* of identity narratives, anecdotes, metaphors and debates over time and genre; 'Moments of Memory' (Part Two), where public commemorative occasions, anniversaries and moments of 'remembrance' accentuate issues of 'performing' identity and the negotiation of a dissonant past; and 'Sites of Memory' (Part Three), where debate and discourse around particular places in Liverpool's contested urban terrain have forged multiple *lieux de memoire* (sites of memory) through 'myths' of slave bodies and contestations over race and representation.

Through its approach, structure and methods of analysis, this thesis argues that Liverpool's memory of slavery has been complicated by varying uses of the past alongside contemporary circumstance and context. However, and as the *long durée* approach has demonstrated, ongoing engagements with this history continue to impact and influence subsequent commemorations, creating mnemonic legacies across time. Additionally, the memory of slavery in Liverpool has been further complicated by the ongoing memory of context; the place of other significant moments in the city's social, economic, political, and, especially racial history. The discourse-analytic approach, moreover, demonstrates memory's active and *interactive* dynamics, which incorporate broader societal discourses, and reveal the *social* processes of collective memory.

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Author's Declaration

I declare this thesis to be wholly my own work. It was not the product of collaboration and has not been previously published elsewhere. All sources are acknowledged as references. This work has not previously been presented for any other award at any other institute.

Introduction

Liverpool has no public memorial to transatlantic slavery. For a port city once deemed the ‘slaving capital of the world’, having come to dominate the eighteenth century European trade in enslaved African people, this may seem surprising.¹ Given the creation of a number of other public memorials in former slave ports in Britain in recent years (*Pero’s Bridge* in Bristol, 1999; *Captured Africans* memorial in Lancaster, 2005; *Gilt of Cain* monument in London, 2008), as well as Liverpool being home to the oldest settled and continuous black community in the country, this anomaly becomes all the more striking. However, whilst there may be no tangible official public memorial to commemorate its role in transatlantic slavery, or the effects of this on African and African descended people, there have been numerous other *lieux de memoire*, official or otherwise, in the public domain over the last two hundred years.²

Stating that Liverpool has no memorial to slavery does of course require a particular definition of what a memorial might be. Liverpool does have, on the one hand, a museum dedicated to transatlantic slavery (the International Slavery Museum), slavery walking tours of the city, and an annual commemorative ceremony, Slavery Remembrance Day (23rd August). On the other hand, however, there is no physical, tangible, and crucially permanent monument which acts to bring the memory of the city’s immense involvement in transatlantic slavery into the public sphere. But perhaps this is no bad thing. As James Young suggests in relation to Holocaust memory, memorials can have restrictive consequences:

For it may be the finished monument that completes memory itself, puts a cap on memory-work, and draws a bottom line underneath an era that must always haunt

¹ Seymour Drescher, "The Slaving Capital of the World: Liverpool and National Opinion in the Age of Abolition," *Slavery & Abolition* 9, no. 2 (1988).

² *Lieux de memoire*, or ‘sites of memory’ was a phrase used by French historian Pierre Nora to describe places ‘where memory crystallizes and secretes itself’, P. Nora, "Between Memory and History, Les Lieux-De-Memoire," *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 7.

Germany. Better a thousand years of Holocaust memorial competitions in Germany than any single “final solution” to Germany’s memorial problem.³

Not only does this raise interesting questions over what memorials should be and do, but relates directly to broader questions over the nature of collective memory itself, and the mechanisms of interaction between past ‘history’ and present ‘memory’.

Memory

This thesis is concerned with the public, *collective* memory of slavery in Liverpool.⁴ Memory is, as Andreas Huyssen suggests, a difficult term to pin down, where ‘as soon as we try to define it, it starts slipping and sliding, eluding attempts to grasp it’.⁵ In some ways this may also be no bad thing. As with James Young’s warnings over the construction of tangible memorials, constructing too rigid a definition of memory might similarly restrict its usefulness. Moreover, its ‘partial, allusive, fragmentary, transient nature’, has been argued to be directly suitable, even therapeutic, for the ‘chaotic times’ of the late twentieth century, when the term gained considerable scholarly attention and debates over the relationship between history and memory flourished.⁶ Its ‘imprecise’ nature may also be beneficial for research, where the

³ James E. Young, *At Memory's Edge: After Images of the Holocaust in Art and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 92.

⁴ The term ‘memory’ will generally be adopted (where appropriate) in a collective sense throughout this thesis. As Jacob Climo and Maria Cattell suggest, there is a seemingly ongoing list of possible terms which can be associated with collective memory including ‘cultural memory, historical memory, local memory, official memory, popular memory, public memory, shared memory, social memory, custom, heritage, myth, roots, tradition’. Jacob J. Climo and Maria G. Cattell, "Introduction: Meaning in Social Memory and History - Anthropological Perspectives," in *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Jacob J. Climo and Maria G. Cattell (Oxford: Altamira Press, 2002), 4. The nuances of potential difference between such terms have been seen to merge within the data for this study and are not deemed to be of central significance in relation to outlining understandings at this stage. Further, the addition of multiple terms is likely to confuse processes of analysis rather than enable or refine it.

⁵ Andreas Huyssen, "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia," *Public Culture* 12, no. 1 (2000): 3.

⁶ Kerwin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," *Representations* 69(2000): 138. The debate over the relationship between history and memory, initiated in large part by the work of Pierre Nora and his colleagues in the 1980s, took both a critical focus on a perceived ‘memory boom’ in public and academic spheres in the later twentieth century and what this might mean for the study of history as a discipline. Much of the debate was concerned with the differences and similarities between history and memory. In addition to Klein, see Nora, "Between Memory and History, Les Lieux-De-Memoire."; John R. Gillis, "Introduction - Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *The*

fluidity of the term means memory can be 'appropriated by unexpected hands, to connect apparently unrelated topics, to explain anew old problems.'⁷

Given its ambiguity, it is in some ways easier to begin by outlining what I am not including in my definition of the term. This thesis is not primarily concerned with the psychological or psychoanalytical study of memory, or indeed the memory of individuals in isolation (though the actions and agency of individuals is considered where relevant to the shaping of collective memory). This project is not an ethnography of black (or white) Liverpudlians, private and individual trans-generational or familial memory and its dissemination, though this is addressed where it emerges publicly. The focus of this study is on collective memory in *public discourse*, in 'texts', commemorative action and other instances of memory work in the public domain, from both authoritative projections and contesting voices, and indeed the spaces in between.

I met memory through heritage. Having studied Cultural Heritage Management, I was familiar with recent theorizations of 'heritage' as a present-day process, as a verb, which is used within contemporary identity construction and meaning-making, standing in contrast to definitions of 'heritage' as a static, tangible thing, passed down through generations.⁸ Heritage, therefore, is situated very much in the present – it is what we *do* with the past; in museums, historic sites, festivals, re-enactments, traditions, art, literature and much more. Such understandings of 'heritage' are similar to some of those surrounding memory, particularly in relation to interpretations concerning its relationship with identity. Here, it is generally proposed that 'memory is the key to personal and collective identity'.⁹ Cattell and Climo suggest that without memory, 'there can be no self, no identity', a process they liken to individual memory where 'the world would cease to exist in any meaningful way, as it does for persons with amnesias'.¹⁰ Similarly, Anthony Smith states that memory is essential to any kind of human identity and that in the case of collective identities people 'carry shared memories of

American History Review 102, no. 5 (1997); Alan Megill, "History, Memory, Identity," *History of the Human Sciences* 11, no. 3 (1998); Huyssen, "Present Pasts."

⁷ Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History," 1403.

⁸ See Stuart. Hall, "Whose Heritage? Un-settling 'The Heritage' Re-imagining the Post-nation," *Third Text* 49, no. 13 (1999); David C. Harvey, "Heritage Pasts and Heritage Presents: Temporality, Meaning and the Scope of Heritage Studies," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 7, no. 4 (2001); P Howard, "Resonance and Dissonance: When the Local and the Global Meet," in *Heritage and Identity: Shaping the Nations of the North*, ed. J. Fladmark (Shaftesbury: Donhead Publishing, 2002); Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006).

⁹ Michael Roth, *The Ironist's Cage: Memory, Trauma, and the Construction of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 8-9.

¹⁰ Climo and Cattell, "Introduction," 1.

what they consider to be “their” past’.¹¹ These more recent discussions of memory and identity follow on from the foundational work of French Durkheimian sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, noted for pioneering the idea that memory, far from being a process of isolated recollection undertaken by the individual mind, was first and foremost a collective process which was influenced by the dynamics of group membership, and inherently bound up in the changing nature of society itself.¹²

At points this relationship has been considered with some scepticism, in part as a result of the prolific use of both terms simultaneously in academic discourse, peppering the introductions of monographs and articles, without being developed much further.¹³ Such terms can easily become, as John Gillis suggests, ‘free-floating phenomena’, devoid of historic or conceptual context.¹⁴ Gillis nonetheless emphasises the significance of this relationship through the co-dependence of memory and identity:

The parallel lives of these two terms alert us to the fact that the notion of identity depends on the idea of memory, and vice versa. The core meaning of any individual or group identity, namely, a sense of sameness over time and space, is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity.¹⁵

However, neither term refers to fixed phenomena or indeed easily definable categories. Too often, Alan Megill suggests, identity is viewed as largely unproblematic and pre-fabricated, where memory is taken up in ‘service of such identities’ carrying pre-existing identities forward.¹⁶ This is a criticism he extends to Halbwachs, who viewed social identities as existing prior to the collective memories they construct – in short that ‘identity *precedes* memory’.¹⁷ Alternatively the relationship between memory and identity is more appropriately understood

¹¹ Anthony Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 208.

¹² Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) work on collective memory was published originally as *Les Cadres Sociaux de la Memoire* (1925) and later, posthumously as *La Memoire Collective* in 1950. The references here are taken from the later translation. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 160.

¹³ Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," 135.

¹⁴ Gillis, "Introduction," 3.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Megill, "History, Memory, Identity," 43.

¹⁷ Ibid.: 44. Similarly, Richard Handler suggests that ‘identity’ has not been subjected to as much critical suspicion as terms such as ‘ethnicity’ or ‘tradition. Richard Handler, "Is "Identity" a Useful Cross-Cultural Concept?," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 27.

as constantly undergoing revision, ever in-flux, as perhaps more of a 'circular' relationship as Peter Novick suggests, where identity and memory play roles in each other's construction, expression and maintenance (or contestation).¹⁸ As John Gillis suggests, we are 'constantly revising our memories to suit our current identities' and identity, as Stuart Hall puts it, is an 'ever un-finished conversation.'¹⁹ Richard Handler also suggests that identity, or 'who we are' is communicative, it is a process which 'includes many voices and varying degrees of understanding and, importantly, misunderstanding,' a process which is therefore as much about conflict and contestation and miscommunication as construction and dialogue.²⁰

Like recent theorizations of 'heritage', memory can also be articulated as a socially-situated and historically contextual process. Hence Geoffrey Cubitt defines 'social memory' as:

...the process (or processes) through which a knowledge or awareness of past events or conditions is developed and sustained within human societies, and through which, therefore, individuals within those societies are given the sense of a past that extends beyond what they themselves personally remember'.²¹

These processes, which are enacted in the present, may well include choices about representation, but, as Peter Novick suggests, these are limited and questions should be raised concerning 'whose choice' this is exactly.²² Further, such choices have a social impact, if memory and identity are understood to sustain each other, 'they also sustain certain subjective positions, social boundaries, and, of course, power.'²³

The 'social' focus of Cubitt's definition above is also useful for thinking about memory as a 'culturally mediated activity' which 'depends on the availability of cultural devices.'²⁴ Culture, as Stuart Hall outlines, is about 'shared meanings', about ways of making sense of things and the production and re-production of meaning through available signs and

¹⁸ Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (New York: First Mariner Books, 2000), 7.

¹⁹ Gillis, "Introduction."; Stuart Hall, quoted in John Akomfrah, "The Unfinished Conversation," (United Kingdom: Autograph ABP, 2012), film.

²⁰ Handler, "Is "Identity" a Useful Cross-Cultural Concept?," 30.

²¹ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 14.

²² Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*, 5.

²³ Gillis, "Introduction," 4.

²⁴ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 141.

symbols.²⁵ Situating memory in a cultural context therefore highlights the potentials and limitations of representation within the realms of what is communicable at a given moment. What is communicable, however, is itself restrictive – just as we should question ‘whose choice’ is involved in memory work, as Novick suggests, so too should we consider the varying access to cultural resources.²⁶

Likening memory to these understandings of ‘culture’, as a social and cultural process, is a theoretical perspective which is similar to that of cultural heritage. However, whilst the study of heritage necessarily *prioritises* the contemporary context in which this process takes place; examining the political, social and cultural factors deemed influential in its construction, memory’s radius can potentially extend much further. Whilst it may be possible, and indeed entirely reasonable, to apply a ‘heritage’ style of analysis to memory work in a particular moment in time, (considering the socio-political context that the creation of a museum exhibition in the early twentieth century sits within, for example), to limit memory to such ‘horizontally’ context-restricted case studies may well be missing the more dynamic and temporally persistent elements which can illuminate memory’s nonetheless vague and mysterious workings.

In part this relates to how we understand the past-to-present relationship. Recent scholarship generally foregrounds the present-day perspective of collective memory, where ‘an image of the past [is] constructed by a subjectivity in the present’.²⁷ This understanding, Alon Confino argues, should not be one that surprises most historians, familiar as they are to the subjectivities of the multiple ‘presents’ with which they engage.²⁸ However, as Arjun Appadurai argues, this does not mean that the past is infinitely malleable - there are constraints on its ‘debatability’, or as Irwin-Zarecka succinctly puts it, the process of memory is ‘not a discursive free-for-all’.²⁹ Whilst this necessarily relates to the cultural parameters within

²⁵ Stuart Hall, "Introduction," in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: Sage in association with the Open University, 1997), 1.

²⁶ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 150.

²⁷ McGill, "History, Memory, Identity," 56. This point is also made by Andreas Huyssen, who also acknowledges changing perceptions of memory over time: ‘If Romantics thought that memory bound us in some deep sense to times past [...] then today we rather think of memory as a mode of re-representation and as belonging ever more to the present. After all, the act of remembering is always in and of the present, while its referent is of the past and this absent.’ Huyssen, "Present Pasts," 3-4.

²⁸ Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History," 1387.

²⁹ Arjun Appadurai, "The Past as a Scarce Resource," *Man* 16, no. 2 (1981); Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 17.

which memory takes place, it can also extend to 'the past(s)' which are being remembered, raising pertinent questions over how far 'the past confines the uses to which people may intentionally put it'.³⁰ Collective memory encompasses yet also exceeds the intentional 'uses' of the past in the present. It touches questions concerning 'what residues the past leaves with us' which ultimately 'construct and confine how we understand the world and how past and present govern our perceptions and actions.'³¹

Laurajane Smith has argued that 'heritage' is best understood as a discourse.³² Whilst, as will be discussed below, I advocate a discourse analytic approach within the study of memory, and speak of an evolving 'memory-discourse' of slavery, I do not consider 'memory' generally as a 'discourse' in this way. Whilst 'heritage' as a discourse restricts the ways in which particular phenomena are considered 'heritage' and others are not, memory, as a broad term for many diverging engagements with the past, moves beyond, around and through such rigid structural parameters in frequently surprising ways. What I consider here is a segment of an engagement with a particular past, considering the evolving memory-discourse of 'Liverpool and slavery' rather than memory itself as a discourse for enabling certain ways of engaging with and representing the past and not others. Further, in focusing too narrowly on largely political features as more structural considerations of discourse might, much of the fuller texture of memory is missed, particularly in relation to more social and cultural concerns, and significantly, in the realms of reception. Reception, an area considered largely absent in memory studies,³³ can be partly addressed through discourse analysis and in particular the analysis of *debates* over memory.

Memory and Discourse

*'Speech is an instrument of comprehension... Hence verbal conventions constitute what is at the same time the most elementary and the most stable framework of collective memory.'*³⁴
- Maurice Halbwachs

³⁰ Michael Schudson, "Lives, Laws, and Language: Commemorative Versus Non-Commemorative Forms of Effective Public Memory," *The Communication Review* 2, no. 1 (1997): 5.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Smith identifies an 'Authorised Heritage Discourse' in the West which constructs a particular understanding (or knowledge about) what 'heritage' is as being restricted to the tangible and old, and concerned predominantly with elite histories. Smith, *Uses of Heritage*.

³³ Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History," 1395.

³⁴ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 45.

To map an evolving public memory of slavery across time, this study takes as its methodological guide, a discourse-analytic approach. As the above quotation illustrates, language and discursive structures have long been considered central to the construction of collective memory. However, few scholars have adopted discourse analysis as a tool for studying memory, particularly as a methodological framework for addressing change over time. Hence, as Halbwachs states, '[n]o memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections', and such frameworks are made comprehensible through language, or 'verbal conventions'.³⁵ If such conventions are central to the construction of collective memory, it follows that one of the ways in which collective memory can be studied is through the analysis of such structures.

Here, 'language' is understood from a sociological perspective as the medium through which meaning is produced and shared, as a signifying process where signs and symbols (particular words, noises, colours etc.) are used to stand for (represent) some particular element, i.e. a concept, instruction or emotion.³⁶ These processes in turn form 'discourses' of certain subjects. As Stuart Hall explains:

Discourses are ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic or practice: a cluster (or *formation*) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with, a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society.³⁷

The study of memory through a study of the 'discourse' of a particular topic, here Liverpool and slavery, is concerned with the ways in which 'knowledge' (of Liverpool and slavery) has been constructed (through 'language' as outlined above) which enable particular social engagements and negotiations (and restrict others) with the subject.

Jan Assmann's *Moses the Egyptian*, a *mnemohistory* of Egypt in European memory, was, he suggests, a 'history of discourse' in its methodological approach. Assmann was, however, concerned with discourse as a way of mapping 'a concatenation of texts which are based on each other and treat or negotiate a common subject matter' across time, and his approach was to place such texts along 'a vertical line of memory'.³⁸ This meant, Assmann admits, adopting a particular definition of 'discourse', which mapped a linear journey but

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Hall, "Introduction," 4.

³⁷ Ibid., 6.

³⁸ Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 15.

focused less on the 'horizontal' setting. The 'horizontal' setting was the focus the term had come to encompass following the theoretical shifts emanating from the work of Michel Foucault from the 1960s.³⁹ 'Discourse' understood in Foucault's terms, is a system of representation which produces and re-produces 'knowledge', not just meaning.⁴⁰

Foucault frequently began with a contemporary 'problem', seeking 'to use an understanding of the past to understand something that is intolerable in the present', which is, as Gary Gutting suggests, also largely what many historians are concerned with.⁴¹ Historic 'discourses' in Foucault's terms, enable or constrain ways of writing, speaking or even thinking about a particular topic at a particular point in time.⁴² Whilst historic specificity was central to Foucault's work on discourse, his inquiry also allowed for (indeed focused on) the possibility of change – that one discursive field could undergo structural re-organisation, thus changing the knowledge of that subject.⁴³ This historicization of discourse meant knowledge could differ radically at different times, pointing Foucault's interest towards wild divergences rather than transhistorical continuities which often attract historians' interest.⁴⁴ In this way, Foucault was concerned with the 'horizontal' where Assmann's study was concerned with the 'vertical'. This study, concerned as it is with an evolving memory-discourse of slavery in Liverpool over two hundred years meets these two methodologies at their central temporal axis. It is concerned with both directions, placing points of a broader (longer) discourse analysis within specific historic contexts.

Memory, like 'language', is a form of *representation* which is discursively constructed.⁴⁵ A discourse-analytic approach to the study of memory tracks not only changes

³⁹ Foucauldian 'discourse' diverged from the largely linguistic definitions preceding his work, which predominantly concerned themselves with grammar and the 'mechanics' of language systems. Instead Foucault embraced a broader definition of what could be included as part of discourse, including images, institutions, laws, physical actions as well as text (words written or spoken) – all of which constructed a 'body of knowledge' about a particular subject. A. W. McHoul and Wendy Grace, *A Foucault Primer: Discourse, Power and the Subject* (London: UCL Press, 1993), 26.

⁴⁰ Stuart Hall, "The Work of Representation," in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: Sage in association with the Open University, 1997), 43.

⁴¹ Gary Gutting, "Introduction - Michel Foucault: A User's Manual," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 10.

⁴² McHoul and Grace, *A Foucault Primer: Discourse, Power and the Subject*, 31.

⁴³ Joseph Rouse, "Power/Knowledge," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 93.

⁴⁴ Hall, "The Work of Representation," 46-47.

⁴⁵ Foucault speaks of language as representation where '...the signifying structure of language (*langage*) always refers back to something else; objects are designated by it; meaning is intended by it; the subject is referred back to it by a number of signs even if he is not himself present in them. Language always

in discursive structures or the components of what a 'discourse' of say, the memory of slavery in Liverpool might be, but crucially asks what this might mean in relation to broader social contexts and issues. It considers the contested production and re-production of power relations through 'memory', a position which relates to understandings of collective memory as 'social and political' activities which are 'the product of processes of intense contest, struggle, and, in some instances, annihilation.'⁴⁶ The discursive approach is concerned with the consequences of this process, of the social impact that creating particular meanings and knowledge can have.⁴⁷

The scholarship on discourse analysis, whilst expansive, holds little in the way of a unified methodology. That said, there are general themes within the social-constructionist approach that are useful for establishing a framework for a memory-discourse study. At the heart of this approach is the understanding that language is not a neutral reflection of the social world, but creates and changes it.⁴⁸ Recent work in heritage studies has advocated for the use of Critical Discourse Analysis as a methodology for understanding the discursive construction of 'heritage' through competing and conflicting discourses.⁴⁹ Developed through a network of scholars across sociology and critical linguistics,⁵⁰ CDA places particular focus on language and power, history, and ideology, aiming to critically investigate 'social inequality as it is expressed, signalled, constituted, legitimised and so on by language use (or in discourse).'⁵¹ However, beyond this approaches to CDA also vary.

seems to be inhabited by the other, the elsewhere, the distant; it is hollowed by absence.' John Gillis outlines how both memory and identity are both 'representations or constructions of reality' and Andreas Huyssen suggests that we should think about memory as a form of re-presentation in that 'remembering' is in the present' but that 'its referent is of the past and this absent.' A similar point is made by Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. Alan M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972), 111; Gillis, "Introduction," 5; Huyssen, "Present Pasts," 3-4.

⁴⁶ Gillis, "Introduction," 5.

⁴⁷ This is in contrast to the semiotic approach as taken by Swiss Linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). For a discussion of the semiotic approach to discourse see Hall, "The Work of Representation," 31-36.

⁴⁸ Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (London: SAGE, 2002), 1.

⁴⁹ See Emma Waterton, Laurajane Smith, and Gary Campbell, "The Utility of Discourse Analysis to Heritage Studies: The Burra Charter and Social Inclusion," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 12, no. 4 (2006).

⁵⁰ This CDA network of scholars initially included Ruth Wodak, Normal Fairclough, Teun van Dijk, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen.

⁵¹ Ruth Wodak, "What CDA is About - A Summary of its History, Important Concepts and its Development," in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London:

Two major figures in CDA, Norman Fairclough and Teun van Dijk, demonstrate some of this variance. Norman Fairclough has perhaps gone furthest to develop a form of theory and methodology for 'doing' CDA.⁵² He viewed language as 'an irreducible part of social life', meaning that any social analysis must take language into account but without viewing social life as 'reduced' to language alone.⁵³ The 'constituted and constituting' nature of discourse in society is central to Fairclough's approach, in which discourse is also viewed as contributing to the construction of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and meaning.⁵⁴ However, Fairclough acknowledges that discourse analysis alone is not sufficient and advocates for the adoption of a range of social and cultural theory to fill non-discursive gaps.⁵⁵ Fairclough also focused on *interdiscursivity* (the way different discourses and genres 'articulate' together), *intertextuality* (how 'texts' draw on other 'texts') and viewed discourse(s) as historically situated yet evolving across time.⁵⁶

There is a flexibility here which enables a more pliable understanding of an 'evolving' discourse which differs from Foucault's focus on time-bound historic specificity or 'radical' change. The *intertextuality* of discourse relates to the perceived *dialogic* quality of collective memory proposed by Jeffrey Olick, whose approach foregrounds the 'path-dependency' of collective memory whilst mapping representations over time. Olick warns against potential tunnel visions of (present) context-dependent assessments of memory. As Olick states:

...we must not treat these histories as successions of discrete moments, one present to-past relation after another; images of the past depend not only on the relationship

SAGE, 2001), 2. This draws on Habermas's theorization of language use as ideological and which is 'distorted' by systems of power.

⁵² Jørgensen and Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, 60. Fairclough's most developed approach is outlined in Norman Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research* (London: Routledge, 2003). However, earlier work on which this text builds includes Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 2001); Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1995); Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); Lilie Chouliarki and Norman Fairclough, *Discourse in Late Modernity*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

⁵³ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse*, 2.

⁵⁴ Jørgensen and Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, 67.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁵⁶ 'In talking about discourses as different ways of representing, we are implying a degree of repetition, commonality in the sense that they are shared by groups of people, and stability over time. In any text we are likely to find many different representations of aspects of the world, but we would not call each separate representation a separate discourse. Discourses transcend such concrete and local representations in the ways I have suggested, and also because a particular discourse can, so to speak, generate many specific representations' Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse*, 41, 124.

between past and present but also on the accumulation of previous such relationships and their ongoing constitution and reconstitution.⁵⁷

In order to address the mechanisms of this 'path-dependency', Olick draws upon Mikhail Bakhtin's theorisation of dialogism, which, like Foucault, also focuses on the historicity of language. Hence, whilst context remains paramount within Olick's work into collective memory, he also views the effect of the 'residue' of previous commemorations and their contexts as significant.⁵⁸ This path-dependency, or dialogism of memory, is also described by Olick as 'an ongoing discourse' which enables speakers to draw upon available 'materials' at a given point in time which are 'the result of long developmental processes as well as of relational contexts'.⁵⁹

Similarly, Fairclough's understanding of discourse as being both *constituted* by the social world and as *contributing* to its construction reflects a more fluid and 'multidirectional' approach to discourse which is, perhaps, more suitable to memory studies.⁶⁰ This understanding of discourse as forged through a certain discursive 'give and take', moreover, means texts can be viewed as sites of conflict, which 'show traces of differing discourses and ideologies contending and struggling for dominance'.⁶¹ Memory is equally a place of contest, forged through conflict, contradiction and debate, and understood in similar discursively active and interactive terms as being both constituted by and constituting the social world.

Teun van Dijk takes a more socio-cognitive approach to CDA.⁶² Like other CDA scholars, van Dijk advocates for a multidisciplinary approach, yet steers largely away from proposing any formal methodology, suggesting instead that CDA benefits from eclectic approaches and subject specific frameworks, conforming only to what is *relevant* for particular projects.⁶³ CDA

⁵⁷ J. Olick, "Genre Memories and Memory Genres: A Dialogical Analysis of May 8, 1945 Commemorations in the Federal Republic of Germany," *American Sociological Review* 64(1999): 382.

⁵⁸ Olick addresses the varying commemorations of May 8, 1945 in German memory at different points in time). Here, commemorative activity in 1995 'was not only different from commemoration in 1985; it was different *in reference* to 1985'. Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.: 382-83.

⁶⁰ Michael Rothberg's recent work on 'multidirectional memory' advocates for a perhaps more 'dialogic' rather than 'competitive' theorization of the workings of memory. Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

⁶¹ Wodak, "What CDA is About," 9.

⁶² Teun A van Dijk, *Discourse and Power* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 1.

⁶³ Teun A van Dijk, "Multidisciplinary CDA: A Plea For Diversity," in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London: SAGE, 2001), 95-96.

is described as a 'critical – perspective on doing scholarship' rather than a sub-discipline of discourse analysis, which van Dijk describes as 'discourse analysis "with an attitude"' due to its focus on social problems and attention given to the role of discourse within the production and re-production (and resistance) of inequality.⁶⁴ CDA addresses the 'macro' notion of say, power, through the 'micro' level of discourse and social practices, and it is this 'bottom-up and top-down' linkage between discourse and corresponding social structures which van Dijk sees as particular to CDA.⁶⁵ For this reason, CDA 'takes the side' of those viewed as part of dominated groups and is *critical* of dominant structures, institutions and systems which maintain inequality.⁶⁶

The question of 'who represents the past' can be easily rephrased as 'who *controls* the past', or who, moreover, is in control of the collective memory of the past. The familiar quotation from George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that '[h]e who controls the past controls the future. He who controls the present controls the past' can here be used to reflect upon processes of power reproduction within processes of collective memory. The control (or challenge) of the memory of a particular history maintains (or contests) systems of power in society. As Craig Blatz and Michael Ross suggest, the opposite can also be considered true, that he who controls the past, also controls the present.⁶⁷ Or, as Geoffrey Cubitt elaborates, '[p]articular visions of the past can be used either to legitimise present political and social arrangements or to supply a standpoint from which these may be criticised or resisted.'⁶⁸ This is a process which takes place *through* identity, where '[j]ust as memory and identity support one another, they also sustain certain subjective positions, social boundaries, and, of course, power.'⁶⁹ However, as the work on CDA suggests, these are contested processes which are forged through conflict. One of the sites where these processes can be most obviously observed is within debates over memory.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 115-18.

⁶⁶ Against criticisms of bias in such an approach (and in addition to counter-claims that all research is biased in the sense of being political, and where to not take a position is argued to itself be a political position) van Dijk boldly claims, 'CDA is biased – and proud of it'. *Ibid.*, 96.

⁶⁷ Craig W. Blatz and Michael Ross, "Historical Memories," in *Memory in Mind and Culture*, ed. Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 226.

⁶⁸ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 224. This point is also made by Paul Connerton who states '[c]oncerning social memory in particular, we may note that images of the past commonly legitimate a present social order,' which he suggests are maintained through largely ritual performances. Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3-4.

⁶⁹ Gillis, "Introduction," 4.

The Debate is the Memorial

Meaning, constructed through discourse, is of course, not only never set in stone, ever in flux, but, as Stuart Hall suggests, part of an evolving discursive interaction, '[m]eaning is a dialogue - always only partially understood, always an unequal exchange.'⁷⁰ The dialogic mechanisms of the representation and contestation of the memory of slavery in Liverpool are considered integral to the workings of collective memory and therefore to an overall 'memory-discourse'. In some respects this relates to how Foucault saw 'statements' as being functional units, as having a more active consequence than mere representation, the suggestion being that we 'do things' when we speak.⁷¹ Returning to the point made at the beginning of this introduction concerning memorials, within James Young's work into the lengthy competition for a German Holocaust memorial, he suggests that this back and forth, this perhaps 'dialogic' engagement with the past, may constitute what any 'memorial' seeks to achieve, that '[i]nstead of a fixed sculptural or architectural icon for Holocaust memory in Germany, *the debate itself* - perpetually unresolved amid ever-changing conditions - might now be enshrined.'⁷² It is this 'debate' which keeps memory alive.

Focusing on debate, moreover, goes some way to readdress the deficiency of engagement with reception in memory studies. However, 'reception', like the relationship between memory and identity, is perhaps best considered as more circular than linear. Like Fairclough's understanding of discourse, debates over memory (as an instance of 'reception') are both constituted by and constitute memory - debates produce and re-produce meaningful engagements with the past in ways which influence an overall memory-discourse. In short, the debate *is* the memorial.

Arguments, Michael Billig suggests, are a 'constant theme in the history of social rules', they are sites of contest and socio-cultural struggle, and to study claims over 'memory', moreover, is to understand that utterances do not emerge out of nowhere, but frequently from the realms of dispute.⁷³ Billig's work on rhetoric is useful for thinking about 'discourse

⁷⁰ Hall, "Introduction," 4.

⁷¹ McHoul and Grace, *A Foucault Primer: Discourse, Power and the Subject*, 37.

⁷² Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 119. My emphasis.

⁷³ Michael Billig, *Arguing and Thinking: A Rhetorical Approach to Social Psychology*, New ed. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 60; Michael Billig, "Discursive, Rhetorical and Ideological Messages," in *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, ed. Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor, and Simeon.J. Yates (London: Sage, 2001), 211-12.

which is argumentative and which seeks to persuade', which has an agenda focused on justification and criticism, as the debates over slavery in Liverpool frequently do.⁷⁴ Whilst, as Bakhtin suggests, all utterances are in a sense dialogic, responding and reacting to other utterances, looking at public debates in particular enables a focus on the argumentative processes at work – on the emergence of attitudes, positioning and counter-positioning which occur in relation to matters of controversy.⁷⁵ It is here, Billig suggests, that the existence and ongoing effects of historical ideology can be seen and understood, where people draw on 'terms which are culturally, historically and ideologically available', yet battle with the implicit contradictions such ideology embodies in an awareness of multiple sides – '[t]hus, those making racist remarks often assert their own lack of prejudice.'⁷⁶ Like CDA, Billig's analysis of the rhetorics of argumentation focuses on the need to unpick assumptions and de-code 'common sense' by revealing what is 'taken for granted'; in what is not said and what is left unchallenged.⁷⁷

This study takes Young's point about memorial debates somewhat literally, by analysing 'debates' surrounding Liverpool and slavery at different historic moments as integral constitutive elements to an evolving memory-discourse. These 'debates' are particularly active negotiations of memory through contested meaning. They support and challenge existing structures of discourse whilst forging new elements and ultimately shaping and re-shaping Liverpool's memory of slavery through discursive action. Whilst, as might be expected, instances of 'debates' over slavery are taken from public discourse in relation to surviving textual evidence, remnants of these debates within 'discourse' are also evidenced across the wide breadth of sources considered by this study.

Source Genres

⁷⁴ Billig, "Discursive, Rhetorical and Ideological Messages," 214.

⁷⁵ M. M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (Austin: University of Texas, 1985), 121; Billig, "Discursive, Rhetorical and Ideological Messages," 214; Billig, *Arguing and Thinking: A Rhetorical Approach to Social Psychology*.

⁷⁶ Billig, "Discursive, Rhetorical and Ideological Messages," 217-18; Billig, *Arguing and Thinking: A Rhetorical Approach to Social Psychology*, 74.

⁷⁷ Billig describes the unchallenged material, ideas or ideologies as 'rhetorical topoi', subjects and areas which are assumed to be acceptable to everyone. Billig, "Discursive, Rhetorical and Ideological Messages," 219-20.

One of the most influential bodies of work on history and memory, Pierre Nora's 1984 *Les Lieux de Memoire* (or 'sites of memory'), was a substantial study into constructions of French national identity across a number of different areas, or 'sites'.⁷⁸ Although subsequent scholars have a tendency to invoke Nora's 'lieux de memoire' in a rather literal translation in reference most commonly to tangible monuments, memorials, museums and physical places,⁷⁹ the term initially had a far broader scope which also included commemorations, historic figures, and flags. What such an expansive study enabled was a more complex picture of 'Frenchness' over time, and the ways in which French national identity was constructed through various symbols or 'sites' of memory.⁸⁰ In a similarly ambitious interdisciplinary study of Israeli re-shaping of Jewish memory, Yael Zerubavel adopts an impressive range of sources, of 'formal and informal commemorations' including 'festivals, monuments, memorials, songs, stories, plays, and educational texts.'⁸¹ What both studies' use of such a wide breadth of materials and interdisciplinary approach to their analysis demonstrated was not only the broad expanse of material that memory can inhabit, but the ways in which particular memories played out within particular 'genres'.

This thesis follows an interdisciplinary framework with a discourse-analytic approach across a wide range of source areas. Whilst discourse is by no means confined to 'talk and texts' it can still be located there, and for this reason an analysis of textual sources is one gateway into the study of discourse.⁸² However, a number of other source 'genres' are

⁷⁸ Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de Memoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984); Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kritzman, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, vol. 1: Conflicts and Divisions (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). This work was later developed and translated into English in 1996 as Nora and Kritzman, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*.

⁷⁹ See for example Tamar Katriel, "Sites of Memory: Discourses of the Past in Israeli Pioneering Settlement Museums," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80, no. 1 (1994); Craig E. Barton, ed. *Sites of Memory: Perspectives on Architecture and Race* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001); Jay Winter, "Sites of Memory and the Shadow of War," in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010). Elsewhere, however, Winter uses the term in reference to the memory of World War One across film and religion, art and literature as well as war memorials. See Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁸⁰ As Nora states, 'Here, the goal is to show how unforeseen mechanisms, combinations of circumstances, the passage of time, human effort, and history itself ultimately transformed the shepherdess of Domremy, the fireside philosopher, and the kind of the barnyard into important and durable symbols of Frenchness.' Pierre Nora, *Introduction to Realms of Memory, Volume III*, ed. Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kritzman, vol. III: Symbols of Memory, *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past* (New York: New York : Columbia University Press, 1996), x.

⁸¹ Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 5.

⁸² McHoul and Grace, *A Foucault Primer: Discourse, Power and the Subject*, 40.

considered. These include art and architecture, public sculpture and imagery, performances within commemorative events, museums, ritual and ceremony. Some of these sources have received previous scholarly attention, others less so, though no previous study has considered this range and quantity of sources together across two-hundred year period. The study has focused the following main source areas; written histories of Liverpool and guidebooks to the city, anniversaries and commemorative occasions, newspapers, black history organisations and events, museums and galleries and the built environment (though the focus here has largely remained on the debate and discourse *around* such sites). Interviews have been undertaken with a selection of individuals significant to Liverpool's memory of slavery as deemed relevant from the archival research and to compliment these source areas.

Some of the areas considered by this study might seem more obviously integral to understanding Liverpool's slavery memory than others. However, the justifications for focussing on say, a newspaper debate in 1939 or the evolution of one sculptural figure on a public building from the nineteenth century just as much as, for example, the International Slavery Museum, centre on a quest for greater understandings of the dynamics of collective memory. As Alon Confino suggests, there is merit in looking for memory 'where it is implied rather than said, blurred rather than clear'.⁸³ Michael Schudson also criticises much contemporary scholarship for embodying a 'drunk-looking-for-his-car-keys under-the-lamppost phenomenon', where research is focused only in the most obvious places, places where such memories are *expected* to emerge, and therefore missing much of the more nuanced and ephemeral interactions between past and present.⁸⁴ Focusing on pre-meditated commemorative events, whilst useful for illuminations on the ways in which the past might be 'used' at particular moments, might be less useful for these more tangential connections. Getting at these more elusive interactions between past and present is, of course, methodologically challenging and has relied to a great extent on the serendipity of the research process.

The Longue Durée

Studies in collective memory which have addressed substantial breadths of time, tracking the memory of particular histories, people, events and phenomena over the '*longue durée*', have

⁸³ Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History," 1395.

⁸⁴ Schudson, "Lives, Laws, and Language," 3.

placed particular importance on viewing memory work, not only in its context in the immediate sense but in its *evolving* context.⁸⁵ Crucially, this longer view is itself a methodological attempt to counter tendencies to concentrate solely on particular moments of historical, or indeed memorial import. Rudy Koshar's work, which addresses debates about the German past from the late nineteenth century through to the late twentieth (from the point of unification to after the Cold War), is an attempt to tackle scholarly gaps created by research which has tended to focus on the memory of Nazism in particular.⁸⁶ Similarly, John Bodnar's study of public memory in America drew on a background analysis of memory across the nineteenth century and into the twentieth which subsequently placed memory in an evolving context, in this case against a poignant background of the 'power of the nation-state' and control of public discourse.⁸⁷ Bodnar demonstrated how public memory was frequently a reflection of structures of power and efforts against this structure, within particular historical moments and the specifics of these, but crucially also across time, drawing conclusions about not just the changing nature of America's public memory but the continuities of this process. Jan Assmann, taking an even longer '*durée*' than either Bodnar or Koshar, maps the memory of Egypt in Europe through what he terms *mnemohistory*, the study of 'the past as it is remembered', following the figure of 'Moses the Egyptian' from the time of Akhenaten (1380-1334BC) to the twentieth century.⁸⁸ The analysis of memory across centuries is necessarily selective, Assmann admits, though this could equally be applied to other studies of *long durées* (and indeed shorter ones). Assmann suggests that memory is less a storage container of bits of the past and more a work of on-going reconstruction, a process of 'mediation' which 'depends on the semantic frames and needs of a given individual or society within a given present'.⁸⁹ Central to Assmann's thesis is the focus on evolving present(s), that there are therefore new identities for each new present within which memory works.

⁸⁵ Rudy Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German Memory, 1870-1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 6.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁸⁷ John E. Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, : Princeton University Press, 1992), 21.

⁸⁸ Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism*. Carolyn Hamilton's work similarly follows the re-imagining of the figure of Shaka in South Africa from his assassination in 1828, tracking changing public representations into the later twentieth century. See Carolyn Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998).

⁸⁹ Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism*, 14.

This study does not claim to be a comprehensive account of the memory of slavery in Liverpool across two hundred years, nor should it be. By focussing on a selection of under-researched areas and better known components, and by utilizing a novel approach which draws on a discourse-analytic framework across a *longue durée*, the study contributes to the literatures of collective memory, slavery and memory and to Liverpool's local history in original and constructive ways. Whilst the scholarship on collective memory is well-established, the specific area of slavery and memory, particularly in a European context, is relatively new, yet steadily growing.

Slavery and Memory

In recent years there has been an explosion of scholarly interest surrounding Britain's involvement in transatlantic slavery. This interest has, by and large, come coupled with a memory dimension, led by an awareness of the comparatively sparse attention much of the subject has historically received in the public domain. There has been a steady core of modern academic scholarship surrounding transatlantic slavery, particularly from the 1970s onwards.⁹⁰ The work of economic historians (such as David Richardson) has done much to show the financial dimension to transatlantic slavery, and many have argued for the inseparable effects of this on British industrial (Eric Williams, Eltis and Engerman) and domestic life 'at home' (James Walvin), though it is only very recently that a more inclusive history of slavery has been foregrounded within histories of eighteenth century Britain.⁹¹ Much scholarship has involved large-scale quantitative studies which have laid the foundations for subsequent databases.⁹²

⁹⁰ Stephen D. Behrendt, "The Transatlantic Slave Trade," in *The Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the Americas*, ed. Robert L. Paquette and Mark M. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 259. It could be argued, as Stephen Behrendt does, that the historiography of the transatlantic slave trade and transatlantic slavery has its roots in the writings and research of eighteenth century abolitionists in Europe and North America who sought out information on the slave trade and slavery for use within the movement.

⁹¹ This point is also made by James Walvin who cites the essays discussing transatlantic slavery as part of a well-known broader history of the eighteenth century in the context of the British Empire in P.J. Marshall, ed. *The Oxford History of the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); James Walvin, *Britain's Slave Empire*, 2nd ed. (Stroud: Tempus, 2007), 8. See David Richardson, "The Slave Trade, Sugar and British Economic Growth, 1748-1776," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 17, no. 4 (1987); Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944); James Walvin, *Slavery and British Society 1776-1846* (London: Macmillan, 1982).

⁹² In particular the work of Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969). Followed closely by the comparative work of Herbert S. Klein, *The Middle*

Transatlantic slavery, with its meticulous lists and financial documents, is much suited to economic quantitative analyses, and Liverpool, as the centre of this trade, has featured regularly within these. In 1999, the publication of the Trans-Atlantic Slavery database CD-ROM dramatically changed the scholarly study of the trade.⁹³ This resource was drawn upon by many of the scholars in the recent collection *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, which was published in part to develop and update the significant 1970s collection of essays edited by Roger Anstey and Paul Hair.⁹⁴

A growing literature surrounds slavery and memory in Europe, Africa, South and North America and the Caribbean. The growth of scholarship on Europe in recent years, particularly in Dutch and French memories of slavery, and indeed in relation to specific towns and cities, is of great interest to this study.⁹⁵ Studies addressing the ways in which transatlantic slavery has been remembered (or indeed silenced, mis-remembered and forgotten) in the United States have discussed the dissonance of the story of enslavement against historical narratives which otherwise foreground themes of freedom and liberty in American identity.⁹⁶ Such studies have, particularly in recent years, foregrounded the experiences of African-American people historically and in memory.⁹⁷ Attention has also recently been turned to silences surrounding

Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). Behrendt, "The Transatlantic Slave Trade," 259-60.

⁹³ This resource which is now available for free online has details of 34,940 voyages a figure representing around 95 percent of the trade from 1525-1866. Behrendt, "The Transatlantic Slave Trade," 261. David Eltis et al., *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See www.slavevoyages.org

⁹⁴ David Richardson, Anthony Tibbles, and Suzanne Schwarz, *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007); Roger Anstey and P.E.H. Hair, eds., *Liverpool, The African Slave Trade and Abolition: Essays to Illustrate Current Knowledge and Research* (Widnes: Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1976).

⁹⁵ See for example chapters within Gert Oostindie, ed. *Facing up to the Past: Perspectives on the Commemoration of Slavery from Africa, the Americas and Europe* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2001). And Jean-Yves Camus, "The Commemoration of Slavery in France and the Emergence of a Black Political Consciousness," *The European Legacy* 11, no. 6 (2006). Renaud Hourcade, "Commemorating a Guilty Past: The Politics of Memory in the French Former Slave Trade Cities," in *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space*, ed. Ana Lucia Araujo (New York: Routledge, 2012). Markus Balkenhol, "Emplacing Slavery: Roots, Monuments and Politics of Belonging in the Netherlands," *African Diaspora* 4, no. 2 (2011).

⁹⁶ James Oliver Horton, "Slavery in American History: An Uncomfortable National Dialogue," in *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*, ed. James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton (New York: New Press, 2006).

⁹⁷ See in particular the essays by Ira Berlin and David Blight in *Ibid.* See also Ron Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

enslavement in historic properties and plantation houses particularly in the US South and critical commentaries have followed attempts to incorporate slavery into the narratives of such sites, within the reconstruction of houses of the enslaved.⁹⁸ Despite criticisms over prolonged silences surrounding slavery in the American public sphere, A.V. Seaton has argued that the US was ahead of Britain in terms of public 'slavery heritage' by about ten years. This is a difference he accounts for through a disparity in tangible evidence, black settlement patterns and, interestingly, diverging national narratives, of America's progressive 'land of the free' (or rather 'the freed') against a Victorian mythology of an ethical British Empire which could not easily accommodate the story of slavery.⁹⁹

Scholarship on the memory of slavery in Britain has largely emerged in the wake of (in particular) developments in museums from the 1990s onwards.¹⁰⁰ John Oldfield has argued that Britain's memory of slavery had for a long time been dominated by what he terms a 'culture of abolitionism' which focused memory largely around narratives of heroic (predominantly white) British abolitionists rather than the story of Britain's involvement in transatlantic slavery.¹⁰¹ Similarly, Marcus Wood has suggested that imagery of slavery, abolition and emancipation created by Europe and America represents, not slavery itself, but a 'white mythology' which 'works hard to deny the possibility of gaining knowledge of the disaster of the Atlantic slave trade.'¹⁰²

Part of Oldfield's research concerns the memory of slavery in Hull at particular moments and in particular in relation to the memory of William Wilberforce, as the city's famous abolitionist son. Related work by Madge Dresser into the social history of slavery in Bristol has explored the ways in which the history of Bristol's involvement in transatlantic

⁹⁸ See for example Jennifer Eichstedt and Stephen Small, *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2002); Stephen Small, "Still Back of the Big House: Slave Cabins and Slavery in Southern Heritage Tourism," *Tourism Geographies* 15, no. 3 (2013).

⁹⁹ A.V. Seaton, "Sources of Slavery-Destinations of Slavery: The Silences and Disclosures of Slavery Heritage in the UK and the US," in *Slavery, Contested Heritage, and Thanatourism*, ed. G.M. Dann and A.V. Seaton (New York: Haworth Hospitality Press, 2001).

¹⁰⁰ Although the subject matter had been represented in part by Wilberforce House in Hull, which opened in 1906, this was primarily a biographical museum which largely focused on the story of abolition and the life William Wilberforce.

¹⁰¹ John. R. Oldfield, *'Chords of Freedom': Commemoration, Ritual and British Transatlantic Slavery* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

¹⁰² Marcus Wood. *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780-1865*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 8. Wood's work has also looked critically at the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery in Liverpool, see the Conclusion of *Blind Memory*.

slavery and the legacies of this, particularly in relation to the city's built environment have been largely 'obscured'.¹⁰³ Dresser's work, whilst largely a social history of Bristol and slavery has a memory 'dimension' which is concerned with the impact of slavery on the city and the ways in which this has (or has not) been publicly remembered, especially in relation to celebrated philanthropic figures who gained wealth from slaving investments, such as Edward Colston. With more of a focus on memory and place, Alan Rice's research into Lancaster's memory of slavery documented the process of creating a slave trade memorial in 2005, against the historical amnesia of the city, where the fourth largest slave port had 'forgotten' its own involvement in slavery through narratives which foregrounded civic pride through mercantile endeavour.¹⁰⁴ Rice identifies, in relation to Lancaster and other examples of artistic intervention across Britain, a resistance to this historical amnesia by African-descended artists which he terms a form of 'Guerrilla Memorialisation'.¹⁰⁵ Much of the benefit of Rice and Dresser's work, certainly for this study, has been the interrogation of the memory of slavery in a particular locale, which necessarily means encompassing factors of relevance to those places, their individual historic and contemporary contexts certainly, but also local demographic change, individual people and groups, and broader historic narratives. A large body of research, much of it addressing individual places (though largely in respect to individual museums and exhibitions) emerged in the wake of 2007, the year in which the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the British Slave Trade Act was marked nationally.¹⁰⁶ Whilst illustrative of some of the nuances of memory and place in relation to a difficult history, this work remains necessarily restricted to recent events.¹⁰⁷ In addition, a number of large publicly-funded projects have developed in recent years including the Legacies of British Slave-Ownership Project at University College London now into its second phase; the EUROTAST project, a European wide research effort into the 'genetics' of the slave trade, and the *1807 Commemorated Project* at the University of York which addressed engagements with and

¹⁰³ Madge Dresser, *Slavery Obscured: The Social History of the Slave Trade in Bristol*, (Bristol: Redcliffe, 2007).

¹⁰⁴ Alan Rice, "Naming the Money and Unveiling the Crime: Contemporary British Artists and the Memorialisation of Slavery and Abolition," *Patterns of Prejudice* 41, no. 3-4 (2007): 322; Alan J. Rice, *Creating Memorials, Building Identities: The Politics of Memory in the Black Atlantic* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010).

¹⁰⁵ Rice, *Creating Memorials*.

¹⁰⁶ See Chapter Two, note 186.

¹⁰⁷ With the exception of Madge Dresser who published work addressing differences between public commemorations of abolition in 2007 and 1907 in Bristol. See Madge Dresser, "Remembering Slavery and Abolition in Bristol," *Slavery & Abolition* 30, no. 2 (2009).

representations of the history of the transatlantic slave trade and its abolition in 2007.¹⁰⁸ Of great significance, was the commissioning of new research by English Heritage into the connections between a number of its properties and transatlantic slavery which culminated in the publication of a book.¹⁰⁹

Liverpool's Memory of Slavery

Whilst a number of scholars already mentioned above have addressed the memory of slavery in Liverpool, this has predominantly been in relation to the museums.¹¹⁰ Beyond this, there has been a discussion in relation to particular areas such as written histories and guidebooks, or in relation to the official apology issued by the city council in 1999.¹¹¹ Sometimes this is done with a particular focus on discussions of Liverpool's role in the transatlantic slave trade and slavery, such as Gail Cameron and Stan Cooke's chapter on 'Liverpool's Historians and the Slave Trade'.¹¹² However, more often the subject is raised in relation to a broader discussion of

¹⁰⁸ Please see the following website for more information on these projects: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/>, <http://eurotast.eu/>, <http://www.history.ac.uk/1807commemorated/>

¹⁰⁹ Madge Dresser and Andrew Hann, eds., *Slavery and the British Country House* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2013). Free download available at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/slavery-and-british-country-house/>

¹¹⁰ For discussions of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery see Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). Wood, *Blind Memory*; Anthony Tibbles, "Against Human Dignity: The Development of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery at Merseyside Maritime Museum," Proceedings, IXth International Congress of Maritime Museums', edited Adrian Jarvis, Roger Knight and Michael Stammers, 1996, http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/resources/against_human_dignity.aspx (accessed November 21, 2013); Anthony Tibbles, "Interpreting Transatlantic Slavery: The Role of Museums," in *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity*, ed. Anthony Tibbles (London: HMSO/National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 2005); Phyllis K. Leffler, "Maritime Museums and Transatlantic Slavery: A Study in British and American Identity," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 4, no. 1 (2006); Stephen Small, "Contextualizing the Black Presence in British Museums: Representations, Resources and Response," in *Cultural Diversity: Developing Museum Audiences in Britain*, ed. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (London: Leicester University Press, 1997). For discussions of the International Slavery Museum see Geoffrey Cubitt, "Lines of Resistance: Evoking and Configuring the Theme of Resistance in Museum Displays in Britain Around the Bicentenary of 1807," *Museum and Society* 8, no. 3 (2010); Richard Benjamin, "Museums and Sensitive Histories: The International Slavery Museum," in *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space*, ed. Ana Lucia Araujo (New York: Routledge, 2012).

¹¹¹ See Mark Christian, "An African-Centred Perspective on White Supremacy," *Journal of Black Studies* 33, no. 2 (2002): 184-5.

¹¹² Gail Cameron and Stan Crooke, *Liverpool - Capital of the Slave Trade* (Liverpool: Picton Press, 1992), 107.

sources and events, such as John Davies's work into Liverpool guidebooks, or John Belchem's research into the official marking of Liverpool's 700th and 750th charter anniversaries in 1907 and 1957.¹¹³

A few scholars have discussed Liverpool's memory of slavery in relation to its impact (here both the historical event and the memory of this) on Liverpool's black population.¹¹⁴ The effects here of 'legacy' (usually articulated as a continuance of 'racism of then' to 'racism of now') alongside the ongoing inadequacies of 'memory' in addressing, or facing up to the history Liverpool and slavery are articulated as part of ongoing racial discrimination against Liverpool's black (specifically African descended) population.¹¹⁵ However, Murray Steele suggests that the more recent recognition given to the subject, in museums and through the city council's apology in 1999 in particular, are significant first steps of 'a long process of restitution', and Stephen Small has described the museums in particular as significant for their potential to initiate debate around slavery and its legacies.¹¹⁶ Steele juxtaposes the 'absence' of slavery in histories against the presence of 'reminders' of Liverpool and slavery within its built environment; in imagery on buildings, memorials and artwork, and the debates around these.¹¹⁷ This is a topic which recurs frequently. A number of texts have been produced, notably by Liverpool-born black historians and educators, which highlight connections of Liverpool's built environment to slavery through the names given to streets, imagery on the Town Hall and former banks, often presented against the words of Liverpool officials who deny such connections.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ John Belchem, "Liverpool's Story is the World's Glory," in *Merseypride: Essays in Liverpool Exceptionalism*, ed. John Belchem (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000); John Belchem, "Introduction: Celebrating Liverpool," in *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character and History*, ed. John Belchem (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006); John Davies, "Liverpool Guides, 1795-1914," *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 153(2004).

¹¹⁴ Murray Steele, "Confronting a Legacy: The Atlantic Slave Trade and the Black Community of Liverpool," in *Historical Perspectives on Social Identities*, ed. Alyson Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2006); Stephen Small, "Racialised Relations in Liverpool: A Contemporary Anomaly," *New Community* 17, no. 4 (1991). Significantly this argument is also presented within the Gifford Inquiry into racial discrimination in Liverpool in the wake of riots in 1981 (to be covered later). Lord Gifford QC (Chair), Wally Brown, and Ruth Bunday, *Loosen the Shackles: First Report of the Liverpool 8 Inquiry into Race Relations in Liverpool* (London: Karia Press, 1989).

¹¹⁵ Ian Law, *A History of Race and Racism in Liverpool, 1660-1950*, ed. June Henfrey (Liverpool: Merseyside Community Relations Council, 1981).

¹¹⁶ Steele, "Confronting a Legacy," 149.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹¹⁸ Lenford (ed) White, *Slavery: An Introduction to the African Holocaust (revised edition...with special reference to Liverpool "Capital of the Slave Trade"* (Liverpool: Black History Resource Working Group,

Jacqueline Nassy Brown's extensive ethnographic research into black identity and the 'geographies of race' in Liverpool in the 1990s, found that the subject of Liverpool's involvement in transatlantic slavery was frequently viewed as central to understanding racial processes, that in a number of interviews with local black people, the 'discovery' of Liverpool and slavery (against its official 'silencing'), was often seen as an explanation for racism.¹¹⁹ Brown's research, whilst illustrative of issues surrounding constructions of black identity and perceptions of racial politics in Liverpool, is necessarily, and understandably given the discipline and methodology (primarily social anthropology with a focus on qualitative interviews), focused on events in the second half of the twentieth century. The study was not, of course, primarily concerned with the memory of slavery in Liverpool, though it is of great interest that the subject was frequently raised without prompt, emerging from discussions concerning race and place in Liverpool.

Scholarship into Liverpool's memory of slavery, whilst informative, has been fragmented; addressing particular sources, events, and moments, in ways which link historic slavery and contemporary racism often fleetingly, and rarely with reference to broader discussions of history and memory in the city or outside of it, or to how such processes might have evolved over time. The study of slavery and memory more generally has a growing body of literature, as discussed above, to which this study of a particular port city, will contribute.

Argument, Thesis Structure, and Liverpool Exceptionalism

*'If the memory of slavery inhabits one location in Britain it is Liverpool.'*¹²⁰

1997), 57-58. Lenford White includes a quotation from one Liverpool book on architectural imagery which states that whilst there are 'allegorical' depictions of African faces on the Town Hall, these 'are not negro slaves' (Thomas Lloyd-Jones, *Know Your Liverpool: Walks Around in the City Centre* (Liverpool: Raven Books, 1974). An English Heritage publication written by a Liverpool born black local historian was published in Laurence Westgaph, *Read the Signs: Street Names With a Connection to the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Abolition in Liverpool* (English Heritage, 2007). This pamphlet is also available as a pdf on English Heritage's website, <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/imported-docs/p-t/streetnames.pdf>

¹¹⁹ Jacqueline Nassy Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail: Geographies of Race in Black Liverpool* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 163-64. See also Jacqueline Nassy Brown, Jacqueline Nassy Brown, "Enslaving History: Narratives on Local Whiteness in a Black Atlantic Port," *American Ethnologist* 27, no. 2 (2000).

¹²⁰ Wood, *Blind Memory*, 295.

As Olick has argued, the representation of the past is shaped in part by the accumulation of previous present to past relationships 'and their ongoing constitution and reconstitution'.¹²¹ This interactive intertextuality is demonstrated across the genres covered by the three parts of this thesis. Part One, 'Mapping the Discursive Terrain' follows particular narratives and discursive devices largely across written histories, guidebooks and other relevant areas of public discourse and analyses individual debates in their contexts, introducing an overview of the distinct discursive features of Liverpool's slavery memory-discourse. Part Two, 'Moments of Memory' addresses the more formal and organised recurring commemorative anniversaries in their contexts; Liverpool's 700th, 750th and 800th 'birthdays' and the coinciding centenaries of the Abolition Act of 1807 in 1907, 1957 and 2007; the Emancipation Centenary of 1933, Black History Month and Slavery Remembrance Day. Part Three, 'Sites of Memory' addresses the spaces and places significant within Liverpool's slavery memory in museums, memorials, buildings, art and architecture and the ways in which these have figured as sites of contest and struggle.

Liverpool has been defined, and indeed has come to define itself, as a place of extremes and contradictions. The 'exceptionalism' of Liverpool's history is frequently commented upon. Presented in a framework of romanticised adventure and discovery, Neil Cossons and Martin Jenkins suggest that '[t]hroughout its history, it is the distinctiveness and exceptionalism of Liverpool that has constantly been remarked upon. It has always been a city like no other; on the edge of one world, looking out towards another.'¹²² Such framing reinforces the idea of 'Liverpool Exceptionalism', as also demonstrated by historian John Belchem's edited collection, *Merseypride: Essays in Liverpool Exceptionalism* and broader historic and public discourse which in some respects acts to 'other' Liverpool itself into the realms of 'peculiarity' at odds with anywhere else.¹²³ Indeed, it is interesting how regularly the word 'peculiar' is used in relation to both the city and its relationship with the slave trade, especially given the use of the 'peculiar institution' as a euphemism for slavery America, 'peculiar' here meaning distinctive to a particular place.¹²⁴ Jacqueline Nassy Brown suggests,

¹²¹ Olick, "Genre Memories and Memory Genres: A Dialogical Analysis of May 8, 1945 Commemorations in the Federal Republic of Germany," 382.

¹²² Neil Cossons and Martin Jenkins, *Liverpool: Seaport City* (Hersham: Ian Allan Publishing, 2011), 6.

¹²³ John Belchem, ed. *Merseypride: Essays in Liverpool Exceptionalism* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000).

¹²⁴ Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-bellum South*, Vintage Books ed. ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1956). A selection of references in relation to Liverpool's historic discourse includes: 'The conviction that the prosperity of the town depended upon its retention, produced an uneasy feeling of suspicion and jealousy, and a dread of all change, which could not but impart a

that '[f]or its rich and tortured history, Liverpool is an endlessly fascinating site for the study of race and place'.¹²⁵ And, I would add, similarly for its rich and tortured *memory*, Liverpool is an equally endlessly fascinating place.

However, theoretical perils may lie in accepting such 'unique' narratives of place. Exactly how far does 'Liverpool Exceptionalism' extend to the city's memory of slavery? Author Caryl Phillips, on a visit to Liverpool, touches upon the city's contradictions and dissonances, notably in relation to slavery which is paradoxically both 'physically present and glaringly absent' from the city's psyche:

A history hitched to tragedy. A train pulls in and I can hear the uncivilised braying of football fans readying themselves for a Saturday afternoon of revelry. I am glad that I am leaving. It is disquieting to be in a place where history is so physically present, yet so glaringly absent from people's consciousness. But where is it any different? Maybe this is the modern condition, and Liverpool is merely acting out this reality with an honest vigour. If so, this dissonance between the two states seems to have

peculiar character at those at least connected with the occupation.' James Allanson Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool, Historical and Topographical Vol 1, 2nd Edition*. (London: Longman, Greens & Co., 1875), <http://archive.org/details/memorialsoliver01pictuoft> (accessed 7 March 2013)., 226 '...the spirit moved the Quakers of America and England to the most vigorous and chivalrous crusade against a traffic so **peculiarly** revolting to their humane and pacific tenets' and 'The slave-ships were **peculiarly** constructed with a view to prevent the negroes from ending their misery by plunging into the sea' in Gomer Williams, *History of the Liverpool Privateers and Letters of Marque: With an Account of the Liverpool Slave Trade, 1744-1812* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1897, reprinted 2004). 567, 589; '...the nature of the slave trade was **peculiar**', Cecil Parkinson, *The Rise of the Port of Liverpool* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1952), 92. The slave trade is of '**peculiar** interest to modern scholars' according to Roger Anstey and P.E.H. Hair, "Introduction," in *Liverpool, The African Slave Trade and Abolition: Essays to Illustrate Current Knowledge and Research*, ed. Roger Anstey and P. E. H. Hair (Widnes: Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1976), 1. As well as interestingly also being included within the introduction to Richardson, Tibbles, and Schwarz, *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, 1. Inspired by the Anstey and Hair collection, the 2007 book claims that it was Liverpool's complex historic involvement in the transatlantic slave trade which 'gave **peculiar** significance to the volume'; Liverpool is described as having a 'physical **peculiarity**' in its geography in Walter Dixon Scott, *Liverpool* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1907), 13. '...the **peculiar** character of its trade has placed a stamp on the physical, social, and commercial life of the City' J. Sandeman Allen, "The Trade and Commerce of Liverpool," in *Merseyside: A Handbook to Liverpool and District Prepared on the Occasion of the Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Liverpool, September 1923*, ed. Alfred Holt (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1923), 117. 'The circumstances of its rise were so peculiar that a very definitive individuality emerged.' D. Caradog Jones, *The Social Survey of Merseyside* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1934), 52-3. 'Merseyside assumed, by reason of compelling geographical, historical and economic circumstances, the specific and sometimes **peculiar** characteristics which have, over the past two hundred years, influenced her rise to a position of major international status'. Francis Edwin Hyde, *Liverpool and the Mersey: An Economic History of a Port 1700 – 1970* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1971), 11.

¹²⁵ Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail*.

engendered both a cynical wit and a clinical depression in the souls of Liverpool's citizens.¹²⁶

Is Liverpool any different? In this thesis I argue that, in relation to the city's memory of slavery, Liverpool both is, and is not, exceptional. Like much collective memory, Liverpool's memory of slavery is discursively forged in line with contextual circumstance, contemporary concerns, and anxieties, and through the lens of collective identity. The socio-political 'context' of Liverpool at specific points across the two hundred years considered, is indeed unique and specific to the city. However, the context of any place is necessarily unique and specific. What makes Liverpool's memory of slavery exceptional *beyond* this is where the process of memory meets with the presence of legacy, the 'shells on the shore when the sea of living memory has receded'.¹²⁷ Liverpool's involvement in transatlantic slavery has been unique in ways which have continued to impact upon both its memory of this history, and indeed the city's broader history. Legacies have been forged through unique timing, dominance and people; not only the tensions between slave merchants and abolitions, but more demographic 'legacies' – the initiation of trading links with West Africa leaving 'shells' in the form of the oldest continuous settled black community in the country. The black presence is itself exceptionalised in Liverpool's historic discourse; in longevity and constitution. So is the Liverpool black experience, where racism in the city has been described as 'uniquely horrific'.¹²⁸ The black presence has shaped Liverpool's unique, if necessarily complex, public memory of slavery in a myriad of ways. The city's continuing colonial and postcolonial global encounters, in tandem with national discriminatory discourses of race and Empire shape local contextual engagements with cultural 'others'. Chapter Two, which outlines Liverpool's memory of slavery across the *longue durée* in context, addresses the history of black Liverpool and the 'Liverpool-born black' experience in the twentieth century as critical influential factors in the city's slavery memory, itself shaped to a large degree through discourses of race and racism. As Chapter Two will discuss, this thesis also argues that Liverpool's accumulative history continues to haunt its memory of slavery. Here, the position of significant moments in Liverpool's political, economic and, especially racial, history, and indeed the *memory* of these, play a prominent part in its 'exceptional' memory of slavery, particularly towards the end of the twentieth century.

¹²⁶ Caryl Phillips, *The Atlantic Sound* (London: Faber, 2000), 93.

¹²⁷ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History, Les Lieux de Memoire," *Representations*, no. 26 (1989).

¹²⁸ Lord Gifford QC (Chair), Brown, and Bunday, *Loosen the Shackles*.

CHAPTER TWO

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History and Memory Across a *Longue Durée*

A Chronological Overview of the Memory of Slavery in Liverpool in Context

The Historic Baseline: Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery

Iwona Irwin-Zarecka advocates for the importance of ‘historical baselines’ in the study of collective memory. Here, the term refers in the first instance to an understanding of the ‘history’ which is being remembered, which can be used to interrogate ‘biases, distortions, gaps, and contradictions in presentations of “the past,”’.¹ This in itself is not unproblematic and requires a degree of paradox, of placing confidence in one particular reconstructed view of the past from which to scrutinise others. However, as Geoffrey Cubitt suggests, ‘[t]he memory of an event or of a historical experience begins with the event or experience itself’.² Here, the perceptions and engagements with the historical event or phenomena in question have the potential to influence future imaginings through periods of living memory and perhaps beyond. Liverpool’s particular involvement in transatlantic slavery, in scale, timing and ongoing effects and legacies are indeed foundational to its evolving memory-discourse.

Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery

¹ Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*, 15.

² Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 206.

In the eighteenth century, Britain carried more enslaved Africans across the Atlantic than any other European country, an estimated 2.5 million of close to 6.5 million enslaved Africans in this century alone.³ Of the estimated 12.5 million Africans shipped in the transatlantic slave trade in total, Britain's share stood at close to 3.3 million shipped from the sixteenth century up to the abolition of the slave trade in 1807.⁴ Of the British ports involved in this trade, none transported more enslaved Africans than Liverpool. Recent estimates put the total number of enslaved African people taken to the Americas by Liverpool ships to be over 1.1 million and between 1750 and 1807 every two out of three enslaved Africans sold on the coast of Africa was sold to a Liverpool ship.⁵

In the seventeenth century, around 90 percent of Liverpool's trade was with Ireland, though a burgeoning transatlantic trade was developing.⁶ By the early 1700s the port was supplying credit and indentured servants to the Chesapeake area, and was involved in a trade of produce such as beef, pork and butter between Ireland and Jamaica.⁷ The Royal Africa Company held the monopoly of Britain's slave trade up until 1698, and in the first ten years following the opening up of this trade to private investors, Liverpool sent out only two voyages, though the creation of the first wet dock in 1715 opened up the port for trade on a grander scale.⁸ By the middle of the eighteenth century, however, Liverpool had over a 50

³ James Walvin, *Britain's Slave Empire*, 2nd ed. (Stroud: Tempus, 2007), 6; Voyages Database, "Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database," <http://www.slavevoyages.org> (accessed November 19, 2013). Estimates of numbers in studies of transatlantic slavery vary, however recent projects have greatly benefitted from the CD-ROM, particularly the research published in Richardson, Tibbles, and Schwarz, *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*. See Eltis et al., *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM*. The dataset was extended and made available online for free in 2009, see www.slavevoyages.org

⁴ Voyages Database, "Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database.", James Walvin had previously given an estimate of three and a half million and Kenneth Morgan put this figure higher, suggesting that Britain shipped almost half of all enslaved Africans during the entire duration. Walvin, *Britain's Slave Empire*, 7; Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy, 1660-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 36.

⁵ Kenneth Morgan, "Liverpool's Dominance in the British Slave Trade, 1740-1807," in *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, ed. David Richardson, Anthony Tibbles, and Suzanne Schwarz (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 15. Stephen D. Behrendt, "Human Capital in the Slave Trade," in *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, ed. David Richardson, Anthony Tibbles, and Suzanne Schwarz (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 86.

⁶ Morgan, "Liverpool's Dominance in the British Slave Trade, 1740-1807," 17. Trade was developing in particular with North America, the West Indies, Madeira and the Canary Islands from the 1670s. Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1440-1870* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 246.

⁷ Morgan, "Liverpool's Dominance in the British Slave Trade, 1740-1807," 17.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 14; Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 247.

percent share of the British slave trade.⁹ This continued to increase up to the decade of abolition when the town's involvement peaked, owning close to 80 percent of Britain's slave trade.¹⁰

Liverpool Exceptionalism

Several explanations for Liverpool's exceptional involvement in the transatlantic slave trade have been put forward. Geographically, Liverpool was well positioned for the reception of goods for trade from the manufacturing areas of Lancashire, Yorkshire and the Midlands, and the business links between Liverpool and Manchester were of particular significance, aided greatly by cheaper communication and trading links following the opening of the Bridgewater canal in 1772.¹¹ Similarly, the Isle of Man, which was beyond customs jurisdiction, was a frequent drop off point for smuggled East India goods imported from Holland.¹² Further, Liverpool's position in the north west of England and the route of her slave ships over the north of Ireland rendered the port a safe distance from enemy privateers and men-o-war which could take ships along the south coast.¹³ This in turn meant lower insurance costs for the comparatively lower risks.¹⁴

However, reasons for Liverpool's comparative 'success' in slave trading are also given more human attributes; of expertise, effort and the 'enterprising spirit' of her inhabitants. Kenneth Morgan suggests that it was 'Liverpudlians' business acumen' that gave the port advantage, a feature which saw merchants and traders seeking out new markets for slaves and new methods of financial transactions.¹⁵ Paul Lovejoy and David Richardson have similarly

⁹ Morgan, "Liverpool's Dominance in the British Slave Trade, 1740-1807," 15.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ This cut costs from 40 shillings a ton via road to six shillings via canal. Morgan, *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy, 1660-1800*, 89; Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 249.

¹² Morgan, *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy, 1660-1800*, 89; Morgan, "Liverpool's Dominance in the British Slave Trade, 1740-1807," 21.

¹³ Morgan, *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy, 1660-1800*, 88.

¹⁴ Morgan, "Liverpool's Dominance in the British Slave Trade, 1740-1807," 20.

¹⁵ Morgan, *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy, 1660-1800*, 89; Morgan, "Liverpool's Dominance in the British Slave Trade, 1740-1807," 29. See Part One for a discussion of the 'enterprising spirit' motif.

demonstrated the particular significance of the close business and trading relationships Liverpool merchants established with African traders, and members of the African elite would send their sons to Liverpool for education.¹⁶ Such relationships of trust with large networks of African dealers in particular regions, whilst highly beneficial to the Liverpool slave traders, necessarily stood as obstacles to merchants from other ports.¹⁷ Similarly, Stephen Behrendt has argued that there was such a wealth of available expertise and skilled slave ship labour on hand in Liverpool that ships could be fitted out quickly during most months of the year rather than in seasons and with more well-trained and experienced mariners than other port cities at any given moment.¹⁸ This made Liverpool an efficient and attractive prospect to investors who might otherwise find it difficult to secure a full shipload of experienced mariners who were frequently lost through high mortality and desertion rates.¹⁹

Ship building, an obviously integral facet to slave trading, thrived in the Merseyside port where ever larger and sleeker vessels were built in the later eighteenth century, and new technologies such as copper sheathing to protect against rot were developed and used.²⁰ The ship building industry developed in large part because of an impetus set by increasing activity in slave trading, and between 1701 and 1810, 2,120 British slave ships were constructed in Liverpool compared to a total of 541 between London and Bristol within the same time frame.²¹ However, not all suggestions are based on such 'constructive' enterprise, and Hugh Thomas suggests that many slave merchants paid their crews far less than those operating out of Bristol and London, meaning their 'cargoes' could be sold at around 12 percent less for a greater profit.²²

¹⁶ Paul E Lovejoy and David Richardson, "African Agency and The Liverpool Slave Trade," in *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, ed. David Richardson, Anthony Tibbles, and Suzanne Schwarz (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 53.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Behrendt, "Human Capital in the Slave Trade," 68-69.

¹⁹ Typically between 25 and 38 personnel were required depending on ship size and region. Ibid., 70-72.

²⁰ James Walvin, *Black Ivory: A History of British Slavery*, 2nd ed. ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 37.

²¹ Morgan, "Liverpool's Dominance in the British Slave Trade, 1740-1807," 19.

²² Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, 247.

The Impact and Involvement of Liverpool People

Jane Longmore has stressed the importance of the slave trade to Liverpool through the acknowledgement that one in eight people (and their families) were dependent on the trade by 1790, which included roughly 10,000 tradesmen, craftsmen and seamen.²³ However, this is a controversial area which has been difficult to assess. When determining Liverpool's involvement in the slave trade, it is perhaps appropriate to question who this might refer to, especially given that a number of Lancaster traders operated out of Liverpool. In fact, legislation from 1799 was passed which required Lancaster originating slavers to clear from Liverpool.²⁴

Assessing the profits and wealth gained from the slave trade in general terms has been equally problematic and nineteenth century estimates (such as Gomer Williams' suggestion that slave voyages incurred 30 percent profit), largely unsupported or crudely calculated, have been repeated by later historians.²⁵ In 1952, Hyde, Parkinson and Mariner sought to adjust these estimates and gave a reduced figure of profit for Liverpool slave traders based on the papers of William Davenport (between 1757-84), though it is equally problematic to base general assessments on an individual case.²⁶ Kenneth Morgan also queries whether commercial prosperity might have arisen through an increase in dock provision rather than from the slave trade per se, though here the extent to which the two can be easily separated is unclear.²⁷ The use of figures in calculating involvement is similarly difficult, and Jane Longmore has highlighted how tonnage figures in particular can be misleading, where relatively low levels of 'tonnage' in fact don't tell the whole story for a cargo with a low tonnage and high value.²⁸

²³ Jane Longmore, "'Cemented by the Blood of a Negro?' The Impact of the Slave Trade on Eighteenth-Century Liverpool," in *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, ed. David Richardson, Anthony Tibbles, and Suzanne Schwarz (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 243.

²⁴ Melinda Elder, "The Liverpool Slave Trade, Lancaster and its Environs," in *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, ed. David Richardson, Anthony Tibbles, and Suzanne Schwarz (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 118, 33.

²⁵ Morgan, *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy, 1660-1800*, 38. Morgan makes this last comment in reference to Eric Williams's 1944 repetition of Gomer Williams' estimates in *Capitalism and Slavery*.

²⁶ Francis Edwin Hyde, Parkinson B. Bradbury, and Sheila Marriner, "The Nature and Profitability of the Liverpool Slave Trade," *The Economic History Review* 5, no. 3 (1953).

²⁷ Morgan, "Liverpool's Dominance in the British Slave Trade, 1740-1807," 19.

²⁸ Longmore, "'Cemented by the Blood of a Negro?'," 237.

David Pope outlines an alternative way of assessing wealth and impact through an analysis of developments in 'social aspiration' which can be attributed to gains in slave-trade-derived wealth by Liverpool merchants. Pope's research outlines how, although Liverpool slave merchants rarely came from abject poverty, they equally rarely came from aristocracy, with families owning some form of property prior to involvement in the trade.²⁹ However, from here, the vast majority of the leading slave merchants considered between 1750 and 1799 are seen to achieve a degree of social elevation, evidenced within the purchase of grander property and estates, relocations to outlying townships like Everton, and marriage to partners from families from similar maritime professional backgrounds.³⁰ However, Pope suggests that the greater comparative social elevation is more discernable in the following generation, noting that the sons of 31 slave merchants in his sample were sent to Cambridge and Oxford.³¹

Banking and Insurance was a significant industry with roots in the transatlantic trade, arising from the needs for managing large financial transactions and, significantly for the insurance of slave ships and their valuable (human) cargo. In 1752, for example, five out of six insurance offices listed in The Liverpool Memorandum Book were run by 'African merchants'.³² Liverpool was also a crucial importer of slave-produced goods from the Americas, the second largest importer of tobacco by 1738, overtaken only by Glasgow by 1776, though regaining its second place position by the mid-1790s.³³ The value of imported tobacco rose steadily over this 100 year period, standing at £1.7 million at the beginning of the eighteenth century and rising to £10.4 million in 1790.³⁴ Similarly, sugar imports amounted to 580 metric tons in 1700 and stood at 25,395 metric tons in 1800, making Liverpool the second principal port for the importation of sugar into Britain at the end of the eighteenth century.³⁵

²⁹ David Pope, "The Wealth and Social Aspirations of Liverpool's Slave Merchants of the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," in *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, ed. David Richardson, Anthony Tibbles, and Suzanne Schwarz (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 165. "

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 170-74.

³¹ The spouses of sons in this next generation were also more likely to come from a higher social status with more fathers-in-law qualifying as being from the 'gentry' against far fewer coming from maritime backgrounds. *Ibid.*, 178.

³² Longmore, "'Cemented by the Blood of a Negro?'," 236.

³³ Morgan, *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy, 1660-1800*, 88.

³⁴ Morgan, "Liverpool's Dominance in the British Slave Trade, 1740-1807," 17.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

The port changed dramatically over the eighteenth century and the population rose from around 7,000 in 1708 to over 77,000 in 1802, predominantly from in-migration from surrounding regions of Lancashire and Cheshire but also from Wales, Ireland and Scotland.³⁶ In relation to longer term legacies of such overwhelming investment and involvement, Jane Longmore has argued that the port's heavy involvement in the transatlantic slave trade meant that levels of manufacturing skills drop dramatically across the eighteenth century, from 57.8 percent in 1765-66 to 25-30 percent in 1810. This left Liverpool with a large number of semi-skilled and un-skilled workers by 1807.³⁷

The Nineteenth Century: From History to Memory

One of the most interesting features of Liverpool's memory of slavery is timing. As much as the memory of an event might start with the event itself, the broader cultural context of that event is also significant. As Liliane Weissberg suggests, the history of memory is ultimately intertwined with the history of history. In the nineteenth century, history came into its own as a scholarly discipline, set against and to counter the subjectivity of the 'memory' of the pre-modern era.³⁸ History in the nineteenth century became viewed as the collective memory of society, as 'the discipline of memory', emerging from progressivist views and in line with changing mechanisms for the conservation of the past through increasingly institutionalised organisation.³⁹ The nineteenth century, Richard Terdiman has argued, witnessed a 'memory crisis' evolving alongside and within the substantial cultural shifts of modernity:

³⁶ M.J. Power, "The Growth of Liverpool," in *Popular Politics, Riot and Labour: Essays in Liverpool History 1790-1940*, ed. John Belchem (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1992), 22. Colin Pooley estimates that around 70-80 percent of growth was through migration rather than natural increase, mortality rates being consistently high. Colin G. Pooley, "Living in Liverpool: The Modern City," in *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character and History*, ed. John. Belchem (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), 175.

³⁷ Longmore, "'Cemented by the Blood of a Negro?'," 237, 44. Longmore also presents this point in Jane Longmore, "Civic Liverpool: 1680-1800," in *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character and History*, ed. John. Belchem (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), 135.

³⁸ Liliane Weissberg, "Introduction," in *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Liliane Weissberg (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 12.

³⁹ Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 30-31. 30 Peter Burke, "History as Social Memory," in *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind*, ed. Thomas Butler (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 106.

[...] the functioning of memory itself, the institution of memory and thereby of history, became a critical preoccupation in the effort to think through what intellectuals were coming to call the 'modern'. The 'long nineteenth century' became a present whose self-conception was framed by a disciplined obsession with the past.⁴⁰

Following the seismic political shifts of the late eighteenth century which saw much dramatic change from old structures of power there was a need to 'remember' a pre-revolutionary world in order to underpin the new, where 'memory' and 'history' came to play significant roles in the formation of the nation state, and nations sought to 'worship themselves through their pasts'.⁴¹ Memory came to play an increasingly significant role in the construction and maintenance of such 'imagined communities' (to borrow Benedict Anderson's much used term), where a 'sense of sameness over time and space, is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity'.⁴² However, memory was also drawn on by smaller 'imagined communities' for similar ends, where the rapid growth of urban centres across the period necessitated a need for people to 'reconstruct the prehistory of their new environment in the effort to naturalize (*sic*) it'.⁴³ This occurred alongside the rise of the 'civil society', where local and regional centres sought greater distinction from the broader identity of the 'state', establishing their own unique identities through 'history'.⁴⁴

As discussed above, Liverpool's rapid expansion in the eighteenth century meant that the port rose to a position of pre-eminence fast, ranking as a substantial global city by 1801.⁴⁵ With the exception of Enfield's 1774 *Essay towards the History of Liverpool*, general histories of the town do not appear until the very end of the eighteenth century, emerging with James Wallace's text in 1795. Similarly, guidebooks designed to be carried by visitors, begin to be published in significant numbers at the very beginning of the nineteenth century.⁴⁶ The writing of Liverpool's story, therefore, coincides with the point at which it was most heavily involved in the transatlantic slave trade, and, crucially in the midst of national, public debates surrounding

⁴⁰ Terdiman, *Present Past*, 5.

⁴¹ Gillis, "Introduction," 7, 19.

⁴² Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Gillis, "Introduction," 3.

⁴³ Terdiman, *Present Past*, 6.

⁴⁴ Jose Harris, "Introduction: Civil Society in British History," in *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions*, ed. Jose. Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁴⁵ Pooley, "Living in Liverpool," 171.

⁴⁶ Davies, "Liverpool Guides, 1795-1914," 63

its abolition – debates in which Liverpool, as Europe’s leading slave trading port, frequently found itself at the centre.

Liverpool’s involvement in the trade peaked at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Between the years of 1801 and 1807, a total of 790 ships were deployed by the city, and figures from 1807 show that the city invested its largest amount of money into the slave trade at that time – a staggering £2.6 million.⁴⁷ Around this time, frictions were caused by Manchester denouncing Liverpool for selling shackles in its shops and similar critical dissociations of the city appeared in the *Leeds Mercury*.⁴⁸ In reaction to this, Liverpool enacted rituals of solidarity by toasting its slave trade at functions and ringing the bells of churches following the defeat of the first Abolition Bill in 1791.⁴⁹ Twelve petitions were sent from Liverpool in 1789 against the abolition of the slave trade compared to the solitary ones sent from Lancaster, Bristol and Glasgow.⁵⁰

Liverpool MPs, the mercantile, commercial and political elite spent decades arguing for the integral importance of the slave trade to the city, providing more detailed evidence against abolition than any other slave port between 1787 and 1807.⁵¹ However, whilst a large proportion of Liverpool’s political and commercial elite had vested interests in the transatlantic slave trade, including 25 of the town’s Lord Mayors between 1700 and 1820 and numerous MPs, one of the greatest perceived contradictions in Liverpool’s involvement in transatlantic slavery is the involvement of some of the town’s most celebrated citizens in campaigns for its abolition.⁵² William Roscoe (1753-1851) was a historian, poet and banker in the town.⁵³ He wrote poetry which was critical of the slave trade such as *The Wrongs of Africa* (1787) and *Mount Pleasant* (1777). Roscoe also wrote pamphlets in response to the Reverend Raymond Harris, a Spanish Jesuit priest who was awarded £100 by Liverpool Corporation as a positive

⁴⁷ Morgan, "Liverpool’s Dominance in the British Slave Trade, 1740-1807," 15.

⁴⁸ Drescher, "The Slaving Capital of the World," 133.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Longmore, "'Cemented by the Blood of a Negro?'," 243. Longmore acknowledges here that this may have largely been a marketing technique yet nonetheless indicates the strength of feeling on the matter from a varied group of stakeholders, which included gun-makers of Liverpool who suggest that without the slave trade they would suffer greatly, particularly in times of peace.

⁵¹ Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 260.

⁵² "Liverpool and the Slave Trade" *International Slavery Museum*. 2014.
<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/srd/liverpool.aspx> (accessed January 12, 2014)

⁵³ He is most well-known for *The Life of Lorenzo de' Medici* (1796) and the poem *The Butterfly's Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast* (1807).

endorsement for his pro-slavery literature. This exchange has been noted and repeated throughout the written histories of post-abolition Liverpool.⁵⁴

In 1806 Roscoe was elected MP for Liverpool and in 1807 he voted in favour of the Abolition Act, though this had not featured prominently in his election campaign, and he arrived back in Liverpool to threats of violence.⁵⁵ The exact extent of abolitionist activity in the town prior to abolition is debated. The anonymous author of *Liverpool and Slavery* (1884) writing under the pseudonym 'Dicky Sam' emphasised that there were only two Liverpool names on the membership list of the 1787 *Society for the Suppression of the Slave Trade*, compared to the 10,000 in Manchester.⁵⁶ The author enters into a back and forth conversation with himself in which he performs his own disbelief, building up to the final dismal figure:

Among the original names, how many belonged to Liverpool? Were there fifty? no; thirty? no; well, surely there were twenty? no; well, ten? no, then there could have not been less than five? Yes, there were less than five; then there must have been none? yes, there were some; well how many then? two!⁵⁷

In 1788, however, a few more names, all members of the 'Roscoe Circle' were added to the Society's list which now stood at eight.⁵⁸ Further, there were a number of other Liverpool notables who were involved in anti-slavery activities who did not sign the lists such as the

⁵⁴ A complex and dissonant engagement with this debate is reflected by James Picton who states in relation to this exchange that 'It would be useless to attempt to disinter arguments which are now utterly dead, repudiated and forgotten, and are only referred to as singular specimens of sophistry and perversity.' Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool Vol 1*. 225

⁵⁵ Brian Howman, "Abolitionism in Liverpool," in *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, ed. David Richardson, Anthony Tibbles, and Suzanne Schwarz (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 292.

⁵⁶ The author explains his use of the name as being for his own protection, that should he 'have the audacity' to publish anything on the subject of Liverpool and slavery people would want to know who he is. Anon, *Liverpool and Slavery: An Historical Account of the Liverpool-African Slave Trade. By a Genuine Dicky Sam* (Liverpool: A. Bowker & Son, 1884). "Dicky Sam" is a predecessor to 'Scouser' and means "a native born inhabitant of Liverpool"; see Ivor H. Evans, *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, 14th Edition* (London: Cassell Publishers Ltd, 1990), 328.

⁵⁷ Anon, *Liverpool and Slavery*, 76-77. The two names were Quaker merchant and ship-owner William Rathbone (1726-1789) and Dr Jonathan Binns (1747-1818)

⁵⁸ The Roscoe Circle was a predominantly Unitarian network which emerged in the 1780s and 1790s and comprised a number of William Roscoe's contemporaries who were involved closely in local and national politics, the arts, sciences, and education, and, crucially in the anti-slave trade movement. Ian Sutton, 'Roscoe Circle (act. 1760s-1830s)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press*, 11b; online edn, Sept 2013 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/theme/101301>, accessed 25 Feb 2014]. The names on the 1788 list were Daniel Daulby, William Rathbone (jnr), William Roscoe, William Wallace, Reverend John Yates and an anonymous subscriber generally thought to have been Scottish physician and Wallace's son-in-law, Dr James Currie. See Howman, "Abolitionism in Liverpool," 279.

Reverend William Shepherd (Unitarian Minister at Gateacre) and Edward Rushton the 'radical blind poet', formerly involved in the slave trade before contracting ophthalmia on board a slave ship, later founding the Liverpool School for the Blind.⁵⁹ As ever, this was a complicated social picture. As part of Liverpool's social elite, members of the Roscoe Circle would inevitably live and work alongside slave traders and West India merchants.⁶⁰ It was this potential conflict, Brian Howman suggests, that led abolition advocates such as the physician Dr James Currie, to conduct so much of their anti-slavery activity anonymously.⁶¹

The legal abolition of the British transatlantic slave trade in 1807 did not end debates over Liverpool and slavery any more than it ended enslavement itself. A far greater level of organised abolitionist activity gained pace in the 1820s with the formation of The Liverpool Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery in 1822 and the Liverpool Ladies' Anti-Slavery Association in 1827 who distributed pamphlets nationally.⁶² James Cropper was a vocal figure at the centre of these later campaigns and engaged in a public debate in the *Liverpool Mercury* and *Courier* with John Gladstone in 1823-24, though Gladstone wrote under the pseudonym *Mercator*.⁶³ Just as enslavement continued in British colonies into the 1830s and in the Americas into the 1860s, so did Liverpool's profits from the importation of slavery produced goods. The Rathbone family, though staunchly anti-slavery, profited greatly from the trade in American slave-grown cotton.⁶⁴

Nonetheless, public debate and publishing of the 1820s reflected a marked increase in anti-slavery campaigning in Liverpool from members of the Roscoe circle and beyond. The Reverend William Shepherd published *The True and Wonderful Story of Dick Liver* under the

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 283.

⁶⁰ William Roscoe for example was business partners with slave trader Thomas Leyland, was associated with the Earle family and shared membership on committees for charitable institutions with the likes of John Gladstone, pro-slavery advocate and Chairman of the Liverpool West Indian Association. *Ibid.*, 281.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*, 278, 89.

⁶³ This correspondence was subsequently published separately by the West India Association for the interest of their members and in a form more permanent than 'the perishable columns of a newspaper.' The West India Association, "The Correspondence Between John Gladstone, Esq., M.P., and James Cropper Esq., on the Present State of Slavery in th British West Indies and in the United States of America;," In *Correspondence Between John Gladstone and James Cropper*. (Liverpool: Thomas Kaye, 1824), <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=ELMNAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&authuser=0&hl=en&pg=GBS.PP3> (accessed February 26, 2014).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 281.

pseudonym Timothy Touchstone in 1824. A satirical history of the city, the text follows the life of 'Dick Liver' a personification of Liverpool. Shepherd, in a critical tract concerning the town's history of slave-trading outlines how 'for a season Dick turned kidnapper, having been accustomed to catch black men on the coast of Africa, and sell them by auction to the best bidder'.⁶⁵

By the following decade and the passing of the Emancipation Act (1833-34), sections of Liverpool's public discourse more vocally supports abolition, or, more accurately, supports abolitionists. In the 1834 edition of *The Picture*, the treatment of slavery has lost the defensive tone expressed in the 1805 edition and a language which condemns slavery is adopted, with much adjectival flourish, although remnants of the complicated defence remains within concerns of the 'profitability' of slavery, of 'that most nefarious, though profitable traffic in human thews and sinews; at the thought of which the heart sickens...'.⁶⁶ Following this hearty condemnation, the author turns to the celebration of abolition and abolitionists. Although only Wilberforce is mentioned by name this may be due to the proximity of his death (1833) to the publication of this guide.⁶⁷ William Roscoe, who died in 1831, though discussed positively in a later section of this guide, is not discussed in relation to his anti-slavery activity. He is praised here, as elsewhere, largely for his literary and cultural credentials. The contestation over how to memorialise William Roscoe following his death (see Chapter Eight) illustrates some of the complexities of being anti-slavery in the 'slaving capital of the world'.

⁶⁵ Shepherd is equally critical of the response of the political elite, those with whom members of the Roscoe circle had been at odds for the past few decades: 'When anybody intimated to him his opinion that this was not a fair kind of dealing, Dick was very peevish and cross – he looked as sour as vinegar, and made no answer to any remarks made on this branch of his traffic, but "you be d—d!" or "go look," or some such coarse phraseology. In short, it was observed, that while Dick was engaged in this business of kidnapping he grew more and more vulgar every day; and from a civil inoffensive gentleman, was fast degenerating into a blackguard.' Timothy Touchstone, "The True and Wonderful Story of Dick Liver," in *Liverpool Pamphlets, 1766-1849. Miscellaneous. 14* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Special Collections, 1824), 1-2.

⁶⁶ The passage continues and the just indignation of every good man is excited. The merest outline of the portraiture of the practices of this inhuman, bloody, and iniquitous trade, must bring forth tears even from the most flinty hearted, and ought to suffuse the cheek of the most insatiably avaricious dealer with a blush of the deepest crimson. Anon, *The Picture of Liverpool; or, Stranger's Guide* (Liverpool: Thomas Taylor, 1834), 27-8.

⁶⁷ 'But thanks to the truly virtuous and benevolent exertions of Wilberforce, and other benefactors of the human race, whose persevering and pacific triumphs over demoniac brutality and cupidity, have earned for them laurels that shall never fade, and a name that shall never perish, and whose memories shall be cherished by the good of all nations and of all ages, when the fame and remembrance of the warrior, who has raised himself into notoriety by his achievements in arms, shall sleep in oblivion.' Ibid., 28. This whole section remains word for word within the next edition of the guide three years later Anon, *The Picture of Liverpool; or, Stranger's Guide* (Liverpool: Thomas Taylor, 1837).

Histories of Liverpool, guidebooks and public discourse in pamphlets, literature and the local press in the early nineteenth century embody some of the dissonances of the concurrent debates over slavery, and Liverpool and slavery more specifically, through the emphasis of Liverpool's dependence on the trade which was simultaneously being debated in parliamentary discourse.⁶⁸ Alongside this, however, the inconsistencies implicit in promoting a line of trade increasingly viewed as a 'national sin' emerge through dissonant discursive statements which embody an increasingly contradictory language throughout the years of abolition and through emancipation.⁶⁹ However, despite Liverpool having 'overcome' abolition, the port was still in receipt of large quantities of slave-produced raw materials such as cotton. Importation of these goods was central to the relationship between Liverpool's commercial and political elite and America in the mid-nineteenth century.

Liverpool and America: Slavery, Cotton and the Confederacy

'The discoverer of America was the maker of Liverpool.'

The above quotation, inscribed on a statue of Christopher Columbus in Sefton Park, Liverpool (Figure 1), refers to the lucrative trade between Britain and America, much of which passed through the port of Liverpool. Slave-produced goods from American plantations constituted a large proportion of Liverpool's imports in the nineteenth century. Up to 1861, the majority of the global supply of raw cotton originated from plantations in the American South and was

⁶⁸ In particular seen within James Wallace, "A General and Descriptive History of the Ancient and Present State of the town of Liverpool." (Liverpool: R. Phillips, 1795), <http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&contentSet=ECCOArticles&type=multipage&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&docId=CW3302482356&source=gale&userGroupName=uniyork&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE> [accessed January 25, 2011]; John Corry, *The History of Liverpool from the Earliest Authenticated Period Down to the Present Time*. (Liverpool: William Robinson, 1810), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/wu.89039205182> [accessed December 6, 2010]; Edward Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer, of the County Palatine of Lancaster Volume 1*, ed. Owen Ashmore, Baines's Lancashire: A New Printing of the Two Volumes of History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County Palatine of Lancaster (Newton Abbot: David and Charles Publishers, 1824).

⁶⁹ In discussing the importance of the slave trade to Liverpool's recent commercial history, Henry Smithers speaks of it in terms of contrasts, of light and dark, '[i]n the bright picture that is about to be exhibited of the flourishing state of Liverpool commerce, there is one gloomy shade which truth requires to be brought forward'. Henry Smithers, *Liverpool, its Commerce, Statistics, and Institutions*. (Liverpool: Thomas Kaye, 1825), http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Liverpool_Its_Commerce_Statistics_and_In.html?id=jdc-AAAAYAAJ [accessed November 11 2010].



Figure 1: Statue of Christopher Columbus, Sefton Park, Liverpool. Author's Photograph

spun by Lancashire cotton workers.⁷⁰ This is largely taken as the reason behind many members of Liverpool's elite merchant class officially and vociferously supporting the Southern States during the American Civil War. The war between the Confederate South and the Union North was a battle in which the survival of the South's 'peculiar institution' of plantation slavery was directly implicated. Liverpool, a 'peculiar' port town, founded to a great degree on transatlantic slavery, benefitted from this institution beyond the Abolition Act of 1807 and the Emancipation Act of 1833/34. This dependence is evident throughout the region during the

⁷⁰ The livelihoods of up to an estimated one-fifth of English people depended on the cotton industry in the first half of the nineteenth century and around 800 million pounds of the cotton imported into Britain originated from the United States Sven Beckert, "Emancipation and Empire: Reconstructing the Worldwide Web of Cotton Production in the Age of the American Civil War," *The American History Review* 109, no. 5 (2004): 1405-08.

'cotton famine', when the importation of cotton ceased due to Northern blockades and a quarter of Lancashire's inhabitants became dependent on public assistance by early 1863.⁷¹

Liverpool supported the Confederate States at a time when Britain was theoretically 'neutral' on the matter.⁷² As Union Consul Thomas Dudley remarked at the time, '[n]o other city in Britain could with so much cause be accused of unofficially fighting on the side of the South during the War.'⁷³ However, the American Civil War re-ignited a mid-Victorian debate in Britain over the 'slavery question' which fractured beyond class and politics. Tories and Liberals supported the north and south variously, as did some factions of the working classes, meaning that 'proclaimed anti-slavery sentiments of England appeared to be no bar to pro-southern sympathies'.⁷⁴ Interestingly, however, Douglas Lorimer suggests that this reaction reflects the *strength* of anti-slavery sentiment in Britain at this time rather than its weakness, suspicious as many were of the intentions of the North, and perhaps too confident that slavery would be abolished under an independent Confederacy.⁷⁵ Liverpool Merchant James Spence argued that an independent South would have to improve the conditions of its slaves and that gradual abolition would follow if the new nation wished to participate in a 'civilised nineteenth century'.⁷⁶ Spence was, however, one of the largest subscribers to the Erlanger Confederate Cotton Loan (£50,000), and under the employment of *The Times*, wrote regularly in support of

⁷¹ *Ibid.*: 1410.

⁷² In October 1862, Prime Minister (1859-1865) Lord Palmerston (1784-1865) stated that Britain should 'continue merely to be lookers-on till the war shall have taken a more decided turn.' Quoted in Joseph M. Herson, "British Sympathies in the American Civil War: A Reconsideration," *The Journal of Southern History* 33, no. 3 (1967): 359.

⁷³ Quoted in Ron Jones, *The American Connection: The Story of Liverpool's Links With America From Christopher Columbus to The Beatles* (Moreton: Ron Jones, 1986), 15. A similar statement was made by Charles Adams who stated that Liverpool's ship-building actions were 'virtually tantamount to participation in the war by the people of Great Britain.' Quoted in Mary Ellison, *Support for Secession: Lancashire and the American Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 172. Though some abolitionists and anti-slavery advocates in Britain (including Lord Brougham, William Gladstone and even Samuel Wilberforce, son of William) also voiced support for the Southern states, this has been interpreted as more a sign of support for the perceived struggle for self-determination. Herson, "British Sympathies in the American Civil War," 359.

⁷⁴ Duncan Andrew Campbell, *English Public Opinion and the American Civil War* (Woodbridge: Royal Historical Society / The Boydell Press, 2003), 2-3; Douglas A. Lorimer, "The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions to the American Civil War," *The Historical Journal* 19, no. 2 (1976): 406.

⁷⁵ Lorimer, "The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions to the American Civil War," 406; Campbell, *English Public Opinion and the American Civil War*, 12.

⁷⁶ Lorimer, "The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions to the American Civil War," 409.

the South.⁷⁷ Following the Emancipation Proclamation of 1862 under which Lincoln declared the abolition of slavery a goal of the Civil War, such support stood on far shakier ground.⁷⁸ As Duncan Campbell argues, slavery meant that English opinion never completely sided with the Confederacy and this was further exacerbated by anti-British sentiments expounded by the South in the face of continued non-intervention.⁷⁹

As the 'centre of Confederate naval operations in Europe', much of the involvement of Liverpool in the Civil War centred on the construction of ships, including the infamous *Alabama*, as well as armaments.⁸⁰ Fittingly, perhaps, the first shots of the American Civil War were made from a Fawcett and Preston (Fosset) gun produced in Duke Street, Liverpool.⁸¹ Despite a number of other British ports such as Glasgow also being involved in the procurement of Confederate ships, the majority sailed from Liverpool where over 1,200 vessels came into or left Liverpool during 1861 alone.⁸² Liverpool soon became the centre for the provision of blockade runners, a trade which benefitted the port twice over, from the initial investment in ship construction to the (albeit limited) return of cotton from the South.⁸³

Confederate navy officer James Dunwoody Bulloch (1823-1901) of Georgia, was sent to Liverpool in 1861 under orders to obtain six commerce destroyer vessels.⁸⁴ Liverpool engineers Fawcett & Preston, W.C. Miller & Son and Laird Brothers were contracted and Bulloch continued to have ships built for the Confederacy throughout the Civil War. Bulloch also appointed a Liverpool based lawyer, F.S. Hull, to find weaknesses in the Neutrality

⁷⁷ Alfred Grant, *The American Civil War and the British Press* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2000), 162. The Erlanger Loan was the only foreign loan generated during the war. Contracted between the Confederacy and Emile Erlanger and Company, Paris, bonds were issued in London, Liverpool, Paris, Amsterdam and Frankfurt. The bonds were redeemable against Confederate cotton. See Judith Fenner Gentry, "A Confederate Success in Europe: The Erlanger Loan," *The Journal of Southern History* 36, no. 2 (1970).

⁷⁸ Lorimer, "The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions to the American Civil War," 411.

⁷⁹ Campbell, *English Public Opinion and the American Civil War*, 15.

⁸⁰ The *Alabama* was also known as the 290 because it was the engineers 290th ship, and as the *Enrica* which was Confederate Officer James Dunwoody Bulloch's personal alias for it. K. J. Williams, *Ghost Ships of the Mersey: A Brief History of Confederate Cruisers With Mersey Connections* (Birkenhead: Countrywise, 1983), 7, 25. Campbell, *English Public Opinion and the American Civil War*, 1.

⁸¹ Andrew Lees, *The Hurricane Port: A Social History of Liverpool* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2011), 59.

⁸² Grant, *The American Civil War and the British Press*, 115.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸⁴ Williams, *Ghost Ships of the Mersey*, 6.

Proclamation and Foreign Enlistment Act.⁸⁵ After the war Bulloch settled in Liverpool permanently and died in the city in 1901 – he is buried in Smithdown Road Cemetery. However, also resident in Liverpool was Thomas Haines Dudley, Bulloch’s Union adversary who arrived not long after Bulloch. It is alleged that the two clashed in public places, as Dudley tried to halt the construction and procurement of ships for the Confederate cause in Merseyside shipyards.⁸⁶

The Liverpool merchant class’s outspoken support for the Southern States did not pass without challenge. As John Belchem and Donald M. MacReild suggest, this support was met with some despair from Liverpool’s more liberal commentators.⁸⁷ One such ‘liberal gentleman’, Hugh Shimmin (1819-1879), editor of the weekly satirical journal *Porcupine* wrote critically about the Confederate cause and his contemporaries’ support of it, drawing on Liverpool’s own history of slavery as an argumentative device within this debate.⁸⁸ Pro-Union sentiment was also expressed however in one of Liverpool’s rival neighbouring cities. The Manchester abolitionists, who had long been concerned the Lancashire cotton industry’s dependence on slave-produced cotton, declared support for the North under the leadership of John Bright.⁸⁹ At Manchester Free Trade Hall, a meeting was held on 31st December 1862, where working men pledged support for the North.⁹⁰

Following the American Civil War, around four million formerly enslaved people gained their freedom and the nature of global cotton production had been dramatically transformed. Through the loss of the production of several million bales of cotton from the US South during 1861 to 1865, the global cotton market was forced to look elsewhere for its ‘white gold’,

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Frank J. Merli, *The Alabama, British Neutrality, and the American Civil War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 125.

⁸⁷ John Belchem and Donald M. MacReild, "Cosmopolitan Liverpool," in *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character and History*, ed. John Belchem (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), 325.

⁸⁸ This is further discussed in Chapter Six. Shimmin was born on the Isle of Man and moved to Liverpool in his teens, working as a book binder then finding some public recognition as a writer. Shimmin’s topics of choice were exposes of Liverpool’s ‘iniquities’, of drinking dens and dog-fighting taverns (later republished as *Liverpool Life* in 1857). In 1870 he was imprisoned for libel following his accusations of insurance fraud against maritime interests in the city. “Shimmin, Hugh (1819–1879),” John K. Walton in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50352> (accessed March 3, 2014).

⁸⁹ Lorimer, "The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions to the American Civil War," 418-19. In addition, the Glasgow New Association for the Abolition of Slavery and the Edinburgh Ladies Emancipation Society. *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Campbell, *English Public Opinion and the American Civil War*, 7.

shifting the focus to new forms of labour and imperial control of Asia and Africa.⁹¹ Moreover, the absence of the US merchant fleet during the war presented a commercial opportunity for Liverpool vessels, and the nineteenth century maritime economy of the city was transformed by through the increase in steamship voyages.⁹²

Interestingly, the last Confederate flag was lowered in Liverpool waters, where the southern raider, the CSS *Shenandoah* surrendered on 6th November 1865.⁹³ However, this did not mark the end of Liverpool's 'peculiar' relationship with America in trade or in memory. In time for the city's 700th birthday in 1907, cotton would be once again the 'most important trade which passes through Liverpool'.⁹⁴ Louis Lacey's commemorative souvenir history draws on a distinct Southern romanticism in discussion of trade, 'race', and Liverpool's 'heroic' contributions to the war:

The cotton trade has ever had the flavour of romance associated with it. One thinks of the picturesque South, and the quaint negro life. Then there are stories told in Liverpool by 'ancient mariners' who took part, of daring deeds and successful dashes through the Yankee blockade, with supplies, and back with the much-needed cotton. The 'Alabama,' that privateer with the wild career and desperate end, was a Mersey-built ship, with Liverpool men among her crew.⁹⁵

A romanticised involvement in the American Civil War is here approached through *living* memory, through the 'stories' of 'ancient mariners' who were there some half a century previously. In Liverpool's 750th birthday celebrations, George Chandler's commemorative history of the city, though absent of any prolonged discussion of slavery or indeed comment on the coinciding anniversary of the Abolition Act (1807), begins by illuminating another coinciding anniversary. Here, Chandler suggests that since '[t]he discoverer of America was indeed the maker of Liverpool [...] it is appropriate that the New World will be celebrating the

⁹¹ Beckert, "Emancipation and Empire," 1406.

⁹² Graeme J. Milne, "Maritime Liverpool," in *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character and History*, ed. John Belchem (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), 261.

⁹³ Campbell, *English Public Opinion and the American Civil War*, 1.

⁹⁴ Louis Lacey, *The History of Liverpool From 1207 to 1907. Some Notes. 700th Anniversary Souvenir* (Liverpool: Lyceum Press, 1907), 64.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 64-65.

350th anniversary of the first permanent English settlement in the same year that Liverpool celebrates its 750th anniversary.⁹⁶

Liverpool's relationship with the Confederate cause has also left more tangible imprints on the city's built environment. Number 10 Rumford Place held the offices of James Dunwoody Bulloch and was a hive of Southern activity, so much so that it was considered the 'unofficial' Confederate Embassy in Britain. Its neighbouring building, number 12 Rumford Place was named Charleston House after Carolina's pre-eminent slave port.⁹⁷ Now part of the University of Liverpool campus, 19 Abercromby Square was the last section of this originally residential site to be built. In February 1863 the building was leased by Liverpool Corporation to the Mozley family, bankers on behalf of Charles Kuhn Priouveau (1827-1887). Born in South Carolina, Priouveau moved to Liverpool in 1854 and was senior partner for Fraser Trenholm & Co., Confederate financial agents (housed in offices at 10 Rumford Place). Priouveau personalised 19 Abercromby Square, leaving a visual memory of Liverpool's connections with the Confederate cause. The stonework above the window over the front door bears the 'Bonnie Blue' star of South Carolina, and more 'Bonnie Blues' adorn the entrance columns. Painted on the ceiling inside the doorway is the cabbage palmetto tree, the state tree of South Carolina, with a protective serpent around its base (see Figure 2).⁹⁸

These connections and others relating to links between Liverpool and America were developed into a themed guidebook by local historian Ron Jones in 1986. Within this Jones presented these links as another feature of Liverpool exceptionalism, that 'London apart, the city can boast more links with America than any other city in Britain'.⁹⁹ Like Chandler before him, Jones also quotes, '[t]he Discoverer of America was the maker of Liverpool' from the inscription of the Columbus statue and includes an image within the opening section of his book. Though happily referenced by historians, this statue has come to symbolise the dissonance and conflict of Liverpool's exceptional links with America, as intimately bound with colonialism and transatlantic slavery. A Columbus Day (12th October) ceremony had been held in the Sefton Park Palmhouse in Columbus's honour since at least 1975, attended by city dignitaries, the American Ambassador and American soldiers from Burtonwood military base

⁹⁶ George Chandler, *Liverpool* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1957), 9.

⁹⁷ Lees, *The Hurricane Port*, 59.

⁹⁸ There were several decorative alterations also made to the interior of the building including depictions of cherubs riding turkeys on the ceilings. References for this section are taken from Adrian Reginald Allan, *The Building of Abercromby Square* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool, 1986), 14-15.

⁹⁹ Jones, *The American Connection*, 7.



Figure 2: Palmetto Tree design in 19 Abercromby Square. Author's Photograph

near Warrington.¹⁰⁰ This is thought to be the only ceremony of its kind in Britain, and the only statue of Columbus in the country. Thomas Lloyd-Jones has suggested that it is due to its value, that the statue is locked away.¹⁰¹ However, Jacqueline Nassy Brown suggests the statue is obscured because its celebration has been met with contestation from people who view the ceremony as an insult to the memory of the repression and genocide which occurred as a consequence of Columbus's voyage.¹⁰² In 1991, demonstrations against the ceremony hosted by the Anglo-Ibero-American Society were held and the following year Sarah Norman, a Labour

¹⁰⁰ The ceremony included military fanfare, wreath-laying and celebratory sherry-drinking. Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail*, 18. There is a video of the 1988 ceremony available online. See John Edward Evans, "Columbus Day 12th October 1988 at Palm House Sefton Park Liverpool," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_N2hz80-rg (accessed March 3, 2014). In a series called 'Time Out', a photograph of the 1975 ceremony was sent into the *Post* by a reader. Eddie Barford, "Time Out: Looking Back," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 13, 2008.

¹⁰¹ Lloyd-Jones, *Know Your Liverpool*, 57.

¹⁰² Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail*, 18.

councillor for Liverpool, commented that '[h]is voyage heralded genocide, imperialism and slavery. It is wrong to continue to commemorate these links in a celebratory way every year.'¹⁰³

The Later Nineteenth Century: Slavery, Anti-Slavery, and Social Commentaries

*'My memory is surprising. I am often astonished at myself in recalling to mind events, persons, and circumstances, that occurred so long ago as to be almost forgotten by everybody else.'*¹⁰⁴

– James Stonehouse, 1863

Across much of the nineteenth century, Liverpool's involvement in transatlantic slavery remains within the *living* memory of a number of her citizens. Writing in 1863, James Stonehouse raises the subject within his autobiographical *Recollections of Old Liverpool, By a Nonagenarian*. Born around 1769, Stonehouse discusses his eighteenth century memories of childhood and the cruelty of his peers, stating that '[i]t was a cruel time, and the effects of the slave-trade and privateering were visible in the conduct of the lower classes and of society generally'.¹⁰⁵ Stonehouse writes that his first memory was of the launch of his father's slave ship, the *Mary Ellen*:

In her hold were long shelves with ring-bolts in rows in several places. I used to run along these shelves, little thinking what dreadful scenes would be enacted upon them. The fact is that the *Mary Ellen* was destined for the African trade, in which she made many very successful voyages. In 1779, however, she was converted into a privateer. My father, at the present time, would not, perhaps, be thought very respectable; but I assure you he was so considered in those days. So many people in Liverpool were, to use an old and trite sea-phrase, "tarred with the same brush" that these occupations were scarcely, indeed, were not at all, regarded as anything derogatory from a man's character. In fact, during the privateering time, there was scarcely a man, woman, or child in Liverpool, of any standing, that did not hold a share in one of these ships. Although a slave captain, and afterwards a privateer, my father was a kind and just man – a good father, husband, and friend.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Sarah Norman, quoted in Jonathan Foster, "Columbus Set to Become Slave to Political Fashion," *The Independent*, September 12, 1992.

¹⁰⁴ James Stonehouse, *Recollections of Old Liverpool, By a Nonagenarian* (Liverpool: J.F. Hughes, 1863), 5. This book originally appeared in the *Liverpool Compass* in chapters but popularity led to many more.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

Though Stonehouse's accounts should be read with a degree of caution, coming from a man who suggests he can 'recollect every occurrence that has fallen under my cognizance' from the age of six, the above passage illustrates some of the over-riding themes of later nineteenth century engagements with slavery which sought to reconcile the inhumanity of the slave trade with the memory of individuals. Writing in the 1870s, James Picton blames custom for its 'wonderful effect in blinding the moral perceptions' and that '[m]any of the merchants engaged in the trade were honourable, kind-hearted, benevolent men in their own sphere'.¹⁰⁷ He uses the example of John Newton's involvement in both the church and slavery as a reason for making 'large allowances for circumstances and associations'.¹⁰⁸

However, as we move into the last few decades of the nineteenth century and further away from its *living* memory, Liverpool's historic involvement in transatlantic slavery also comes to be used within social commentaries critical of particular institutions and social conditions in the city, and indeed beyond. A number of commentators at this time are concerned that Liverpool face up to its slave trading past and explore more critically the memory of her 'well-respected' slaving elite. Furthermore, in the 1880s, the *intertextual* influence of James Picton's *Memorials of Liverpool* (above), and the coinciding 50 year anniversary of the Emancipation Act of 1834 demonstrate how previous memory-work and commemorative moments play into Liverpool's slavery discourse.

In 1884, Liverpool held no public celebrations of the 'Emancipation Jubilee' of August 1st. In spite of, or indeed perhaps because of, this absence, the liberal-supporting *Liverpool Review* published a number of articles on 'Slave-Owning Liverpool'.¹⁰⁹ 'There was no celebration in Liverpool this Saturday of the Jubilee of the abolition of slavery,' the first of these articles begins, 'though as our readers are no doubt aware, Liverpool owes a great deal

¹⁰⁷ Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool Vol 1*. Sir James Allanson Picton (1805-1889) was an antiquary and architect. He was born in Liverpool and was an important figure within the city. He became a council member in 1849 and began campaigning for a public library which he stated should be paid for with public money. Because of his efforts, a penny-rate levy was introduced to help pay for both the public library and museum (buildings for which were provided by Sir William Brown in 1860) and the Picton Reading Room, modelled on the reading room at the British Library, was added in 1879. Picton was chairman of the library and museums committee from 1851 until his death, a president of the Liverpool Philomathic Society, the literary and philosophical society, the architectural society, the geological society and a number of other societies. C.W. Sutton, "'Picton, Sir James Allanson (1805-1889)'" rev. Eric Glasgow, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹⁰⁸ He follows this defence with a disclaimer that stresses how, whilst this 'context' is necessary, he is in no way supportive of the slave trade. Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool Vol 1*.

¹⁰⁹ "Slave Owning Liverpool," *The Liverpool Review of Politics, Society, Literature and Art*, August 16, August 9, 16 and 23, 1884.

of its commercial importance to the infamous traffic.¹¹⁰ John Davies has argued that the articles in the *Review* were particularly concerned that Liverpool contemporaries should not hide behind moral justification of the slave trade.¹¹¹ Perhaps this is why such graphic details are deployed concerning the realities of a frequently euphemistically categorised 'cargo'. The following quotation is a reaction to the passive terms in which changes to transatlantic trading are frequently discussed. Frequently, Liverpool is presented as moving naturally into the shipment of 'human cargoes' having previously transported neutral 'Manchester goods':

Manchester goods didn't turn the hold of the vessel into a floating hell of indescribable agony and suffering, and the freight could be delivered in 'good order and condition,' which could not by any means be said of the maimed, bruised, wounded, and half dead negro men, women and children who had gone through the horrors of the 'middle passage'.¹¹²

The discrepancy between perceptions of slave traders during their time and in the 1880s is framed in a more critical tone than within Picton's text. In an interesting section, the author suggests that the memory of these men as individuals has perished with their personal deaths, having become 'mingled with the dust of St. Peter's and St. Nicholas's churchyards' and whilst '[t]heir memory has perished' to a larger degree 'a faithful record has been kept of all the blood and tears and suffering upon which they built their wealth.'¹¹³ In discussing one of Liverpool's philanthropist heroes, Bryan Blundell, the author hints at the ambiguity of his maritime-trading activities:

Perhaps Bryan Blundell was a slave trader, like most of his contemporaries. He lived in the slave trading epoch, and it seems difficult to believe that he could have done so without being "tarred with the same brush" as those with whom he habitually associated and did business.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ "Slave-Owning Liverpool," *The Liverpool Review of Politics, Society, Literature and Art*. August 9, 1884.

¹¹¹ John. Davies, "Political Satire: Nineteenth-century Comic Histories of Liverpool," *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 157(2008): 111.

¹¹² "History of Liverpool," *The Liverpool Review of Politics, Society, Literature and Art*. May 30, 1885.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* Bryan Blundell established the Blue Coat School for poor children (opened 1717-1718). The Bluecoat Chambers is the oldest surviving building in central Liverpool. Longmore, "Civic Liverpool: 1680-1800," 149.

The author here draws on the same ‘tarred with the same brush’ phrase used by Stonehouse.¹¹⁵ Whilst the author acknowledges that he is ‘indebted to Sir James Picton’s “Memorials”’ for knowledge on Liverpool and slavery, Picton’s request for moral allowances for slave traders past are quoted, with the additional comment that:

Large allowance indeed is necessary for a time when men, women, and children could be torn from their native land, and shipped “by the grace of God in good order and condition, marked and numbered as in the margin,” just as they now mark and number imported American cattle.¹¹⁶

However, part of the above quotation, ‘by the grace of God’, also points to a general theme within this and other ‘exposés’ of Liverpool and slavery which situates such responses firmly in response to philosophical and moral anxieties of the later nineteenth century. The Liverpool slave merchants, now increasingly the focus of criticism, are used alongside the institution of slavery as vehicles through which to criticise the church, the bible, and actions of the clergy. The *Liverpool Review’s* consistently critical tone focuses particular attention on the role of organised religion at a high-point of an apparent Victorian ‘crisis of faith’ in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.¹¹⁷ Whilst it is not possible to ascertain with any certainty the spiritual position of the anonymous authors of the 1880s texts considered here, their criticism of the role of Christianity within the history of slavery aligns closely with broader secular and irreligious discourse. The *Liverpool Review* suggests Liverpool slave-traders may have felt

¹¹⁵ According to a number of sources, Bryan Blundell did have connections with the slavery business, having ‘invested heavily in West Indian slaving’ by the late 1720s Lorena S. Walsh, "Liverpool's Slave Trade to the Colonial Chesapeake: Slaving on the Periphery," in *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, ed. David Richardson, Anthony Tibbles, and Suzanne Schwarz (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 104. The Slave Voyages database also produces results for 67 voyages which list Bryan Blundell as a sole or co-owner of a vessel Voyages Database, "Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database." Laurence Westgath states that Bryan Blundell was involved in the transportation of ‘“refuse slaves” from captivity on Caribbean sugar plantations to less labour-intensive work on the tobacco plantations of the Chesapeake’. Laurence Westgath, "Built on Slavery," *Institute of Historic Buildings Conservation* 108(2009): 27. Given the unease over Blundell being ‘tarred with the same brush’ as his perhaps more heavily involved slave-trading contemporaries, it is of interest to note that Blundell also took over a tar business from William Clayton, in 1715. See Longmore, "Civic Liverpool: 1680-1800," 118.

¹¹⁶ "History of Liverpool." *Liverpool Review of Politics, Society, Literature and Art*, September 26, 1885

¹¹⁷ The earlier roots of avowed atheism in Britain are in fact popularly traced back to a Liverpool physician, Matthew Turner, who published *Answer to Dr Priestly’s Letter to a Philosophical Unbeliever* in 1782. David Berman, *A History of Atheism in Britain* (New York: Croom Helm, 1988), 110. For reading on the ‘Victorian crisis of faith’ see Anthony Symondson, ed. *Victorian Crisis of Faith* (London: SPCK, 1970); Richard J. Ed Helmstadter and Bernard Ed Lightman, eds., *Victorian Faith in Crisis: Essays on Continuity and Change in Nineteenth-Century Religious Belief* (London: MacMillan, 1990); Frank M. Turner, "The Victorian Crisis of Faith and the Faith That was Lost," in *Victorian Faith in Crisis: Essays on Continuity and Change in Nineteenth-Century Religious Belief*, ed. Richard J. Ed Helmstadter and Bernard Ed Lightman (London: MacMillan, 1990).

morally justified in their business endeavours since, 'spiritual pastors told them from the pulpit that so far from there being anything wrong in it, it was an admirable institution, which had full scriptural sanctions and approval.'¹¹⁸ The slave-traders held a 'conviction that it was perfectly legitimate and honourable; a belief in which they were encouraged by their religious teachers.'¹¹⁹ The anonymous author of *Liverpool and Slavery* (1884) also questions the apparent hypocrisy of slave-trading activities undertaken by 'Christians', stating that their actions 'ought to have shocked humanity, and have been a perpetual disgrace to a barbarous people, and how much more to a civilised community, and a people professing Christianity.'¹²⁰

However, where the *Liverpool Review* focuses largely on the clergy, *Liverpool and Slavery's* criticism extends to religious literature. Across the nineteenth century, the Bible held a central focus for sceptics and doubters.¹²¹ 'Dicky Sam' states that slavery 'was supported by the Bible, and strenuously advocated by the clergy of the time'. The author stresses the racialised inhumanity of Christian principles which taught that 'the blacks were of an inferior race, and were to be bought and sold by the white man'. 'How many crimes' asks the author, 'have been committed in the name of that Book?'¹²²

Beyond the church itself, however, moral and social conditions and broader interests in contemporary politics were also significant reasons to criticise religion.¹²³ Population growth, industrialization, urbanisation, and the associated impacts on public health, poverty and poor housing, sat awkwardly against 'God's order, harmony, and stability' which the natural theology of the eighteenth century had foregrounded.¹²⁴ Across the nineteenth

¹¹⁸ "Slave-Owning Liverpool," August 9, 1884.

¹¹⁹ "Slave-Owning Liverpool," September 26, 1885. Later in this article, the author makes direct reference to the contradictory use of the phrase, 'bless you', and revisits the words of the bill of lading discussed previously: 'They had no idea that this was blasphemous, bless you. [...] So they went on consigning men, women and children to the indescribable horrors of the slave ship's hold, with a fate worse than death at the end of the voyage, unless the victims were happy enough to obtain a release in its course, and doing this "by the grace of God!"'

¹²⁰ Anon, *Liverpool and Slavery*, 13.

¹²¹ Turner, "The Victorian Crisis of Faith and the Faith That was Lost," 16.

¹²² Anon, *Liverpool and Slavery*, 13-14.

¹²³ Susan Budd, *Varieties of Unbelief: Atheists and Agnostics in English Society, 1850-1960* (London: Heinemann, 1977), 104-06.

¹²⁴ Reba N. Soffer, "History and Religion: J.R. Seeley and the Burden of the Past," in *Religion and Irreligion in Victorian Society: Essays in Honor of R.K. Webb*, ed. Richard W. Davis and Richard J. Helmstadter (London: Routledge, 1992), 133.

century, Liverpool's population grew from 77,653 in 1801 to 746,421 by 1911.¹²⁵ Such rapid population increase alongside burgeoning urbanisation brought with it problems and by the 1840s Liverpool had been labelled the 'Black Spot on the Mersey' for the town's high mortality rates and poor living conditions.¹²⁶ The mass immigration of Irish people in the middle of the nineteenth century received prolonged contemporary social commentary in relation to poverty, health, housing and Victorian morality. Liverpool's Irish community in 1841 stood at 49,639, yet following the famine (1846-47), this increased to 580,000 Irish people passing through Liverpool, though many subsequently emigrated to North America.¹²⁷

These social conditions and, moreover, the morality of impoverished people living in them, became a topic of concern for Victorians keen to 'save and to better the poor and the sick'.¹²⁸ This social responsibility was largely directed at one of the foremost vices of the day - alcohol. Arrests for drunkenness were the largest category of crime in Liverpool at the end of the nineteenth century and the city soon gained a reputation for having a 'drinking problem', leading police to launch a campaign against long opening hours for drinking establishments in the 1880s and 1890s.¹²⁹ Drink was a major concern for *The Liverpool Review*. Anxieties over the effects of alcohol were expressed through a satirical take on eighteenth century consumption of slave-produced rum, juxtaposed against the hypocrisy of the high social standing of Liverpool's slave-trading elite who:

[...] imported rum of fine quality from the West Indies, and showed their appreciation of its quality by consuming large quantities of it; an indulgence which may have had rather a disturbing effect on the "gentility" of their dress and deportment.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Pooley, "Living in Liverpool," 171.

¹²⁶ Concerns over health and housing led to the establishment of the first Medical Officer for Health in England and in the 1860s the first council houses were created in Liverpool. *Ibid.*, 173, 208-09.

¹²⁷ In 1851 22.3 percent of Liverpool's population were Irish born (Wales 5.4 and Scotland 3.7 percent). The poorer Catholic Irish population of Liverpool resided mostly in the dockside and inner city locations, and those foreign born were also largely based in dockside locations. *Ibid.*, 187-88.

¹²⁸ Owen Chadwick, "The Established Church Under Attack," in *Victorian Crisis of Faith*, ed. Anthony Symondson (London: SPCK, 1970), 91.

¹²⁹ Pooley, "Living in Liverpool," 241.

¹³⁰ "Slave-Owning Liverpool," August 9, 1884. A similar section is published in the comic histories of the following year: 'The rum was a favourite tippie with the be-laced, be-wigged, and knee-breeched merchants who congregated in Castle Street, in front of the old Exchange, to transact their business, and no doubt do their best to over-reach their neighbours. For the better achievement of this laudable object they would no doubt abstain from rum until the arrival of evening permitted to indulge in it in the seductive form of punch, when they would no doubt make full amends for their discreet abstinence.' "History of Liverpool," September 26, 1885.

In another 'exposé' of Liverpool and slavery, also published anonymously, this time by an author using 'Robin Hood' as a pseudonym, the author states that slavery was 'the foundation of the greatness and prosperity of this town.'¹³¹ Yet, in a partial defence of slave-traders of the eighteenth century the author suggests that:

The fashion and morals of the time make all the difference. To-day it is the "accursed drink traffic"; a hundred years ago it was the "accursed slave trade"; a hundred years hence it will be the accursed – well, the people who don't advertise in newspapers like the *Commercial World*.¹³²

The author uses the immorality of the slave trade to stress the immorality of the 'drink traffic', against a tongue-in-cheek comment concerning other products or lines of trade that companies currently advertising in the *Commercial World* might be criticised for. Put plainly, if crudely, 'even the horrors of the Liverpool slave trade have been exceeded by the horrors of the Liverpool drink traffic.'¹³³ In the following week's column, the author questions whether drink-trafficking might be given the same exposé treatment as he is currently giving the slave trade.¹³⁴ The author completes his criticisms of both trades by questioning the morality of Liverpool's political elite and their vested interests, past and present, where '[a] Council composed entirely of brewers and distillers would, no doubt, pass some remarkable resolutions in our own day regarding another traffic which has its slaves.'¹³⁵

In addition to the gulf between God's good grace, Christian doctrine and social realities, the increasingly militant expression of organised Christianity throughout the nineteenth century turned many further away from religion.¹³⁶ However, not everyone joined

¹³¹ Whilst it is possible that 'Robin Hood' was the author's actual name, this seems unlikely given both the proliferation of other anonymous authors on the subject at this time and indeed the nature of the name itself and the legend to which it belongs. Robin Hood, "The Liverpool Slave Trade," *The Liverpool Commercial World*, March 11, 1893. Four articles in total were published in relation to 'The Liverpool Slave Trade' though only two are cited in this thesis due to restrictions on access during the closure of Liverpool Record Office.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ 'Will any journalist of the next century write of the Liverpool drink traffic and all its horrors, abuses, miseries, deaths, and enormous profits, with the same disgust and pity as I have felt in this traffic of a bygone age in human flesh and blood?' Robin Hood. "The Liverpool Slave Trade" in *The Liverpool Commercial World*, March 11, 1893

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Turner, "The Victorian Crisis of Faith and the Faith That was Lost," 10-11.

the ranks of atheism and this intensification occurred across the 'peripheries' as well as the 'core' of the later nineteenth century British Empire in ways which were ultimately linked to the memory of Emancipation. Despite the lack of any public ceremony in Liverpool, *The Liverpool Mercury* published an article marking the 1884 jubilee of 'the great Act of Emancipation' and reported on the national commemorations in London.¹³⁷ This article outlined how 'it will not be forgotten that much remains to be done' in relation to East Africa and 'Moslem slave traders' proving that '[t]he world has still room for the work of the Anti-Slavery Society.'¹³⁸

The memory of emancipation changed shape from 1833 to embody new narratives of moral imperial right, and to reflect new contexts, agendas and civilising missions. Narratives surrounding the economic justifications for slavery's abolition were gradually displaced, and by 1884 moral narratives came to dominate the commemorative agenda. These foregrounded a 'tradition' of British anti-slavery which some have argued reflected and supported rhetorical justifications for the 'New Imperialism' of the late nineteenth century, with the emancipation jubilee also marking the cusp of the 'scramble for Africa'.¹³⁹ Richard Huzzey has argued that a tighter bond between anti-slavery and imperial expansion existed, suggesting that rather than being a mere smokescreen, justification or passive propaganda for the imperial project, anti-slavery as an ideology, was more of a driving force.¹⁴⁰ Such an ideology of emancipation and freedom could nonetheless sit comfortably alongside growing nineteenth century racism, frustration and angst in reaction to African peoples' inability to see the error of their ways, or more unfathomably, the lack of capitalist sense in enslavement.¹⁴¹ The 'moral imperialism' of a post-Emancipation British Empire was a suitable space for the reinforcement of racial superiority – a status of strength which inferred a sense of obligation to the 'weak', seeing as

¹³⁷ "To-day - the first of August - [...]," *The Liverpool Mercury*, August 1, 1884. The London event was discussed in more detail the following day, "Anti-Slavery Jubilee," *The Liverpool Mercury*, August 2, 1884.

¹³⁸ "To-day - the first of August - [...]."

¹³⁹ Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*, 90; Seymour Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment: Free Labor Versus Slavery in British Emancipation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 227.

¹⁴⁰ Richard Huzzey, *Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 132-60.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 141.

its duty the civilisation of such societies, and, crucially, a responsibility to convert subjects to Christianity.¹⁴²

In 1897, at the peak of British 'High Imperialism', little known author, Gomer Williams, published a text which, over 100 years later, remains an important resource for the study of Liverpool and slavery.¹⁴³ Whilst claiming to have restricted himself to the 'plain statement of facts' of this 'national sin', the author nonetheless reflects on the nature of contemporary Imperial drives:

Though we are on the threshold of the Twentieth Century, with its tremendous possibilities, there are indications that white men still exist who would gladly revert to the iniquitous system of a bygone age, and enslave the African in his own land. If anything in this book should help to awaken the public conscience to jealously watch that under no specious pretext shall the bodies and souls of "African labourers" be again handed over to the tender mercies of greedy and unscrupulous adventurers, the author will rejoice.¹⁴⁴

Quite who these 'white men' are is unclear, though this statement aligns with European competition over the 'Scramble for Africa'. Like previous authors, Williams repeats comments made by James Picton (emphasised) concerning moral context and the perception of Liverpool slave-traders. At the end of the nineteenth century, and in the midst of a broader Imperialism and British pride which foregrounds 'continuing' drives to end slavery in Africa, this moral complexity is most apparent:

However we may detest the trade, and shudder at the horrors which necessarily accompanied it, even when most rigorously supervised, and conducted by the most humane instruments; though we know that **no casuistry can convert wrong into right, yet we remember that custom has a wonderful effect in blinding the moral perceptions**; that men's standard of morality is being raised, as the leaven of Christianity spreads with power, and that ages, like individuals, are prone to

"Compound for sins they are inclined to,
By damning those they have no mind to,"¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Ibid., 132; Andrew Porter, "Introduction," in *The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880-1914*, ed. Andrew Porter (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 2003), 2.

¹⁴³ Williams, *History of the Liverpool Privateers*. In his introduction to the 2004 reprint, David Eltis suggests that this text is significant in large part for its replication of primary material, much of which has been subsequently lost since its publication (page xiii to xiv).

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., xxvi.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 595-96.

The awkward acknowledgement of slavery and slave-traders in Liverpool history is presented against a nineteenth century progressive framework which outlines moral development, where 'Christianity spreads with power'. This passage reflects contemporary Imperialism within the confines of its own rhetoric; the emphasis of the inhumanity of the slave trade reflecting Anti-Slavery discourse, yet conflicting with the act of writing a history of this in relation to the author's hometown. Such were the complexities of being a former 'slaving capital of the world' and the contemporary second city of an 'Anti-Slavery Empire'.

Liverpool Black History and the 'Liverpool-Born Black' Experience

*'Part of our problem is that we do not know our histories; part of your problem is that you do not know our histories.'*¹⁴⁶

– Dr Stephen Small

Liverpool has the oldest established black community in Britain, perhaps in Europe, and one which in comparison to other British black communities is primarily of West African as opposed to Caribbean origin.¹⁴⁷ The Liverpool black presence has been dated back to the eighteenth century, with accounts of a sizeable number of African school children in and around the city, though opinions vary over whether the current black community can be safely dated back this far.¹⁴⁸ What makes the Liverpool black presence 'exceptional', argues local historian Ray Costello, is its continuity; that some families can trace ten generations of settlement in the city. Ray Costello's history of black Liverpool places the origins of the community firmly in the context of the transatlantic slave trade. He states that the Liverpool

¹⁴⁶ Stephen Small, "Case for Black History in Mainstream Agenda," *Charles Wootton News*, June 1999.

¹⁴⁷ Ray Costello, *Black Liverpool: The Early History of Britain's Oldest Black Community, 1730-1918* (Liverpool: Picton Press, 2001), 8. Diane Frost, "Ambiguous Identities: Constructing and De-constructing Black and White "Scouse" Identities in Twentieth Century Liverpool," in *Northern Identities: Historical Interpretations of 'The North' and 'Northernness'*, ed. Neville Kirk (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 196. Frost states that 'Liverpool boasts one of the older-established and largest indigenous black communities in the country'.

¹⁴⁸ Jane Longmore suggests there is insufficient evidence to suggest a sizeable and continuous community from this time though Colin Pooley suggests that there may have been some second generation African-Caribbean descended people. See Longmore, "Civic Liverpool: 1680-1800," 161; Pooley, "Living in Liverpool," 189. Peter Fryer however gives the account of African school children and Ian Law suggests there has been a continual black presence in Liverpool since the 17th century Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto, 1984), 60; Law, *A History of Race and Racism in Liverpool, 1660-1950*, v.

black community is 'both a direct and indirect result of the Slave Trade', that black people entered Liverpool through the 'to and fro of commerce' and the desire of wealthy merchants to own 'highly fashionable black servants'.¹⁴⁹ Through this 'to and fro', connections to Africa were facilitated and people of African descent were coming to Liverpool for multiple reasons; free and enslaved, as servants, and as the children of white plantation owners and African women. Ian Law has argued that because so much of Liverpool's trade was dependent on Africa and the Caribbean, on slaves and slave-produced goods, 'the question of race became bound up inevitably with economic life in the port.'¹⁵⁰ An 1860 account by Charles Dickens is frequently quoted in Liverpool histories whereby Dickens describes 'Dark Jack' as a black sailor in a Liverpool public house alongside British, Scandinavian, Spanish, Maltese, Finnish Jacks and 'Loafing Jack of the Stars and Stripes'.¹⁵¹

Liverpool's black population grew over the course of the nineteenth century alongside increasingly close trading connections with West Africa through the trade in palm oil, and subsequently through the employment of West African Seamen in the Elder Dempster Company (founded 1868).¹⁵² By 1871, census data shows that Liverpool had the largest African-Asian population outside the capital, though this growing community was met with increasing contempt.¹⁵³ Liverpool's black presence has influenced the city's collective memory of slavery in a myriad of ways; informed and impacted by national discourses of empire and colonialism which necessarily held race and racialised discourse at their heart, the city's unique engagement with the black Atlantic has led to unique influences on its memory. In 1884, 'Dicky Sam' states that he was prompted to think about Liverpool's role in the slave trade after seeing black people in the city:

Not long ago, as I was strolling on Mann Island, in a musing mood, a batch of negroes passed by me, this turned my thoughts on niggers, slaves, and Africa, then came the

¹⁴⁹ Costello, *Black Liverpool*, 8-9.

¹⁵⁰ Law, *A History of Race and Racism in Liverpool, 1660-1950*, 1.

¹⁵¹ Charles Dickens, "The Uncommercial Traveller." (London: Chapman and Hall, 1860), <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=RsMBAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&authuser=0&hl=en&pg=GBS.PA1> (accessed March 15, 2014). Referenced in Law, *A History of Race and Racism in Liverpool, 1660-1950*.

¹⁵² Law, *A History of Race and Racism in Liverpool, 1660-1950*, 25; Diane Frost, "Racism, Work and Unemployment: West African Seamen in Liverpool," in *Ethnic Labour and British Imperial Trade: A History of Ethnic Seafarers in the UK*, ed. Diane Frost (London: F. Cass, 1995), 24-25.

¹⁵³ Law, *A History of Race and Racism in Liverpool, 1660-1950*, 21.

climax: Liverpool and Slavery; or, what part did Liverpool take in those wealth-getting times?¹⁵⁴

‘Liverpool-born Black’: Identity and its Contentions

Diane Frost has suggested that Liverpool black identity in the twentieth century was forged as a mechanism for showing solidarity against common experiences of racism expressed through the ‘microculture’ of ‘Scouseness’ which is consistently presented as white and working class.¹⁵⁵ The distinct historic composition of the Liverpool-born black community has been determined by economic marginalization, geographic separation and the shared experiences of discrimination, leading many white women living in Liverpool ‘black areas’ to identify as part of the ‘black community’, a point which emphasises the significance of family influences and social identity.¹⁵⁶ Liverpool’s racialised geographic boundaries originate in nineteenth century immigration and settlement, where the area around the South Docks housed different elements of the black community as well as a substantial number of white working class, Irish and other migrant settlers including Chinese, Scandinavians and Russian ‘aliens’.¹⁵⁷ Following post World War Two slum clearance initiatives, much of the south dock area was cleared and the black population moved into the Granby/Toxteth (‘Liverpool 8’) area.¹⁵⁸

A particular terminology has evolved in an attempt to confront the specificity of place and people through the use of the identifier ‘Liverpool-born Black’ (LBB).¹⁵⁹ ‘Stephen’, a LBB

¹⁵⁴ Anon, *Liverpool and Slavery*.

¹⁵⁵ Frost, “Ambiguous Identities.” See also John Belchem, “An Accent Exceedingly Rare,” in *Merseypride: Essays in Liverpool Exceptionalism*, ed. John Belchem (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000). This point is also argued in Small, “Racialised Relations in Liverpool,” 517.

¹⁵⁶ White women in Diane Frost’s interviews referred to themselves as ‘we, the Black community.’ Frost, “Ambiguous Identities.” See also Mark Christian, “Black Identity in Liverpool: An Appraisal,” in *Black Organisation and Identity in Liverpool: A Local, National and Global Perspective*, ed. William Ackah and Mark Christian (Liverpool: Charles Wootton College Press, 1997), 68.

¹⁵⁷ Law, *A History of Race and Racism in Liverpool, 1660-1950*, 19; Andrea Murphy, *From the Empire to the Rialto: Racism and Reaction in Liverpool, 1918-1948* (Birkenhead: Liver Press, 1995), 5.

¹⁵⁸ Marij van Helmond and Donna Palmer, *Staying Power: Black Presence in Liverpool* (Liverpool: National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside, 1991), 6.

¹⁵⁹ Mark Christian stresses the ‘uniqueness’ of this term through noting that other towns and cities do not replicate this phrasing, i.e. there are now ‘Birmingham born Blacks’. Christian, “Black Identity in Liverpool: An Appraisal,” 72. The earliest reference I have found so far to the use of this term has been in Gideon Ben-Tovin and Rashid Mufti, *Merseyside Against Racism - First Annual Report of MARA - Merseyside Anti-Racist Alliance* (Liverpool: Merseyside Anti-Racist Alliance, 1979).

man who featured in Caryl Phillips book *The Atlantic Sound*, stressed the need for unique terminology to reflect the uniqueness of Liverpool black people. In response to a question over the term 'Liverpool-born black' Stephen responds:

Well, it became a term simply because again, because Liverpool has this old, this long history of Black settlement it became an issue because in the seventies after things like the Race Relations Act, er, and the advent of multiculturalism, there was a lot of initiatives put into dealing with the people who were obviously non-white and born in other places. So in Liverpool we had things like the Igbo Centre, the Nigerian Centre, The Caribbean Centre, the Pakistani Centre, but if you're a Liverpool-born black person, and your family has been living here you know, in my case for 200 years, you don't fit into any of those categories. And it was almost like, people who were born here, were kind of forgotten about in this rush to try and provide these er, benefits to people who come from these other diverse communities, where did the Liverpool-born black community fit in? ¹⁶⁰

The deployment of 'Liverpool-born black' acts to root people to place, seeking to actively reinforce the legitimacy of Liverpool black people. Its use is therefore a distinctly *political* act. However, William Ackah argues that forging such a unique identity can separate as much as it unites; it binds those who identify as 'LBB' whilst creating a barrier to engagement with those outside this identity group. Indeed, in a speech made by activist Eric Lynch in 1980, the term is used to highlight disproportionate discrimination against this group, that 'Liverpool-born blacks, can no longer tolerate the situation that we are forced to live in' whilst laying critical attention against black people from elsewhere through a slavery metaphor:

[...] we will no longer put up with politicians and so-called Black West Indians put in places of authority above us. In the same way that 100 years ago the White slave owners put Black over-seers over the slaves. ¹⁶¹

This is echoed by Jacqueline Brown who suggests LBB people articulate racial exceptionalism through the 'local', and who see other black people as immigrants by comparison. Stephen

¹⁶⁰ 'Stephen'. Question and Answer Discussion Between Undergraduate Students and Stephen. Liverpool, April 28 2012. This was a discussion organised by the author with "Stephen", a participant from Caryl Phillips *The Atlantic Sound* (2001) and University of York second year undergraduate students undertaking the *Slavery in the Transatlantic: Cultures, Representations, Legacies* module as part of the BA English and Related Literature. Within *The Atlantic Sound*, Phillips visits three key places in the Atlantic slave trade triangle, Liverpool, Elmina in Ghana and Charleston, US. Phillips is taken around Liverpool by Stephen who discusses Liverpool's denial of its slave trading past and the contemporary racism black people in the city endure.

¹⁶¹ Eric Lynch, quoted in Lord Gifford QC (Chair), Brown, and Bunday, *Loosen the Shackles*, 247.

correspondingly recalled hearing 'Affo' used as derogatory term against first generation African immigrants.¹⁶²

The Twentieth Century

Decolonisation and Decline

Andrew Lees's history of Liverpool describes the city as a 'Hurricane Port' for the whirlwind-like changes, dramas and traumas that have erupted throughout her tumultuous past.¹⁶³ In the twentieth century in particular, this metaphor seems particularly fitting. The first few decades were a high point of Imperialism, with the city standing tall as second city of Empire, and celebrations of the 700th Anniversary matched these expressions of Edwardian confidence as Liverpool's skyline rose in line with outward expressions of civic pride. The publication of Ramsay Muir's *History of Liverpool*, John Belchem suggests, was another expression of such pride and though Muir did not 'shy away' from the history of the slave trade, his foregrounding of civic pride led to contradictions and dissonance in his discourse (see Chapter Three).¹⁶⁴ The motifs of the later nineteenth century are echoed by James Touzeau whose words ring with imperial pomp and pride, and reflect discourses of the 'civilising mission' of Empire:

[...] and no one could doubt that [slavery's] abolition conferred an immense benefit and exercised a meritoriously humanizing influence upon the whole civilised world. This one act alone placed Britain in the forefront of all nations, and makes every true Englishmen proud of his country.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² William Ackah, "The Fact of Blackness: Identity in Context," in *Black Organisation and Identity in Liverpool: A Local, National and Global Perspective*, ed. William Ackah and Mark Christian (Liverpool: Charles Wootton College Press, 1997), 57; Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail*, 5; Stephen, Question and Answer Session.

¹⁶³ Lees, *The Hurricane Port*.

¹⁶⁴ Ramsay Muir, *History of Liverpool* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1907); Belchem, "Liverpool's Story is the World's Glory," 6. Other histories published at this time include John Hughes, *Liverpool Banks and Bankers, 1760-1837* (Liverpool: Henry Young & Sons, 1906); Lacey, *History of Liverpool From 1207 to 1907*; Thomas Burke, *A Catholic History of Liverpool* (Liverpool: C. Tinling & Co., 1910); James Touzeau, *The Rise and Progress of Liverpool from 1551 to 1835*. (Liverpool: Liverpool Booksellers Co, 1910).

¹⁶⁵ Touzeau, *Rise and Progress of Liverpool*, 745.

However, this confidence would not last and following bouts of unemployment and decline immediately following the world wars, the loss of the cotton industry and the transference of passenger shipping to Southampton after the 1950s, levels of dock-related employment dropped from 45,000 in 1945 to just 3000 by 1977.¹⁶⁶ Decolonisation, dramatic depopulation, globalisation and ‘world economics as a whole’, suggests Peter Aughton, ‘did to Liverpool what the abolition of the slave trade and a ship canal were unable to do – [...] deprived the port of its shipping.’¹⁶⁷ This, coupled with a particular manifestation of inter-war racism, and with corresponding paternalistic discourses of imperialism, meant that the ‘birthday’ celebrations of 1957 took place in a very different social and economic landscape of post-war devastation and fractured imperial sensibilities. Liverpool’s role in the transatlantic slave trade, when it was discussed at all in the post-war years, was significantly downplayed by historians, awkwardly justified, and laced with racialised and racist discourses.

Racism, Riot, and Resistance

The ‘exceptionalism’ of the Liverpool black presence plays out in relation to unique ‘racialised relations’ in the city, which Stephen Small has described as ‘an anomaly.’¹⁶⁸ In contrast to much of the celebration over Liverpool’s ‘cosmopolitan’ credentials, Small outlines the social segregation of the city’s black population, who are rarely seen in the city centre or higher education institutions.¹⁶⁹ The evolving context of Liverpool’s racial history; through racism, riot and resistance - and indeed the memory of this context, continues to and shape interactions in memory work well into the twenty-first century.

The history of black people in Liverpool has been marked by consistent experiences of racial discrimination and organised resistance to this. An inquiry into race relations in Liverpool 8 following riots in 1981, known as the *Gifford Report* and ominously titled ‘Loosen the Shackles’ deemed racism in Liverpool to be ‘uniquely horrific’ compared to other comparably

¹⁶⁶ William E. Nelson, *Black Atlantic Politics: Dilemmas of Political Empowerment in Boston and Liverpool* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2000), 37. See also Michael Parkinson, *Liverpool on the Brink* (Hermitage, England: Policy Journals Publication, 1985)

¹⁶⁷ Peter Aughton, *Liverpool: A People's History* (Preston: Carnegie, 1990), 207.

¹⁶⁸ Small, “Racialised Relations in Liverpool.”

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*: 516.

sized cities.¹⁷⁰ The second chapter of the report addresses 'The Legacy of the Past' and suggests that Liverpool, as 'A City built on Slavery' has a history which contextualises contemporary racism and that furthermore, efforts to 'forget' this history are just as damaging.¹⁷¹

Significantly, Liverpool's black community was growing concurrently with nineteenth century 'scientific racism', in the midst of Imperial expansion. Colonialism and Imperialism shaped Liverpool in the early twentieth century, structuring its politics through 'ideologies of racial inferiority' in a port city which was 'the ground where the metropole first met the colonies.'¹⁷² During the First World War black soldiers from the Caribbean joined the British war effort and many also worked in Britain, enabling white British men to leave for military service and many more black seamen came to Liverpool following the requisition of Liverpool/West Africa ships.¹⁷³ After the war, however, resentment against an increased black population grew.¹⁷⁴

It was within this context, in the year of the 'Aliens Act' (1919), that 'race riots', or 'racist riots' as Michael Rowe terms them, erupted in Liverpool, and elsewhere.¹⁷⁵ Post-war competition over scarcer jobs between demobilised soldiers and sailors (which included large numbers of black men) and apparent 'sexual jealousy' over relationships between black men and white women were seen as factors.¹⁷⁶ Up to 10,000 white rioters attacked black homes,

¹⁷⁰ In response to the report, which was criticised for not addressing the City Council or looking at education in full, the Charles Wootton Newsletter replied to the title stating that 'WHAT BLACK PEOPLE WANT IS NOT MERELY TO LOOSEN BUT TO CUT INTO PIECES AND MELT DOWN ALL THE SHACKLES AROUND THEM' "Charles Wootton Centre Responds to Gifford," *Charles Wootton News*, June 1999.

¹⁷¹ Lord Gifford QC (Chair), Brown, and Bunday, *Loosen the Shackles*. This report was commissioned by Liverpool City Council in October 1988 after requests from various local organisations to address issues primarily in relation to policing and the L8 community; however the search remit was widened by the inquiry team to include the City Council and general social conditions.

¹⁷² Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail*, 20-24.

¹⁷³ Law, *A History of Race and Racism in Liverpool, 1660-1950*, 30.

¹⁷⁴ The Liverpool local press, ever the catalyst in racial issues, ran a series of articles titled *Black and White* which reported specifically on court appearances by black people with headlines such as 'Coloured man sent to gaol for desertion.' Murphy, *From the Empire to the Rialto*, 11.

¹⁷⁵ Other disturbances occurred in Manchester, London, Newport, Cardiff and Barry. Roy May and Robin Cohen, "The Interaction Between Race and Colonialism: A Case Study of the Liverpool Race Riots of 1919," *Race and Class* 16, no. 2 (1974): 68.

¹⁷⁶ Michael Rowe, "Sex, 'Race' and Riot in Liverpool, 1919," *Immigrants & Minorities* 19, no. 2 (2000): 53.

and in June 1919, 700 black people were held in police cells 'for their own safety'.¹⁷⁷ However, this was not the way events were represented in the press, where the events were portrayed as a white reaction to 'unprovoked' black violence.¹⁷⁸ The riots led to the death of one black sailor, Charles Wootton, who drowned in the Queen's dock after being chased and beaten.¹⁷⁹ Whilst one press report at the time emphasised the need to contain the violence so that it did not 'develop into an Imperial problem', inciting action in the colonies, in many ways it already was an 'Imperial problem'; racialised discrimination was forged in the ideological rhetoric of Empire.¹⁸⁰

Following demonstrations by the 'Discharged Sailors and Soldiers Federation', appeals were made for employers to give preference to white seamen who had served in the war, in effect creating a 'colour bar'.¹⁸¹ The issue of employment was also taken up by the trade unions and the passing of the Aliens Order and Coloured Alien Seaman Order was passed in 1920 and 1925 respectively, giving police powers to remove 'aliens' without (and indeed also with) proof of identification.¹⁸² Between the wars, Liverpool entered a period of economic decline; high levels of unemployment, a declining population and an overall fall in trade levels by one quarter in 1939 compared to 1914 levels.¹⁸³

In 1929 the white, liberal, and paternalistic Association for the Welfare of Half-Caste Children sponsored a *Report on an Investigation into the Colour Problem in Liverpool and Other Ports* (1930) conducted by Muriel Fletcher (*Fletcher Report*).¹⁸⁴ The report's conclusions constructed 'half-caste' children and their black and white parents as a 'problem' without any

¹⁷⁷ Law, *A History of Race and Racism in Liverpool, 1660-1950*, 31; Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail*, 21; Murphy, *From the Empire to the Rialto*, 11.

¹⁷⁸ Murphy, *From the Empire to the Rialto*, 13.

¹⁷⁹ Rowe, "Sex, 'Race' and Riot in Liverpool, 1919," 55.

¹⁸⁰ May and Cohen, "The Interaction Between Race and Colonialism," 113, 21-22.

¹⁸¹ Diane Frost, "West Africans, Black Scousers and the Colour Problem in Inter-War Liverpool," *North West Labour History* 20(1995/96): 54.

¹⁸² Law, *A History of Race and Racism in Liverpool, 1660-1950*, 32; Murphy, *From the Empire to the Rialto*, 66.

¹⁸³ Murphy, *From the Empire to the Rialto*, 73. Frost, "Racism, Work and Unemployment," 29; D. Caradog Jones, *The Economic Status of Coloured Families in the Port of Liverpool* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1940).

¹⁸⁴ The Association had before this time concerned itself with the plight of Liverpool's working classes. Law, *A History of Race and Racism in Liverpool, 1660-1950*, 32; Frost, "West Africans, Black Scousers and the Colour Problem in Inter-War Liverpool," 54.

focus on the structuring of British Society.¹⁸⁵ The report strengthened pre-existing stereotypes which extended to white women who married black men as being 'mentally unstable and sexually loose'.¹⁸⁶ Mark Christian has suggested that this report marked the beginning of years of further castigation of children of mixed racial parentage in Liverpool as a 'problem'.¹⁸⁷

The interwar years, as Diane Frost argues, exhibited 'a particular brand of racism' which 'had its roots in the expansion of empire and the pseudo-scientific doctrines on "race" that had emerged in the previous century'.¹⁸⁸ Reflecting these broader discourses, the 1928 *Book of Liverpool* proudly states that '[w]e produced slave captains who taught their miserable cargoes of savages the fear and love of the white man's God as part of the ship's discipline'.¹⁸⁹ The paternalistic and philanthropic credentials of the slave captains are stressed in *The Story of Liverpool* (1935), a text produced for use in Liverpool's schools. Here, Hugh Crow:

...gave his "cargo" three meals and a bath daily dosed them with lime-juice to keep off scurvy, allowed them a pipe of tobacco, and, if sick, a nip of brandy, and (except in the worst weather) insisted on daily cleaning of the 'tween decks, while the blacks were allowed to dance on deck beneath a cover, which was rigged up to give them shelter from the blazing sun.¹⁹⁰

This sentiment was repeated in 1946, when another author suggested that Hugh Crow earned the 'gratitude of even the slaves who crowded round their saviour like so many children'.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁵ Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail*, 28.

¹⁸⁶ Frost, "West Africans, Black Scousers and the Colour Problem in Inter-War Liverpool," 54-55.

¹⁸⁷ Mark Christian, "The Fletcher Report 1930: A Historical Case Study of Contested Black Mixed Heritage Britishness," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 21, no. 2/3 (2008). Law, *A History of Race and Racism in Liverpool, 1660-1950*, 34. The Association changed their name to the Liverpool Association for the Welfare of Coloured People in 1937, following the lead of the National League of Coloured Peoples led by Dr Harold Moody, and focused instead on carrying out research and campaigning against racial discrimination. This new organisation carried out a further investigation this time less subjectively titled, Caradog Jones, *The Economic Status of Coloured Families in the Port of Liverpool*. The report distanced itself from the *Fletcher Report* and acknowledge the difficulties in 'making contact with representative coloured families', perhaps because of the reaction over the Fletcher Report and the memory of representation from this (p. 10).

¹⁸⁸ Frost, "West Africans, Black Scousers and the Colour Problem in Inter-War Liverpool," 50.

¹⁸⁹ Matthew Anderson, *The Book of Liverpool. Civic Week, September 22nd to 29th, 1928*. (Liverpool: Liverpool Organization Ltd, 1928), 9.

¹⁹⁰ The 'dancing of the slaves' is however much more widely recognised as an inhumane, gruelling and humiliating attempt by slave captains to keep enslaved Africans alive during the journey. Charles L. Lamb and Eric Smallpage, *The Story of Liverpool* (Liverpool: Daily Post Publishers, 1935), 36-37.

¹⁹¹ William Tyndale Harries, *Landmarks in Liverpool History* (Liverpool: Philip Son & Nephew, 1946), 63.

Labour shortages following the outbreak of the Second World War led to a volunteer worker scheme for West Indians initiated by the Ministry of Labour and the Colonial Office, and Liverpool was chosen to take these volunteers initially because of its pre-existing black population.¹⁹² Racial tensions at this time, apparently exacerbated by the presence of American soldiers, led to meetings between Dr Harold Moody (League of Coloured Peoples) and the Bishop of Liverpool, and a community centre was established (Stanley House).¹⁹³ Mark Christian has argued that Stanley House's support for the Pan-African Federation demonstrates that it was a predominantly black social institution.¹⁹⁴ An interesting example of war-time exchange of black American culture is demonstrated by one author who states that '[a]s for the poor African, we may fairly conclude that, with the coming of the modern dance band, he has been only too horribly avenged.'¹⁹⁵ In the early 1950s, the 'modern dance band', likely refers to British dance band music influenced by American jazz. Jazz, which has its roots in African-American music and culture, is presented as the medium through which 'Africans' (and their descendants) are reaping revenge on British cultural norms.¹⁹⁶ Black people in Liverpool were influenced by American civil rights movements and the politics of the black Atlantic in the following decades, and a branch of the Black Panthers (the 'Young Panthers') was established in Liverpool in the 1960s.¹⁹⁷ A similar 'black experience' was perceived across Liverpool and America; in oppression and segregation, and local black people drew on Black Atlantic politics to confront oppression they experienced in their own city.¹⁹⁸

Liverpool had suffered greatly during the war. There were 90 bombings on the city between 1940 and 1942 and the 1941 May Blitz hit the city hard.¹⁹⁹ The city itself did not

¹⁹² Murphy, *From the Empire to the Rialto*, 106.

¹⁹³ Law, *A History of Race and Racism in Liverpool, 1660-1950*, 34.

¹⁹⁴ Mark. Christian, "An African-Centered Approach to the Black British Experience: With Special Reference to Liverpool'," *Journal of Black Studies* 28, no. 3 (1998): 302.

¹⁹⁵ Parkinson, *The Rise of the Port of Liverpool*, 102.

¹⁹⁶ See Laura E. Cooper and B. Lee Cooper, "The Pendulum of Cultural Imperialism: Popular Music Interchanges Between the United States and Britain 1943-1967," *Journal of Popular Culture* 27, no. 3 (1993). For the significance of jazz, 'America's most important indigenous artistic form' on black literature see Alan Rice, "Jazzing It Up A Storm: The Execution and Meaning of Toni Morrison's Jazzy Prose Style," *Journal of American Studies* 28, no. 3 (1994).

¹⁹⁷ Christian, "An African-Centered Approach to the Black British Experience;," 302; William.E Nelson and Gideon Ben-Tovin, "Race, Class, Equal Opportunity Policies and Local Government: The Case of Liverpool," *The National Political Science Review* 7(1999): 56.

¹⁹⁸ Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail*, 48-54.

¹⁹⁹ Murphy, *From the Empire to the Rialto*, 115.

benefit from levels of post-war West Indian immigration as other towns and cities did, yet national patterns of immigration meant that by the end of the 1950s 'race' dominated national political agendas in ways which impacted local politics, infiltrating the discourse around Liverpool's 750th Birthday in 1957 (see Chapter Seven).²⁰⁰

Against the tone of official histories at this time which largely sought to downplay the significance of the slave trade to Liverpool,²⁰¹ interest in Liverpool's past caught the interest of local black people who began research. Interviewee Scott has been conducting Slavery Walking Tours of Liverpool since the 1970s. He outlines the intimate connection between discoveries of slavery, the built environment and a quite literal 'history from below', emerging from old papers in the basements of buildings. Here, he recalls a job he had in a building in Liverpool's commercial centre and his close relationship with an elderly caretaker:

So, this old man used to tell me all kinds of things, and anything about slavery went into the back of my head. And when he found out I was really interested, he said to me, in the weekend, go to such-and-such a building, and see- ask for Mr so-and-so, he's the caretaker there. Have a word with him. And I'd go and they'd tell me about that building and the people in it. So – I built up this history of what was on the buildings, why they were there and er, the way in which my mind works, anything which regards Africa, slavery, black history, Liverpool, treatment of black people, it just goes to the back of my head. I had gathered all this information and did nothing with it for years.²⁰²

Scott recounts how, after marrying and having children, he would take his family walking around the city and recount the history of buildings and the trading history of the city. From here word spread and Scott began to conduct tours more regularly, eventually charging a small fee. Scott's tours would feature as part of race-relations and educational initiatives through the city council, local education authorities, the police and prison service, and the museums in the wake of racialised 'hurricanes', riots and resistance to racism in the 1970s and 1980s.

²⁰⁰ Many questioned whether the *Nationality Act* of 1948 should be revised in order to control immigration, and the *Commonwealth Immigrants Act* followed in 1962 (with a second in 1968, coinciding with Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech). Small, "Racialised Relations in Liverpool." Nelson, *Black Atlantic Politics*, 198-99.

²⁰¹ 'To some extent the image of the Liverpool merchant in the eighteenth century has been distorted by his association (very often erroneously) with the slave trade' (p. 25) and 'In the cold light of financial gain, the business was far less remunerative than has generally been supposed' (p. 32) Hyde, *Liverpool and the Mersey*. Anstey and Hair call for a 'longer perspective' in order for the slave trade to be viewed as just 'one of numberless migrations in history', (p. 1) and argue that 'Liverpool was more important for the slave trade than the slave trade was for Liverpool' (p. 5) Anstey and Hair, "Introduction,".

²⁰² Scott, Interview by author, Liverpool, February 5th 2012.

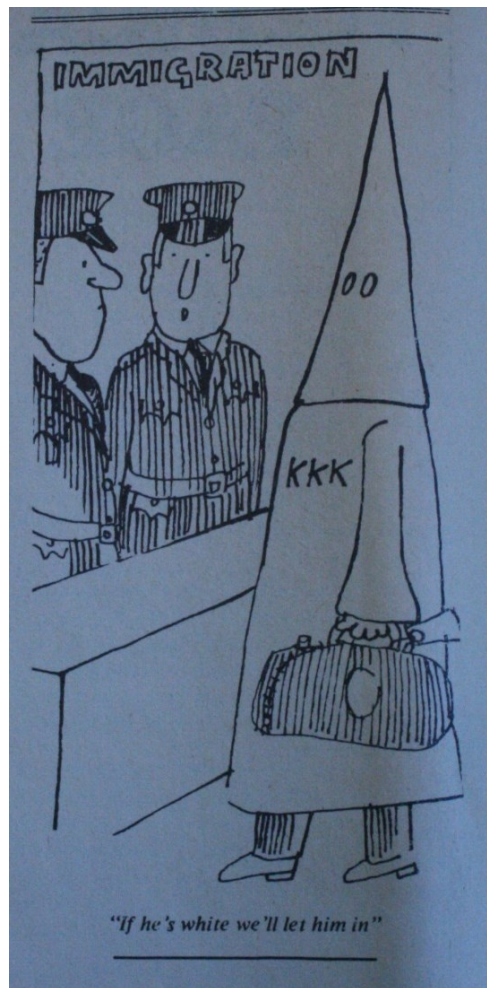


Figure 3: 'If he's white, we'll let him in'. Cartoon, *Liverpool & Express*, March 1978 (Number 8) (LRO)

Emerging from a revolutionary context of 1960s civil rights movements, post-war immigration, demographic change and corresponding race-relations organisations, an increasingly active and vocal black politics alongside local and national anti-racism movements spoke out against restrictive acts of parliament and legislation including immigration and nationality acts (see Figure 3), discriminatory policing tactics and the growth of far-right groups like the National Front.²⁰³ General action in the form of protest was often taken in the face of an ignorance surrounding black history. From this, the history of Liverpool's involvement with the slave trade came to be presented alongside other examples of colonial exploitation from the standpoint of challenging contemporary racism. One of the Merseyside Anti Racialist Alliance's (1979) stated aims was to counter racist ideology through education, to challenge:

²⁰³ This also extended to police oppression and the deployment of SUS laws. Nelson, *Black Atlantic Politics*, 201.

...a reservoir of myths and stereotypes which in the past helped to justify the economic exploitation and political and military control exercised by Britain during the periods of the slave-trade and colonialism.²⁰⁴

A particular focus of such groups was racism in the media. In 1978, the day before a television series aired about Merseyside Police called 'On the Mersey beat', an article was published in the BBC background magazine *The Listener*. Reporter Martin Young outlined that the 'major social problem' for the Merseyside police was 'the half-caste problem' described as follows:

Many are the product of liaisons between black seamen and white prostitutes in Liverpool 8, the red light district. Naturally, they do not grow up with any kind of recognisable home life. Worse still, after they have done the round of homes and institutions they gradually realise that they are nothing. The Negroes will not accept them as blacks, and the whites just assume they are coloured. As a result, the half-caste community of Merseyside – or, more particularly, Liverpool – is well outside recognised society.²⁰⁵

Young creates a context of temporariness. The children of mixed racial parentage are the product of 'liaisons', brief moments of interaction rather than any more permanent forms of relationships. These moments are themselves 'maritimized', it is specifically Black *seamen* who presumably like other seamen, exist in a seabound life, moving between ports and across oceans without settlement. It is a situation which is attributed to Liverpool 'particularly', rather than the county generally, exceptionalising whilst framing 'half-caste' people as a 'problem' unique to Liverpool, without any recognition of the long underlying historical context which would rationalise and indeed legitimise the demographics of the city, and instead placing mixed heritage people 'well outside' society.

A few weeks later, a protest was staged over *The Listener* article and against the Merseyside Police force for their part in supplying the statements. Around 300 people met at Stanley House, marching to the offices of BBC Radio Merseyside in the city centre to deliver a petition calling for a public apology and investigation into Police Chief Kenneth Oxford and his force. One banner at this protest asked, '400 years of race hatred, where will it end?' (Figure 4), placing the article's statements in a longer history of discrimination spanning the years of slavery and colonialism.

²⁰⁴ Ben-Tovin and Mufti, *First Annual Report of MARA*.

²⁰⁵ Martin Young, "On the Mersey Beat," *The Listener*, November 2nd 1978.



Figure 4: '400 years of race hatred – where will it end?' protestors gather in Upper Parliament Street. Image taken from 'March over "racist slurs"'. *Liverpool Daily Post*. November 27th 1978

The *Listener* incident has gone down as a milestone moment within a chain reaction instigated through black protest against racism, which would later culminate in the riots of 1981. The political action and awareness raised by the response to *The Listener* article led to the formation of the Liverpool Black Organisation the following year, the leaders of which went on to forge a number of key political organisations in the 1980s including the Merseyside Community Relations Council, Race Relations Liaisons Committee, the Black Caucus and the Liverpool 8 Defence Committee.²⁰⁶

The riots of 1981, known as the 'Toxteth riots' although the events occurred mostly in Upper Parliament Street, the 'Rialto' area, and Lodge Lane, are a milestone in Liverpool's social and political history. Prompted by the arrest of a young black man in Liverpool 8, the riots themselves, though ill-classified in the media as 'race riots', equally concerned issues of class, brutal policing tactics, deprivation as well as institutionalised racism more generally.²⁰⁷ Speaking after the events of summer 1981, local Councillor Margaret Simey is quoted as saying that she'd have rioted too, if she had to live in the Rialto area.²⁰⁸ Though other rioting occurred around the country in urban areas (Bristol in 1980, Brixton 1981), and previous clashes

²⁰⁶ Nelson, *Black Atlantic Politics*, 242; Nelson and Ben-Tovin, "Race, Class, Equal Opportunity Policies and Local Government: The Case of Liverpool," 57.

²⁰⁷ For recent oral histories of this period, see Diane Frost and Richard Phillips, *Liverpool '81: Remembering the Riots* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011).

²⁰⁸ "I'd Riot Myself, Simey," *Liverpool Echo*, July 28, 1981.

between black youth and the police had occurred in Liverpool in 1972 and 1975, those in Liverpool in 1981 were the largest mainland disturbance in Britain, during which CS-Gas in a civilian context was used for the first time.²⁰⁹ The police were heavily criticised for their conduct, especially following the death of David Moore, a disabled man, after he was hit by a police van.²¹⁰ Out of the disturbances, however, further black organisations were forged including the Liverpool 8 Law Centre and the Immigration Advice Unit.²¹¹

Black organisations would become embroiled in further strain to community relations during a now infamous phase in Liverpool's political history, where the 1980s Militant Labour Council's staunch colour-blind workerist ideology caused divisions, exacerbated by the appointment of London-born Samson Bond as Principal Race Relations Advisor. As someone not from the local area and without previous experience or any credentials to his name except for his support for Militant, this was considered a purely political appointment which was subsequently boycotted and protested against.²¹² The literary play around Sam Bond's name in the first banner in Figure 5 draws deliberate allusions to the bondage of slavery.

Many of the black organisations mentioned stressed education as a medium through which racism and disempowerment could be challenged, and none more so than the black-led Charles Wootton College, set up initially in 1974 and named to honour and memorialise the black seaman killed during the riots in 1919 (Figure 6).²¹³ The 'Charlie' as it was affectionately known, was officially given college status in 1992 and Bernie Grant MP became the College's first patron in 1997.²¹⁴ It ran a Black Studies course, whose stated aims included 'analysing the continuities and changes that have emerged as a result of Africans being torn out of Africa via

²⁰⁹ Nelson, *Black Atlantic Politics*, 202.

²¹⁰ This police van disappeared mysteriously prior to investigation over the incident. *Ibid.*, 206.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 209.

²¹² For an overview of this episode from the point of view of the Liverpool Black Caucus, see Liverpool Black Caucus, *The Racial Politics of Militant in Liverpool: The Black Community's Struggle for Participation in Local Politics 1980-1986* (Liverpool: Merseyside Area Profile Group and Runnymede Trust, 1986). And from the militant labour perspective see Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn, *Liverpool: A City That Dared to Fight* (London: Fortress, 1988).

²¹³ The College was initially housed in the Adult Education Centre based in the Rialto buildings, one of the sites to be predominantly destroyed during the 1981 riots. The College moved to 248 Upper Parliament Street in March 1978. "Further Information on the College Management and Staffing," *Charles Wootton College - Special 20th Anniversary Report 1994*.

²¹⁴ "Guests Toast College Status," *Charles Wootton News*, December 1992.

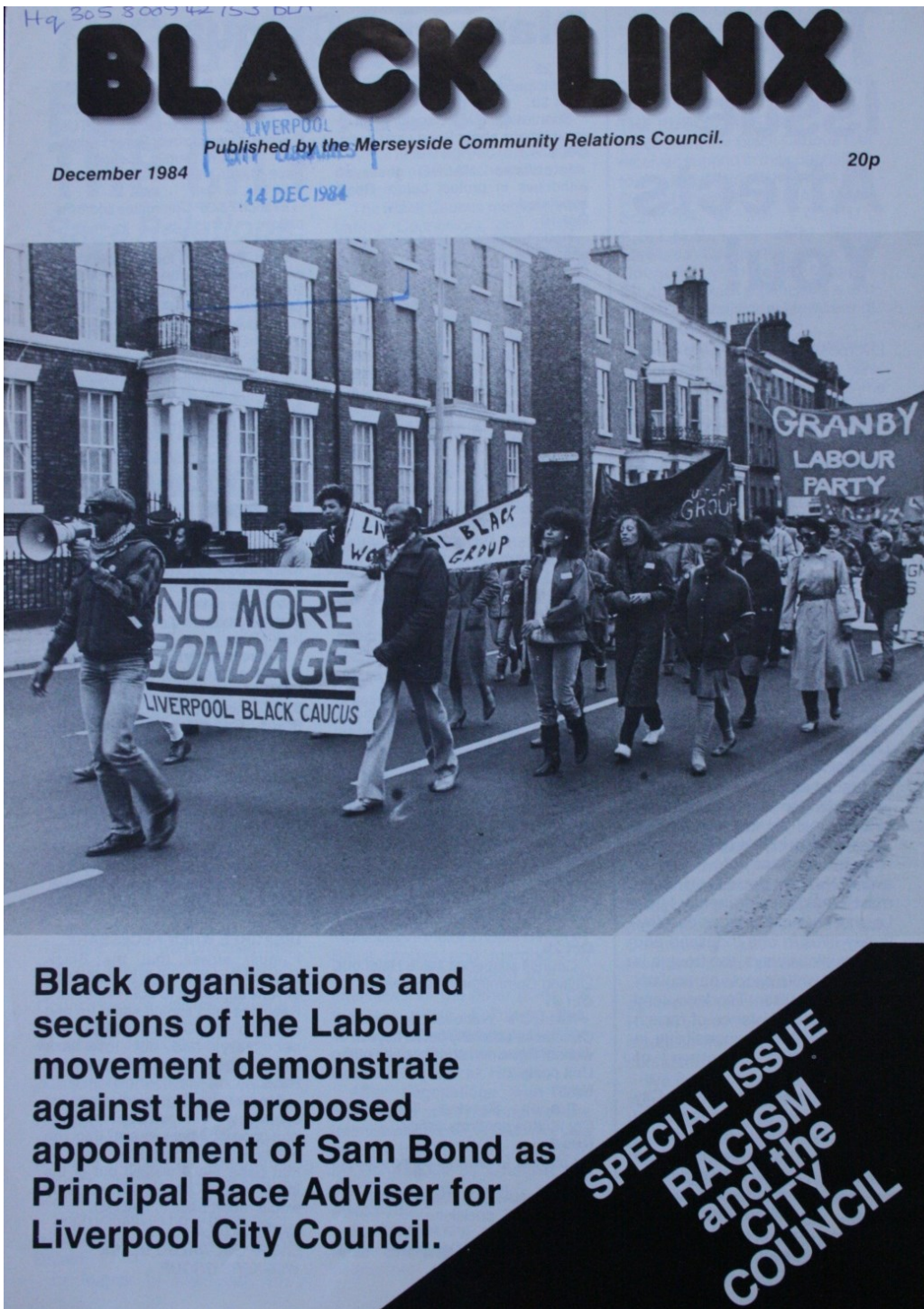


Figure 5: Front Cover of *Black Linx* showing demonstration against policies of the Militant Labour Council

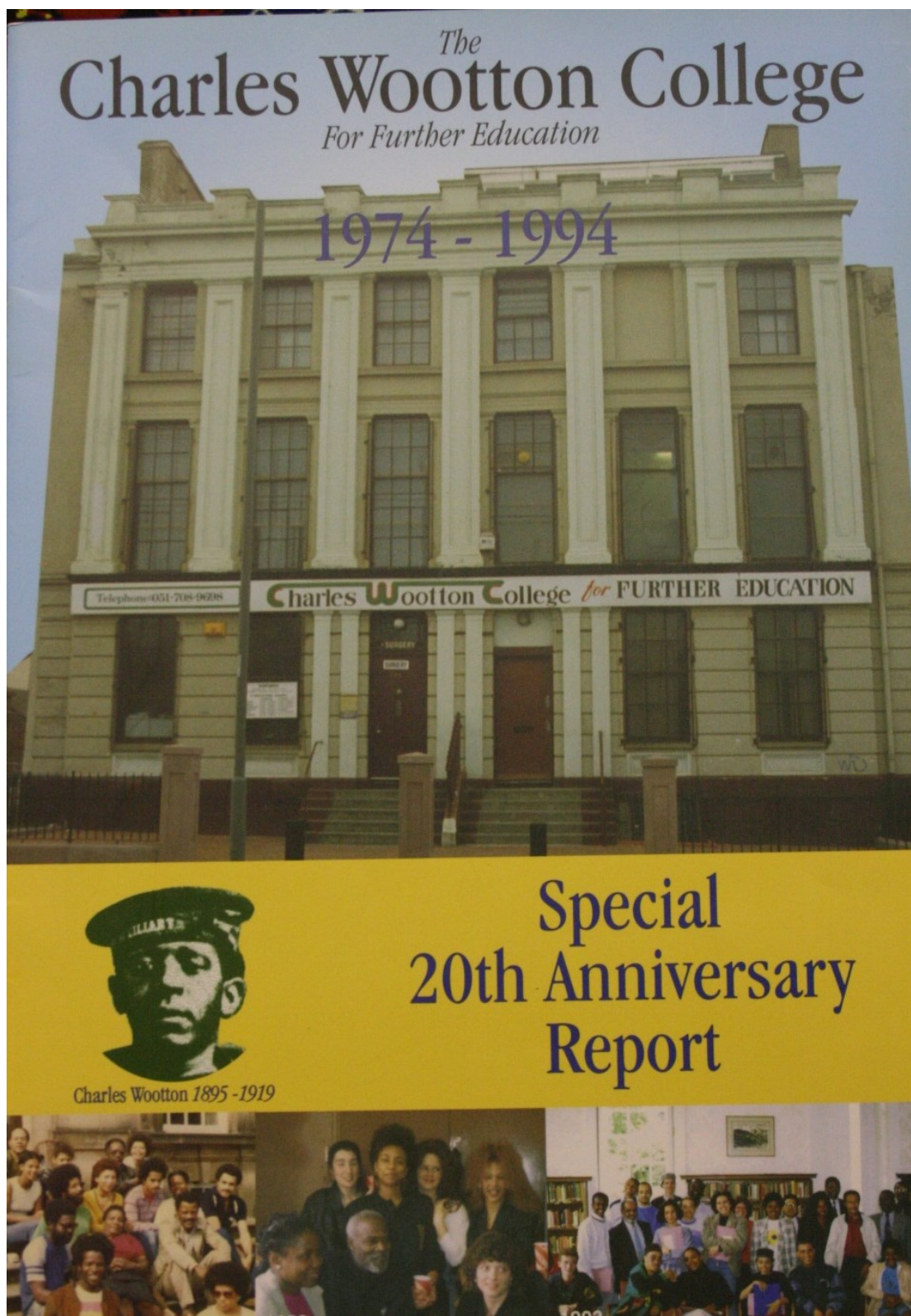


Figure 6: Image of the Charles Wootton College in a twentieth anniversary edition of its newsletter (1994). Black Cultural Archives, London

the infamous “Atlantic Slave Trade”²¹⁵. A Black History Workshop was established after 1981 and which was designed to ‘rewrite the distorted history of Black People in Liverpool’.²¹⁶ Students of the college went on to shape Liverpool’s memory of slavery through articles within the college’s newsletter and beyond, going on to higher education and into academic careers.²¹⁷ It was also a former student of the College who proposed the motion that the city council issue an official apology for Liverpool’s role in the slave trade, in 1999. However, this was also the final year the college would remain open, having suffered significant funding cuts and criticisms over its management. As Mark Christian recently said, ‘in 1999 the City Council apologises for the slave trade. The next year they close down our college.’²¹⁸

Black political action in the 1980s was a watershed in Liverpool’s history in a number of ways. It emerged within papers released in 2011 that following the riots of 1981 some members of the Thatcher government proposed leaving Liverpool to a state of ‘managed decline’.²¹⁹ However, more pro-active steps were instead taken, and Michael Heseltine was appointed ‘Minister for Merseyside’, establishing the Merseyside Development Corporation as part of a drive for economic regeneration in the city which he considered would go some way to alleviating social issues.²²⁰ These initiatives included the regeneration of the Albert Dock,

²¹⁵ Topics of the Black Studies course included African contribution to the development of European civilisation; the Atlantic Slave Trade, Slavery and its Abolition; Events & Issues in Modern Africa and African Diaspora History 1850-1990; Religion and Identity in the Africana and African Diaspora Experience; Black Creative Production; Black Politics; Black Women; and Education from a Black Perspective. William Ackah, "Black Studies Curriculum at the Charles Wootton College," *Charles Wootton College - Special 20th Anniversary Report* 1994. At an open day in 1990, William Nelson, visiting on the Fulbright Scholar scheme from Ohio State, suggested that the history of the 1919 riots and similar occurrences was not ‘black history’, but ‘British history’, that it is ‘the history of a country whose economy in the 18th and 19th centuries was developed on the back of the slave trade’. William.E Nelson, "Speech given for June 1990 Open Day," *Charles Wootton News*, December 1990.

²¹⁶ Chief Ben Agwuna, "Charles Wootton Centre for Further Education," *Charles Wootton News* 1987, 2. "Black History Workshops," *Charles Wootton College - Special 20th Anniversary Report* 1994.

²¹⁷ Professor Stephen Small and Dr Mark Christian were both students of the College.

²¹⁸ Remark made during introductions to the ‘Liverpool Black Atlantic Conference’, International Slavery Museum, May 2012.

²¹⁹ "Toxteth Riots: Howe Proposed 'Managed Decline' For City," BBC News, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-16355281> (accessed March 15, 2014).

²²⁰ Jon Murden, "'City of Change and Challenge': Liverpool since 1945," in *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character and History*, ed. John Belchem (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), 445.

The International Garden Festival in 1984 and the Tate Gallery, but were criticised for not employing local black people and ultimately not benefitting anyone living in L8.²²¹

The riots, unrest and organised protest instigated projects of urban regeneration and development but, perhaps more significantly, would come to influence the relationship between the Liverpool black community and the city's cultural organisations in processes of memory work in the 1990s and beyond.

The Rise of Museums and Memory in an Age of Globalization

Despite the regeneration initiatives, 1980s Liverpool experienced further dramatic economic and demographic decline. Employment and population levels both fell by 23 and 12 percent respectively and the city emerged into the 1990s with the label of 'European Objective One Status'.²²² This title has, however, been retrospectively viewed as a turning point for the city. It opened new doors to European subsidies, with structural funds of £1.6bn allocated to Liverpool between 1994 and 1999.²²³ Culture, John Belchem muses, has itself been 'hailed as the economic driver'.²²⁴ Across the 1980s and 1990s, investment in 'culture' has transformed a number of major cities, particular those in areas of de-industrialisation in the north of England.²²⁵ Though the rise of cultural tourism and 'heritage regeneration' has attracted

²²¹ Belchem, "Introduction," 53. Nelson and Ben-Tovin, "Race, Class, Equal Opportunity Policies and Local Government: The Case of Liverpool," 59; Liverpool Black Caucus, *The Racial Politics of Militant in Liverpool*.

²²² Objective One is a label given by the European Union to identify in which gross domestic product (GDP) is less than 75% of the average within the European Community Anon, "Objective 1 : Supporting development in the less prosperous regions," The European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/objective1/index_en.htm (accessed February 18, 2010). Also discussed in Belchem, "Introduction," 53.

²²³ Belchem, "Introduction," 53-54. Mark Christian, "Black Organisation and Urban Policy in Context," in *Black Organisation and Identity in Liverpool: A Local, National and Global Perspective*, ed. William Ackah and Mark Christian (Liverpool: Charles Wootton College Press, 1997).

²²⁴ Belchem, "Introduction," 56.

²²⁵ Nick Prior, "Postmodern Restructurings," in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 512.

criticism from sceptics of a so-called 'heritage industry', investment in Liverpool's cultural institutions would prove central to the city's memory of slavery in the 1990s and beyond.²²⁶

Developments in cultural tourism and 'heritage', moreover, can be viewed as part of a broader rise in 'memory' from the 1980s onwards, which itself grew alongside a proliferation in psychoanalytic literature on trauma and commemorations of 'politically painful anniversaries'.²²⁷ Crucially, the 'memory boom' across the later twentieth century rises in line with broader processes of globalisation. Andreas Huyssen suggests that in this sense, and in comparison to nineteenth century memory, the past has become 'memory without borders'.²²⁸ For a history which is necessarily *transatlantic*, this might, of course, seem a moot point. However, Liverpool's memory of slavery in the 1990s onwards is shaped by global discourses and transnational 'booms' in memory alongside shifts in museology, tourism and heritage and yet continues to be *exceptionalised* through the 'local' specifics of racialised relations peculiar to this global port city.

From the late 1980s onwards, Liverpool's cultural institutions - National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside (NMGGM – established in 1986), becoming National Museums Liverpool (NML) in 2003 - came to play a far larger role in 'memory work' relating to Liverpool and slavery whilst ultimately remaining linked, psychologically if not always literally, to processes of regeneration in the city. Further, museological developments around this time sought to go 'beyond the mausoleum', placing increasing focus on communities and stories, in place of traditional focuses on glass cabinets and artefacts.²²⁹ Housed within the much lauded Albert Dock complex, itself 'a self-conscious symbol of rebirth and redirection',²³⁰ the Merseyside Maritime Museum became an important site of slavery memory after a decade of

²²⁶ See Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (London: Verso, 1985); Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987); David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). For an overview of the 'Heritage Debates' of the 1980s and 1990s see Robert Lumley, "The Debate on Heritage Reviewed," in *Heritage, Museums and Galleries: An Introductory Reader*, ed. Gerard. Corsane (London: Routledge, 2005).

²²⁷ Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 14.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

²²⁹ Andrea Witcomb, *Re-Imagining the Museum: Beyond the Mausoleum* (London: Routledge, 2003); Kevin Walsh, *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post-modern World* (London: Routledge, 1992). See also Peter Vergo, ed. *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion, 1989).

²³⁰ Joseph Sharples and Richard Pollard, *Liverpool (Pevsner Architectural Guides)* (New Haven, Conn. ; London: Yale University Press, 2004), 103.

silence on the matter. A temporary exhibition called *Staying Power: Black Presence in Liverpool*, developed in partnership with the Liverpool Anti-Racist Community Arts Association (LARCAA) and the City Council, (1991) discussed slavery in relation to the city's black community.²³¹ This exhibition sought to tell the story of the Liverpool black presence from the eighteenth century onwards, and the 'Roots' section of the souvenir guide, which began with 'Africa's exploitation by Britain', discussed the 'trade in African people', giving an outline of the history of transatlantic slavery and Liverpool's role.²³²

In 1994, the city's first permanent museum exhibition on slavery, the *Transatlantic Slavery Gallery: Against Human Dignity* (TSG) was opened in the basement of the Maritime Museum (Chapter Twelve). The TSG arose in a context of shifting racial politics in 1990s Britain, and at a time when many museums were seeking ways of incorporating new languages of diversity and more inclusive ideas of national identity.²³³ This context was also influenced by a new wave of global black politics linked with the African Reparations Movement, major conferences for which were held in Nigeria and Birmingham (UK) in 1993.²³⁴ Sharon MacDonald suggested that it was because museums had 'become global symbols through which status and community' were expressed that they became sites of contest over issues of ownership, and consequently stages for history and culture wars.²³⁵ However, contestations around the museums in Liverpool, including protest from local black people, also reflected Liverpool's particular political context, in particular the social dissonance of the 1980s between

²³¹ van Helmond and Palmer, *Staying Power: Black Presence in Liverpool*.

²³² The exhibition catalogue also outlines sections on employment, the 1919 riots, the Fletcher Report, the 1948 riots, black organisation including Stanley House and the Colonial People's Defence Association and 1970s organisations, 1981 and renowned black Liverpool figures. *Ibid.*, 8.

²³³ Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*, 120.

²³⁴ Small, "Contextualizing the Black Presence in British Museums," 58. A key figure in this movement was black MP Bernie Grant, a founding member of the Parliamentary Black Caucus in 1989, who focused on museums (and their artefacts) as symbols of colonial oppression Grant organised a protest at the British Museum. Stephen Small was an assistant to Grant during this period. See Stephen Small, "Slavery, Colonialism and Museums Representations in Great Britain: Old and New Circuits of Migration," *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 9, no. 4 (2011): 121.

²³⁵ Mark W. Rectanus, "Globalization: Incorporating the Museum," in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 383; Sharon Macdonald, "Theorizing Museums: An Introduction," in *Theorizing Museums: Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World*, ed. Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe (Oxford: Blackwell/The Sociological Review, 1996), 2. For a discussion on 'History Wars' around this time, see Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, *The History Wars* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2003); Steven Dubin, *Displays of Power: Memory and Amnesia in the American Museum* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Edward Tabor Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996).

the council and black organisations, reflecting museums as an 'urban phenomenon', ultimately embroiled in the dynamics of the city.²³⁶

The rise of cultural tourism in line with regeneration in the city, however, would complicate public history initiatives in the mid-1990s. The 'tourist industry', Nick Prior suggests, thrives on 'imaginary geographies' of cities as 'sites of pleasure', romantic environments to direct the 'tourist gaze'.²³⁷ Although slavery walking tours had previously been run privately, it was not until authoritative cultural institutions organised their own that they became a matter of public controversy. Following the opening of the TSG in 1994, a series of guided tours were organised and funded by NMGM. A national public debate around these took place within *The Times*, in 1996. The most vocal critic of the tours was Fritz Spiegl,²³⁸ who suggests that '[t]he city suffers from a negative image and this will not help.'²³⁹ Richard Foster, Director of NMGM however, states that the tours will instead have positive repercussions, and that this is something the guides are trained in, that 'the tour guides go out of their way to promote the positive aspects of Liverpool, and reflect on the benefits that flowed from the prosperity created in part by the slave trade.'²⁴⁰ An engagement with the public history of slavery is here warped by the dominant notion that heritage tourism is a largely positive endeavour that primarily promotes place in a public relations capacity.

In 1997, an International Day of Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition was established by UNESCO. The 23rd August was chosen as the date on which Toussaint l'Ouverture led slaves in Haiti in an uprising which would later see the successful overthrow of the French colonial regime.²⁴¹ As former curator of Merseyside Maritime Museum Anthony Tibbles suggests, whilst the day was marked by only a few countries, Liverpool has been one of

²³⁶ Prior, "Postmodern Restructurings," 510.

²³⁷ Ibid., 512; John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1990).

²³⁸ Writer, broadcaster and resident of the city since 1946, Spiegl set up The Scouse Press in 1965 and wrote an opinion column for the *Liverpool Daily Post*.

²³⁹ Fritz Spiegl, quoted in Paul Wilkinson, "Heritage dispute over Liverpool's slavery tours," *The Times*, September 9 1996.

²⁴⁰ Richard Foster, "LETTER: Liverpool's Gains From Slave Trade," *The Times*, September 24, 1996.

²⁴¹ Christopher R. Hughes, "ICTs and Remembering the 200th Anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade in Britain: An Occasion for Celebration or Remorse?," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 25, no. 2 (2012).

the places which has had a continual and repeated series of events (see Chapter Nine).²⁴² Initiated and led by NMGM with support from representatives and organisations from within the local black community, and, later with support from the City Council, the day has been marked since 1999. This perhaps also reflects the growth of the scope of museums to engage with communities, merge education with leisure and consumption, which Mark Rectanus suggests connects museums with an 'event culture' embedded in 'global networks of media communication'.²⁴³

A wave of collective, political apologies for historic 'wrongs' also rose globally around the turn of the millennium. These have been viewed variously as a consequence of post-decolonisation consciousness of 'traumatic' history, part of a politics of recognition and as a consequence of the decline of the nation.²⁴⁴ Michel-Rolph Trouillot has argued that apologies in the global era act to create continuities of collective groups. Interested in the 'wave' of apologies from the 1980s onwards, he suggests that the transference of attributes of the liberal self to collectives, as well as changes in historical perception and the existence of a 'global stage' have been influential.²⁴⁵ The idea of an 'international community' is, however, also important for framing apologies, the idea being that such performances are 'watched' by a global audience.²⁴⁶ Liverpool, a 'global' city since the late eighteenth century, has perhaps always felt the whole world was, or should be, looking its way. When the City Council announced it would issue an official apology for Liverpool's role in the transatlantic slave trade in 1999 (see Chapter Six), transnational links were sought with America (through the guise of celebrity, invitations extended to Jesse Jackson and President Bill Clinton) and Africa (through

²⁴² Anthony Tibbles, "Facing Slavery's Past: The Bicentenary of the Abolition of the British Slave Trade," *Slavery and Abolition* 29, no. 2 (2008). The Greater London Authority have also undertaken activities, and France has marked its own Slavery Remembrance Day on the 10th May since 2006, the date chosen to commemorate the passing of a law in France recognising slavery as a crime against humanity, taken in 2001. BBC News Online, "France Remembers Slavery Victims," <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4756635.stm> [accessed July 23, 2013]; France.fr, "Remembrance of the Slave Trade," <http://www.france.fr/en/institutions-and-values/remembrance-slave-trade> [accessed July 23, 2013].

²⁴³ Rectanus, "Globalization: Incorporating the Museum," 384.

²⁴⁴ Nancy Fraser, "Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation," in *Culture and Economy After the Cultural Turn*, ed. Larry Ray and Andrew Sayer (London: Sage, 1999); Jeffrey K. Olick and Brenda Coughlin, "The Politics of Regret: Analytical Frames," in *Politics and the Past: On Repairing Historical Injustices* (2003).

²⁴⁵ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Abortive Rituals: Historical Apologies in the Global Era," *International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 2, no. 2 (2000): 173.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*: 181.

the guise of global tourism, a twinning call made with a West African port).²⁴⁷ As Chapter Six will show, the timing of the apology alongside the turn of the millennium was stressed as significant for critics and supporters. However, the timing of the apology was also meaningful in other ways, taking place concurrently with the publication of the *MacPherson Report* into the murder and police investigation of black London teenager Stephen Lawrence, and ten years after the publication of the *Gifford Report*. This point was drawn upon both by members of the council to support their choice of timing and by black critics of the apology, that it was 'more than 10 years since the Gifford Inquiry into racism but discrimination and apartheid is still practised under the noses of Liverpool City Council'.²⁴⁸

Slavery Remembrance Day (SRD) emerged linked with the apology, both in terms of timing and subsequent ritual performance. The debate and discourse initiated by events of the first SRD which including the dedication of a commemorative plaque by the waterfront, merged into that aroused by the announcement of the City Council's apology from October, becoming part of a wider debate over the city's memory of slavery.²⁴⁹ In 2000 and 2001, second and third stages of the official apology were carried out by the city council to coincide with SRD, though these remained separate to the events organised by NML. The framing of these commemorative events, particularly SRD, align with an 'events culture' which is itself part of a global culture of consumption, the events marking the memory of slavery become points among many in a busy cultural calendar.²⁵⁰ 'The paradox' argues Andreas Huyssen, 'is that memory discourses themselves partake in the detemporalizing processes that characterise a culture of consumption and obsolescence.'²⁵¹ The key temporal dimension to SRD becomes its calendrical reoccurrence, shifting the focus to its immediate 'presentness' in relation to cultural events, in place of timely connections to the past.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Liverpool's place on the 'world stage' was further enhanced by a roll call of transnational accolades. In 2003, the city was awarded the title of European Capital of Culture (to be marked in 2008) and the following year it was

²⁴⁷ Larry Neild, "Forgive us for our Slave Trade History, Mayor to Seek a Presidential Pardon for Port," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 13, 1999.

²⁴⁸ Mark Brown quoted in Sol Buckner, "Children of Slavery Blast City's 'Quick-Fix' Apology," *Liverpool Daily Post*, December 10, 1999.

²⁴⁹ An analysis of the debate at this time is discussed in Chapter Six

²⁵⁰ Brian Conway sees this 'neoliberalism triumphalism' in the selling of 'Bloody Sunday T-Shirts' in Derry. Brian Conway, "Local Conditions, Global Environment and Transnational Discourses in Memory Work: The Case of Bloody Sunday (1972)," *History & Memory* 1, no. 2 (2008), 192.

²⁵¹ Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, 10.

inscribed a 'Maritime Mercantile City', World Heritage Site by UNESCO.²⁵² Competitions such as the Capital of Culture title, are 'preceded by years of civic promotion and expansionism,' and the late 1990s build up included ventures into other, ultimately unsuccessful, bids including the 1999 Year of Architecture, the loss of which was discursively framed as a chance to go for something bigger, of perhaps achieving greater success in the face of 'overcoming adversity' (see Chapter Three).²⁵³

The run up to the Capital of Culture year somewhat dampened the organised celebration of Liverpool's '800th Birthday' in 2007, the most significant outcome from which was perhaps the publication of a new written history of the city.²⁵⁴ 2007 was, moreover, also the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the British Slave Trade, a commemorative year marked nationally and during which the International Slavery Museum opened in Liverpool.²⁵⁵ 2007, perhaps, more than any year, marks the shifts in memory away from civic localism seen in 1907 and 1957, in place of transnational titles and commemorative years performed on a global stage. Hence, the museum which opened in 2007 was not the *Liverpool* Slavery Museum, but the *International* Slavery Museum.

²⁵² Belchem, "Introduction," 54; Murden, "'City of Change and Challenge'," 476.

²⁵³ Prior, "Postmodern Restructurings," 513.

²⁵⁴ John Belchem, ed. *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character and History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006).

²⁵⁵ There has been much written about 2007. See for example, Geoffrey Cubitt, "Museums and Slavery in Britain: The Bicentenary of 1807," in *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space*, ed. Ana Lucia Araujo (New York: Routledge, 2012); Laurajane Smith and Kalliopi Fouseki, "The Role of Museums as 'Places of Social Justice' Community Consultation and the 1807 Bicentenary," in *Representing Enslavement and Abolition in Museums: Ambiguous Engagements*, ed. Laurajane Smith, et al. (New York: Routledge, 2011); Ross Wilson, "Rethinking 1807: Museums, Knowledge and Expertise," *Museum and Society* 8, no. 3 (2010); Diane Paton, "Interpreting the Bicentenary in Britain," *Slavery & Abolition* 30, no. 2 (2009); Tibbles, "Facing Slavery's Past."

PART ONE

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**Mapping the Discursive Terrain:
Narrative, Identity, Debate**

Introduction to Part One

Mapping a discourse entails seeking out patterns, identifying the use of particular phrases, narratives and motifs across time. These patterns incorporate narrative frameworks which are utilised within the construction of a historic 'story'. In their 1992 book, *Liverpool - Capital of the Slave Trade*, Gail Cameron and Stan Crooke suggest that one of the key obstacles in relation to understanding Liverpool's role in the transatlantic slave trade is the way in which the subject has been handled by historians.¹ They argue that Liverpool's historians have sought to 'defend' the city against its involvement in the slave trade, through the celebration of 'Liverpool's insignificant band of abolitionists' or the more prominent disassociations if not outright denial of the links between the city and the trade.² Murray Steele similarly points to the 'historical airbrushing' of slavery he sees in Liverpool's histories and argues that this attitude mirrored that directed towards the city's African descended population.³

Though Cameron and Crooke's point concerning the significance of 'Liverpool's historians' in the formation of understandings of Liverpool and slavery is an important one, the influence of those writing history, or, indeed, representing the past in various genres, goes beyond lines of defence. Liverpool's memory of slavery has been shaped by the interdiscursivity of broader identity narratives of the city, which frame Liverpool as rising through a 'rags to riches' story, mould interpretations of slavery within an 'overcoming adversity' narrative and complicate representations through contradictions and dissonances of phrasing which stand as legacies of constructing civic pride through history (Chapter Three). One of the key defining features of Liverpool's public, collective identity more generally, centres on its distinctly *maritime* articulation, historically and contemporarily. Liverpool's identity as a port city, intimately entwined with the River Mersey, the Atlantic Ocean and the movement of her ships, is influential within engagements with its history of slavery. However, rather than slavery forming a central part of this 'maritime' story, it is instead obscured through romanticism and generalisations, and displaced in discursive arrangements. Chapter Four will address the 'maritimization' of Liverpool's slavery discourse in the midst of broader maritime themed identity narratives.

¹ Cameron and Crooke, *Liverpool - Capital of the Slave Trade*, 107.

² *Ibid.*, 100.

³ Murray Steele, "Confronting a Legacy," 137

Mapping discourses concerns to a large extent, mapping repetitions. Here the re-deployment of motifs over time extends to particular linguistic devices, such as the ‘metaphor’ used by George Frederick Cooke concerning Liverpool’s bricks being ‘cemented by the blood of a negro’. This anecdote, has been repeated by commentators down the years, and moulded and adapted to suit particular standpoints; agreed with and disagreed with in equal measure (see Chapter Five). The dissonant history of Liverpool and slavery has, furthermore, been a topic of debate for the past two hundred years. Initially emerging from ‘debate’ over its abolition at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the topic has been debated throughout the centuries. Chapter Six explores some of these debates in detail, noting repeated themes and argumentative devices, and assessing these in their contexts. Two debates are addressed which occur some 60 years apart; The Peacock Debate of 1939 which was largely a debate over the ‘history’ of Liverpool and slavery, and in 1999 where debates over slavery in the context of remembrance days, memorial plaques, and apologies, had turned their attention to debates over ‘memory’. The chapter ends with a discussion of some of the other argumentative contexts that Liverpool and slavery has been used within.

CHAPTER THREE

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Narratives of Memory

'People create stories create people; or rather stories create people create stories.'
– Chinua Achebe, *No Longer At Ease* (1961)

The use of narrative in the construction of individual identity has been widely attested, particularly within the cognitive and cultural psychological literature, where it is generally agreed that people create a sense of self through 'storying' their lives.¹ Additionally, James Wertsch's work has shown how history is drawn upon to create narratives of the past which are used to construct and re-construct identity, where narrative becomes one of the 'cultural tools' with which this process is undertaken.² Further, Louis Mink has described narrative as a 'primary cognitive instrument', as a key way of enabling the comprehension of experience, as an article in the constitution of common sense.³ This theorization of narrative aligns closely with the processes of discourse, as a mechanism through which semiotic expressions of meanings filter and can be overlaid in repeatable linguistic structures of 'sense-making'.

The past is recounted, transferred and engaged with dialogically, through language, and such linguistic articulation can be 'framed as stories, narratives which structure their telling and influence their reception'.⁴ Collective memory, suggests James Wertsch, is 'fundamentally organised by the "textual resources" it employs', and of these narratives are especially significant.⁵ This is a selective and active process, as Vinitzky-Seroussi surmises:

¹ See Jens Brockmeier and Donal A. Carbaugh, *Narrative and Identity: Studies in Autobiography, Self, and Culture* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co., 2001); Paul John Eakin, *Living Autobiographically: How We Create Identity in Narrative* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

² James V. Wertsch, "Narrative Tools of History and Identity," *Culture and Psychology* 3, no. 1 (1997).

³ Louis O. Mink, "Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument," in *The History and Narrative Reader*, ed. Geoffrey Roberts (London: Routledge, 2001), 213-14.

⁴ Ron Eyerman, "The Past in the Present: Culture and the Transmission of Memory," *Acta Sociologica* 47, no. 2 (2004): 162.

⁵ James V. Wertsch, "The Narrative Organization of Collective Memory," *ETHOS* 36, no. 1 (2008): 122.

Narratives are never mere lists – assemblages of dates or facts – put together without logic or motivation. Rather they are selective accounts with beginnings and endings, constructed to create meanings, interpret reality, organise events in time, establish coherency and continuity, construct identities, enable social action, and to construct the world and its moral and social order for its audience.⁶

The creation of collective identity relies upon imbuing a shared sense of who ‘we’ are. One way of achieving this is through the creation of shared foundation narratives. These are identified as ‘master-frames’ by Ron Eyerman who suggests that these are passed through traditions, in ritual and ceremonial processes.⁷ Within this process official accounts of the past become paramount, having a major impact on subsequent narratives, albeit not necessarily or exclusively in the ways intended.⁸ Yael Zerubavel similarly discusses the creation of ‘master narratives’, formed by commemorations which constitute a culturally constructed storyline, providing members of a shared identity group with a shared past. In this sense, it is important to view individual commemorations as part of a broader whole, within the larger ‘framework of the master commemorative narrative.’⁹

James Wertsch has identified what he describes as ‘specific’ and ‘schematic’ narratives within collective memory. ‘Specific’ narratives are organised around individual dates and actions, and ‘schematic’ narratives refer to the broader frameworks overarching these, the ‘structures used to generate multiple specific narratives with the same basic plot’.¹⁰ Here, Wertsch also draws attention to the intertextuality of this process of narrativising the past, where texts used to produce narratives have ‘a history of use by others’, and the impact and influence of this can present itself in interesting ways.¹¹ These schematic narratives, like master narratives as understood by Zerubavel, have at their core processes of forgetting as much as ‘remembering’, through their focus on themes they necessarily silence parts which do not fit the narrative integrity of such structures.¹²

⁶ Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, "Commemorating a Difficult Past: Yitzhak Rabin's Memorials," *American Sociological Review* 67, no. 1 (2002): 34.

⁷ Eyerman, "The Past in the Present," 162.

⁸ Wertsch, "Narrative Tools of History and Identity," 15.

⁹ Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*, 6-7.

¹⁰ James V. Wertsch, "Collective Memory and Narrative Templates," *Social Research* 75, no. 1 (2008): 140.

¹¹ Wertsch, "The Narrative Organization of Collective Memory," 122.

¹² Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*, 8.

Liverpool, whose historic story begins to be 'narrativised' at the height of its involvement in the transatlantic slave trade, replicates dominant master narratives across the period considered which shape representations of slavery, as a part of an overall 'history'. The city, seen emerging through a 'rags to riches' schematic narrative, follows other specific and schematic narratives to construct particular collective identities. Whether it's overcoming the adversity of abolition, stressing the enterprising spirit of her merchants in relation to slave trading, or reiterating unique discursive dissonances which embody contradictions, Liverpool's historic discourse exemplifies the unique processes of collective memory through the narrativisation of a complicated past.

Foundation Stories: Rags to Riches

As Eviatar Zerubavel has suggested, the starting point for any foundational historic narrative comes to define what has preceded it as insignificant, as 'pre-history'.¹³ Similarly, Yael Zerubavel suggests that 'the decision of where to begin and end the story defines what constitutes the relevant event and determines its meaning'.¹⁴ Liverpool's 'beginnings' span a considerable breadth of time within its historic discourse, reflected in the structuring of texts and chapters of books. *The Story of Liverpool*, written initially to coincide with the Festival of Britain in 1951, later reprinted for Liverpool's 750th anniversary in 1957, has two sections of equal length, one covering the history of Liverpool up to 1900, the second reserved for 'The Twentieth Century', all 50 years of it by this point.¹⁵ Liverpool's historic narrative of progression is one which drags its feet until a sudden spur of activity, turning point(s) or 'symbolic markers of change'.¹⁶ These markers largely revolve around the activities of the port, often taking the beginning of growth from the construction of the Old Dock at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and, significantly, the maritime activities which this facilitated.¹⁷

¹³ Eviatar Zerubavel, "Social Memories: Steps to a Sociology of the Past," *Qualitative Sociology* 19, no. 3 (1996): 287.

¹⁴ Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*, 221.

¹⁵ The first section outlines how the 'pre-history' of Liverpool (i.e. that before 1207) is one of 'indefinite beginnings and almost complete obscurity', leading into another 450 years during which time it 'remained a small and relatively unimportant out port' until 1660 when 'it underwent a sudden and enormous expansion which has continued to the present day'. F.A. Bailey and R. Millington, *The Story of Liverpool* (Liverpool: Liverpool Corporation, 1957), 7.

¹⁶ Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*, 9.

¹⁷ The 'Old Dock' was the first commercial wet dock constructed in the world. It was opened in 1715 and the engineer was Mr. Thomas Steers. Muir, *History of Liverpool*, 176-77. William Farrer & J. Brownbill

Histories of Liverpool consistently present the city as having risen quickly - from having been small in size and 'insignificant' in status, to 'great' in size but more importantly so in status. This narrative is present within the general histories which emerge in the latter part of the eighteenth century, from Enfield's 1774 *Essay* onwards, in which the author states that Liverpool is a 'place which has lately emerged from obscurity'.¹⁸ This point itself is sometimes exceptionalised, that there is 'no town in England that has so small pretensions to historic description as Liverpool', as Wallace (1795) states. The city's beginnings are here shrunk to the point of apparent insignificance, that '[f]or all its 700 years of history, Liverpool was little more than a fishing village until the beginning of the eighteenth century'.¹⁹ From this point of 'insignificance', the city is shown to have emerged, growing substantially over a short period of time, rising from a 'humble state' to 'present greatness' in John Corry's 1810 text.²⁰

This 'schematic' narrative follows a 'rags-to-riches' storyline, a familiar plot in Western literature, and included in Christopher Booker's list of seven basic plot lines.²¹ This was a well-established narrative of Liverpool's history by the early nineteenth century, and one which William Shepherd is able to satirise through the fortunes of 'Dick Liver' a personification of Liverpool, who quickly rises from being a humble fisherman to a 'man of substance'.²² The dramatic and extreme nature of this transformation, as shown in the *Dick Liver* text, is frequently articulated through a distinctly maritime categorization of place. Liverpool thereby begins as a small fishing village (just as Dick Liver is a fisherman), and rises to become a 'mighty seaport'. This is emphasised particularly clearly within public memory work concerned with imbuing a sense of collective civic pride. In the programme for Liverpool's 700th birthday in 1907, the pageant shows 'the continuous story of Liverpool's growth through those seven hundred years, from humble fishing hamlet to the mightiest seaport of the world', and the two extremes are presented succinctly within the title of the aptly named Derek Whale's article in

(editors), "Liverpool: The docks," *A History of the County of Lancaster: Volume 4*, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=41373> (accessed March 20, 2014)

¹⁸ William Enfield, "An Essay Towards the History of Liverpool." (London: Joseph Johnson, 1774), <http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=universityofyork&abID=T001&docId=CW103901081&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE> [accessed January 13, 2011].

¹⁹ Wallace, "A General and Descriptive History of the Ancient and Present State of the town of Liverpool." 4; Liverpool Corporation, *City of Liverpool Official Handbook (Published Under the Authority of the Corporation)*, 19th ed. (Liverpool: Littlebury Brothers, 1950), 129.

²⁰ Corry, *The History of Liverpool from the Earliest Authenticated Period Down to the Present Time*. 5

²¹ Christopher Booker, *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories* (London: Continuum, 2004).

²² Touchstone, "The True and Wonderful Story of Dick Liver,"

1957, *Fishing Village to Great Sea Port* which, nonetheless, manages to omit discussion of slave trading completely.²³

This device, familiar to Liverpool's historic discourse generally, is used by those seeking to stress the significance of the slave trade to Liverpool. In 1907 Ramsay Muir, who as John Belchem suggests, did not 'shy away' from acknowledging this aspect of Liverpool's history, states in his oft repeated line, that '[b]eyond a doubt it was the slave trade which raised Liverpool from a struggling sea port to be one of the richest and most prosperous trading centres in the world.'²⁴ Similarly, one hundred years earlier John Corry also took this view, suggesting that the slave trade played a significant part in the growth of the town's population.²⁵ Corry's surmise arises only a few years after Liverpool MP General Banastre Tarleton, whose family were slave merchants, had used the rags-to-riches motif to emphasise the importance of the slave trade to Liverpool during parliamentary debates over its abolition, in 1806. He describes, 'Liverpool – a town which from a miserable fishing hamlet of about 150 huts, had within a century risen to be the second town, in point of commercial wealth and consequence, in the British dominions, entirely by the African trade.'²⁶

However, the very familiarity of this narrative also means it can be drawn upon in altered or inverted forms for discursive effect. Liverpool historian Mike Boyle, within a debate in 1996 concerning slavery walking tours of the city, states that '[w]e have got to face up to these things. Liverpool was the leading slave port in Europe in the 18th century, accounting for about forty per cent of the trade. Without it, Liverpool would have remained a fishing hamlet.'²⁷ Boyle poignantly draws on the term 'fishing hamlet' to invoke references to the 'rags' of this narrative, knowing the next section is well known in public discourse, in a

²³ *700th Anniversary of the Foundation of Liverpool: Programme of the Pageant in Wavertree Park & Grounds August 3rd, 5th and 6th*, (Liverpool: Gilbert G. Walmsley, 1907); Derek Whale, "Fishing Village to a Great Seaport," in *City of Liverpool Charter Celebrations 1207-1957: Evening Express Charter Supplement* (Liverpool: Liverpool Evening Express, June 17th 1957).

²⁴ Muir, *History of Liverpool*, 195.

²⁵ 'In the year 1770, the population of Liverpool amounted to 35,000 and this vast increase must be attributed, in a great measure, to the advancement of its trade to Africa and the West Indies – the number of ships belonging to this port, at that period, being 309; of which, the slave-trade alone employed ninety-six vessels'. Corry, *The History of Liverpool from the Earliest Authenticated Period Down to the Present Time*. 81

²⁶ 'Abolition of the Slave Trade', *Hansard Parliamentary Debates* June 10, 1806, vol 7 http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1806/jun/10/abolition-of-the-slave-trade#column_587 (accessed November 20, 2013)

²⁷ Mike Boyle, quoted in Paul Wilkinson, "Heritage Dispute over Liverpool's Slavery Tours," *The Times*, September 9 1996.

rhetorical gesture to simultaneously provoke thought over how the city got its 'riches'.²⁸ The reasons behind Liverpool's rags to riches transformation are humanised by William Ackah who stresses that elevating the 'small fishing village' to its pre-eminent standing were African people:

Liverpool, however started out as a small fishing village, a tiny place in an insignificant area. It was Liverpool's confrontation with the people of the African continent that brought the city its wealth and pre-eminence in the world.²⁹

Overcoming Abolition

The rags to riches plot is also one which fits the ebbs and flows of Liverpool's economic fortunes, unfolding, as Booker suggests 'through alternating phases of constriction and expansion', which in other examples of this storyline, often include a central crisis to be overcome and for the protagonist to be all the 'richer' for having done so.³⁰ In Liverpool's case these 'crises' frequently include the abolition of the slave trade, as well as later events and disasters such as bomb damage in World War Two, decline in shipping, the end of Empire and subsequent de-industrialization and unemployment. The 'Overcoming Abolition' narrative can be understood as a 'schematic narrative' as identified by James Wertsch, which is a version of another broader 'schematic narrative' which John Belchem identifies as 'Liverpool is at its best when overcoming adversity'.³¹ This narrative plays out in relation to a number of key 'adversities' the city has had to overcome, such as the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal.³²

Developing Belchem's thesis, I argue that the beginnings of this narrative emerge much earlier than the period of Edwardian confidence Belchem suggests, within years of the

²⁸ Peter Fryer also uses the motif to make this point, 'without the slave trade, Liverpool would have remained much as it had been towards the end of the seventeenth century: "an insignificant seaport,"' Fryer, *Staying Power*, 33.

²⁹ William Ackah, "Introduction: Organisation and Identity in Local, National and Global Context," in *Black Organisation and Identity in Liverpool: A Local, National and Global Perspective*, ed. William Ackah and Mark Christian (Liverpool: Charles Wootton College Press, 1997), 2.

³⁰ Booker, *The Seven Basic Plots*, 51-66.

³¹ Belchem, "Liverpool's Story is the World's Glory," 10.

³² In response to which Louis Lacey in 1907 suggests, 'Pessimists predicted serious injury to the port of Liverpool, because of the Canal competing, but somehow, the pessimists have been wrong, and the port is busier than ever.' Lacey, *History of Liverpool From 1207 to 1907*, 64.

abolition act having been passed. Furthermore, the use of the 'overcoming abolition' narrative in the twentieth century is also drawn upon as a device with which to downplay the significance of the slave trade to Liverpool's development – i.e. that the city easily overcame abolition simply because the slave trade was not that integral to its commercial workings. Crucially, Liverpool's own declaration of having 'overcome abolition' has broken its links to post-1807 enslavement systems. The process of drawing on the 'cultural tool' of a schematic narrative is here demonstrated as one which enables displacement and forgetting through an emphasis on broader narratives, as James Wertsch puts it:

A past that is imagined through narrative templates is one in which interpretation relies heavily on abstract meaning structures not anchored in specific places, times, characters, or events. Information – especially information that contradicts these schemas – is routinely distorted, simplified, and ignored.³³

As such, the framing of Liverpool's show of success through 'overcome abolition', is a discursive interpretation which allows other events and activities in relation to slavery (such as the trade in slave-produced goods, plantation investment by Liverpool families, or other general economic benefits), to be quietly forgotten. However, the suggestion here is not that such schematic narratives and their specific manifestations do not reflect actual historic happenings or, more accurately, historic attitudes. The importance of the slave trade to the city and the economic perils of its abolition dominated public discourse in early nineteenth century Liverpool. Following the Abolition Act of 1807, the suggestion that Liverpool had made 'a great sacrifice' in the loss of its slave trade was presented in a Town Hall Meeting discussing the upcoming visit of the Prince Regent in 1814.³⁴

Ten years after this Town Hall meeting, Edward Baines *History of Lancashire* included the overcoming abolition narrative structured in the way it was to be repeated within histories well into the twentieth century, with an initial outline of fear and anxiety in line with the 'supposed' integral place of the trade to Liverpool, that '[t]he abolition of so lucrative and extensive a branch of commerce, it was generally supposed would have given a severe shock to Liverpool,' followed by the 'reality' contradicting this, and statement of distaste with the trade, 'but these gloomy forebodings were not realized (*sic*); the foreign trade of the port was rooted too deeply to be materially impaired by lopping off one of its least desirable

³³ Wertsch, "Collective Memory and Narrative Templates," 142.

³⁴ 'Mr S said it was far from his habits, or his wish, to enter upon unpleasant retrospections – but thus much he might be permitted to say, that the trade in question had some years ago been prohibited by the British Legislature – that, on that occasion, many respectable individuals, and the town of Liverpool at large, had been called upon to make great sacrifices...' "An Address Read to the Prince Regent," *Liverpool Mercury*, May 13, 1814. 'Mr S' is the Reverend William Shepherd (1768–1847).

branches'.³⁵ What seems important in this statement is the extent to which this is presented as a triumph - that Liverpool prospered significantly in spite of the threat of economic hardship.

However, it is within the twentieth century that the 'overcoming abolition' motif is most actively and frequently drawn upon and used within Liverpool's identity narratives alongside the significance of the slave trade to Liverpool being downplayed. This new use of the narrative continues to be emphasised well into the twenty-first century. One of the major ways in which the 'overcoming abolition' narrative is constructed is by representing an increase in trade after 1807 as evidence of the city prospering in the face of economic adversity. For example, in 1910 James Touzeau states:

[...] the predicted ruin did not follow, although the trade of the port naturally suffered for some years, after the year 1807 Liverpool and its dependencies experienced a more rapid general commercial improvement and prosperous increase in trade than at any former period in its history.³⁶

The omission of any discussion of the details of such trade after 1807, acts to cloak a continuing connection with slavery with a rhetorical vagueness. Similarly, in 1946, William Tyndale Harries outlines the anti-abolition arguments of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century rehearsed in the city, which included the supposed threat to Liverpool, that:

Grass would grow between the stones in Castle Street; the docks would be turned into fish ponds; Bootle organs (frogs) would sing in the mansions of the wealthy merchants. In a word Liverpool would be ruined.³⁷

Dramatic hyperbolic statements of doom and gloom are presented against the outcome, that 'happily they were proved wrong' and the tonnage entering the port increased, 'in 1811 it had risen to 611,190', though what this tonnage consisted of is not here detailed. Moreover, it was a moral advantage as well as an economic one, yet one which would not be complete until the 1830s according to Harries, 'more than that a great wrong had been righted, although it was not until 1833 that slaves in the British Empire were set free.'³⁸ An acknowledgement perhaps

³⁵ Baines, *Baines's Lancashire*, 188-89.

³⁶ Touzeau, *Rise and Progress of Liverpool*, 744.

³⁷ 'Bootle organs' is a Merseyside colloquialism for frogs, a reference for which can be found in the *Magazine of Natural History*, 1834, where one correspondent discusses the 'Natterjack', a variety of toad seen in the Bootle area with a distinctive and loud croak from which the name Bootle Organs is said to have derived. Tyndale Harries, *Landmarks*, 64; Henry Berry, "Letter," *The Magazine of Natural History, and Journal of Zoology, Botany, Mineralogy, Geology, and Meteorology* 9 (1834).

³⁸ Harries, *Landmarks*.

made in the light of pervasive national celebrations of the centenary of the emancipation act in 1933 and 1934.

However, explicit links between the increase in tonnage of importation and the origin of the goods being imported is rarely incorporated into this narrative. In the 'Liverpool and Shipping' chapter of a guide to the city produced by Liverpool City Council, the cotton imported from America is used as proof of Liverpool overcoming abolition:

The abolition of the trade in slaves was thought to presage Liverpool's ruin, but within 10 years her maritime commerce was bigger than ever before. Trade with the East Indies and with India had been sought with success by Liverpool merchants and, as early as 1811, 250,000 bales of cotton were imported in one year from the West Indies and America.³⁹

City Council produced guidebooks in the mid-twentieth century clearly illustrate the 'overcoming abolition' narrative in relation to the grand schematic narrative of Liverpool prospering in the face of adversity. Here, abolition is placed in direct comparison to previous economic adversities, such as in 1930 when,

Liverpool was facing a crisis as big as that of 1807, when the British Maritime Slave Trade was stopped and people said grass would grow in Liverpool's streets. This time the changes were international ones. Versailles had created new nations eager to be self-sufficient. British tariff policy had altered. The 1929 crash had cut down international trade. Everything combined to knock the bottom out of Liverpool's staple industry – sea transport.⁴⁰

The juxtaposition of the 1929 crash and the abolition of the slave trade align apparently comparative moments of challenge in Liverpool's 'sea transport' history with the assertion that if Liverpool could overcome abolition, then the city would pull through any crisis facing her in the 1930s, or, more significantly, the post-war 1950s in which this guide was produced.⁴¹

The continuing connections between Liverpool's trade and enslavement after 1807 are displaced in a themed guide to Liverpool from 1986 outlining Liverpool's links with America.

³⁹ Liverpool Corporation, *Official Handbook (1950)*, 129. This line of reasoning is also seen within a school text book in 1935 in which it is stated that the 'old established businesses such as tobacco and sugar' continued to prosper after abolition alongside 'new developments' which 'more than made good expected loss' Lamb and Smallpage, *The Story of Liverpool*, 46.

⁴⁰ Liverpool Corporation, *Official Handbook (1950)*, 123.

⁴¹ The motif also appears in discourse around the 750th Anniversary celebrations, where the increased prosperity is particularly stressed in one press article suggesting that 'when Parliament finally passed the Abolition Bill there were those who presaged the ruin of Liverpool's prosperity. It was not so, of course. Within ten years of the abolition of slavery Liverpool's maritime trade was greater than it had ever been' Thomas Whitford, "Seven Centuries of Mersey Shipping," *Liverpool Daily Echo*, June 19th 1957.

Here, Ron Jones presents Liverpool overcoming abolition, not through the importation of goods but through its role in emigration. He states that:

The merchants of Liverpool wrung their hands in despair when the evil but lucrative slave trade was brought to an end by Parliament in 1807. The previous year had been a good one and the holds of their ships had carried nearly 50,000 slaves. Ruin was forecast but they need not have been unduly worried. Soon they would be carrying a profitable human cargo of a different kind – emigrants.⁴²

Here, Jones is quite literally substituting one ‘human cargo’ as he puts it, for another.

Perhaps due to these years of repetition, in 2008 Alexander Tulloch succinctly, if bluntly, encapsulates the discursive abuse of the overcoming abolition narrative to downplay the significance of the slave trade to Liverpool when, in a sardonic tone, he states that ‘[s]lavery ended in 1807 and Liverpool did not fall apart.’⁴³

The focus given over the past one hundred years to Liverpool overcoming abolition is indeed, as John Belchem has identified, part of a broader discourse of *Merseypride* in which Liverpool defines itself as being at its best when succeeding in the face of economic challenge and hardship. What is significant also is the extent to which this narrative works to both instil hope from a display of resilience alongside minimising the significance of the slave trade to Liverpool at a time when, as the above writers have noted, Empires were falling and shipping was faltering.

Narrative and Identity

Seymour Drescher has outlined some of the discursive complexities present in Liverpool histories at the end of the eighteenth century which were affected by the pro and anti-abolition debates so publically fought in and often aimed at the city.⁴⁴ He suggests that James Wallace’s text, published in 1795 sought to inspire pride in the city’s livelihood, and the sheer scale of Liverpool’s slave trade as its ‘raison detre’. This is illustrated through Wallace’s emphasis of this dominance through fractions.⁴⁵

⁴² Jones, *The American Connection*, 69.

⁴³ Alexander Tulloch, *The Story of Liverpool* (Stroud: History Press, 2008), 68.

⁴⁴ Drescher, "The Slaving Capital of the World."

⁴⁵ ‘First. That one-fourth of the ships belonging to the port of Liverpool are employed in the African trade Second. That is has five-eighths of the African trade of Great Britain Third. That it has three-sevenths of the African trade of all Europe. Fourth. That is navigates one-twelfth part of all the shipping of Great Britain. Fifth. That is has one-fourth part in all foreign trade of Great Britain. Sixth. That is has

The negotiation of slavery within written histories at this time maintains residues of pro-slavery debates by stressing the importance of the trade to Liverpool alongside imbuing a sense of civic pride. This process began and continued with a positive endorsement of maritime mercantile endeavour and a celebration of the city's seafaring expertise which flourished through the 'enterprising spirit' her people demonstrated in relation to slave trading. This is expressed frequently alongside competitive tones in which Liverpool's successes are greater than her 'rival' port cities, London and Bristol. Throughout the nineteenth century, however, these identity narratives are awkwardly reworked against an increasingly prominent national anti-slavery discourse, a process which has left discursive legacies in contradictory statements, and the ghosts of an enterprising spirit haunting a dissonant past.

Scouse Boasting, Enterprising Spirits and Competitive Tones

Whilst conducting ethnographic research in Liverpool, Jacqueline Nassy Brown came into contact with a now stereotyped attribute of Liverpool identity. She asked her black Liverpoolian tour guide why he didn't mention the other UK port cities involved in the slave trade to which he replied '[y]ou see Jackie, it's all about the Liverpool psyche. It's all about boasting.'⁴⁶ This is comparable to John Belchem's identification of a 'Merseypride' discourse.⁴⁷ Whilst Ramsay Muir's *History of Liverpool* in 1907 epitomises several aspects of the 'Merseypride' discourse as Belchem argues, written histories over the century prior to its publication also exhibit articulations of a particular civic pride within a well-rehearsed 'enterprising spirit' motif emerging out of the rapid 'rags to riches' expansion of the town and port across the eighteenth century.

James Wallace suggests that Liverpool's 'avidity and sagacity' was the reason behind the city's success in the transatlantic slave trade. He presents this against Bristol's 'short-sighted', even arrogant focus on plantations, that Bristol had become 'too secure' in having no

one-half the trade of the city of London. Seventh. That it has one-sixth part of the general commerce of Great Britain. Eighth. That 584 ships belong to the port, whose burthen is 92098 registered tons.' Wallace, "A General and Descriptive History of the Ancient and Present State of the town of Liverpool." 238-39

⁴⁶ Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail*, 186.

⁴⁷ Belchem, "Liverpool's Story is the World's Glory," 6.

rivals but London.⁴⁸ This competitive and indeed derisory tone persists throughout following histories in relation to Liverpool and Bristol.⁴⁹ John Corry's 1810 history of Liverpool, similarly tells of how it was 'that adventurous spirit which has since distinguished the merchants of Liverpool', and that furthermore, it was the 'perfect knowledge of the commerce of the British West India Islands' which meant that:

...the traffic to the coast was engrossed by Bristol, till Liverpool, advancing in wealth, population, and enterprize (*sic*), endeavoured to participate in a species of commerce, which however repugnant to the feelings of humanity, was productive of opulence.⁵⁰

Liverpool is presented as clearly beating Bristol in competition for this trade, due to its enterprise, however the inclusion of the end clause reflects the problematic nature of deriving pride from 'success' in slave trading, meaning that the author brushes aside moral arguments against it, instead falling back onto unquestionable amounts of wealth. Similarly, in 1824, Edward Baines combines the enterprising spirit motif with Liverpool's rags-to-riches narrative when he suggests that Liverpool prospered in spite of having 'no peculiar claims to high antiquity' because of the 'enterprize (*sic*) of her mercantile classes'.⁵¹

The frequent deployment of the enterprising spirit motif and competition with Bristol and London is, however, later derided through satire in *Porcupine* (1863). Here, Hugh Shimmin outlines how:

In 1720 this traffic had been abandoned by London. The London dog, grasping at the shadow which he saw in the depths of the South Sea, let fall the piece of black flesh which he had been carrying in his mouth. Bristol would have seized the tempting morsel gladly and run away with it; but Liverpool was then, as she is now, energetic and enterprising. So she cut in and cut Bristol out; and Bristol has scarcely ever held up her head in a decent way since Liverpool carried off the slave trade.⁵²

⁴⁸ Wallace, "A General and Descriptive History of the Ancient and Present State of the town of Liverpool.", 220, 215.

⁴⁹ See also Corry, *The History of Liverpool from the Earliest Authenticated Period Down to the Present Time*. page 109 and 111 for Liverpool overtaking Bristol; 'Bristol had been beaten in the race', Muir, *History of Liverpool*, 192.; Bristol was beaten by Liverpool's 'superior skill and industry', Anderson, *Book of Liverpool*, 8.; for a discussion on the competition between Liverpool and Bristol and yet also their shared disgust of state monopolies see Parkinson, *The Rise of the Port of Liverpool*, 93. And general reference to the competition between the two cities in Chandler, *Liverpool*, 305; Aughton, *Liverpool: A People's History*, 75; Tulloch, *The story of Liverpool*, 61 and 63.

⁵⁰ Corry, *The History of Liverpool from the Earliest Authenticated Period Down to the Present Time*. 111

⁵¹ Baines, *Baines's Lancashire*, 149.

⁵² Hugh Shimmin, "The Comic History of Liverpool: Chapter XXII," *Porcupine*, December 5, 1863.

Critical of Liverpool's contemporary support for the Confederate States and staunchly anti-slavery, Shimmin is here knowingly drawing out the curious clichés of Liverpool's historic narrative of slavery for ridicule, presenting her competition with rival ports as the fighting of dogs over scraps of meat. This marks a turning point, and the 'enterprising spirit' motif fades somewhat over the rest of the nineteenth century within official histories.

The motif reappears at the beginning of the twentieth century in time for Liverpool's 700th birthday. Ramsay Muir presents Liverpool's dominance in the slave trade against other port cities in a highly competitive tone, where 'Bristol had been beaten in the race, London was far behind; and in the second half of the century, Liverpool was beyond all competition the principal slaving port, not only in England but in Europe.'⁵³ The spirit of enterprise is once again revived alongside the suggestion that Liverpool's slave trading success was something to be revered by all:

In the eyes of the Liverpool merchants, and in the eyes of all the world, the success of Liverpool was a thing to be envied, the legitimate reward of enterprise which everyone would have been delighted to share.⁵⁴

A 1907 guidebook, produced by the city authorities, gives 'Shipping' as the primary reason for Liverpool's wealth and when slavery is briefly mentioned within this, the 'successful' competition with Bristol seems to be the main point of emphasis:

By far the larger number of the ships were employed in the West Indian trade which had grown to importance. Out of this trade sprang the slave trade which was wrested from Bristol.⁵⁵

Here, the imagery of the slave trade 'springing' from a more generalised West Indian trade gives the 'trade' itself a sense of agency. The representation of slavery within official guides to Liverpool in the twentieth century maintains the precedent set within this commemorative guide, and the line concerning the 'springing' of the slave trade and its 'wresting' from Bristol,

⁵³ Muir, *History of Liverpool*, 192.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁵⁵ Liverpool Corporation, *City of Liverpool Official Handbook (Published Under the Authority of the Corporation)* (Liverpool: Littlebury Brothers, 1907), 82.

is retained into the 1970s.⁵⁶ In another commemorative book published to mark the 1928 Civic Week, the editor reminds the reader of Liverpool's 'enterprising spirit' in line with the slave trade, expressed through a competitive line with its rival port city:

It must be remembered that it was our superior skill and industry which beat Bristol and London out of the slave trade, then a perfectly legitimate and praiseworthy occupation in everybody's estimation.⁵⁷

Similarly, in 1952 one history suggests that the act of slave trading is itself something to be proud of. Whilst it is acknowledged that:

Everyone who worked in Lancashire and the Midlands, everyone even who smoked a pipe or (being a sailor) chewed tobacco, everyone who took snuff, and everyone using sugar in tea, was encouraging the Slave Trade and benefitting from it.⁵⁸

A reasonable point is here made about the broader cultural and economic benefits of transatlantic slavery, however the author then defends the crew aboard slaving vessels by stating:

We need not be unduly ashamed of our ancestors who sailed in the Guineamen. They were no worse than their neighbours and in one respect they were better; for we know at least that they were *men*.⁵⁹

Here, the physical act of working aboard a slave ship is presented through a definitively gendered masculinity, as better, perhaps through its active as opposed to passive nature, than simply consuming slave produced goods from the return journey. Crucially, this is reworked as something to take pride in.

The narratives outlined above are replicated and repeated in different discursive contexts. Although outlined largely in regard to written histories, guidebooks and discourse

⁵⁶ This line is included in the following guides: Liverpool Corporation, *Official Handbook (1950)*, 31-2; Liverpool Corporation, *Liverpool Official Handbook (published under the authority of the Corporation)* (Liverpool: Littlebury Brothers, 1957), 19; Liverpool Corporation, *Liverpool Official Guide (published under the authority of the Corporation)* (Liverpool: Littlebury Brothers, 1967), 19; Liverpool Corporation, *Liverpool Official Guide (published under the authority of the Corporation)* (Liverpool: Steel House Publications, 1971), 14.

⁵⁷ Anderson, *Book of Liverpool*, 8.

⁵⁸ Parkinson, *The Rise of the Port of Liverpool*, 102.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* Original emphasis.

around commemorative texts, Liverpool's distinctive identity narrative of beating other port cities is reproduced in response to discourse surrounding other memory work. Old habits die hard, and, accordingly, within reporting concerning the opening of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery in 1994 the local press reported that, 'Liverpool beat competition from London and Bristol to house the gallery.'⁶⁰

'The Glory and the Shame'

The complicated nature of expressing a sense of civic pride in slave trading has persisted throughout Liverpool's histories. Eviatar Zerubavel has suggested that it is the '*sociobiographical*' nature of memory, the extent to which people collectively identify with the past, which 'accounts for the sense of pride, pain and shame' experienced.⁶¹ This sense of 'pride, pain and shame' is captured succinctly within contradictory phrasing which embodies oppositional expressions seen throughout Liverpool's slavery discourse.

These discursive traits emerge out of and alongside expressions of pride in the 'enterprising spirit' of Liverpool slave trading merchants and are expressed most strongly among its more liberal commentators. However, complications also arise in Liverpool's early guidebooks. Criticisms of the trade are noted and the complications of acknowledging the significance of the trade to Liverpool's commercial development are expressed within the *The Stranger* in 1807, a guide in which John Davies identifies a dominantly positive tone, making the discussion around slavery all the more complex, emphasis falling instead on its imminent abolition:

It is, however, a very considerable abatement of the pleasure which arises from the view we have taken, to reflect that so considerable a part of the opulence of this flourishing port is to be ascribed to a trade, so degrading to the national character, and so much at variance with sound policy, humanity and religion, as the African. This is a page in our history upon which benevolence lets fall a tear of pity, and which, were it possible, it would expunge. But what is past cannot be recalled; the alleviation is, that the time is hastening, when a British invoice shall no longer enumerate as articles of commerce, "*slaves and souls of men.*"*⁶²

⁶⁰ David Hope, "Gallery Puts Roots of Racism on Show," *Liverpool Daily Post*, June 8, 1994.

⁶¹ Zerubavel, "Social Memories," 290.

⁶² Within a footnote following this statement it is acknowledged that 'Since this was written, an act for the abolition of this traffic has passed the legislature of the country'. Anon, *The Stranger in Liverpool or. An Historical and Descriptive View of Liverpool and its Environs* (Liverpool: Thomas Kaye, 1807), 25-6. Davies, "Liverpool Guides, 1795-1914," 67.

However, this entire section is removed from this series by 1815 and replaced with a section on competition with Bristol.⁶³

In the mid-nineteenth century, Thomas Baines (1806–1881), the liberal proprietor of the *Liverpool Times*, demonstrates a shift in tone where the civic pride illustrated previously in the ‘success’ of Liverpool’s African merchants meets the author’s need to morally distance himself from the slave trade. He tells the reader that of the ‘814,000 negroes, conveyed from Africa to the West Indies in 11 years, Liverpool had the profit and disgrace of conveying 407,000’.⁶⁴ Here ‘profit’ acknowledges Liverpool’s dominance in the trade yet clashes with the ‘disgrace’ expressed in relation to the nature of its commercial venture. Similarly, in 1853, Richard Brooke describes the rise in the number of ships involved in the slave trade from 1775 to 1799 as a ‘striking but lamentable increase’.⁶⁵

This conflicting presentation of civic pride has its roots in the development of a civic historic narrative which emerged out of debates surrounding slavery and abolition. However, moving into the later nineteenth century, the ‘celebration’ of Liverpool’s ‘success’ in slave trading, becomes increasingly problematic. As discussed in Chapter Two, authors in the 1870s and 1880s express a psychologically reflective tone when addressing the subject of slavery and are concerned by the effects of this history on consciousness and thought, past and present. James Picton considers the psychologically dissonant effect of the slave trade on Liverpool people where,

The secret consciousness that the trade would not bear the light either of reason, scripture, or humanity, combined with the conviction that the prosperity of the town depended upon its retention, produced an uneasy feeling of suspicion and jealousy,

⁶³ ‘Bristol and Liverpool, as we have seen, were at an early period rival ports; but the latter, though she started late, has not only overtaken but surpassed her rival’. Anon, *The Stranger in Liverpool or. An Historical and Descriptive View of Liverpool and its Environs* (Liverpool: Thomas Kaye, 1815), 28-29. The text remains the same in 1825, Anon, *The Stranger in Liverpool or. An Historical and Descriptive View of Liverpool and its Environs* (Liverpool: Thomas Kaye, 1825).

⁶⁴ Baines, *History of the Commerce and Town of Liverpool*, 719.

⁶⁵ Richard Brooke, *Liverpool as it was During the Last Quarter of the Eighteenth Century, 1775-1800 (a 2003 reprint by Liverpool Libraries and Information Services* (Liverpool: J. Mawdsley and Son, 1853), 233. Richard Brooke (1791-1861) was a Liverpool born antiquary who also practised as a solicitor and notary within the city. He was a founding member of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire and joined the Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society in 1855, later becoming a council member (1860). As well as the text discussed presently, he also published *Visits to Fields of Battle in England in the Fifteenth Century* (1857) and *The Office and Practice of a Notary in England* (1847). See C.W. Sutton, ‘Brooke, Richard (1791-1861).’ Rev. Simon Harrison, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

and a dread of all change, which could not but impart a peculiar character at those at least connected with the occupation.⁶⁶

Whereas in 1884, 'Dicky Sam' emphasises this complication on contemporary Liverpoolians, asking:

What are we to think, when we consider that the wealth produced by this iniquitous trade, the stamping out of the negro's life, and filling the cup of misery to the very brim, yet it made many rich and happy, and their society sought and courted.⁶⁷

The author also makes an interesting link between these riches and charitable work within the city which he suggests was done out of 'a troubled conscience', the kind which perhaps Picton was also alluring to.⁶⁸

Ramsay Muir's 'unconcealed liberal discomfiture at the undeniable inhumanity' of slavery against a desire to foster a coherent civic pride in Liverpool's staggering rise to commercial success leads the author to most succinctly express this discursive dissonance.⁶⁹ Muir stresses the 'proud and shameful eminence' Liverpool had, and describes the slave trade as 'the glory and the shame' of the city.⁷⁰

In comparison the earlier official guidebooks' promotion of successful competition against Bristol, a relatively more detailed mention of the slave trade in the history section of an 1988 guide is made:

The Atlantic trade carried manufactured goods to West Africa, to our shame, slaves to the West Indies and sugar, rum and raw cotton to Liverpool again. By 1760 there were 69 Liverpool ships on this triangular trade.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool Vol 1*, 226

⁶⁷ Anon, *Liverpool and Slavery*, 14.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶⁹ Belchem, "Liverpool's Story is the World's Glory," 9.

⁷⁰ Muir, *History of Liverpool*, 184. In a sermon given by the Archbishop of York, Dr Arthur Michael Ramsey, fifty years later during Liverpool's 750th Charter celebrations, he asks, '[w]hat is man? He did not shrink from enslaving his African fellow men and transporting them to America. So man's shame as well as man's glory was part and parcel of your history. "Primate: The City's Glory is God's Gift. Shame, too, in History," *Liverpool Daily Post*, June 17th 1957. Interestingly, this section is omitted from the official programme of the service and within all other press coverage of the event.

⁷¹ Liverpool City Council, *City of Liverpool Official Guide* (Liverpool: British Publishing Company Ltd, 1988), 14. An interesting advert for Barclays appears later in the book reading 'Barclays in Liverpool: Bankers in the city for 200 years. Looking forward to the future with confidence'

It is interesting that it is within the later 1980s that this addition should occur, following a very difficult decade in Liverpool's history, not least the riots of 1981 which have largely been seen as protests against institutionalised racism.⁷²

Conclusion

The discursive devices outlined above shape particular aspects of Liverpool's slavery memory discourse, providing frameworks for cognition and interpretation. They are deployed across the two centuries considered in varying ways, frequently constituting and constituted by broader identity narratives. These are by no means exhaustive, but emerged from the sources considered most prominently and consistently across the time period.

However, they do not exist in a vacuum. These narratives, motifs and devices exist alongside and within other features of this evolving discourse, and come to be used in different settings and in various ways. One key example of this is the way in which the focus given to Liverpool having 'overcome abolition' also acts to 'maritimize' slavery into the movements of Liverpool ships, severing links between the city's nineteenth century import and export trade, and ongoing enslavement and forced labour in the Americas. The maritimizing of slavery in Liverpool, however, is again complicated by broader civic identity narratives which present an anomalous picture against the perhaps more straightforward national maritimization of slavery. These complexities will be the focus of Chapter Four.

⁷² See Frost and Phillips, *Liverpool '81*.

Maritime Mercantile City

In 2001, John Beech argued that Britain's memory of slavery has predominantly been represented as a maritime activity. This 'maritimization', of slavery placed commemorative focus on the slave *trade* rather than enslavement more broadly, a bias which Beech believed was demonstrated by a preoccupation with the Middle Passage. Beech saw this as a form of distancing, and one which was 'misleading', drawing a comparison to Holocaust memory by stating that it would be 'hard to imagine that any German recognition of the Holocaust would be placed in a railway museum simply on the basis that trains were used to transport victims to the concentration camps'.¹ Writing in 2008, Beech suggests that despite major exhibition redesigns in Liverpool and Bristol, there was still little evaluation of the broader impacts of slavery on Britain and that slavery was still being 'maritized' in its representation.²

Much of the focus of Beech's 'maritimization' argument rests on the location of public exhibitions and museums addressing slavery, which are situated in port cities; in London, Bristol, Hull and Liverpool. How then, does this argument work in relation to the isolated study of one of these places? What does the process of 'maritimizing' the memory of slavery mean in somewhere like Liverpool, a place where much of the city's general historic story is 'maritized', connected intimately, as it necessarily is, to the activities and workings of its port? The maritimization of slavery in Liverpool is a process which is ultimately embroiled within the city's own historic story and constructed sense of collective identity. However, far from rendering the slave trade a therefore inescapable and significant segment of a dominant maritime story, the subject is frequently flooded by a discourse of maritime romanticism,

¹ John Beech, G., "The Marketing of Slavery Heritage in the United Kingdom," in *Slavery, Contested Heritage, and Thanatourism*, ed. G.M. Dann and A.V. Seaton (New York: Haworth Hospitality Press, 2001).

² John Beech, "A Step Forwards or a Step Sideways?: Some Personal Reflections of How the Presentation of Slavery Has (and Hasn't) Changed in the Last Few Years," <http://www.history.ac.uk/1807commemorated/exhibitions/museums/step.html> [accessed August 21, 2013]. John Oldfield supports Beech's arguments in Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*, 135.

obscured by 'sea themed' generalisation, and dislodged by displacement narratives which shift focus to other maritime activities.

The 'maritimization' of collective identity narratives is not, of course, something so exceptional to Liverpool. Geoff Quilley has argued that the image of the sea in eighteenth century art was integral to the 'imagining' of the British nation at this time, in which the 'island nation' idea was represented and reinforced through a visualisation of an 'affinity with the sea', which metaphorically combined 'commerce and patriotism'.³ This occurs, Quilley suggests, through a 'discursive network' in which discourses of the 'nation' and of eighteenth century aesthetics interact.⁴ Equally, as Ken Lunn and Ann Day argue, 'maritimity' has been a significant component of British national identity construction, comparable, perhaps, to romantic images of landscape and the rural idyll, and at points emerging combined, where the nation is represented as being both maritime *and* rural. They suggest, however, that maritime constructions of identity have not been subjected to as much analysis as their rural and landscape counterparts, with commentators instead turning to a 'quasi-biological notion of "the sea in the blood"'.⁵ They argue that, although a form of 'maritimity' is perceptible in the 'new navalism' of the 1880s and 1890s, in biographies of seafaring 'heroes', narratives of maritime achievement and the 'control of the seas' motif became increasingly central to British national identity constructions in the early twentieth century.⁶

Authoritative and promotional texts produced in Liverpool at this time embarked on this process whole-heartedly, drawing on national romanticism of a maritime past and adding their own unique dose of 'Merseypride' to the mix. In 1902, at a high point of imperial pride for the city, maritime accomplishment is presented as something Liverpool did first and most extensively, that:

It is not without reason that Liverpool, the great Mersey seaport, is generally looked upon as one of the first – if not the first – maritime ports of the world. Her ships sail on every sea, and the produce of every land under the sun finds its way to her Docks.⁷

³ Geoff Quilley, "'All Ocean is Her Own': The Image of the Sea and the Identity of the Maritime Nation in Eighteenth-Century British Art," in *Imagining Nations*, ed. Geoffrey Cubitt (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 135.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁵ Ken Lunn and Ann Day, "Britain as Island: National Identity and the Sea," in *History, Nationhood, and the Question of Britain*, ed. Helen Brocklehurst and Robert Phillips (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 125-26.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 125-29.

⁷ Anon, *A New Guide to Liverpool* (Liverpool: Littlebury Brothers, 1902), 133.

The physical infrastructure of maritime activity and the port's built environment are also drawn into the maritime pride discourse, that by 1753, the town 'could boast proudly of its docks', though slavery does not receive any mention here, or in the rest of the text.⁸

The associations between local and national maritime identity narratives were particularly overtly expressed in promotional literature surrounding the Festival of Britain of 1951, during which Liverpool staged its own 'Festival of Liverpool' celebrations. The place of maritime identity is centralised within naturalizations of the pertinence of this 'great seaport' holding its own festival:

As soon as it was decided that the Festival of Britain was to be a truly national festival, it was apparent that the great seaport of Liverpool had the strongest of claims to be considered as one of the provincial Festival centres.⁹

The three week Festival should, argued the *Official Handbook*, hold the river Mersey at its core, as 'Liverpool's very reason for existence,' and, indeed, as an integral global artery too, 'carrying the shipping of the World.' Ships are also significant actors within this performance of maritime identity, though to the visitor, 'the daily traffic of ships to and from the ports of the World is a festival in itself'.¹⁰

Maritime romanticism, like that articulated in relation to the Festival of Britain/Liverpool is strongly expressed around other promotional events and commemorative moments. In 1957, Derek Whale's article described how '[o]ceans of water have flowed down the Mersey since the mighty Port of Liverpool was but a sleepy little village', the quaint rural idyll of traditional British identity narratives here invoked through the 'sleepy village', but set against more mid-twentieth century industrialising imagery, of 'might', and of the curiously industrial image of a river capable of holding the flow of oceans.¹¹ The author also imagines the 'bygone seafaring age' to be 'a romantic age of trading pioneers under sail' who bring back '[t]ales of strange customs and people of foreign lands, where lay the white man's treasures in silks, cotton, ivory, oil, wine and spices', and presumably the enslavement of African people,

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹ Liverpool Corporation, *Official Handbook (1950)*, 105.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹¹ Whale, "Fishing Village to a Great Seaport."

though not included in this list of foreign treasures.¹² This maritime romanticism and pride was given a human-heroic incantation by the Lord Mayor in 1957 when, in an interview for the BBC, and after choosing a sea shanty for the radio to play, he stated that 'Liverpool was bound up with the sea', and that furthermore, it was '[f]rom our sailors we have derived our prosperity.'¹³ The river Mersey itself receives its fair share of romanticism when it is described in one article as '[a] busy, hard-working highway of trade and commerce that is a dreamer's highway as well' and the Liverpool Shipping exhibition was described as 'the harsh and romantic story of one of the world's great ports'.¹⁴ Within *The Song of Liverpool* (an actual song, written by C.W. Bailey, music by Herbert F. Ellingford) a romantic tone is set for the performance through the female personification of the city juxtaposed against her masculine sailors and sons, declaring that:

We sing a song of Liverpool,
A chanty rolling free,
Of ships and docks and sailormen
And twinkling lights at sea.
Of quest, adventure, love and fame,
Home-coming and farewell,
There's magic in our Liverpool
As all her sons can tell.¹⁵

Maritime romanticism has also been at the heart of funding bids for promotional years and heritage designations. Liverpool's bid to host the Year of Architecture in 1999, stated that Liverpool had 'followed the western world's industrial development as surely as the river at its heart has ebbed and flowed with the movements of the moon', naturalizing its own economic fate by drawing on tidal metaphors, 'the river at its heart', which implies industrial development also had an ebb and flow, referring to the city's own highs and lows.¹⁶

Liverpool's historic narratives have long held a distinct tone of maritime romanticism. This is not to say that 'maritime history' is not an integral part of Liverpool's past but rather

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Lord Mayor Gives BBC Interview," *Daily Post*, June 20, 1957.

¹⁴ "Liverpool serves the seven seas," *Liverpool Daily Post*, June 18th 1957; "Port's History in Review: Liverpool Exhibition," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 17th 1957.

¹⁵ Ian Stevens, "The Song of Liverpool," *Liverpool Daily Echo*, March 5th 1957.

¹⁶ *Profile 1: Redefining the City. Produced as Part of Liverpool's Bid to Host the Arts 2000: Year of Architecture and Design 1999*, (Liverpool, 1994).

that it has frequently been presented in ways which favour 'romantic' stories, imagery, tales and characters. The 'maritime' character of Liverpool, a 'Maritime Mercantile City', World Heritage Site, as designated by UNESCO in 2004, is an integral part of the city's historic story, and the representation of this 'maritimity' in public discourse is an important reflection of collective civic identity.

A Museum of the Sea: Representing Maritime Identity

For decades before its creation, the Merseyside Maritime Museum existed largely as an idea to be raised - an intangible symbol to be debated and proposed at points of civic significance and collective commemoration, during which time the importance of Liverpool (of all places) having a maritime themed museum was stressed against a lamentation over this absence.

Initially only a small amount of maritime material was held by Liverpool's museums.¹⁷ Shipping and maritime themed exhibitions had, however, been organised, notably within exhibitions staged for the 1907 and 1957 commemorations. However, there would not be a dedicated maritime museum open to the public until 1980.¹⁸ In an article written by the Director of Liverpool Museums in 1963, it is stated that '[e]very museum must in some way reflect the life of its area' and that it is therefore 'surprising' that the museums held little in the way of maritime related material until the collection started by Dr Douglas Allan in the 1920s which included a substantial collection of model ships.¹⁹

Joseph Sharples suggests that the idea of a maritime museum had been raised as early as 1884.²⁰ Equally, whilst maritime historian Robert Gladstone had also initiated a campaign

¹⁷ The Liverpool Museum had '[a] small fleet of ships' amongst its collection in 1815 and the Mayer Museum received a ship model as a gift from the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board in 1862. Elizabeth Mumford, *An Explanatory and Interesting Companion to the Liverpool Museum* (Liverpool: Johnson, 1815). T.A. Hume, "History of the Port Lives On," in *The Port of Liverpool: The Vital Link Between British Industry and the World (Supplement)* (Liverpool: Liverpool Daily Post, December 30, 1957).

¹⁸ National Museums Liverpool, "Creating a Museum," National Museums Liverpool, <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/maritime/about/creating-museum.aspx> [accessed August 24, 2013]; Hume, "History of the Port Lives On."

¹⁹ This collection, which grew over the next decade, was, however, largely destroyed when the William Brown Street buildings were hit in the May 1941 Blitz, leading to the loss of 90 ship models. Hume, "History of the Port Lives On," 7. Douglas Allan (1896-1967), a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, was Director of Liverpool Public Museums from 1926 to 1945. C.D. Waterston and A Macmillan Shearer, "Biographical Index of Former Fellows of the Royal Society of Edinburgh 1783-2002," The Royal Society of Edinburgh, http://www.royalsoced.org.uk/cms/files/fellows/biographical_index/fells_indexp1.pdf (accessed March 14, 2014).

²⁰ Sharples and Pollard, *Liverpool*, 109.

for a permanent maritime gallery in 1924, sustained public discourse around the idea would only really come to the fore during the 1931 'Shipping Week', held in August that year.²¹ Liverpool Shipping Week was organised by The Liverpool Organisation, a group of Liverpool businessmen who were behind a number of 'civic weeks' in the 1920s'.²² These weeks sought to reinvigorate civic pride alongside promoting the city's industrial and commercial potential for external investment, drawing on positive narratives of Liverpool's history as an endorsement of competency in line with national imperial ambitions. The Shipping Week of 1931 can be understood as a maritime-specific development of these earlier promotional episodes with events including a Shipping Exhibition in St George's Hall, film screenings in Picton Hall and a 'Pageant of the Sea' in Wavertree Park in which sea shanties were sung and sea ballets performed with water babies and frolicking sea nymphs.²³ A 'Sea Queen' presided over events, alongside her maids who embodied 'loyalty', 'beauty' and 'glamour' in a feminised performance of seafaring pride; the sea Queen wearing a 'dress of golden satin, long and flowing', one 'maid' stating that she 'wishes she could follow her father, who was for twenty-two years in the Royal Navy, and is now retired, and go to sea herself'.²⁴

The Shipping Exhibition in St George's Hall sought to promote a memory of maritime heroism and foreground a long nautical history which would naturalise Liverpool's position and legitimacy as a port against fears of 'forgetting' this fateful relationship.²⁵ Whilst the local press claimed the Exhibition would not 'hide' anything, and the organisers intended to 'include documents and models referring to the slave trade, as well as things more creditable to us' detail on items relating to Liverpool and slavery remain conspicuously absent from press coverage after the opening of the exhibition, and within official literature.²⁶ The section of the official guide concerning the history of the port outlines its physical developments and states that Liverpool traded with 'the British Colonies in America, West Africa', and that 'towards the

²¹ National Museums Liverpool, "Creating a Museum." Robert Gladstone was the great-nephew of former Prime Minister William Gladstone.

²² See Belchem, "Introduction," 30.

²³ "Growth of a Great Port - Liverpool Shipping Week features," *Liverpool Post & Mercury*, August 6, 1931; "Liverpool Launches its Shipping Week," *Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury*, August 31, 1931.

²⁴ "Sea Queen chosen," *Liverpool Post & Mercury*, August 7, 1931.

²⁵ 'In spite of constant reminders, it is too often forgotten even by Merseyside, that Liverpool's destiny is on the sea. Her place and wealth as a port have been built up over the centuries, and this exhibition, which opens on August 29th, will, it is hoped educate as well as interest'. "Ships down the ages," *Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury*, August 18, 1931.

²⁶ "Day to Day In Liverpool," *Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury*, August 8, 1931.

end of the eighteenth century Liverpool had fairly outstripped Bristol' without detailing such lines of trade.²⁷ One item relating to slavery which was discussed in the local press, however, was a bronze bell which had been given to the African 'Grandy Robin John' in Old Calabar in 1770 by Thomas Jones, a Bristol merchant. A point is here made that '[t]here was great rivalry with Bristol. Where every effort was made to retain the lucrative slave trade' though nothing more is said about Liverpool's involvement in the trade.²⁸

Of over 650 items exhibited, only a further four listed items related to slavery.²⁹ Interestingly, although a lending note claims that a diagram of the Liverpool Slave Ship *Brooks*, now a staple component in museum representations of slavery, had been provided for the exhibition, this is not listed in the guide.³⁰ Mention that there was of slavery therefore, was separated from the representation of ships and the romanticised histories of sail.

It was, from this large, popular and predominantly celebratory exhibition of maritime pride, that Robert Gladstone hoped a permanent shipping exhibition would emerge.³¹ However, up to his death in 1940, this idea was not realised, though he had left £20,000 in a bequest towards the creation of such a museum. In 1946 another maritime historian and lecturer, Cecil Northcote Parkinson, a former assistant at the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, argued for a Maritime Museum rather than a Shipping Gallery (which had temporarily been housed in the Bluecoat School), suggesting that a separate building would be paramount.³² The exhibition held in the Walker Art Gallery for the Festival of Britain in 1951 also prompted calls for a dedicated maritime museum. 'Such a Museum,' argued the *Official Guide* for the year, 'properly developed, would be unique in this country, representing the

²⁷ L.A.P. Warner, "How the Port of Liverpool was Evolved," in *Liverpool Shipping Week Official Book and Programme* (Liverpool: Liverpool Organization Limited, 1931), 14-15.

²⁸ "A Slave Trade Bell," *Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury*, August 25, 1931.

²⁹ These were a 'Slave Emancipation Letter' for an Elizabeth Bennet Croft from 1826 signed by the Mayor of Liverpool, a related 'Original Account' for Croft from 1813 to the amount of £150, a Bill of Lading of slaves from 1803 and a 'Debit Note Sale of Slaves' from 1782. *Liverpool Shipping Week Official Book and Programme* (Liverpool: Liverpool Organization Limited, 1931), 69.

³⁰ LRO, Liverpool, Liverpool Shipping Week 29 August - 5 September 1931, Correspondence in Connection with the Organisation etc, 387.2 LIV, List of Items Lent to Liverpool Shipping Week Exhibition. The ship was originally called 'Brooks' though later spelled 'Brookes', both spellings are used within literature.

³¹ "Liverpool Launches its Shipping Week."

³² C Northcote Parkinson, "The Idea of a Maritime Museum," *Nautical Research Society Transactions* 3(1946).

maritime commerce of the nation and the growth of Liverpool as its centre, as the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich represents the country's naval history.³³

Similarly, the Maritime Exhibition held as part of the charter celebrations in 1957, showed 'for the first time since before the last war a large proportion of [Liverpool Public Museums'] shipping collection', presumably referring to the 1931 Shipping Exhibition.³⁴ The Exhibition and the discourse around 1957 generally, put forth a particularly romanticised narrative of Liverpool's maritime heritage, in which slavery sat uncomfortably. The Maritime Exhibition, held in the Littlewoods Central Clubroom, received a great deal of coverage within the press and was organised by Littlewoods, Liverpool Corporation, The Liverpool Steamship Owners' Association, and other parties. On display were models, pictures, charts, instruments and manuscripts which intended to 'give as complete a picture as possible of Liverpool's maritime history' broken down into three sections outlining the history of trade, increase in port traffic and the history of merchant ships.³⁵ The beginning of the eighteenth century is discussed as the time when Liverpool 'entered the African trade and the profitable traffic in slaves in competition with London and Bristol, from which she emerged supreme', the successful competition against other port cities is here raised and a brief discussion of the slave trade focuses around the 'triangular trade' motif.³⁶

This exhibition and the celebrations more generally prompted renewed calls for 'building the long-wished-for Maritime Museum', in relation to which one article laments that the £25,711 left by Robert Gladstone, whilst having increased to £45,000 through accumulated interest, was not nearly enough to cover such building costs.³⁷ Similarly, another article states that 'the time is long overdue when Liverpool should have its own permanent maritime

³³ Liverpool Corporation, *Official Handbook (1950)*, 43.

³⁴ E.W. Paget-Tomlinson, "Liverpool Charter Celebrations: The Maritime Exhibition," *SEA: Journal of Elder Dempster Lines* 58(1957).

³⁵ Represented through the time periods 1207-1800, 1800-1900 and 1900-1957. E.W. Paget-Tomlinson, *Maritime Exhibition Catalogue and Guide* (Liverpool: Littlewoods, 1957).

³⁶ 'The slave trade was organised in the form of a triangle: the first leg a general cargo from Liverpool to West Africa, the second, the famous "middle passage" from West Africa to the West Indies with a cargo of negroes, bought from the sale of the general cargo, and the third a cargo of sugar or tobacco from the West Indies or America to Liverpool, bought from the proceeds of the slaves.' *Ibid.*, 5-6.

³⁷ Listener, "Street parties - may be prizes for the decorations - distinguished visitors to the city expected - latest pay rises," *Liverpool Daily Echo* 1956.

museum' and the Lord Mayor of Liverpool pledged support for a permanent shipping museum.³⁸

Though talked about for decades before, it was not until 1980 that such a museum was realised, initially housed within the former Pilotage Building.³⁹ This absence is commented on within articles which stress that 'no single place has been set aside to house the many, many articles concerned with centuries of seafaring which belong to the people of Merseyside.'⁴⁰ However, alongside this older justification of showcasing maritime material, the development of a maritime museum at this time arose alongside regeneration initiatives which centred on tourism, where it was hoped the museum would 'act as a catalyst for the investment of private money'.⁴¹ The first phase of the museum was structured around the history of 'the river' and the port, with live demonstrations of maritime skills such as net making, and a 'maritime park' complete with restored dock and ships. It seemed important here not just to create a museum in a traditional sense, but to create an attraction which would have a broader appeal,

It is important that the Maritime Museum is not just a museum, but a lively place – as lively as the era which makes it a necessary part of Merseyside's future developments.⁴²

In discourse surrounding the museum's opening, the particular maritime past being presented omits any specific reference to transatlantic slavery, though freely references maritime romanticism and individual memory, suggesting that those interested in the museum will include 'many who have memories of a working life on the docks or at sea, and those which have childhood memories of the romance of Britain's second seaport.'⁴³ Here the focus is limited to a 'living memory' and the history trail around the quayside focuses on the tangible aspects of the port, rather than its past.

³⁸ "Famous ship models to be seen again," *Liverpool Daily Echo*, June 13th 1957; "Liverpool Pride as City Celebrates its 750th Birthday," *Liverpool Echo*, June 17, 1957.

³⁹ LRO, Liverpool, Merseyside County Council Minutes, 352(73) MER, Meeting November 8, 1983, Appendix 4: The County Museums Service, Merseyside Maritime Museum

⁴⁰ "After 100 Years - A Museum of the Sea," *Sea Breezes* 54(1980).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*: 396.

⁴³ Peter Rockliff, "Special...The Launching of the Maritime Museum," *Trident* 2, no. Nov/Dec (1980). *Trident* is the Journal of the Merseyside Chambers of Commerce.

Through initiatives started by Merseyside County Council and seen through by the Merseyside Development Corporation, the Maritime Museum became part of the larger re-development of the Albert Dock area, moving into the Albert Dock in 1984.⁴⁴ Two years later, the Maritime Museum would be made a part of NMGM and within the same year *The International Congress of Maritime Museums* was held in Liverpool.

The Maritime Museum's brief mention of the slave trade was described as 'a lawyer's plea for mitigation for Liverpool' in the second chapter of the Gifford Report in 1989 which addressed 'The Legacy of the Past'.⁴⁵ The report suggested that Liverpool, as 'A City built on Slavery' has a history which explains contemporary racism; that the efforts to 'forget' this history are just as damaging.⁴⁶ It was within this context that the TSG was developed, as a gallery in a larger 'Maritime Museum', and slavery could be argued to be 'maritimized' within this location. Furthermore, Marcus Wood has argued that the memory of slavery was compartmentalised within the museum's narrative by being housed in the basement of the building:

Slavery is consequently excised from the overall narrative of Liverpool's development and sent down to the basement. The viewer must go through a separate door, down a series of staircases, to a set of underground galleries. Slavery is physically separated, as if it exists in contradistinction to, and down below, indeed out of sight of, the normal growth of the port.⁴⁷

Even the ISM, a museum in its own right, is currently physically a floor of the larger Maritime Museum complex. However, the creation of the ISM as a 'discursively' separate entity from the Maritime Museum prompted some public reaction that '[s]lavery should be covered as part of the Maritime Museum (as it was), not as a free-standing museum', perhaps reflecting unease

⁴⁴ Murden, "'City of Change and Challenge'." LRO, Liverpool, Merseyside County Council Minutes, 352(73) MER, Meeting November 8, 1983, Appendix 4: The County Museums Service, Merseyside Maritime Museum

⁴⁵ This statement was made in relation to the following panel text in the museum: 'The slave trade did make a significant contribution to Liverpool's prosperity. However, Liverpool's trading wealth was firmly established before it began to dominate the slave trade from the 1760s. Between 1783 and 1793, 878 Liverpool ships carried 303,737 slaves. Sailings to Africa represented only 10% of outward bound tonnage from Liverpool. On the other hand slaves produced the sugar and tobacco which were Liverpool's most important imports.' Quoted in Lord Gifford QC (Chair), Brown, and Bunday, *Loosen the Shackles*, 26.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Wood, *Blind Memory*, 297.

at any breaking away from the more comfortable 'maritimization' of slavery.⁴⁸ However, its position within the Maritime Museum building was also used as a device to downplay the significance of slavery to Liverpool,

In some respects it is quite suitable that the museum is integrated into the wider Maritime Museums complex. If ever there was a statement that slavery was not the only thing that made the city rich it is that.⁴⁹

In 2009, on route to an honorary talk marking new additions to the ISM's Black Achiever's Wall (one of which was the recently inaugurated President Barack Obama), a conversation between strangers in a lift illustrated the possible avoidance and downplaying of slavery through museum levels. Inside the Maritime Museum's lift, a mother asked her son what he would like to see first. The boy did not know, so his mother suggested they start on the fourth floor, the top floor, and work their way down. A museum employee interjected stating that there wasn't much to see on the fourth floor these days except for the view, and that the family should instead start on the second floor. 'Floor three's pretty good too you know', said Dorothy Kuya, veteran LBB activist, local slavery historian and community campaigner. 'Oh yes?' asked the mother, to which the employee replied, 'oh yeah, that's the slavery stuff.' All smiled awkwardly. After Dorothy had exited onto floor three where the ISM is located, the mother gasped, 'A whole floor for slavery!?' exchanging astonished looks between herself and her partner. 'I know', said the employee, 'it's madness isn't it?' We all exited onto the fourth floor and although I left these people to go and enjoy the view, their exchange stayed with me whilst I sat and listened to talks celebrating progress and equality.

Maritimizing Slavery in a Port City: Concluding Thoughts

Frequently, the 'maritimization' of Liverpool's historic story is used to omit slavery from discussions of the city's development, where commentators instead list other port-related activities or blur potential references in sea-themed generalisation. This acts to flood the

⁴⁸ Liverpoolitan, Comment on, "Skyscraper City Forum: International Museum of Slavery thread," September 16, 2007
<http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?s=f3172977c66555ae6da093ef09ab3c20&t=524570>
[accessed July 6, 2008].

⁴⁹ Buggedboy, Comment on, "Skyscraper City Forum: International Museum of Slavery thread," September 18, 2007
<http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?s=f3172977c66555ae6da093ef09ab3c20&t=524570>
[accessed July 6, 2008].

specific activities of the port in vague romanticised statements. 'Liverpool made its money from the sea' stated one tour guide and in more promotional tones an article outlined how 'Liverpool, once the second port of the British Empire, owes its existence to the sea.'⁵⁰ This generalisation is also used by Peter Aughton to refer to the popularity of the TSG and ISM, which he suggests is down to intense interest in this area '(and, indeed, in the immensely important theme of Liverpool's maritime history in all its many and varied dimensions)',⁵¹ placing the slave trade firmly within a maritime context and yet also highlighting the 'varied dimensions' of maritime history itself thereby reducing the significance of the slave trade within this more general context.

The maritime focus of Liverpool's identity plays out within its memory of slavery by largely confining the city's engagement with transatlantic slavery to the seas in talk shaped by triangles, in the 'triangular trade'.⁵² The use of the triangular device to describe the Atlantic routes of the slave trade, familiar to representations of this history nationally, keeps human connections between Liverpool and slavery at bay, having ships leave and return with inanimate goods only. The triangle also points slave bodies away from Liverpool, used as a device to discredit stories of slaves in the city. Following the announcement of the creation of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery, an article in 1991 states that stories of slaves being sold in Liverpool itself 'is also a myth, according to some historians, who say that slaves never came to the city, but were taken straight to America and the Caribbean in the infamous triangular trade which made the port rich.'⁵³ The familiarity of the triangular motif, however, has been used to downplay the status of the slave trade in Liverpool's history. Peter Aughton states in a map

⁵⁰ RIBA Architectural Tour of Liverpool, July 24, 2011. "After 100 Years - A Museum of the Sea."

⁵¹ Peter Aughton, *Liverpool: A People's History, 3rd Edition* (Lancaster: Carnegie, 2008), 307-8.

⁵² The southern produce imported to the Mersey was largely raised by negro slaves bought in Africa by Liverpool traders, and sold to Americans on stage two of that damnable **triangular trip**' Sydney Jeffery, "Liverpool Links with America," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 15th 1956. 'By 1760 there were 69 Liverpool ships on this **triangular trade**' Liverpool City Council, *City of Liverpool Official Guide*, 14.

⁵³ Steve Brauner, "Slavery haunts the old docks," *Liverpool Daily Post*, December 13th 1991. The motif was also used this way in a local press article in the 1930s in a response to the 'persistent fable' of slaves in Liverpool: 'While Liverpool was certainly largely interested in the traffic, the ships made a **triangular trip**, going out to the African coast with a cargo, loading their slaves there for the Atlantic crossing, and selling them direct on the other side. The home cargo was American and Colonial produce.' Anon, "A Persistent Fable," *Liverpool Post and Mercury*, November 6 1934. George Chandler also uses it in 1957 to discredit this suggestion, '[s]laves were not, of course, brought to Liverpool in large numbers, as the Liverpool slave trade was only part of a **triangular** commercial operation.' Chandler, *Liverpool*, 305.

caption that the depiction of the Salthouse Dock should act as ‘an important reminder of the most important ‘triangular’ trade in Liverpool’s economy – not slavery, but salt’.⁵⁴

Liverpool’s ‘maritimization’ of slavery also has similar consequences as its national counterpart. In Liverpool, slavery has been represented and discussed overwhelmingly as the activity of ships and their people, of slavers, slave merchants and slave captains. This places transatlantic slavery in a sea-bound context, removing focus on Liverpool people involved in more ‘land-based’ aspects of enslavement and the legacies of this. The profits from plantations as well as slave-trading, for example, led to the creation of large residences and estates, some of which have now become public parks.⁵⁵ The focus on slave ships and their associated captains, crews and controllers, necessarily reflects a focus on maritime history as particular to Liverpool, Liverpool is a port therefore the sea-based activities of her historic figures has taken precedence in the framing of this history. However, narratives contesting the distancing of maritimization, persist throughout Liverpool’s slavery discourse, most notably through stories of slaves in Liverpool and the tangible presence of ‘tools of the trade’. James Picton references slave sales taking place in Liverpool and suggests that ‘the traffic in human flesh and blood was not kept altogether at a distance, but pollutes our own country by its hateful presence’.⁵⁶ The ownership expressed in the use of ‘pollutes our own country’, and the idea of polluting, dirtying an otherwise clean and pure place implies that this history is somehow more manageable when confined to Africa and America, or to the Atlantic Ocean.

The maritimization of slavery in Liverpool has synchronised with broader civic historic narratives concerning the distinctly ‘maritime’ identity of the city, alongside some of the classic motifs of Liverpool’s historic discourse. ‘Overcoming abolition’ has meant concluding Liverpool’s involvement with transatlantic slavery from 1807 onwards, leaving the memory of slavery confined to the movement of ships. This distancing sought, in large part, to break the connections to Liverpool’s physical urban environment, a point of contention across the two centuries considered, and one which has been the subject of a melodramatic metaphor exclaimed by George Frederick Cooke, who is the focus of Chapter Five.

⁵⁴ Peter Aughton, *Liverpool: A People’s History, 2nd Edition* (Preston: Carnegie, 2003), 80.

⁵⁵ The opening of Newsham Estate in 1868 as a public park was the first in a series of a ‘ribbon of parks’ around Liverpool and by the mid-twentieth century Liverpool had acquired one of the most extensive designations of urban public parkland in the country. Jane Longmore, "Rural Retreats: Liverpool Slave Traders and their Country Houses," in *Slavery and the British Country House*, ed. Madge Dresser and Andrew Hann (Swindon: English Heritage, 2013), 42-43.

⁵⁶ Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool Vol 1*, 195

CHAPTER FIVE

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Using Anecdote and Metaphor: George Frederick Cooke

What? do you you hiss me? – hiss George Frederick Cooke? – you contemptible money-getters! You shall never again have the *honour* of hissing me! Farewell! *I banish you! ... There is not a brick in your dirty town but what is cemented by the blood of a negro!*¹

This statement, allegedly made by a drunken actor on the Liverpool stage in response to his booing audience, has been passed down like an heirloom through Liverpool's slavery memory discourse. The above version of the statement is outlined within Anne Mathews in *Anecdotes of Actors* (1844). Mathews describes Cooke (1756? –1812) as a popular actor in Liverpool and well-liked by his audiences. She suggests that there was no reaction to this statement from the crowd. In the *Annals of the Liverpool Stage*, R.J. Broadbent suggests that the incident may have occurred on August 18th 1806 when Cooke was performing the lead in *Richard III*, and cites a discussion from the *Dublin Evening Post* in support of this. However, an interesting inclusion of '(if ever)' before this suggestion indicates the myth-like status this event had obtained in Liverpool by 1908.²

Michael Billig and Katie Macmillan have argued that '[t]hrough constant use, the live metaphor is killed', in ways intended to 'deadend political awareness', drawing on the example of the 'no smoking guns' metaphor from its evolution through political discourse from

¹ Anne Jackson Mathews, *Anecdotes of Actors: With Other Desultory Recollections* (London: T.C. Newby, 1844), 99.

² R. J. Broadbent, *Annals of the Liverpool Stage* (Liverpool: Edward Howell, 1908), 120-21. The reference the author cites is given as 'Liverpool chit chat in "The Dublin Evening Post," September 6, 1806'. This date coincides with Cooke's 'most discouraging' season between 1805-06, where he made only fifty performances out of a planned 212, "Cooke, George Frederick (1756?–1812)," Don B. Wilmet in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6164> (accessed November 11, 2013).

Watergate to the Iraq War.³ However, the metaphor can inhabit a number of states between life and death, and an 'inactive' metaphor can be 'reactivated' through discursive action, through the use of new or altered metaphorical interpretations which means it can be 'given the kiss of life and then left to die in another graveyard.'⁴ Used varyingly as dramatic literary decoration, within discussion of the magnitude of this history and impact upon the built environment, or to downplay the significance of the slave trade through ridicule and hyperbole; George Frederick Cooke's words have provided additional drama to the debate around slavery in the city. The question stands, however, as to whether, having metaphorically 'died' once on the Liverpool stage in 1806, George Frederick Cooke's metaphor itself dies again through *usure*.⁵

The George Frederick Cooke incident itself has a number of discursive 'layers' - it is an anecdote about a deployment of a metaphor. The metaphor itself holds a discursive power through its jarring symbolic imagery, in particular the emotive use of bodily 'blood' against the banality of inhuman 'bricks'. The historicity of the anecdote is important to an understanding of the metaphor's 'life'. Similar statements were applied to Liverpool's rival port Bristol, and both Eric Williams and Peter Fryer quote sources referring to the statement being made in reference to the growth of the south west port as well as to Liverpool.⁶ Further, as noted by Fryer, an early account of the phrasing used by Cooke though here not attributed to him is given in John Corry's *History of Lancashire* in 1825 where 'several of the principal streets of the town may be said to have been marked out by the chains, and the walls of the houses cemented by the blood of Africans!'.⁷ The very bodily image of slave-blood in the context of slavery would not have been uncommon in abolition-era Britain, and the focus given to the processes endured by the slave body alongside blood as a Christian symbol of pain, martyrdom and redemption, would equally have abounded in other areas of public discourse. However, it is specifically the words as attributed to Cooke which are repeated, used and reused, rather than any more general statements concerning blood and enslavement. Further, it is the

³ Michael Billig and Katie MacMillan, "Metaphor, Idiom and Ideology: The Search For 'No Smoking Guns' Across Time," *Discourse & Society* 16, no. 4 (2005): 460.

⁴ *Ibid.*: 477.

⁵ *Usure*, meaning wear or usage, is the term used by Jacques Derrida in relation to the death of metaphor in philosophical writing. Cited in *Ibid.*: 461.

⁶ Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, 61; Fryer, *Staying Power*, 33. Williams also recounts the anecdote in reference to Liverpool individually, page 63.

⁷ Corry 1825, quoted in Fryer, *Staying Power*, 477 (notes).

metaphor as *particularly* applied to Liverpool, rather than any other port, that is a feature of its usage over time.

In contrast to the idiom, or 'dead metaphor' of 'no smoking guns' in political discourse, the George Frederick Cooke anecdote is frequently revived through imaginative re-use, alteration and elaboration. Cooke is drawn upon within organs of mid-nineteenth century liberal political satire where authors were keen for their contemporaries to acknowledge the source of the town's wealth.⁸ Though sometimes straightforwardly reiterated for dramatic effect,⁹ the Cooke anecdote is also paraphrased with additional embellishments, as the author of the *Liverpool Review* suggests, 'Cooke, the actor, wasn't far wrong when he declared, on the stage of the old Theatre Royal, in Williamson-square that there was not a brick in Liverpool that was not cemented with the blood of a slave'. The author agrees with the statement and adds to the metaphor, that '[e]very brick in old Liverpool was cemented with the blood of a slave; and nothing will ever wash it away,' using and extending Cooke's imagery to draw focus to the perceived need to acknowledge a past which cannot be wiped from the historic record. However, distinctions are made between what areas of Liverpool's built environment the metaphor can be extended to, that whilst Bryan Blundell might have been involved in slave trading, 'there is some consolation in reflecting that no brick of the Blue Coat School, or at least of the original building, is cemented with the blood of a slave, for it was erected fourteen years before the slave trade began to develop'.¹⁰ However, consistently critical of religious institutions, the author of the *Review* happily relates the metaphor to sites of Christian worship, '[c]urious, by the way,' the author muses, 'to reflect that of the churches built between 1750 and 1800 it might be as truly said, as George Frederick Cooke said of Liverpool, every brick or stone was cemented with the blood of a slave.'¹¹

The episode continues to be drawn upon with various interpretations and linguistic substitutions of 'African', 'negro' or 'slave', with texts generally moving from 'African' in the

⁸ Davies, "Political Satire," 111.

⁹ "'There's not a stone" said Cooke, the tragedian, scowling from the footlights at an uproarious Liverpool audience – "there's not a stone in all the walls of Liverpool but is cemented with the blood of Africans!" Hugh Shimmin, "The Comic History of Liverpool: Chapter XVIII," *Porcupine*, October 31, 1863.

¹⁰ "History of Liverpool," *The Liverpool Review of Politics, Society, Literature and Art*, August 30, 1885.

¹¹ See Chapter Two for further discussion of *The Liverpool Review* and criticisms of the church at this time. "History of Liverpool," *The Liverpool Review of Politics, Society, Literature and Art*, August 16, 1884.

later nineteenth century to using 'negro' in twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.¹² Authors continue to add their own embellishments to the Cooke anecdote to infer their own position on the topic of Liverpool and slavery. Benjamin Blower, writing in 1878, adds his own clause as a prefix to the anecdote, stating that 'while we look with sorrow upon the fact that slaves were sold in Liverpool, and our trade grew occasion for Curran's (*sic*) sarcasm that "the very docks were cemented with the blood of the African"'.¹³ 'Dicky Sam' similarly elaborates on the device in 1884, suggesting that it is not known whether Cooke received a reply, perhaps because he was speaking the truth, and further laments '[w]hat would we have given for it to be false and he a liar?'.¹⁴ However, the device can also be coupled with other motifs of Liverpool's slavery discourse, as seen within Gomer Williams' 1897 text where the author uses the Cooke anecdote to introduce the topic of Liverpool and slavery, describing it as a 'home-thrust which might have made the daring offender the hero of an unrehearsed tragedy' yet suggests:

The taunt, however, would have been almost as applicable hurled at London, Bristol, or certain southern port audiences, whose bricks were more or less cemented in the same sanguinary fashion for fully one hundred years before the people of Liverpool ever soiled their hands and souls in the African slave trade.¹⁵

Williams extends the metaphor to 'other port cities' (specifically 'southern' ones), as a way of not only discursively spreading the blame, but to suggest that 'other places started it'. Williams

¹² Whilst this could be a reflection of imperial racialised discourses of the early twentieth century, this could also be a discursive attempt to demonstrate 'authenticity' through the adoption of perceived linguistic characteristics of an earlier era. The following quotations all profess to repeat Cooke's statement: '...cemented by an **African's** blood!' James Aspinall, "Liverpool a Few Years Since," (Liverpool: A. Holden, 1869), <https://archive.org/details/liverpoolfewyear00asp> (accessed December 5, 2010), 172 ' "the very docks were cemented with the blood of the **African**"' Benjamin Blower, *The Mersey, ancient and modern* (Liverpool: Edward Howell, 1878), 60. 'cemented with an **African's** Blood', Williams, *History of the Liverpool Privateers*, 594. ' "I have not come here to be insulted by a set of wretches, every brick in whose infernal town is cemented with an **African's** blood."' Lacey, *History of Liverpool From 1207 to 1907*, 50.; 'cemented by the blood of a **negro**' Muir, *History of Liverpool*, 204. 'cemented with innocent **Negroes'** blood' Tulloch, *The story of Liverpool*, 70.

¹³ Although Blower attributes this phrase to a 'Curran' it is most likely that it was the Cooke incident he was referring to. Blower, *The Mersey, Ancient and Modern*, 60.

¹⁴ Dicky Sam's version of the anecdote reads, "I have not come here to be insulted by a set of wretches, of which every brick in your infernal town is cemented with an African's blood." Anon, *Liverpool and Slavery*, 16.

¹⁵ Williams, *History of the Liverpool Privateers*, 594. Eric Williams also quotes Gomer Williams concerning this anecdote in his influential Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*.

then returns to the setting of Cooke's metaphor by suggesting that Liverpool 'rather unjustly, has had to bear the concentrated odium attached to the whole of the play.'¹⁶

The setting of the Cooke anecdote within the theatre provides the perfect 'stage' for generating melodrama in discursive elaboration. Ramsay Muir also embellishes the Cooke anecdote in 1907 with further description, adding drama to a theatrical encounter, stating that:

When George Cooke, the actor, was hissed for appearing drunk on the boards of the theatre, he pulled himself together, and said venomously over the footlights that he had not come to be insulted by a pack of men every brick in whose detestable town was cemented by the blood of a negro.¹⁷

In previous accounts of the anecdote, no definitive response from Cooke's audience had been outlined. However, Ramsay Muir, keen to promote a history of Liverpool worthy of the city's (and indeed his own) historic liberal heroes, namely Roscoe and his circle, claimed that the crowd cheered Cooke's statement.¹⁸

The potential for melodrama and for discursively increasing the theatricality of the performance of this anecdote is one adopted whole-heartedly by the local press at commemorative anniversaries. In 1933 the *Post and Mercury*, reporting on the centenary of the Emancipation Act described how Cooke, 'once hissed at the old Theatre Royal by a prosperous Liverpool audience, heatedly shouted to "a gang of slave-dealers that every black brick in this accursed city is cemented with the blood of a negro."¹⁹ The suggestion that it was 'every *black* brick' is a new addition to the anecdote, there perhaps being considerably more blackened bricks in the city by the early twentieth century.

Prompted by the publication of *Human Livestock* by Edward d'Avergne in 1933, one article draws the Cooke anecdote together with another theatrical anecdote from the city:

No wonder a drunken actor, being hissed in a Liverpool theatre, turned upon the audience and told them what he thought of the infernal city in which every brick was cemented by an African's blood, or that Kemble said to the public, "You are like

¹⁶ Williams, *History of the Liverpool Privateers*, 595.

¹⁷ Muir, *History of Liverpool*, 204.

¹⁸ '...it speaks strongly, not only for the magnanimity of his audience, but also for the change that was coming over their opinions, that he should be cheered for his bitter defiance'. Ibid.

¹⁹ "Not Brought Here?," *Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury*, August 28, 1933.

Captain Driver in 'Oronooko,'" that tragedy being banned in Liverpool because of the susceptibilities of the local merchants, who were making fortunes out of the slave trade.²⁰

John Phillip Kemble (1757-1823) made this statement in 1778 to an angry Liverpool theatre-going crowd on the opening night of an amateur theatre company established by Kemble and several other performers.²¹ Captain Driver was a slave dealer in Oronooko, who captured the African Prince under false pretences, at first growing 'very much into his favour', and inviting the lead character onto his slave ship where he was enslaved.²² Originally written by Aphra Behn in 1688 and dramatized by Thomas Southerne in 1695, the play was frequently performed in the eighteenth century, and the character would have been a familiar one to a theatre-going audience.²³ Here, both incidents are used as a form of discursive melodrama which seeks to emphasise the impact of slavery on the city, albeit in ways which acknowledge where the subject is being sensationalised through their 'theatrical' tone.

Whilst the anecdote can be used for emphasis, acknowledging if not the whole statement then at least 'an element of truth' within it, the opposite can also be true. The Cooke anecdote has been used to break links between Liverpool and transatlantic slavery by reducing the subject to ridicule. Lenford White highlights the following example this type of use, where a text concerning the history of the central docks, published by NMGM, claims the only evidence for eighteenth century Liverpool having benefitted from transatlantic slavery is the Cooke anecdote:

...still the popular perception of the growth of 18th century Liverpool is that it was very largely funded by the slave trade. Documentary evidence for this view appears to be limited to the celebrated utterance of a drunken actor to the effect that every brick of the detestable town was cemented by the blood of negroes.²⁴

²⁰ "'Human Livestock' - And Great Christians: Challenging Books for Merseyside," *Liverpool Echo*, October 26, 1933.

²¹ Broadbent, *Annals of the Liverpool Stage*, 72. Broadbent suggests that following this incident, Kemble did not perform in the city again until 1784.

²² Thomas Southerne, "Oronoko: a Tragedy as it is Acted at the Theatre-Royal, by His Majesty's Servants." (London: H. Playford, 1696), <http://archive.org/details/oronokotragedya00sout> [accessed August 30, 2013].

²³ See J. R. Oldfield, "The 'Ties of Soft Humanity': Slavery and Race in British Drama, 1760-1800," *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (1993).

²⁴ Adrien Jarvis. 'Liverpool Central docks 1799-1905' Published by NMGM 1991, quoted in White, ed. *Slavery: An Introduction to the African Holocaust*, 58.

The prominence and fame of the 'celebrated' anecdote is here drawn upon, alongside its hyperbole as a form of ridicule and to suggest that its (over) use has distorted a historical awareness of the time period.²⁵

The anecdote itself transcends genre, from histories to guidebooks, newspaper articles to academic histories, and recently, to the small screen. In the 2008 Time Team special *The Lost Dock of Liverpool*, local historian Ray Costello uses the George Cooke anecdote to introduce connections between the built environment, Liverpool people and transatlantic slavery. 'There was one famous old drunken actor, eighteenth century actor, George Frederick Cooke,' Costello recounts, 'who was hissed and booed off stage in Liverpool who ran back on to say, "I have not come here to be insulted by a set of wretches whose infernal city is cemented by the blood of Africans!"' to which Tony Robinson asks, 'So which buildings are stained with the blood of Africans?'. This then prompts a discussion concerning Heywood's Bank, and the Heywood family and street names. Robinson returns to the anecdote to draw together Costello's accounts, stating that '[t]he whole city was cemented together with its profits'.²⁶

There is perhaps something added by attributing these words to a person, and moreover, a well-known actor, which marks this out as both more concrete in its attributes and yet more elusive in its meaning, or rather in what can be done with its meaning. The 'use' of Cooke's melodramatic statement in Liverpool's slavery discourse both reveals and obscures the city's history of slavery, raising the curtain in a dramatic opening scene, yet shrouding its connotations in an air of theatrical mystery and open ambiguity. Cooke's words are powerful, strong and dramatic. But their drama and theatricality is hyperbole, open to manipulation and ridicule. However, the discursive manipulation, use and reuse of the anecdote has meant that rather than being 'dead' George Frederick Cooke the anecdote is better viewed as a twitching re-animated corpse, the Frankenstein's monster of metaphor within debates over Liverpool's memory of slavery.

²⁵ The legendary status this anecdote has acquired is also illustrated in Jane Longmore's academic essay in which she uses the phrase to challenge the assumption of wealth brought to Liverpool by the slave trade Longmore, "'Cemented by the Blood of a Negro?'"

²⁶ "Time Team Special: The Lost Dock of Liverpool", *Time Team*, Channel 4, April 22, 2008, television broadcast. Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMUQsmAn7hw> (accessed September 1, 2013)

Debates of Memory

Introduction

The discursive patterns and devices outlined so far have shown how particular ways of ‘framing’ the memory of slavery in Liverpool, through narratives, metaphors and maritime themes, can influence its representation and interpretation. Frequently this is a part of a broader effort by authors and speakers to get across a particular ideological standpoint, to emphasise or to downplay the significance of slavery, to criticise or to contextualise the institution of slavery, and to breaks links with or indeed emphasise connections to legacies of this history in economics, demographics and ongoing racialised discrimination. Whilst the history of Liverpool’s slavery memory discourse more generally can be understood as a theoretical ‘debate’ in relation to these active discursive exchanges, the subject has at points been subject to more literal debates. This chapter begins with a literal debate over the history of transatlantic slavery in Liverpool in 1939, and ends with a discussion of a debate over the memory of slavery in Liverpool, contesting remembrance days, commemorative plaques and the ‘speech act’ of apology.

1939: History Debates

In *Multidirectional Memory*, Michael Rothberg points to the sporadic, unpredictable nature of collective memory processes, emphasising not only how events can come to the fore long after they have happened, but can also appear to be raised ‘through triggers that may at first seem irrelevant or even unseemly’, revealing the surprising and uneven development of collective memory.¹ This is perhaps particularly so in histories which have not received prolonged public exposure and are associated with forms of cultural trauma. Marcus Wood has previously outlined the ‘violent instability’ of the slavery archive, and its unpredictable and fluctuating

¹ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 17.

memorial nature across time.² Therefore, whilst it may be unsurprising to find discourse concerning Liverpool and slavery at key commemorative dates surrounding major civic celebrations which draw on history or centenaries of the passing of Parliamentary acts associated with transatlantic slavery, the 'debate' of slavery also emerges unpredictably around points in time which appear comparatively inconsequential. Finding such 'unceremonious' points of discursive eruption is itself an unpredictable activity which relies as much upon the serendipity of the research process as it does on an informed or methodical investigation. Hence, in an un-catalogued file of assorted newspaper clippings held by Liverpool Records Office, found by chance, emerged the 'Peacock Debate' of August 1939.

On August 9th 1939, Mr. D.C.W. Peacock gave an address at a Liverpool Round Table Luncheon which prompted a public press debate consisting of 15 letters to the editor following articles in the *Evening Express* and *Daily Post*, and which only ceased when the Editor of the *Post* closed correspondence on the subject on 19th August. Mr Peacock, head master of St Christopher's Preparatory School for Boys, was initially reported to have said that 'the slave trade was the most important trade in Liverpool'.³ However, controversy stemmed specifically from a statement surrounding historic attitudes, expressed through a familiar tone of Liverpool exceptionalism, that 'Liverpool was probably the only place in the world whose inhabitants earned their living by means of a trade which even people of their own day looked upon with horror'.⁴ This prompted a response from Arthur C. Wardle (Honorary Secretary of the Nautical Society) who took exception to the above points in particular. Although the debate largely involved Peacock and Wardle, other speakers joined them, including historian Robert Gladstone. The debate illustrates a number of discursive devices familiar to Liverpool's slavery discourse alongside more generic argumentative motifs, and some interesting examples of the intertextuality of the city's slavery memory, where previous press interaction, artefacts and exhibitions are drawn upon and influence this particular 1930s exchange.

From the outset, the status of Liverpool and slavery as a prominent 'controversial' subject of discussion was raised and commented on. The *Post* article outlining Peacock's address states that '[o]n the controversial point as to whether slaves were ever brought to Liverpool, Mr. Peacock said the number must have been relatively small'⁵ a point which

² Marcus Wood, *Slavery, Empathy, and Pornography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4.

³ "L'Pool's Slave Trading Days," *Evening Express*, August 9, 1939.

⁴ "Slave-Trading Shares: Liverpool and its "Trustee Security", *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 10, 1939.

⁵ *Ibid.*

reoccurs across the following exchanges. Peacock himself later acknowledges the controversy of the subject matter generally and recounts how, following the public discussion initiated by his address, he had been told that he had done 'a very unwise thing in ever raising the question of slavery', that 'the very mention of the subject is an anathema', a known point of controversy.⁶ He suggests that had he known this, he would not have raised the subject at all, and extends a partial apology in a mocking tone, for any offence caused:

I hasten to assure both him and them that no offence was intended. Had I been warned in time, I would not have spoken as I did. Least of all did I intend any reflection upon his ancestors or theirs. I am prepared to believe that both he and they are the descendants of a blameless line of church wardens – anything he chooses to say.⁷

Peacock's original address showed awareness of some of the arguments previously made in support of slavery, that '[s]ome people say that negro slaves had a better time in America than they had in Africa', a point which he says he doubts, but that 'it was quite likely that slaves on the cotton plantations were better off than cotton operatives in this country at that period',⁸ pointing to an area of comparative, and more so in later letters from his critics, competitive, historic trauma. Later, letter writer John Chambers used comparisons of 'sweated child-labour and the most hideous sanitary conditions' of eighteenth and early nineteenth century British society which in 'comparison with the conditions of the slave left (say) the Bradford mill-owner in the worse position'.⁹ Similarly, the use of historic arguments in support of slavery was acknowledged. Peacock stated that he wished Wardle would be 'a little more original' in his methods, suggesting that the same argument was made John C Calhoun, a slave-owner in the United States in 1848, whose points have 'been trotted out in every discussion on slavery that

⁶ D.A.W. Peacock, "Letter: Mr Wardle's Statistics," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 15, 1939.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ "Slave-Trading Shares: Liverpool and its "Trustee Security".

⁹ John F. Chambers, "Letter," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 22, 1939. Robert Gladstone equally draws comparisons between differing historic trauma, in this instance between slaves and emigrants, justifying that '[t]he slaves unquestionably were stowed on board in a way quite intolerable according to modern notions; yet we must remember that the emigrants on the emigrant ships were packed just as tightly at that time', and that captains had a financial incentive for keeping slaves healthy. Robert Gladstone, "Letter," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 16, 1939. This point is also made by Ron Jones, 'Their journey was no picnic. It has even been suggested that conditions were often worse for them than for slaves. At least the captain of a slaveship had a money incentive for keeping his 'cargo' alive and in good condition.' Jones, *The American Connection*, 69-70.

has taken place since.¹⁰ Wardle, in response, suggested that the use of Calhoun is 'inapt' since he was writing 'in the mid-19th century and after abolition of slavery by England.'¹¹

The bulk of the debate centred on the importance of the slave trade to Liverpool and the attitudes of contemporaries. These are also two key recurring points in Liverpool's slavery discourse, articulated through familiar discursive devices which are turned around to suit standpoints in these argumentative structures. The importance of the slave trade to Liverpool, a point stressed initially by Peacock (or, at least in articles reporting on his address)¹² are argued against by Wardle who draws upon the 'overcoming abolition' motif to downplay the significance of the slave trade to the city, and the 'enterprising spirit' motif to explain how Liverpool overcame this adversity:

[...] and the fact that the abolition of slavery (largely due to Liverpool energy) made no difference to the mercantile and employment progress of the town is sufficient to demonstrate that Liverpool – no more than the manufacturing towns of England – was not dependent upon the slave trade for its livelihood.¹³

However, in critical response to Wardle's comments outlining other industries Liverpool prospered in, John Chambers writes that these developments were only possible through the 'private fortunes of those drawing their wealth from the slave trade'.¹⁴ Wardle later repeats his point and suggests that more formal memory work in the form of a 'comprehensive mercantile history' of Liverpool would dispel 'popular legend' around this subject, especially it seems, 'the assertion that the town owed its remarkable commercial development to prosecution of the African trade'.¹⁵

Identity narratives of Liverpool were drawn upon in this line of argument, where P.D. McGuffie writes in to stress the importance of the slave trade to Liverpool, saying that in the beginning of the eighteenth century 'Liverpool had hardly been born' and that it was only

¹⁰ D.A.W. Peacock, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade - Our "Main Industry", " *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 12, 1939.

¹¹ Arthur C. Wardle, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade - Participation of Other Ports," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 14, 1939.

¹² "L'Pool's Slave Trading Days."

¹³ Arthur C. Wardle, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 11, 1939.

¹⁴ Chambers, "Letter."

¹⁵ Arthur C. Wardle, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade - Early Records," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 19, 1939.

through the 'lucrative profits of the slave trade, that Liverpool forged ahead' articulating this significance through the familiar rags-to-riches narrative of the city.¹⁶ However this point was disputed by Wardle who challenges the rags-to-riches motif. He suggests that the change was not so dramatic and that Liverpool was in fact thriving in 1700, 'largely due to the discovery of rock salt in Cheshire, the importation of Virginia tobacco, and the refining of sugar at Liverpool',¹⁷ none of which is apparently related to transatlantic slavery.

Similar discursive devices and motifs were drawn upon by both sides in this debate, used both to stress and highlight, and downplay and mitigate Liverpool's role in transatlantic slavery. One such familiar motif is the 'triangular trade', used within a letter by local historian Robert Gladstone to stress and naturalise the significance of the trade:

The slave trade was undoubtedly of great value to Liverpool, especially as it formed part of a system of three cornered voyages by means of which colonial produce was brought to Liverpool.¹⁸

Here importance is gained through accumulation of produce, an inanimate point of significance perhaps easier for critics to accept. However the triangular motif was also used by George Lascelles both to familiarly point slave bodies away from the physical city, but also to downplay the specific significance of slavery to the city, by suggesting that the 'produce' within the holds of the ships could have been anything:

The trade being largely three-cornered, hardware from Liverpool to Africa, slaves from Africa to America, and raw cotton from America to Liverpool, it could easily be argued that Liverpool ships were not slavers, but engaged in the innocent trade of manufactured goods outwards, raw material inwards and the intermediate voyage being as a passenger boat and merely incidental.¹⁹

¹⁶ P.D. McGuffie, "Letter," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 18, 1939.

¹⁷ Wardle, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade - Early Records."

¹⁸ Gladstone, "Letter."

¹⁹ George Lascelles, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 18, 1939. I have been unable to ascertain whether the author is a relative of the Lascelles family, who own Harewood House in Yorkshire and who owned plantations in the Caribbean. It is perhaps unlikely that the author, who has a Liverpool address, 'Stoneycroft', is George Henry Hubert Lascelles, 7th Earl of Harewood (1923-2011) since he was at this time working for the Head of the War Agricultural Committee in the West Riding of Yorkshire, shortly before joining the army, though of course not impossible. George Lascelles, *The Tongs and the Bones: The Memoirs of Lord Harewood* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1981), 30-31.

Other familiar motifs of Liverpool's historic discourse appeared throughout the debate. Wardle suggests that the increase in slave trading across the eighteenth century was 'not because of the Liverpolitans' propensity for slaving, but by reason of the enterprise of local merchants',²⁰ reiterating the 'enterprising spirit motif'. However, the 'Liverpool exceptionalism' presented by Peacock, was counter-argued by Wardle who lists other countries, places and industries which were involved:

Liverpool's trade with West Africa dates from and was mainly dependent upon the North Country's ability to manufacture cheap textiles, the Birmingham district's capacity for making cheap trinkets, and "the iron" country's production of utensils for sale or exchange on the Coast – so that an area far vaster than Liverpool "earned its living by the slave trade."²¹

He also listed other maritime centres, stating that 'Bristol, London, Exeter, Lancaster, Hull and other ports had ships engaged in the trade'.²² Wardle also made a point of stressing how the initiation of involvement in the trade was due to 'foreign' influence, here 'foreign' to Liverpool, that the slave trade 'was an "industry" imported into Merseyside by "foreigners" from Bristol and other declining ports'.²³ This point was picked up by John Chambers who suggested that this shows how Wardle 'seems to feel some moral disapprobation in the existence of this trade in Liverpool'. This said, Chambers also drew involvement back further to other countries whereby the slave trade 'originated with the Portuguese at the opening of the sixteenth century, and was immediately taken up by the Dutch and the English',²⁴ suggesting instead that efforts '[t]o condemn or endeavour to mitigate our civic "past" is irrelevant'.²⁵

This claim for neutrality was made by commentators on various sides. This is a point which occurs throughout Liverpool's slavery discourse, in response to a debate renowned for its controversy and for raising emotive responses. This is frequently achieved through positioning contrasts, of facts against fictions (or more frequently against myths, legends, and distortions). In Wardle's second letter, his own factual response was pitted against Peacock's

²⁰ Wardle, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade."

²¹ Ibid.

²² The inclusion of Hull is rare in this list. Wardle, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade - Participation of Other Ports."

²³ Wardle, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade."

²⁴ Chambers, "Letter."

²⁵ Ibid.

'distortion'; 'now for historic fact' he states.²⁶ He ends his letter with a personal defence again, stating that:

I do not wish to make light, as he suggests, of Liverpool's participation in the slave trade, but any student of local history would be failing in his duty if he permitted to pass, unchallenged, the exaggerations which periodically recur in connection with this subject.²⁷

The 'legality' and acceptability of the slave trade was a point frequently raised, here both as a way to stress the extent of the slave trade in Liverpool by Peacock who suggested 'it was "the thing" to be associated with it' and that it was looked upon in the same way as 'a trustee security'²⁸, and as a method of naturalization by George Lascelles, who wrote to say that 'it was not considered a wicked or illegal trade' and judging historic acts by modern standards is 'absurd'.²⁹ However, the acceptability of the slave trade to contemporaries is argued against both through the discussion of abolitionists, but interestingly also through highlighting the difficulties of political expression, particularly by lower classes. Herbert Feilden suggested that 'there was always a revulsion against the slave trade by the ordinary rank and file of the city' but that 'if too outspoken at public meetings punishment was swift and drastic', citing the Peterloo massacre as an example of this.³⁰

The familiar subject of slaves in Liverpool was raised in one of the introductory articles and within a further three letters. Peacock initially suggested that the numbers were probably small but did not deny that enslaved people may have been brought to Liverpool, whereas Wardle counted this as one of the 'popular legends' a comprehensive mercantile history of the city would dispel. George Lascelles, however, was more firm in his convictions, though blurs the debate of slaves in Liverpool through terminology, placing 'slave' against, here 'nigger "servant"' which is, apparently, something quite different:

²⁶ Wardle, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade - Participation of Other Ports."

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "L'Pool's Slave Trading Days."; "Slave-Trading Shares: Liverpool and its "Trustee Security"."

²⁹ Lascelles, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade."

³⁰ Herbert Feilden, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade - The Triangular Voyages," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 22, 1939.

I think it should be made clear that there never was any slave trade in Liverpool. I do not mean that no nigger "servant" ever changed hands here, for such transactions were not infrequent in certain circles all over the kingdom, but no cargo of slaves was ever landed here.³¹

In reference to the record of one 'cargo' of enslaved people being brought to Liverpool from Bonny, the author of the following letter interestingly suggested looking for evidence of slaves in Liverpool in artwork, rather than in maritime archives:

I have no doubt that if one cargo was landed in Liverpool other cargoes were. Perhaps an examination of the Binns Collection of prints and old newspaper cuttings in the Picton Reading Rooms might supply adequate proof.³²

At points the debate turned to external memory work; previous press discussion, material artefacts and museum displays. Of particular interest is the recurring discussion of a bell which one author raised a reference to in his own memory of an auction, '...about thirty-five years ago I attended a forced sale of old ships' stored in Liverpool, and noticed in a lot of old metal, a blackened bell which bore some inscription...', the inscription, dated 1770, states that the bell was a gift from Thomas Jones.³³

Museums were also drawn into the 1939 debate, where one author suggested that their critics should pay a visit to Wilberforce House, which had opened in 1906 and received a good deal of publicity around the Wilberforce and Emancipation Centenary activities in 1933 and 1934:

Instead of consulting our local historians for the facts, Messers. Wardle and Lascelles might have visited an old red brick house, in the ancient gabled Hull High Street, the home of Wilberforce.

³¹ Lascelles, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade."

³² S.M. Musker, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 21, 1939.

³³ R. Stewart-Brown, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 14, 1939. "A Slave Trade Bell." This bell was earlier on display at the Liverpool Shipping Exhibition, of 1931, and was discussed within the local press. It is now held by Bristol Museum and Art Gallery and was a featured artefact of the Port Cities project, a website partnership exploring and presenting the history of UK port cities which included Bristol and Liverpool. "The Calabar Bell" *Port Cities: Bristol* <http://discoveringbristol.org.uk/browse/slavery/the-calabar-bell/> (accessed September 27, 2013)

There they would find illustrated and other evidence (or was years ago) that cries out against Mr. Lascelles' personal opinion that 'evidently it was not considered a wicked or illegal trade.'³⁴

Here, the authority of the museum is stressed against the bias of 'local historians', the museum's place as an authoritative institution is emphasised. Within the same letter, Herbert Feilden recalled a press discussion of the subject from the previous year. Feilden wrote into the paper in response to Arthur Wardle and the Liverpool Nautical Research Society's research into the Norris Papers, and the 1700 Liverpool slaver the *Blessing*, a name which the Post suggested was 'embarrassing' and 'ironic'.³⁵ Here he recounted the story of having met an elderly seaman 'who considered he must be the very last Liverpool sailor who had been engaged in the slave trade as a young man', and who disclosed how slave trading had continued after 1807, that he had 'innocently shipped aboard a fast schooner' only to find himself involved in covert slave-trading.³⁶ This last letter, touching on issues concerning the role of museums in memory work, as well as the intriguing lingering connections to a 'living memory' of slavery, relate to the following section. At the end of the twentieth century, Liverpool's authoritative institutions were more heavily involved in the representation and engagement with transatlantic slavery. In comparison to 1939, however, the debate that ensued in 1999, was more self-consciously focused on the 'memory' of slavery than its 'history'.

1999: Memory Debates

Sixty years later to the month, another slavery debate occurred, initiated by press coverage of Liverpool's first Slavery Remembrance Day and the unveiling of a commemorative plaque on Liverpool's waterfront. However, no letters or commentary took exception to the instigation of a repeated annual day of remembrance, and criticism focused solely around the more tangible memorial artefact of the plaque, its text and the reporting of it. The debate around the plaque, encouraged by the *Daily Post* who asked readers to share their views in 'an important local

³⁴ Feilden, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade - The Triangular Voyages."

³⁵ "Day to Day: An Embarrassing Choice," *Liverpool Daily Post*, May 11, 1938.

³⁶ Feilden, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade - The Triangular Voyages." In his original letter, in 1938, Feilden outlines how this discussion took place in Newsham Park in 1913 with a man of 85 years. Herbert Feilden, "Letter: Liverpool Slavers," *Liverpool Daily Post*, May 13, 1938.

debate – make sure you have your say in it',³⁷ soon merged in the following months into the debate around the official apology. Issued by the council, the apology was announced and reported on in October and delivered in December 1999, which brought the debate up to the dawn of a new Millennium, this ominous timing frequently commented on. The differing foci of these events illustrate prominent points of contention in Liverpool's slavery discourse. In relation to the memorial plaque, these points of contention centre on the built environment. Within responses to the apology, the focus falls on issues of recognition, acknowledgment and responsibility, the negotiation of guilt, and use of competitive trauma. These debates took place against a broader local political context of fraught community relations ultimately raising and perhaps never answering the question of 'whose apology' this was; both in the sense of who was making it, who it was for and who, if anyone, was receiving it.

A Memorial Plaque

At Liverpool's first Slavery Remembrance Day (August 23rd 1999), MP Bernie Grant unveiled a commemorative plaque, the text of which read:

Attention, Listen!!! Remember: Do not forget!!! Millions of African people lost their lives in slavery. Millions worked in the plantations. African's blood sweat and toil is the cement that gave rise to the great seafaring ports like Liverpool.³⁸

The wording of the plaque read like a performed speech, making an animated command to listen and a conscious call to remember and 'not forget'. There is an interesting discursive allusion to the familiar George Frederick Cooke anecdote seen within the use of 'blood' and 'cement'. The plaque's wording makes no claims that any of the numerically vague, 'millions' of slaves were shipped from Liverpool itself, yet much of the following press debate concerned the theme of slaves in Liverpool, largely in reaction to press reporting that the plaque was unveiled for the 'memory of the slaves who passed through Liverpool on their route to the New World.'³⁹

³⁷ Tony McIntyre, "Is This an Episode of History Best Left Unremembered?," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 27, 1999.

³⁸ Quoted in David Charters, "Port's Shameful History Told in Black and White," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 24, 1999.

³⁹ David Charters, "Port's Shameful History Told in Black and White," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 24, 1999.

Most letters set out to dispute the presence of slave bodies. One letter outlines how the plaque itself makes no statement of the sort,⁴⁰ and the following letters go to great lengths to direct slave bodies away from the city, by drawing triangles across the ocean, the 'triangular trade',⁴¹ or 'triangular operation',⁴² and by severing connections with the built environment.⁴³ One author concedes that 'Liverpool was the worst port for this loathsome trade for at least 150 years' yet immediately disputes that enslaved African people ever set foot in the city, 'but to claim that boatloads of slaves came to Liverpool is false history. If you doubt my words visit the slavery exhibition at the Maritime Museum or read the Times Atlas of World History'⁴⁴ here drawing on authoritative institutions and sources. However, most letters dispute the significance of the slave trade, minimising its importance through ambiguous interpretations of time:

The slave trade was one of the important factors in the development of the port of Liverpool for only about 50 years, from about 1750 until William Wilberforce and others brought about its abolition in 1807 – hardly something “happening in Liverpool for so many generations”.⁴⁵

By compartmentalizing Liverpool's involvement in transatlantic slavery to a period of 'only about 50 years' the author is disputing that it occurred for 'so many generations' suggested by Bernie Grant. Grant makes this statement in relation to the psychological impact of enslavement, that '[y]ou can't have something like that happening for so many generations without it leaving a lasting impression somewhere'.⁴⁶

African complicity in the slave trade was raised repeatedly, that 'far from being a European idea, [slavery] was an age-old trade of the African kingdoms'.⁴⁷ One author is

⁴⁰ 'I MADE a point of viewing the 'slave memorial' plaque by the Canning graving docks mentioned by David Charters (Daily Post August 24th). The plaque records that the docks were used by slave ships, but nowhere does it claim that African slaves were shipped from there because very few slaves even came near Liverpool' M.F. Dinsmore, "LETTER: Ships Not Slaves," *Liverpool Daily Post*, September 1, 1999.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² M. Young, "LETTER: Trading Facts," *Liverpool Daily Post*, September 2, 1999..

⁴³ Dinsmore, "LETTER: Ships Not Slaves."

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Young, "LETTER: Trading Facts."

⁴⁶ Bernie Grant, quoted in Charters, "Port's Shameful History."

⁴⁷ Laurence Keen, "LETTER: Slave Points," *Liverpool Daily Post*, September 7, 1999.

specifically 'extremely irritated when lectured by the likes of MP Bernie Grant' about Britain and slavery, and suggests that:

He conveniently forgets the part played by tribal leaders in Africa at that time. Without their enthusiastic participation (ie selling their own people for gain) the scale of the whole sorry business would not have been possible.⁴⁸

The 'Africans enslaving Africans' motif reflects templates of racist discourse, encompassing what Stuart Hall terms a '*binary* form of representation', where the 'other' occupies two opposed extremes.⁴⁹ Here, the 'other' is both enslaved and enslaver, victim and perpetrator.

Much of the adverse reaction to reporting on SRD, the plaque, and Bernie Grant's visit concerned statements Grant is reported to have made about contemporary racism in Liverpool. Grant makes a number of positive statements about enjoying coming to Liverpool and around the significance of Liverpool undertaking actions to 'remember slavery', suggesting that SRD and the plaque act as a form of acknowledgement.

Liverpool is the only place in Britain that I know which is remembering slavery today. The plaque shows that people are beginning to recognise that part of Liverpool is tied up with African enslavement. But if people acknowledge that, as Liverpool Council has, it begins to heal the bad feelings that have been around for generations.⁵⁰

Grant links this history directly into the context of contemporary racial politics in Liverpool, speaking of 1990s racism as a legacy of transatlantic slavery.⁵¹ Grant further illustrates the direct link he sees between slavery and racism, that '[t]he big part Liverpool played in the slave trade must have made an impact on the consciousness of white people'.⁵²

Bernie Grant, Guyanese Labour MP for Tottenham, was described as a 'red rag to the bulls of rightwing politics', for his controversial statements over racism, particularly in relation

⁴⁸ I L Marshall, "LETTER: Sorry Trade," *Liverpool Daily Post*, September 7, 1999.

⁴⁹ Stuart Hall, "The Spectacle of the Other," in *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, ed. Margaret Wetherell, S. Taylor, and S.J. Yates (2001), 326.

⁵⁰ Bernie Grant, quoted in Charters, "Port's Shameful History."

⁵¹ 'People tell me that as far as racism is concerned they are still have great difficulties, like not getting jobs even when they are qualified. They are treated as second class citizens and, of course, they complain of police harassment. I think the blacks in Liverpool are suffering from that history of enslavement' Bernie Grant, quoted in David Charters, "Bernie Grant's Message for Merseyside," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 24, 1999.

⁵² Charters, "Port's Shameful History."

to policing, having commented that Tottenham youths considered the police had received 'a bloody good hiding' in the 1985 riots in Broadwater Farm, in which a police officer was murdered.⁵³ Response to Grant's statements present him as an outsider 'causing trouble' where none previously existed, presenting the common argument that speaking out against racism is somehow causing it, that it was 'nice of Bernie Grant to come up to Merseyside, and, in his true fashion, seek to whip up racial hatred and tension'.⁵⁴ The history of transatlantic slavery is distanced through time, that Grant should 'stop bleating on about events 200 or more years ago' and instead turn his attention to the worse situations now, such as 'the anarchy and bloodshed being waged by Yardies in his homeland, Jamaica'.⁵⁵ This position Grant's assumed identity group as the real problem – though Grant was born in Guyana, not Jamaica.

Whose Apology?

As its last formal act, at its last formal meeting of this Millennium, the City Council acknowledges Liverpool's responsibility for its involvement in three centuries of the slave trade, a trade which influenced every aspect of the city's commerce and culture and affected the lives of all its citizens.

Whilst bequeathing the city with a rich diversity of people and cultures, learning, architecture and financial wealth it also obscured the human suffering upon which it was built. The untold misery which was caused has left a legacy which affects Black people in Liverpool today.

On behalf of the city, the City Council expresses its shame and remorse for the city's role in this trade in human misery. The City Council makes an unreserved apology for its involvement in the slave trade and the continual effects of slavery on Liverpool's Black community.

The first step towards reconciliation will be the basis upon which the city and all its people and institutions can grasp the challenges of the new Millennium with a fresh and sustainable commitment to equality and justice in Liverpool.

The City Council hereby commits itself to work closely with Liverpool communities and partners and with peoples of those countries which have carried the burden of the slave trade.

⁵³ Mike Phillips, "Bernie Grant: Passionate Leftwing MP and Tireless Anti-Racism Campaigner," *The Guardian*, April 10, 2000. Grant is a recurring figure in Liverpool black history and in relation to the city's memory of slavery. He was the first patron of the Charles Wootton College and was involved in the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery.

⁵⁴ Geoff Markland, "LETTER: Stop Bleating," *Liverpool Daily Post*, September 1, 1999.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

The Council also commits itself to programmes of action with full participation of Liverpool's Black communities which will seek to combat all forms of racism and discrimination and will recognise and respond to the city's multi-racial inheritance and celebrate the skills and talent of all its people.⁵⁶

The debate initiated by reporting on SRD and the commemorative plaque ran into early October. A mere nine days after the last letter in this line of debate, came the announcement that Liverpool City Council was to issue an official apology for the city's role in the transatlantic slave trade. The motion for an official apology was raised by a former student of the Charles Wootton College and Liberal Democrat Councillor Mirna Juarez.⁵⁷ Much has been written about Tony Blair's expression of 'deep sorrow' during the Bicentenary year (2007) which significantly was not an explicit apology, but in reaction to which there was some debate.⁵⁸ Tony Tibbles has suggested that the apology in Liverpool in 1999 did not attract a great deal of criticism or reaction, though conceded that there were protests from members of Liverpool's black community over a perceived lack of consultation.⁵⁹ Whilst, as Tibbles suggests, perhaps the apology did not attract as much of a furore as might have been expected, the reaction within the local press unveiled telling if familiar threads of argument through a sustained debate.

The place of the apology within Liverpool's slavery memory discourse is particularly significant when apologies, individual, collective and political, are understood as 'speech acts'.⁶⁰ Nicholas Tavuchis suggests that apologies accomplish nothing 'outside of speech', that

⁵⁶ The full text of Liverpool's official apology for the city's role in the transatlantic slave trade. LRO, Liverpool, Liverpool City Council Minutes, 352 MIN/COU, Special Meeting of the City Council, December 9, 1999. Also quoted in Mark Christian, "The Age of Slave Apologies: the case of Liverpool, England (Transcript of Lecture)," National Museums Liverpool, http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/podcasts/transcripts/liverpool_slavery_apology.aspx (accessed October 30, 2013).

⁵⁷ Juarez was born in Honduras and had lived in Liverpool for twenty years. She left the College in 1995, going onto further education at Liverpool John Moores University studying for a Media and Screen degree. "Former CWC Student Elected to the City Council," *Charles Wootton News*, June 1999.

⁵⁸ See for example Michael Cunningham, "'It Wasn't Us and We Didn't Benefit': The Discourse of Opposition to an Apology by Britain for Its Role in the Slave Trade," *The Political Quarterly* 79, no. 2 (2008); Emma Waterton and Ross Wilson, "Talking the Talk: Policy, Popular and Media Responses to the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Using the 'Abolition Discourse'," *Discourse & Society* 20, no. 3 (2009); David Scott, "Preface: Soul Captives are Free," *Small Axe* 11, no. 2 (2007).

⁵⁹ Tibbles, "Facing Slavery's Past," 301.

⁶⁰ Craig W. Blatz, Karina Schumann, and Michael Ross, "Government Apologies for Historical Injustices," *Political Psychology* 30, no. 2 (2009): 221; Jan Lofstrom, "Historical Apologies as Acts of Symbolic Inclusion – and Exclusion? Reflections on Institutional Apologies as Politics of Cultural Citizenship," *Citizenship Studies* 15, no. 1 (2011): 105; Janna Thompson, "Apology, Justice, and Respect: A Critical

it is not enough to *be* sorry, subjects must *say* that they are, and Janna Thompson similarly emphasises the integral 'appropriate words' in apology performances.⁶¹ Within council meetings, the wording of the official apology was itself a subject of debate. Councillor Alan Dean suggested replacing the word 'remorse' with 'shame', for a more powerful effect, and both words were included in the final wording (above). These words were perhaps chosen to counter the sanitised language of other political apologies, and indeed the frequently euphemistically termed 'trade' in slaves. Whilst one recommendation was made to include 'activists who were residents from the City [who] actually assisted in bringing about the abolition of the slave trade', this was not included in the apology text.⁶²

The Liverpool apology debate was, in essence, a 'memory debate', holding at its core a 'cultural war over how we remember the past and what, if anything, we should do about it.'⁶³ This element of the debate concerned the larger theoretical question of whose apology this was, who was or was not involved, and what such an act could or could not accomplish.

In the United States ideas over slavery apologies gained particular momentum in the 1950s and 1960s, stimulated by civil rights protests including those around James Forman's 1969 *The Black Manifesto*.⁶⁴ However, a number of scholars have assessed the rise in collective, institutional and political apologies in the later twentieth century.⁶⁵ Michael Cunningham assigns the increase to shifts in identity politics and a self-reflexive political ideology seen across the Blair and Clinton administrations in particular.⁶⁶ Indeed, the council

Defense of Political Apology," in *The Age of Apology: Facing up to the Past*, ed. Mark Gibney, et al. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 32.

⁶¹ Nicholas Tavuchis, *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 31; Thompson, "Apology, Justice, and Respect: A Critical Defense of Political Apology," 32.

⁶² LRO, Liverpool, Liverpool City Council Minutes, 352 MIN/COU, Community, Equality and Values Select Committee Meeting, November 4, 1999

⁶³ Alfred L. Brophy, "The University and the Slaves: Apology and its Meaning," in *The Age of Apology: Facing up to the Past*, ed. Mark Gibney, et al. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 115.

⁶⁴ Roy L. Brooks, "Not Even an Apology?," in *When Sorry Isn't Enough: The Controversy Over Apologies and Reparations for Human Injustice*, ed. Roy L. Brooks (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 310; Jerry K. Frye, "The 'Black Manifesto' and the Tactic of Objectification," *Journal of Black Studies* 5, no. 1 (1974). Forman called for financial reparations from religious organisations.

⁶⁵ Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann and Mark Gibney, "Introduction: Apologies and the West," in *The Age of Apology: Facing up to the Past*, ed. Mark Gibney, et al. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008). See also Trouillot, "Abortive Rituals: Historical Apologies in the Global Era.,"; Mark Gibney et al., *The Age of Apology: Facing up to the Past* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

⁶⁶ Cunningham, "It Wasn't Us and We Didn't Benefit," 252.

attempted to build on familiar links between Liverpool and America through marketing organisation around Liverpool's slavery apology. President Clinton and Jesse Jackson were invited to the 'celebration', and the Lord Mayor suggested that they would be there 'in spirit' if not physically.⁶⁷ Jesse Jackson was at this time Clinton's special envoy to Africa, where Clinton had recently stopped short of issuing a full apology for slavery in 1998 whilst in Uganda, instead expressing regret for the role the United States had played in the slave trade.⁶⁸

The timing of the apology in 1999 was frequently remarked upon by supporters and critics. It would be, as was often stated 'Liverpool City Council's final deed of the 20th Century', which would mean going 'into the millennium with a fresh start'.⁶⁹ Public responses supporting the apology echoed the fresh start idea, suggesting that '[t]he Millennium is a good moment for cleaning the slate'.⁷⁰ However, reaction against the way the apology was being carried out from one LBB speaker suggested that the timing showed the apology to be insincere, that '[i]f the millennium had not come around this apology would not have happened' suggesting that councillors wanted only a 'clear conscience' to start the new millennium but were not doing enough of substance for 'black members of the community'.⁷¹ As Scott also stated:

At the same time, the new millennium was coming in. And at the same time Councillor Devaney was leaving as Lord Mayor. So, he wanted to be seen as a sh- as going out in a shower of glory but he knew that- he wanted to be part of history! And what better way from his point of view than to apologise, yeah.⁷²

The act of apology is here linked with desires for celebrating, a ways of becoming 'part of history'. Devaney did claim part-ownership of the apology idea, suggesting that it was something he had 'considered for some time and by coincidence Coun[cillor] Juarez has come

⁶⁷ Neild, "Forgive us for our Slave Trade History."

⁶⁸ BBC News, "Special Report: Clinton Close to Apology Over Slavery," http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1998/03/98/africa/68974.stm (accessed October 30, 2013); John Ryle, "A Sorry Apology from Clinton," *The Guardian*, April 13, 1998; James Bennet, "Clinton in Africa: The Overview; in Uganda, Clinton Expresses Regret on Slavery in US," *The New York Times*, March 25, 1998.

⁶⁹ Councillor Juarez and Mayor Joe Devaney quoted in Neild, "Forgive us for our Slave Trade History."

⁷⁰ Gerald F. Henderson, "LETTER: Clean Slate," *Liverpool Echo*, October 19, 1999. Henderson later reiterates his focus on timing in a letter written after the apology had passed commending the council for expressing 'regret for Liverpool's leading role in the slave trade, as we enter the new millennium'. Gerald F. Henderson, "LETTER: 2000 Pardons," *Liverpool Daily Post*, December 14, 1999.

⁷¹ Buckner, "Children of Slavery Blast City's 'Quick-Fix' Apology."

⁷² Scott, interview.

forward with her own thing.⁷³ Joe Devaney further placed himself as central to this process within a later interview for an oral history of Liverpool. He suggests that Bernie Grant's comments at SRD in August that year were the catalyst which drove the apology forward:

...in the Autumn, Lord David Alton, a Liberal Democrat Councillor, came to talk to me about slavery, and I said, 'Look why don't we apologise?' So Myrna Juarez, a young Liberal Democrat Councillor, with my help put down a motion. I fully supported it.⁷⁴

Accusations of seeking personal acclaim are a common trait in debates over apologies.⁷⁵ Such actions are frequently presented as superficial or done for other self-centred, non-authentic reasons, often utilizing a commercial language, as one letter suggests, 'and if the council has nothing better to do, I'm sure they can get the "apology industry" up to nearly one a month'.⁷⁶ The Millennium played a large part within such conclusions about the apology's superficiality, and the 'use' of the black community within such performances. Mark Brown of the Consortium of Black Organisations suggested that the council was 'using the black community as a Millennium Trophy in the shop window to promote an unreal multi-racial corporate image of Liverpool'.⁷⁷

One of the main arguments made against issuing apologies for 'historical wrongs' is that no one who is alive now, was alive then, particularly not the historical 'perpetrators'. However, as Tony Hall argued in his defence of 'House Concurrent Resolution 96', that Congress should apologise to African-Americans whose ancestors were enslaved, whilst no member of Congress today will have been involved in slavery, 'Congress' as an institution acted collectively in the past and bears political continuity across time. It is a 'transgenerational polity' which exists beyond the individual lifespans of people.⁷⁸ Within

⁷³ Neild, "Forgive us for our Slave Trade History."

⁷⁴ Piers Dudgeon, *Our Liverpool: Memories of Life in Disappearing Britain* (London: Headline Review, 2010), 34.

⁷⁵ Howard-Hassmann and Gibney, "Introduction: Apologies and the West," 6.

⁷⁶ B.W. Hale, "LETTER: Say Sorry Again," *Liverpool Daily Post*, December 9, 1999. My emphasis.

⁷⁷ Mark Brown, quoted in Buckner, "Children of Slavery Blast City's 'Quick-Fix' Apology." Interestingly, given the topic of the previous few months press debates, Brown suggested that one way of demonstrating a, perhaps more sincere and tangible sense of remorse, would be through the erection of a plaque saying so, 'We want a prominent plaque erected in the city which shows how sorry this council is then future generations might be able to learn from its terrible past,' Mark Brown quoted in Buckner, "Children of Slavery Blast City's 'Quick-Fix' Apology."

⁷⁸ Thompson, "Apology, Justice, and Respect: A Critical Defense of Political Apology," 37-38.

Liverpool's official apology text, 'shame and remorse' was expressed 'on behalf of the city', symbolically encompassing a vague body of diverse peoples, yet the speech act of 'apology' itself was restricted to the city council alone, an institution which had supported the slave trade.⁷⁹ Michael Cunningham suggests that the 'we weren't born' argument really comes down to a question of responsibility, which an apology necessarily requires.⁸⁰ This was worded in various ways in the Liverpool apology debates, where the *Liverpool Daily Post* questioned whether contemporary Liverpoolians had a 'right' to apologise for past actions:

It is surely unconscionable nowadays that we as individuals could feel anything other than disgust at the barbarity of the slave trade. But, collectively, have we the right to express remorse, or any other emotion, for the actions of shipping owners so many generations ago, when the world was an entirely different place, founded on strange and primitive principles?⁸¹

Here, the 'wrongness' of slavery is naturalised, the *Post's* position on the issue made clear, an apparently sympathetic stage laid on which to criticise the idea of apology. The issue of a 'right' to apologise can be articulated, as Cunningham suggests, as an issue of responsibility, which the *Post* discursively limits to 'shipping owners so many generations ago'. There is also a moral distancing articulated from a time which was 'founded on strange and primitive principles', implying that Liverpool today is too morally and culturally different to relate to 'Liverpool then'. The suggestion here is that there is no lineage, no continuity. However, there is an internal conflict within this argument since the editors also draw identifying connections within acknowledgments of 'our' history and its representation, that '[t]he displays at the Maritime Museum provide a permanent reminder of our deplorable record at the end of the 18th century'.⁸²

Mike Boyle (University of Liverpool) wrote a piece on Liverpool and the transatlantic slave trade for the *Echo* which stressed the magnitude of the city's involvement, and ended the piece suggesting that he does not 'think the slave trade is something people in Liverpool should be ashamed of today or feel guilty about...but we do need to acknowledge the

⁷⁹ Liverpool Corporation organised petitions against the Abolition Bill and paid £100 to Reverend Raymond Harris who wrote tracts claiming that slavery was sanctioned by the bible (see Chapter Two).

⁸⁰ Tony P. Hall, "Defense of Congressional Resolution Apologizing for Slavery," in *When Sorry Isn't Enough: The Controversy Over Apologies and Reparations for Human Injustice*, ed. Roy L. Brooks (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 351; Brophy, "The University and the Slaves: Apology and its Meaning," 114; Cunningham, "It Wasn't Us and We Didn't Benefit," 253.

⁸¹ "Daily Post: Our View," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 13, 1999.

⁸² Ibid.

significant role the city played.⁸³ This perhaps reflects an awareness of the obstacles facing those trying to tell the story of Liverpool and slavery, and of the kind of reactions acts like apologies elicit. However, Boyle's suggestion above was not one that sat well with everyone. Whilst supportive of the apology generally, Mark Christian found Boyle's comments 'very off', asking, '[c]an you imagine the outcry if someone stated that the people of Germany today should not feel ashamed about the Jewish Holocaust?'⁸⁴

Michel-Rolph Trouillot suggests that what sets apologies apart from other 'speech acts', is the recognition of identity which implicates the speaker as historical perpetrator and addressee as historical victim, linking the two along temporal planes.⁸⁵ Thus, speakers sought to identify with a historic collective group that 'did not benefit from transatlantic slavery', frequently through historic 'working classes'.⁸⁶ One respondent stated that '[t]he majority of modern day Liverpool people – with largely working class origins – would have had no direct connections with slavery and it is unlikely that their antecedents had any connections either.'⁸⁷ The phrasing here produces an interesting ambiguity of tense and time, since the author is placing the class composition of modern-day Liverpool over its eighteenth century history, and then extending this to their 'antecedents'. A similar intersection of temporal planes between collective identity groups is demonstrated in a response to Mark Christian's letter above where '[t]he working classes did not share in this wealth, so why should they – or their descendants – share in the guilt?'⁸⁸ The author then draws focus to another large collective identity group in Liverpool, asking 'how can the Liverpool Irish have any responsibility for Liverpool's role in slavery?' when most would not arrive in the city until the 1840s.⁸⁹ Here, the author, Delia O'Hennessey focuses on direct personal lineage and genealogy articulated through larger collective identity groups. Similarly, competitive trauma is drawn upon to shake links between the temporal planes of 'perpetrator' and 'victim', where '[p]erhaps there should be an apology

⁸³ Mike Boyle, "Slaves to History," *Liverpool Echo*, October 16, 1999.

⁸⁴ Mark Christian, "LETTER: History Lesson," *Liverpool Echo*, October 19, 1999. Mark Christian was named as a consultant within the apology process within council minutes. LRO, Liverpool, Liverpool City Council Minutes, 352 MIN/COU, Community, Equality and Values Select Committee Meeting, November 4, 1999

⁸⁵ Trouillot, "Abortive Rituals: Historical Apologies in the Global Era," 175.

⁸⁶ 'Liverpool's working classes were victims of the same system which produced slavery.' R.W. Hale, "LETTER: Not Guilty," *Liverpool Daily Post*, December 28, 1999.

⁸⁷ Laurence Keen, "LETTER: Who's Sorry Now," *Liverpool Daily Post*, December 14, 1999.

⁸⁸ Delia O'Hennessey, "LETTER: Not Guilty," *Liverpool Echo*, November 3, 1999.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

for the inhuman treatment of Liverpool seafarers whose death rate in percentage terms for that era was reported as being higher than the hapless slaves'.⁹⁰ The link is more explicitly made by one author between such conditions and slavery itself that '[i]t can be argued that Liverpool's seafarers fared just as badly; press-ganged into the Royal Navy (a form of slavery) and treated equally badly in the Merchant Navy'.⁹¹

Alfred Brophy has outlined how, in reactions to a call for apology over Alabama University's slavery links, the identity of those asking for an apology became part of the negative arguments against issuing one. One respondent suggested that they were 'sorry that your owner in Africa sold you to an American rather than to another African. There's your apology'.⁹² In Liverpool, the call for apology came from its highest political body, and whilst the motion for apology was issued by someone who had been involved in at least one institution within Liverpool's black community for some time, the speaker's identity as a cultural outsider, from outside not only Liverpool's black community, but outside Liverpool and indeed the UK, was significant for some.

And, there was er- there was also, a Latin American woman there erm... I'm pretty certain, if she didn't come from Nicaragua, she came from that area. Her parents were from there. She may have been born here but to all intents and purposes, the way in which she spoke, she was from that area – had more in common with Latin America. She was a councillor as well. [...] And he [Joe Devaney] had this woman- this young woman who'd never been in the black community, knew nothing about it whatsoever, to propose or to second it.⁹³

For Scott, who assigns the identity of Juarez to Latin America through cultural attributes, Juarez's position 'outside' the Liverpool black community in belonging and awareness is significant, and the suggestion underlying his statement above is that the junior councillor was used by her senior counterpart, Joe Devaney, Lord Mayor of Liverpool, without a full awareness of Liverpool's unique context of racial politics. Press reports did make a point of stating that Juarez's 'own family were affected by the slave trade', however, though there is no further detail on this connection.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Hale, "LETTER: Say Sorry Again."

⁹¹ Hale, "LETTER: Not Guilty."

⁹² Brophy, "The University and the Slaves: Apology and its Meaning," 117.

⁹³ Scott, interview

⁹⁴ Buckner, "Children of Slavery Blast City's 'Quick-Fix' Apology."

Supporters presented the apology as a form of verbal acknowledgement which would in turn perform a restorative function, often through the metaphor of physical wounds, that 'such acts of acknowledgement and regret can play a part in healing the festering wounds inflicted in years long gone by',⁹⁵ that the apology 'could help heal the wounds of the past.'⁹⁶ It was frequently recognised as a symbolic act, and articulated as such.⁹⁷ Furthermore, the apology was understood as a process of recognising and taking steps against inequality experienced by Liverpool's black communities as a legacy of this history, that 'slavery left white people with a stereotypical view they [black people] were only fit for servitude' and this this is a 'legacy affecting black people in Liverpool today.'⁹⁸ Mark Christian suggested that whilst this apology 'would not solve the contemporary discrimination faced by black Liverpoolians',⁹⁹ it was a step in the right direction, and apology-supporter Gerald Henderson suggested that the apology would be an opportunity to 'hold the city council and each other to account' on issues of racism and discrimination.¹⁰⁰ During the apology ceremony, Councillor Juarez called 'upon the black community never to forget its history of struggle against inequality, but to forgive the past and claim the future'.¹⁰¹ Forgiveness is, however, a big thing to ask of a varied and diverse group of people, many of whom were not happy about the process of the apology and had not felt involved within its process.

Criticisms of the apology, however, were framed negatively around what an apology could *not* do, opposed to what it *could* do. Apologies could not 'change history – what is done is done, and is irrevocable, immutable, unalterable' as the *Liverpool Daily Post* editorial put it, also suggesting that apologies are (implicitly futile) attempts to 'transform people's

⁹⁵ Henderson, "LETTER: Clean Slate."

⁹⁶ Christian, "LETTER: History Lesson."

⁹⁷ 'These acts are of course symbolic but they have play a helpful role in building trust between the descendants of the victims and the perpetrators of such injustices.' Henderson, "LETTER: Clean Slate."

⁹⁸ Juarez, quoted in Buckner, "Children of Slavery Blast City's 'Quick-Fix' Apology." Whilst attempts at social inclusion through such acknowledgment of both historical injustice and contemporary effects is a common justification of political apologies, Jan Lofstrom has argued that institutional apologies can have the opposite effect, excluding those who do not fit into national historic stories (such as recent immigrants), and therefore not being part of contemporary 'apologizing community'. Lofstrom suggests that the rise in political apologies across Europe in recent years also aligns with a rise in citizenship tests for immigrants and that rather than the two things being opposed, one the liberal ideal and the other a conservative policy, apologies can exclude by reinforcing alien status. Lofstrom, "Historical Apologies as Acts of Symbolic Inclusion – and Exclusion?."

⁹⁹ Christian, "LETTER: History Lesson."

¹⁰⁰ Henderson, "LETTER: 2000 Pardons."

¹⁰¹ Juarez, quoted in Buckner, "Children of Slavery Blast City's 'Quick-Fix' Apology."

perceptions of events long ago', which many would argue is in fact a key factor in the apology process.¹⁰² The editorial ends by again outlining the nature of apologies as a 'token gesture', words which might 'salve our collective conscience, but capable of little else.' Here, an acknowledgement of the 'wrongness' of this historic injustice is made whilst simultaneously outlining what cannot be achieved:

We know slavery was wrong, inhumane and detestable, and will do well to remember the lessons that history can teach us. But we should never pretend that we can ever turn back the clock.¹⁰³

The focus on what apologies cannot achieve draws on claims apology advocates never in fact made. It was never suggested that history could be changed or clocks be turned back. The focus here falls on the ridiculous, points which fly in the face of 'common sense', rendering the opposition's support itself nonsensical, also demonstrated within describing the apology as 'yet another example of the ludicrous affliction of political correctness'.¹⁰⁴

B.W. Hale argued against the apology on the grounds that it will do more harm than good, that it is 'yet another example of the desires of many people, black and white, to depict black people as perpetual victims'. Hale suggested that energies should instead be focused on more pressing concerns, drawing on the ominous timing, that 'at the dawn of the 21st century', the council should instead 'tackle today's problems' such as 'the catastrophically high dropout rate for black school children'.¹⁰⁵ The focus on how the apology might frame black people as 'perpetual victims' acts to sidestep issues of white British responsibility that an apology would otherwise highlight.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, Councillors like Juarez are 'obsessed with race' and 'determined to create a problem by stirring up resentment',¹⁰⁷ echoing criticisms of Bernie Grant's comments about discrimination made a few months earlier.

As indicated by Tony Tibbles, there was protest from some sections of Liverpool's black community. This focused, not so much on the idea of issuing an apology, but on the way

¹⁰² "Daily Post: Our View."

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Keen, "LETTER: Who's Sorry Now."

¹⁰⁵ Hale, "LETTER: Say Sorry Again."

¹⁰⁶ This is also seen within public discourse surrounding debates over an apology for the slave trade in 2007, where one commentator within the *Daily Mail* suggested that focusing on Britain's role in the transatlantic slave trade 'utterly demeans black people by stripping them of equal responsibility for their own actions', see Waterton and Wilson, "Talking the Talk."

¹⁰⁷ Hale, "LETTER: Not Guilty."

in which it was being carried out, with protesters critical of the speed of the process and lack of consultation with black organisations. Mark Brown reacted to the two days' notice groups had been given for comments, suggesting that '[y]ou can't even get a tap fixed by Liverpool City Council in two days'.¹⁰⁸ James Hernandez of the Liverpool Anti-Racist Community Arts Association (LARCAA) was prominently quoted in the local and national press as one of the apology's biggest critics, suggesting that it was 'little more than lipservice' and was essentially 'too little too late'.¹⁰⁹ The move was also referred to as a 'publicity stunt', and as 'window dressing and a public relations exercise' by Maria O'Reilly of the Consortium of Black Organisations.¹¹⁰ Particularly critical of the lack of consultation, Hernandez drew focus to the place in which the apology was being carried out, suggesting that the use of the Town Hall was itself insulting:

If they had taken into account our feelings I am sure they would not have staged an apology in that building.

There is artwork in there that black people find racist and insulting.

It is somewhat ironic to apologise in a building built on slavery and glorifying slavery without doing something to change it.¹¹¹

This was a point also raised by other spokespeople.¹¹² In an interview, James Hernandez reflects that at the centre of much of the reaction, at least from LARCAA's point of view, was the lack of clarification, and possibly thought, over what the apology might 'mean', and indeed, what might happen afterwards:

... we were a bit like there's been no consultation about this - what does this mean, what does an apology for the city's role in slavery actually *mean*? ... a number of

¹⁰⁸ Mark Brown, quoted in Buckner, "Children of Slavery Blast City's 'Quick-Fix' Apology." This point of lack of consultation was also made separately by LBB elder Eric Lynch, quoted within the same article above.

¹⁰⁹ "'Sorry' Slave Row," *Liverpool Daily Post*, December 8, 1999; Kate Hurry, "City Haunted by Slavery Tries to Say Sorry," *Daily Mail*, December 8, 1999.

¹¹⁰ "City's Apology on Slave Trade Called 'A Stunt'," *Liverpool Echo*, December 19, 1999.

¹¹¹ James Hernandez quoted in "'Sorry' Slave Row."

¹¹² 'You just have to look around the town hall building to see the outdated images of slavery which are an outright insult to our community which undermines everything the council is trying to achieve', Mark Brown quoted in Buckner, "Children of Slavery Blast City's 'Quick-Fix' Apology." Brown also criticised the statue of Major William Earle (1833-1885) outside St. George's Hall which depicts Earle standing with his foot on an aesthetically 'African' shield.

organisations and a number of key people from the black community got together and discussed it and thought well, there's been no consultation, what does this mean, there's been a few select people invited to the Town Hall when the apology was taking place and erm you know we had a lot of different- on why we were doing it but I think collectively, you know, one – no consultation, you know, what does an apology mean, what was the apology as well, erm, and then also, what next? You know, you don't just apologise for something and then you know, business as usual you know what I mean?¹¹³

The council's defence implied firstly that there had been sufficient consultation, going as far as to suggest the 'ceremony was planned with full consultation of the black communities in Liverpool', and Mirna Juarez stated that letters were sent out to 45 black organisations on 26th November which focused on the wording of the apology text to be read out less than two weeks later, on the 8th December.¹¹⁴ In reaction to the criticisms over the use of the Town Hall, a spokesperson suggested that whilst they 'can't hide the foundations of many institutions and buildings', they can give this apology.¹¹⁵ Critics were not suggesting the council was hiding foundations, but were drawing attention to the inappropriate use of the Town Hall as a stage. This in turn may have been purposefully used as a symbol for the lack of consultation, showing that without full and lengthy discussions with black organisations in Liverpool, these are the kind of issues which an unaware city council are otherwise blind to. It has been suggested that the relationship between the addressees and issuers of the apology are integral factors within the 'success' of apology processes, where trust and respect between the two groups would facilitate a more credible apology.¹¹⁶ In Liverpool, this historically and contemporarily fraught relationship between the highest political institution in the city, and Liverpool's black communities was not a sound foundation upon which to enact a trouble-free performance of something as contentious as a collective apology.¹¹⁷

Defending the council's position and in reaction to criticisms over the apology being 'lip-service', Juarez also suggested that the apology was only the first step and that '[f]urther consultation will take place in the near future regarding the next steps in this process of

¹¹³ James Hernandez, Interview by author, November 23, 2012.

¹¹⁴ 'Council Spokeswoman' quoted in "'Sorry' Slave Row."; Mirna Juarez, "LETTER: Slavery Apology is First Step," *Liverpool Daily Post*, December 14, 1999.

¹¹⁵ "'Sorry' Slave Row."

¹¹⁶ Blatz, Schumann, and Ross, "Government Apologies for Historical Injustices," 234.

¹¹⁷ '...City Council continues to exclude many people in its workforce. Individuals and communities do not receive a fair equal service.' Christian, "An African-Centred Perspective on White Supremacy," 185.

apology.¹¹⁸ The 'next step' was something raised with James Hernandez in interview. He recalls one meeting and some slightly disorganised attempts to fulfil the very ambitious promise 'to combat all forms of racism and recognise and respond to the city's multi-racial inheritance and celebrate the skills and talents of all its people':

JM: And what did happen next?

JH: Oh, (laughs) erm. Not much actually. I do remember being involved in a very large meeting and there was representatives from various black community organisations and erm, the City was there, I can't remember exactly who from the city was there but the city was there. And erm, the city was almost saying you know, well what do you want us to do? We've made this apology, what do you want us to do? And we were only semi-prepared for that answer. For that question. And you know we had a list, when I say prepared, we had ideas in our heads of things the City could do in order to erm, for want of a better phrase, slightly level the playing field [...] they were sort of shrugging their shoulders going 'And? You know, what do you want us to do? We've apologised' [...] – there was loads of different measures that could have been put in place and we actually I think came up with a 20 point list of things they could explore. [...] But nothing happened. Nothing.¹¹⁹

One measure which was fully supported (and indeed raised) by a senior member of Liverpool City Council was that Liverpool should be twinned with an African port. The support for this idea largely centred on comparative positive touristic and financial repercussions following Liverpool's previous twinning's with Dublin, Cologne and Shanghai, though it was suggested that this twinning would have benefits of a more 'cultural' than 'financial' nature. The twinning would 'form part of the council's public apology for Liverpool's involvement in the slave trade' according to Lord Mayor Joe Devaney who proposed the Ghanaian port of Takoradi where he had previously worked in the 1970s with the Voluntary Service Overseas. Devaney suggested the move would lead to 'better racial harmony in Liverpool' through a cultural exchange.¹²⁰

The apology text itself is fairly long, and, as Mark Christian has noted certainly sounds powerful.¹²¹ However, the apology perhaps promised more than it could deliver, and the specifics on how exactly the council would tackle the legacies of the injustice being apologised for were not spelled out. Whilst discussing the apology, Scott suggested that without such action, the apology had no meaning:

¹¹⁸ Juarez, "LETTER: Slavery Apology is First Step."

¹¹⁹ James Hernandez., interview.

¹²⁰ Rob Brady, "Africa Twinning Call," *Liverpool Daily Post*, January 10, 2000.

¹²¹ Christian, "The Age of Slave Apologies."

And, erm, an apology in words is no good. I learnt a poem from when I was very very little. And it is a man of words and not of deeds, is like a garden full of weeds, and when the weeds begin to grow, it's like a garden full of snow, and when the snow begins to melt, it's like a ship without a belt, and when the ship begins to sail, it's like a bird without a tail, and when the bird begins to fly, it's like an eagle in the sky, and when the sky begins to roar, it's like a lion at your door, and when the door begins to crack, it's like a stick across your back, and when your back begins to bleed, it's like a garden full of weeds, and so it goes on and on and on. Yeah, and that's what this is. It's words, without deeds.¹²²

However, Blatz, Schumann and Ross suggest that government apologies are aimed as much at people who might not have previously known about the injustice in question as they are at the identifying victim group.¹²³ In this sense, apologies can act to raise awareness about episodes in history. One impact such 'speech acts' can have, is the facilitation of an active discursive exchange. As Alfred Brophy concludes, a consequence of the heated debates both on and off the Alabama campus has been discussion, which 'has increased the knowledge of history on the campus.'¹²⁴ If the 'debate is the memorial', then apologies can in this sense act to stir debate and raise awareness, ultimately shaping Liverpool's slavery memory discourse beyond the 'speech act' itself.

Using Slavery in Debate

In addition to repeated public debates over Liverpool and transatlantic slavery, Liverpool's slavery discourse is complicated through the use of slavery within other debates concerning sometimes seemingly unrelated matters. Slavery is itself drawn on as an argumentative device in part because of an awareness of the discursive power the subject holds, and the pre-existing debate surrounding it. Uses of slavery in such debate reflect the standpoints and ideologies of the speakers and their specific contexts. Liverpool's unique involvement in transatlantic slavery is here drawn upon to criticise related or unrelated systems of abuse which the speaker opposes, and, at one point, also arguably to justify such systems, or at least to shake the foundations on which they could be criticised.

¹²² Scott., interview

¹²³ Blatz, Schumann, and Ross, "Government Apologies for Historical Injustices," 221.

¹²⁴ Brophy, "The University and the Slaves: Apology and its Meaning," 118.

In 1863 and 1864, *Porcupine* editor Hugh Shimmin used Liverpool's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade to directly criticise the town's support for the Confederacy.¹²⁵ This began by drawing on another example of Liverpool's history, the rule of Henry III and the trading 'freedoms' bestowed to Merchant Guilds, '[t]hat notion of freedom reminds one of the odd idea of some people in our own time who are fighting like fury for the right of free citizens to wallop their own niggers.'¹²⁶ Later, Shimmin discusses the older merchants in the town who 'derive their hereditary fortunes from trading in black flesh', subsequently turning to contemporary 1860s Liverpool:

But the chronicler forgets himself. Anti-slavery sentiments are not at all the tone in good society to-day – and we will be fashionable though we perish for it. Therefore we throw up our hats for life-hire, (what a very much prettier word than slavery!) and we hope some day to be invited to dinner by the Southern Club.¹²⁷

Shimmin uses a language of high-society (of 'good-society', 'fashion', 'hats' and 'private clubs'), against images of superficiality and concealment, hypocrisy and contradiction, where the 'tones' of a 'good society' cannot speak of anti-slavery, are fashionable whilst perishing, and slavery is made 'pretty' through euphemism.¹²⁸ It is suggested that Liverpool's contemporary support for the South may indicate a return to its past, that 'the good old trade may be opened again in Liverpool, now that we are getting rid of foolish sentimentalities and nigger on the brain.' Shimmin makes direct links to contemporary political discourse on the subject, referring to journalists and authors who are also writing in support of the South:

¹²⁵ The publications stance on the matter was set out thus: 'Does *Porcupine* sympathise with the Southern Confederate cause? Not the least in the world. Any fellow who sustains slavery, be the Northern or Southern, Turk or Spaniard, is, *ipso facto*, *Porcupine's* foe. *Porcupine* would proclaim emancipation tomorrow, if he could, by a decree a vast deal more sweeping than that of Abraham Lincoln. Does *Porcupine* approve of Englishmen fitting out war-vessels for a slave Government? *Porcupine's* bitterest enemy would not venture to say that he does' Hugh Shimmin, "The Confederates and The Foreign Enlistment Act," *Porcupine*, April 18, 1863.

¹²⁶ Hugh Shimmin, "The Comic History of Liverpool: Chapter III," *Porcupine*, June 20, 1863. *Porcupine's* 'Comic History of Liverpool' coincided with a rise in the comic novel against a decline of satire in the mid-nineteenth century. See Frank Palmeri, "Narrative Satire in the Nineteenth Century," in *A Companion to Satire*, ed. Ruben Quintero (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 365.

¹²⁷ Shimmin, "The Comic History of Liverpool: Chapter XVIII." The Southern Club was a club for members of Liverpool's elite who supported the Confederacy.

¹²⁸ Davies, "Political Satire," 102. Other Southern Clubs and Southern Independence Associations had been established in Manchester, London and Lancashire, though some members were anti-slavery and believed that emancipation would surely follow an independent South. See Lorimer, "The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions to the American Civil War," 410.

There's a good time coming, as Charles Mackay can tell, who has discarded his old nonsense about being brothers and human rights and that kind of thing. Long live Beresford Hope! For ourselves, we prefer Jefferson Davis, by long chalks, to Washington, and think General Morgan a much nobler hero than Garibaldi. Which nobody can deny!¹²⁹

Charles Mackay, a journalist for *The Times* and reporting on the Civil War whilst in New York was technically an opponent of slavery, but voiced an opposition to the war suggesting that it was not for the north to do battle over, hence his having 'discarded his old nonsense' concerning 'human rights'.¹³⁰ Similarly, Alexander James Beresford Hope, though have stated that slavery generally was a 'curse' had nonetheless suggested that slaves in the South were well treated.¹³¹ Beresford Hope had likened Confederate generals to Italian politicians involved in the unification movement, comparing Jefferson Davies to Count di Cavour and originally "Stonewall" Jackson to Garibaldi, suggesting they would be equal in memory.¹³² The reason behind Jackson's substitution for Morgan in Shimmin's piece is unclear, though this may have been drawing on recent news that year that Morgan had led the longest cavalry operation of the war, 700 miles in a month in early 1863.¹³³

As Shimmin continues his satirical history of the eighteenth century, he suggests that '[i]t may be some consolation to the Liverpool public (in the state of present feeling) to know that almost the whole of the wealth and commerce of this town originated with the slave

¹²⁹ Shimmin, "The Comic History of Liverpool: Chapter XVIII."

¹³⁰ Mackay, Charles (1812–1889)," Angus Calder in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17555> (accessed November 7, 2013).

¹³¹ He wrote in support of the 'rights of the South' in a series of pamphlets which outlined how it would be constitutional for the South to secede, further arguing that Britain should identify with the South rather than the North since the southern states were 'to a great extent communities of Englishmen still living in the 18th century' Donald Bellows, "A Study of British Conservative Reaction to the American Civil War," *The Journals of Southern History* 51, no. 4 (1985): 520. Alexander James Beresford Hope, "The Social and Political Bearings of the American Disruption." (London: William Ridgway, 1863), <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=upg-AAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Social+and+political+bearings+beresford+hope&hl=en&sa=X&ei=8KZ7U5ioKoHE7AbA9IHwBQ&ved=0CDEQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Social%20and%20political%20bearings%20beresford%20hope&f=false> (accessed November 7, 2013)., 38; Bellows, "A Study of British Conservative Reaction to the American Civil War," 518.

¹³² '...then by the side of Cavour will blaze with equal splendour on the historic page then name of Jefferson Davis [...] David will stand by Cavour, and "Stonewall" Jackson will not be forgotten when Garibaldi is recorded.' Beresford Hope, "The Social and Political Bearings of the American Disruption."

¹³³ R.B. Rosenberg, "Morgan, John Hunt (1825-1864), in American National Biography Online," Oxford University Press, <http://www.anb.org/articles/04/04-00720.html> (accessed November 7, 2013).

trade'.¹³⁴ The rhetorical presumption here is that of course many citizens are not entirely comfortable with this evaluation. Shimmin's last word on the matter in his comic history again turns from Liverpool's historic involvement in the transatlantic slave trade to its support for the Southern states, this time moving through the guise of abolition and ending in the symbolic site of what he sees as the crux of the matter, Liverpool's Cotton Salesroom:

Weak notions on this subject marred this splendid source of wealth. Some ridiculous nonsense about humanity and Christian brotherhood and the rights of the black began to get abroad – dangerous and revolutionary doctrines, which, unhappily, prevailed for a while and stopped the slave trade. Better times, however, seem coming round again, and if public opinion only progresses in the direction it is now taking, we have good hope to see black men and women knocked down by auction at the Cotton Salesroom.¹³⁵

By placing American style slave auctions so centrally within Liverpool's own physical urban landscape, Shimmin is promoting the unspoken issue of debate to physical prominence.

Whilst *Porcupine's* satire above connects the history of transatlantic slavery to a relevant contemporary context, in the twentieth century, the subject is used within debates over wholly unrelated matters. This is a mechanism within which journalistic practices play an influential role, as the following example from the late 1970s and on the cusp of the 'Winter of Discontent' shows.¹³⁶ A "'Slave trade" jibe', as the *Daily Post* headline states, was made by a union leader in relation to job losses at a Leonard Cheshire care home in the city in November 1978. Colin Barnett,¹³⁷ the north-west chief of union NUPE (National Union of Public Employees) also allegedly accused managers of exhibiting a 'medieval antediluvian' attitude, though these periods of more ancient history were of less interest the *Post* and *Echo*. Instead, it was the comment, quoted in the article as being made in response to the sacking of striking workers that "'The management's attitude is worthy of the forefathers of the City of Liverpool

¹³⁴ Shimmin, "The Comic History of Liverpool: Chapter XXII."

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ The 'Winter of Discontent' was a season of severe industrial disruption from November 1979 into February 1979. See W. Rodgers, "Government Under Stress, Britain's Winter of Discontent 1979," *The Political Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (1984).

¹³⁷ Colin Barnett was heavily involved in trade union activities during the 'winter of discontent' strikes of 1978 to 1979 and subsequently the centre of much press attention, taking a 'hard left' line in politics and advocating for the dismissal of Merseyside Police Chief constable Kenneth Oxford. Ray Mariott, "Colin Barnett Obituary," *The Guardian*, February 27, 2011.

who supported the slave trade", which was given headline status.¹³⁸ The line was used very deliberately by the speaker as a powerful condemnation in this dispute, set on highlighting the perceived archaic, outmoded and unjust actions of the home's management and drawing a deliberate if awkward relational link between mistreated workers and un-free slave labour.

Media discourses played a crucial role within the discursive construction of the 'winter of discontent', and, as Colin Hay argues, they framed this period as a 'crisis' through rhetorical strategies and linguistic devices.¹³⁹ The local press in Liverpool was certainly not divorced from these processes, and the emphasis given through rhetorical framing of the Leonard Cheshire dispute encourages particular subject positions. In the first paragraph of the *Post's* article, 'Liverpool's Leonard Cheshire home', owned by the city rather than situated in it, is discursively positioned as the real victim since it 'was the butt of a furious attack by a union leader last night'. The use of the 'slave trade' comment by the press also adheres to this subject positioning. This is the headline of the article, drawing focus to a 'furious attack' aimed at 'Liverpool's Leonard Cheshire home'. Furthermore, this directs attention away from the rest of the story and weighs the balance of reader-subject positioning away from the speaker and his associated 'strikers' (not 'workers', 'Liverpudlians', or even 'people'), through apparent familial ties, placing readers against those who would throw such a 'jibe' concerning, potentially *their* 'forefathers of the City'.

Barnett was using Liverpool's historic involvement in the transatlantic slave trade as a discursive device which worked through equating contemporary injustice with a historical human rights abuse. This is used as a form of short-hand by speakers looking to create a large impact through an awareness of the sensitivity around slavery, and specifically around highlighting Liverpool's exceptional involvement within it. However, this line of 'debate' can also be enacted through performance. Some ten years later, critics of the Thatcher Government's Employment Training Scheme, 'ET' (which would see the unemployed work close to full time for around £10 in additional benefits) drew on Liverpool and slavery to make

¹³⁸ Lynn May and Charles Nevin, "'Slave Trade' Jibe as Home Sacks 20 Strikers," *Liverpool Daily Post*, November 11, 1978. An almost identical article was also published in the *Echo* with the same authors, Lynn May and Charles Nevin, "'Slave Trade' Jibe After Sackings at Charity Home," *Liverpool Echo*, November 11, 1978.

¹³⁹ In Hay's research an example of an incident in Liverpool as reported by the *Daily Mail* is used to demonstrate some of the ways in which preferred subject positions are presented. Here, reporting from February 1979 on strikes by council employed gravediggers led with the headline: 'They won't even let us bury our dead' which Hay argues frames the narrative for a preferred subject position against those striking, where 'we' identify with those bereaved, it could be 'our' dead too, against the 'others', 'they' who strike. Colin Hay, "Narrating Crisis: The Discursive Construction of the 'Winter of Discontent'," *Sociology* 30, no. 2 (1996): 256-62.

their point. 'The slave trade returned to Liverpool yesterday' press reporting stated, where performers in Williamson Square were 'bought and sold' in supermarket trolleys, though as a *Post* article reminds its readers '(In the 17th century the slaves had to walk, if they could).'¹⁴⁰ Protest organiser Terry Egan is reported as describing ET as 'slave labour' and Kevin Coyne, co-ordinator of the Merseyside Trades Union and Unemployed Centre is quoted as saying '[b]y this piece of theatre, Liverpool will be returned to its terrible past' claiming that ET is 'quite clearly a contemporary slave trade.'¹⁴¹

'Liverpool and slavery' is an argumentative device which can be used across a diverse range of subject matter, from worker's rights and labour schemes in Liverpool as above, to potential international football partnerships. Here, a letter to the editor writing in response to news that a Chinese Government fund, was bidding to buy Liverpool football club claimed that, 'GIVEN Liverpool's history of involvement in the slave trade, I would think China with its human rights record would make a perfect partner for the Anfield club.'¹⁴² The author uses Liverpool's historic involvement in transatlantic slavery for dramatic effect, aware of the reaction aligning historic injustices with contemporary ones would cause. The author, Gerry Connors, of 'West Yorkshire', received a reply from Liverpool 8 resident, P. Saeed responding to 'his jibe about Liverpool's involvement in the slave trade' which focused on how Yorkshire had also benefitted from transatlantic slavery. 'If he doesn't believe me' says the author, 'ask Professor David Richardson, director of WISE', drawing on authoritative experts to support his points that people 'such as William Ingram of Halifax' invested in slave ships. The author draws on a regional stereotype of Yorkshire in response to Connors having issued a 'jibe' against Liverpool, suggesting that the author should visit:

...the International Slavery Museum here in Liverpool. It has over 2.5 million visitors each year, is open daily and all exhibitions, events and activities at National Museums of Liverpool are free.

That should appeal to a Yorkshireman!¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ "Slavery is the Price of ET," *Liverpool Daily Post*, December 14, 1988.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Gerry Connors, "LETTER: No title," *Liverpool Echo*, August 25, 2010.

¹⁴³ P. Saeed, "LETTER: A Nationwide Blight," *Liverpool Echo*, August 31, 2010. WISE is the Wilberforce Institute for the study of Slavery and Emancipation, an academic research centre part of the University of Hull.

Whilst the point made by Connors initially may have been a cutting point about the global football market which drew on Liverpool's historic involvement in transatlantic slavery for emphasis, the response has focused entirely on the latter and bypassed Connors points in relation to human rights in China.

The above examples show how (frequently subject-positioned 'outsiders') can be quick to draw upon Liverpool and slavery as an argumentative device to throw light on contemporary injustices and support the speakers' arguments against these. However, this history has also been used to shift focus away from accusations of human rights abuses on the speaker's side, and discredit the standing of their 'accusers'. In August 1939, on the cusp of the Second World War, Dr Joseph Goebbels, German Minister for Propaganda drew upon Liverpool's exceptional involvement in the transatlantic slave trade within the 'German Newsletter Controversy', a heated exchange of correspondence between the Reich Minister and ex-British Naval Commander, Stephen King-Hall. King-Hall had distributed a series of newsletters to individuals in Germany seeking to challenge information, particularly concerning Britain which had been presented by the Nazi regime. The German government responded through its own publication *Völkischer Beobachter* and other national publications with pieces concerning King-Hall's newsletter and this 'English Propaganda'. One of the responses was a 4,000 word essay written by Goebbels and sent to thousands of addressees across Britain – though notably not to King-Hall, which was designed to put the British government 'on the defensive'.¹⁴⁴ Following accusations of censorship from Germany, King-Hall personally paid for a full-page reprint of Goebbels's response within the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, a step taken, according to Stephen King-Hall's accompanying letter so that 'my fellow countrymen should know you and your views for what they are'.¹⁴⁵ Goebbels's essay reversed each of King-Hall's statements in turn in a way which sought to discredit King-Hall through drawing on details of his career. Goebbels uses points from British military and naval history during the periods in which King-Hall was in active service to highlight abuses such as the 'starvation blockade against Germany', and then moving to earlier historic examples such as the use of concentration camps in the Boer War. A large proportion of the introductory section to Goebbels's response centres on 'brutal methods which the British

¹⁴⁴ See Aaron Goldman, "Stephen King-Hall and the German Newsletter Controversy of 1939," *Canadian Journal of History* 10, no. 2 (1975): 215.

¹⁴⁵ Stephen-King Hall, "A Letter to Dr. Goebbels," *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, August 12, 1939. The text of Goebbels essay in the newspaper was a verbatim reprint of his original text, as compared with an original, Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, The Papers of Baron King-Hall of Headly, STKH 3, Dr J. Goebbels The Reply to British Propaganda August 1939.

Empire employed against defenceless people'. One point in particular was picked up by the Liverpool local press:

Was your attention not drawn to the fact that in 1771 Liverpool was singled out as the principle port for shipments of coloured human cargoes to all parts of the world? Also to the fact that Liverpool in those days possessed 105, London 58 and Bristol 25 slave-carrying ships? That in those days and under the English flag, 30,000 blacks were annually shipped, and that this fact accounts for a good deal of British wealth today?¹⁴⁶

National responses within the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, whilst drawing some attention to 'misconceptions' about the history of the British Empire, did not take exception to the use of Liverpool's historic involvement in the transatlantic slave trade.¹⁴⁷ This was, however, the only point to be discussed in the Liverpool local press. K. Bradshaw quotes the section above and replies suggesting that this is stating the obvious, that 'Yes, Liverpool and the world is fully aware of this', and that furthermore Liverpool's own citizens are aware of this history because '[u]nlike the Nazis we do not hide unpleasant facts of history'. Bradshaw outlines how slavery is covered by history books and that 'every schoolboy knows' about it. Interestingly, Bradshaw then issues a collective apology on behalf of the city some 60 years before Liverpool City Council's; '[w]e know it and are sorry'. However, the author quickly turns to more comforting areas of British abolition as a form of argumentative defence against the German's verbal attack, stating that:

But Liverpool is also proud of the fact that free men in England and Liverpool could, without fear of secret police, openly protest against the evil in pulpit, platform and Press until the infamous traffic was ended. Would Dr Goebbels equally permit the Czech and German Oppositions openly to organise against the evils of Naziland?¹⁴⁸

This diverges from other common stories of Liverpool and anti-slavery, where those holding abolitionist sentiments are vilified in public; Roscoe lost his parliamentary seat and came home to an angry mob after voting in favour of abolition, Clarkson was almost pushed in the Mersey, and other Liverpool notables such as Dr Currie wouldn't publicly associate their names with

¹⁴⁶ Dr. Joseph Goebbels, "The Reply to British Propaganda," *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, August 12, 1939.

¹⁴⁷ "Dr. Goebbels at Length," *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, August 12, 1939; John Jarvis, "LETTER: Answering Dr. Goebbels," *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, August 15, 1939; Stephen King-Hall, "LETTER: Fabrications May do More Harm," *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, August 17, 1939.

¹⁴⁸ K. Bradshaw, "LETTER: Yes, We Know!," *Liverpool Echo*, August 14, 1939.

abolition for fear of losing business, friends and standing. It seems in this discursive context, their hero-martyr status is not so useful. The author ends with a dramatic outline of the 'triangular trade' and a celebratory endorsement of British emancipatory activity, that '[i]t was a period of horrors and profits. But it roused the wrath of Britons and was suppressed over a century ago', an endorsement of such a positive support for liberation would come to be fitting in national perceptions of warfare in the coming months and years. However, not everyone was so quick to accept Goebbels's assessment of Liverpool and slavery and, ink still wet from his engagement in the Peacock Debate concurrently taking place in the *Echo's* sister paper, Arthur Wardle joins in this reaction by suggesting that both the German minister and the Liverpoolian letter-writer were spreading untruths, suggesting instead that, 'Dr Goebbels, Mr Bradshaw, and every Liverpool school boy should be told immediately that not a single slave shipment was ever made from the port of Liverpool.'¹⁴⁹

Bradshaw's letter never out rightly claimed that slaves were shipped from Liverpool, stating instead that slaves were 'shipped across to America and the West Indies', and Goebbels's statement that 'Liverpool was singled out as the principle port for the shipments of coloured human cargoes to all parts of the world?', could be read as suggesting slaves were shipped from Liverpool itself, though this seems unlikely. Wardle's response is, rather, symptomatic of an awareness of the existing discourse of slavery in the city, within which the 'myth' of slaves in Liverpool plays a prominent part. Slaves being shipped from Liverpool is perhaps the only aspect of Goebbels's text that Wardle could deny, even if it is a misinterpretation. Underneath Wardle's letter, the editor of the Liverpool *Echo* draws a link between the slavery debates happening concurrently across the two papers by reprinting Robert Gladstone's outline of the process of the triangular trade.¹⁵⁰ Interestingly, responses to this discursive exchange in the Manchester press agree that Liverpool was heavily dependent on the slave trade, using the George Cooke anecdote (though without accrediting this to Cooke) for emphasis, stating that '[m]en said that every black brick of the city was cemented with the blood of a negro slave'.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Arthur C. Wardle, "LETTER: All Wrong," *Liverpool Echo*, August 16, 1939.

¹⁵⁰ 'What happened was this; the ship sailed from Liverpool with a cargo of miscellaneous goods for barter with African native chiefs in exchange for slaves. The captain, having got his cargo of slaves, sailed for the plantation, such Demerara, Jamaica, Virginia, &c., and disposed of slaves in the slave markets there. With the proceeds he bought a return cargo of colonial produce such as cotton, tobacco, sugar, rum, &c., and sailed back to Liverpool' quotation taken from Gladstone, "Letter." Printed on the same day.

¹⁵¹ "Dr. Goebbels and Liverpool," *Manchester Guardian*, August 18, 1939; "The Rathbones and the Slave Trade," *Manchester Guardian*, August 23, 1939.

Conclusion

In taking a closer look at particular ‘debates’ over slavery, whether disputing particular points concerning its history, as seen in the Peacock Debate of 1939, or more consciously over its ‘memory’ as seen in the debates of 1999 concerning remembrance days, plaques and apologies, memory is shown to be an active, if contested, exchange. The debates themselves, whilst frequently driven by their own contemporary circumstances, politics and subject positioning, nonetheless exhibit some common themes and lines of argument. These revolve around the nature and significance of slavery to Liverpool, the impact on the built environment (i.e. what ‘evidence’ there is) and the ever contentious point concerning ‘slaves in Liverpool’. These last two points will converge and be examined further in Chapter Eleven. The memory of slavery, particularly in the examples discussed in this chapter, is itself a ‘debate’, which has Liverpool at its centre. Arguments of defence frequently reflect pro-slavery arguments of the eighteenth century concerning the ‘defence’ of slavery, though increasingly into the twentieth century, the defence turns its attention to downplaying the significance of slavery to the city and its people. Those intent on engaging with and ‘exposing’ Liverpool’s involvement in slavery take the opposite route, stressing its significance to the city as well as the brutal realities of the enslavement process.

However, the memory of slavery in Liverpool, as a ‘social’ phenomenon, is entirely embroiled in politics and social, cultural contexts of any given time, which includes instances where ‘Liverpool and slavery’ is itself used as an argumentative device in debates over other subject matter. This further complicated engagements with this history and highlights the broader realms memory extends into, beyond the obvious markers of commemoration, and perhaps, beyond the light cast by metaphorical lampposts.

Conclusion to Part One

The 'discursive terrain' of Liverpool's memory of slavery has been shaped by 'specific' and 'schematic' narratives which relate not only to the history of Liverpool and slavery, but to broader identity narratives concerning Liverpool's historic 'story'. These have been further complicated by processes of drawing on history to forge collective civic identities, particularly at the beginning of the nineteenth century, though remnants of this contradictory process have remained in discursive legacies of paradoxical phrasing concerning the 'glory and the shame' of Liverpool's lucrative trade. This has been further complicated by the debates over the history (and memory) of slavery in the city. However, much of Liverpool's slavery-memory discourse can be understood theoretically as a 'debate'; as part of a process of contestation, disagreement and struggle over how the past is represented, engaged with, and understood.

The narratives, motifs, discursive devices and lines of argument explored in Chapters Three to Six repeat across the *longue durée* of Liverpool's slavery-memory discourse. They ebb and flow across time and genre, and will rise again throughout Parts Two and Three, repeated in a variety of different contexts and circumstances. The interconnection between aspects specific to Liverpool's memory of slavery and the interrelationship of this with broader narratives of Liverpool's historic story, play out particularly clearly within commemorative moments which address the use of history in processes of foregrounding collective civic pride, national identity narratives, or, processes of global memorialization. This will be the subject of Part Two.

PART TWO

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**Moments of Memory: Birthdays,
Anniversaries and Calendric
Reoccurrence**

Introduction to Part Two

The chapters in Part Two address significant commemorative moments for Liverpool's slavery memory; events which mark centenaries, anniversaries or annually repeated days and months. The coincidence of Liverpool's 'Birthday' with the Abolition Act of 1807 (as discussed in relation to 1907 and 1957, Chapter Seven) is an interesting, if complicated, example of the use of history in constructions of collective civic identity, and the awkward negotiation of Liverpool and slavery within this. The commemoration of the centenaries of the births and deaths of 'heroes', whose memory is re-awakened by celebration and historical scholarship within the 1930s occurs alongside the centenary of the Emancipation Act (1933/4), allowing heroes (William Roscoe and William Wilberforce) and humanitarian heroic endeavour to be celebrated simultaneously (Chapter Eight). In the second half of the twentieth century the growing proliferation of activity concerning black history in the public domain, foregrounded by the repeated commemorative marker of Black History Month, impacts on the memory of slavery, albeit often in divisive ways. A focus on black history also feeds into the instigation of Slavery Remembrance Day, shifting the focus of memory from abolition to slavery, yet carrying distinct undercurrents of Liverpoolian identity discourses (Chapter Nine). Part Two will end with a discussion of 2007; of Birthdays and Bicentenaries.

Commemorative ceremonial activities can be understood as ways of 'framing' historic events, marking out particular ways of understanding the past and crucially its significance for the present, initially with the often authoritative suggestion that they should be remembered in the first instance, but also through the memory work which is employed in achieving this.¹ They are, by their very nature, *social* events in which people are being asked to actively engage with the performance of the past being enacted, either through direct participation or the process of witnessing.² Centenaries, as more 'occasional' commemorative markers may act to reinvigorate particular symbolic associations of contemporary identity with a historic memory through the resurrection of narratives of the past and other memory work to be temporarily drawn upon. This is a process which can be strengthened through repetition and reinforced through calendric reoccurrence, a process all the more potent in annual reoccurrence seen with Slavery Remembrance Day.³ The marking of the anniversary of the King John Charter of

¹ Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*, 5.

² See Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 43; Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

³ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 220.

1207 as Liverpool's birthday in the years concerned aimed to imbue a sense of civic identity through history. Jeffrey Olick and Joyce Robbins suggest that various levels of identities are 'established and maintained through a variety of mnemonic sites, practices and forms', of which commemorative occasions present a particularly active example (discussed further below).⁴ As Geoffrey Cubitt has highlighted, however, these commemorations rarely exclusively focus on the event they mark. Liverpool was not simply 'remembering' the historic moment when King John signed the charter of 1207, but expanding the potential scope of this anniversary through a symbolic lens with which to view (or rather with which to construct and celebrate) an apparently complete version of Liverpool's historic narrative.⁵ Such focal points, or 'periodic fusion[s] with the past', create a space in which to reflect upon a community's story and crucially to realign meaning with the presentation of the past being offered at that moment.⁶ Foundational events, as a 'birthday' can be understood, present a clear example of this process, whereby the commemorations' focus on 'evoking and defining' the people marking such moments enables an insight into processes of collective identity through memory work.⁷ Anthony Smith stresses the importance of these types of commemorations to the definition of the collective identity of ethnicity, where the celebration of the foundation moment seeks to inspire a 'collective belief in common origins and descent, however fictive' this may be.⁸ The choice of this charter as the symbolic founding point of the city draws Liverpool's historic narrative backwards, creating a wider and therefore 'stronger' foundation on which identity can be played out. As Eviatar Zerubavel further suggests, '[o]rigins help articulate identities, and where communities locate their beginnings tells us quite a lot about how they perceive themselves.'⁹ In Liverpool's case, the use of the royal and therefore official and historically recognised charter of 700 years prior to these commemorative events sought to legitimise the city's standing through longevity and crucially acted as a counterargument to claims of Liverpool's 'lack of antiquity'.¹⁰

⁴ J. K. Olick and J. Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From "Collective Memory" to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24(1998): 124.

⁵ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 221.

⁶ Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, 46.

⁷ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 221.

⁸ Anthony Smith, 1999, quoted in *Ibid.*, 223.

⁹ Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, 101.

¹⁰ This is a line repeated within many nineteenth and early twentieth century histories of Liverpool.

King John and the Abolition Act in 1907 and 1957

Introduction

Liverpool takes as its 'birthday' the year 1207, the date when letters patent were granted by King John, designating Liverpool a free borough. In 1807, the Act for the Abolition of the British Slave Trade was passed by Parliament, marking the end of an activity in which Liverpool had been heavily involved, crucially throughout the public debates concerning the moral, economic and political arguments against it – and at the time of its abolition. From 1907, when Edwardian Liverpool first started celebrating its 'birthday' in grand public ways, the two themes met in awkward and contradictory ways. Both 1907 and 1957 illustrate the complicated process of negotiating Liverpool and slavery alongside fostering a sense of civic pride and collective identity performed through commemorative rituals. Though downplayed and partially obscured, Liverpool's role in the transatlantic slave trade cannot be completely silenced from the various enactments of the city's historic story. However, the silences which do stand out represent a distinct 'organised forgetting',¹ a process which focused on actively rearranging, contesting and re-signifying the memory of slavery in Liverpool in line with broader discourses of civic patriotism in 1907 and of wider argumentative and racialised discourses of imperialistic paternalism in 1957.

1907: Performing Civic Patriotism

On the 13th February 1907, Liverpool City Council decided that a celebration of the 700th Anniversary of Liverpool's charter should take place that year.² The celebrations included a

¹ Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 14.

² LRO, Liverpool, Council Proceedings 1906-7, 352 COU, Meeting of the Council of the City of Liverpool 13th February 1907

historical exhibition, a five day pageant, a thanksgiving service at St. George's Hall, a visit from the Channel Fleet consisting of 14 Battleships and Cruisers, firework displays and the production of a commemorative medal. The final report of the celebrations claimed that the money brought in by these events and the increase in visitors demonstrated that 'the Festival must have very greatly benefitted the trade of the City, as well as given healthy amusement and recreation to so many thousands', which John Belchem has suggested proves that the celebrations were an 'early exercise in heritage leisure and tourism' which 'placed commercial success and enjoyment above authenticity'.³ However, the final report also stressed the importance of the celebrations having 'shown the citizens of Liverpool that their City has a history of which they may well be proud'.⁴

In *The Report of the Town Clerk*, Edward Pickmere states that the celebrations should 'stimulate civic pride and patriotism and (especially in the young) encourage the growth of a higher citizenship' and 'bring Liverpool more prominently to the notice of other countries'.⁵ The use of history in these objectives was blatantly stated, and there was a perceived need to address an apparent ignorance on the part of Liverpool's citizens about their city's history. As the Chairman of the Sept-centenary Festival Committee, Frank J. Leslie states, a 'spirit of citizenship has always drawn its strength from the lessons of history, and there could hardly be a great city more careless or more ignorant of her own history than is the Liverpool of today'.⁶ Leslie likens the necessity for knowledge of the past to individual memory, warning of the dangers of amnesia:

A man who through mental affliction has lost his memory is a pathetic object, and we, whether as a nation or as a city, have in our pre-occupation been in danger of losing all memory of our own past. May we not have dimly felt that this was so, and may not these historical pageants be the outcome of that feeling?⁷

³ LRO, Liverpool, Liverpool City Council Proceedings 1906-1907, John Japp and Frank John Leslie, *700th Anniversary of the Foundation of Liverpool: Report of the General Committee to the City Council*, 1907, 10. Belchem, "Introduction," 9.

⁴ Japp and Leslie, *Report of the General Committee*, 10.

⁵ LRO, Liverpool, Liverpool City Council Proceedings (1906-1907), Edward R. Pickmere, *Proposed Celebration of the 700th Anniversary of the Foundation of Liverpool: Report of the Town Clerk*, 1907, 3.

⁶ Frank John Leslie, "Our 700th Anniversary and Civic Patriotism," *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, April 5th 1907.

⁷ Frank John Leslie, "Liverpool's Birthday Pageant - Some Final Pictures," *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, July 3rd 1907

Leslie calls upon the ghosts of Liverpool's past and asks who an onlooker would see walking through Castle Street of years gone by. Among the 'figures of the historic past' he states is, 'Roscoe with outspoken courage, denouncing the slave trade in which his own friends and neighbours were engaged', though the ghosts of slave traders, and indeed the enslaved Africans who were sold in the Coffee Shops around that very street, do not appear from the ether. Leslie ends his article by calling upon these ghosts to raise the 'spirit of patriotism' from the depths of memory which should counter criticisms levelled against the city:

It is memories such as these that the celebrations in August next will revive, and they will fail in much of the designed result if they do not also revive the spirit of civic patriotism which in the past has done so much for our city, and in the future can do more, so that it may never be said again, as the "Times" said of us in 1874, that "Liverpool is a town whose leading inhabitants are negligent of their duties as citizens."⁸

Whilst there was a distinct silence surrounding the year 1907 as the centenary of abolition nationally,⁹ and this particular Act was not commemorated in Liverpool either, the slave trade was remembered in relation to the defining role it played within Liverpool's historic development, which the Historical Exhibition and the Pageant's focus on the narrative history of the city could not avoid reference to. In this way, Liverpool stands apart from the rest of the country in 1907 by talking about slavery when other places perhaps were not, although this was done in a manner which strove to adhere to the festivities' objectives of fostering a sense of civic pride. A particularly celebratory tone was thus adopted and dissonance further obscured through tactical omissions and distorted misrepresentation through the parody of performance.

Exhibiting Slavery

⁸ Leslie, "Our 700th Anniversary and Civic Patriotism." The *Post's* editorial similarly suggests that the celebrations of 1907 indicated a 'birth of interest', in Liverpool's history indicating that previously only '[o]ne or two facts and fancies of Liverpool history, chiefly derogatory, have been Liverpool household words. "Best Wishes for the Pageant!," *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, August 3rd 1907.

⁹ Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*.

The historical exhibition held at the Walker Art Gallery in July contained a limited number of artefacts relating to Liverpool and slavery. These included a plate which celebrated Liverpool's slave trade, bearing the words 'Success to the Africa Trade', and a slave collar (Figure 7).¹⁰ The collar's use by anti-slavery campaigner James Cropper was noted without discussion of who else in Liverpool might have used this artefact for its intended purpose, or indeed that it would have been one of many exhibited for sale in Liverpool's shops.¹¹

William Roscoe, however, featured regularly in the exhibition. From commemorative items such as medals marking the centenary of his birth, a bust from 1820 and a Wedgwood

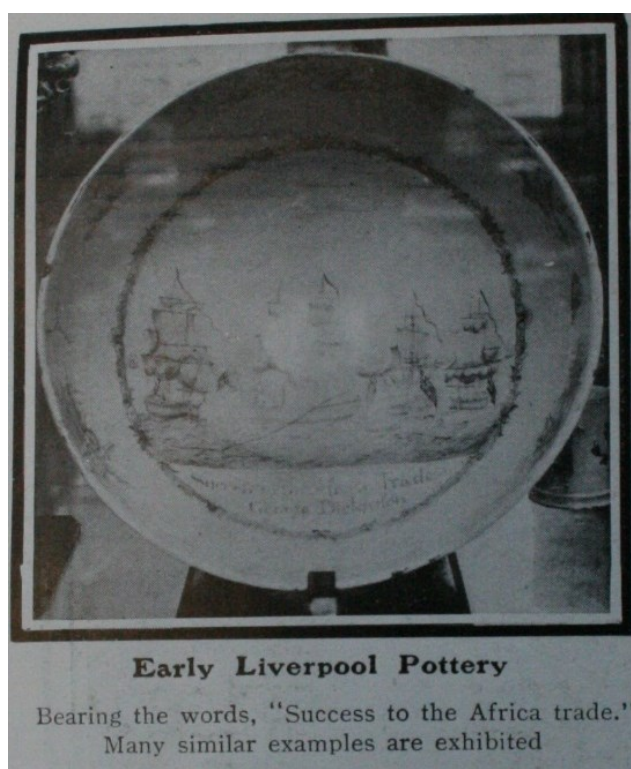


Figure 7: Early Liverpool Pottery, *The Sphere*. No. 394. London: August 10th, 1907

portrait, to items once owned by Roscoe himself such as his walking cane, a pencil case or items associated with him such as a hat ribbon worn by his election supporters in 1806 (see

¹⁰ Liverpool Libraries Museums and Arts Committee, *Catalogue of the Historical Exhibition held at the Walker Art Gallery 15th July - 10th August 1907, in connection with the celebration of the 700th anniversary of the foundation of Liverpool* (Liverpool: Lee & Nightingale, 1907), 9. An image of this piece also appeared within the London newspaper *The Sphere*, in a specially produced supplement about Liverpool's 700th anniversary celebrations (Figure 7). See "Celebrating Liverpool's Foundation: 700 Years of Municipal History," *The Sphere: An Illustrated Newspaper for the Home* 1907.

¹¹ The catalogue entry reads: '647 Slave collar, with projecting hooks to prevent the slave's escape into the bush. This collar was procured by Mr. James Cropper, who was closely associated with Mr. Thomas Clarkson and Mr. Wilberforce in the work for the abolition of the Slave Trade, and was used at their meetings to illustrate the cruelties practised on slaves.' Liverpool Libraries Museums and Arts Committee, *Catalogue of the Historical Exhibition*, 79.



Figure 8: Politics and Vanity in Old Liverpool. *The Sphere*. No. 394. London: August 10th, 1907

Figure 8), to which the catalogue remarks that Roscoe 'voted with Wilberforce when they passed the Act of Parliament Abolishing Slavery'. There was also a curiously relic-like object in the form of a snuff box 'made from oak taken from the house in which Wm. Roscoe was born.'¹²

The section of the exhibition on historic documents, charters and books was curated by Robert Gladstone (also vice-chairman of the Historical Exhibition). A brief collection of 11 documents relating to Liverpool's slave trade was included, comprising slave ship lists, bills of lading and insurance policies.¹³ However, as John Belchem has discovered, Robert Gladstone wrote a letter to the *Liverpool Courier* which illustrates the contested nature of memory through highlighting the extent to which authoritative figures within the city obscured slavery from official narratives of Liverpool:

I was unable to give in my section of it a complete collection of the materials for the history of the Liverpool slave trade. The catalogue does not contain any mention of the two most important manuscript volumes known by the name of 'The Log of the Slave Ship Boom' covering the period from 1779 to 1792.

¹² *Ibid.*, 67-8.

¹³ "Old Liverpool at Walker Art Gallery - Pictures and Handicrafts," *Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury*, July 13th 1907, 10.

The fault is not mine. The authorities in charge of the Public Library flatly refused me permission to include these volumes in our Exhibition, on the ground (so I understand) that it was desirable to suppress and conceal the evidence of the important part taken by Liverpool in the slave trade...I would therefore suggest that those who are keeping our catalogue as a book of reference should cut out this letter and insert it at page 156.¹⁴

The copy of this catalogue currently in the collection of the Athenaeum Library, Liverpool, has Gladstone's letter inserted on page 156.

The Pageant

It was agreed that a pageant 'like that of Warwick' should be held.¹⁵ The Pageant took place on Edge Lane Hall Grounds and Wavertree Park on August 2nd to August 6th and a further free performance took place on the 10th. There was a perceived need to show how Liverpool, against popular speculation, had a long history which was deserving of this type of celebration. According to Frank Leslie, and echoing a familiar discursive motif, the pageant was intended to demonstrate 'the continuous story of Liverpool's growth through those seven hundred years, from humble fishing hamlet to the mightiest seaport of the world.'¹⁶

The Historical Procession included over one thousand historical characters and 12 cars representing specific historical themes in overarching 'periods'.¹⁷ It was estimated that upwards of 200,000 people attended the pageant displays which culminated in a patriotic rendition of Elgar's *Land of Hope and Glory*.¹⁸

¹⁴ Gladstone, Robert 1907. Quoted in Belchem, "Liverpool's Story is the World's Glory," 19.

¹⁵ Pickmere, *Report of the Town Clerk*, 5. Pageantry has a long history, largely based in the display of the Royal Entry and folk-customs surrounding the May Day Festivities (Liverpool had actors performing the roles of Robin Hood, Maid Marian and Friar Tuck within its procession in 1907). Robert Withington has termed Liverpool's pageant as an 'occasional-pageant' and likens the event to Ripon's *Millenary Celebration* of 1886. Robert Withington, *English Pageantry: An Historical Outline* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926), 163.

¹⁶ *Programme of the Pageant*.

¹⁷ The Periods were: Ancient Britons, Norsemen and Saxons; Normans and Plantagenets; Days of the Barons; Early Days of Trade; Stanleys and Molyneauxs; The Tudors; Midsummer's-Eve Pageant in Elizabeth's time; The Stuarts and the Civil War; Wealth and Charity; The Age of War, 1756-1815; The Age of Commerce and Industry, roadways, waterways, steam. Taken from *Ibid.*, 18-41.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

Wealth and Charity: Positioning Slavery in the Pageant



Figure 9: 'The Liverpool Slave-trade Car. Period A.D. 1709'. (The caption is the same as the quotation below). Taken from Liverpool Records Office. *Celebration of the 700th Anniversary of the Grant of Liverpool's First charter: programmes, photographs, extracts from periodicals & connected with the Festival August 1907*. Replacing the volume destroyed by enemy action 4 May 1941

Liverpool's role in transatlantic slavery was confined within the city's historical pageant to a 'Slave Trade Car' embedded within *Period IX: Wealth and Charity* (Figures 9 and 10). The period began with a picture banner celebrating Liverpool's first dock, and a performer playing the part of dock engineer Thomas Steers. The slave trade car, 'one of the most picturesque and effective in the Pageant',¹⁹ was designed by Mr. G. Chowne²⁰ and was described in the *Pageant Programme* as follows:

Seated on a throne, under a canopy of gold and brown, is a draped figure typifying "Wealth", holding in her left hand a golden cornucopia. She is supported on either side by the celebrated "slave captains," John Newton and Hugh Crowe. The former commanded a slave ship while studying for the Ministry, and was afterwards a highly

¹⁹ "Liverpool's 700th Birthday Pageant," *Liverpool Courier*, August 5th 1907.

²⁰ It seems most likely that this is Gerard Chowne (1875-1917) a portrait, landscape and flower painter. He was born in India and studied at the Slade School, Paris and Rome. He taught painting at Liverpool University 1905-8 but soon moved to the Sandon Studios, Liverpool which began as a society in 1905 and aimed to create an alternative art studio in Liverpool independent of London influence. See Mary Chamot, Dennis Farr, and Martin Butlin, *The Modern British Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture, Volume 1* (London: Tate Gallery, 1965); National Museums Liverpool, "Art in Revolution: Liverpool 1911 online catalogue," ed. National Museums Liverpool (Liverpool: National Museums Liverpool, 2011). <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/exhibitions/art-in-revolution/online-catalogue.aspx> (accessed March 13, 2011)

respected Liverpool Divine. Behind her stands another famous slavetrader, and at each end of the Car is a group of slaves, while at the back is shown a slave driver. On each side of the Car are six slaves and a driver.²¹

The car was decorated with chains and manacles which apparently gave 'an awesome reality to the idea of slavery' and further '[i]ntense reality is imparted by the six Africans who walk on each side of the car.'²² Pageantry at the beginning of the twentieth century rarely included black people, and even American Pageantry around this time seldom performed narratives of black American history, yet when it did this predominantly focused on representations of slavery and emancipation, racial stereotypes and depictions of Southern black people as



Figure 10: Liverpool Pageant, CAR "The Slave Trade." 1907 commemorative postcard owned by author

'comic buffoons'.²³ The men who took on the roles of the 'living freight' in this car were probably the only black faces in Liverpool's historic pageant.²⁴ This was said to add an air of

²¹ *Programme of the Pageant*, 38-9.

²² "Processional Cars - The Slave Trade Car," *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, August 5th 1907. The sale of chains and 'tools of the trade' in Liverpool is referenced within the national press (*The Sphere*) "Celebrating Liverpool's Foundation."

²³ W.E.B. Dubois responded to what he terms the white 'efforts to use pageantry as black folk drama', by writing and directing a black history pageant, *The Star of Ethiopia* in 1913. See David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 131-32.

authenticity to the scene, although within the *Courier's* description, the parody of performance illustrates a distinct sanitization of a traumatic past:

[...] and at each end of the car, to give realism to the scene, was a group of negroes, while at the back was shown a slave driver with his whip, but which did not appear to be a very formidable instrument of torture. On each side of the car were six slaves and driver, but, in the true spirit of pageantry, all appeared in the happiest of moods and on the best possible terms.²⁵

One article concerning the slave trade car suggests that the 'group of "darkies", [...] though appearing as slaves harried by cruel drivers, were typical of the modern freedom and prosperity of the coloured brother'.²⁶ If this article is suggesting that the contemporary treatment of black people was one of 'freedom and prosperity', this is a statement hotly contested within a letter written to the *Post* in March earlier that year in which a black man living in Liverpool outlines the discrimination he faces finding employment on board ships because of his skin colour. He argues that there are few black people compared to white in the city but that they are British citizens and as such should be granted the same rights. Interestingly, he draws attention to the exploitation which lies at the foundation of Britain's wealth:

I often wonder if the shipowners and those who govern this country ever think for one moment that the ships and the great wealth of this country of which they boast are the tears and blood of my forefathers which they have taken and are still taking from their land, and they, the people of this country refuse to give us a chance of earning a little of what has been taken from us, they may speak of America and criticise the actions of the white people towards the coloured race, if a charge of crime is brought against a poor unfortunate he is taken out and lynched, but on the other hand they will not deprive one of the chance of earning his daily bread on account of colour, as is done in this country.²⁷

²⁴ "Liverpool's 700th Birthday Pageant." This article also states that slaves were taken 'from the West Indies or Africa to the slave mart of the Mersey' which is not commonly stated within the historical narrative of slavery in Liverpool. Whether this is the author's error, or a reference to the slave sales that would have taken place in Liverpool, is unclear. There is no reaction recorded to this statement within the letters pages following the publication of this article.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ "Slavery and Freedom," *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, August 5th 1907.

²⁷ Edward B. Hinds, "Grievances of coloured men in Liverpool," *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, March 1st 1907. Replies were published following the publication of this letter including one response which whilst sympathetic to the treatment of these men who were 'quite as good seamen as the white man, and just as hard workers' suggested segregated ships with 'full negro crews' as a viable solution: George C. Thomas, "The Troubles of Coloured Men," *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, March 4th 1907. Whilst

Tellingly, if frustratingly, the identity of those who took on the role of slaves within the pageant remains a mystery as the pageant cast list, which includes the names of all other performers including the children following Molly Bushell's 'Sweets Car', does not name these men.

The necessary inclusion of Liverpool's 'most lucrative'²⁸ trading endeavour, within a performance of its historical narrative conflicted with the stated aims of the pageant. This dissonance was exemplified within the local press where it was stated that '[l]ocal pride received a check or a toning at sight of the succeeding group, "The Slave Trade"', this section of the pageant display being 'impossible to view impartially in a twentieth century atmosphere' and that the slave trade was something 'with which the early history of the port of Liverpool is somewhat painfully associated.'²⁹ Attempts to negotiate the conflicts and contradictions of aligning slavery within a celebration fell into awkward patterns of juxtaposing cruelty with kindness and wealth with charity:

Unhappily, the opportunity came to it of making money quickly in a traffic of which we cannot now be proud – the buying and selling of slaves. Many of the old Liverpool merchants who built up vast fortunes in this way seem to have been very wealthy and highly respected citizens, examples of all the virtues of which go to the making of God fearing, clean-living Englishmen. They were generous of their wealth, and to them some of Liverpool's noblest charities owe their beginning. It was not easy to find a distinctive title for this somewhat mixed and perplexing period of our pageant, and it was the ingenuity of Mr Legge, our new director of education, which coined for us the descriptive and comprehensive heading of "The Beginning of Wealth, well gotten and ill-gotten, and of Charity, which covereth a multitude of sins".³⁰

another suggested that 'As a rule, coloured men are not very sharp on board ship, especially in steamers, and in these days that counts for much' see A. Meadows, "The Troubles of Coloured Men," *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, March 4th 1907.

²⁸ Muir, *History of Liverpool*, 185.

²⁹ "Processional Cars - The Slave Trade Car."; "Slavery and Freedom."; "Liverpool's 700th Birthday Pageant."

³⁰ Frank John Leslie, "Liverpool's Birthday - Some More Pageant Pictures and Their Stories," *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, June 21st 1907, 11.

Well-gotten and ill-gotten wealth is obscured by aligning slavery with charity, and it is perhaps through this apparent balancing act that a 'multitude of sins' is covered. The discussion of Liverpool merchants falls on justifying their activities by stating how 'wealthy and respected' they would have been in their time and that this wealth went on to found charitable institutions. Such institutions are immediately celebrated in the following themes of the pageant performance. Whilst, as Frank Leslie admits, '[i]t would have been impossible in any faithful presentation of the city's history to have omitted a sufficient reference to her share in the slave trade', civic pride is reignited: 'we shall welcome the appearance of the Bluecoat School banner as the advent of a brighter theme' (Figure 11).³¹

The narrative presented in the procession through car arrangement, places the slave trade between a celebration of the engineering feat which made the docking of slave ships



Figure 11: Robert Stythe and the children of the Bluecoat Hospital. Taken from LRO, *Celebration of the 700th Anniversary of the Grant of Liverpool's First charter: programmes, photographs, extracts from periodicals & connected with the Festival August 1907*. Replacing the volume destroyed by enemy action 4 May 1941

possible and distinctly positive charitable institutions. The source of the 'wealth' of Liverpool is thus briefly acknowledged and simultaneously morally distanced from and mitigated.

³¹ Ibid. The Bluecoat Founder was Bryan Blundell, a sea captain and slave trader involved in the transportation of 'refuse slaves' from sugar plantations in the Caribbean into the tobacco plantations of the Chesapeake. Westgaph, "Built on Slavery."

1957: New Worlds and Racialised Arguments

Fifty years on, Liverpool's landscape had changed dramatically. John Belchem has suggested that the charter celebrations of 1957 sought to present Liverpool as a 'modern industrial city'.³² This was achieved through narratives of progress and events which celebrated industry.³³ In a city still physically fragmented by the devastation of war, the need to talk progress and illustrate recovery to potential investors and to the psyche of the local population, was powerfully apparent. The official marking of Liverpool's 750th birthday consisted of a charter fortnight of events in June, predicted as 'the biggest display of civic high-jinks Liverpool has ever seen' the year before.³⁴ This included exhibitions, lectures, sporting activities, concerts, guard mount display, street decorating competitions and a special religious service held at the Anglican Cathedral to mark the beginning of these events. Originally, celebrations were planned on a larger scale – intended to surpass those of the Festival of Britain in 1951, but budgetary cuts downscaled these plans dramatically.³⁵

A precedent to mark the anniversary year had been set up by the events 1907, and a commemorative expectation for some forms of memory work was repeated as standard, such as the creation of exhibitions demonstrating a narrative history of Liverpool, and the production of commemorative texts.³⁶ However, in 1957, there was an obvious absence of the historical pageantry in seen in 1907, omitted because of cost restrictions. There was also a lack of commemorative merchandise such as mugs and medals, with emphasis falling instead on

³² Belchem, "Introduction," 48.

³³ As exemplified by the booklet which told Liverpool's story through '750 years of progress'. Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, *Liverpool and Merseyside 1207-1957: 750 Years of Progress* (Derby: Bemrose Advertising Limited, 1957). The *Industry Advances Exhibition* held in Cleveland Square, near Paradise Street celebrated Liverpool industry. *City of Liverpool 1207-1957: Charter Celebrations 16th to 30th June 1957*, (Liverpool: Liverpool Corporation, 1957), 6.

³⁴ Stephen Wright, "What a Fortnight it will be," *Liverpool Daily Echo*, September 5th 1956.

³⁵ Derek Whale, "Liverpool will celebrate its Charter, and - THE SQUEEZE WILL NOT STOP OUR CITY GOING GAY," *Liverpool Evening Express*, May 22nd 1956.

³⁶ Which in 1907 included Scott, *Liverpool*; Lacey, *History of Liverpool From 1207 to 1907*; Muir, *History of Liverpool*; *Liverpool Ancient and Modern: Published by the Liverpool Post, Mercury, and Echo Ltd. in Commemoration of the 700th Celebration of City Charter*, (Liverpool: Liverpool Post, Mercury, and Echo Ltd, 1907).

the role of specially produced books, or 'inscribed texts'³⁷ as a better alternative since 'all would learn something about the city'.³⁸

The position and significance of the transatlantic slave trade in the narrative of Liverpool's history in 1957 was significantly downplayed, alongside much moral justification and distancing. William Roscoe received far greater attention and a more central role alongside a more pronounced celebration of abolition than had been the case in 1907. The mediating role of historians was also of great determining influence. City Librarian and historian George Chandler had his council sponsored history *Liverpool* published in 1957, which was described as a 'permanent commemoration of the anniversary' by the local press.³⁹ The book itself contained a mere four paragraphs on the slave trade within its 500 pages, two of which wholly concerned William Roscoe. Within this text, Chandler states that:

In the long run, the triangular operation based on Liverpool was to bring benefits to all, not least to the transplanted slaves, whose descendants have subsequently achieved in the New World standards of education and civilisation far ahead of their compatriots whom they left behind.⁴⁰

Both George Chandler and Francis E. Hyde (an economic historian at Liverpool University) authored pieces in press special supplements. Much of this echoed their own histories and standpoints, particularly Chandler's focus on Roscoe (his biography of Roscoe was published in 1953, the bicentenary of Roscoe's birth) and Hyde's pieces downplayed the economic impact of the slave trade (repeating much of an essay also written in 1953).⁴¹

Celebrating William Roscoe

Much of the new focus given to Roscoe – in particular a more vociferous celebration of his vote for the Abolition Act of 1807, was demonstrated within specially produced literature. In local press articles, Chandler foregrounds William Roscoe's 'success' in voting for the abolition

³⁷ Connerton, *How Societies Remember*.

³⁸ "It's Say it With Music for the Charter Celebrations," *Liverpool Daily Echo*, May 17th 1957.

³⁹ Listener, "Street Parties."

⁴⁰ Chandler, *Liverpool*, 306.

⁴¹ George Chandler, *William Roscoe of Liverpool* (London: Barsford, 1953); Chandler, *Liverpool*; Hyde, Bradbury, and Marriner, "The Nature and Profitability of the Liverpool Slave Trade."

of the slave trade in 1807 and titles one article, *William Roscoe and the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, forging a definitive connection, though only the last three paragraphs of this long article actually discuss abolition, the rest focusing Roscoe's life and work more generally.⁴² Great significance is given to Roscoe's brief political career which was 'of great historical importance' since '[h]e spoke up for Reform, and against the slave trade, casting his vote successfully for its abolition in 1807'. From this, Chandler holds Roscoe up 'as the symbol for Liverpool's moral progress at the time of its sixth centenary', his vote being 'one of the delightful paradoxes of history'.⁴³

Similarly, and despite the rather misleading title, *In Liverpool ships went the African slaves [...]*, less than a quarter of this article discusses the slave trade, with much focus falling again on Roscoe and how '[i]n 1807 no more fitting representative of Liverpool in its sixth centenary year could be found than William Roscoe'.⁴⁴ The article also discusses Roscoe's poem *Mount Pleasant*, which 'attacked the slave trade in no uncertain terms, although this was considered essential for Liverpool's prosperity', and repeats this idea later through emphasis of the dependence of the city on the slave trade.⁴⁵ Sydney Jeffery similarly described William Roscoe, as 'the great anti-slaver, the Morning-Star of Liverpool's reformation'.⁴⁶ Within a similar celebration of *Men Who Made Liverpool Famous* in the *Liverpool Evening*

⁴² 'William Roscoe led the movement for the abolition of the slave trade and was successful in 1807 in voting for its abolition during his brief period as Member of Parliament for Liverpool', George Chandler, "Towards the new industrial city," in *City Charter Supplement* (Liverpool: Liverpool Daily Post, June 17th 1957), 5. 'William Roscoe voted successfully, during his brief period as Member of Parliament for the abolition of the slave trade' George Chandler, "Dates that made Liverpool," in *Charter Programme* (Liverpool: Liverpool Daily Echo, June 17th 1957), 11. George Chandler, "William Roscoe and the Abolition of the Slave Trade," *Liverpool Daily Echo*, July 3rd 1957.

⁴³ Chandler, "William Roscoe and the Abolition of the Slave Trade." This is presumably a 'paradox' because an MP from Liverpool, a town heavily involved in the slave trade, voted for its abolition.

⁴⁴ "In Liverpool ships went the African slaves and apprenticed white children who were to play an unhappy but significant part in - Opening up the New World," *Liverpool Daily Echo*, July 2nd 1957. Although no author is acknowledged on this article, it seems highly probable that this piece was either written by Chandler or heavily influenced by his writings. The section morally justifying the slave trade that, 'This was not due to any particular moral failing in her merchants, but to worldwide economic forces which Liverpool was well fitted to serve' appears in a similar form within Chandler's *Liverpool* as 'Liverpool's supremacy in the slave trade was not, therefore, due to any distinctive moral failing in her merchants, but to worldwide economic needs, which she did not create' (305-6). It is interesting that an additional note is made of Liverpool's suitability for fulfilling these global needs.

⁴⁵ 'In spite of Liverpool's economic dependence on the slave trade, Roscoe was firmly convinced that it was wrong to deny others the liberty which Englishmen had acquired for themselves. He also knew at first hand the demoralising effect of the trade on some of those who were forced to take part in it.' Ibid.

⁴⁶ Sydney Jeffery, "The Making of the City," in *City Charter Supplement* (Liverpool: Liverpool Daily Post, June 17th 1957), 6.

Express's charter supplement, William Roscoe is described as '[o]ne of the greatest Liverpolitans' who 'achieved fame as a poet, historian, political pamphleteer, opponent of the slave trade and fighter for freedom and equality'.⁴⁷

Exhibitions

The William Brown Library held a number of exhibitions concerning Liverpool's history and place in the world. All dignitaries who opened exhibitions received either a copy of George Chandler's *William Roscoe of Liverpool* or his Council sponsored, *Liverpool*. The exhibitions individually addressed Liverpool's relationship with Africa, America, Asia, Europe, the Commonwealth and the United Kingdom. The International Library was itself opened by special guest dignitary Mr. Jacob Blukoo-Allotey of Ghana, who was presented with a copy of George Chandler's *Liverpool* by Councillor W.R. Maylor, Ghana having gained independence on March 6th that year (see Figure 12).

Liverpool and Africa

The exhibition on Liverpool's relationship with Africa was opened by the Rev. Father Trevor Huddleston of the Anglican Community of the Resurrection, a former missionary in Johannesburg, South Africa. Among those in attendance (tickets for the opening sold out) were 'members of the city's African community'.⁴⁸ Within his opening speech, Father Huddleston discussed racial discrimination in South Africa. He addresses criticisms levelled against him that he has only focused on South Africa, stating that racism exists elsewhere, like in the US South, though suggests there is a difference in that 'racial discrimination is dying out in America, but that it is sustained and bolstered up by the government in South Africa'. In amongst the discussion of contemporary racism, a *Post* article has interjected a line in bold that the 'City aided the abolition drive', seemingly unrelated to the points it's adjacent to, relating instead to the words of Mrs Bessie Braddock, who awarded Father Huddleston with a copy of *William Roscoe*. Braddock draws the focus back to a celebration of abolition suggesting that 'it needed

⁴⁷ "The Men Who Made Liverpool Famous," in *City of Liverpool Charter Celebrations 1207-1957: Evening Express Charter Supplement* (Liverpool: Liverpool Evening Express, June 17th 1957).

⁴⁸ POSTMAN, "House Full," *Liverpool Daily Post*, January 16th 1957. Although another article described them as 'Africans in Liverpool under the Elder Dempster training scheme', "Father Huddleston Opens City Show, Asks: Why No Protests on South African Treason Trial?," *Liverpool Daily Post*, January 17, 1957.



Figure 12: Mr Stephen Amponsah and Mr George Odartey (Elder Dempster trainees) hold the Ghanaian flag on day of independence on the roof of Elder Dempster's Head Office. Sea: Journal of Elder Dempster Autumn 1957

as much courage in 1807 when William Roscoe voted for the abolition of slavery as it took Father Huddleston to put his point of view in countries where it has been very unpopular'. Councillor W.R. Maylor similarly added that although the city was once central in the slave trade, 'Liverpool people were among the first who campaigned for the abolition of slavery'.⁴⁹ Similarly, according to the guide, the exhibition demonstrated how 'Liverpool, because of its geographical position, wrenched the monopoly of the slave trade from Spain and took a prominent part in the movement for its abolition.' Taking a distinct focus on abolition, yet ending the introductory paragraph with a reminder that '(t)he slave trade had been organised for centuries by the tribal chiefs of Africa.'⁵⁰

The content of the exhibition was criticised within the Manchester Press for its silences surrounding slavery, although an acknowledgement is made for bias within the historical record, for those who 'won their fortunes from slaving [...] had doubtless many reasons for silence, even in their private correspondence.' The focus on abolitionists at the expense of the supportive role Liverpool City Council played in opposing abolition is also criticised.⁵¹

⁴⁹ "Father Huddleston Opens City Show."

⁵⁰ *Order of Proceedings for the Opening of the Exhibition "Liverpool and Africa"*, (Liverpool: Liverpool Libraries, Museums and Archives Council, 1957).

⁵¹ '[...] the case for abolition is well represented, but not very much is to be seen or heard of its opponents' "News of the North-west - Liverpool and the Slave Trade. Father Huddleston Points a Contemporary Moral," *The Manchester Guardian*, January 17, 1957.

The exhibition prompted a telling article within the *Echo* (Figure 13), stressing the need for a sense of ‘perspective’ on the city’s slave trading past, and praising this exhibition for having done so.⁵² The author draws on familiar discursive devices such as the celebration of abolitionists, disputing the ‘myths’ of this history (largely concerning its profitability) and the comparative re-alignment of African trauma against those experienced at ‘home’. Stevens adopts a system of rhetorical questions, each referring to an area which he sets out to dispute. ‘A city built on the slave trade?’ the opening line of the article asks, to which ‘No’ is presented as the only logical answer.

Directly after noting 1957 as the charter year, Stevens notes the coincidence with ‘the 150th anniversary of the abolition of slave trading in Britain’.⁵³ Liverpool abolitionist names surround William Wilberforce, equalling his significance; ‘slave trade reformers like Roscoe, Rathbone, Wilberforce, Dr Currie, Lord Holland’. However, there is a distinct conflict presented within the article which at points acknowledges the impact of the slave trade, that ‘the port’s phenomenal expansion at the end of the eighteenth century was undoubtedly based upon it’, yet throws doubt at the specific significance of slavery as a form of trade by inducing what-if histories, suggesting that ‘the slave trade enhanced a prosperity that was inevitable’ because geographic position and the salt trade ‘would have made Liverpool a port to reckon with whatever else her merchants did’.⁵⁴ The rest of the article seeks to morally justify the brutality and inhumanity of the slave trade by listing other horrific experiences of the eighteenth century:

And what was morally wrong in the 18th century? To send white children into bondage overseas? We did that; we called it apprenticeship. Was it sinful to send mites scrambling up chimneys to choke in soot? Was it wrong to use women as pit-ponies? Was it a moral crime to permit Pressganging? All this happened.

⁵² Ian Stevens, "An exhibition opening to-night puts into perspective Liverpool's part in the transport of negro slaves: The Skeleton In Our Cupboard Gets A Creak In The Joints," *Liverpool Daily Echo*, January 16th 1957.

⁵³ He reiterates the overcoming abolition narrative whereby abolition was predicted to bring ‘financial disaster’ and ‘instead it channelled trade into healthier lanes, increased it, and cemented the cornerstone of Liverpool’s place in the world.’ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ This is reminiscent of James Touzeau’s comments in 1910 that Liverpool merchants would have been as successful in any other line of trade. ‘It cannot be gainsaid that this nefarious traffic had done much to establish the wealth and foster the prosperity of Liverpool, but, while admitting this, who can say that the indomitable perseverance and energy of its people, so amply demonstrated through a long course of years would not have ensured an equal prosperity in other directions, perhaps not quite so quickly, yet as efficaciously, if this trade had never existed.’ Touzeau, *Rise and Progress of Liverpool*, 589.

Set against such a background of moral progression, with human conscience tied by different values, the sale of black men from a land known only to be fierce and primitive stirred little passion in the breast of England.⁵⁵

The case is one of moral contextualisation which nonetheless invites the reader to answer 'yes' to the first questions, express revulsion at the idea of the exploitation of children and abuse of women which, when contrasted to 'the sale of black men' or perhaps simply the moving of them out of a 'fierce and primitive' land, accentuates eighteenth century white traumatic experience. Stevens invites a comparison between slavery and equally horrific issues contemporary to 1950s Britain, '[s]lavery in the eighteenth century, loneliness and state-inspired poverty in an age of plenty. Neither better nor worse than each other, historically speaking,' the suggestion being that these traumas do not receive equal condemnation. 'Slavery indeed!' exclaims Stevens, 'The public conscience had different opinions about freedom then.' Moreover, slavery, echoing Chandler's claims, is presented as having positive consequences, whereby:

The Africans were taken from their backwardness and forced to create new worlds. They escaped into slavery from the ju-ju rites and mass killings. They have built a culture that is now a Western institution. Out of it has risen the only true Negro middle-class in the world. It still fights prejudice, but will win while most of us are still alive.⁵⁶

This justifying tone of imperialistic paternalism is continued through the suggestion that Liverpool is continuing to 'help' Africans, through The African Steamship Company, Lever Brothers and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. Through these developments, 'Liverpool's pride became restored.' Stevens ends his article with the generalising platitude that 'it takes all kinds to make history.'

⁵⁵ Stevens, "The Skeleton in our Cupboard."

⁵⁶ Ibid.



Figure 13: Clipping from Ian Stevens, "An exhibition opening to-night puts into perspective Liverpool's part in the transport of negro slaves: The Skeleton In Our Cupboard Gets A Creak In The Joints," Liverpool Daily Echo, January 16th 1957

Conclusion

The memory work undertaken as part of Liverpool's 700th birthday in 1907 had been a demonstration, and indeed defining construction of, civic patriotism largely directed at her own citizens and secondly to onlookers, centring on the perceived need to correct misconceptions about the length of Liverpool's history and educate her population in order to encourage ideals of citizenship. 1957, by contrast, was largely an advert, a promotion of the post-war recovery of the city, its industrial progress and openness to new business and investment. The cultivation of civic pride through history also had its place in this process,

though was closely connected to the psychological recovery of Liverpool's citizens, set to be achieved through 'revivifying Liverpool's great past'.⁵⁷

Both years illustrate the intertextuality of memory work across genre and between different activities; discourse evolved and was contested through dialogue created between exhibitions, pageant and performances and within written memory work in the local press and commemorative literature. Paul Connerton suggests that 'inscribed texts' have been given precedence in memory studies over 'non-inscribed' ones but argues that memory is at its most powerful in the latter, through the physical bodily performances of commemorative ritual. In the commemorative events in question, bodily performance ('non-inscribed' texts) and 'inscribed' texts meet and interact. The publication of a commemorative book contrasting 'ancient and modern' images of Liverpool included a section on the historic Pageant held in 1907.⁵⁸ Within this was a photograph of the Slave Trade Car, bringing Liverpool's involvement with the transatlantic slave trade into an 'inscribed text' where mention would not otherwise have been made. The power of the bodily performance of the pageant here has brought an (albeit brief) inclusion of the slave trade into an inscribed-text.

Throughout the commemorative events of 1907, the use of history as a tool for fostering civic pride led to a celebration of the human forces behind the city's role in the slave trade and the rhetorical defence of this involvement through the juxtaposition of themes oppositional to brutality and cruelty in the name of wealth – namely the celebration of Liverpool's charitable institutions and figures. This could be understood as an 'organised forgetting' of the slave trade through structuring which obscures dissonance.⁵⁹ More overt and racialised argumentative lines of defence emerged in 1957; a time when 'race' was prominently on the post-Windrush political and public agenda. Here, the vociferous downplaying (indeed, denial) of the significance of the slave trade to Liverpool was a bid to obscure particular aspects of history which did not correspond with the identity construction being played out.⁶⁰ What discourse around the 1957 celebrations lacked in the imperial 'pomp' of 1907, it compensated for in justifications of slavery which embodied distinctly racialised and paternalistic overtones. This supports the idea that the repetition of commemorative events

⁵⁷ "Charter Reflections," *Liverpool Daily Post*, July 1st 1957.

⁵⁸ *Liverpool Ancient and Modern*.

⁵⁹ Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 14.

⁶⁰ Sinfrey Makoni, 1998, quoted in Jacob J. Climo and Maria G. Cattell, *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives* (Lanham: AltaMira, 2002).

enables people to engage with revisions of meaning to suit contemporary identity concerns and contextual circumstance.⁶¹ In activities marking the centenary of the Emancipation Act in 1933, this also becomes particularly evident.

⁶¹ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 221.

Centenaries of Heroes and Heroic Endeavour: Celebrating Death, Birth, and Emancipation

John Oldfield has suggested that the commemoration of anniversaries of abolition and emancipation created ‘usable past[s]’, which were moulded to embody national identity narratives and objectives relevant to contemporary commemorative contexts.¹ Marcus Wood has similarly suggested that the iconography produced within Emancipation processes, which can be extended to the memory of such processes, does not in any meaningful way represent enslavement, but a ‘spasmodic white ejection’, creating a mythology of abolition which obscures knowledge of transatlantic slavery.² Whilst 1907 was not marked in a major way nationally, even by the Anti-Slavery Society, the centenary of Emancipation was marked to such an extent that, as Oldfield argues, this commemorative marker replaced the Abolition Act, and in 1957 no major national commemorative events took place. However, as has previously been stressed, this national picture cannot be replicated for Liverpool due to concurrent charter celebrations. Liverpool did, however, have its own answer to the nation’s ‘hero-martyr’ William Wilberforce. William Roscoe, though presented as a cultural and civic ‘hero’ through processes of memorialisation following his death in 1831, would not rise to be the archetypal abolitionist-martyr-hero until his memory is met with the influence of adjacent centenaries of other such national heroes, and, crucially, the centenary of the Emancipation Act in 1933.

The Uses of Emancipation in 1933 and 1934

¹ Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*, 88.

² Wood, *Blind Memory*, 8.

In Liverpool in 1933 and 1934 the commemoration of Emancipation replicates some aspects of national commemorative activity during these years, yet more activities are undertaken through a religious framework which foregrounds a white 'spasmodic' reaction to slavery by (re)creating an emancipatory memory forged within the redemption concept. The sermons, articles and discourse articulated during these years illustrate the ways in which abolition, and here, Emancipation, has been 'used', or *perverted* to suit contemporary circumstance; justifying colonial endeavour and, more significantly, religious missionary activity. Whilst this was also the case nationally, in Liverpool, this paternalistic discourse is directed at 'colonial others' both abroad and at home, and, crucially, disrupted by a politically active black voice in the city, diverging from national trends of a largely unproblematic celebration of white philanthropic activity.

The growth of anti-slavery and abolitionism rose alongside a revival of the missionary movement in the nineteenth century. Andrew Porter suggests missionary activity rose to a status of 'missionary imperialism' by 1899, when 10,000 British missionaries were at work.³ Both movements, Duncan Rice has posited, had the problem of freedom at their core; freedom from physical bondage, or spiritual freedom (an 'original freedom').⁴ Both were also criticised for domestic failings in light of their foreign activity, for ignoring the plight of the white 'slaves' of industrialising Britain or disregarding their flocks at home in the name of misguided ventures with 'lowly natives'.⁵ Both supported 'Christianity and commerce', with liberal business proposals at home, Corn Law Repeal and the Reform Act, and the substitution of former slaving relationships with endeavours of 'legitimate' trade.⁶ Though the relationship between missionaries and abolitionists was (in theory) a mutually supportive one, the connection between religion and empire was complicated by increasing levels of missionary autonomy during a period in which church and state were extricating from one another.⁷

³ Seymour Drescher, "Two Variants of Anti-Slavery: Religious organisation and social mobilization in Britain and France, 1780-1870," in *Anti-Slavery, Religion, and Reform: Essays in Memory of Roger Anstey*, ed. Christine Bolt and Seymour Drescher (Folkestone: Dawson, 1980), 47; A. Porter, "Religion and Empire - British Expansion in the Long 19th-Century, 1780-1914," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 20, no. 3 (1992): 372.

⁴ Poignant historical episodes of mutual ideological action occur between the two, Sierra Leone having been founded as much to spread Christianity as to halt slave trading Duncan C. Rice, "The Missionary Context of the British Anti-Slavery Movement," in *Slavery and British Society 1776-1846*, ed. James Walvin (London: Macmillan, 1982), 150.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 153; Huzzey, *Freedom Burning*, 135-7.

⁷ Rice, "The Missionary Context of the British Anti-Slavery Movement," 151; Porter, "Religion and Empire," 383.

Missionaries increasingly looked at imperial politics with suspicion and resentment, fuelling greater tension and divisions between the two power structures and producing an increasingly independent 'missionary imperialism' supported by militant evangelism.⁸

The activities of religious groups in the peripheries, however, impacted upon socio-cultural contexts within the core. They shaped British imaginative engagements with 'Africa' through stories of missionary adventure articulated through an anti-slavery discourse. So much of the Empire was, after all, 'brought home' by missionaries and their work, public excitement over the 'discoveries' of Livingstone, for example, was driven by his encounters with the East African and Saharan slave trades.⁹ Culturally, the work of missionaries at home and abroad was interconnected and inter-influential, there being heathen classes in both contexts in need of saving through conversion. Susan Thorne has argued that a mutually impacting discourse was articulated by missionaries in response to the British poor and to colonial 'others', where in both contexts race had been 'classed' and class had been 'raced' through the reverberations of the colonial encounter.¹⁰ Here, the 'to and fro' of missionary discourse in which 'missionary imperialism' acts both at 'home' and in colonial contexts, shares, reinforces and (re)creates ideas of racialised heathen classes in need of moral redemption.

The culturally incestuous relationship between anti-slavery and religious missionary movements has forged a memory of slavery, or more specifically a memory of emancipation, shaped within a religious cognitive framework fashioned by a compelling evangelical discourse. Emancipation was itself seen as a cue to 'evangelise' African people. Ralph Wardlaw said of the freed slaves following the passing of the Emancipation Act in 1834 that '[t]hey need another emancipation – the emancipation proclaimed by the Gospel Jubilee', placing new energies of conversion within a biblical context.¹¹ Within this evangelical framework, the concept of *redemption* has been at the forefront of engagements with the memory of slavery and emancipation and has continued to frame such remembrance. The related concepts of recompense and redemption, for making good past wrongs and saving souls from historic sins

⁸ Porter, "Religion and Empire," 383-86.

⁹ Susan Thorne, "'The Conversion of Englishmen and the Conversion of the World Inseparable'" *Missionary Imperialism and the Language of Class in Early Industrial Britain*, in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 254; Rice, "The Missionary Context of the British Anti-Slavery Movement," 150.

¹⁰ Thorne, "The Conversion of Englishmen," 254.

¹¹ Ralph Wardlaw from a sermon made to mark British West Indian Emancipation in 1834, quoted in Rice, "The Missionary Context of the British Anti-Slavery Movement," 158.

forged a Christian cognitive framework which, through the further and increasingly active public presence and work of both anti-slavery advocates and religious missionaries, formed a membrane of guilt through which future memories of slavery and emancipation would be viewed and interpreted.

The concept of redemption within slavery memory has been further informed by temporal constructs which align to Judeo-Christian discourse. David Brion Davis, writing on the 150th anniversary of British Emancipation, has argued that the idea of an 'Emancipation Moment', an instantaneous act of freedom-giving, is a myth which has been furthered by subsequent acts of memory. Emancipation was, in practicality, gradual - a long, drawn out process of policy change, clauses and compromise which saw slavery graduate to indenture; freedom from bondage leading into economic reliance and servitude. Davis suggests that understandings of emancipation in Western and European contexts have largely been forged within a framework of Judeo-Christian religious imagery, of 'deliverance and redemption'; with art and images of abolition further endorsing ideas of spontaneous heroic acts of white freedom-giving and black passive gratitude.¹² Like the Calvinist sinner, the recipient of 'freedom' in British colonial contexts was afterwards in debt, emancipation having created a new bondage, one of obligation.¹³ This new status of domination was itself justified through a rhetoric cast in a religious discourse concerning freedom, which in 1933 and 1934 utilised the myth of the 'Emancipation Moment' of 1833 and 1834, alongside later acts of nineteenth century imperial mission to create a heritage of Emancipation, a backdrop of spontaneous moral moments of righteous action, used to frame contemporary missionary activity.

Nationally, 250 commemorative events took place between March 1933 and November 1934 which included meetings, special religious services, 17 performances of a pageant play, and lantern lectures.¹⁴ These events and the discourse around them sought to reinforce national identity narratives concerning the morality of British Imperial endeavour, celebrating the righteousness of an Empire which abolished slavery, as an Empire which could, in the early 1930s, be justified in extending its reach in the name of emancipation. Within this process, William Wilberforce was elevated as the heroic torch through which liberation

¹² This is a process Davis likens to the manumission ritual. See also Chapter Eleven for a discussion of the uses of abolition imagery. David Brion Davis, *The Emancipation Moment : 22nd Annual Robert Fortenbaugh Memorial Lecture* (Gettysburg: Gettysburg College, 1983), 8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

¹⁴ Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*, 96-99.

shone.¹⁵ Wilberforce, more than any other abolitionist, was held aloft as an idol of national pride whose status contemporary ‘emancipators’ follow. Parliamentary Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, Sir John Harris encapsulated much of the discourse surrounding the meaning of Emancipation in 1933/34 by suggesting that the best way to honour the Anti-Slavery heroes of the past was ‘to follow in their footsteps and in the same fervent spirit to complete the work of both abolition and emancipation’.¹⁶ Commemorative events, sermons and national press coverage emphasised that there was still a process of ‘abolition and emancipation’ to be completed, through the need to abolish systems of ‘modern-day slavery’ in foreign places. Sir John Harris spoke in Liverpool during the commemorations. At a lecture (29th October 1933) in Liverpool Cathedral promoting the Society’s modern-day slavery cause as a form of commemoration in itself, Harris suggested that whilst monuments have been erected for abolitionists, ‘if we were to ask them what monument they would most like as a permanent reminder of their work, they would say – “Finish the task, set all the slaves free”’.¹⁷ Harris’s lecture did include some aspects which were specific to his host city, and when discussing the opposition abolitionists faced, he suggested that ‘[i]t is of course well-known that this very city of Liverpool took a prominent part in protesting against the abolition of the slave traffic, and spent thousands of pounds supporting the system of slave-owning and slave-trading.’¹⁸ Local press coverage of the centenary events in 1933 and 1934 in Liverpool, however contained few references to the city’s support for slavery.¹⁹

The need to further the aims of the Anti-Slavery Society by foregrounding the fight against modern-day slavery was a key objective of the commemorative centenary. Religious groups were specifically requested by the Society to highlight this within commemorative sermons and a manifesto appeal was sent to a number of religious leaders and groups.²⁰ John

¹⁵ Discussed by a Bristol local press article alongside Buxton, and yet without reference to the source of wealth within the history of that particular port city. See Madge Dresser, "Remembering Slavery and Abolition in Bristol," *Slavery & Abolition* 30, no. 2 (2009): 227.

¹⁶ Sir John Harris, quoted in Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*, 99.

¹⁷ Lecture given by Sir John Harris, Liverpool Cathedral, October 29th 1933, notes in Rhodes House Library, Oxford, British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society Papers (BFASS) Mss Brit Emp, S22 G412.

¹⁸ Sir John Harris, notes in *Ibid.*

¹⁹ However, an article published in a newspaper from the neighbouring town of St Helens did suggest that ‘the freeing of the slaves did not please everybody. There were many merchants in Liverpool and elsewhere [...] who thought it no shame to traffic in human cargoes. "Abolition of Slavery," *St. Helens & District Reporter*, July, 20 1934.

²⁰ This point was reported on nationally, including within the Liverpool local press the year before the anniversary of the death of Wilberforce, 1932. Copies of the manifesto are held in the Anti-Slavery

Harris had, however, been wary of the angle missionary societies might take within the centenary and was concerned that instead of promoting the campaign they would 'content themselves with "boosting" their Missionaries in the past and carefully refrain from saying very much about present-day conditions', not wanting to upset political powers in the countries they work in.²¹

In Liverpool, with no local organising committee listed in the Anti-Slavery Society records, activities surrounding the 1933 and 1934 commemorations were largely organised by religious bodies in the city.²² There was very little said in the local press, and activity concerning the Emancipation centenary largely consisted of lectures and sermons which took place in secular spaces and religious buildings. Within these events, talk of 'modern-day slavery' occupied a prominent position, and claims for maintaining an on-going emancipation fight were foregrounded alongside the elevation of abolition heroes and narratives of Britain's Anti-Slavery credentials. In one case, the Catholic Church was itself held up as an abolition hero. One of the first lectures given in the city, marking the centenary of the passing of the Emancipation Act on March 25th 1833, was from Father Arthur Hughes of the Heston 'White Fathers', a missionary society founded in 1868 by Cardinal Lavignerie which worked in Africa who apparently take their name from their white habit.²³ Father Hughes's lecture, given in Picton Hall for the Catholic Evidence Guild argued that '[t]he slavery of the pagan days has not disappeared'.²⁴ Within an article discussing the lecture, the centenary and contemporary abolition efforts are coupled together as mutual moral bedfellows, combining commemorative activity with contemporary liberating action:

The subject of slavery might occasion surprise in that it appeared to be one of no present day actuality. This year, however, marked the centenary of the abolition of slavery in the British Empire, and the commemorations that would be arranged would not only commemorate the liberation of slavery, but would attempt to devise means

Society Records, Rhodes House. "Rhodes House, BFASS, Mss Brit Emp, S22 G412."; "To Free The World Of Slavery - Appeal of The Churches," *Liverpool Post and Mercury*, July 29, 1932.

²¹ Letter from John Harris to Rev Paton December 20, 1932 "Rhodes House, BFASS, Mss Brit Emp, S22 G412."

²² Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*, 93.

²³ "The Slavery Act Centenary - Commemoration Meeting in London," *Liverpool Catholic Herald*, April 29, 1933. Father Hughes was based in Uganda.

²⁴ Father Arthur Hughes, quoted in "The Church and Slavery," *Liverpool Catholic Herald*, March 25 1933.

of abolishing slavery from every part of the world, for there were slaves today to the number of five to six million.²⁵

The article supposes that it may 'occasion surprise' in its audience that there are 'slaves today', such surprise perhaps also anticipated by the subject being raised within the context of the commemoration of a historic act passed one hundred years previously. Here the 'historic' status of 'slavery', is disputed for dramatic effect; assumptions are turned on their head in attention-grabbing beginning lines of articles which predictably turn to celebrations of contemporary white philanthropic action and black passivity. Significantly, within this article which appeared in the *Liverpool Catholic Herald*, the Catholic Church, which 'in all ages had done wonders for the liberation of slaves' is itself personified as an abolitionist, who carries out the work of emancipation through apparently peaceful missionary activity.²⁶

The work of Catholic missionaries is presented through the prism of abolition, as a morally admirable enterprise on par with the 'heroes' of emancipation concurrently being celebrated within the centenary, heroes predominantly made up of Non-Conformist Evangelicals, Methodists and Quakers. Archbishop of Liverpool, Dr Richard Joseph Downey (1881-1953), also presented a lecture as part of Roman Catholic commemorations of Emancipation in London in April that year.²⁷ His speech, similarly to Hughes's, also began by introducing the 'surprise' of modern-day slavery.²⁸ To further align historical abolition, contemporary commemoration of emancipation and the liberating status of the Catholic Church, Downey couples the much celebrated abolitionist of the moment with the historic hero-figure of nineteenth century anti-slavery missionary enterprise, stating that although modern-day slavery does not take the form of auctions, 'as in the dark days before Wilberforce

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ 'She had never used violent means in Her fight, but had endeavoured to convert the hearts and minds of the slave owners by putting before them the equality of all men before God.' Ibid.

²⁷ Dr Downey had been appointed as a member of the Catholic Missionary Society in 1911 (thereafter becoming dedicated to the conversion of non-Catholics to Roman Catholicism) and was appointed as Archbishop of Liverpool in 1928, making him the youngest Roman Catholic archbishop in the world at this time. "Downey, Richard Joseph (1881–1953)," Michael Gaine in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, October 2006, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32886> (accessed May 2, 2013)

²⁸ '[...] it came as a great surprise to most people living in a civilised community to be told that one hundred years after the formal abolition of slavery, there were in the world some five million human beings in bondage'. "Forced Labour and Slavery - Dr. Downey's Protest," *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, April 29, 1933.

and Lavigerie' it was still nonetheless, 'real slavery'.²⁹ The Liverpool Catholic Herald's report on Dr Downey's speech repeats much of the above emphasis on combatting 'modern-day slavery', however, goes further to foreground religious conversion as the solution to the problem of slavery, suggesting that slavery is 'ingrained in pagan people' and little can be done about this 'until the indigenous religions and Islam in particular, cease to countenance polygamy'.³⁰ The article includes testimony from Missionaries currently working in Africa which justifies white European paternalism and imperial control, that whilst 'slavery is congenial amongst backward peoples', and their treatment by their native owners is inhumane, '[b]y comparison, white masters are beneficent beings'.³¹ Furthermore, forced labour is seen as necessary for native Africans who are 'naturally apathetic, indolent and improvident with a constitutional aversion to work in any shape or form', thereby justifying the intervention of Europeans, and Britain in particular, since the country 'led the way in many humanitarian movements', reminding readers 'that it was an Englishman, William Wilberforce, who freed the negro from his fetters'.³²

A later sermon, in July 1933, was given by the Reverend Sidney Spencer (1888-1974), a Unitarian Minister who joined Hope Street Church in Liverpool in 1927.³³ Spencer, who would later cause consternation by preaching pacifism during World War Two, gave his sermon on similar calls to abolish modern-day slavery, but alongside an interesting critical re-assessment of the historic role of the church.³⁴ Spencer drew attention to the ways in which slavery had been justified as 'the necessary outcome of human sin', criticising past religious leaders for making 'no attempt at all to abolish the institution'.³⁵ The sermon also drew upon Liverpool's historic involvement with transatlantic slavery in support of the supposition that '[f]or years the conscience of the Christian world was entirely unmoved in the face of its abominations' where '[m]erchants of Liverpool alone, in ten years, made a net profit of over two million

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ "Five Million People in Slavery," *Liverpool Catholic Herald*, May 6, 1933.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Andrew Hill, "Sidney Spencer at Edinburgh," <http://www.trowbridgeunitarians.org.uk/history/sidney-spencer> [accessed May 3, 2013].

³⁴ This was apparently out of a moral desire not to let any other person 'compel his private conscience'.
Ibid.

³⁵ "Christian Attitude to Slavery - Liverpool Minister and Duty of Church," *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, July 24, 1933.

sterling out of the trade, and a quarter of the ships in the port were engaged in the traffic'.³⁶ Although taking a far more critical tone than the previous sermons, by ending with familiar calls for the abolition of modern-day slavery, Spencer is reiterating justifications for contemporary religious activity, stressing that 1930s Christian people 'must go on to apply those principles to the whole of society'.³⁷

As the last line quoted from Spencer's sermon illustrates, the call for contemporary religious and white philanthropic action against modern-day slavery; largely the vehicle for religious conversion ventures and further Missionary work, was not simply aimed at Africa, but also at British society. Whilst Spencer may have been speaking in broader terms about the national moral condition of the country, members of the Catholic Church in Liverpool during this time focused their religious paternalism more locally. Around the time of the Emancipation Centenary a Catholic Coloured Mission was founded, initially in October 1932 and allegedly the first of its kind in Britain.³⁸ Under the control of Father Cullen, of the Irish African Missions Society, Cork, the mission fought against other religious bodies for the conversion of black people in the city, with Father Cullen stating that '[t]here is a large number of coloured people domiciled in this city and their souls are worth fighting for'.³⁹

The Mission's work in Liverpool was framed in a language which replicated the discourse of missionary work abroad, with Liverpool's black community being repeatedly referred to as 'Liverpool's African Colony'. The city's Mission was discussed as a microcosm of missionary work in Africa, as another 'colony' which differed only in size and geography:

Simultaneously with the great work which is being done in Africa by the priests and nuns of the mission, the work is going ahead with marvellous rapidity in the coloured colony in Liverpool.⁴⁰

The 'work' being done was rhetorically centred on the 'rights' of black people in Liverpool, that having settled in the city they deserved a (Catholic) education. Dr Downey was amongst those pledging support for the Mission, having approached the African Mission Society for help in

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ "Coloured Catholics Mission in Liverpool," *Liverpool Catholic Herald*, March 11, 1933.

³⁹ Father Cullen, quoted in Ibid.

⁴⁰ "City's Work for the Coloured Man - Ministering to Liverpool's African Colony," *Liverpool Catholic Herald*, September 23, 1933.

employing the services of African priests.⁴¹ At a lecture on the work of the African Missions Society in Picton Hall in September 1933, speaker Bishop William Porter (1887 – 1966) of the Gold Coast related the history of the Liverpool black presence back to the transatlantic slave trade, whilst suggesting it was the subsequent trading relationship the city built up with West Africa that resulted in the city's 'native Africans'. Interestingly, he suggests that the memory of slavery in Africa was the reason for current problems in missionary work:

Explaining the origin of the colony in the city, the speaker referred to Liverpool's connection with the slave trade of former days and stated that, since the abolition of slavery, the relations of Liverpool with West Africa were of a higher character, chiefly through commercial enterprise. It was this intercourse that had resulted in the colony of native Africans in the city.

Bishop Porter, in the course of his lecture, said that the progress of missionary effort had long been retarded by the ravages of one of the deadliest climates in the world. Furthermore, the natives, remembering the slave trade feared even the religion which the white man professed.⁴²

As reporting in the *Liverpool Catholic Herald* acknowledges, theirs was not the only 'coloured mission' in the city.⁴³ Close by their original location in Upper Hill Street was the Wesleyan African Mission, in Templar Hall, Mill Street which, when it was founded in 1923, had segregated entrances for 'white' and 'coloured'.⁴⁴ Run by Pastor Ernst Adkin, the Mission held religious services and offered some small loans to black people in the city, with the welfare and ill-treatment of its congregation a key point in Pastor Adkin's correspondence with John Harris of the Anti-Slavery Society in 1923, where he described the 'bitter feelings' of black people in the city against whites, following the riots of 1919.⁴⁵ Whilst concern, albeit paternalistic, such as this was expressed by its Pastor, the Wesleyan African Mission received much criticism for assisting Muriel Fletcher in the compilations of her 1930 report, though this involvement was disputed by Adkin.⁴⁶ The *Liverpool Catholic Herald* offered similar

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Marika Sherwood, *Pastor Daniels Ekarte and the African Churches Mission* (London: The Savannah Press, 1994), 11-14; Murphy, *From the Empire to the Rialto*, 80.

⁴⁵ Sherwood, *Pastor Daniels Ekarte*, 14; Murphy, *From the Empire to the Rialto*, 78.

⁴⁶ Sherwood, *Pastor Daniels Ekarte*, 14; Muriel Fletcher, *Report on an Investigation into the Colour Problem in Liverpool and Other Ports* (Liverpool: Liverpool Association for the Welfare of Half-Caste Children, 1930). Fletcher was also involved in another 'coloured Mission' in Liverpool, organising a girls'

paternalistic and racist assessments of the 'colour problem' where, '[t]he mixed coloured population of Liverpool' the paper states, 'is one of the great social problems' of the city.⁴⁷

Against this backdrop of religious paternalism and racist reports which castigated the city's mixed population as a 'problem', one of the Missions aimed at serving the souls of Liverpool's black population stood against the grain. The African Churches Mission of 122-124 Hill Street was established two years earlier than its Catholic neighbour, in 1931 by Nigerian-born Pastor George Daniels Ekarte (c. 1890-1964) who came to Liverpool around 1915.⁴⁸ In a brief biography written by Ekarte, the significance of travelling to England is presented as emanating from a conception of white Christianity. Having much admired the work of white missionaries, Ekarte asks, 'is it little wonder than an unsophisticated boy could not overcome the feeling that Christ the Shepherd was a white being or white spirit', furthermore that the 'Holy Book in my hand was in English language, my hymn book, English, and my "mother" who sang daily to me in English was white'.⁴⁹ However, England did not stand up to such expectations and Ekarte recounts a Liverpudlian man telling him that he had 'come to the wrong country and the worst town in the country as far as Christian charity goes', exceptionalising Liverpool as an extreme site of irreligion. His biographical account places his experiences of racism in Liverpool as central to his religious journey in the city, that the discrimination he faced caused a loss of faith which could only be restored through seeing other black people worshipping in a city so flawed with unchristian behaviour.⁵⁰ Though finding Liverpool disappointing compared to Itu, Ekarte regained faith when he came across African men worshipping at 4 Hardy Street (the Coloured Men's Religious Institute, run by Pastor William Bernard), where he soon started preaching.⁵¹ He held various services in temporary locations around the city from 1922 onwards, finally establishing the African

club in the African and West Indian Mission at 73 Parliament Street after results from her Report highlighted the complete discrimination in employment against mixed race girls. Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail*, 30; Sherwood, *Pastor Daniels Ekarte*, 27.

⁴⁷ "The Mixed Coloured Population of Liverpool (image caption)," *Liverpool Catholic Herald*, June 30, 1934.

⁴⁸ This date comes from interviews with Ekarte although as Marika Sherwood suggests, it is odd that within these interviews he does not mention anything in relation to World War One or the 1919 anti-black riots in Liverpool Sherwood, *Pastor Daniels Ekarte*, 24-25.

⁴⁹ Rhodes House Library, Oxford, British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society Papers (BFASS) Mss Brit Emp, S23 H1 21, African Churches Mission Pamphlet August 1933, 7.

⁵⁰ He records an encounter with a minister in Bold Street who said, "'Dare a Nigger speak to me in the street'". Ibid., 9.

⁵¹ Sherwood, *Pastor Daniels Ekarte*, 25-26.

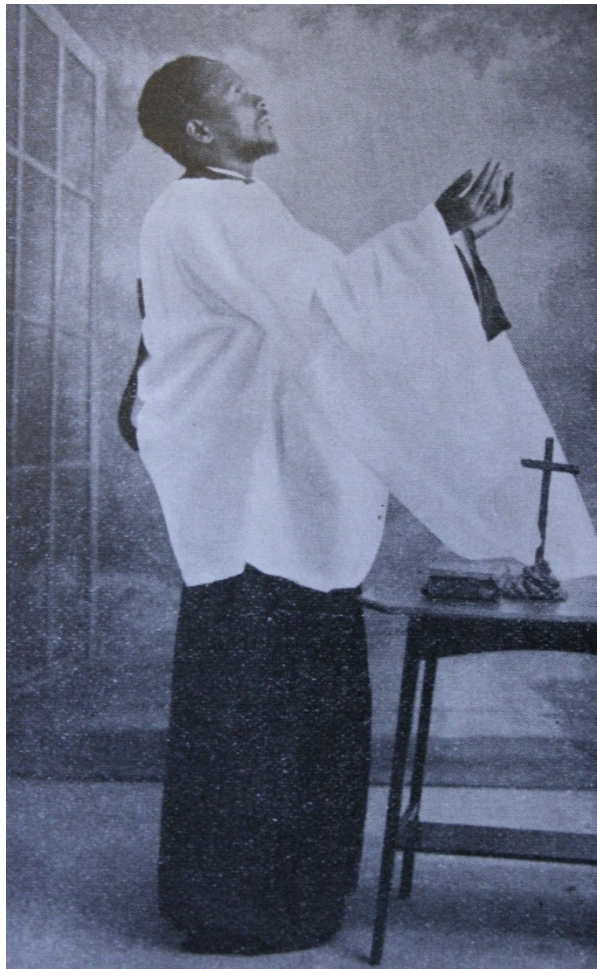


Figure 14. Pastor Daniels Ekarte. Rhodes House Library, Oxford, British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society Papers (BFASS) Mss Brit Emp, S23 H1 21, African Churches Mission Pamphlet August 1933

Churches Mission in its Hill Street location on July 7th 1931.⁵² Known as ‘Daddy Daniels’ to local children, Ekarte became a respected figure amongst the black and white community in Liverpool, preaching to a mixed community of ‘Chinese, English, Arabs, Africans like myself’.⁵³

A commemorative thanksgiving ceremony for the Emancipation Centenary in August 1933 took place in which Daniels announced an appeal for £5,000 in support of the Mission’s work since ‘the skin of man is no barrier to Salvation’.⁵⁴ Pastor Ekarte and the African Churches Mission also produced a commemorative pamphlet which included a history of slavery and

⁵² *Ibid.*, 28-9.

⁵³ By 1934, there were 380 men and 86 women registered and 148 children on the Mission’s Sunday School register, with a Scout Troop also organised for the children by the Mission called the *Liverpool Africans* which had around 18 members at this time. Rhodes House, BFASS, Mss Brit Emp, S23 H1 21, 10.

⁵⁴ Sherwood, *Pastor Daniels Ekarte*, 98; Rhodes House, BFASS, Mss Brit Emp, S23 H1 21, 4.

abolition. The pamphlet's introduction calls for thanksgiving for emancipation 'on behalf of the black struggling and oppressed people of the world since the day of slavery till now', placing emancipation within a context of historic and contemporary discrimination, where black people continue to struggle and suffer from oppression.⁵⁵

May it please your Excellencies (sic), your respectful Petitioners are the Black Race, popularly known and classified ethnologically, as Negroes, whose proper and legitimate home was, and is, and ever shall be, Africa, but who are scattered and dispersed the world over, not by their wish, but by the woeful trick of circumstances that reveals a terrible history of the traffic in the bodies of men...We are a people who have already suffered most terribly from the greed, lust and viciousness and injustice of others of the human race, who have for centuries imposed upon us the horrors of slavery – chattel and industrial...⁵⁶

In this passage, Ekarte frames the violence of the African Diaspora in a language of suffering and deception. At odds with much of the discourse surrounding the Emancipation centenary, there is no tone of thankful gratitude shown to white emancipators and no discussion of an 'emancipation moment', instead denoting a continuance of injustice, from chattel through to industrial slavery. Ekarte focuses on injustices experienced by African people, on the sins of those who committed injustice, foregrounding their 'greed, lust and viciousness' in place of any hint of black passive gratitude. Ekarte's discourse merges religion and politics, a commitment furthered by his having referred to the Mission as, the Universal Negro Improvement and African Churches Mission within this pamphlet, echoing the name of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association.⁵⁷

Ekarte's brief history of slavery and abolition leads straight from his point concerning greed to 'The Price of my Race', listing the amounts paid for enslaved people, divided by gender and age. He asks for forgiveness for those who applied such prices who were 'in the hands of the Christian world.'⁵⁸ Ekarte also highlights how Emancipation was not immediate, that it took 30 years before the trade would be abolished, during which time 'three times as many Negroes were shipped from Africa as before', and even within a ship named, quite blasphemously the 'S.S. "Jesus"'.⁵⁹ An American post-Civil War 'Emancipation Moment' is

⁵⁵ Rhodes House, BFASS, Mss Brit Emp, S23 H1 21, 1.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Sherwood, *Pastor Daniels Ekarte*, 78; Rhodes House, BFASS, Mss Brit Emp, S23 H1 21, 1.

⁵⁸ Rhodes House, BFASS, Mss Brit Emp, S23 H1 21, 2.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

however presented within a section on Abraham Lincoln, that 'when the clock struck twelve', Lincoln 'announced that the First of August had arrived, and exclaimed: "You are all free"'.⁶⁰ The pamphlet closes with a list of significant dates for the history of slavery and abolition which are constructed within a Christian framework, starting in 1102 when 'Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury denounced and forbade slave traffic', a starting point also used by Sir John Harris in his lecture given in Liverpool Cathedral October 29th 1933.⁶¹

In August 1934, Pastor Daniels addressed his congregation in commemorative sermons which diverged from the paternalistic and celebratory tones of those given by Catholic and Methodist speakers.⁶² Daniels turns the focus of the commemorative discourse away from abolitionists and emancipators to enslaved Africans and, through association, to those who were responsible for imposing such cruelty, drawing on abolitionist language to emphasise this, describing such conditions as the 'horrors of slavery', a phrase used by, among others, William Wilberforce in 1789, black Scottish-West Indian radical Robert Wedderburn in the early nineteenth century and later, African-American Abolitionist Frederick Douglass.⁶³ Pastor Ekarte further stated that:

There are still too many people [...] eager to discover the worst in us. My race, of which I am proud, has many good qualities, not least of which is the ability to think the best of those who so often think the worst of us... My people believe that the problems of the present and the future could be solved through careful and sympathetic study of the past.⁶⁴

Daniels draws on history not to justify contemporary power relationships or even religious conversion as leaders of Liverpool's other missions had done, but to contextualise

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 5; Lecture given by Sir John Harris, Liverpool Cathedral, October 29th 1933, notes in Rhodes House, BFASS, Mss Brit Emp, S22 G412.

⁶² "Abolition of Slavery Anniversary," *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, July 30, 1934; Sherwood, *Pastor Daniels Ekarte*, 42.

⁶³ William Wilberforce. *On the Horrors of the Slave Trade*. Speech, available at <http://www.bartleby.com/268/4/8.html> [accessed May 8 2013], Robert Rev of Jamaica Wedderburn, *The Horrors of Slavery exemplified in the life and history of the Rev. Robert Wedderburn ... ; with remarks on, and illustrations of the treatment of the blacks, and a view of their degraded state, and the disgusting licentiousness of the planters* (London 1824). Frederick Douglass, "The Horrors of Slavery and England's Duty to Free the Bondsman: An Address Delivered in Taunton, England, on September 1, 1846." *Somerset County Gazette*, September 5, 1846. Blassingame, John (et al, eds.). *The Frederick Douglass Papers: Series One--Speeches, Debates, and Interviews*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979. Vol. I, p. 371. Available online <http://www.yale.edu/glc/archive/1081.htm> [accessed May 8 2013]

⁶⁴ Daniels Ekarte quoted in "Liverpool Letter: From Our Correspondent," *West Africa*, August 9, 1934.

contemporary circumstance, to explain discrimination and place racist attitudes in a logical chronology which can be realised with care and sympathy. Ekarte's sermons foreground the ill-treatment of African descended people historically, and by extension contemporarily. Despite coming from a missionary background, and framing his experience in Liverpool in such terms,⁶⁵ discursively, Ekarte's sermons and writings align far more closely with contemporary black political discourse than to anything being said locally by his white religious missionary neighbours, or, indeed the national Anti-Slavery Society.⁶⁶ Perhaps most comparable to his statements is the speech made by Dr Harold Moody, President of the League of Coloured Peoples in Hull, July 1933.⁶⁷ Ekarte had had contact with the League during the 1930s, having spoken at their annual conference in 1934 which took as its subject 'The Negro in the world today', with a special feature being published in the Spring 1937 edition of the League's newsletter about the African Mission.⁶⁸ Moody's speech merged dominant authoritative discourse concerning the positive representation of the emancipation hero currently being so publically celebrated in Hull and around the country with a discussion of black pride in the face of contemporary anti-black racism and discrimination. Reiterating a familiar language of Christian martyrdom increasingly attached to the memory of Wilberforce, having seen the Emancipation Bill pass before his dying eyes, suggesting that 'Wilberforce did not die in vain' since African people had 'fully justified the sacrifice and work of our liberators' and that his standing in Hull at that time, giving this speech, was some testament to that achievement.⁶⁹ Moody also challenges the portrayal of black passive acceptance of emancipation, suggesting that 'emancipation would never have been possible had my ancestors not fully demonstrated

⁶⁵ Ekarte states in his biography that he fully intended to return to Africa as a 'holy man to preach to thousands in my native land, to win Itu, Ikot-Ekperere and the adjacent districts for Christ and His Kingdom'. Rhodes House, BFASS, Mss Brit Emp, S23 H1 21, 7.

⁶⁶ Ekarte had been in contact with the Anti-Slavery Society in 1934 requesting but ultimately not receiving funding in support of his work. Funding was only given to the African Churches Mission after the death of Sir John Harris, when the leadership passed to Barbadian C.W.W. Greenidge, see Sherwood, *Pastor Daniels Ekarte*, 99. Rhodes House, BFASS, Mss Brit Emp, S23 H1 21, 7.

⁶⁷ Hull civic authorities had requested the assistance of the League in relation to their commemorations for the centenary of the death of William Wilberforce during the week of July 23rd to 30th ""The Keys" Disclose -," *The Keys* 1, no. 1 (1933); "Editor's Mailbag: Letter from Lord Mayor of Hull," *The Keys* 1, no. 3 (1934). *The Keys* was the Official Organ of The League of Coloured Peoples and ran from July 1933 to September 1939.

⁶⁸ David Tucker, "Editorial," *The Keys* 2, no. 2 (1934); Pastor G.D Ekarte, "Liverpool's Coloured Centre," *The Keys* 4, no. 4 (1937). Further to this, Ekarte also made attempts to reinvigorate a Liverpool branch of the League and the League also publically supported the Mission and his work. "Rev. G. Daniels Ekarte," *The Keys* 5, no. 1 (1937).

⁶⁹ Dr Harold Moody, quoted in "The Wilberforce Centenary Celebrations Hull July 23rd-29th," *The Keys* 1, no. 2 (1933).

the fact of our humanity'. Like Ekarte, Moody draws attention to the 'sins' responsible for slavery rather than the heroics of its abolition, that it was 'not on the sins of my own people, but mainly or entirely because of the sins, selfishness and short-sightedness of your own people'.

Like other commentators during these commemorative years, Moody also calls for a continuation of emancipatory action as the appropriate way to remember past abolitionists. However, unlike the religious or Anti-Slavery Society speakers mentioned previously, the focus of Moody's liberation falls upon white British psychological legacies of slavery, calling for his Hull audience to honour their 'great citizen' Wilberforce by carrying on his work and 'seeking to emancipate yourselves from any slave mentality which still exists and to emancipate us from the results of such slave mentality'.⁷⁰

Heroes of abolition, with William Wilberforce most prominently at the helm, led the commemorative proceedings during the Centenary of Emancipation in 1933 and 1934, be it through a promotion of civic patriotism in Hull, religious identity in calls for missionary action, or within black political speech. The creation and accumulation of martyr-heroes of anti-slavery continued into the later nineteenth century, where martyrs were made fighting against both slavery and irreligion, the greatest of all martyrs being missionaries who also fought against enslavement.⁷¹ William Johnston has also suggested that the celebration of heroes, 'celebrants' or 'luminaries' as he terms them has, however, come to replace significant parts of the religious calendar in the secular age. Celebrating the births and deaths of heroes, he suggests, forms part of the 'cult of anniversaries', which although discussed in the context of 1980s commemorative activity, bears some use in application to the commemoration of 'heroes' more generally. Johnston suggests that there is some comfort in the expectation that cultural figures will be remembered at round number anniversaries, following 50 or 100 years after either their birth or death, or usually both.⁷² He suggests that during these celebrations, these figures come to be 'carriers of national and regional heritage' relevant to the year in which they are being celebrated.⁷³ Although Johnston suggests that these commemorative

⁷⁰ Moody, quoted in *Ibid.* This 'slave mentality' would, in the commemorations of 1938, be translated by another author in the League's newsletter as an 'emancipation complex', which worked hard to spread 'propaganda to the effect that the abolition of slavery was a gift from heaven due to the efforts of a few reformers'. E.W., "That Emancipation Complex," *The Keys* 6, no. 2 (1938).

⁷¹ Rice, "The Missionary Context of the British Anti-Slavery Movement," 159.

⁷² William M. Johnston, *Celebrations: The Cult of Anniversaries in Europe and the United States Today* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1991), 21.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

years are, ironically for a secular calendar, largely down to the whims of the 'Great Schedule Maker in the sky', it is important nonetheless to keep in mind the active role of contemporary people within the commemorative process.⁷⁴ It takes conscious and often greatly orchestrated organisation to mark the centenary of a cultural figure's birth or death, and the activities undertaken are telling in their inclusions, omissions and 'uses' of historical figures. One such celebrand or luminary in Liverpool conforms to the martyr figure in Christian Emancipation memory, and his memory had continued to be used, re-used and perverted throughout successive anniversaries of his birth and death to suit contemporary circumstance.

Roscoeana: The Cult of William Roscoe

William Roscoe is Liverpool's version of the nation's martyr-hero, William Wilberforce. Held up as an abolitionist-hero for voting for the Abolition Act of 1807, Roscoe receives martyr-status through stories outlining varying levels of violence he suffered at the hands of angry Liverpoolians upon returning from Parliament. He too made great sacrifices, risking friendships and harm through his opposition to slavery, dying only two years before Wilberforce and the passing of the Emancipation Act, in 1831.

Roscoe's memory has, however, been fragmented through the discourse of commemoration. The memory-debate process surrounding Roscoe has diverged over how he should be remembered; for his literary and cultural credentials, which are largely seen as uncontroversial, or for his politics, a point which divides commentators in the first half of the nineteenth century. Subsequent revisions of memory in the twentieth century bring Roscoe's anti-slavery sentiments to the fore within a more comfortable British 'culture of abolitionism'. Discourse around Roscoe's round number anniversaries of life and death inform the memory debate surrounding his representation, constituting a distinct 'cult of anniversary'.⁷⁵ Varying aspects of Roscoe's life are stressed or downplayed at different points in time meaning that different versions of William Roscoe have been drawn out of a schizophrenic catalogue of his character. Significantly, this is an interactive process in which commemorative actions from one anniversary influence further memory work in subsequent anniversaries in relation not only to Roscoe's round numbers but others in Liverpool's history, especially those connected with slavery.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 24.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

This contested process begins with the public discourse immediately surrounding the announcement of Roscoe's death. William Roscoe died 30th June 1831 and on the day his death was announced in the local press, 1st July, *The Liverpool Mercury* was celebrating its own round number anniversary of 20 years since publication. The announcement of Roscoe's death ran directly after a piece concerning the *Mercury's* history of humanitarian and liberal ideals, and its promotion of 'the moral, social, and political improvement of our fellow men, of every country and every complexion' were foregrounded.⁷⁶ The paper states that some of these objectives have been achieved, and in an asterisked footnote the first Liverpool name stated in relation to such achievements is Roscoe's.⁷⁷ The piece immediately below this paragraph is the announcement of the death of 79 year old William Roscoe, made whilst ink from 'the foregoing paragraph was scarcely dry'.⁷⁸ Roscoe is described as 'a philanthropist, a patriot, and a literary man', who had far-reaching fame, that 'not only in his own country, but throughout civilised Europe' he is known. This point was repeated in one article which frames Roscoe's fame, literacy and culture against criticisms of his hometown that 'the learned of all countries have heard with surprise that Liverpool, once only known for its enormous commercial wealth, and its local and political importance, has given birth to the most distinguished of the historians of Europe'.⁷⁹ Two lines of poetry are quoted, adapted from their original use as John Dryden's epitaph, 'substituting the name of one poet for that of another', replacing the name of a former poet Laureate.

Reader, attend,-the sacred dust below
Was Roscoe once,-the rest who does not know.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ "Completion of the Twentieth Year of the Mercury," *The Liverpool Mercury*, July 1, 1831.

⁷⁷ In the very first few editions of the paper in 1811 Roscoe wrote letters to Henry Brougham (1778–1868), Whig candidate for Liverpool at this time, advocating for Parliamentary Reform, and the article outlines how this would later become a cause for which Brougham showed support (as Lord Chancellor) and that Roscoe may hopefully 'live to see the great experiment fairly tried. Ibid.

⁷⁸ "The Late William Roscoe, Esq," *The Liverpool Mercury*, July 1, 1831.

⁷⁹ "Monument to the Memory of Roscoe," *The Liverpool Mercury*, July 15, 1831.

⁸⁰ "The Late William Roscoe, Esq." Original lines by Alexander Pope in relation to John Dryden, intended as his epitaph on his monument in Westminster Abbey, erected by Sheffield Duke of Buckingham 'This Sheffield raised. — The sacred dust below / Was Dryden once; the rest who does not know.' From Theophilus Cibber and Robert Shiels, "The Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol II." (London: R. Griffiths, 1753), http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/The_lives_of_the_poets_of_Great_Britain.html?id=CzcJAAAAQAAJ&redir_esc=y [accessed June 5, 2013].

In relation to the context of these adapted lines, taken from Dryden's burial monument in Westminster Abbey, the piece claims that 'Roscoe needs no monument, except in the hearts of his numerous friends'. However, the need to find some way of memorialising Roscoe is expressed in relation to the 'debt of gratitude' Liverpool people owe to 'the memory of this excellent man'.⁸¹

In subsequent eulogies, Roscoe is described as an 'elegant and enlightened historian and scholar' publically and privately (among 'more immediate friends') expressing true Christian spirit, charity and firmness of opinion.⁸² His support for 'civil and religious liberty' and in particular his work advocating for Parliamentary Reform is stressed, as is his concern for prison discipline.⁸³ Perhaps his support for the abolition of slavery is hinted at in the lines '[t]he moral courage and integrity of mind which it required to maintain his opinions in earlier life, can only be fully estimated by those who know the circumstances in which he commenced his career in the world'.⁸⁴

Public discourse surrounding Roscoe's life at this point touched problematically on his opposition to slavery, appearing in opaque hints or embedded within general assessments of his support for 'the unhappy outcasts of society'.⁸⁵ However, a very personal account sent to the local press by a 'fair townswoman' who had known Roscoe for 13 years, does reference his anti-slavery sentiments. In a long letter, taking up close to an entire column in the *Mercury*, the author stresses Roscoe's support for abolition in the face of opposition from his own townsmen, claiming this to be more important than his advocacy of literature and the arts:

The slave trade flourished, and was a prolific source of wealth and aggrandisement to many of his contemporaries and associates. He condemned it with an uncompromising steadfastness; he kept the interests of human nature in view, and disregarded the

⁸¹ "The Late William Roscoe, Esq."

⁸² "Death of William Roscoe, Esq," *The Liverpool Mercury*, July 1, 1831.

⁸³ *Ibid.* Roscoe is also described as a 'friend of civil and religious liberty' in a eulogy within the London-based *Morning Chronicle*, quoted within "The Late William Roscoe, extract from Morning Chronicle," *The Liverpool Mercury*, July 8, 1831.

⁸⁴ "Death of William Roscoe, Esq."

⁸⁵ T.S.T., "Letter: Proposal for Erecting a Monument to the Memory of Roscoe," *The Liverpool Mercury*, July 22, 1831. The author is most likely Dr Thomas Stewart Traill (1781-1862), originally from Orkney but moved to Liverpool in 1804 where he established a medical practice and became a part of Liverpool's cultural elite and of Roscoe's social circle. "Traill, Thomas Stewart (1781-1862)," Brenda M. White in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, , <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27662> (accessed June 26, 2013)

clamour and hostility that assailed him. As "the lion shakes the dew-drops from his mane," he made light of impediments that would have suspended the usefulness of an inferior nature, opposing, as he did, the prejudices and pecuniary interests of a numerous class of his townsmen, yet so deep was their conviction, as a body, of his superior merits, that they sent him as their representative to Parliament, where he had the proud satisfaction of being amongst those who decided that our country should no more be disgraced by a traffic in mankind. On this question he had long fought the good fight, and he shared in the glorious reward of a triumph so dear to humanity.⁸⁶

In the national press, by comparison, Roscoe's opposition to the slave trade is more easily referenced; in the *Morning Chronicle* a eulogy presents his views against the general mercantile attitudes of his hometown.⁸⁷ Despite the *Mercury's* previous assertion that Roscoe's memory did not require a monument, the paper supported a call for one on the 15th July 1831, calling for contributions to the project.⁸⁸ One letter of support for the scheme considers it unthinkable that Liverpool people could 'permit the tomb to close over the remains of Roscoe, without some durable memorial of their admiration of his talents.'⁸⁹ The author suggests that not to give Roscoe a memorial on the grounds that great men do not require them is a cheap solution - 'a base and selfish apology, set up by avarice', and frames the need to memorialise Roscoe by foregrounding the construction of civic identity through competitive place comparisons:

...if the comparatively small town of Penzance, eager to record that it gave birth to Davy, has already decreed a pyramid of granite to the memory of its great philosopher, - shall opulent Liverpool be forgetful of what it owes to the memory of its Roscoe? Certainly not.⁹⁰

If small and perhaps thereby insignificant Penzance can undertake such civic duties to its heroes of place, so should Liverpool, a town continually aware of the accusations of cultural ignorance as a centre of commerce, not of arts. The author in turn calls for funds to be raised for a suitable '*public memorial*', its 'public' quality here stressed as significant through italics.

⁸⁶ F.M.S., "The Late Mr. Roscoe," *The Liverpool Mercury*, July 22, 1831.

⁸⁷ Not, however, all his zeal for the local interests of that great mart of commerce could prevail over that more enlarged passion of philanthropy which he cherished throughout life. He was among the first to denounce the slave trade (in one of his early poems) and he had the happiness to assist in the deliberations of the Legislature which ratified its abolition. "The Late William Roscoe, extract from *Morning Chronicle*."

⁸⁸ John Gibson is suggested as sculptor for this memorial. "Monument to the Memory of Roscoe."

⁸⁹ T.S.T., "Letter: Proposal for Erecting a Monument to the Memory of Roscoe."

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

In a public (though sparsely attended) meeting held to discuss the proposed memorial, William Wallace Currie (1784-1840), son of the physician and Robert Burns biographer James Currie (1756-1805), suggested that, in light of Roscoe's international fame, it was the duty of the citizens of Liverpool 'to let foreigners see that they had not been less conscious of the great and admirable qualities of their illustrious townsman than foreigners were.'⁹¹ A physical memorial, it was supposed, would be one way of demonstrating this. The form the monument should take caused some debate, and suggestions included a public fountain, bronze statue and observatory. Roscoe's opposition to slavery was raised in a letter by a W.J. Roberts⁹² and read aloud by William Rathbone within this meeting, in which it was suggested that Roscoe could rest easy having seen so many causes close to his heart realised, such as 'the abolition of slavery'. To this, Roberts asks whether Liverpool will appear 'ungrateful and indifferent?' as it did when it permitted the sale of his library during bankruptcy. His birthplace, Mount Pleasant, also the title of one of his better known poems, was designated within this letter as an appropriate site of memory for Roscoe, '[t]his spot is become sacred to his memory', and it is here, Roberts suggests, that a Greco-Roman style monument would be most appropriate in the middle of an area the size of Abercromby Square. Interestingly, Roberts suggests that the design should incorporate allusions to Roscoe's work, one panel of which should show, ' "The Wrongs of Africa;" the manacles falling from the arms of the slaves &c.'.⁹³ However, Dr Traill responds that such 'political sentiments of Mr. Roscoe might give rise to differences of opinion, and might produce discord'.⁹⁴

Despite this meeting and such proposals, however, it would be some ten years before a dedicated public memorial to William Roscoe was created.⁹⁵ Efforts to memorialise William

⁹¹ "Monument to the Late Wm. Roscoe, Esq.," *The Liverpool Mercury*, August 5, 1831.

⁹² I suspect this is William Roberts (1767-1849), a barrister and writer based at this time in Clapham and who was close friends with William Wilberforce and Hannah More. More was also close to Roberts's sisters, and Roberts published a biography of More in 1834. He had also been made a commissioner in bankruptcy between 1812 and 1832 which would explain his comments on Roscoe's bankruptcy. G. Le G. Norgate, "Roberts, William (1767–1849)," rev. Rebecca Mills, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23778> (accessed June 26, 2013).

⁹³ W.J. Roberts, quoted in "Monument to the Late Wm. Roscoe, Esq.."

⁹⁴ This point was supported in the meeting by Ashton Yates. *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ However, alternative 'memory artefacts' were produced following Roscoe's death, with adverts appearing for a commemorative medal engraved by Scipio Clint, the King's medallist and *The Life of William Roscoe* by son, Henry Roscoe (1800-1833) coming out in 1833. "Advert: Medal of the Late William Roscoe, Esq.," *The Liverpool Mercury*, August 5, 1831; "News in Brief - Roscoe," *The Liverpool Mercury*, August 5, 1831.

Roscoe would continue to be haunted by Roscoe's opposition to slavery. In 1840, a brief press debate highlights this as an on-going process. A letter, written by 'A Native of Liverpool', asks why there was at this stage no memorial to Roscoe in Liverpool, and questions why Roscoe's 'memory should be apparently obliterated from our recollection', especially disgraceful for Liverpool, 'the wealth of whose Corporation is so generally known?'.⁹⁶ The Editor responds by publishing a note from J Mayer on the progression of a statue of Roscoe, undertaken by sculptor Francis Chantrey, which he states is nearing completion. Mayer also suggests that the location of the completed statue should be in front of the Lyceum Newsroom, facing Church Street, a point which the Editors support.⁹⁷ However, just over a month later, a critical letter is published in the *Standard* about this exchange. The author of this letter, 'G', suggests that there is controversy over memorialising Roscoe because of his political views:

From the manner in which this matter of a statue of Roscoe was first brought before the people of Liverpool, by an anonymous correspondent of the *Mercury*, it appears that it is not to be erected in honour of his literary, but of his political character; if so, then Delta is right in objecting to this being considered the work of the town.⁹⁸

The *Liverpool Standard and General Commercial Advertiser* (1832 to 1856), published twice weekly by Samuel Franceys, was set up as a conservative, Protestant voice. It took a stance against 'the groundswell of liberal sentiment that surrounded the Reform Bill' of which Roscoe was an advocate. Significantly, one of the leaders in the first issue of 1832 (November) advised voters to ignore 'the propaganda of the Anti-Slavery Society' and the paper openly supported colonial slavery on the grounds that 'Negroes' actual progress towards civilisation' was doubtful.⁹⁹ The *Mercury* and *Standard* were rival papers, the Editor of the *Mercury* suggesting that the letter from 'G' was a misrepresentation or even falsehood which does not merit surprise given 'that truth is rarely deemed a necessary auxiliary to Tory logic'.¹⁰⁰ Further, the editors of the *Mercury* suggest that G's statements are meant to 'prejudice the Tories, who are very numerous in the Lyceum Newsroom, against the motion, if it should ever be made, for

⁹⁶ A Native of Liverpool, "Letter: ROSCOE," *The Liverpool Mercury*, March 27, 1840.

⁹⁷ J. Mayer, "Letter: ROSCOE," *The Liverpool Mercury*, March 27, 1840.

⁹⁸ 'G' quoted in "Statue of Roscoe," *The Liverpool Mercury*, May 1, 1840.

⁹⁹ Information from Laurel Brake, Marysa Demoor, and Margaret Beetham, *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism: In Great Britain and Ireland* (Gent: Academia Press, 2009), 369-70.

¹⁰⁰ "Statue of Roscoe."

placing Mr. Roscoe's statue in the area of the building.'¹⁰¹ The Editor also draws attention to a letter from 1834 calling for a memorial to Roscoe in which his politics are not mentioned, suggesting that the original public subscription for a memorial would have been made on the merits of 'private worth and the literary reputation of a distinguished and lamented townsman' which gained support even from those who disagreed on his politics. 'G' also takes issue with the statue being erected 'by the town' if it is indeed to honour his politics, to which the Editor of the Mercury responds that the statue was in fact raised by 'voluntary contributions'. The statue had been commissioned in 1835 and was exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1840, then moved to the Liverpool Royal Institution in 1841, later transferred to St George's Hall in 1893 it was dropped and badly damaged.¹⁰²

During the centenary of Roscoe's birth (1853), a collection of what George Chandler has described as 'Roscoeana', material relating to William Roscoe and the commemorations was compiled by Roscoe's son-in-law, Thomas Brooks, the collection subsequently added to by Liverpool Libraries.¹⁰³ The collection included programmes of events for the 'Roscoe Festival' that year, paintings and illustrations of Roscoe and his life, the commemorative collection of his poems published in 1853, ribbons from his parliamentary campaign, and a lock of his hair (see Figure 15). Literature commemorating the centenary highlights Roscoe's anti-slavery sentiments in more depth than much of the press coverage around his death, particularly in a leaflet outlining events which present Roscoe's anti-slavery stance against Liverpool's own large investment in the trade:

In the town of Liverpool, which then received a profit of three or four hundred thousand a-year from the slave trade, and which did not at that time possess any other trade which produced the fourth-part of that profit, he began his war against that

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Terry Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of Liverpool* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997), 284-5.

¹⁰³ Chandler, *William Roscoe of Liverpool*, 135; Thomas Brooks, *Centenary of William Roscoe: The Philanthropist, Poet & Historian. Album containing a collection of pamphlets, news cuttings, portraits, illustrations, election ribbons, etc.* (Liverpool:1853). 'Roscoeana' was a phrase in use in nineteenth century Liverpool for Roscoe-related subjects. One letter to the Liverpool Albion was titled 'Roscoeana' by James Boardman and concerned the issue of Roscoe's birthplace. Clipping found in Brooks (above citation)



Figure 15: William Roscoe's hair, in Brooks *Centenary of William Roscoe*

detestable traffic in the year 1771, before he was twenty years of age, and never ceased it until he appeared as member for Liverpool, in the House of Commons, to vote for its abolition.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ The Roscoe Centenary in Brooks, *Centenary of William Roscoe*.

The piece draws attention to the lack of leader articles and newspapers who could promote the cause, especially since many of those which were in circulation were funded by ‘the patronage of the slave-dealers’. William Roscoe is presented as the sole reason people in Liverpool were alerted to the wrongs of slavery, without Roscoe, the article suggests, ‘the people of Liverpool would scarcely have had anyone to warn them that man-stealing was a crime’. Interestingly, the article aligns Roscoe’s position in Liverpool to abolitionists in the contemporary US South, suggesting that ‘[f]or nearly thirty years the position of Roscoe in Liverpool was nearly as painful (though not so dangerous) as that of an Abolitionist would be at the present time at Charleston or New Orleans.’¹⁰⁵

The birth centenary in 1853 inspired new calls for public memorials to Roscoe, in addition to the statue, Roscoe Street and Roscoe Lane, with one commentator suggesting that Lime Street be renamed Roscoe Street as it was in a more prominent position and the first street to greet visitors by train.¹⁰⁶ A monument was at this time erected in the churchyard where Roscoe was buried in Renshaw Street.¹⁰⁷

During the centenary of Roscoe’s death in 1931 lengthy press articles celebrated Roscoe in ways which emphasised his ‘rags to riches story’, mirroring Liverpool’s own narrative, through specific lines of trade.¹⁰⁸ Roscoe is said to have ‘educated himself and rose to eminence’, was a ‘botanist who started by labouring in potato-fields’. This is presented against his contradictions as a public figure, ‘execrated by the mob, yet given the freedom of his city’, he was ‘a banker who crashed from wealth to poverty’, perhaps also like Liverpool at this point during the Depression era of the 1930s. Roscoe’s opposition to slavery is mentioned but out of chronological sequence at the very end of his life, breaking from the otherwise narrative biographical structure of the article and highlighting this opposition through triumph and achievement:

Roscoe’s hatred of the slave trade on which Liverpool thrived was first recorded in verse when he was nineteen. Nor did his concern for slaves welfare end with the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Civic “Roscoe Memorials” clipping in Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ James Picton states that the monument was erected by worshippers of the church in 1856 and its inscription described Roscoe as ‘Historian, poet, patriot, and Christian philanthropist’. Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool Vol 1*, 433

¹⁰⁸ “A Maker of Liverpool - Life and Work of William Roscoe,” *Liverpool Post and Mercury*, June 24, 1931.

triumphant abolition of the trade, a triumph for which, as a Member of Parliament, he shared the credit.¹⁰⁹

The place for moral celebration of Roscoe, perhaps more so than his literary credentials alone, seems more acceptable by this point. Perhaps this is, as one article suggests because '[t]ime clarifies our estimates of our fellows', meaning that 'in Roscoe's case, we can now perceive his towering moral stature as distinguished from the concrete manifestations of his career'.¹¹⁰ The passing of time may have alleviated some of the sensitivities around celebrating Roscoe's moral stance on issues close to the hearts of Liverpool's mercantile elite. The promotion of Roscoe's stance against slavery, moreover and his reframing as an abolitionist-hero also aligns more acceptably with preparations for the centenary of emancipation and centenary of the death of William Wilberforce. This version of Roscoe also corresponded to national discourses of Britain's anti-slavery empire in the later nineteenth century, presenting a nationally relevant 'hero' during a time of much economic uncertainty for Liverpool. His greatest strengths are presented as his 'energies' for change and action, which included being 'a channel for the emancipatory fervour of the period. His active opposition to the slave trade, in Parliament and in the Press, obviously required no little courage in those days'.¹¹¹ Courage, energy and an active stance on political issues were qualities relevant to 1930s Liverpool and indeed Britain, some of which has been continued since 'it is pleasant to think that in the century which has passed since 1831, Liverpool, despite the growing urgency of material preoccupations, has never ceased to forward the ideals he set forth.'¹¹²

Following the centenary celebrations, the Roscoe family donated his private papers to the Picton Library.¹¹³ The donation of these papers, 'together with the shabby old chest, in which they have always lived' were given to the library as 'a mark of appreciation of the Roscoe Centenary Exhibition' that year, a move which in turn led to the production of a new

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ "William Roscoe," *Liverpool Post and Mercury*, June 30, 1931.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ A further donation was also made by a great-granddaughter of Roscoe's, Lady Margaret Mallet. "Liverpool Corporation has reaped a rich reward...", *Liverpool Post and Mercury*, November 23, 1931.

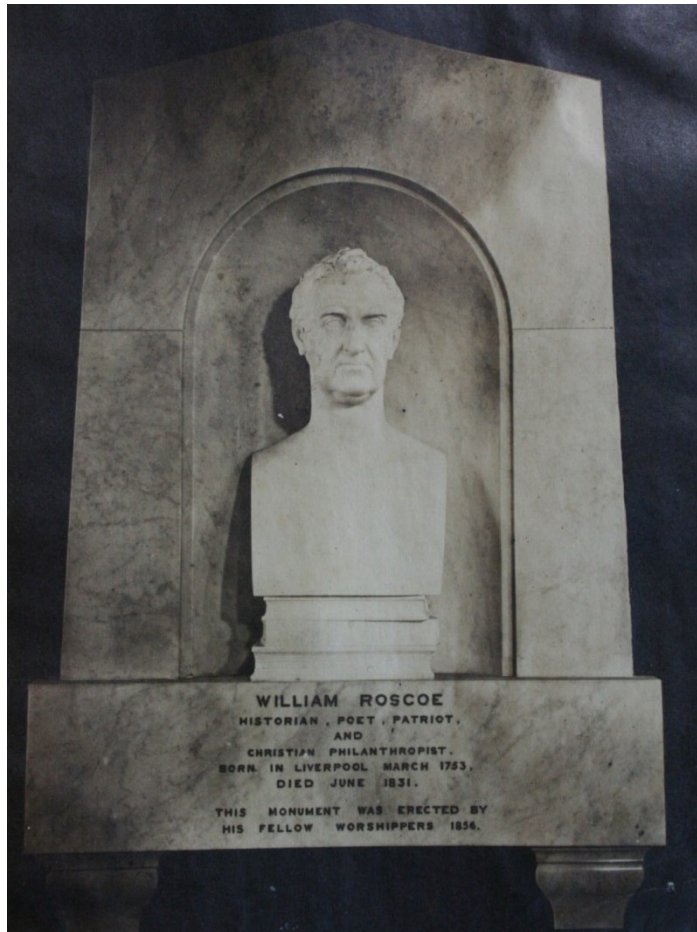


Figure 16: Roscoe Monument in Ullet Road Chapel, from Brooks *Centenary of William Roscoe*

biography researched and written by City Librarian George Chandler.¹¹⁴ Chandler's biography of Roscoe, which included a fuller collection of his poetry than had previously been published, was sponsored by the city council, and published to coincide with Roscoe's bicentenary of birth in 1953. In Sir Alfred Shennan's lengthy and detailed introduction to this book (at points more detailed than Chandler's main text), Roscoe is presented as the 'founder of Liverpool culture'.¹¹⁵ Shennan suggests that the book is important for re-evaluating William Roscoe and his impact on Liverpool, to see his achievements and his influence in the context of 'a town which throughout his life was chiefly hostile to his ideals', and the conflicts of having to do business, especially banking, in a town which dealt in slave-trading is again highlighted.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ LRO, Liverpool, Roscoe Papers: correspondence, newscuttings, lists, etc. concerning the books, manuscripts, drawings, etc. relating to William Roscoe, donated by members of the Roscoe family. 820.1 PAP Letter from William Roscoe, jnr, to the City Librarian ; J.J. Bagley, "The Bicentenary of William Roscoe," *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 105(1954).

¹¹⁵ Alfred Shennan, 'Introduction' in Chandler, *William Roscoe of Liverpool*, xv.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Chandler presents Roscoe as central to Liverpool's cultural development, almost as the embodiment of Liverpool's renaissance, since 'there is hardly any movement or institution in modern Liverpool which does not owe some part of its existence or tradition to his work.'¹¹⁷

Chandler stresses Roscoe's anti-slavery activities through hyperbole and generalisation, and against a discursive mitigation of the extent of Liverpool's involvement and financial benefit from the slave trade, since he was 'leader of the movement against the slave trade (although this was believed to be the foundation of Liverpool's prosperity)', specifically only 'believed' to be foundational. However, within the chapter titled, amusingly, 'Marriage and the Slave Trade',¹¹⁸ covering the years 1781-1790, Chandler does acknowledge the significance of the slave trade to Liverpool, though this is done in a manner which avoids exploration of its impacts and workings in the town in favour of a discussion of privateering and the French Revolution, apparently for contextual reasons. Familiar discursive lines are drawn upon within the (brief) discussion of slavery, that Liverpool 'secured large portions of the traffic in negro slaves, leaving their chief rivals, London and Bristol, far behind. Slaves were not, of course, brought to Liverpool in large numbers'.¹¹⁹

That year, a church ceremony was held in Ullet Road and a commemorative event also took place at the Bluecoat Hall which was attended by 400 people including Roscoe's descendants. Mr. J. Chuter Ede, M.P. for South Shields and former Home Secretary spoke at the event, describing Roscoe as 'a man who fought for causes which now had triumphed and were part of the English heritage', suggesting that a lack of informal education may have led him to his moral beliefs. Alternatively, Rev Lawrence Redfern, a Unitarian minister claimed his religious faith enabled him to see through his public-spirited notions, even in relation to slavery where it might have seemed he was wrong:

I often think that the worst that can befall a reformer is to find that the emancipated have themselves turned into tyrants like the slaves of St. Domingo or the French revolutionaries. That happened to Roscoe; but he was right and his panic-stricken contemporaries were wrong.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 2.

¹¹⁸ The connection made in this title apparently due to biographical chronology, against expressed through a martyr framework, that '[i]t is typical of Roscoe that he should have devoted the first year of his married life to the preparation of material for this idealistic poem', referring to *The Wrongs of Africa*. Ibid., 60.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ "400 honour Liverpool historian," *Liverpool Daily Post*, March 9th 1953.

In longer press articles about Roscoe at this time, he is again presented as a versatile Renaissance man, as '[p]oet, artist, philosopher, historian, agriculturalist, botanist, politician and philanthropist – he was all these things and a capable lawyer and business man as well'.¹²¹ A point is made about Roscoe having been 'one of the first to denounce' the slave trade but 'could hope for little support in the city which was one of the chief centres of the traffic.'¹²²

A wreath laying ceremony took place in 1953 at Roscoe's grave in Roscoe Gardens, Mount Pleasant, led by the Lord Mayor (Alderman A. Morrow), with red roses symbolic of Roscoe's Lancashire roots and Cyprus leaves for his associations with Italy.¹²³ The Roscoe Gardens remain on the site of the original graveyard of Renshaw Street Chapel today, where an octagonal domed memorial sits centrally, commemorating the church.¹²⁴ The monument had a memorial plaque which commemorated some of the people who were buried in the grounds including William Roscoe, without an assessment of his character.¹²⁵

In memory of / the worshippers / within its walls / and of / William Roscoe
/ Joseph Blanco White / and all who were laid to rest / in this ground.¹²⁶

However, abolitionism creeps into Roscoe's abbreviated memories on plaques and guides addressing places of memory in Liverpool, in the later twentieth century. Within close vicinity to Roscoe Gardens, are the Roscoe Head pub on Roscoe Street and Roscoe Arms on Renshaw Street, both of which, according to a 2004 guide 'are named after William Roscoe, writer, anti-slavery campaigner, and cultural giant'.¹²⁷ A black plaque was erected on the memorial in Roscoe Gardens as part of a scheme to replace the 'blue-plaque style' colour coded system

¹²¹ I.W.P. Roberts, "After 200 Years Liverpool Still Honours His Name - The Life and Fame of William Roscoe," *Liverpool Daily Post*, March 6 1953.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ "Roscoe Bi-Centenary Wreath," *Liverpool Daily Post*, March 7, 1953; "Civic tribute on City Poet's Bi-Centenary," *Liverpool Daily Post*, March 6, 1953.

¹²⁴ Erected in 1905 it was built by the architect Thomas Shelmerdine and designed by Ronald P Jones. Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of Liverpool*, 116; Sharples and Pollard, *Liverpool*, 210.

¹²⁵ Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of Liverpool*, 116.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ David Lewis, *Walks Through History: Liverpool* (Liverpool: Breedon Books Publishing, 2004), 168.



Figure 17: Memorial plaque currently in Roscoe Gardens. Photograph by Author.

previously run by the Liverpool Heritage Bureau (city council) after 2005.¹²⁸ The plaque, placed after the 250th anniversary of Roscoe's birth in 2003, and in the year the International Slavery Museum was announced, centralises Roscoe's 'abolitionist' identity neatly and succinctly, memorializing him simply as 'William Roscoe MP / Solicitor & Slavery Abolitionist / 'Greatest of Liverpool's Citizens''.

Conclusion

Processes of reframing Roscoe's character and credentials have followed the ebbs and flows of time and sensibilities. Across centenaries and bicentenaries of life, death and emancipation, Roscoe's anti-slavery sentiments, once a dissonant piece of Roscoe's memory puzzle in the nineteenth century, are foregrounded to elevate his position as Liverpool' great abolitionist-martyr-hero in the twentieth century. Roscoe is, in this sense, a 'usable' past, much like the anniversaries abolition and emancipation. The centenary of the emancipation act in 1933 and 1934 demonstrated the use of a particular memory of emancipation for contemporary colonial and missionary activity. Both the centenaries of heroes and of 'heroic endeavour' demonstrate the use of memory in context with broader identity narratives of civic pride and identity,

¹²⁸ Frankie Roberto and Carl Winstanley (Liverpool City Council), "Freedom of Information Act Requested by Roberto Frankie February 26, 2009," https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/blue_plaque_scheme_2 (accessed March 24, 2014).

religious and imperial expansion or, indeed, a more critical black political discourse. Pastor Ekarte and Dr Harold Moody both used the memory of slavery and emancipation, as well as the dominant discourse of the commemorative years concerning white abolitionist heroes, to reveal and contest experiences of racial discrimination as a legacy of this history. Towards the end of the twentieth century, dedicated annual months to black history and annual days for the memory of slavery, begin to shift the focus from emancipation and abolition to enslavement. However, through ritual performance and the life-cycles of events calendars the black experience is 'segregated' through memory work, in time and theme.

Segregated Memories: Black History Month and Slavery Remembrance Day

Black History Month (BHM) and Slavery Remembrance Day (SRD) hold commemorative significance as annually repeated events which seek to actively 'remember' or raise awareness of specific subjects within restricted yet recurring temporal frames. Michael Geisler has suggested that such commemorations lack power as they do not repeat daily and in different contexts, in the way flags, national colours, music etc. do.¹ They are singular and do not form part of a broader web of meaning which can infiltrate subconsciously through sight and sound in ways which sometimes pass us by, yet nonetheless form a background murmur of subliminal symbolism.² Furthermore, when they do occur they are 'too intrusive' to accompany other symbols of identity in harmonious ways, shouting their meaning too explicitly.³ Nonetheless, the instigation of a commemorative moment, can act to raise awareness of an area which has previously been marginalised. However, Andrew Cossu questions how useful such 'routinized (*sic*)' memory work is for identity groups wanting to create public recognition of cultural trauma, suggesting that through a process of institutionalisation, a 'mundane, routinized version of memory' may be produced.⁴

There has been considerable debate surrounding the introduction of Holocaust Memorial Day in Britain and criticisms by commentators echoed some of the points above.

¹ Michael E Geisler, "The Calendar Conundrum: National Days as Unstable Signifiers," in *National Days: Constructing and Mobilising National Identity*, ed. David McCrone and Gayle McPherson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 16.

² *Ibid.*, 17.

³ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁴ Andrew Cossu, "Difficult Days and National Calendars: Italy, Cultural Trauma and *Giorno di Ricordo*," in *National Days: Constructing and Mobilising National Identity*, ed. David McCrone and Gayle McPherson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 168.

Dan Stone suggested that the allocation of a 'day' to remember the Holocaust could lead to it being 'forgotten' the rest of the year, and would simultaneously enable disengagement through non-participation.⁵ In response to these criticisms, David Cesarani suggests Stone's fears about disengagement were unfounded given the 63 percent visitor number increase at Imperial War Museum's Holocaust exhibition.⁶ However, the ways in which visitors were engaging with this exhibition is not fully examined. Furthermore, Sharon MacDonald and Mark Levene have expressed concerns over the memorialisation of a history in which Britain largely engages with its involvement through narratives of heroism and moral right. They also highlight how such a history can be used in ways which justify contemporary conflicts (in particular the Iraq War); an objective Levene suggests misappropriates the Holocaust to support international actions in the post-Cold War era.⁷ Was this the narrative visitors came to experience? And what about voyeurism; were people there to experience the pornography of death and torture? Footfall alone does not tell the whole story.

Stone's most poignant observation about Holocaust Memorial Day in relation to comparisons with BHM and SRD, however, is that people might feel they have in some way 'done' remembering the Holocaust. Having fulfilled this obligation, they can quietly ignore this history for the other 364 days of the year, that 'what memorial days actually do is relieve the community of the burden of memory, for here is an established day on which everyone can express their grief before heading off and forgetting about it.'⁸ This in turn enables a process of memorial segregation, where 'memory is channelled' into a particular place (or place in time).

Black History Month

⁵ The plans for Holocaust Memorial Day were announced by Foreign Secretary Robin Cook on 26th January 2000 and the 27th January was chosen as the annual date of remembrance as the day in 1945 when Auschwitz was liberated by the Red Army. D. Stone, "Day of Remembrance or Day of Forgetting? Or, Why Britain Does Not Need a Holocaust Memorial Day," *Patterns of Prejudice* 34, no. 4 (2000): 53.

⁶ D. Cesarani, "Does the Singularity of the Holocaust make it Incomparable and Inoperative for Commemorating, Studying and Preventing Genocide? Britain's Holocaust Memorial Day as a Case Study," *Journal of Holocaust Education* 10, no. 2 (2001).

⁷ Sharon Macdonald, "Commemorating the Holocaust: Reconfiguring National Identity in the Twenty-First Century," in *The Politics of Heritage: The Legacies of 'Race'*, ed. Jo Littler and Roshi Naidoo (London: Routledge, 2005); Mark Levene, "Britain's Holocaust Memorial Day: A Case of Post-Cold War Wish-Fulfilment, or Brazen Hypocrisy?," *Human Rights Review* 7, no. 3 (2006).

⁸ Stone, "Day of Remembrance or Day of Forgetting?," 56.

Black History Month in the UK (BHM) has been running in London from 1987. It sought to promote knowledge and understanding of black history, culture and heritage as a way of encouraging the formation of more positive black British identities and perceptions of black British people.⁹ Whilst this does not, indeed should not, mean a forum for discussing slavery as 'black history', the two have historically converged. As Paul Gilroy suggests, slavery is 'somehow assigned to blacks', becoming 'our special property rather than part of the ethical and intellectual heritage of the West as a whole.'¹⁰ Much of the history of Liverpool's involvement in slavery and the history of the Liverpool black presence are told entwined, transatlantic slavery perhaps acting as a useful 'starting point' for talking about the Liverpool black presence, as well as, crucially, a starting point for addressing historic and contemporary racism in the city. With this in mind, it might be expected that, given Liverpool's historic black community, BHM would be marked on a large scale or, at least, in a significant way. However, BHM was not marked by local authorities until the early 2000s and has not played a particularly significant role in the civic calendar until relatively recently. An alternative argument might suggest that, given the long history of a black presence in the city, the aims and objectives set out by BHM had already been met, if not by the local authority than internally within the black community, by educational initiatives within community centres, city elders and by colleges such as the Charles Wootton College. Whilst this may well be the case, part of the objectives of BHM were also to educate everyone else, to share black history as British history and facilitate a more informed dialogue between different groups of people. BHM can be, if nothing else, a calendric prompt for the promotion of black history, a reason, as if it were needed, to bridge gaps, open dialogue and raise issues relevant to Liverpool's black community. Given the long-standing political tensions, racism and conflicts between the black community and local authorities in Liverpool, this reoccurring, nationally endorsed opportunity to foreground black history, heritage and culture might seem a natural one for Liverpool council to seize. That this has not, in a significant way, happened until very recently, is intriguing. Further, where events have been held, they have rarely focused on black *history* or issues directly related to the Liverpool black experience, facing criticism of tokenism and triviality (see below). Where slavery emerges, rightly or wrongly, in the midst of such events, the subject is enveloped within lists of more positive, celebratory entertainment-focused scheduling, creating a distinct commemorative dissonance. Slavery emerges in BHM in

⁹ "About Black History Month," Black History 365, http://www.black-history-month.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=223&Itemid=57 (accessed July 2, 2013).

¹⁰ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), 49.

Liverpool through pre-existing memory work, through trails and literature, or as part of a milieu of generalised 'black' culture which sits somewhat uncomfortably with other events.

BHM is a contested commemorative period. There has been much criticism over the idea of having one month set aside for addressing black history. This has been succinctly captured most notably in the US by actor Morgan Freeman who criticised black history being consigned to a month, stating 'I don't want Black History Month. Black History is American History.'¹¹ Other critics of American BHM question whether the activities are mere tokenism, or, perhaps worse, are predominantly commercial events – a month of marketing for publishers who focus titles related to African-American subjects for release during this time.¹² Carter G. Woodson, creator of US Negro History Week in 1926, had hoped that the event 'would outlive its usefulness' and become integrated with American History in more mainstream ways.¹³ Criticisms of the 'ghettoization' of black history in this way are made by UK commentators who also draw attention to the way 'black' is articulated in the UK to mean anyone who isn't white, diffusing the focus beyond African and Caribbean descended people.¹⁴ Delroy Constantine-Simms sees this as a process of cultural generalisation which may lead to identity obliteration, a movement away from addressing the histories of African-descended groups, suggesting that 'it's only a matter of time before it becomes Multicultural History Month before being called Urban History Month, to no celebrations at all'.¹⁵ Similarly, singer and writer Cy Grant suggested that Black History Month was 'a mere distraction or act of appeasement' which black organisations bought into, subsequently becoming dependent on state funding.¹⁶ This was also a point made by Liverpool respondent Scott in relation to black organisations in Liverpool.¹⁷

¹¹ Morgan Freeman, quoted in "Putting the Black into History," http://www.black-history-month.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=76:our-story&id=215:putting-the-black-into-history [accessed July 1, 2013].

¹² John Hope Franklin et al., "Black History Month: Serious Truth Telling or a Triumph in Tokenism?," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 18 (1998): 87.

¹³ *Ibid.*: 88.

¹⁴ Delroy Constantine-Simms, "Black History Month in Britain," *Black History* 365, <http://www.black-history-month.co.uk/sitea/articles/blackhistoryinbritain.html> [accessed May 22, 2012].

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Cy Grant, quoted in "Putting the Black into History."

¹⁷ 'Cause this is the problem. The black communities depend on council funding far too much. They should be in a system, and a situation whereby they raise money for themselves. If you have to appeal to rich black men and women throughout the world – do it. If you have to raise dances, street raffles, whatever – do it. But don't depend on government, don't depend on city councils. And the reason why,

Although initiated in London, other councils around the UK organised similar events from the years immediately following 1987. In Liverpool however, official (council-supported) BHM events were not organised until the early 2000s. The organisation was subsequently taken over by the Merseyside Black History Month Group (MBHMG) in 2003, which still organises the events today. Largely this was initiated by new funding allocations announced by the Heritage Lottery Fund specifically for community groups organising BHM events, through the Awards for All Scheme.¹⁸ From 2003, an Education Resource Pack was produced by representatives of local race relations groups to aid planning of BHM events in line with the 2000 Race Relations Act. These booklets included activity ideas and useful contacts within the Liverpool black community to facilitate communications. Links to slavery were made through NML and the TSG-run activities such as handling of the 'slavery collection', slavery archives in the MMM library, a slavery history trail and SRD. Further resources also included a Key Stage 2 resource with CD-Rom *The History of Liverpool Slavery*, an initiative funded by the city council and produced with NML as 'part of the City's public apology for its association with the slave trade'.¹⁹ Activities for BHM after this included a food festival, Black Achiever's Award ceremony, dance, music and drama performances and screenings of films amongst much more.

If, as one press article suggests, some activities were carried out in Liverpool as early as 1978, these were not covered by the mainstream press, and it's possible that this was a typo for 1987 in relation to London events.²⁰ In 2002, plans were announced for a 'year-long' schedule of events in 2003, along with £10,000 of local council funding allocated for education projects in schools. More books were promised to local libraries, and the events were advertised as being 'in recognition of [the] black community'.²¹ One LBB elder quoted in the press welcomed the new investment but was concerned that the black community would not be consulted, responding critically to how BHM had been marked in the past, stating that '[b]lack history is not just about singing and dancing; it is about people learning about the

and that's the reason why I don't work for anybody and won't work for anybody, because once you work for somebody or you receive money from them you have to sing their song.' Scott, interview.

¹⁸ "Celebration of Black History," *Liverpool Echo*, April 8, 2002.

¹⁹ Sandi Hughes et al., *Black History Month: History Belongs to Everyone, Education Resource Pack* (Liverpool: Black History Month Group, 2003), 9.

²⁰ Debbie Johnson, "Celebration of Black Culture," *Liverpool Echo*, September 30, 2003.

²¹ Jane Woodhead, "City Marks Year of Black History," *Liverpool Echo*, December 28, 2002.

history of black people in Liverpool as well as the history of Africa and the Caribbean'.²² Another respondent in a press article from 2001, suggested that it was 'quite ironic' that they had been asked to speak on Liverpool and slavery at a BHM event in London, whilst there were so little BHM events in Liverpool itself.²³ 2003 saw 40 events hosted in October with exhibitions of organisations, showcasing the work of black artists, a large 'Carnival fashion show' and a food festival at Sefton Park, though, with the exception of a book signing by Ray Costello, the focus was not on Liverpool Black History.²⁴

Whilst BHM in Liverpool has been used to highlight texts and events relevant to Black History, such as Costello's *Black Liverpool* in 2001, or the opening of the TSG, in October 1994, this has not carried the same criticisms of opportunistic commercialism that American BHM has.²⁵ Criticism about BHM in Liverpool more often concerns tokenism, and the trivialisation of culture and history. Answering a question on BHM in Liverpool, Scott criticised the content of BHM events, which do not largely concern black history, and are generally not about Liverpool's black history.

And so, to a certain extent, it has been song and dance. It has been, as regards the Maritime Museum, inviting black Americans to come over and speak. Or, people from the Caribbean, to speak. It's never been about black Liverpoolians. And, from my point of view, because the black Liverpoolians are the bottom of the ladder, and because we live the legacy of slavery more... black Americans can come over here, do a lecture on America and then disappear.²⁶

Ultimately, BHM events in no way 'spoke' to Scott, or, as he suggests, to the experiences of LBB people specifically. Scott didn't believe BHM had had any influence on the memory of slavery in Liverpool and would have rather seen more in the form of 'political debates taking place in Liverpool by Liverpool-born Black people'.²⁷ Scott's point about the events comprising

²² A meeting was scheduled for June 4th 2003 to discuss possible Black History Month events "Black History Meet," *Liverpool Echo*, May 30, 2003. Woodhead, "City Marks Year of Black History."

²³ Emma Gunby, "Call to Black Black History; City Should Do More Say Community Leaders," *Liverpool Echo*, October 31 2001.

²⁴ Johnson, "Celebration of Black Culture."; Emma Gunby, "Passion Show - Fashion Fun Starts Month of Celebration," *Liverpool Echo*, October 2, 2003. Ray was signing his book, Ray Costello, *Black Liverpool*.

²⁵ Hope, "Gallery Puts Roots of Racism on Show."; Andrew Forgrave, "Gallery Slave Trade Exhibition Launches Voyage of Discovery," *Liverpool Daily Post*, February 9, 1994.

²⁶ Scott, interview.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

largely of 'song and dance' is part of a wider critical discourse of multicultural engagement in Britain, the 'saris, samosas, and steel bands' syndrome, which acts to divert attention away from more meaningful engagements with non-white European culture through superficial celebration of consumable and largely seemingly uncontroversial cultural phenomena.²⁸ During BHM, where slavery was raised, it was done so in the midst of a discursive collage of more light-hearted cultural products, where it was reported that events in 2004, double in number to those held the year before, 'range from Senegal star Yousou N'Dour performing at the Philharmonic Hall to a slavery trail, Black Expos, fashion and hair shows, a black film festival and numerous community projects.'²⁹ Despite BHM's aims 'to celebrate the history of people in Liverpool with an African background, and develop an understanding between all the city's different cultural and racial communities', the celebration of history doesn't appear to have included much discussion of a historical past, and 'history' is perhaps more generally



Figure 18: Image accompanying the article, "History Cooks up a Treat." *Liverpool Echo*, October 20, 2004

²⁸ Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). This point is also made by Mark Christian in Mark. Christian, "The Lawrence Inquiry and the Role of Education in Resisting Institutional Racism," *Charles Wootton News*, June 1999.

²⁹ Catherine Jones, "City Prepares for an Historic Month," *Liverpool Echo*, October 2, 2004.

interpreted as contemporary culture. 'History', the word, when it does appear within press discourse, does so within the title of the month alone, or within food-related puns (see Figure 18).

Slavery Remembrance Day

The main SRD event is a performance of a libation ceremony on August 23rd, a traditional African ritual led by city elder Chief Angus Chukuemeka.³⁰ This is accompanied by a changing programme of events which has included poetry readings, musical performers and arts and crafts workshops. A commemorative lecture was added to the programme in 2003, usually taking place the day before, and more recently (2011) a walk of remembrance has been instigated, leading participants from the centre of town to the site of the Old Dock. 2012 was a particularly 'exceptional' year for SRD, with the presence of distinguished guest of honour, Martin Luther King III, son of the late African-American civil rights leader. All ritual events during this year were amplified, and the commemorations saw record numbers of people attend at all stages.

The memorial significance of SRD is manifested within its calendrical re-occurrence. This is an event which calls upon people to 'remember slavery' not once, not when visiting a museum or reading a book, but on a particular moment in organised time, on a particular day every year. In this sense, not only has there been a conscious decision to create this particular commemorative day, but a deliberate decision to keep marking it every year, a decision which demonstrates support by particular groups of people, though for potentially different reasons.³¹ In relation to SRD, it could be argued that part of the 'segregation' of the memory of slavery into a commemorative day, much like its segregation into 'black history' or 'maritime history' or, even, just to ports like Liverpool, is a way of forgetting through marginalisation.

³⁰ Though born in Nigeria in 1938, Chief Angus Chukuemeka has been involved in Liverpool's local politics for over 40 years. He is Chair of the Merseyside African Council and has previously been Chair of Merseyside Racial Equality Council and President of the Ibo Community Association, member of the Board of Directors of the Granby Toxteth Poverty Three Project. Taken from author details in William Ackah and Mark Christian, *Black Organisation and Identity in Liverpool: A Local, National and Global Perspective* (Liverpool: Charles Wootton College Press, 1997).

³¹ Eviatar Zerubavel, "Calendars and History: A Comparative Study of the Social Organization of National Memory," in *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Representation*, ed. Jeffrey K. Olick (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 318.

However, one function SRD can perform through being part of a 'calendar' of events is to reach audiences who might not otherwise have come into contact with the subject matter.³²

The Discourse of Slavery Remembrance Day

The ceremony and activities organised as part of SRD are articulated in ways which place platitudes of not forgetting alongside celebrations of contemporary culture, and in some instances the advertisement of events as entertainment. Councillor Mike Storey encapsulated these positive expectations of celebration, stating that SRD 'provides a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the harmony between the city's ethnic groups'.³³ However, links within SRD are made to a less harmonious present, to contemporary racism, through the choice of speakers, guests and lecture topics such as the inclusion of Doreen Lawrence, mother of Stephen Lawrence, as the event's main speaker in 2002. In the, albeit very limited, press reports which do include LBB voices, the statement that '[t]he legacy of slavery is racism and discrimination' is plainly put by one respondent, and the significance of the commemorative event is seen largely as acknowledgement but also as a source of psychological healing and pride through education that:

Slavery Remembrance Day is important for this city. We have young people who feel ashamed that their ancestors were slaves. People think African slaves were savages who lived in mud huts and ate missionaries. We need to stop, think and educate ourselves'.³⁴

Similarly, SRD is presented by another LBB respondent as a way of legitimising identity, because 'it gives someone like myself and other black people in the city a firm place in the city's history'.³⁵ The expectation that SRD should fulfil both a commemorative and psychologically healing function and yet also act as a form of 'celebration', perhaps of African resistance to enslavement, though more commonly as another 'celebratory' event in Liverpool's cultural calendar, was repeatedly set out within discourse surrounding subsequent

³² See Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*, 217.

³³ Joe Riley, "Civic Remembrance Of Slavery Victims," *Liverpool Echo*, January 23, 2004.

³⁴ Mary Murtagh, "Slaves to City's Fortunes," *Liverpool Echo*, August 18, 2004.

³⁵ Catherine Jones, "City's Triangle Of Shame: As Liverpool Commemorates Slavery Remembrance Day," *Liverpool Echo*, August 23, 2004.



Figure 19: Sankofa bird design used in promotional material by NML. Image from <http://culture.org.uk/2012/07/slavery-remembrance-day-2012/> [accessed July 31, 2013]

events, becoming increasingly positioned as a ‘festival’.³⁶ The ‘festival of commemoration and celebration’ in 2002, was a programme of events which mixed performance and entertainment into the libation ceremony, where ‘the River Niger Orchestra and singing group Sense of Sound will be woven in with speeches about the occasion’.³⁷ It is later assured that ‘tomorrow is not just about speeches. It will also be a celebration and a chance to reflect and look forward’, the contradicting call to look both forwards and backwards is echoed in symbolism by NML’s adoption of the Sankofa bird as its image for the event, a mythical creature which looks behind whilst flying forwards (Figure 19).

Within this discussion of SRD as a ‘festival of commemoration and celebration’, language is used which reinforces its presentation as an entertainment event, where Chief

³⁶ Celebrating African resistance appears to be more easily expressed within the local press after 2007, when national discourses repeated such ideas and, crucially, this was a major theme around the marketing of the ISM which opened in 2007. ‘Liverpool’s 2009 Slavery Remembrance Day festival is part of an annual international event that commemorates the lives of millions of enslaved Africans and their descendants and celebrates the spirit of resistance that ended slavery’ in “Victims of Slave Trade Not Forgotten,” *Liverpool Echo*, August 21, 2009.

³⁷ Ian Fannon, “City Atones For Slavery; Top Actress Cathy Tyson At Festival,” *Liverpool Echo*, August 22, 2002.

Angus Chukwemeka 'will kick off proceedings at 4pm' and where SRD is an event which 'showcased some of the best acts in Merseyside'.³⁸ In a review of events from 2008, Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture, SRD is assimilated into Liverpool's cultural calendar, sandwiched between the annual Liverpool Children's Festival and the World Fire-fighter Games in a month which saw much 'carnival fun'.³⁹ The assimilation of SRD into civic entertainment events, as 'something to do' is clearly expressed in 2012, as one events article outlines:

Cheap thing to do!
Slavery Remembrance Day: August 23.
This will be the 13th year the museum has commemorated Slavery Remembrance Day outside the museum.⁴⁰

This process of assimilation took hold particularly from 2004 when there was far greater prominence and public discussion given to SRD. It was a year after the announcement of Liverpool's successful bid for European Capital of Culture, as the year that Liverpool City Council began officially (and financially) supporting the event. Crucially however, the events held in Liverpool in this year could, more than ever, be seen and articulated as part of a wider global promotion of this history which subsequently reinforced Liverpool's international position during the UNESCO Year for Commemoration of the Struggle Against Slavery and its Abolition. SRD is rendered a point in Liverpool's civic calendar which is an 'event' of significance, councillor Marilyn Fleming outlines, 'August 23 is now an annual civic event, recognising its growing importance as a day of remembrance, commemoration and celebration', SRD becomes 'August 23', a 'civic event', something important for memory and celebration, though remembering what and celebrating what exactly is not stated.⁴¹

After 2004's year-long promotion of remembering slavery, SRD is presented by a member of NML staff as being 'firmly established as part of the city's rich cultural life'.⁴² From 2005 onwards more focus is given to accompanying entertainment, performances, song, dance and food, which for the next few years take place at Otterspool Promenade, out of the city

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ "Summer's Here And The Time Is Right For...Carnival," *Liverpool Echo*, December 11, 2008.

⁴⁰ "Summer Family Fun For Free," *Liverpool Echo*, July 23, 2012.

⁴¹ Jones, "City's Triangle Of Shame."

⁴² "Pier Head Libation Marks Slavery Day," *Liverpool Echo*, August 22, 2005.

centre and a bus ride away due to waterfront building work taking place by the docks. However, criticisms of SRD were raised in 2005 by organisers of the River Festival, set to take place in 2007 which they feared would be 'themed around slavery'. The (former) organisers of the River Festival spoke to *Echo* columnist Joe Riley, stating that instead the festival 'should be celebrating "courage and international youth endeavour"', also taking the opportunity to criticise the content of slavery tours of the city and suggesting that Liverpool was being turned into a 'slavery theme park'. Interestingly, Riley began this piece with a disclaimer which used a comparison with Holocaust Memorial Day, that '[t]his Wednesday's Slavery Remembrance Day, like International Holocaust Day which Liverpool will host in 2008, has its rightful place in the history of human suffering. But former River Festival organisers [...]'.⁴³

Performing Ritual Text

James Young has suggested that speeches made as part of Yom Hashoah, the Jewish Holocaust Memorial Day, 'constitute part of the remembrance day's text', but calls within this speech to unite listeners with memory don't necessarily signify that the meaning of this memory itself is united, text does not necessarily mean concurrence.⁴⁴ Paul Connerton has suggested that rituals can usefully be understood along the same interpretive lines as myths, that both can be viewed as 'collective symbolic texts' which embody cultural values, often through 'elaborate statements'.⁴⁵ However, he stresses that the medium of expression is here fundamental, that through the performance of ritual, the relationship between performer and performed subject is specified, and to an extent, solidified, through the ritual process. Rites are less malleable than myths, which can take on different forms (be sung, told in different ways), and are thereby somewhat less open to change.⁴⁶ Through their physical performance, rituals are 'stylised, stereotyped and repetitive' carrying meaning through textual and bodily engagement.⁴⁷

⁴³ Joe Riley, "No 'Theme Park' Slavery," *Liverpool Echo*, August 21, 2006.

⁴⁴ James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 276.

⁴⁵ Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 53.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

Ritual text is part of the hyperbole of the commemorative performance. Particular linguistic forms are used and formal language drawn upon.⁴⁸ Ritual language forms a crucial component of the performance, is more restricted in vocabulary than every day speech, takes on a fixed sequence and pattern and often carries rigidity in tone and volume.⁴⁹ The structure and form of SRD in Liverpool has become familiar through its repetition. The ritual text forms a significant part of this familiarity and, significantly as a point of contest and debate. The following analyses of the 'text' of the SRD libation ceremony is taken from the 2010 and 2012 ceremonies.⁵⁰ The 'exceptionalism' of the 2012 ceremony will be discussed later.

The ritual text performed by actors within the libation ceremony forms a crucial part of SRD's cognitive reception, with words and phrases forming a structural web of recognition and association through the performance of largely formalised language by one senior participant to an audience, much like preaching a sermon, carried out in the tone of a prayer. The ceremony is, however, highly self-conscious in its post-modern commemorative performance, reflecting Charles Maier's interpretation of memory as a 'self-referential activity'.⁵¹ Rather than the historic event, the ceremony starts with a discussion of memory, highlighting former silences around the subject of slavery, that 'nothing was mentioned' for a long time, and that it is important to remember for the usual platitudes concerning children, futures and 'never again'.⁵² During the libation itself, the groups of people being honoured and remembered are named, as the 'kinsmen and women who were forcefully uprooted from the African soil against their will', their experiences of suffering are noted and remorse is expressed. Honour is paid to abolitionists, though emphasis is given to Africans who 'were their own liberators'. The libation ends calling for the end of apparently relatable 'suffering', in the form of 'all modern day slavery, conflicts, operations and acts of terror in the world today', the last poignantly relevant in a post 9/11 world. Language is however also a point of contest as Scott demonstrates:

⁴⁸ This formal language is 'already coded in a canon and therefore exactly repeatable', *Ibid.*, 58.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁵⁰ The 2010 ceremony has been transcribed from an online video produced by Square One Pictures, funded by NML and narrated by Chase Johnston-Lynch. The 2012 ceremony text has been transcribed from an audio recording of the event taken by the author that year. Chase Johnston-Lynch (Square One Pictures), "Slavery Remembrance Day," *YouTube* (2010), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jawK-oNbKV8> (accessed July 30, 2013); "Slavery Remembrance Day Libation Ceremony, Audio Recording Made by Author," (Albert Dock, Liverpool, 2012).

⁵¹ Charles Maier, "A Surfeit of Memory? Reflections on History, Melancholy and Denial," *History & Memory* 5, no. 2 (1993).

⁵² Chief Angus Chukuemeka in Square One Pictures, "Slavery Remembrance Day."

[...] when the ceremony was first done, they speak in English, they don't speak in African. And if they do speak in African, they don't have an English interpreter to talk about what they're saying.⁵³

The question of whose voice, or 'in' whose voice, the ceremony is conducted, is important here, and raises questions over who the ceremony is for. By suggesting that this is important, Scott focuses on the larger significance of the objectives behind the ceremony, intended audience and position through language, perhaps turning traditional positions of power around through the adoption of a language which is not English.

The ritual text enacted for SRD constitutes not only a symbolic and integral part of the commemorative ceremony, but also part of its commentary. The participants (which include viewers and listeners) are told explicitly what the ceremony is doing; there is no part of the process which is not labelled with its corresponding symbolism-caption. The ceremony is to honour ancestors who were enslaved, 'and that is what libation is all about, which we are now about to perform', with helpful subtitles, translating symbolic African gestures into English language.⁵⁴ Libation is described within the ceremony as 'a traditional African way of making connections with God, with ancestors, through atonement during which we point out our own deeds, acknowledge them and promise to make amends, and finally ask for forgiveness.'⁵⁵ Here the form is set out, the stages of the ceremony listed as if in a programme, reasons made clear, even the emotional processes of 'atonement' and 'forgiveness' are outlined. In 2012, this self-conscious commentary on the commemorative process was made more explicit, libation explained as 'a solemn African traditional ceremony for remembering and honouring our ancestors and leaders.'⁵⁶ The significantly larger, broader audience at the event this year prompted a far longer libation ceremony, with an extended and elaborated 'ritual text', though much of the content was repeated. Perhaps it was the broader audience which merited further explanation of terminology within the ceremony during this year, with explanation of beliefs for those who might be confused, or even scared or offended, that '[d]uring the libation we will be referring to the spirits of our ancestors, African ancestors, because we Africans believe there is life after death so the spirit of our ancestors are still there, looking at us' but

⁵³ Scott, interview.

⁵⁴ Square One Pictures, "Slavery Remembrance Day."

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ "SRD Libation Ceremony, 2012"

that 'there is nothing devilish about it'.⁵⁷ The props in the performance are also explained, the kola nut which is offered in African tradition 'to our guests as a gesture of peace and goodwill it is shared by all present, and sharing brings us all together.'⁵⁸ In case any of the *symbolism* of the last section of the ceremony might be missed, it is emphasised repeatedly, 'we are going to end the libation today by symbolically pouring the drinks into the sea and the sea behind you is symbolic. It is the port where the ships were repaired in those days, so pouring the libation along the shores is quite symbolic.'⁵⁹

The language used within the ritual text acts to create a sense of unity, as Connerton outlines in relation to the liturgical language of commemorative rites, that '[t]he community is initiated when pronouns of solidarity are repeatedly pronounced'.⁶⁰ In the libation speeches, it is continually 'we' who remember, for 'our children' and their future, 'we' who honour ancestors and ask for forgiveness, 'we' who are performing the ceremony. However, in the ritual commemoration of a history which necessarily has victims and perpetrators, exactly who this 'we' is, is ambiguous. The speaker is an African born man, but through the collective pronouns he speaks for a great many, for 'we the citizens of Liverpool, Great Britain and all people of African descent'.⁶¹ Simultaneously it is 'our kinsmen and women who were forcefully uprooted from their African soil', for whom the ceremony is dedicated, during which 'we point out our own deeds, acknowledge them and promise to make amends, and finally ask for forgiveness'. The 'we' in this last instance becomes broader, more widely applicable than those who had been rooted in African soil. 'We' in this instance can encompass the ancestors who were involved in enslavement from the African soil themselves (chiefs and elites who traded with Europeans), but it can also include the ancestors of European, British and indeed Liverpudlian citizens, previously embraced in the 'we' before this statement. The collective perpetrators, coming from a variety of soils though they may, are outlined in relation to their position of power within the next statement which again self-consciously explains why particular people are present at the ceremony:

During the slave trade, again the leaders of this country and in fact royalty supported and gave blessing, so it is important that when we are doing libation the leaders know

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 58-9.

⁶¹ Square One Pictures, "Slavery Remembrance Day."

the significance of it and take part in it, because every day they are the people who make the decision so we appeal to them to cast their mind back and remember.⁶²

This acts to shift the focus of who should be asking for most forgiveness to those with the most power. The 'leaders' present as audience-participators within the ceremony are drawn in personally by being asked to 'cast their mind back', it is their minds specifically which, through a metaphorical personal act of 'remembering', should connect most with this ceremony and what it stands for. However, the presence and interaction with these 'leaders' can also be a point of contest. For Scott, it was an insult to carry out performative actions which were seen to be 'honouring' people in such positions:

The other thing which really upsets me, and I've said so at the time, was, the audience is made up of Lord Mayors from around the country. Chief Angus Chukuemeka always honours the kings and queens of this country, he honours the Lord and Lady Mayors who are present. That is a disgrace. Because, the people who hold them offices, are representatives and in some cases, royalty are the true descendants of the Duke of Clarence and others who were heavily involved in the slave trade – so why honour the people whose office is responsible for the slave trade?⁶³

In the 2012 ceremony, however, Chief Angus Chukuemeka makes far more use of the personal pronoun, 'I' within the beginning of the ceremony, positioning himself and his own narrative within Liverpool's memory of slavery, in a sequence of events which led to this exceptional and historic moment, the visit of the son of Dr Martin Luther King III. Chukuemeka uses the plural pronouns when explaining the ceremony's objectives and outlining what will be done, that 'we will remember the enslavement of our African brothers and sisters' and within the ceremony itself, that 'we are pouring this libation to remember our kinsmen and kinswomen', but personalises the performance when naming people who have been involved in the organisation of the event, 'I must have to thank the members of staff which have made this possible'. Chukuemeka positions himself within the narrative of the development of SRD, which is intimately linked to the development of both the TSG and ISM, that 'I was part of the museum, I was part of the team', (akin to 'I was there', at these milestones), along with noted friends, 'with Dorothy Kuya – Dorothy are you there? Where are you? Dorothy, can you stand up please, let people see you'. Involvement in the advisory team for the TSG is historically

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Scott, interview.

situated, 'how many years now? Twenty, twenty years? And we're still going strong' in relation to the 'strength' of the events of 2012.⁶⁴

In the ceremonies in both years, Liverpool's 'exceptional' memory of slavery is noted by Chukuemeka. In 2010, this exceptionalism is expressed through the museums more than the ceremony, it being said that very little was done to commemorate slavery until 'Liverpool took the first stride through one of these projects to do this museum which now is the first of its kind in the world'.⁶⁵ This reaffirms the position of the libation ceremony as part of the memory work done by NML. In 2012, however, more focus is given to SRD, that 'Liverpool first hosted Remembrance Day thirteen years ago following UNESCO's declaration' and that '[o]ur city is the first city in Europe that recognised the remembrance event and has supported it ever since', statements of pride for a proud day, marking out the particular commemorative event as something of further uniqueness to the city.

The end of the ceremony, like the end of sermons and other memorial rites, turns to the present with an eye on the future, asking in 2010 'for the end of all modern day slavery, conflicts, operation and acts of terror in world today.' This request for an end to 'modern day slavery' aligns closely with ISM's mission statement and internal discourse though falls short of Scott's hope that SRD should act to 'remember our ancestors and the agonies of the African Holocaust that they went through and it's also there to be political about what is happening today as regards the legacies of slavery in this city'.⁶⁶ However, in 2012, broader contemporary themes are raised within the extended ritual text, in which the ceremony is called on to 'promote equality, fairness, and justice for all mankind. Let us use it to promote and preserve human rights, and human dignity for all mankind irrespective of colour and creed,' spoken in a language very similar to that used by Dr King and civil rights discourse, particularly within the 'I have a dream' speech played moments before during the renaming of the Dock Traffic Office as the 'Martin Luther King Junior Building'. The ancestors and 'almighty God' are asked once again to aid in the end of 'all civil wars' though this year the 'poverty and suffering in Africa' is also highlighted (a point raised by Martin Luther King III in his SRD lecture the previous evening), as well as 'the end of all modern-day slavery, conflicts and acts of terror in the world today' as before. However, a prayer is also made to the ancestors concerning conflict in contemporary Liverpool, that '[w]e humbly beg you to bless our city of Liverpool and bring

⁶⁴ "SRD Libation Ceremony, 2012"

⁶⁵ Square One Pictures, "Slavery Remembrance Day."

⁶⁶ Scott, interview.

unity and prosperity to her diverse community', a point most poignant just over a year after riots in major UK cities in 2011.

Bodily Memory

Paul Connerton has criticised historicised approaches to the study of commemorative ceremonies for placing undue focus on their interpretation as invented traditions, as 'intentional responses to particular and variable social and political contexts' and for not allowing the performance itself to be addressed as a significant aspect of such rites. In this sense, he suggests, the 'reading' of ceremonies has been taken to literal extremes by historians, who analyse rites like documents in an archive.⁶⁷ Further, Connerton argues that although 'incorporating practices' such as rituals, as opposed to 'inscribed' ones such as written texts, are 'traceless', leaving little behind, they are constitutive of a collective memory primarily through their bodily performance, where memory becomes 'sedimented in the body'.⁶⁸

Whilst there are a number of artefacts associated with and produced for SRD which could be considered 'inscribed', such as badges handed out to attendees and participants, leaflets produced by NML, and coverage in the local press, the 'ritual text', as discussed above, 'works' as a mnemonic device largely through its performance. Further, the use of sound such as drumming, rather than a more Eurocentric period of silence and quiet reflection, sets SRD apart. However, during the 2012 ceremony, a 'one minute silence' (presumably metaphorical since it lasted 40 seconds) was incorporated, perhaps due to its familiarity as a mnemonic device at more well-known and well-attended commemorative days such as the Armistice, and therefore as a process more familiar to the broader audience. A silence has been adopted in previous years (reported in 2006), though not every year, suggesting that this is not a crucial part of the ceremony.

Within the performance of the libation, the body itself becomes a mnemonic device through which memory is 'sedimented' through an associative engagement with place. Connerton's use of the process of 'sedimenting' can be poignantly applied to a ceremony

⁶⁷ Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 103.

⁶⁸ 'If there is such a thing as social memory, I shall argue, we are likely to find it in commemorative ceremonies; but commemorative ceremonies prove to be commemorative only in so far as they are performative; performativity cannot be thought without a concept of habit; and habit cannot be thought without a notion of bodily automatisms'. *Ibid.*, 102,4-5



Figure 20: Pouring liquid into the Mersey. From National Museums Liverpool. Slavery Remembrance Day Leaflet 2011: National Museums Liverpool, 2011

which is performed with liquid (the pouring of drink) and makes conscious reference to water; to seas and rivers, being performed next to docks and structures of maritime history.

We present this drink to you today and humbly ask you to bless it and all that are here today. Motherland [...] the great sea gods, the great sea of Atlantic, the great river Mersey through whose course the seafarers of Liverpool and Europe continued the trade in slavery, the spirit of ancestors, the gods of ancestors, the lands and rivers of Africa we present this drink to you today and always.⁶⁹

Water is poured after statements of honour, onto the ground of the Liverpool waterfront, an act in which the front row of the audience (the ‘leaders’, mayors, councillors, and NML director) also partakes. The last of the liquid is then cast into the Mersey, formally ending the libation ceremony (Figure 20).

The body comes to be used in its most collective sense to ‘sediment’ memory through performative action within the ‘Walk of Remembrance’ introduced in 2011. The walk, initially held the day before the ceremony, begins in Church Street, in the heart of Liverpool’s shopping district and, deliberately or not given the museums’ interest in contemporary human rights and labour abuses, outside Primark.⁷⁰ The official text within the 2011 SRD leaflet describes the walk as follows:

⁶⁹ “SRD Libation Ceremony, 2012”

⁷⁰ Primark was at the centre of a BBC Panorama documentary and Observer investigation in 2008 into the use of child labour in Indian refugee camps to produce its clothing. The low-cost fashion retailer has consistently been at the centre of labour investigations into high street retailers and general criticisms

Remember ancestors who, deprived of their liberty, enabled the port of Liverpool to thrive. Making its way from the bandstand on Church Street in Liverpool city centre, via Paradise Street to Thomas Steers Way, the walk ends at the site of the Old Dock. The point where hundreds of years ago, the fruits of enslaved labour – cotton – would have landed.⁷¹

Although it is suggested that participants on this walk will ‘remember ancestors’ of the enslaved, these ‘ancestors’ are not owned or explicitly associated with any particular contemporary identity group, though this is perhaps inferred. The audience, at which this commemorative act is aimed, however, is much broader than those who identify themselves as the descendants of enslaved people. In taking this form of performative commemorative action into the city centre, away from the docks and the Maritime and Slavery Museums where the memory of slavery has in the past been segregated to through its ‘maritimization’, the walk seeks to engage people who are not the usual faces, or bodies, at SRD, or may not otherwise engage with events organised in relation to the memory of slavery. It is a point of interest also that, although aimed at remembering the enslaved, a prominent point of dissonance – the theme of slaves in Liverpool, is neatly avoided. The walk ends at the site of the Old Dock, where any number of statements could have been made about the activities of slaving vessels at this site in the eighteenth century. However, emphasis is placed on cotton which shifts focus to enslaved African labour in America, on the other side of the Atlantic triangle. Perhaps this also ties up loose threads, as it were, starting at Primark and ending in cotton produced by un-free labour, aligning with the special exhibition due to open the month after this walk in the ISM about labour abuses in the cotton industry in Uzbekistan.⁷²

The walk was accompanied by a drumming band which led the procession. In 2011 this was a group from Amsterdam and in 2012 the group was Batala, from Merseyside. The use of sound alongside movement meant the procession reached those who might not even be in the same street as the walk’s route, in much the same way the sound of the siren made on the

of the industry, though other stores are implicated, it is often Primark, perhaps as one of the cheapest yet highly successful of these, which is singled out as a metaphor for the unethical price of contemporary fashion. See Dan McDougall, "The Hidden Face of Primark Fashion," *The Guardian*, June 22, 2008.

⁷¹ National Museums Liverpool, *Slavery Remembrance Day Leaflet 2011* (National Museums Liverpool,, 2011).

⁷² National Museums Liverpool, "White Gold: The True Cost of Cotton," <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/exhibitions/whitegold/> [accessed July 29, 2013]. This exhibition was organised with the environmental justice foundation and ran from 1st September 2011 to 1st December 2013.

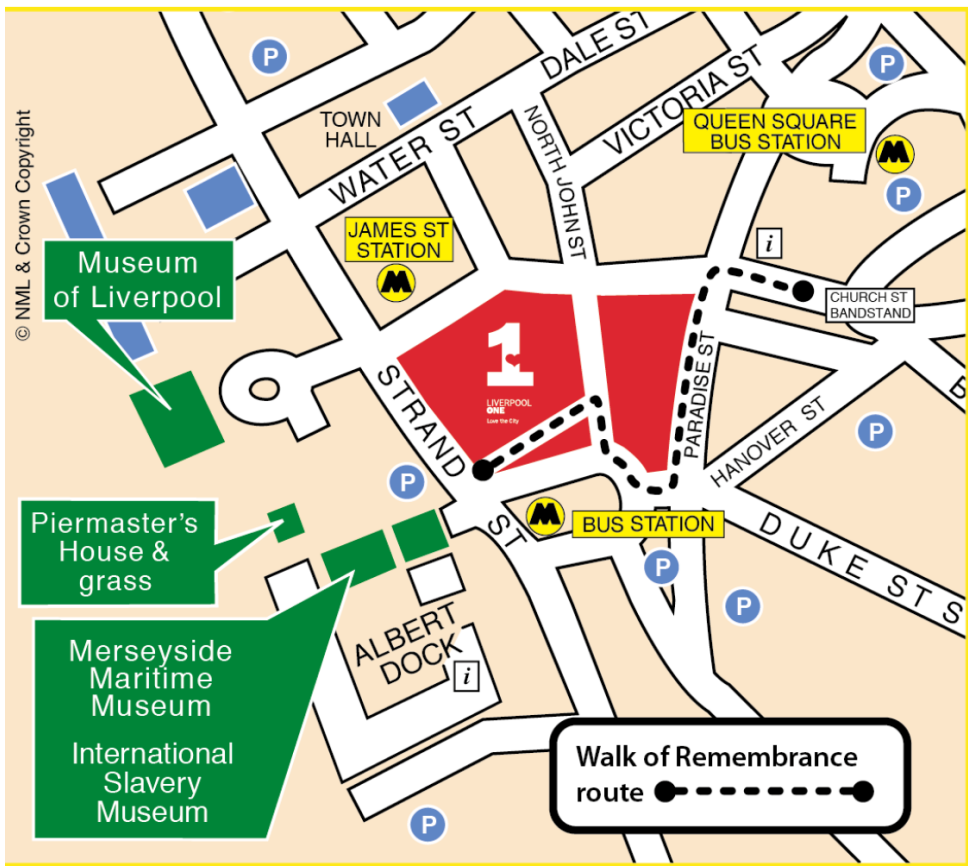


Figure 21: Route of Walk of Remembrance. From National Museums Liverpool, *Slavery Remembrance Day Leaflet 2011* (National Museums Liverpool, 2011)

morning of Yom Hashoah reaches those who do not attend the official ceremony.⁷³ The walk was introduced by a member of NML staff at the beginning, though as the procession worked its way through the streets of the city centre, past banks and shops and MacDonald's, it was unclear whether passers-by, particularly those who could not see the banner at the front, knew what the event was for. For many, dancing with children in the side-lines and waving to the procession, this could have been any of a number of lively carnival-style events. However, people were handed badges along the route and some joined the procession to see where it led. The procession catches at least the eyes or ears of many ordinary people going about their business, watching from the windows of shops or the overhead walkways, and commenced at the busiest time of day, the procession also comes into contact with those out and about on their lunch breaks. The procession engages bodies in the act of walking or moving, a simple, widely applicable activity in which a variety of people could easily partake. There was something of spectacle about the walk as a performance. As a collective 'body', walking through the streets, there was an awareness of being gazed at by those not engaged in the

⁷³ Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 276.

movement, of being a focus of intrigue. Whilst this could lead to a sense of self-consciousness, even of embarrassment, it also initiated a sense of distinction. Encouraging bodies to 'perform' through something as simple as walking, or moving, created a sense of collective participation and unity in action with relative ease, where participants could feel like they were a part of something.

The use of walking is utilised elsewhere in commemorative rituals of history, memory and collective identity. This is particularly familiar when associated with 'marching', military connections made such as walks or parades on Armistice Day, and further political and religious forms of walking such as the marches of Northern Irish groups like the Orange Order, who also march through areas of Liverpool. However, walking is also a practice with particular relevance to the history of enslavement, the long arduous walks of the enslaved in chains often conjured in representations of this history in art, museums and textbooks. The Walk of Remembrance also mirrors global slavery memory work, particularly in the US, such as the Richmond Slave Trail where a night-time walk acts to re-create the route taken by enslaved people through the city. Organised by the Richmond Slave Trail Commission, this trail has more recently been given tangible expression through the creation of 'markers' along the route which include interpretation and information for people wanting to make their own journeys along the route.⁷⁴ The Richmond trail also bears similarities to the Walk of Remembrance since both are associated with annual commemorative days, the Richmond walk taking place during the celebrations of Juneteenth, or Emancipation Day (marking 19th June, 1865, taken as the day the last slaves were freed following the Emancipation Proclamation). As of yet, and unlike its American counterpart, there are no tangible memory markers along the route in Liverpool, although the Old Dock is commemorated, slavery is only memorialised by banners, badges, drums and walking. The walk does not, in fact, come into contact with any of the 'sites of memory' discussed in Part Three, or meet any of the places tour guides have taken their groups. Furthermore, and despite seeking to 'remember ancestors', there is no obvious association between the routes which might have been taken by enslaved African people or to sites which have had associations with slaves in Liverpool such as Goree. Here, a distinction is made between memorial action and history. This is not a history walking tour, this is a memory walk - this is part of the performance of SRD. The sites of memory associated with Liverpool and slavery are, additionally, perhaps on the wrong side of town, in the business district which

⁷⁴ Katherine Walker, "Buried in the Unremissive Ground: Reading Richmond's Subterranean Signs," *Social Semiotics* 19, no. 4 (2009).



Figure 22: 2011 Walk of Remembrance Procession. National Museums Liverpool
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalmuseumliverpool/6105781125/sizes/l/in/set-72157627452172951/> [accessed July 29, 2013]

though busy at lunchtimes, might not be the place where shoppers, families and strollers will stop and take notice.

The performance of the walk, however, is one which is directly dependent on its relationship with place, shaped by physical geographical circumstances and active involvement of human bodies; sometimes slowed by the routine of the drummers or by turning corners, the beat of the drums echoing around the buildings of Liverpool's busy retail district. Bodies move through the newly constructed shopping centre, Liverpool One, and end at the site of the Old Dock (viewable through a glass ceiling constructed following an excavation), and outside the towering Hilton Hotel. The engagement through movement with space in this way is sometimes poignant, references and connections are inferred to the contrasts of richness and poverty of the city, the buildings and capitalist dynamics of working life and street beggars passed. This engagement via the movement of bodies through space, no matter how carefully orchestrated and mapped, remains unpredictable. This gives the performance uniqueness, not only in the experiences of individuals but through the changing set of environmental circumstances, temperature and weather, and through sound. In 2011 when the procession ended at the Old Dock site, much of the crowd dispersed, though some remained to listen to the year's invited speaker, Dr Maulana Karenga. When Dr Karenga spoke of the 'African Holocaust', of resistance and struggle, of the horrors of slavery and the trauma the enslaved would have endured, he spoke against a background of audible screaming. Screams from the fairground rides above in the site in Chavasse Park echoed the speaker's story, linking to the

screams of torture in cognitively dissonant ways, representative of the complications and contradictions which 'celebrating' the memory of slavery create, a process which aspects of SRD aim to do.

Conclusion

The instigation and performance of commemorative days can reinforce, and indeed construct and support collective identity. This is the argument presented in relation to the marking of national commemorative days by David McCrone and Gayle McPherson:

...what could capture better the essence of being a 'nation' than setting aside a holiday on which to celebrate who we are, and how we got here, selecting a day to mark out calendrically what it means to be a member of a national community?⁷⁵

Understanding, and, increasingly, celebrating 'who we are and how we got here' is a point raised within the commemoration of SRD, and one which is repeated calendrically. However, as Benedict Anderson questions in relation to memory and the nation, how much of this active remembering is a way of 'forgetting' a 'shameful' historic event such as slavery? What aspects of the history of transatlantic slavery are 'dis-placed' by, for example, the focus on celebration, entertainment and contemporary consumable 'culture'? Through its broadening lens on global human rights, speakers and celebrities from the United States, the Caribbean and Africa, has SRD forgotten Liverpool?

McCrone and McPherson's comments are made in relation to national days of celebration. However, national days of mourning also act to reinforce contemporary identity, as seen with the Armistice Day commemorations. As much as they may have originally been created to mark one particular historic event, Remembrance Day in Britain has snowballed to collect additional conflicts to 'remember' as well as contemporary ones to support. Whilst garnering a strong public support, these commemorations do not pass without criticism, particularly by anti-war protestors who disagree with the way the event is used to glorify contemporary conflicts. Similarly, the Remembrance Day event and its identity supporting/celebrating connotations are place-specific, the commemorations causing

⁷⁵ David McCrone and Gayle McPherson, "Introduction," in *National Days: Constructing and Mobilising National Identity*, ed. David McCrone and Gayle McPherson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1.

particular dissonance in Northern Ireland where performances of 'Britishness' and 'Irishness' have historically met with conflict, and indeed, continue to be a point of contest.⁷⁶

National days are also noted for their considerable economic worth, for increasing tourism, spending and visitation.⁷⁷ Though this is rarely the starting point for the initiation of commemorative days, this can easily become a factor within their organisation and promotion. The obvious point must be made, however, that SRD in Liverpool is not a national commemorative day, and, moreover, that there is no national slavery remembrance day in Britain. This, in effect, places more weight around SRD's articulation through the 'Liverpool exceptionalism' narrative, the uniqueness of the event also readily expressed as a unique selling point for the city's cultural calendar.

As discussed previously, the events in 2012 were themselves, exceptional. SRD was this year inflated, expanded and shaped through the cult of celebrity capitalised on by civic authorities. However, as with much of the 'exceptional' memory of slavery in Liverpool, the uniqueness of this event acts to exaggerate and focus underlying processes of memory. This is particularly apparent when considering the SRD lecture, given by Martin Luther King III. The lecture was given to a full house in St. George's Hall, and a programme of events surrounding the speech broke from the 'tradition' of previous lectures. There was no introductory speech from the Lord Mayor, only from Anna Rothery, Labour councillor for Princes Park ward, L8, and King was introduced by Dr David Fleming, Director of NML. 'Warm up' acts performed included local poet Levi Tafari who recited a poem about Liverpool and slavery, stating within his introduction that he does not want to remember slavery, but neither should it be forgotten. He highlighted issues of the 'segregation of memory', stressing that this is often spoken about as black history, not European history that affected Africa. There were also musical performances from local musician Esco Williams and Ogo Nze Ocore as well as the 'Positive Impact Dancers' who performed to songs by Beyoncé and Michael Jackson. All artists and performers were from Liverpool. King's lecture, 'Fulfilling the Dream: Idols vs. Ideals' discussed leadership and social change, though questions afterwards quickly turned to criticisms of the ISM. One woman asked why the museum didn't include more about Liverpool and slavery, to which Dr Fleming responded that the ISM was 'bigger than Liverpool'. More performances followed the speech and the night ended with songs performed by a musical

⁷⁶ In 1987 an IRA bomb exploded in Enniskillen, killing 11 people. This has been described as an attack on a nation through an attack on a national day. See John Poulter, "ReMembering the Nation: Remembrance Days and the Nation of Ireland," in *National Days: Constructing and Mobilising National Identity*, ed. David McCrone and Gayle McPherson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 61-66.

⁷⁷ McCrone and McPherson, "National days," 7-8.

duo from Liverpool starting with 'Let There Be Love' sung by Billy Wenton followed by 'At Last' sung by Joanna Wenton (a professional singer and actress who has also made appearances in Northwest soap operas such as *Brookside* and *Hollyoaks*). The pair ended the night with a duet of 'My Girl'. The singers performed in a tradition which could best be described as 'Scouse Cabaret', the white-suited Billy beginning the set exhibiting some cheeky humour by trying to get King to sing along with him, and both singers pulling up Councillor Anna Rothery for a dance. A comment from an audience member who had not visited Liverpool before, likened the act to karaoke, adding that it was 'like if Butlins did Slavery Remembrance Day'. Perhaps to someone not familiar with Scouse culture, the evening would seem crass, out of place and at worse, offensive. However, the majority of the diverse audience were singing along, clapping and dancing in the aisles of St George's Hall, cheering their local acts. Rather than interpreting this as a way of lightening the mood at the end of a serious and sombre talk, although it could certainly be seen this way, this is perhaps more accurately viewed as an expression of what remains at the heart of commemorative performances: identity. This, the whole evening and the events of the following day at the walk of remembrance and libation ceremony, were an expression of a very 'exceptional' Liverpool identity, much like the opening ceremony of the Olympics that same year had been an expression of a British identity – or, more suitably, a showcase. The 'Liverpool Slavery Remembrance Cabaret' brought together the drive to showcase identity and forge unification, rounding off an evening in which the audience were requested at the beginning to give a 'very big Liverpool welcome' to their distinguished American guest, this celebrity, an act which could be seen as an attempt to unite white and black Liverpool, echoing statements of intention at the very first SRDs.

As 'successful' as this year was, 'footfall' does not tell the whole story. As Mark Levene suggests in relation to the history of the Holocaust, 'avoidance and celebration have been carefully calibrated through the medium of events such as Holocaust Memorial Day to serve specific functions'.⁷⁸ Through the segregation of slavery to a commemorative day, and one which is used to fulfil a number of increasingly demanding and jarring social roles, most prominently entertainment, celebration and as a festival moment, much of the history of transatlantic slavery, and in particular Liverpool's involvement in it (speakers tended not to speak on this issue since those invited usually come from America, Africa and the Caribbean), remains predominantly glossed over. There is also a sense that the performative aspects of SRD enable politicians and those in positions of power to play a part in remembering in somewhat superficial ways. After the libation is over, connections can be broken, and they

⁷⁸ Levene, "Britain's Holocaust Memorial Day."

return to their positions of power which directly influence social issues relating to legacies of racism, discrimination and unequal treatment of different people. As Dan Stone puts it in his criticisms of the initiation of Holocaust Memorial Day, '[a] day will be ignored by most people and act as smokescreen for political performances of concern'.⁷⁹

One further point of contention is the process of homogenising memory. The memory of slavery cannot be synthesised into handy mottos, singular ceremonies or statements which read like the mission statements of museums. One of the greatest dangers in collective memory, James Young suggests, is this process of homogeneity, that memory is silenced through the creation of singular narratives. This is also, as he accepts and as it relates to Liverpool, very much a part of the complications and contradictions of collective memory:

This is the painful necessity and impossibility of a public remembrance day, its blessing and its curse. On the one hand, the creation of common memorial experience can indeed unify plural segments of a population, even if it is only during a brief "memorial moment". This is both the right and of the state and, many would argue, its obligation. On the other hand, in heeding the traditional call to "remember events as if they happened to us" we risk confusing the shared moment for a shared memory.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Stone, "Day of Remembrance or Day of Forgetting?."

⁸⁰ Young, *The Texture of Memory*.

Conclusion to Part Two

As outlined at the end of Chapter Two, Liverpool's 800th birthday in 2007 was largely overshadowed by the city's forthcoming year as European Capital of Culture, set to take place in 2008, which was foregrounded as a more *transnational* celebration against the more parochial birthday commemorations.¹ The promotion of 2008 was, moreover, presented as a milestone moment in the city's economic re-birth.²

The charter celebrations of 2007 included some examples of the memory work displayed in 1907 and 1957. Interestingly, 'pageantry' made a reappearance, having been absent during the celebrations 50 years previously. The route circled roads around St. George's Hall, but stayed around the city centre. Whilst images of the 'pageant' featured regularly in the press, it was clear that the scale of the performance in 1907 had not been replicated. The performance was perhaps particularly dwarfed by comparison to later twentieth century examples of Caribbean-style carnivals and street processions.

Out of all three anniversary years, slavery featured the least within 2007 in public discourse around 'Liverpool's 800th birthday'. The subject was mentioned particularly briefly in the Official Guide, which included one sentence in an historical overview, or relegated slavery to its 'Tourist City' section, and in a mention of the 'Transatlantic Slavery Museum' (*sic*) set to open that year.³ The Charter Exhibition held in Liverpool Central Library, like the ones in 1957 and 1907, displayed the original King John Charter, alongside a number of other charters, town books and grants of arms.⁴ In contrast to the Historical Exhibition hosted in the same library in 1907, there are no items relating to transatlantic slavery noted in publications.

¹ The official 800th birthday guide lists developments and projects taking place as part of the Capital of Culture title and mentions the title 'European Capital of Culture 2008' four times in its one-page Introduction. Debbie Johnson, "Happy Birthday Liverpool 1207-2007 - The Official Guide to the City of Liverpool," ed Margo Storey. (Gloucester: British Publishing Company, 2006)., 1

² 'Now basking in the glory of its successful bids to become the European Capital of Culture 2008 and a World Heritage Site, it is throwing off the outdated images of yesteryear, and instead is emerging into a new era: one of prosperity and aspiration' Johnson, "Happy Birthday Liverpool 1207-2007.", 35

³ History of Liverpool by Steve Binns in 2007 guide has simply 'In the 18th century, Liverpool became the predominant English Town concerned with the slave trade'. *Ibid.*, 43, 112

⁴ Liverpool Central Library, *Free Borough of the Sea: 800th Anniversary Exhibition of Liverpool's Charters* (Liverpool: Liverpool City Council, 2007). This exhibition ran from the 7th February to the 20 June, 2007.



Figure 23: The Design of Liverpool's 2007 Birthday Coin. "2007 Coin Will Tell 800-Year City Story." *Liverpool Echo*, December 20, 2006.

The most prolonged discussion of slavery in relation to the city's 800th birthday seems to have been made in the local press, in articles outlining Liverpool's history. Still, these were, by comparison to the previous years, few and far between, and subsumed by a celebratory tone.⁵ Slavery appears as point number 73 in the 'Top 100 things that made Liverpool great'; 'It is not always good things that have made Liverpool great,' the point begins, 'and we must acknowledge that much of our wealth and influence came from the profits of slavery, and from the human suffering and sale of commodities that were part of the Triangular Trade.'⁶ Interestingly,

one of the most sustained tracts on the history of Liverpool and slavery in the local press was written by 11 and 12 year-olds from De La Salle Humanities College, Croxteth who wrote a history of Liverpool for the *Echo*.⁷

One of the commemorative artefacts created for Liverpool's birthday was a coin (Figure 23) designed by Liverpool-based sculptor Stephen Broadbent, which included a (less than subtle) symbolic chained hand to represent the slave trade.⁸ Given Broadbent's involvement in slavery memorial projects in Benin and Richmond, and his part in creating the

⁵ 'The 18th century also marked the beginning of one of the most shameful periods in the city's history. Liverpool became part of the infamous slave trade triangle between Africa, the Americas and Britain. Goods from Manchester were given to the Africans in return for slaves. The slaves were transported across the Atlantic to the West Indies and sugar was brought back from there to Liverpool, and the merchants of the city were making profits previously unheard of. Despite the huge amount of money to be made from the slave trade not all of Liverpool's business people were in favour'. McDonough, "An Economic Necessity Gave Rise to Birth of City With a Colourful Past," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 28, 2007.

⁶ Ken Pye, "100 Reasons," *Liverpool Echo*, August 22, 2007.

⁷ 'The greatest accelerator of the city's development was the slave trade, a practice which caused controversy even at the time with many prominent voices in the city raised against the injustice and cruelty of what was taking place. The slave trade triangle was a profitable route for Liverpool's ships. Metal goods and weapons would be taken to Africa and exchanged for a grim human cargo, who would be taken in dreadful conditions to the plantations of the West Indies and mainland America. The ships then brought back sugar, tobacco and cotton to England. As the trade increased, docks were built and Liverpool prospered. When the abolitionists finally won their argument, the slave trade left behind broken families and uprooted people, but Liverpool continued to prosper as the cotton trade continued to grow.' Ellis Brice, Jamie Fitzsimmons, and Karl Rowlandson, "Hamlet That Grew to a World Class City," *Liverpool Echo*, August 20, 2007. Children in L8 also staged a play about slavery at the John Archer Hall in Toxteth. Note from photo caption in David Bartlett, "Street Revellers Mark Milestone," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 28, 2007.

⁸ "Liverpool's 800th Birthday Coin Given to Schoolchildren," *Liverpool Daily Post*, May 11, 2007.

Newton Memorial (see Conclusion to Part Three), perhaps this is not surprising. However, it would be one of the few tangible artefacts which linked Liverpool's 'birthday year' to slavery.

2007 was not only the year in which the ISM opened, but through a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £50,000; Liverpool also played host to a year-long programme of events to mark the Bicentenary of the Abolition Act. Events took place across the city which included book readings and launches, lectures, public debates, film screenings, dance, music, theatre productions, commemorative walks and other events alongside the regular SRD ceremony which also coincided with the opening of the ISM.⁹ The 'pageant' of Liverpool's 800th birthday was largely dwarfed in style and scale by the 'Liverpool International Carnival' organised by Brouhaha International and the lavish gala birthday dinner in St. George's Hall, was matched by another lavish dinner on August 22nd in St. George's Hall, to celebrate the opening of the ISM.¹⁰

Crucially, the opening of the ISM occurred during a year in which much of the country, in museums, galleries and a variety of other public spaces, was marking the Bicentenary of the Abolition Act, talking about slavery nationally against the silent treatment this had received in 1907. Events marking the opening of the ISM and related events which formed part of a national discourse on slavery in 2007 were largely separated from performances of 'civic high jinks' related to Liverpool's narrative history. Where in 1907 and 1957 the incorporation of slavery in the city's historic story was awkwardly negotiated, footnotes in a discourse promoting civic pride, Liverpool and slavery was virtually absent from engagements with the city's 800th birthday, at least in any great depth. However, in comparison to the number, breadth and scale of events taking place which marked the Bicentenary of 1807 and the coinciding opening of the ISM, Liverpool's 'birthday' became a 'footnote' in the more dominant public discourse surrounding local and national commemorations of slavery. This is symbolically captured by the scale and 'footer' positioning of the Liverpool 1202-2007 trademark on the cover of the 2007 Bicentenary events programme (Figure 24).

⁹ Liverpool 08 Company, *Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade - Liverpool Event Programme 07* (Liverpool: Liverpool City Council, 2007).

¹⁰ Johnson, "Happy Birthday Liverpool 1207-2007."



Figure 24: Front Cover of Liverpool 08 Company. *Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade - Liverpool Event Programme 07* (Liverpool: Liverpool City Council, 2007).

PART THREE

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**Sites of Memory: Memorials, Ghosts
and Bodies**

Introduction to Part Three

As stated in Chapter One, Liverpool has no dedicated public memorial to transatlantic slavery. Anstey and Hair, writing in 1976, suggested that the absence of any 'monumental reminder of the slave trade period' had led to the dearth of slavery memory in the city, referring here to the scarce eighteenth century buildings directly associated with the slave trade in Liverpool's urban landscape.¹ However, their statement could easily be transferred to 'memorials' more generally, as the 1999 'memorial plaque', the subject of much press debate (see Chapter Six), was removed during construction work at the waterfront in the 2000s and has not been replaced. However, this is not to suggest that the idea of a memorial has remained absent, or that 'unofficial' sites of memory do not exist. Pierre Nora describes *lieux de memoire* as the places where 'memory crystallizes (*sic*) and secretes itself'.² Similarly, Brian Ladd suggests that '[m]emories often cleave to the physical settings of events' through activities which are enacted at them.³ This can be a contested process, and Koshar views such sites as coming about through 'negotiation and conflict'.⁴ The memory of slavery in Liverpool has 'crystallised' against its built environment and the urban landscape through debate and discourse, through imagery, 'myth' and narrative.

However, the level of 'debate' around one particular public monument in Liverpool raises the idea that Liverpool may have had a public slavery memorial since the early nineteenth century. The Nelson Memorial in Exchange Flags, and the debate surrounding the chained figures around its base, offers an interesting case study of the complex overlaying of symbolism public and subsequent ambiguities in meaning which public art can embody. The Grade II* listed Monument to Lord Nelson was designed by Matthew Cotes Wyatt (1775 – 1856), and its completion overseen by Sir Richard Westmacott (1799–1872), who had also produced memorials to Nelson in Birmingham and Barbados.⁵ Created to commemorate

¹ Anstey and Hair, "Introduction," 5.

² Nora, *Introduction to Realms of Memory, Volume III*.

³ Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 1.

⁴ Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces*, 10.

⁵ Alison Yarrington, "Public Sculpture and Civic Pride 1800-1830," in *Patronage and Practice: Sculpture on Merseyside*, ed. P Curtis (Liverpool: Tate Gallery Publications and National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1989), 22. Campbell Dodgson, "Westmacott, Richard (1799–1872)," rev. Marie Busco, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29115> (accessed February 27, 2013).

Admiral Horatio Nelson (1758-1805) as a 'supreme English naval hero', Terry Cavanagh suggests the memorial was intended to align closely with Liverpool's own maritime identity.⁶ Liverpool's coinciding rise in maritime confidence and sea-bound civic identity narratives were well-placed and well-timed to celebrate this heroic naval figure. The Nelson memorial was Liverpool's first major public monument and was instigated through a large subscription appeal.⁷ The project committee consisted of 21 people including the Mayor, John Bolton, John Foster Senior, John Gladstone, and William Roscoe.⁸

Around the pedestal are four semi-nude male figures in chains which are said to represent Nelson's victorious battles.⁹ The figures align to a sculptural tradition, and there is a similarity between this piece and Giovanni Bandini's *Monument to Ferdinand I* (1624, Piazza della Darsena, Livorno) with its similar deployment of bronze 'slaves' around its base.¹⁰ However, the use of chained figures within Liverpool's first public memorial at a time when the city was at the height of its involvement in the transatlantic slave trade is intriguing. Alison Yarrington has argued that perhaps the figures did in some way represent slaves, using William Roscoe's central involvement in the project in support of this. This is a stance also taken by architectural historian Quentin Hughes, who suggests the four chained prisoners 'may also be a subtle allusion to Roscoe's hatred of the slave trade'.¹¹ Throughout most of the written histories, however, connections between the chained figures and transatlantic slavery

⁶ Terry Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of Liverpool*, 51.

⁷ Alison Yarrington, "Nelson the citizen hero: state and public patronage of monumental sculpture," *Art History* 6, no. 3 (1983): 322; Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of Liverpool*, 55.

⁸ Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of Liverpool*, 55.

⁹ 'At the base of the pedestal are four emblematic figures, of heroic size, in the character of captives, or vanquished enemies; in allusion to the four signal victories obtained by Lord Nelson, viz. those of St. Vincent, the Nile, Copenhagen, and of Trafalgar.' Sydney Jones Library, Liverpool, Liverpool Pamphlets 1806-1814: Miscellaneous, SPEC G34.30 (12), *Report of the Committee for superintending the erection of the monument to the memory of the late right honourable vice-admiral Lord Viscount Nelson, in the Area of the Liverpool Exchange*, 21 October 1813, 17.

¹⁰ Further, Westmacott perhaps took direct inspiration from the shape of the chains used, with oblong links connected the figures with the monument. Yarrington, "Public Sculpture and Civic Pride 1800-1830."; Yarrington, "Nelson the citizen hero," 325.

¹¹ Quentin Hughes, *Liverpool: City of Architecture*, 2nd ed. (Liverpool: Bluecoat Press, 1999), 33.



Figure 25: The Nelson Memorial (1813). Photograph by Author

are more often vociferously argued against. Where concessions are made through murmurings of the possible allusions to slavery, these appear behind the guise of Liverpool's much-celebrated anti-slavery campaigner, with James Picton also suggesting that William Roscoe 'took a leading role' in the project.¹²

¹² Yarrington has argued that this is was most likely the case given his networks and cultural endeavours, especially his friendship with artist Fuseli and his London connections, his involvement in the *Society for Promoting Painting and Design in Liverpool* alongside his belief in the benefits the cultural arts could have for his commercial town. Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool Vol 1*. Yarrington, "Nelson the citizen hero."; Alison Yarrington, "The commemoration of the hero, 1800-1864 : monuments to the British victors of the Napoleonic wars" (PhD. diss, Cambridge University, 1980).

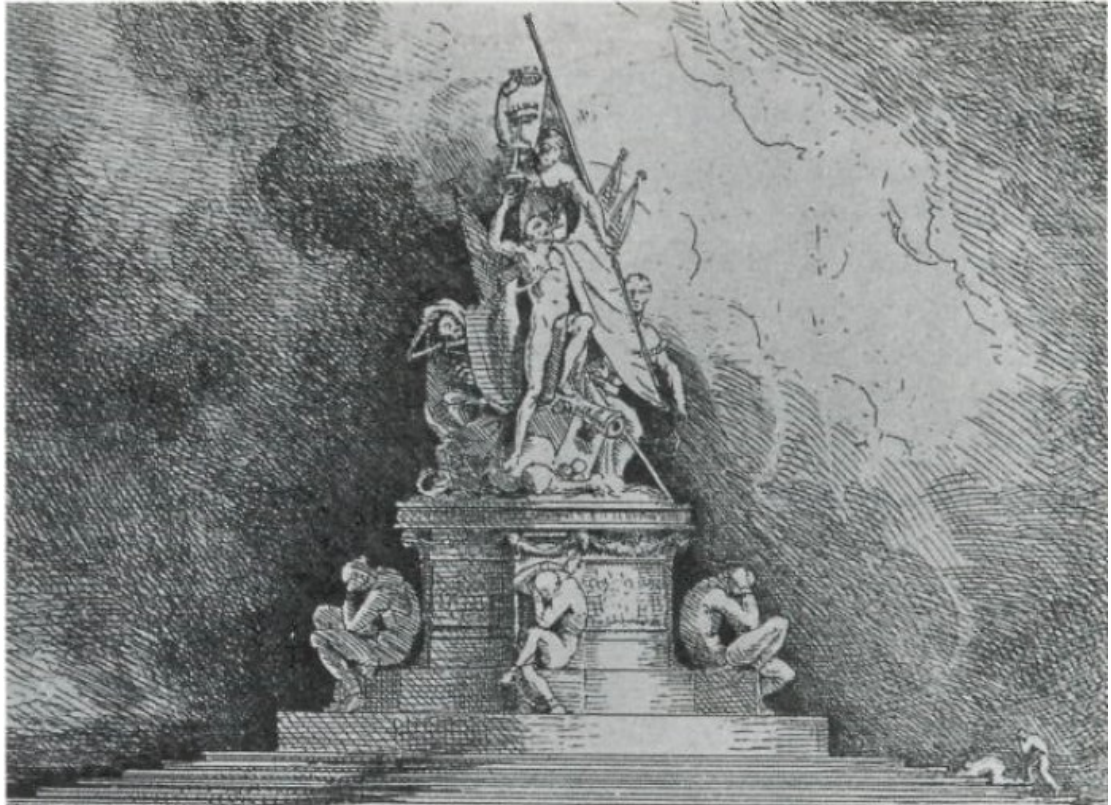


Figure 26: M.C. Wyatt. *Drawing of a Model Devoted to the Memory of Lord Nelson*, reproduced in Yarrington, "Public Sculpture and Civic Pride 1800-1830," 24

Curiously, although a number of other Nelson memorials were created at this time,¹³ no other designs around the country included chained figures, and yet *two* of the designs proposed for Liverpool by different artists, both with local connections, do.¹⁴ It is also pertinent to note the timing of this competition; that these designers were submitting their compositions up to February 1807, in the midst of abolition debates and a mere month before the Act of Parliament outlawing slave trading by Britain would be passed.¹⁵

¹³ The first of which in Castletownend in County Cork, with others following in Birmingham, Edinburgh, Dublin, Glasgow and Great Yarmouth. Rodney Mace, *Trafalgar Square: Emblem of Empire*, 2nd ed. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2005), 51.

¹⁴ Matthew Cotes Wyatt was a fairly unknown sculptor in Liverpool, yet he had connections to the town through his father, James Wyatt (1746–1813) who was an external advisor to the competition for the design of the sculpture, and who had also been involved in the rebuilding of Liverpool Town Hall. George Bullock (d. 1818) came to Liverpool from Birmingham in 1798 with a mind to establishing himself as a sculptor in the town, becoming President of the Academy of Art and earning the patronage of William Roscoe. Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of Liverpool*, 55. Yarrington, "The commemoration of the hero".

¹⁵ Sydney Jones Library, Liverpool, Liverpool Pamphlets 1806-1814: Miscellaneous, SPEC G34.30 (12), *Report of the Committee for superintending the erection of the monument to the memory of the late right honourable vice-admiral Lord Viscount Nelson, in the Area of the Liverpool Exchange*, 21 October 1813



Figure 27: George Bullock's design for a monument to the memory of Lord Nelson showing figures in chains, 1807. From Yarrington, "Public Sculpture and Civic Pride 1800-1830,"

Roscoe's Whiggish anti-slavery stance was at odds with the views of the other men on the committee, many of whom formed an active part of the pro-slavery lobby. Whilst more visually obvious renditions of enslaved Africans may have come up against fierce opposition from the majority of the committee, it is possible that a more 'veiled' reference to slavery is being made which draws instead upon the experience of prisoners of war, of which there were around 4000 within Liverpool at this time.¹⁶ One letter published in the *Mercury* after the monument was unveiled, reveals the beginnings of what would be a long public debate over what the four figures represented. The author states that 'a prodigious outcry has been raised against the four figures in chains', that many have claimed it a shock to see such a 'galling exhibition of slavery in Britain! For, as the poet says, "Slaves cannot breathe in England"' drawing on a quote from renowned anti-slavery poet, William Cowper.¹⁷ The author dismisses such assumptions stating instead that the statues represent prisoners of war, and shifts the focus of the debate around these figures away from slavery, and indeed Liverpool's part in it, to a more

¹⁶ Yarrington, "Public Sculpture and Civic Pride 1800-1830," 25.

¹⁷ N.Y., "Letter: Nelson's Monument," *Liverpool Mercury*, November 5th 1813. 'Slaves cannot breathe in England ; if their lungs / Receive our air, that moment they are free / They touch our coun'ry, and their shackles fall.' William Cowper, 'The Task' (1785) Book II in Cowper, William. *The Poems of William Cowper*. (New York: C. Wells, 1835)

acceptable and concurrently prominent area of national discourse by issuing anti-French rhetoric in a mocking tone:

In answer to all this, I would beg leave to ask, are not these figures intended to represent prisoners of war? And have we any assurance that they have been put on their *parole*? For my part, I never trust a Frenchman, and I have not the least doubt, that if the chains were taken away, these *mounseers* would quickly scale the palisades, and take French leave, without waiting for the ceremony of being regularly exchanged.

As to the misery which is so visibly depicted in their countenances and postures, I have no hesitation in saying that it is all feigned, in order to excite sympathy in the bystanders, and to induce them to ease them of their chains. I, however, warn the Committee to be on their guard, and even to employ some loyal blacksmith to examine their fetters once a week; for, should they get loose, as far as I can judge from their size and muscular appearance, they would be more than a match for a whole posse of constables.¹⁸

The author turns attention away from something the town had been criticised for, to a subject it could take pride in. From this letter we are given an insight into how, from the moment of the unveiling, there was a reactionary debate prompted by the chained figures, certainly to a high enough degree to merit the author of this letter writing into the local press to assert his position and deny symbolic connections to slavery, instead turning to national identity narratives which celebrated naval heroism via stereotypes of the French.

The chained figures, whilst perhaps not explicitly or singularly representing African slaves, do imply a symbolic connection to them, through coincidental suggestion maybe, or through an intentional allusion which can take as its alibi the 'official' allegory of a national heroic victory. The multiplicities of meaning and ambiguity of interpretation permit contestation and contradiction, and through this dissonance have created a porous terrain onto which a memory debate can take root and unfold. In American novelist Herman Melville's largely autobiographical text *Redburn*, Melville aligns the figures surrounding Nelson on the base of the structure with slaves:

These woe-begone figures of captives are emblematic of Nelson's principal victories; but I never could look at their swarthy limbs and manacles, without being involuntarily reminded of four African slaves in the market-place¹⁹.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Herman Melville, *Redburn: His First Voyage* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1849), 148-9.

Whilst Redburn's 'involuntary' reminiscence implies a subconscious link with symbolism, the connections he makes to slavery are rationalized through the more obvious aesthetic qualities of the sculpture's physical fabric; that it is impossible to look at 'black' bodies in chains, the 'swarthy limbs and manacles', of figures rendered in bronze and treated with a black patina, without thinking of African slavery.

To suggest there is 'no memorial to slavery in Liverpool', is, as stated in Chapter One, to place a particular, and perhaps restrictive, definition on what a memorial is or can be. In addition to the 'sites of memory' forged through the 'crystallization' of 'myth' (to be discussed further in Chapter Ten in relation to the 'ghosts' of slaves), sites of memory also form around places of public debate and conflict (discussed in Chapter Eleven in relation to the imagery of African bodies). Further, museums are themselves discussed in terms of their memory-functions, and sometimes as 'sites of memory' in certain terms.²⁰ The 'rise of the museums' in Liverpool's slavery-memory discourse will be the subject of Chapter Twelve.

²⁰ See for example P. Williams, *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (Oxford: Berg Publisher, 2007); Susan A. Crane, ed. *Museums and Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott, eds., *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, vol. 68 (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2010).

Slaves in Liverpool

Introduction

The prospect of enslaved people living in, or, more contentiously, being *sold* in Liverpool is a central and recurring point of debate within the city's slavery discourse. The contentiousness of a slave presence is curious given how little it would affect overall assessments of the city's involvement in or profit from, the slave trade. For, even if no enslaved African person had ever touched Liverpool soil, her merchants still masterminded the shipping and sale of over 1.1 million Africans, and the city still financially benefitted from transatlantic slavery in real tangible ways. However, the possibility of the 'product' of this involvement, and the consequence of the planning and administrative organisation of Liverpool's 'African trade' being physically present in the city; of Liverpool people having seen the realities of the trade, is somehow more intolerable. Furthermore, through denying the presence of slaves in Liverpool by familiar processes of maritimization; drawing triangles across the Atlantic (and pointing these away from the city, having only inanimate slave-grown produce return to the city), and reinforcing temporal seals (using Acts of Parliament and moments in legal history to draw lines under particular issues), associations with transatlantic slavery are kept at a distance. Debate around 'slaves in Liverpool', moreover, focuses on issues which speakers believe *can* be denied and thereby removes focus from the broader economic and cultural implications of this history on Liverpool.

In the presence of these official denials or silences surrounding 'slaves in Liverpool', the suggestion of their existence nonetheless perpetually rises, often from below ground, from graveyards, caves and cellars; or from concealment, from behind locked doors, gates, and under the cover of darkness. Stories of a Liverpool slave presence are articulated through an ethereal language of 'myth' and 'legend', a language which nurtures their presence through ambiguity, blurring lines between truth and untruth, and allowing them to rest on playful genres such as 'romanticism', in ways which provide gaps for them to rise. The contested remains, discursive and physical, of slave bodies in the city can be understood as a ghostly

haunting. Avery Gordon describes such sociological 'ghosts', as occupying an uneven visible/barely visible state which represents something trying to be known, that, '[t]he ghost or apparition is one form by which something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our supposedly well-trained eyes, makes itself known or apparent to us [...].'¹ One of the ways in which slave bodies rise, is through the recurring persistence of 'myths'. Here, 'myths' are understood, not as contradictions of historical fact but as the layering and 'crystallisation' of narrative around place.² In this sense, as Jan Assmann describes, '[t]he past is not simply "received" by the present. The present is "haunted" by the past and the past is modelled, invented, reinvented, and reconstructed by the present...'³

These risen stories of slaves in Liverpool are 'hooked' onto place, through semiotic associations – sites previously associated with slave ships and named in celebration of Liverpool's lucrative trade, sites which continue to provide the foundation for a layering of debate which is echoed in architectural change and urban development. If the prospect of slaves in Liverpool can be understood as a reoccurring or 'haunting' debate, nowhere is this more literally apparent than in an actual graveyard, where the ghosts of Liverpool and slavery rise from below, fusing with history, memory and phantom memorials.

Buried Memories - St James's Church

Some of Liverpool's sites of slavery memory concern places which are significant to Liverpool black history and merge the ghostly presence of slaves, free black people, life and death. One such site is the Grade II* listed Church of St James's.

Built between 1774-5 and located on the corner of Upper Parliament Street and St James's Place in Toxteth, St James's Church was listed in June 1985 for architectural significance as the earliest surviving recorded example of a cast iron structure in Britain.⁴ In a book produced as part of *Religion and Place* (a project run by English Heritage documenting historic places of worship in Leeds, Liverpool, and Tower Hamlets, London), St James's is

¹ Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis,: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 9.

² Nora, *Introduction to Realms of Memory, Volume III*.

³ Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism*, 9.

⁴ English Heritage, "Church of St James, List Summary," <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1209882> [accessed August 14 2012].

similarly celebrated for its embodiment of 'speculative enterprise' which transformed the development of industrial architecture.⁵ The book was produced as part of a project which aimed to use historic places of worship to 'tell the stories of individuals and communities',⁶ yet a distinct silence remains around an aspect of the building's social history which is nonetheless outlined elsewhere on the organisation's website, in a section created especially for marking the 2007 Bicentenary:

Many people from West Africa, the Caribbean and America settled in Liverpool. St James's Church, Toxteth, Liverpool was built between 1774-5 and many of these settlers were baptised here. The records and monuments of St James's are evidence of the many reasons for this transatlantic migration, including Liverpool's involvement in the slave trade.⁷

Ray Costello uses the records of baptism from St James's when discussing early Liverpool-born black people to prove that '[b]lack people were being born in Liverpool by at least the latter part of the eighteenth century'.⁸ Although this aspect of the church's history is not discussed within many of the architectural histories and guides to Liverpool,⁹ a history of the church written in 1925 by the contemporary Vicar, cites five such records, presenting one as a 'reminder' of slavery:

There are many entries referring to the baptism of negroes and mulattos, such as these:-

"Jemmy Africa, negro, native of Gold Coast.

Thomas Neptune, negro, native of Tortola.

Thomas, son of Jack Brown, native of Savannah."

The Following entry is a reminder of the slave-holding of that period:-

"1792. James Thomas, a negro, was baptized, March 9th, with the consent and approbation of his master, Thomas Aspinall, Esquire."

This record of the baptism of a black prince is interesting:-

⁵ Sarah Brown and Peter De Figueiredo, *Religion and Place: Liverpool's Historic Places of Worship* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2008), 13-14.

⁶ English Heritage, "Religion and Place: Multifaith projects in Leeds, Liverpool and Hackney." (Accessed February 21, 2013)

⁷ English Heritage, "Black lives in England," <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/discover/people-and-places/the-slave-trade-and-abolition/sites-of-memory/black-lives-in-england/> [accessed August 14 2012].

⁸ Ray Costello, *Black Liverpool*, 36.

⁹ Not discussed within Quentin Hughes, *Seaport* (London: Percy Lund, Humphries & Co, 1964); Quentin Hughes, *Liverpool: City of Architecture*; Sharples and Pollard, *Liverpool (Pevsner Architectural Guides)*; Nikolaus Pevsner, *Lancashire: The Industrial and Commercial South* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1969).

“1796. Samuel Baron, son of the African King, Oaramby, alias Johnson, was baptized January 21st”¹⁰

Although the church is therefore an important site within the history of the Liverpool black presence, and indeed for black British history more generally, it is rarely talked about in these terms in broader historic discourse, only emerging from moments and actions focusing particular attention on issues, research and projects into black history or transatlantic slavery. St James’s, as a site of black memory remains outside authoritative discourses which focus attention and conceptualise significance around its exceptional architectural features and material history, and yet from debates surrounding the conservation and maintenance of the church’s physical fabric, the ghosts of the enslaved re-emerge.

St James’s Church had been derelict for over 30 years following plans (ultimately not seen through) to extend the M62 motorway into the city centre.¹¹ The Church had been in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust until responsibility was returned to the Diocese.¹² Writing a decade earlier, in 1999, Quentin Hughes laments the church’s fall into disrepair and asks ‘how wonderful it would be if it could be converted into a museum of iron architecture in whose development Liverpool has played such a significant part’.¹³

In 2012, a memorial acknowledging a different significant part of Liverpool’s history was proposed for the site as part of a £45m regeneration project organised by Liverpool City Council and LivServ, an Anglican diocese charity. The proposed memorial was described as an ‘African Garden of Remembrance’ within the local press, and was also billed as ‘the UK’s first monument to victims of the slave trade’, without acknowledging any preceding memorials.¹⁴ It was suggested that the memorial would attract tourism from America, the Caribbean and West Africa, presumably in an attempt to tap into ‘roots tourism’. Roots, or Diaspora Tourism, which emerged during the 1960s and 1970s saw many people of African descent, and African-

¹⁰ Colin T. Dawson, *The Church of St. James, Toxteth Park 1775-1925. One Hundred-and-Fiftieth Anniversary of the Consecration of the Church* (Liverpool: A. Litchfield, 1925), 10.

¹¹ Emily Gosden, "Historic church's £400k grant joy: Archbishop of York visits to celebrate work," *Liverpool Echo*, March 12th 2011.

¹² Ben Schofield, "Historic church given back to city," *Liverpool Daily Post*, May 21 2010.

¹³ Hughes, *Liverpool: City of Architecture*, 26.

¹⁴ Including the nearby *Captured Africans* memorial designed by Kevin Dalton-Johnson in neighbouring former slave port Lancaster as part of STAMP (Slave Trade Arts and Memorial Project) in 2005. See Alan Rice, "Naming the Money and Unveiling the Crime: Contemporary British Artists and the Memorialisation of Slavery and Abolition," 323.

Americans in particular, visiting sites along the West Coast of Africa.¹⁵ This tourism drive extended to sites of slavery memory in Africa, particularly to 'slave castles' along the West African coast, in a bid to 'promote the tangible and intangible heritage handed down by the slave trade for the purposes of cultural tourism' (one of the objectives of the 1995 Slave Route Project).¹⁶ The St James's 'Garden of Remembrance' was, perhaps rather optimistically, proposed to offer the same experience to wealthy African-descended tourists. The tension created by this particular presentation of the past, through economically motivated heritage tourism, was expressed within an online comment in response to this piece which sarcastically responded; 'Toxteth the museum ... I don't see it catching on. You'd have difficulty getting anyone to come from as far as Norris Green to see this.'¹⁷

Councillor Joe Anderson was quoted in the local press as stating that St James's was an appropriate site for a slavery memorial because 'of the people buried there who are victims of the slave trade' and journalist Marc Waddington also stated that the garden will recognise the 'many slaves who were buried there'.¹⁸ The suggested presence of slave bodies provoked much criticism within online responses to the scheme, 'Watch my lips...' demands one author, 'SLAVES ARE NOT BURIED THERE..but but (*sic*) people believe what they want to believe..!!!'.¹⁹ One respondent stated that since there are 'no slaves' within the cemetery, the whole scheme must be a public relations stunt and 'land grab on a historic monument'.²⁰ Similarly, 'Moriarty'

¹⁵ See Bayo Holsey, "Transatlantic Dreaming: Slavery, Tourism, and Diasporic Encounters," in *Homecomings: Unsettling Paths of Return*, ed. Fran Markowitz and Anders H. Stefansson (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004), 168.

¹⁶ UNESCO, quoted in Anthony Tibbles, "Facing Slavery's Past", 298.

¹⁷ Norris Green is a suburb of Liverpool. Lord_Rafa, "Comment on article: Marc Waddington, "£45m Toxteth regeneration to include UK's first slave trade victims memorial," Liverpool Echo, March 13 2012," Liverpool Echo, <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/liverpool-news/local-news/2012/03/13/45m-toxteth-regeneration-to-include-uk-s-first-slave-trade-victims-memorial-100252-30517431/#ixzz1rogxQtKQ> [accessed April 12th 2012].

¹⁸ Marc Waddington, "£45m Toxteth regeneration to include UK's first slave trade victims memorial," *Liverpool Echo*, March 13 2012.

¹⁹ georgechristophermciver, "Comment on article: Marc Waddington, "£45m Toxteth regeneration to include UK's first slave trade victims memorial," Liverpool Echo, March 13 2012," Liverpool Echo, <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/liverpool-news/local-news/2012/03/13/45m-toxteth-regeneration-to-include-uk-s-first-slave-trade-victims-memorial-100252-30517431/#ixzz1rogxQtKQ> [accessed April 12th 2012].

²⁰ Vespers9, "Comment on article: Marc Waddington, "£45m Toxteth regeneration to include UK's first slave trade victims memorial," Liverpool Echo, March 13 2012," Liverpool Echo, <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/liverpool-news/local-news/2012/03/13/45m-toxteth-regeneration-to-include-uk-s-first-slave-trade-victims-memorial-100252-30517431/#ixzz1rogxQtKQ> [accessed April 12th 2012].

questions in expressive capitals 'WHAT MANY SLAVES??' whilst stating that 'very few slaves were brought to Liverpool'.²¹

The issue of whether slaves were buried in St James's cemetery is divisive, and has been for some time, with most local historians careful to cite only the baptism records available in discussions of slaves and the church, and much popular debate implying, or outrightly stating that enslaved people must have been buried within the grounds. The issue was raised in 2008 when the Diocese laid out regeneration plans which included redevelopment of the grounds and the construction of office and apartment blocks to finance renovations. This would, the Diocese declared, require the exhumation of up to 2,500 bodies from the graveyard, 'including many former slaves'.²² These plans were criticised as 'ludicrous vandalism' in a subsequent letter to the *Post*, the author condemning the exhumation of 'graves containing the remains of slaves who settled in Liverpool', and a plea in a later letter asks the church to '[j]ust let the slaves rest in peace'.²³ Joyce Exley suggests that the area around St James's should be used instead to reflect upon the lives of the enslaved through religious prayer, that the International Slavery Museum, opened the year before was a 'constant reminder [...] of the shameful past of Liverpool's heritage and its slaves, and those who wish to pray for their souls may do so in any of the churches near St James's'.²⁴ The plans to develop the land and exhume skeletons did not go ahead and whilst it's likely that the suggestion was a hypothetical one; made to highlight the financial dire straits of the church and raise the profile of the regeneration scheme, the public response it elicited once again raised the dissonant issue of slave bodies in Liverpool.

The repeated assertion that slaves were buried at St James's, without specific historic evidence so far to confirm this, could be a reflection of the dominance of the idea of 'slave burial grounds' in global slavery memory, such as the high profile archaeological excavation and subsequent memorial and museum site of the African Burial Ground in New York in the

²¹ Moriarty, "Comment on article: Marc Waddington, "£45m Toxteth regeneration to include UK's first slave trade victims memorial," *Liverpool Echo*, March 13 2012," *Liverpool Echo*, <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/liverpool-news/local-news/2012/03/13/45m-toxteth-regeneration-to-include-uk-s-first-slave-trade-victims-memorial-100252-30517431/#ixzz1rogxQtKQ> [accessed April 12th 2012].

²² Ben Schofield, "Church may dig up 2,500 bodies: Buried slaves among remains facing removal in city plan," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 8 2008.

²³ Ian Poole, "Letter: Ludicrous vandalism," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 10 2008; Monice Lawrence, "Letter: Church plan," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 14 2008.

²⁴ Joyce Exley, "Letter: Refurbishment plan," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 20 2008.

early 1990s.²⁵ The idea of the internment of ‘slaves’ could also reflect an imaginative association of community and place, that the church served a small but growing local black population in Liverpool, in life certainly, for Baptisms, and, as churches do, also in death; for burials, seeing through the lifecycles of Liverpool black people. The ghostly presence of slaves in this Liverpool graveyard also reflects the itinerant nature of the enslavement process itself, the mass forced movement of bodies across oceans and the loss, indeed severing of roots, a displacement perhaps rendered all the more evocative in death. In this sense, the graves in St James’s are imagined, as the Diocese suggests, as the ‘final resting places’ of black slaves, the transient bodies of enslaved people, many remaining untraceable or whose bones line the Atlantic Ocean.²⁶ ‘Slaves were buried at sea...’ replies one author to the vociferous denials of slave burials in St James’s, ‘[t]hrown over the side!!..on their way to the “New World”’.²⁷ This resonates with Dr Barbara J. Molette’s poignant image that ‘[i]f the Atlantic Ocean were to dry up, a trail of bones would lead from the shores of Africa to the Americas’.²⁸

Alan Rice and Johanna Kardux, in discussing the ownership of a mummified hand, passed down as an ‘heirloom’, by a former slaving family, suggest that this ‘literal phantom limb’ counters otherwise sanitised narratives of Lancaster’s slaving history:

It is a business whose profits returned, but whose bodies, broken and mutilated, remained elsewhere. What the returned public appearance of the hand does is to interrupt such convenient elision and introduce the black flesh on which such profits were made and of course the traumatic histories it carries with it.²⁹

²⁵ See Michael L. Blakey, "The New York African Burial Ground Project: An Examination of Enslaved Lives, a Construction of Ancestral Ties," *Transforming Anthropology* 7, no. 1 (1998); Joyce Hansen and Siri Hustvedt, *Breaking Ground, Breaking Silence: The Story of New York's African Burial Ground* (New York: Henry Holt and Company Ltd, 1998); Cheryl J. LaRoche and Michael L. Blakey, "Seizing Intellectual Power: The Dialogues at the New York African Burial Ground," *Historical Archaeology* 31(1997).

²⁶ Schofield, "Church may dig up 2,500 bodies."

²⁷ tiktokman0, "Comment on article: Marc Waddington, "£45m Toxteth regeneration to include UK's first slave trade victims memorial," Liverpool Echo, March 13 2012," Liverpool Echo, <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/liverpool-news/local-news/2012/03/13/45m-toxteth-regeneration-to-include-uk-s-first-slave-trade-victims-memorial-100252-30517431/#ixzz1rogxQtKQ> (accessed April 12, 2012).

²⁸ Quote taken from Imna Arroyo. "Exhibitions" <http://www.imnaarroyo.com/exhibitions.html> (accessed February 22, 2013)

²⁹ Alan Rice and Johanna C. Kardux, "Confronting the Ghostly Legacies of Slavery: The Politics of Black Bodies, Embodied Memories and Memorial Landscapes," *Atlantic Studies* 9, no. 3 (2012): 249-51.

The hand was eventually laid to rest in a special ceremony, 'as a material spectre to remember other such black lives that made little or no mark'.³⁰ What the internment of slave bodies in Liverpool soil *would* do, is root people to place and create concrete connections between the city and the victims of its 'lucrative trade'. The ghostly presence of slaves in Liverpool serves to draw focus back to the 'real' human embodiment of an otherwise distant and often euphemistically discussed 'African trade', placed in a maritime, mobile context of seafaring and 'trading' which occurs between foreign people in foreign lands. The presence of enslaved people in Liverpool itself acts to 'bring home' the reality of Liverpool and slavery, by highlighting the more tangible effects of an industry otherwise largely only administratively controlled from within the city space. Although historians and commentators have discussed the evidence for slave sales and auctions taking place within coffee houses and on the steps of the Custom House in the pages of the *Liverpool Williamson Advertiser*, the issue of slaves being sold in Liverpool itself has remained a contentious issue.

Myth and Place

The memory of slavery in Liverpool has 'crystallised' against its urban landscape through contested imagery, myth and counter-myth. Here, 'myth' also refers to the symbolic association between histories and their contexts, often in the face of and in reaction to silences surrounding this subject. Slave sales are discussed in an illusory language of 'myths and legends', 'folklore' or 'local tradition' which is often 'hooked' onto particular places.³¹ Ramsay Muir states in 1907, 'the legend which pictures rows of negroes chained to staples in the Goree Piazzas, exposed for sale, is a curious instance of popular superstition', or more

³⁰ Ibid.: 251.

³¹ 'Local folklore has it that slaves used to be tied to iron rings at the Pier Head. However, truth tells a different story and there is no evidence to suggest that any ship ever berthed at Liverpool with a cargo of slaves' Ron Jones, *The American Connection*, 77. 'Folklore has it that slaves were once chained to the iron rings on the arches of the Goree and in the cellars of the Town Hall's pub on the corner, though this is not generally considered to be true'. Peter Aughton, *Liverpool: A People's History, 3rd Edition* (2008), 216; 'A comprehensive mercantile history of the city has yet to be written, but meanwhile it is essential to dispel, by means of such forthright letters as Mr. Lascelles's, the *popular legend* that slaves were shipped from Liverpool, and to refute the assertion that the town owed its remarkable commercial development to prosecution of the African trade.' Italics my own Arthur C. Wardle, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade - Early Records," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 19, 1939.



Figure 28: Goree Buildings, Liverpool, (1826) engraving by Edward Finden, scan of engraving copy owned by author.

elusively the Goree Piazza, ‘suggests old slaving days,’ claims Louis Lacey, writing in the same year as Muir.³² Here the name of Goree alone conjures up associations with slavery.

The Goree Piazas used to stand on the east side of St Georges Dock (opened in 1771) and James Picton suggests that they were a part of the original design although not constructed until 1793 when they were named ‘in commemoration of the African trade, then so prosperous in Liverpool’.³³ The original structure was largely destroyed by fire shortly after construction in 1802. After their reconstruction, they stood for over one hundred years, surviving another fire in 1840 in Back Goree (behind the warehouses, now The Strand), until being partly destroyed during the Blitz, and finally being completely demolished 1948-1950.³⁴ Their association with slavery, slaves in Liverpool and specifically slave sales, however, continued long after their demolition, becoming the intangible place where ‘legend asserts

³² Muir, *History of Liverpool*, 202; Lacey, *The History of Liverpool From 1207 to 1907*, 75. After his mysteriously unexplained association by name, Lacey includes further reference to slave sales in the immediate vicinity of the Goree warehouses, where ‘a publichouse, where slaves were regularly bought and sold, stood, not more than half a century ago, adjacent to the Churchyard.’

³³ Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool Vol 1*, 557

³⁴ Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool Vol 2*, 84. Date of demolition given on a commemorative plaque at the original site.

that slaves were sold'.³⁵ Here, memory lingers against absence, settling into a more 'mythical' status, where 'THE STORY that African slaves were once chained to the metal rings in the now-vanished Goree Piazza near the Pier Head is one of the classic images of Liverpool's brutal past.'³⁶ However, '[i]t is also a myth, according to some historians' who again point the triangle of slave trading away from the city. Who is telling these stories seems important, that according to Ron Jones's 1986 guidebook to Liverpool's American connections, '[t]axi drivers and other locals may tell you that this [Goree] is where slaves were housed awaiting shipment to America or the West Indies' but that historians will tell you otherwise. Local people, ordinary people, those prone to flights of fancy such as 'taxi drivers' might even propose evidence of their own, 'that they have actually seen the iron rings to which the slaves were chained'. But they are recounting *tales* not factual history and 'the fact of the matter is that these tales are simply untrue!'³⁷ Myth is articulated as a 'commonly held belief' in relation to Goree by Alexander Tulloch in 2008, that '[i]t used to be a commonly held belief that African slaves were brought to Liverpool and put up for sale near the docks on a large square known as the Goree Piazza' and that furthermore, '[s]chool children of the pre-war years were told that the iron rings fixed into the walls surrounding the piazza were originally where the slaves were manacled and chained'.³⁸ School children, like taxi drivers, are also apparently gullible in their love of a 'good story'.

In 1923, some 30 years before their demolition, Professor of Architecture at the University of Liverpool, Charles Reilly discussed the association made between the warehouses and slavery within the context of discussing the 'older' (predominantly eighteenth century) architectural structures within the city. He suggests that very few eighteenth century buildings remain though those he does discuss are linked to slavery, tantalisingly mentioned as asides without details, perhaps illustrating the prominence of stories surrounding these places in public discourse. He states that 'there are only a few fine old merchants' residences in Duke Street and the neighbourhood, now used as warehouses, and the walls of a slave prison'.³⁹ He queries the age of the Goree Piazzas, though proposes that they are in an eighteenth century style, articulating the language of 'myth' through 'tradition', that 'local tradition says that slaves were exposed for sale in their arcades'. He does not dismiss such 'traditions' and even

³⁵ Hughes, *Seaport*, 11.

³⁶ Steve Brauner, "Slavery Haunts the Old Docks," *Liverpool Daily Post*, December 13th 1991.

³⁷ Jones, *The American Connection*, 24.

³⁸ Tulloch, *The Story of Liverpool*, 65.

³⁹ Reilly, "A Note on the Architecture of Liverpool," 49.

draws further detailed connections between these suggestions and visual architectural signals, where '[c]uriously enough, there is still a very finely carved wooden tiger with a negress upon its back (which ought to be in the local museum) to be seen above their arches'.⁴⁰

The 'myths' of slave sales in Liverpool repeatedly emerge from below ground, from stories about tunnels, dens, chambers, and prison cells under buildings, under the feet of contemporary Liverpudlians, in movements which fuse history and memory. Debate concerning connections between specific warehouses and the presence of slaves emerged in the early 1930s when an 'invoice' was discovered in the cellar of a Liverpool warehouse. This document was discussed by Mr Harry Gaunt on the 24th April 1931 in an address to the Liverpool Transport Institute and prompted debate within the local press. Within local press coverage it was recounted how Mr Gaunt raised a 'controversial point' by claiming that the previously discovered document, 'found a few years ago in a cellar shows that Goree warehouses, as well as those of Sparling, Gilbert, and Henry Streets were frequently used for the housing of African negroes'.⁴¹ The invoice is quoted as accounting for 'a cargo of 209 men, women and children shipped in 1773 in the Julia from Old Calabar' and Mr Gaunt is reported as stating that slaves were 'accommodated in the Sparling warehouses pending transshipment to America.' Two days later, a letter defends Mr Gaunt, making clear that he had been 'careful to say that the warehouses mentioned' within the article 'were "said" to be used for the storage of slaves', drawing attention his knowing 'full well that this was a controversial point'.⁴² The author of the letter gives further detail about the recovery of the document, that it was found 'with other documents relating to the slave traffic, in a cellar of one of the very old warehouses in Henry-street'.⁴³ However, the following day this 'evidence' is discredited by the suggestion that this document was probably a 'A/c sales', for slaves exchanged in Jamaica. The *Post & Mercury* reporter then adds that '[t]here need be no uncertainty about Liverpool and the slave trade. Liverpool merchants always sent barter goods to the West Coast, where they were exchanged for slaves collected by African Kings', drawing attention to the 'triangular' structure of the slave trade system, that these slaves were then taken to the West Indies, 'on the terrible Middle Passage' and the returning ships would carry home 'rum, sugar and other native produce'.⁴⁴ Drawing on the Somerset case of 1772,⁴⁵ the author claims that

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Y.J. Woodcock, "Letter: Old Slave Traffic," *Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury*, April 27 1931.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ "Letter: In reference to your note...", *Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury*, April 28 1931.

after this date 'no slave came to Liverpool'. The piece ends defiantly, '[w]hat has been written from time to time about slave cellars and slave dens is all rubbish'.⁴⁶

Two years later this document and debate was revisited, in the midst of the centenary of the Emancipation Act in 1933. One article throws doubt on the document whilst acknowledging the 'controversial' nature of the topic by using a separate occurrence to distance the action of slave sales elsewhere, to the West Indies, leaving an imagined Liverpool ship to return home without slave bodies:

Invoices found a few years ago in a very old cellar at Henry-street suggest that warehouses may conceivably have been used to accommodate slaves at the Goree and in Sparling, Gilbert, and Henry streets. This is still a controversial point. In 1766 a report in Williamson's Advertiser made it appear that the ship Vine had brought 400 slaves from Bonny to Liverpool. It has since been shown, however, that she sold these slaves in the West Indies before returning here.⁴⁷

Another two years later in 1935, this evidence was again disputed. The only evidence there is for slave sales in Goree warehouses, the author suggests, was this 'one solitary invoice' with its corresponding and elusive 'suggestions'. The author draws a triangle across the Atlantic and turns the points of slave sales away from Liverpool, where 'actually' only 'rum, sugar and so on' were returned.⁴⁸

The relationship between slaves in Liverpool and a 'mythical romanticism' persistently re-emerges. When Edmund Vale undertook research for writing the British local information sheets in 1946 he was reported as describing Liverpool as 'a most romantic town' immediately describing 'the subterranean sandstone chambers in which the pitiful "stock" of the slave

⁴⁵ Often used in sections discounting the possibility of slave sales in Goree since the warehouses were constructed in 1793, after the Mansfield ruling in the 'Somerset' case, it is claimed meant that 'slavery did not exist in England and that every slave became free so soon as his foot touched English soil' Muir, *History of Liverpool*, 202.

⁴⁶ "Letter: In reference to your note...".

⁴⁷ "Not Brought Here?," *Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury*, August 28, 1933.

⁴⁸ 'One solitary invoice was found in a Goree cellar, some years ago, referring to a cargo of 209 men, women and children, shipped in 1773 in the Julia from Old Calabar, which suggested that they might have been accommodated in Sparling's warehouse there. Actually, Liverpool ships sailed to West Africa with beads, cloth, gin, guns and knives, and have these to the head men in exchange for slaves. Then they sailed by the cruel middle passage to the West Indies, where they sold the slaves for anything up to £50 apiece. Newly-born children brought £5. This was then spent on rum, sugar and so on, which was brought to England' "Chained and Auctioned," *Liverpool Daily Post*, February 11th, 1935.

trade used to be kept while awaiting shipments to America'.⁴⁹ It was this line in particular that was reported within the local press, eliciting a predictable and perhaps desired response from the ever vocal Arthur C Wardle and George Lascelles (see Chapter Six). Wardle responded with apparent disappointment in Mr Vale, whose 'good work is likely to prove valueless if he relies on legend rather than factual history and the research of the historian', complaining that he himself was tired of 'continually trying to dispel the legend of the Liverpool "slave cellars,"'.⁵⁰ However, putting the intentions of the *Liverpool Daily Post's* editorial team aside, the subject of slaves in Liverpool continues to be shrouded in a language which foregrounds the notion of myths which are apparently by their nature romantic. This romanticism is used as a way of trivialising the suggestion of slaves in Liverpool, and discounting the possibility of slave sales having taken place; '[i]t's all rather amusing' suggests Arthur Wardle recounting how people take him to see 'slave cellars'. Arthur Wardle urges Edmund Vale to 'stick to factual history, for he will find more romance in the authentic history of the local press gangs, privateers and the general trade than by following the sordid story of slaving or the silly legend of the slave-cellars', crucially to histories other than Liverpool and slavery.⁵¹ Edmund Vale responds to his critics by citing his source as the 'memory' of an elderly Liverpool man who remembers seeing 'slave cellars' in his youth, presumably during the nineteenth century:

I knew a man fairly well who was a big Liverpool contractor and had been connected with the building and joinery trades all his life. He must have been about seventy years of age in 1920. He told me that under many houses in Liverpool there were formerly large cellars excavated in the sandstone rock. At some time (I think when he was a young man) they had been filled in, a work in which he took part. He said that at one time some of these underground rooms had been used to confine negroes who had been brought from Africa (the Middle Passage being then closely watched by our gunboats) and were destined for the American plantations. The men were brought up from the waterside by night and returned at a similar hour after transhipment matters had been arranged. I suppose my friend had this information from others. But he said it was a fact that there were ring-bolts with rings in them let into the rock walls and he was quite satisfied in his own mind about the use they had been put to, and that the authorities had been sympathetically aware of it.⁵²

The cellars in this instance are numerous and general rather than isolated and solitary, ordinary and domestic rather than exceptional and commercial, appearing under 'many

⁴⁹ "'All Round' in The London Letter," *Liverpool Daily Post*, April 8th 1946.

⁵⁰ Arthur C. Wardle, "Letter: "Slave Cellars" Legend," *Liverpool Daily Post*, April 9 1946.

⁵¹ Arthur C. Wardle, "Letter: The Slave Cellars," *Liverpool Daily Post*, April 23 1946.

⁵² Edmund Vale, "Letter: Liverpool and the Slave Trade," *Liverpool Daily Post*, April 16 1946.

houses'. These domestic 'caves' carved out of Liverpool's physical geographic substance, exist in the same discursive space as the cellars of Goree, they are hidden, walked over, lived over, unknown. The mystery and secrecy of these stories extends to time itself and the cloak of darkness, that slaves were moved by night, from water to underground cell, like myths moving through shadows. There is also a suggestion of a 'public secret', that authorities were aware of such places and their histories even if it was not explicitly stated. He ends with a comment on myth and history, suggesting that his critics' idea of 'history' will always remain incomplete if it is relying blindly on documents, highlighting their inadequacy for subjects such as this.

Mr. Wardle demands documentary evidence for his facts. But in the past there have always been "open secrets" whose mention in any form of writing has been studiously avoided. That is why history based entirely on documentary evidence must always remain very incomplete.⁵³

Through their romanticism, however, these stories carry an uncanny translucent beauty in their elusiveness and ambiguity, existing in the hazy space between truth and untruth, fact and fiction, history and memory. In Liverpool's 750th birthday year, one author states that '[i]t is unlikely that any slaves were chained to the ringbolts in the pillars of old Goree, or in underground city passages, however romantic the stories may sound'.⁵⁴ This mythical, romanticised status of stories surrounding slaves in Liverpool arises in the face of 'things unknown', and in reaction to the 'hidden' nature of Liverpool and slavery. This hidden history arises from under visible surfaces, in particular surrounding Goree as discussed, and at points reaction to secrecy and concealment becomes more literally expressed, where J.F. Doyle, writing in 1951, suggests that not only is evidence of slaves in Liverpool hidden within cellars in Goree, but behind purposefully sealed doors wherein tangible evidence lies:

Regarding the slave cellars in Goree, a friend of mine in the cotton business told me that, years ago, he, with several others, discovered a nailed-up door in the cellar of one of their warehouses, and upon opening it, leg irons were found hanging from staples on the walls, which seemed to indicate that slaves had been kept there.⁵⁵

Evidence here, like the 'invoice' discussed previously, merges with memory in the recanting of stories surrounding Goree. The relationship between history, myth, and memory collide in the

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ "The Men Who Made Liverpool Famous," in *City of Liverpool Charter Celebrations 1207-1957: Evening Express Charter Supplement* (Liverpool: Liverpool Evening Express, June 17th 1957).

⁵⁵ J.F. Doyle, "Letter: Slave Market," *The Liverpool Echo*, November 6 1951.

debates surrounding slaves in Liverpool. Myth is pitted against history in Arthur Wardle's response to Edmund Vale's piece above, suggesting that sound scholarship was 'undone' by its association with such stories, stories which are fanciful nonsense and that 'calm reflection' will show that 'the "slave-cellar" legend is a myth'.⁵⁶ However, George Lascelles suggests that simply denying 'myths' does not kill them, that it 'does not seem to prevent the circulation of another variant', that the fluidity and ambiguity of myth allows for longevity in variation and persistence in adaptability.

Place and Layering

Particular places become regular 'haunts' for stories of slaves in Liverpool, experiencing a 'layering' of myth, counter-myth and association. In a changing urban terrain, such sites experience physical and discursive 'layering', and at times architectural and tangible development itself reflects and incorporates broader discursive processes.

Myths of slaves in Liverpool and their attachment to place create connections across Liverpool's urban landscape, from old houses on the outskirts of the city, back to the above riverside sites of memory. Gateacre Hall in Gateacre, a suburb of Liverpool officially incorporated into the city in 1913, used to be known as 'The Nook'. Architect Huan Matear wrote into the *Liverpool Post* in July 1937 to discuss this building in which he had lived some years previously, praising the beauty and antiquity of the place but dismissing any supernatural connections in relation to 'the so-called "ghost," I may say I never saw or even heard of one, and I think it is very unfortunate that rumour should attribute such a thing to this fine old place.'⁵⁷ However there seems to be no issue in drawing architectural connections between this 'fine old place' and slavery, where:

As a matter of historic interest, may I add that the old stone entrance gateway and wrought iron gates were many years ago removed from a site now occupied by Tower Buildings, at the bottom of Chapel-street (?), where they formed the original gateway through which the slaves were reputed to have passed into the old building where they were confined pending transhipment.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Wardle, "Letter: The Slave Cellars."

⁵⁷ Huan A. Matear, "Letter: Gateacre Hall," *Liverpool Daily Post*, July 5, 1937.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

The author creates a 'door of no return' akin to those made infamous in the slave castles on the coast of West Africa, and indeed on the island of Goree, though here placed at the foot of Liverpool's waterfront. The site of Tower Buildings runs parallel with the Goree warehouses separated by metres, a point which a follow up letter in the press also draws attention to:

In view of the persistence of this slave story – always in the vicinity of the Goree Piazzas, it will be observed – I have caused further search to be made for evidence on this point; but I am assured there is no evidence whatever of slaves being transhipped from Liverpool, and only a few isolated instances of odd slaves being sold here.⁵⁹

Goree and its immediate vicinity becomes a place for stories of slavery to gather, and, over time this has caused a layering of narrative. Urban landscapes change and develop, buildings go up or are brought down, but discourse persists.

In the case of Goree, architectural change has mirrored structures of discourse, in an effort to displace narratives of slavery with narratives celebrating abolition. After the warehouses were demolished in the 1950s, a large office block was constructed directly opposite to the site where Goree Piazzas would have stood, on the road known as Back Goree. This 1960s tower was named 'Wilberforce House' after William Wilberforce, the nationally celebrated abolitionist, whose Bicentenary of birth had been marked in 1959.⁶⁰

The office block, designed and built by Gotch and Partners in 1965-67,⁶¹ was given the name Wilberforce House to celebrate a national hero, one who had recently received much publicity and whose commemoration in name few would take issue with. The discursive displacement of one 'myth' for another, of narratives of slave sales for narratives of white heroism was also reproduced in the discussion of this site of memory within Howard Channon's 1972 *Portrait of Liverpool*. The following passage sets up contradictions and awkward juxtapositions of shame and courage, compassion and cruelty, embodied in the problematic celebration of Hugh Crow, a 'kind slave captain'. Channon replicates the same process of discursive displacement seen within the architectural developments under consideration, drawing on discourses which foreground white philanthropic action as justification for historic wrongs:

⁵⁹ "Letter: No evidence," *Liverpool Daily Post*, July 6, 1937.

⁶⁰ Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*, 104-5.

⁶¹ Terry Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of Liverpool*, 46.

So, with Hugh Crow's last voyage, ended an enterprise in which Liverpoolians have no pride, even if there is courage, and indeed compassion in its chronicles, as well as cruelty. Where the Piazzas called Goree (after an African island) stood on the quayside of George's Dock, from which many of the slave ships sailed, there is now Wilberforce House, an office block built in the 1960s and bearing the name of the arch-apostle of abolition; and at least the port has made some practical recompense to Africa for the agonies that hundreds of thousands, taken in bondage from that continent, endured in the holds of Mersey vessels. It can be argued that the vital role of Merseyside's commerce in the economic development of West Africa – Nigeria in particular – sprang from self-interest; but the foundation, by citizens, of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine at the beginning of the present century was an act of pure altruism which has made – and continues to make – a contribution of profound importance in the social progress of the new nations of the continent.

To see Africans joining in the dedicated quest at that school for new ways to remove the malignancies still exacting a terrible toll among their peoples; to see, in modern quarters near the Mersey, sophisticated young Nigerian cadets who will in this decade be officers of ships sophisticated beyond the imagining not only of men like William Hutchinson but of the captains of the great Cunarders that sailed from Liverpool between the world wars; to see other young people from Africa at the University and colleges in and around the city – this is to be encouraged to believe that an association which brought so much anguish in its beginnings will have helped, before the twentieth century ends, notably towards the enrichment of all mankind.⁶²

Economic development through shipping and trade, medical altruism through the activities of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, employment of African people in maritime roles and the education of Africans in Liverpool establishments are seen as some of the ways in which Liverpool is 'helping' Africa, in a tone of 'post'-imperialistic paternalism alongside an awkward attempt to find some good from so much 'anguish', to celebrate outcomes and effects in order to avoid guilt. Compassion is seen to have made up for cruelty, just as the naming of buildings have been an attempt to cover memories of slavery and the city's direct, tangible and human involvement with it, so has Channon's passage sought similar processes of displacement through layering. However, it is significant that the people benefitting from these activities are 'from Africa', or more specifically are Nigerian, with no mention being made of Liverpool's own longstanding black community. This omission is particularly stark given the increasing national and local race relations initiatives and political activity and concurrent civil rights movements and actions in the US.

⁶² Howard Channon, *Portrait of Liverpool* (London: Robert Hale & Company, 1972), 73. Ron Jones also includes a section on the poignant naming of the building following a section of Goree, here showing a layering over American connections, 'Wilberforce House, the modern building looking out onto the Piazza, is named after William Wilberforce the great anti-slavery reformer and replaced Washington Buildings where Nathaniel Hawthorne, the author and American Consul in Liverpool, had his office from 1853-7' Jones, *The American Connection*.

On the other side of Wilberforce House, in a courtyard off of Drury Lane, the road running parallel with Back Goree, a water sculpture was created called 'Piazza Waterfall'. The sculpture was commissioned during a period of great urban development in the city, following a permanent City Planning Department (1962) and reports issued under the direction of Graeme Shankland and Walter Bor, architect-planners from London County Council.⁶³ Shankland and Bor advocated the use of public art in urban spaces ear-marked for redevelopment, in particular they suggested that 'Water and Fountains will have a great role to play' in redevelopment plans.⁶⁴

Merseyside Civic Society also supported public art and street decoration, and it was this group of architects and other interested parties who commissioned Richard Huws to design the fountain.⁶⁵ The sculpture was originally intended to be placed outside the city, but was promptly re-imagined as a way to mark the beginning of the inner city redevelopments and building work taking place.⁶⁶ Director of The Walker Art Gallery, Mr. Hugh Scrutton, put the project forward to the Arts Council who donated £750 towards costs.

Liverpool shipbuilding company Cammell Laird & Co had their name behind the sculpture's construction and Dengbigshire sculptor on the project, Richard Huws, was a shipbuilding apprentice at Cammell Laird's Birkenhead Yard before going on to become an Engineering Lecturer at Liverpool School of Architecture. Huws is best known for designing the Festival of Britain water sculpture at the South Bank Exhibition, London, in 1951.⁶⁷ The involvement of Cammell Laird, an old Liverpool shipping company, significant to the city's contemporary economy and historical maritime development, is noteworthy. Furthermore, their association with a place in which a layering of abolition discourse has obscured slavery is noteworthy; where Wilberforce stands over Goree, here Cammell Laird, a company with its history in MacGregor Laird, construct a water sculpture. MacGregor Laird has been celebrated as an abolitionist figure in Liverpool for promoting a trade with Africa which was not in slaves. A thanksgiving service was held in 1932 to mark the centenary of his expedition to West Africa,

⁶³ John Willet, *Art in a City* (London: The Shenvall Press, 1967), 15.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 104; Graeme Shankland, *City and County Borough of Liverpool Planning Consultants Report No 10. Draft City Centre Map* (Liverpool: City and County Borough of Liverpool, 1963), 54; Graeme Shankland and Walter Bor, *Liverpool City Centre Plan* (Liverpool: City and County Borough of Liverpool, 1965), 89.

⁶⁵ Merseyside Civic Society, *Report for the Year Ended 30th September, 1966* (1966), 3.

⁶⁶ "The Merseyside Civic Society," *Liverpool Illustrated News*, January 1967; Merseyside Civic Society, *Report for the Year Ended 30th September, 1966*; "Liverpool fountain with be shipyard built," *Liverpool Journal of Commerce*, May 19 1966.

⁶⁷ Willet, *Art in a City*, 108; "Liverpool fountain with be shipyard built."



Figure 29: Richard Huws design for the Piazza Waterfall, in Willet, *Art in a City*, 108

and to commemorate the man 'who won Liverpool from the slave trade to legitimate commerce'.⁶⁸

Cammell Laird and Company provided the New Piazza with a plaque to mark its completion in 1967. It was placed next to the sculpture and is, poignantly, modelled in the shape of an African shield, the text commemorating the original warehouses and noting their association with Africa through name, if not through trade.

“GOREE-PIAZZA”, ORIGINALLY TWO ARCADED / WAREHOUSES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OLD / DOCK ROAD, WAS NAMED AFTER THE ISLAND / “GOREE” OFF THE WEST COAST OF AFRICA

⁶⁸ "Slave Trade Centenary - Cathedral Thanksgiving Service," *Liverpool Evening Express*, July 16 1932.



Figure 30: Piazza Waterfall with Wilberforce House behind. Photo by Author

Connections are made without being made, visual and textual references are made to Goree and Africa whilst leaving the nature of Liverpool's trading relationship with the island, and indeed the significance of this site of memory, muddled in the water.

Such explicit connections between the sculpture and slavery memory may not be made on tangible public surfaces, etched into metal, but they are made within later discourse.



Figure 31: African shield plaque presented by Cammell Laird, 1967. Photograph by Author

When Ron Jones leads his readers to New Goree Piazza, Brunswick Street, he states that the site's,

[...] intriguing Piazza Waterfall takes its name from the Goree Piazzas which were two arcaded warehouses named after 'Goree', a slave exporting island off the west coast of Africa. The warehouses were situated opposite here in the centre of the main dock road, i.e. between the Strand and the Goree, and were demolished after the last war.⁶⁹

Here, Jones is recounting the Russian doll of memory naming at the site, directing his readers to notice the sculpture, which is named after a site, named after a warehouse, named after an Island - following the mnemonic links back to Liverpool and slavery. David Lewis, in his guidebook to the city, directs his readers to walk over a covered bridge (demolished a few years after publication) from the waterfront side of Goree, across the road, over Back Goree and through to Wilberforce House courtyard and the location of the Piazza Waterfall which he

⁶⁹ Jones, *The American Connection*, 23.

says is known to locals as 'the Contraption' and is 'lively and exciting, noisy and unpredictable'.⁷⁰ His connection to slavery within this section is more delayed than Jones, after mentioning the name Goree a number of times, Lewis approaches Liverpool's involvement with transatlantic slavery through 'little history', describing the view from Wilberforce House:

The dock road below us is divided by a central reservation. The road heading north is called the Goree, and the road going south, along the old shoreline is called the Strand; but it was once called Back Goree and the old roads ran either side of a warehouse complex called the Goree Piazzas. This was built in the late 18th century to hold goods for George's Dock. Sometimes even Liverpool's little history is stained with the slave trade; the piazza was named after an island off Senegal used as a holding camp for slaves, which is now a World Heritage Site.⁷¹

The 'stain' of this history appears to be in the names left on Liverpool's built environment, where the name of one road, one warehouse, one sculpture, carry memories of slavery. Toni Morrison once said that when the Mississippi river floods, it returns to the route it took before it was artificially straightened out, and that this flooding was an act of 'remembering', that water has a perfect memory.⁷² If the Mersey ever flooded enough to remember its eighteenth century course, before it was pushed back by later dock constructions on reclaimed land, it would touch sites of memory which place slaves on Liverpool soil, creating presence in the face of absence. This water-sculpture was placed to mark the old site of 'Goree', a site of memory along the old shoreline, where once land would have met the Mersey, and slave ships would load and unloaded in George's Docks. When operational, the structure has a series of buckets on poles which tip out water into a pool below. This is done intermittently and is unpredictable, the motion 'said to resemble the sound of waves breaking on shore'.⁷³ Richard Huws suggests that the design of the sculpture creates a continual flow of action, creating a sound which, unlike more conventional fountains, 'is no longer that of the monotonous ever burbling river, but that of the restless temperamental sea'.⁷⁴ The water sculpture commemorates the historic place of the water's edge, and like the motion of the tide itself, the commemorative site of Goree acts to both reveal and obscure Liverpool's memory of slavery;

⁷⁰ David Lewis, *Walks Through History: Liverpool*, 152.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Toni Morrison, "The Site of Memory," in *Out There: Miringalization and Contemporary Cultures*, ed. R. Ferguson, et al. (London: MIT Press, 1990), 305.

⁷³ "Liverpool fountain with be shipyard built."

⁷⁴ Richard Huws, quoted in Hughes, *Liverpool: City of Architecture*, 167.

through romanticised maritime narratives which celebrate the sea, drowning memory through generalisation, or displacement narratives which foreground white abolition. Yet stories of slaves in Liverpool ‘crystallise’ around Goree and other sites in the city, anchoring an otherwise maritimized history to Liverpool’s tangible surfaces, and revealing human connections historically discursively confined to foreign lands or the bellies of ships.

Conclusion

The persistent debate around ‘slaves in Liverpool’ is a symbolic struggle over a largely invisible history, frequently discussed in a ‘neutral’ language of trading and economics. Like the mummified hand in Lancaster, the ‘ghosts’ of slaves in Liverpool, as myths and as hypothetical ‘bodies’ in graveyards, are also phantom limbs. Crucially, however, they are not ‘free-floating’; they ‘haunt’ specific places across Liverpool’s contested urban terrain; places along the original course of the river Mersey, places associated with the inanimate ‘goods’ which an amnesiac language of an ‘African trade’ foregrounds, and places associated with the long history of the Liverpool black presence. These ‘myths’ function much like ghost stories, which, Avery Gordon suggests, ‘not only repair representational mistakes, but also strive to understand the conditions under which a memory was reproduced in the first place, toward a counter-memory of the future.’⁷⁵

Fittingly, perhaps, Liverpool’s involvement in transatlantic slavery emerges in theatrical ‘ghost walks’ of the city.⁷⁶ At the start of one tour, a ghoulishly-made-up drama student, standing at the foot of the towering Roman Catholic Cathedral, lists items traded by Liverpool ships, ‘tobacco, cotton, sugar, and most famously...?’ leaving this lingering, leading question, following on from the subliminally suggestive inanimate products to, ‘slaves!’, the audience shouts back in awkward pantomime. This, now ‘famous’, trade in slaves, raised at the start of the walk, continues to ‘haunt’ the audience through the suggestion that the subject ‘will be returned to later’, persisting at the edges of expectations until the tour ends at

⁷⁵ Avery Gordon, quoted in Rice, *Creating Memorials, Building Identities*, 217.

⁷⁶ ‘The Hope Street Shivers’ ghost walk by *Shiverpool*. Taken October 2010. See <http://www.shiverpool.co.uk/>



Figure 32: Shiverpool Ghost Walk. <http://www.shiverpool.co.uk> (accessed March 27, 2014)

Liverpool's other Cathedral. Standing in the tunnel leading down into St. James's Cemetery, the last ghost story of the evening concerns an African refugee with a crippled left leg, who (played by another drama student) jumps out at the group from behind a gravestone to screams of terror. Here, like the symbolic movement of waves commemorated at the site of Goree, links to the human 'products' of Liverpool and slavery, are revealed and obscured, and the hints of connections levitate. The 'African refugee' is not explicitly named a slave, but the memory of slavery's introduction at the tour's start, alongside the promise that the subject would return later, presents unanswered questions and ambiguous associations. His disfigured body, moreover, raises the haunting memory of Liverpool and slavery via the brutal realities of the 'trade in human flesh,' his body, like the mythical 'bodies' of slaves in the city, bought and sold or laid to rest, carries otherwise repressed memories.

Conserving Discourses of Race and Empire: St. George's Hall and The Britannia Project

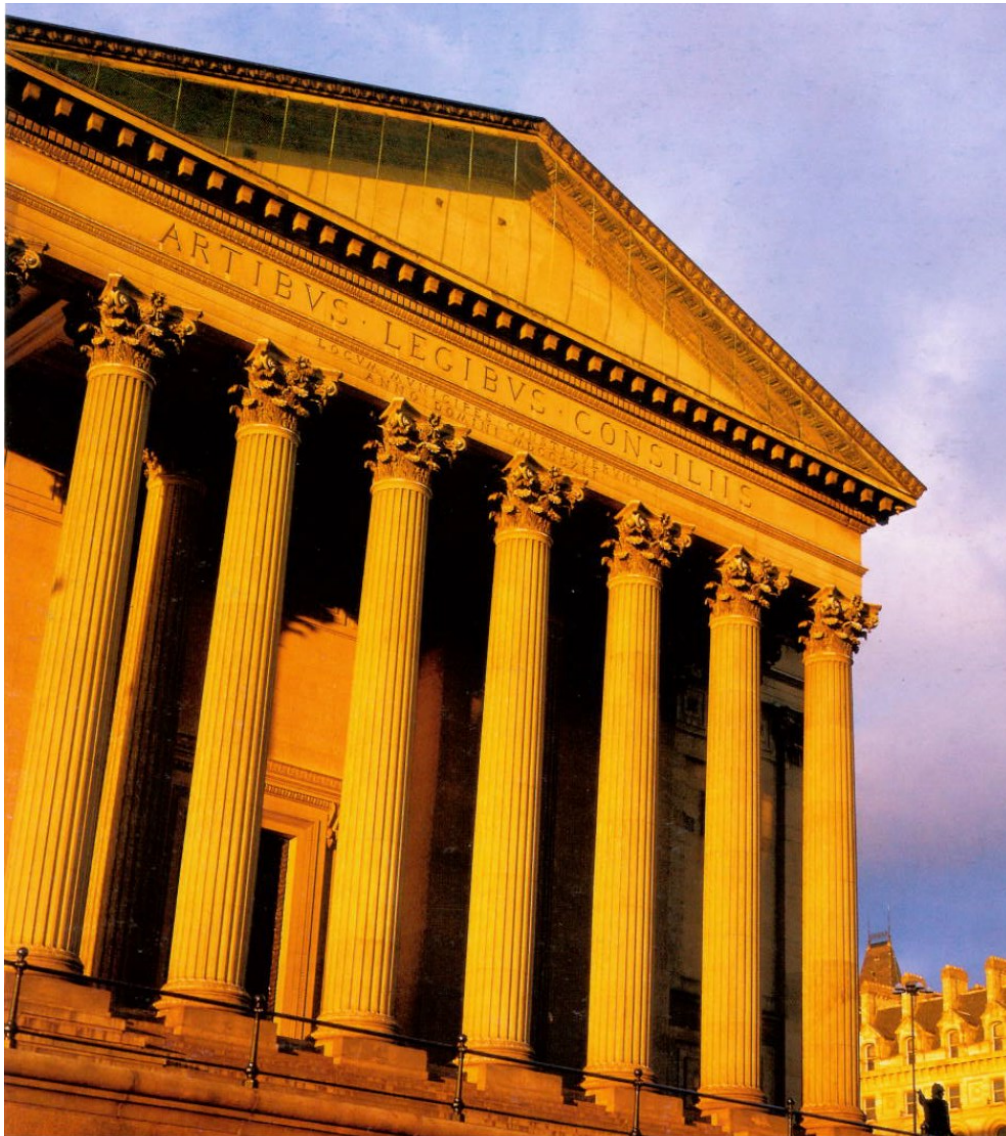


Figure 33: St. George's Hall. (Hughes, *Liverpool: City of Architecture*)

Introduction

In September 1995, a public debate erupted over the proposed restoration of the sculptured pediment of one of Liverpool's most iconic buildings, the pediment having stood empty since parts of it fell off in the 1950s.¹ The restoration proposed for the south side pediment of St George's Hall met with conflict over the reinstatement of a sculptural group which was to include a black African figure, in chains, kneeling before Britannia. The debate captured a distinctly racialised discourse within the media response which promoted difference, stereotype and discriminatory language focused against respondents from the city's black community who had voiced opposition to the figure. The defence of this imagery by the project organisers rested on its interpretation as a symbol of the abolition of slavery, and not of enslavement itself. However, the original nineteenth century figure thought to represent 'abolition', more accurately represents the misappropriation, indeed perversion of abolitionist iconography, which was in its conception promoting racial stereotype, and was further re-cast and re-used to align with and support contemporary identity narratives of race and empire.

1995: 'Race' and The Britannia Project

In 1995, St George's Hall had recently been transferred from council ownership to a charitable trust in the hope, according to deputy council leader Frank Pendergast, that through external fundraising, it would be 'restored to its former glory'.² The Hall had been opened to the public the month before, where a model of the proposed pediment sculpture, largely a replica of the piece originally created for the building in the mid-nineteenth century was on display.³ The proposed pediment sculpture contained 18 figures including Britannia in the centre presiding over a lion, Neptune, Mercury, and figures representing the four corners of the globe with whom Liverpool traded: Europe, America, Asia and Africa. Of these, it was the figure identified as 'Africa' which drew criticism from black and anti-racist organisations in Liverpool.

¹ By 1950, around the centenary of the original pediment sculpture's completion, the piece had weathered almost beyond recognition and on the 21st August, sections of the sculpture had fallen off the building, some 100 feet to the ground. "Statuary falls from St. George's Hall," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 22nd 1950.

² Deborah Mulhearn, "Liverpool council places St George's Hall in charity trust," *The Architects' Journal* 202, no. 10 (1995): 14; Caroline Gidman, "Trust takeover of city treasure," *Liverpool Echo*, September 5th 1995.

³ Roger Bryson, "Back home and backing battle for Britannia," *Liverpool Echo*, September 6th 1995.



Figure 34: Proposed Sculpture with Artists. 'Race Row Frieze in £3m Storm'
Liverpool Daily Post, September 6th 1995

The figure was defined within local and national press variably as a freed black slave,⁴ or, a black man bowing before Britannia,⁵ and giving thanks 'with broken manacles at his feet'⁶ for his release from slavery.⁷ Opposition to this sculpture came from members of the Liverpool Anti-Racist Community Arts Association (LARCAA) and the Merseyside Racial Equality Council. Ibrahim Thompson, from LARCAA expressed concern over the glorification and representation of history in this way:

Recreating art from this era without thought or consideration of its content - especially on such a large scale - is very alarming. I think the portrayal of Britannia as some sort of saviour is rewriting the history books.⁸

He also asked, '[h]ow would the Jewish community feel in Germany if they started recreating some of the artwork from Hitler's time?' in a discursive tactic which makes reference to the

⁴ Mulhearn, "Liverpool council places St George's Hall in charity trust."

⁵ Gidman, "Trust takeover of city treasure."; Roger Bryson, "Race row frieze in £3m storm - sculpture faces axe in slavery rumpus," *Liverpool Echo*, September 6th 1995.

⁶ Stephen Oldfield, "Freeze on the Frieze," *The Daily Mail*, September 7th 1995.

⁷ "News in Brief: Row over 'racist sculpture'," *The Guardian*, September 7th 1995.

⁸ Oldfield, "Freeze on the Frieze."



Figure 35: Close-up of 'Africa' figure on sculpture model
'Race Row Frieze in £3m Storm' *Liverpool Daily Post*,
September 6th 1995

Holocaust, a history which is recognised for the magnitude of its horror and is remembered and acknowledged within British society.⁹ LARCAA member Lenford White also spoke out about the pediment sculpture, suggesting that a more positive image of a black person could be found and used, and Maria O'Reilly, chair of the Merseyside Racial Equality Council suggested that the money for the project should instead go on 'black youth projects'.¹⁰

Opposition to the sculpture voiced by Liverpool black people was framed in the local and national press through a discourse of violence and vandalism which carried allusions to reporting on 1980s protests and political unrest. The debate was frequently described as a 'row',¹¹ or more specifically a 'race row',¹² and more risibly as 'a slavery rumpus',¹³ suggesting that this was a petty dispute launched by black people which would 'jeopardise the scheme'.¹⁴

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Gidman, "Trust takeover of city treasure."; "News in Brief: Row over 'racist sculpture'."

¹² Bryson, "Race row frieze in £3m storm."

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Gidman, "Trust takeover of city treasure."

over 'one small detail',¹⁵ presenting the sculpture as an innocent bystander in a personal spat which might not go ahead through 'fears it will upset the black community'.¹⁶ The sculpture was itself presented as a victim, being 'in danger of falling prey to that most modern of curses, political correctness'.¹⁷ Violent and threatening imagery was drawn upon, whereby the black opposition were 'outraged'¹⁸ and 'threatened to wreck the scheme',¹⁹ with Fritz Spiegl writing in *The Times* a year later that it was the same "'Black rage'",²⁰ generated by slavery heritage trails, which had stopped the restoration project from going ahead a year before. References were also made to destruction; that the sculpture, though not yet physically created, would have to 'be scrapped'.²¹ Council leaders were also keen to stress that they were not 'bowing to the black lobby',²² echoing conflicts between Militant Labour leaders and The Black Caucus some ten years earlier.

Defence of the image centred on the suggestion that the sculpture's critics were simply upset because they had 'misunderstood' the intended visual symbolism. Sculptor on the project John Hogg stated that, '[i]t seems to be generally thought that it represents slavery but it represents the abolition of slavery. The figure is on his knees giving thanks to Britannia for his liberty because of the decision by Britain to abolish the horror of the slave trade.'²³ Hogg's comments fit into a general 'culture of abolitionism', which has dominated Britain's memory of slavery.²⁴ Whilst the image certainly echoes abolition imagery, particularly the 'Am I Not a Man and a Brother?' Wedgwood figure, a closer analysis of the cultural context surrounding the visual symbolism in question reveals that this interpretation does not tell the whole story.

¹⁵ Brian Baker, "I can think of a better way to spend our £3m," *Liverpool Daily Post*, September 11th 1995.

¹⁶ Gidman, "Trust takeover of city treasure."

¹⁷ Oldfield, "Freeze on the Frieze."

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Bryson, "Back home and backing battle for Britannia."

²⁰ Fritz Spiegl, "Letter: Liverpool at odds on slave heritage," *The Times*, October 3rd 1996.

²¹ Oldfield, "Freeze on the Frieze."

²² Ibid.

²³ Bryson, "Race row frieze in £3m storm."

²⁴ Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*.

The Image of 'Africa' on St George's Hall: The Perversion of the Black Body from Freedom to Domination

The figure of 'Africa', understood as a symbolic representation of the abolition of the slave trade within the 1995 debates, is more accurately conceptualised as an allegorical justification for British imperial ambition, oppressive colonial rule and domination, articulated through a gendered embodiment of mid-nineteenth century identity and anxiety narratives of Empire. That the figure echoes visual prompts of abolition is indicative of the many ways in which the memory of slavery, and here, its abolition, has been *perverted* for contemporary motives. The widespread reach of the abolition imagery that the figure takes its cue from, has fuelled its reinvention, its use and abuse, reflecting what Marcus Wood has described as 'the violent instability of the slavery archive'.²⁵

In 1843 Charles Cockerell produced a sketch titled 'Idea for the Frontispiece of a Public Building in England', which Elmes had asked to be executed on St George's Hall.²⁶ Following Elmes' death, Cockerell sought Alfred Stevens' artistic input on the re-design and completion of his own design for the pediment sculpture of St. George's Hall.²⁷ Kenneth Towndrow laments in his biography of Stevens how unaware the Liverpool public are of both this piece of work and the pediment which 'was for long almost lost to view behind encrusting dirt and wire netting'.²⁸ Stevens' reworking of Cockerell's plan removed seven out of a proposed 25 human figures, and redesigned much of the remaining composition. A lithograph survives of Stevens' design, which was executed by sculptor William Grinsell Nicholl (c. 1796-1871)

²⁵ Wood, *Slavery, Empathy, and Pornography*, 4.

²⁶ Ronald P. Jones, "The Life and Works of Harvey Lonsdale Elmes," *The Architectural Review* XV(1904): 238.

²⁷ Kenneth Romney Towndrow, *Alfred Stevens* (Liverpool: University Press of Liverpool, 1951), 5. There is some debate over the extent of Stevens input. See Robert Pepys Cockerell, "The Life and Works of Charles Robert Cockerell, R.A.," *The Architectural Review* (1902): 139.

²⁸ Towndrow, *Alfred Stevens*, 18-19. Stevens was born in Blandford Forum in Dorset in 1817. The son of a local craftsman, he is thought to have been influenced by his hometown surroundings. Blandford Forum was burnt to the ground in 1731 and thereby re-built as an architecturally coherent eighteenth century market town. He studied the 'old masters' in Italy and made friendships with John Morris-Moore, W.B. Spence and Leonard Collman later returning to Blandford and working for his father. He had a number of commissions for decoration in London and in the mid-nineteenth century he was preparing decorations for Harewood House near Leeds when he was asked 'to pull together an unsatisfactory and commonplace design' for the floor of St George's Hall Liverpool



Figure 36: Close up of Cockerell's original design showing Asia, America, Europe and Africa and 'Africa's children'



Figure 37: Close up of Stevens Lithograph showing Asia, America, Europe and Africa and 'Africa's children'

between the end of 1849 and the beginning of 1850, the Hall itself opening in 1854 and the sculpture remaining on the south pediment for the next one hundred years.²⁹

The description accompanying Steven's lithograph (Figures 37 and 39) reads as follows:

In the centre Britannia (the Mersey at her feet) offers the olive branch to Asia, America, Europe and Africa, who are presented by Mercury, the genius of commerce and manufacture – beyond are the symbols of the natural and artificial productions of foreign lands, at her right are the corresponding symbols of native productions in agriculture and the useful arts heralded by science.³⁰

However, within a handwritten note accompanying the original design (Figures 36 and 38) by Charles Cockerell, the figures are described as follows:

The subject represents Britannia in the centre, and Neptune at her feet; in her left hand she holds out the olive branch to Mercury and the four quarters of the Globe; of whom the last, Africa, does homage for the liberty she **and her children** owe to her

²⁹ Frank Salmon and Peter De Figueiredo, "The South Front of St George's Hall," *Architectural History* 43(2000): 203. Robert Chambers, "St. George's Hall, Liverpool: A Review of the Recent Work," *Journal of Architectural Conservation* 13, no. 1 (2007): 39

³⁰ After C.R. Cockerell, R.A. *The Sculptured Pediment of St George's Hall, Liverpool* c. 1850 Lithograph, 330 X 892 mm (image), 560 X 930 mm (sheet) William Grinsell Nicholl Lithographed by Alfred Stevens Printed by Hullmandel and Walton Photo © Royal Academy of Arts, London; Prudence Cuming Associates Limited

protection; beyond are figures representing the vine and other foreign commercial productions. In her right she extends her protecting spear over her own productions, agriculture, sciences – domestic affairs, the plough, the loom, and the anvil.³¹

The section of the sculpture which had been identified as 'Africa' within the 1995 debates is seen within Stevens' lithograph as the last figure on the right following the four corners of the globe with whom Liverpool traded (see Figure 39). When compared to the same allegorical group in Cockerell's original drawing, and read alongside his description of the piece, it becomes apparent that the kneeling figure in Stevens' lithograph, rather than representing 'Africa', more specifically represents 'Africa's children', depicted within Cockerell's earlier design in a more obvious childlike aesthetic. In the later image, 'Africa', the mother figure, has one arm around 'her children' and one wrist in the grasp of Europe, to whom she is turned, looking up to presumably for guidance and protection.

The changes made to the design reflect the re-projection of national identity narratives and broader discourses of Empire and Colonialism through a more locally specific prism. Cockerell's initial earlier sketch of 1843, 'Idea for the Frontispiece of a Publick Building in England' had originally been designed for the Royal Exchange in London, a competition which Liverpool's Nelson Monument sculptor Richard Westmacott ultimately won.³² Stevens's development of the design for St George's Hall rendered it more apposite to a Liverpool context; the addition of a bale of cotton to the corner of the pediment sculpture represented the significance of the cotton trade to mid-nineteenth century Liverpool, and the allegorical male reclining figure in the centre came to represent the river Mersey, specifically, rather than Neptune as it had in Cockerell's drawing and description. More significantly, Stevens's substitution of a standing child for a kneeling African figure in chains only appears once it is known that the sculptural group is intended for a Liverpool building.

The figure of 'Africa's children', chains to the wrists and depicted in a kneeling position, claimed to represent 'the abolition of slavery' by advocates in the 1995 debates, does bear an obvious correspondence to familiar abolitionist visual imagery of the late eighteenth

³¹ LRO, Liverpool, St. George's Hall: Collection of Illustrations, Photographs, News cuttings etc., Prepared in the Library, Hf 942.7213 GEO, duplicate of label attached to watercolour drawing by Cockerell, 1843. My emphasis.

³² Gavin Stamp, "Architectural Sculpture in Liverpool," in *Patronage and Practice: Sculpture on Merseyside*, ed. Penelope Curtis (Liverpool: Tate Gallery Publications and National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1989), 9. Campbell Dodgson, "Westmacott, Richard (1799–1872)," rev. Marie Busco, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29115> (accessed February 27, 2013).

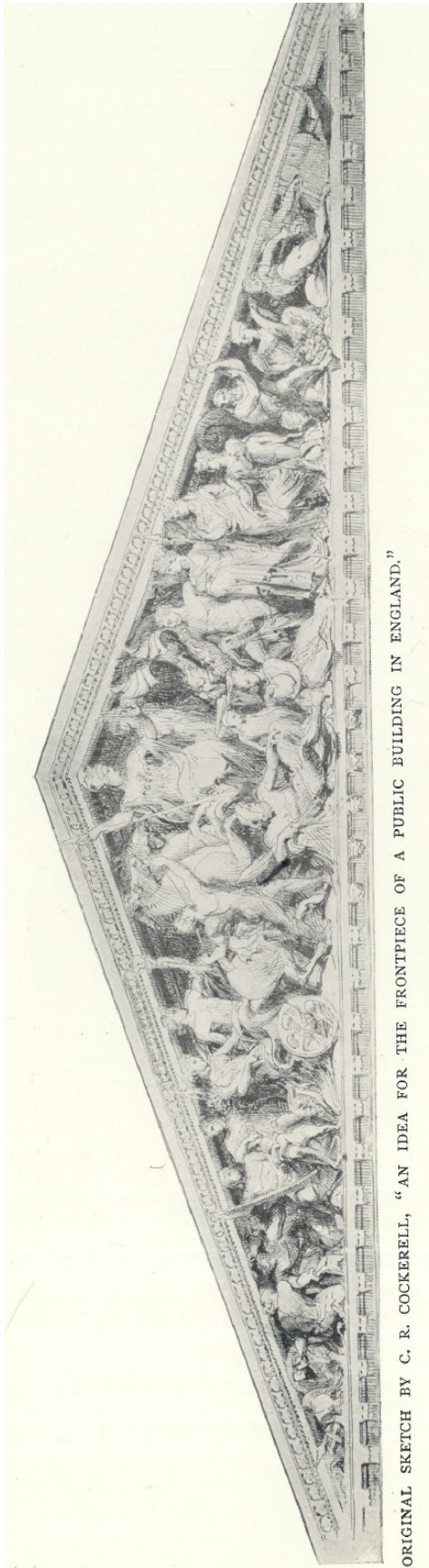


Figure 38: Cockerell, C.R. An Idea for the frontispiece of a public building in England taken from Robert Pepys Cockerell, "The Life and Works of Charles Robert Cockerell, R.A.," *The Architectural Review* (1902) p140

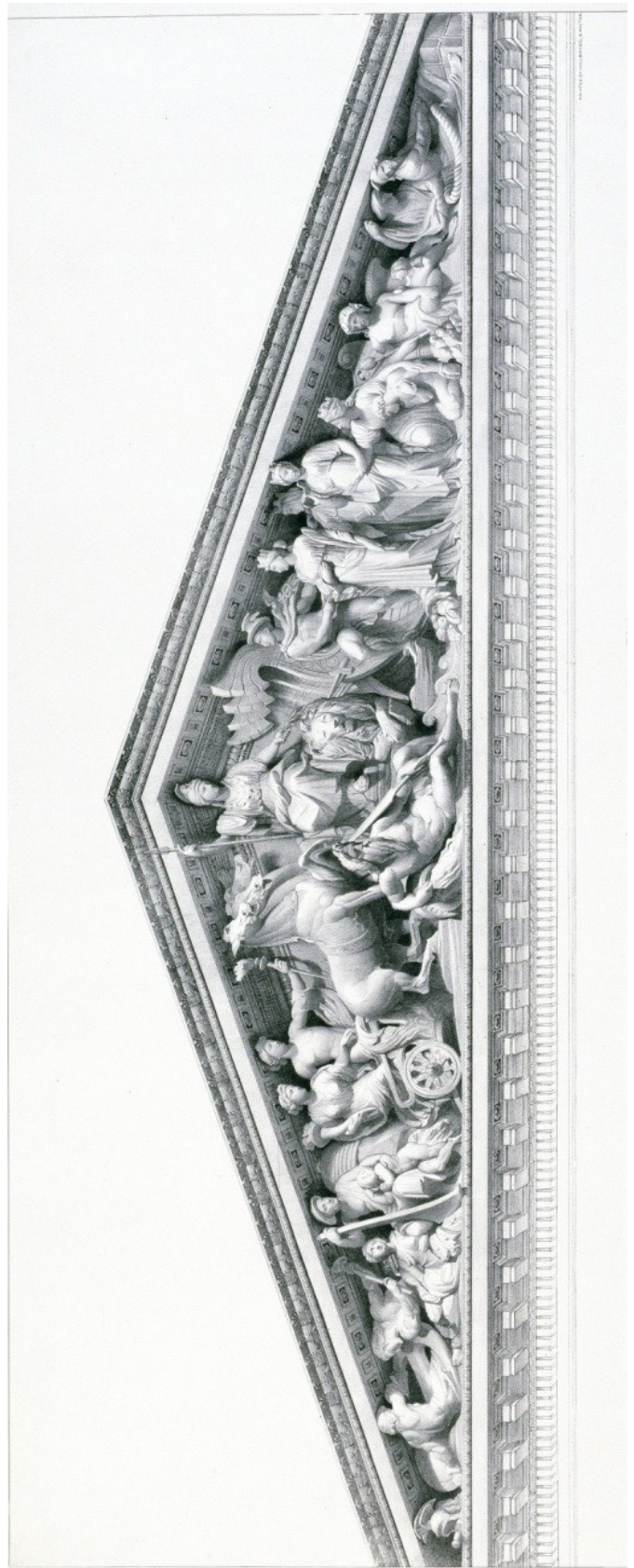


Figure 39: After C.R. Cockerell, R.A. The Sculptured Pediment of St George's Hall, Liverpool c. 1850 Lithograph, 330 X 892 mm (image), 560 X 930 mm (sheet) William Grinsell Nicholl Lithographed by Alfred Stevens Printed by Hullmandel and Walton Photo © Royal Academy of Arts, London; Prudence Cuming Associates Limited

and early nineteenth centuries, in particular the figure made popular by Staffordshire potter Josiah Wedgwood (Figure 40). The image was developed as the seal for the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade who adopted its use in October 1787.³³ It appeared in a number of guises after its official adoption quickly becoming familiar to many circles at the time. The Wedgwood company swiftly set about producing cameos, the first of three being produced in 1788 and thousands more going into production after this. Mary Guyatt has suggested that the production of the Wedgwood medallion alone may have matched the print roll of Clarkson's pamphlet 'A Summary view of the Slave Trade' which amounted to 15,050 copies.³⁴ A highly fashionable consumer product, the image was placed on snuff boxes or worn on bracelets or



Figure 40: Josiah Wedgwood. Anti-slavery medallion, 1787.
British Museum (Pottery Catalogue I. 683)

hair ornaments by women, and the figure soon filtered through eighteenth century British society in fashionable circles.³⁵

³³ J. R. Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery: the mobilisation of public opinion against the slave trade, 1787-1807* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 156.

³⁴ Mary Guyatt, "The Wedgwood Slave Medallion: Values in Eighteenth-Century Design," *Journal of Design History* 13, no. 2 (2000): 96.

³⁵ Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery*, 156-9.

The image was exploited for its market potential, and commercial incentives drove the dispersal of this kneeling African figure through diverse media, from token coins, farthings, pennies and half-pennies to medals and medallions worn as icons of self-identity, aligning 'humanitarians' publically and visually with their cause and enabling members of eighteenth-century British society to 'show their colours'.³⁶ The image was also replicated for its symbolic transferability, the idea of a black oppressed slave coming to mean more than support for the abolitionist cause alone, reflecting other contemporary radical sentiments and rebellion against 'oppression'.³⁷ Further development and re-development of material culture with abolition designs emerged in the post-abolition nineteenth century. Pottery continued to form a central vehicle for the dissemination of the kneeling figure, which, more than any other image of the abolitionist's cause remained the most popular and recognisable.³⁸ The kneeling slave appeared in other contexts, such as within Thomas Bewick's engraving for the title page of the *Abstract of the Evidence Delivered before a Select Committee of the House of Commons*, Newcastle, 1791, the figure here set against a plantation background.³⁹ In another of Richard Westmacott's designs, the memorial to Charles James Fox (1822), shows a kneeling African figure below Fox, hands clasped in a 'supplicating' posture as the Wedgwood figure does, though in this case the figure could represent the many oppressed groups for whom Fox is suggested to have fought, the oppression of slavery the most extreme of oppressions, and, perhaps, the more straightforward to express in sculpture (Figure 41).⁴⁰ The kneeling figure had, on the back of growing commercialisation of politics during the period, become 'abolitionist shorthand', going on to be used again in the 1830s for the women's abolition movement in Britain.⁴¹

³⁶ Ibid., 160-2; Guyatt, "The Wedgwood Slave Medallion," 98.

³⁷ Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 58.

³⁸ Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery*, 163.

³⁹ Ibid., 179.

⁴⁰ Hugh Honour, *The Image of the Black in Western Art, Vol IV* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 98-99.

⁴¹ Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery*, 179; Guyatt, "The Wedgwood Slave Medallion," 103.

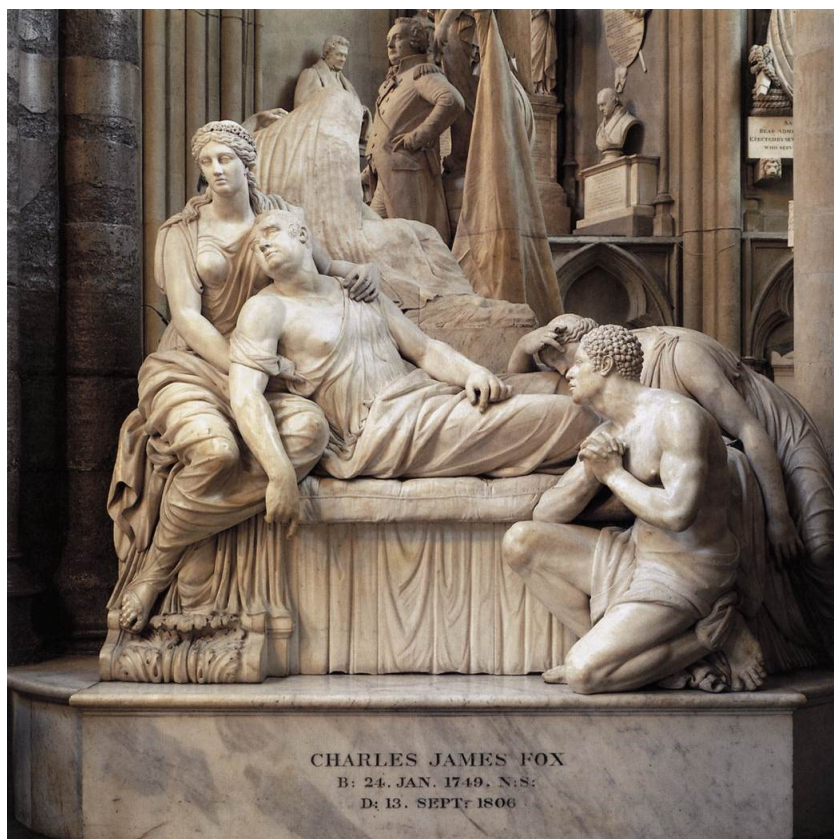


Figure 41: Richard Westmacott. Funerary monument to Charles James Fox, 1822. Web Gallery of Art. http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/w/westmaco/mon_fox.html (accessed April 12 2013)

The Wedgwood figure shows ‘an African in chains, in a Supplicating Posture’;⁴² kneeling, face tilted and looking up with his hands clasped, as if in prayer – perhaps representing familiar pleading figures in Christian iconography.⁴³ Around the figure is the motto ‘Am I not a man and a brother’. Whilst it was important that the design have dignity alongside demonstrating the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade’s aims, it also drew on stereotype and simplicity to convey them, aesthetically stressing characteristic African features and quite literally placing a black body on a white background.⁴⁴ Mary Guyatt has suggested that the image embodies contradictions and confusion within the abolition movement itself, particularly the expression of empathy alongside distance; the figure showing a relatable humanity together with a weak posture, supplicating and bound by chains. She suggests that whilst it is true that political propaganda rarely utilises moderate imagery, the image of the kneeling slave is a reflection of a contemporary cognitive framework of ‘race’,

⁴² Honour, *The Image of the Black*, 1.

⁴³ Guyatt, "The Wedgwood Slave Medallion," 99; Pieterse, *White on Black*, 58.

⁴⁴ Katz-Hyman, "Doing Good While Doing Well.," Guyatt, "The Wedgwood Slave Medallion," 99.

with the complications and contradictions embedded within the stereotype of the African hero/victim.⁴⁵

The image has received much critical attention, namely surrounding the figure's passivity and depicting African people surrendering to white will.⁴⁶ It has been seen to be embodying racialised contradictions through a hero/victim dichotomy, in the figure's dignity and composure, 'patiently waiting for his white master to liberate him via an Act of Parliament' and thereby conforming to white notions of a 'noble savage' figure, prominent in cultural expression in the later eighteenth century.⁴⁷ Hugh Honour suggests that the image succeeded in depersonalizing and degrading black African people, through its popularity (alongside that of the diagram of the *Brooks* slave ship) it effectively wiped out the possibility of varied and multiple visual representation of black people.⁴⁸ Through imagery such as the kneeling slave, the Abolition movement promoted new stereotypes of black Africans in contradictory ways, stressing humanity to introduce empathy, whilst simultaneously producing and reproducing the African as victim.⁴⁹ Such contradictions and oppositional values were embodied within the Wedgwood figure which was 'ideal and realistic, classical and modern, heroic and pathetic', the kneeling figure also exuding gratitude in humility, through a visual imagery also seen within representations of religious conversion, here combined with emancipation. The kneeling slave thus becomes the 'archetype of the docile black appealing for the help of whites', and the image comes to solidify notions of the inferiority of black Africans through an articulation of white superiority, a positioning which continues after abolition.⁵⁰ In fact, two hundred years later during the Bicentenary of the Abolition Act in 2007, the Wedgwood figure, amongst similar abolitionist imagery, still dominated visual responses to slavery in different media, still acting to promote stereotypes of black passivity, anonymity and suffering.⁵¹ Whilst the image as object was not uncritically presented by museums and galleries during 2007, attention being drawn to its problematic representation of African people, few institutions, as

⁴⁵ Guyatt, "The Wedgwood Slave Medallion," 101.

⁴⁶ Ibid.: 100; Marcus Wood, "Significant Silence: Where was Slave Agency in the Popular Imagery of 2007?," in *Imagining Transatlantic Slavery*, ed. Cora Kaplan and John. R. Oldfield (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 164; Wood, *Blind Memory*, 16-40.

⁴⁷ Guyatt, "The Wedgwood Slave Medallion," 100.

⁴⁸ Honour, *The Image of the Black*, 18.

⁴⁹ Pieterse, *White on Black*, 60.

⁵⁰ Honour, *The Image of the Black*, 19, 64.

⁵¹ Wood, "Significant Silence," 164.

Jane Webster has pointed out, placed the Wedgwood cameo in its historic context, leaving the stereotyped image 'floating' without critically examining its eighteenth century abolitionist materiality.⁵² This acted to remove the image of the kneeling slave from its physical context, thus anonymising another black body, now separated by time and the distance created by the glass case.

Jan Nederveen Pieterse has suggested that it was through the Abolition movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that race emerged as a justification for brutality, that '[r]ace was the answer to the problem of freedom', the pro-slavery lobby requiring fresh arguments to justify enslavement in reaction to those put forward by the abolitionists, resting such cases on new emerging theories of 'race' brought on by pseudoscientific theory.⁵³ Equally, Michael Harris places the developing discriminatory visual representation of black people from the eighteenth century onwards firmly in the context of slavery and its abolition, suggesting that opposition to slavery spurred formal justification which relied on equating black African people definitively as 'slaves', and emphasising difference. He also argues that former justifications of slavery once embedded within religious rhetoric came to be replaced in post-Enlightenment society by 'sciences' which foregrounded visual and physical difference and hierarchical organisation of people.⁵⁴

Images of 'Africa' under European 'protection' in the nineteenth century express such racialised visual rhetoric of domination and difference whilst drawing on familiar abolitionist imagery in often jarring and uncomfortable juxtapositions. On a jug produced by Christopher Whitehead made between 1817 and 1819 in Shelton, England, and amongst images relating to abolition and quotes from William Cowper's 'The Negro's Complaint' is 'Britannia Protecting the Africans', a print showing Britannia seated above two Africans, one standing and one seated.⁵⁵ Whilst the Wedgwood kneeling slave had been criticised for its passivity, representing 'docile Africans', the images which come after 1807 are strikingly more pronounced; the kneeling 'supplicating' figure, once seen looking to the Heavens, hands clasped in prayer, becomes ever weaker; head turned down towards the floor, more passive, more broken. In Robert Smirke's illustrations of James Montgomery's poetry collection *The*

⁵² See Jane Webster, "The Unredeemed Object: Displaying Abolitionist Artefacts in 2007," *Slavery & Abolition* 30, no. 2 (2009).

⁵³ Pieterse, *White on Black*, 63.

⁵⁴ Michael D. Harris, *Colored Pictures: Race and Visual Representation* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 23-24.

⁵⁵ Katz-Hyman, "Doing Good While Doing Well," 225.



Figure 42: Robert Smirke. Illustration for James Montgomery, *The West Indies*, a Poem in Four Parts in *Poems on the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, 1809. Britannia granting liberty to four black slaves. Dated 1809. Steel engraving by William Henry Worthington. From Honour, *The Image of the Black*, p. 97.

West Indies, a poem in Four Parts (1809) (Figure 42) Africans are shown to be expressing gratitude before female European figures, their protectors, the central kneeling figure shown with his head bowed, not uplifted, and still bearing chains.⁵⁶ The female figure behind holds a child whilst motioning for aid from 'Europe', as the mother figure of 'Africa' does in the pediment sculpture on St George's Hall. By the mid-nineteenth century a 'stooped' kneeling slave appears in a large fresco by Daniel Maclise which appears in the House of Lords, Westminster Palace called *The Spirit of Justice* (commissioned 1847), kneeling with head

⁵⁶ Honour, *The Image of the Black*, 97.



Figure 43: Daniel Maclise *The Spirit of Justice* 1847-49. Fresco. 499.5x284.6cm London Westminster Palace, House of Lords in Honour, *The Image of the Black*, p. 169

bowed next to broken manacles, here seated next to a figure apparently pleading on their behalf, representative of British abolitionism (Figure 43).⁵⁷

The pediment sculpture fits into a tradition of architectural visual representation from a European perspective, where continents are personified as female, kneeling before a regal female figure in classical dress and appearance (representing 'Europe'), often in the presence of ships and with Mercury signifying commerce in the company of Neptune symbolizing the sea, uniting European prowess over maritime commercial enterprise.⁵⁸ In actuality, however, it represents, reinforces and symbolically creates much more. Jan Nederveen Pieterse has suggested that the emphasis in such classical representations shifted from a focus on commerce in the eighteenth century to an emphasis more on power and rule in the nineteenth century, following an imperial framework which worked within neo-classical visual cues.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁵⁸ Pieterse, *White on Black*, 18-19.

Drawing on a 'pictorial architecture of power' such imagery created a subtext of domination which drew on visual contrasts, placement and body language.⁵⁹ The weak, beaten posture of the kneeling slave recurrent in nineteenth century imagery can celebrate white philanthropic action as in the above examples, whilst simultaneously reflecting actions of contemporary colonial rule, the power and domination of Europe, or more specifically Britain, over Africa. It is to this perversion of abolitionist imagery that the sculpture on St George's Hall aligns.

Art and visual culture in the nineteenth century, particularly around the middle of the century came to 'reflect and establish racist ideas', often through the reinforcement of constructions of social hierarchy; the changes in the way black people were represented reflecting developments in Europe as much as they did anything happening in Africa.⁶⁰ Joanna de Groot has argued that discriminatory discourses of 'race' and 'sex' during this period emerge entwined, that the construction of a system of language which emphasises physical difference to justify power and control over both women in British society and non-European people in the colonies mutually corresponds. These discourses drew on similar arguments within 'pseudoscience' as previously discussed, specifically within anthropology and biology to emphasise the inherent weakness of both groups and therefore their necessary control by western men. This was correspondingly expressed through the symbolic imposition of a 'parent-child' relationship which related to both women and non-European peoples, men valuing in both subordinated groups, 'obedience, devotion and ability to serve and nurture'.⁶¹ The expression of subordination achieved through a coupling of protection and power within 'parental' roles, as outlined by de Groot, becomes particularly 'gendered' in the pediment sculpture on St George's Hall. Here, as de Groot also highlights, expressions of a Western male identity, the anxiety and confusion over contradictions inherent in processes of colonisation, and discriminatory power, find artistic expression in romanticised, idealised notions of 'sex' and 'race'. It is specifically Africa 'and *her* children' who is showing gratitude to Britannia for her freedom, holding her 'children' in a nurturing posture, head resting against breast. She turns to Britannia, hand held out and in the grip of 'Europe', seeking the guidance and protection the imperial power can afford her. The black African body thus works in European art as a performance of difference, the pediment figure of 'Africa's children' is deliberately visually 'different' to the other figures; aesthetically Africanised, on bended knees where

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

⁶⁰ Harris, *Colored Pictures*, 40; Pieterse, *White on Black*, 23, 29.

⁶¹ Joanna de Groot, "'Sex' and 'Race': The Construction of Language and Image in the Nineteenth Century," in *Cultures of Empire: A Reader*, ed. Catherine Hall (2000), 43.

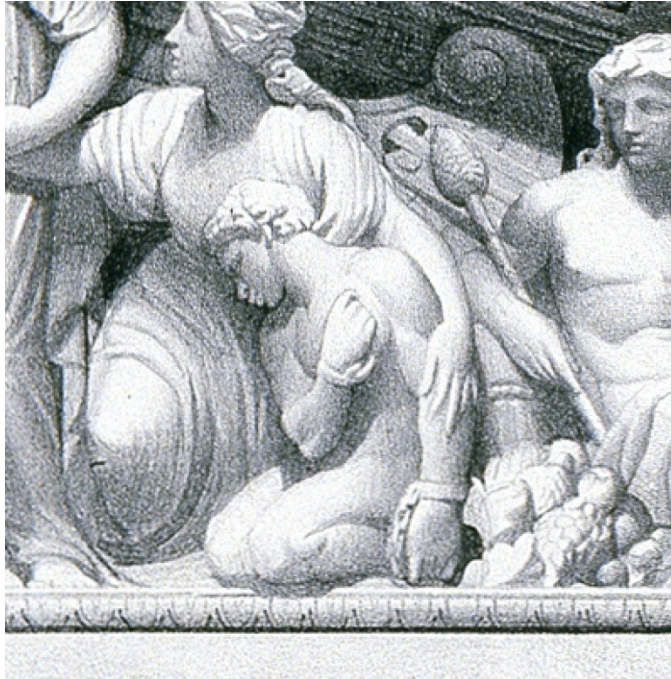


Figure 44: Close up of the Figure of 'Africa and her children' from Stevens' Lithograph

others stand and wearing nothing but manacles, where the other corners of the globe are robed in classical attire. Michael Harris has suggested that the repeated depiction of the naked black body in Western Art signifies primitivism, which constitutes another tactic within the justification of imperial dominance.⁶² Next to her naked 'children', Africa is gendered as *more* female than the allegories of other continents through her 'mother' role, a position which requires, and thereby justifies, protection from a father-figure, an imperial power who exerts 'protection' via the colonial rule of Africa (and her children), defended by ongoing public displays of cultural propaganda and artistic expressions of imperialistic paternalism.

The roles of domination/subordination are played out in the sculptured pediment through an oppositional positioning of contrasting themes; weakness and power, freedom and slavery, parent and child, which fuse distinctly gendered articulations of colonial rule with warped memories of slavery and abolition. These memories of abolition are resurrected at points of commemorative re-awakening in the later nineteenth century, where the black body is once again used as the canvas for expression of white philanthropic celebration and colonial endeavour simultaneously. Descriptions of the sculpture in a guidebook from 1883, the 50 year anniversary of the Emancipation Act produced just after the commencement of the 'Scramble for Africa' (1881-1912), describe the sculpture as depicting 'Africa, who is represented in a posture of gratitude and humility, with her sons in her arms, the breaking of

⁶² Harris, *Colored Pictures*, 35-36.

whose chains is the work of Britannia, to whom she points.’⁶³ This description remains within versions of this guide from 1912 and 1927, and it is this description which Quentin Hughes, in his 1964 architectural history of Liverpool quotes whilst suggesting the sculpture’s subject matter ‘may now seem pompous – and somewhat ironical in view of the port’s large participation in the slave trade’.⁶⁴

Conclusion

In addition, what may now seem more ‘pompous’ and ‘ironic’, if not simply erroneous, is that the defence made for the pediment sculpture at the end of the twentieth century, relied on the image’s interpretation as a symbol of abolition. The figure of ‘Africa’ on St. George’s Hall emerges as a *perversion* of abolitionist imagery, used to justify nineteenth century colonial ambitions through a racist and distinctly gendered expression of quite literal imperialistic paternalism, drawing on the guise of a symbolic ‘child’. In regards to the debates around the image in 1995, however, this more theoretical exploration of meaning might seem somewhat of a moot point. There is enough wrong with the idea of re-creating a sculpture of a black African person in chains (broken or not), kneeling before a white European figure on a prominent (public) city centre building without going back to the sculptural intentions or cultural contexts of the 1840s. However, re-examining sculptural symbolism can uncover some of the ways major cultural symbols, are themselves used and abused in different contexts, and, perhaps more significantly, directs attention to the way this has been done to the black body since slavery. As Alan Rice similarly suggests:

So for ill and good these bodies have already entered our imaginations as degraded and aestheticized, as commodified and caricatured, so that it appears there is nothing new to say and no way to redeem these bodies from the limitations of the historical record of the visual archive.⁶⁵

Examining the ‘visual archive’ in its context, moreover, also demonstrates the overbearing significance and cultural weight given to white British abolitionism which has simultaneously carried, created and sustained racist discourses within British cultural responses concerning

⁶³ Anon, *Illustrated Guide to, and Popular History of Liverpool and its Environs*, Tenth ed. (London: Ward, Lock & Co. Ltd, 1883), 19.

⁶⁴ Quentin Hughes, *Seaport*, 103.

⁶⁵ Rice, *Creating Memorials, Building Identities*, 189.

not only enslavement, but encounters with people constructed as 'cultural others', both abroad in the expanding imperial territories, and at home, through racialised media discourse levelled against Liverpool-born black people who challenged such imagery in their city.

The Rise of the Museums

Introduction

As outlined in Chapter Two, the development of major museum representations of slavery in Liverpool at the end of the twentieth century occurred against a global expansion in the memorialisation of slavery, as well as within a context of theoretical and curatorial shifts in museology, particularly from the 1980s onwards. Beyond this, however, it is important to recognise the context the museums in Liverpool sit within; the way debate surrounding the museums in the 1990s and 2000s responded to Liverpool's memory-discourse of slavery and memories of other facets of the city's history, as well as reflecting broader, indeed global, themes and issues. This is an interactive process; discourse around the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery (TSG) reflected the pre-existing memory of slavery in Liverpool and interaction with contextual circumstance specific to the city's local, political and, particularly, racial history. The development of the ISM some ten years later, however, also responds to the 'memory' of the TSG, the discourse and debate experienced throughout its development. What both museums demonstrate is the complex layering of discourse and context which influences, shapes, and complicates representations of slavery in the public sphere. Processes of globalization, rising efforts to memorialise slavery on an international scale, developments in museology and broader national discourses and memory work meet this pre-existing memory-discourse and local context in complex interactions. Within this, however, the TSG, as the first permanent gallery addressing transatlantic slavery in Liverpool, holds a particular 'milestone' status in the history of Liverpool's memory of slavery, though its development was embroiled in contestations, conflict and, crucially, debate.

Situated in the basement of the Merseyside Maritime Museum (MMM), the TSG opened to coincide with Black History Month in October 1994. Whilst a number of critiques of the display itself have provided assessments of the perceived successes and failures of the

exhibition,¹ the focus for the purposes of this study will be on public debate and discourse around the gallery, looking primarily at the announcement of the project in December 1991, its opening in 1994 and associated public literature. The focus of the ISM for this study will also be on the *public* debate and discourse around the museum, in 2005 and 2007, though the Conclusion will return briefly to the interior museum space.

The Transatlantic Slavery Gallery

The criticisms surrounding the development of the TSG, as with many instances of local black intervention in the public memory of slavery in Liverpool, can be understood as local actions performed in relation to broader political processes of the black Atlantic. Stephen Small has argued that more general patterns of political empowerment in Britain should draw inspiration from the African Diaspora.² In relation to the development of the TSG, the influence of the Reparations movement in particular was important for shifting the focus to museums as sites of potential empowerment which had hitherto not been high on the black political agenda.³ However, the reaction and debate which surrounded the gallery, had at its heart Liverpool's local political context, and the city's distinct history of race and racism.

The Development of the TSG: White Philanthropy and Black Response

Despite growing academic scholarship concerning transatlantic slavery from the 1960s onwards, museums were slow to develop displays reflecting this, and many maintained narratives which celebrated colonial endeavour and acts of white liberation.⁴ Previous museums addressing transatlantic slavery, namely Wilberforce House, Hull and the Wisbech

¹ See for example, Kowaleski-Wallace, *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory*, Chapter One; Wood, *Blind Memory*, Conclusion; Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*, Chapter Five; Celeste-Marie Bernier, "Exhibition Review - Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity: 'A Respectable Trade?': Bristol and Transatlantic Slavery: Pero and Pinney Exhibit," *Journal of American History* 88, no. 3 (2001); Patrick Hagopian, "Exhibition Review - Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity," *The Public Historian* 19, no. 4 (1997); Phyllis K. Leffler, "Maritime Museums and Transatlantic Slavery: A Study in British and American Identity,"

² Stephen Small, "Slavery, Colonialism and Museums Representations in Great Britain: Old and New Circuits of Migration," 125.

³ Small, "Contextualizing the Black Presence in British Museums," 57.

⁴ Anthony Tibbles, "Interpreting Transatlantic Slavery: The Role of Museums," 131; Stephen Small, "Slavery, Colonialism and Museums Representations in Great Britain: Old and New Circuits of Migration," 118.

Museum, Cambridgeshire, honouring William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson respectively, presented narratives of abolition and emancipation. The development of the TSG, therefore, represented the beginning of a shift towards a memory of *slavery* rather than abolition.⁵

The TSG was established following a substantial grant of close to £550,000 from The Peter Moores Foundation and additional supporting funds from the Tourist Development Project.⁶ Lancashire-born businessman and philanthropist Peter Moores, set up the Peter Moores Foundation in 1964 with revenue from his family's (Liverpool-based) football pools business, Littlewoods.⁷ The initial impetus for the gallery is largely ascribed to Moores himself, who approached the museums in Liverpool about a project concerning transatlantic slavery.⁸ Spokespeople for the museums suggest that the approach from Peter Moores coincided with discussions in the late 1980s and early 1990s over how to improve representations of transatlantic slavery within current displays, particularly in the wake of criticisms concerning text panels in the Maritime Museum made within the Gifford Inquiry.⁹ In December 1991 the project was publically announced and 400 square metres was dedicated to a gallery addressing transatlantic slavery which was to open as *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity*.¹⁰

Despite the clear Liverpool connections Moores and his family business had, and much being made in the local press over the significance of the project being in Liverpool, the actual reasons for Liverpool being the home for Moores's vision were largely coincidental. Moores reportedly became interested in the history of slavery after researching the history of his own Barbados estate. Surprised by omissions in the historic record, silence surrounding the topic and the sheer statistics involved, Moores subsequently spent six years searching for a museum willing to take on the subject. After numerous unsuccessful approaches, Sir Richard Foster,

⁵ Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*, 119.

⁶ Kowaleski-Wallace, *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory*, 33.

⁷ Peter Moores Foundation, "Sir Peter Moores - Biography," http://www.pmf.org.uk/pag_pm_biog.php (accessed November 26, 2013).

⁸ Peter Moores, "Foreword," in *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity*, ed. Anthony Tibbles (London: HMSO/National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1994).

⁹ Anthony Tibbles, "Against Human Dignity: The Development of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery at Merseyside Maritime Museum,"; Anthony Tibbles, ed. *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity* (London: HMSO/National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 2005), 132. The original criticism from the Gifford Inquiry was not only that the representation of Liverpool's involvement in transatlantic slavery in the MMM was inadequate, but read 'like a lawyer's plea in mitigation for Liverpool'. Lord Gifford QC (Chair), Brown, and Bunday, *Loosen the Shackles*, 26.

¹⁰ Tibbles, "Against Human Dignity: The Development of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery at Merseyside Maritime Museum."

Director of NMGM took him up on his offer.¹¹ This is an important point for Scott who suggests that Moores had approached Liverpool museums only 'as a last resort.'¹²

The project was described by Richard Foster as 'one of the most challenging projects' the museums had ever undertaken.¹³ Part of this challenge lay in not only negotiating the range of ways in which the subject matter could be addressed, but in determining who should be in control of this process, or, at least, whose voices should be included in developing the gallery. Though the project had supporters from the outset, including Lord Gifford,¹⁴ there were also criticisms from the beginning. Black organisations and groups within the city raised vocal concerns from the public launch meeting in 1991 onwards, stating that they had not been adequately consulted, and that they should have been involved prior to the public launch, after numerous decisions had already been taken.¹⁵ The number and diversity of people involved in the planning and development of the gallery expanded largely after this. NMGM brought on board 11 guest curators, seven of whom were black, and alongside current NMGM employees (maritime history curator Anthony Tibbles and project curator Alison Taubam), Garry Morris, a black outreach worker, was appointed to the team in November 1993.¹⁶ The curatorial team worked with an advisory committee of 17 members chaired by Lord Pitt which included Angus Chukuemeka (Chair of Merseyside African Council), Dorothy Kuya (Senior Community Relations Officer at Merseyside Community Relations Council) and Wally Brown (Principal of Liverpool Community College and member of the Gifford Inquiry).¹⁷

¹¹ Simon Tait, "Chains of Shame," *The Times*, October 20, 1994.

¹² Scott, interview.

¹³ Richard Foster, "Foreword," in *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity*, ed. Anthony Tibbles (London: HMSO/National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1994).

¹⁴ Lord Gifford (co-author of *Loosen the Shackles*) sent a letter to the committee which was read out at the public launch in December 1991 in which he stated 'Black people in Liverpool continue to suffer grievously from the attitudes of race inferiority by which the inhumanity of the slave trade was justified'. Quoted in Steve Brauner, "Slavery haunts the old docks," *Liverpool Daily Post*, December 13th 1991.

¹⁵ The Merseyside African Council questioned why the first gallery about Africans in the city was about slavery and not about the history of African civilisations prior to European contact. Small, "Contextualizing the Black Presence in British Museums," 51. See also Tibbles, "Against Human Dignity: The Development of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery at Merseyside Maritime Museum."

¹⁶ The guest curators were Femi Biko, Alissandra Cummins, Preston King, Mary Modupe Kolawole, Paul Lovejoy, Pat Manning, Jennifer Lyle Morgan, Ed Reynolds, David Richardson, Stephen Small and James Walvin. Black Cultural Archives, London, Enslavement, Collections Management BCA/5/1/85, Press Release: How the gallery was developed

¹⁷ Lord Pitt was a former Chairman of the Greater London Council, the British Medical Association and involved in numerous anti-racist campaigns. Tibbles, *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity*, 7; David Hope, "Gallery Puts Roots of Racism on Show," *Liverpool Daily Post*, June 8, 1994. Other members

The advisory committee's role was largely to act as a means of communication to the curatorial team and to give advice on consultation, education, use of materials and overall approach.¹⁸ Anthony Tibbles stressed the importance of incorporating a black perspective through the consultation and advisory processes, suggesting that '[b]ecause it is a story about Africans and black people it is sensible to speak to these communities in the same way you would speak to Jews about the Holocaust', and that this would enable a 'different perspective on slavery'.¹⁹

Despite the involvement of a number of local black people and organisations including the Merseyside African Council, there were calls for a boycott from others such as the Consortium of Black Organisations and the Federation of Liverpool Black Organisations, and some Liverpool black people refused to attend the gallery after it had opened.²⁰ Anthony Tibbles suggests there was general suspicion about NMGM undertaking this project as the organisation was seen to have a poor race relations record, employing very few black people.²¹ Similarly, some took issue with a government funded (and predominantly white) organisation charging admission to black people to view what some considered was 'their history', and in this way profiting from slavery twice over:

So, if you're you know, wanted to view your history, you had to pay to go view your history and that money was staying in an organisation that was predominantly white, it was you know, government controlled, erm, perceptions then, and as I say obviously I'm just going back you know, so, you pay money to go view your history so you could argue that a white institution was profiting from slavery still.²²

of the advisory committee were Dame Jocelyn Barrow, Alissandra Cummins, Richard Foster, Len Garrison, Professor Stuart Hall, Herbie Higgins (Merseyside Jamaica Association), Professor Alistair Hennessey, Barbara Johnson, Professor Preston King, Sir Shridath Ramphal, Dr Stephen Small, Sir Kenneth Stuart, Alan Swerdlow and Sir David Wilson.

¹⁸ Tibbles, "Against Human Dignity: The Development of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery at Merseyside Maritime Museum."

¹⁹ Andrew Forgrave, "Gallery Slave Trade Exhibition Launches Voyage of Discovery," *Liverpool Daily Post*, February 9, 1994.

²⁰ Small, "Contextualizing the Black Presence in British Museums," 51; Wood, *Blind Memory*, 300.

²¹ Tibbles, "Against Human Dignity: The Development of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery at Merseyside Maritime Museum."

²² James Hernandez, interview. This point was also made in the *Granby Toxteth Community Project Newsletter* which suggested that the museums were 'using' the black community for financial gain. See Murray Steele, "Confronting a Legacy", 143.

How to represent Africa and Africans was one of the central significant issues the gallery faced. This was particularly poignant given previous representations within museums (both in Liverpool and elsewhere) of dehumanised, stereotypical depictions of black people as 'barbarians and savages' from a European perspective.²³ One linguistic change which would set a precedent for further representations elsewhere was the adoption of the phrase 'enslaved Africans' in place of 'slaves', a move intent on re-humanizing the story of slavery, against a previous language of trade terminology, and one which the organisers saw as central to giving African people identities.²⁴ Part of this humanizing drive also sought to challenge stereotypes of African passivity through a focus on African resistance to enslavement.²⁵ Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace has suggested that such depictions of agency were necessarily paradoxical, requiring to both emphasise the full extent of the dehumanizing trauma of the enslavement process whilst also challenging conceptions of the passive African victim.²⁶ One of the changes made to the display, largely as a result of lobbying from black organisations in the city, was the inclusion of a section depicting Africa before slavery.²⁷ However, this has been criticised by scholars who suggest it confirms stereotypes. Partly this refers to the ahistorical presentation of artefacts relating to African culture, from different ethnic groups, regions and time periods which present Africa from a decidedly European point of view through the dominance of Western ethnographic museum practice.²⁸ These more traditional practices, however, stood somewhat in contrast to emerging curatorial theory.

Museums, Emotions, Experiences

²³ Stephen Small argues that this was particularly so of black women. Small, "Slavery, Colonialism and Museums Representations in Great Britain," 118. See also Small, "Contextualizing the Black Presence in British Museums," 50-51.

²⁴ This point is stressed on the front page of the exhibition brochure which states: 'To refer to the Africans who were enslaved only as 'slaves' strips them of their identity. They were for instance, farmers, merchants, priests, soldiers, goldsmiths, musicians. They were husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters. They could be Yoruba, Igbo, Akan, Kongolese.' *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity (Exhibition Brochure)*, (Liverpool: National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1994). Point also discussed in Tibbles, "Interpreting Transatlantic Slavery," 139.

²⁵ This was, in part, influenced by developments in academic scholarship, which since the 1970s had focused increasingly on studies of 'slave autonomy' and produced new studies into culture and resistance. Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*, 121.

²⁶ Kowaleski-Wallace, *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory*, 35-36.

²⁷ Small, "Slavery, Colonialism and Museums Representations in Great Britain," 124.

²⁸ Kowaleski-Wallace, *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory*, 37-38.

...the black subject remembers slavery through trauma and the white subject remembers it through guilt.

Barnor Hesse.²⁹

Much of the public debate surrounding the TSG drew on and reflected developments in museological practice and curatorial theory in the 1980s and 1990s. At the crux of much of the debate was disagreement over what the exhibition should do (what it should achieve and how it should do this) which necessarily reflected different ideas concerning what museums in general should do and how they should go about doing it. This debate reflected reactions to developments in the experiential dimension of museum and heritage site presentation, much critiqued in the 1980s and early 1990s,³⁰ and the surrounding discourse reflected the implied 'emotive' focus of the museum experience and reactions to this.

One of the features of the exhibition which focused on creating a particular 'experience' within the museum space was the depiction of the middle passage, which took the form of a reconstructed slave ship, largely modelled on a plan of the infamous Liverpool slaver *The Brookes*, with a background soundtrack of readings from John Newton's log and Equiano's memoirs, though empty of any of the model slave bodies seen elsewhere.³¹ Since, as it was suggested, this was the 'common experience of all Africans who were enslaved', so would it form a central 'experience' of visitors to the gallery.³² Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace suggests that this part of the gallery in particular was asking visitors to place themselves in the position of the enslaved African, and "'experience" something of the physical effects of the passage', an approach which aligned with contemporary museum practices involving (re)constructed spaces.³³ This also reflects theories of 'client participation' seen within living

²⁹ Barnor Hesse, "Forgotten Like a Bad Dream: Atlantic Slavery and the Ethics of Postcolonial Memory," in *Relocating Postcolonialism*, ed. Theo Goldberg and Ato Quayson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 164.

³⁰ Often referred to as the 'Heritage Debates', critics of a so-called 'Heritage Industry' (particularly Robert Hewison, David Lowenthal and Patrick Wright) in 1980s Britain, seen within the proliferation of new museums in old industrial sites (Coal Mining Museum, Yorkshire) and in particular the development of 'Living History' heritage sites such as Beamish, viewed such experiential engagements with history with suspicion, though others such as historian Raphael Samuel, were more open to alternative representations of the past. See Robert Lumley, "The Debate on Heritage Reviewed"; Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry*; Wright, *On Living in an Old Country*; Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*; Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Volume 1* (London: Verso, 1994).

³¹ Wilberforce House used such models in its Middle Passage display. Tibbles, "Against Human Dignity: The Development of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery at Merseyside Maritime Museum."

³² Ibid.

³³ Kowaleski-Wallace, *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory*, 42.

history sites and heritage tourism ventures such as Jorvik Viking Centre in York.³⁴ The focus on experiential engagement with the middle passage was reflected within promotional literature for the gallery through a string of active verbs focusing on the actions of visitors, that 'visitors *will pass*' through the reconstructed slave ship, after which the tense shifts to the present and imperative verb demands are laid out, '*Find out* about the horrors of the Middle Passage', the leaflet insists, and '*listen to* the true accounts of conditions on board.'³⁵ Anthony Tibbles stressed the active involvement of visitors by describing the Middle Passage as a 'walk-through experience'. However, he acknowledged that this could risk additional *unwanted* emotional responses, suggesting that 'visitors needed to experience the dislocation, but we did not want something that frightened people (particularly children) and we did not want to sensationalise.'³⁶ The focus on 'experience' within public discourse around the gallery, particularly from NMGM itself, carried the implicit suggestion that experience inside the gallery, would have effects outside of it. Peter Moores suggested that the emotional impact of visiting was a way of actively engaging with the history of the slave trade in a way which would have (largely positive and cognitive) consequences:

A visit to the exhibition is bound to disturb us – black or white. But it is meant to bring the slave trade before us without mincing matters, to act as a catalyst which will spark off reflection, debate, understanding and further study.³⁷

However, for Marcus Wood, this focus and the representation of the middle passage was a worrying application of contemporary museum theory that focused blindly on entertainment, educational experience, consumer involvement, and client participation. It promised something neither the gallery, nor anything else for that matter, could deliver – absolute empathy. This was, Wood argues, part of the 'empathetic yet complacent emotional

³⁴ Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*, 123.

³⁵ 'View a trading scene' the leaflet later stated in relation to other parts of the exhibition, 'Learn more about the ways in which Europeans used Africans to work in the plantations', 'Discover how much of the social life of Western Europe in the 18th century depended on the products of slave labour' and 'Listen to accounts of those who endured the hardships an resisted slavery'. *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity (Leaflet)*, (National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1994).

³⁶ Tibbles, "Against Human Dignity: The Development of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery at Merseyside Maritime Museum."

³⁷ Moores, "Foreword."

substitutions with which the West has been mis-remembering and dis-remembering slavery for more than three centuries'.³⁸

Throughout the announcement and development of the TSG, it was suggested that the representation of slavery as an acknowledgement of an otherwise silenced or hidden history, would go some way to healing (presumably racial) wounds, to better the social position of black people in society and aid relations between black and white alike.³⁹ It was repeatedly suggested that the gallery would in the long term have positive social consequences, and much of this positivity was implicitly discussed using language stressing the significance of 'recognizing' the history of transatlantic slavery.⁴⁰ One public response supportive of the gallery and its intentions, reflected the discourse of the TSG, stating that '[a]n honest look at our past is also one important step towards healing the wounds of history and restoring dignity to those from whom it has been dented', drawing on the common healing wounds metaphor and indeed language in the gallery's title, focusing on the 'dignity' which can apparently be restored, though to whom, is unclear.⁴¹ However, as Stephen Small argues, ideas over the ways in which this can or should be done will vary greatly, as will the viewpoints from black and white perspectives, that 'the extent and causes of racialised inequality, and their commitment to changing this inequality, is demonstrably different'.⁴² In reference to Peter Moores' summation of the intentions, that '[w]e can come to terms with our past only by accepting it, and in order to be able to accept it we need knowledge of what actually happened. We need to make sense of our history', Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace draws important attention to the perspective of such a statement. Through the use of plural pronouns 'we' and 'our', Moores both constructs a collective and unified perspective from which to view this history, yet simultaneously creates an ambiguous 'we'; quite whose history he refers to, and from whose perspective, is, she suggests, unclear.⁴³ The issue is far clearer for Marcus Wood, who suggests that such statements reinforce the dominantly white European

³⁸ Wood, *Blind Memory*, 300.

³⁹ Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace suggests this was the driving force between both the TSG and Bristol's Slave Trail (1999) Kowaleski-Wallace, *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory*, 26.

⁴⁰ 'The opening of this gallery is part of a process of recognition of the role that this city played in the transatlantic slave trade' Sir Leslie Young, quoted in "Tears for Slavery Role," *Liverpool Echo*, October 25, 1994; Moores, "Foreword."

⁴¹ Gerald Henderson, "LETTER: Dignified Display," *Liverpool Echo*, November 1, 1994.

⁴² Small, "Contextualizing the Black Presence in British Museums," 57.

⁴³ Moores, "Foreword."; Kowaleski-Wallace, *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory*, 33.

outlook of the gallery, and further that slavery is something that should never be 'accepted' or come to terms with, and such a statement would never conceivably be made about the Holocaust.⁴⁴ Wood further emphasised the white English focus of the gallery from its title, arguing that "'Dignity" is a wonderfully English verdict on what Atlantic slavery was "against"'.⁴⁵ This focus, John Oldfield suggests, was perhaps what protesting black groups took issue with. Rather than lack of consultation alone, concerns were raised over who ultimately had control over the content, outlook and perspective of the gallery.⁴⁶

Though the stated intentions of the gallery stressed an emotional engagement with the 'black experience', it would ultimately be an experience viewed from a dominantly white perspective. NMGM's mission statement for the exhibition was as follows:

The aim of the gallery is to increase public understanding of the experience of Black people in Britain and the modern world through an examination of the Atlantic slave trade and the African diaspora.⁴⁷

The statement starts very much in the present. The aim is for 'understanding', not knowledge, information, or even awareness, but a compassionate engagement on an emotional level. The slave trade is a methodology of achieving this understanding, a tributary for an emotional journey of discovery across the Atlantic and into the contemporary African diaspora. However, the phrasing and perspective of the statement raises questions over which public is it exactly that's being asked to understand the black experience?

Numerous public statements drew upon general perceptions of museums as neutral and objective spaces, stating that the exhibition would not have a slant and would not 'follow any particular line' according to Peter Moores.⁴⁸ Lord Pitt reassured black protestors at the first public meeting that the TSG would be a way to tell history 'properly', and that it 'would not be a "Madame Tussauds"', reflecting concerns over the trivialisation of such an important

⁴⁴ Wood, *Blind Memory*, 296.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*, 127.

⁴⁷ Tibbles, "Against Human Dignity: The Development of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery at Merseyside Maritime Museum." This mission statement was repeated in the local press, Forgrave, "Gallery Slave Trade Exhibition."

⁴⁸ Peter Moores quoted in Brauner, "Slavery haunts the old docks."

and difficult history.⁴⁹ Peter Moores further suggested that as opposed to the emotional response this history was likely to elicit, the museum would maintain a neutral stance that, '[w]hile we as white and black people who have gained and lost from slavery should be emotional about the tragic and shameful past, museums should be as factual and unemotional as possible.'⁵⁰ However, some considered that the gallery should in fact 'take a line'. Maria O'Reilly of the Consortium of Black Organisations suggested that the exhibition should 'be slanted our way because it happened to us. We were taken, we were murdered and made Liverpool rich'.⁵¹

An emotional engagement with the gallery and by extension the subject of slavery was frequently emphasised by discourse inside and outside the museum space. Richard Foster suggested that the subject touched upon 'deeply seated emotions', particularly for black people, and Anthony Tibbles suggested that though the gallery was looking to elicit an emotional engagement, 'white people should not leave feeling guilty and black people should not leave feeling angry'.⁵² Displays making demands on emotions was a key component to the new museology movement, and the emotional response recorded by visitors to the TSG met with approval from the management of NMGM, of which 'sadness' and 'shame' measured highest.⁵³ There were, then, desirable emotional responses, and undesirable ones. Much of the public discourse surrounding the TSG included references to what museum visitors, Liverpoolians, Britons, black people, white people, should or should not be feeling.

⁴⁹ Lord Pitt, quoted in Ibid.

⁵⁰ Peter Moores, quoted in Danu Kogbara, "The Chains of History: Liverpool's New Museum of Slavery is Under Fire by Radical Blacks," *The Sunday Times*, October 30, 1994.

⁵¹ Maria O'Reilly, quoted in Brauner, "Slavery haunts the old docks." A critique of the gallery in *The Guardian* focused on the changing nature of museums, suggesting that while the TSG was apparently unsuccessful in its aims due to a lack of 'authenticity and authority', down largely to an absence of artefacts bearing 'historical patina', what it did succeed in was raising the question of the purpose of museums in the modern age: 'Are they the repository for precious objects from the past, or are they places in which individuals with a particular point of view can use the aura that still attaches to the very word museum, to promote their own ideas? The truth is that museums in our secular age have long served as the nearest thing to sacred space in the modern city. Now, more and more, they are called on to take on the role of shrine as well. And in so doing, they risk losing their authority.' Deyan Sudjic, "Shackled to the Shrine of Good Causes," *The Guardian*, November 29, 1994.

⁵² Foster, "Foreword.;" Tibbles, "Against Human Dignity: The Development of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery at Merseyside Maritime Museum."

⁵³ Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*, 127. See also Vergo (ed), *The New Museology*. Research commissioned by NMGM in 1995 concerning visitor reactions to the gallery found that people reported a number of emotional responses, including sadness (62 per cent of those interviewed), shame (40 per cent), and guilt (31 per cent), although shock (25 per cent) and humility (19 percent), were less common. Quoted in Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*, 127.

Despite Tibbles assertion above, one of the most commonly referred to emotions in public discourse, particularly in newspaper headlines, was 'guilt'. 'History Tinged with Guilt' declared headlines in the local press, but 'Liverpudlians of today have no reason to feel guilt for the cruelty of their ancestors' were the second-hand quoted words of the Lord Mayor in one letter, and another writer suggested that 'some political groups are determined to give the people of Liverpool a guilt complex'.⁵⁴ Repeated references to 'guilt' shed light on perspectives of this history and, indeed, the dominant perspective of slavery in this context. Central to the concept of 'historical guilt' is historical ownership; people need to feel sufficiently connected to the historical past, to feel it is 'theirs' to consider debates over guilt or non-guilt applicable and relevant. Equally, it is unlikely that the press was referring to black feelings of 'guilt' in relation to the history of slavery, again reflecting the dominant white perspective such discourses spoke from. Ranking equally highly was 'shame', though this was discussed as an emotion experienced (or not) by both black and white speakers. Lord Pitt suggested that for black people, slavery was 'not something we have to be ashamed of, we should be proud because we overcame that'.⁵⁵ The local and national press discourse drew on this word easily. *The Times* reported on the opening of the gallery under the title 'Chains of Shame', and the same article stated that slavery was 'at least as shameful to humanity as the Holocaust, and as beset by a conspiracy of silence as child abuse'.⁵⁶ The exhibition reportedly received a 'blessing for show of shame' in the religious service held in Liverpool in October 1994, and upon opening there was a '[f]ocus on city's slave shame'.⁵⁷

Maya Angelou drew both common words and emotions together in remarks made during the opening of the gallery in October:

⁵⁴ "History Tinged with Guilt," *Liverpool Daily Post*, September 2, 1994; Michael James, "LETTER: Slur on the Albert Dock," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 27, 1994; John Amendale, "LETTER: Slavery Guilt is Misplaced," *Liverpool Daily Post*, December 27, 1994. The quote from the 'Mayor' in Michael James' letter is most likely actually meant to read 'Maya' Angelou, whose words were quoted in the article the author refers to.

⁵⁵ Lord Pitt, quoted in, David Hope, "Anger as Slave Trade Exhibition Set for City," *Liverpool Daily Post*, December 13, 1991.

⁵⁶ Tait, "Chains of Shame." Also 'David Ward on a gallery that helps black and white people confront a shameful past' David Ward, "Story of 133 Murders in Museum of Slavery," *The Guardian*, October 20, 1994. Interestingly, the prominence of both the Holocaust and the opening up of cases of child abuse, particularly in the US, is one of the trends seen alongside psychoanalytic literature on trauma which Andreas Huyssen suggests was part of the global rise of memory in the 1980s and 1990s. Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, 14.

⁵⁷ Ann Todd, "Slavery Exhibition Wins Tribute - Blessing for Show of Shame," *Liverpool Echo*, October 6, 1994; Claire Stocks, "Focus on City's Shame as Gallery Opens," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 25, 1994. Stocks' opening line reads, 'THE shame of Liverpool's hidden history as the slave trade capital of Europe has been finally exposed to public scrutiny'.

Guilt is about the most dangerous of emotions, it eats up the host but does nothing for the problem. What this exhibition can do is inform. That is the most important thing. Those who have eyes, let them see and those who have ears, let them hear.

No doubt white people will be ashamed by the exhibition but that is a different emotion. One should be sorry but never guilty for one's history.⁵⁸

Here, Angelou draws a distinction between emotions of 'guilt' and 'shame', where shame is an expression of sorrow, an outward reach of human empathy perhaps, against guilt's inward cannibalistic processes.

Liverpool's Slavery Discourse and Local Context

The debate surrounding the TSG in public discourse frequently drew upon, used and reacted to existing motifs and themes within Liverpool's slavery discourse. These focused in particular on the built environment, reaction largely stemming from the way in which press reporting on the TSG framed Liverpool's involvement with transatlantic slavery. This was stressed for dramatic effect and through over-emphasis, hyperbole and inaccuracies which prompted passionate responses in the letters pages.

Whilst the 'beating London and Bristol' motif has already been highlighted, the tone pervades in public documents produced for the TSG by NMGM, where Liverpool's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade in the eighteenth century is talked about in a language of rivalry, dominance and competition, which Liverpool ultimately excels in.⁵⁹ Whilst the information provided may not be false, it is unlikely that museums addressing slavery in other locations would phrase this history in such a way.⁶⁰ Materials such as the catalogue published

⁵⁸ Maya Angelou, as quoted in Stocks, "Focus on City's Shame as Gallery Opens."

⁵⁹ '...Liverpool merchants were increasingly involved and from about 1730 began to outstrip their **rivals**. Although London, Bristol and other ports continued to send ships to Africa, Liverpool **dominated** the trade until its abolition in 1807.' *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity (Exhibition Brochure)*. This brochure was produced cheaply (sold for 50p a copy) and contained a synthesised account of the panel text from inside the gallery. It was designed as something for visitors to take away and read in their own time. Tibbles, "Against Human Dignity: The Development of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery at Merseyside Maritime Museum." I would like to thank Graeme Callister, University of York, for providing me with a copy.

⁶⁰ On a visit to Bristol's M-Shed museum in 2012, the introductory panel text to the section on transatlantic slavery states that, 'In the long history of Bristol as a trading port, the transatlantic slave trade lasted only 100 years, but it was of crucial economic importance', focusing on the (limited) amount of time (although one hundred years could be viewed as quite long) rather than anything suggesting that it lost out to 'rival' port Liverpool.

for the exhibition included research-focused academic articles and discussions concerning Liverpool, such as 'Liverpool and the English Slave Trade' by David Richardson, and an article concerning Liverpool after 1807 by Anthony Tibbles. However, statements arising in the local press frequently coupled an emphasis on the extent of Liverpool's involvement in the trade with sometimes specific, yet more often generalised reference to the built environment.⁶¹ For example, though it is acknowledged by the *Post* that the impact on the city is 'a subject of debate', the 'physical legacy is seen in the wealth of 18th century city architecture: carvings of African heads on the town hall, are a reminder'.⁶² Street names are discussed, sometimes generally, sometimes with reference to specific streets and their associated slaving merchants.⁶³ The impact on the built environment however, more often than not, is talked about in vague terms, where finances from the trade 'provided the capital for the docks, the warehouses and the merchants' mansions',⁶⁴ though which buildings exactly are not specified. This ambiguity is furthered through metaphorical language which draws on allegories of building and construction, of wealth being 'largely built on an ignominious slave trade', or that 'the traffic in enslaved Africans was the cornerstone of Liverpool overseas trade.'⁶⁵

One of the most hotly contested associations between slavery and the built environment concerns the docks (specifically the Albert Dock). One article states that Dr Maya Angelou had come to open the 'exhibition at the Merseyside Maritime Museum in Liverpool's Albert Dock' then states, '[t]he dock played an enormous part in the slave trade', leaving open the interpretation that it was the Albert Dock specifically the author is referring to, though it could have quite reasonably been suggested that 'the dock', as a mechanism rather than a specific collection of bricks, played an enormous part. These contentions arose alongside varying interpretations of the ongoing impacts of history, viewing historical processes as having long term effects and consequences, or in more compartmentalised perspectives which

⁶¹ Isolated examples of stressing Liverpool's involvement aside from visibilities in the built environment do occur, though less frequently and usually much before the run up to the opening of the gallery, 'Although not involved until 1700AD, Liverpool merchants were responsible for more slaving voyages during the second half of the 18th century than any other European port', states one article from February 1994, drawing instead on Liverpool's 'late to slavery' motif coupled with stressing dominance against other ports. Forgrave, "Gallery Slave Trade Exhibition."

⁶² Hope, "Gallery Puts Roots of Racism on Show."

⁶³ "'Lord Granby made profits from the slave trade, Lord Sefton made profits from the slave trade Canning and Huskisson were ministers in governments which actively promoted the slave trade.'" Stephen Small, quoted in Brauner, "Slavery haunts the old docks."

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ "History Tinged with Guilt," 75; David Richardson, "Liverpool and the English Slave Trade," *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity* (1994).

focused on immediate effects of eighteenth century histories on eighteenth century lives, fortunes, industries and architecture. For example, Dr Angelou is quoted in the local press as saying that '[t]he great industries of the 19th century were built on the slave trade [...] You could say if it weren't for the sale of my great-grandmother, then Liverpool's famous Liver building would not be there, and that's the truth of it.'⁶⁶ However, one letter takes issue with any association between slavery and the Albert Dock in particular, that the implied suggestion that the Albert Dock played 'an enormous part', was 'patently wrong', based on when the dock was constructed and when the slave trade was abolished.⁶⁷ This author also draws on Irish identity and a genealogical interpretation of time to distance themselves from Liverpool and slavery, that '[m]y ancestors came to this city from Ireland in the early 1900s. Countless thousands of other Irish people had earlier fled the potato famine to come to England.' A further interesting disassociation is made between the writer's own ancestors and the objectives of the gallery, is expressed, '[m]y ancestors were not racist and did not besmirch their hands in that foul trade,'⁶⁸ as if not having been a Liverpool slave trader automatically means someone is 'not racist'. The Irish (normalised as 'white') victim status is a regular in Liverpool's slavery discourse, though in relation to the TSG and the rhetoric of the museum space, it is one which is interestingly reflected in mirroring exhibitions. Visitors could walk from the TSG into the second half of the basement which housed the exhibition on Emigration to the Americas with similar mock-ups of ships, this time carrying white figures below their decks.⁶⁹

The built environment is also used in a case for reparations:

⁶⁶ Stocks, "Focus on City's Shame as Gallery Opens."

⁶⁷ 'The Albert Dock was constructed in 1847. The British Atlantic slave trade had been abolished on May 1, 1807, and slaves were granted their emancipation within the British Empire on August 1, 1834.' James, "LETTER: Slur on the Albert Dock."

⁶⁸ Ibid. The author ends with a familiar suggestion that people who had financially benefitted from slavery had left Liverpool swiftly, taking their longer term economic, cultural and architectural legacies with them, 'The people that profited from slavery had made their money and got out of Liverpool many years before [the early 1900s].'

⁶⁹ See Wood, *Blind Memory*, 298. The interplay of the histories of (predominantly Irish) emigration and the transatlantic slave trade as more of a substitution of traumatic experience, indeed where emigrants fare worse than slaves is replicated in Ron Jones, *The American Connection*, 69-70. Jones states of Liverpool's ships after 1807, '[s]oon they would be carrying a profitable human cargo of a different kind – emigrants' who suffered greatly since 'conditions were often worse for them than for slaves. At least the captain of a slaveship had a money incentive for keeping his 'cargo' alive and in good condition.'

Many of my fellow black brothers and sisters were in tears when they saw this very disturbing display. Their indignation increased when they learned that this great city of Liverpool was built almost entirely from the profits of slavery.

Surely the time has now come for generous compensation. The exhibition shows that Liverpool Town Hall, Abercromby Square and the entire Albert Dock are all fruits of slavery.

As a matter of right and justice, these must now be handed over to the black community of Liverpool, since it was by the sufferings and labours of the black people of Liverpool that these fine buildings came into being in the first place.⁷⁰

Here, the metaphorical statement that Liverpool was 'built from slavery' leads to links with tangible and specific buildings, individual sites which are considered 'fruits of slavery'. The last section which suggests it was 'the sufferings and labours of the black people of Liverpool' which led to the creation of such 'fine buildings' may seem a strained and artificial leap, however, it is a statement which reflects the public discourse around the aims, indeed the 'mission' of the TSG itself, which begins from the standpoint of the contemporary black population and their 'experience', and then moves back to slavery.

In public discourse around the gallery, Liverpool's historic black presence was mentioned frequently, yet briefly, and largely as an introductory remark framing the (implicitly apposite) location of the gallery in Liverpool, and alongside comments emphasizing the extent of Liverpool's involvement in transatlantic slavery. Moores suggests that '[i]t is particularly appropriate that this gallery should be in Liverpool, which not only has one of the oldest black communities in Europe but was also the major European slaving port in the eighteenth century.'⁷¹ Though it is not explained why this should be appropriate, Moores' suggestion that the gallery will enable 'acceptance' of 'our history', and that specifically housing a gallery on a taboo subject might 'exorcize' it, frames the 'appropriate' co-existence of Liverpool's black community and this gallery largely from a white perspective. However, in terms of a more in depth engagement with Liverpool black history, very little was said.⁷²

⁷⁰ Sharron Obote, "LETTER: Time to Pay for Such Inhumanity," *Liverpool Echo*, November 21, 1994.

⁷¹ Moores, "Foreword." This is the initial statement made in press reporting, that 'Liverpool, home to one of Europe's oldest black communities, beat competition from London and Bristol to house the internationally significant gallery' Hope, "Anger as Slave Trade Exhibition Set for City."

⁷² In the local press reporting the most that was said was one article's statement that '[b]lack people were living in Liverpool in the late 1700s, bought by traders and enslaved as domestic servants. Others came as freemen, having fought for the British during the American War of Independence.' Hope, "Gallery Puts Roots of Racism on Show."

The development of the gallery and the discourse around it, reflected Liverpool's recent political and racial history in interesting displays of parallel circumstances, derogatory terminology, and particular phrases concerning Liverpool's 'peculiar' brand of 1980s local politics. The employment of Gary Morris, a black man who was (notably) not from Liverpool, who was 'brought in to get the information out of the black communities', (as Scott surmises, '[t]hey bring a black face in, right?'), mirrors the tactics of the Militant Labour Council, who in 1984 also 'brought in a black face', Sampson Bond, a black man from London employed as principal race relations advisor in an attempt to ease mounting tensions in the city.⁷³ Furthermore, in reporting over the early gallery protests, a *Sunday Times* journalist suggests that there is 'no denying that disgruntled blacks in Liverpool (once dubbed Self-Pity City) might, with their penchant for interminable discussions, have been regarded as potential wreckers of carefully planned schedules',⁷⁴ using a language of violence against black people in the city, of 'disgruntled blacks' who might 'wreck' time itself. The author draws on a previous pejorative phrase used against Liverpool more generally, 'once dubbed Self-Pity City', dubbed indeed by another *Sunday Times* journalist only the year before in relation to public reaction in Liverpool to the murder of three-year-old James Bulger.⁷⁵ The use of this phrase acts to classify black reaction in 1994 as *over*-reaction, ridiculing critical voices which are nonetheless typical of 'exceptional' Liverpool, to be expected somewhere with a history of needless displays of emotion. This tone is, however, also repeated by someone inside Liverpool and the TSG project, as the same article quotes Peter Moores' assessment of the protests against the gallery. 'Liverpool' Moores suggests, 'is a city of militants'.⁷⁶

One of the major outcomes and effects of the TSG project as a whole, as stressed by people involved, was the opportunity to 'stimulate a debate about this history'.⁷⁷ Through the

⁷³ Scott, interview; Liverpool Black Caucus, *The Racial Politics of Militant in Liverpool*.

⁷⁴ Tait, "Chains of Shame."

⁷⁵ Jonathan Margolis, "Self-Pity City," *The Sunday Times*, February 28, 1993.

⁷⁶ Peter Moores, quoted in Tait, "Chains of Shame."

⁷⁷ Stephen Small, quoted in *Ibid.* Also stated by Peter Moores, 'to act as a catalyst which will spark off reflection, debate, understanding and further study', Moores, "Foreword." Before the opening of the gallery, Small also wrote about the importance of the gallery creating debate about education generally, 'The way I see it is that it will start a debate about the inadequacies and deficiencies of the British Educational System. About the limited coverage of African history, culture and arts in the National curriculum. About the lack of books and information about our people, alongside an abundance of books about Europeans. History is not only an end in itself, it is a means to an end. To a dialogue, to a greater discussion and debate. the gallery will contribute to rectifying the distortions that pass for education, and will enable our children to get a full and more comprehensive education from the very start.' Stephen Small, "Recapturing Our Past," *Charles Wootton News*, June 1993.

at times fraught, contentious and difficult process of ongoing consultation, disagreement and negotiation, one of the 'debates' to emerge from the project and have long lasting institutional effects on future representations of this history was the 'debate' of the development of the TSG itself. The experience of developing a gallery on transatlantic slavery and the reaction from local black organisations, representatives and figures, themselves situated within both local and global networks of black Atlantic debate over reparation and recognition, would set the tone for future projects undertaken by the museums, and none more so than the TSG's successor in the twenty-first century, the International Slavery Museum.

The International Slavery Museum

The International Slavery Museum (ISM), successor to the TSG, opened as a museum in its own right, though still physically located within the larger MMM complex (on the third floor), on the 23rd August 2007. Its opening coincided with Slavery Remembrance Day, the year in which the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the British Slave Trade Act was marked nationally and, of course, Liverpool's 800th Birthday.

Head of the ISM, Richard Benjamin stated that the TSG had played an influential role within the development of the ISM, and that whilst the former gallery had been successful and had been much praised, after a decade the displays needed updating. The impetus this time came largely from inside the organisation, from NML's new Director, Dr David Fleming, who suggested that the subject matter deserved a museum in its own right.⁷⁸ Fleming tied this into the Bicentenary commemorations by suggesting that the decision to create the ISM had been taken in 2003 during discussion over how to mark 2007.⁷⁹ The museum was developed

⁷⁸ Richard Benjamin, "Museums and Sensitive Histories," 181-82; David Fleming, "Opening of the International Slavery Museum: International Slavery Museum Gala Dinner, 22 August 2007," National Museums Liverpool, http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/resources/opening_speech.aspx (accessed December 4, 2013).

⁷⁹ 'Creating a new national museum takes a lot of commitment and determination. Nonetheless, when we at National Museums Liverpool considered in 2003 what we should do in Liverpool to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the British slave trade in 2007, this is exactly what we decided to do.' David Fleming, "Foreword" in *International Slavery Museum (Commemorative Booklet)*, (Liverpool: National Museums Liverpool, 2007). However, elsewhere Fleming suggests plans were put in place shortly after his arrival in the organisation in 2001 when the project was raised with NML Trustees. Fleming, "Opening of the International Slavery Museum: International Slavery Museum Gala Dinner, 22 August 2007."

following a successful Heritage Lottery Fund bid of £1.65m in 2005 and the project was publicly announced in October that year.⁸⁰

Having already been through similar processes for the TSG, the museums initiated consultation meetings with representatives from the local black community in May 2005, before the public announcement about the project was made in the press. Working on the feedback representatives gave about having previously felt excluded by museums services, another consultation process was started in 2006. Benjamin suggests that this demonstrated a more positive relationship between the museums and the black community.⁸¹ This, in large part, reflects the presence of the TSG in Liverpool's memory of slavery, and the influence of the response from the black community and consultation within this process. The TSG would continue to play into public discourse around the ISM.

2005: Historical Slavery and Contemporary Racism

Public discourse around the announcement of the ISM in 2005 largely reflected the existing memory discourse of slavery in Liverpool, perhaps unsurprisingly drawing on the presence and impact of the TSG in debates, often to support and justify the project. However, there was a great deal of negative reaction to the idea of a separate slavery museum. where the city was itself articulated as a 'victim' of (the representation of) slavery. The temporality argument was also frequently deployed, focusing on the 'pastness' of slavery and how long ago, thereby irrelevant, it was to contemporary society.

The articles announcing the project, largely based on press releases from the museums, demonstrated an awareness of Liverpool's pre-existing slavery-memory discourse, including the reaction around the TSG, and, more recently around SRD, and the apology in 1999. The TSG was presented by NML as an example of a previously successful museum endeavour, and as a sound foundation of experience on which to build, its popularity frequently commented upon as something on which to 'expand'.⁸² There was, however a

⁸⁰ The ISM also received government funding of £500,000 capital grant for its displays (announced in 2007 by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport), and an annual sum of £250,000 for running costs. Anthony Tibbles, "Facing Slavery's Past: The Bicentenary of the Abolition of the British Slave Trade," 301; Fleming, "Opening of the International Slavery Museum: International Slavery Museum Gala Dinner, 22 August 2007."

⁸¹ Benjamin, "Museums and Sensitive Histories," 183.

⁸² 'The Maritime Museum already has a gallery dedicated to transatlantic slavery, but the new facility will allow it to expand.' Nick Coligan, "Waterfront Site for Slave Trade Museum," *Liverpool Echo*, October

perceived need to justify the creation of a new museum of slavery in the city as separate, unique and distinct from the current gallery. This justification focused on how 'big' and 'exceptional' the new museum would be, as well as its further positive (though at this stage largely economic) consequences, a point stressed in most articles.⁸³ Articles made repeated reference to how the ISM would be the 'first' and 'biggest of its kind in the country'.⁸⁴ The museum, and in particular the proposed research centre, initially called the Centre for the Understanding of Transatlantic Slavery, was also hailed as a feature with which to 'attract black tourists keen to trace their roots', in much the same way that American descendants of Irish immigrants had been frequenting the city's archives to trace their family trees. This reflected a broader explosion of interest in genealogical research (highlighted by the creation of the BBC series *Who Do You Think You Are?* in 2004).⁸⁵ The language of economic tourism in relation to heritage sites, whilst familiar in public discourse from the 1980s onwards, would have been all the more prominent in the wake of the announcement of Liverpool as Capital of Culture 2008, made in 2003.⁸⁶

In contrast to the public discourse surrounding the TSG in the early 1990s, however, reporting over the location of the ISM and its poignancy to Liverpool, omits any of the frequent, yet ambiguous, links to Liverpool's black presence.⁸⁷ In addition, whilst the word

5, 2005. 'Visitors to the Maritime Museum have almost doubled in the past few years with 234,000 in 2001-2 and 412,000 coming through the doors in 2004-5. Its slavery gallery is one of the few places that schools can learn about slavery, with groups coming from around the country to experience the exhibitions.' Homa Khaleeli, "£10m Slave Trade Museum Will be Biggest in Country," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 6, 2005. 'The current Transatlantic Slavery Gallery - despite being located in the basement of the Maritime Museum - already draws thousands of visitors a year' "Confronting Our Shameful Past," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 6, 2005.

⁸³ 'MORE than half a million visitors a year are expected to visit the country's biggest museum dedicated to the slave trade, at Liverpool's Albert Dock.' Khaleeli, "£10m Slave Trade Museum Will be Biggest in Country." 'It is hoped more than 500,000 people will visit the site each year.' Catherine Jones, "Never Forget Our Roots: Appeal to Raise £9.5m for Slave Museum," *Liverpool Echo*, November 12, 2005.

⁸⁴ Quote from Khaleeli, "£10m Slave Trade Museum Will be Biggest in Country." 'THE country's first museum dedicated to the slave trade will be established in Liverpool.' Coligan, "Waterfront Site for Slave Trade Museum." '...the country's biggest museum dedicated to the slave trade' "Confronting Our Shameful Past." 'MUSEUM chiefs have launched a £9.5m appeal to create the country's biggest centre dedicated to the slave trade.' Jones, "Never Forget Our Roots."

⁸⁵ Nick Coligan, "Tourists Will Trace Roots at New Centre; US Visitors To Use Museum," *Liverpool Echo*, October 8, 2005.

⁸⁶ Plans to apply for the Capital of Culture title emerged publically in 1999 following an unsuccessful bid for the city to be named 'City of Architecture'.

⁸⁷ 'Museum bosses believe Liverpool is the perfect location for the national archive because of the key role it played in the industry' Coligan, "Waterfront Site for Slave Trade Museum." 'The city owes much of its wealth and buildings to the trade, which was abolished in 1807.' Jones, "Never Forget Our Roots."

'shame' was still frequently deployed within public discourse, it was done so alongside a sense of facing up to this 'shame', that the new museum would act as an acknowledgement of the past and that, crucially, Liverpool now had a demonstrable history of doing this.⁸⁸

Within responses to initial reporting on the proposal, the TSG featured both in support and opposition to the ISM. One letter objected to the new museum, calling it 'overkill', stating that this topic had already been covered by the TSG. The letter ends by suggesting the new museum will further damage the psyche of Liverpool people that '[h]aving been down-trodden itself by so many over the last 30 years, the curators of Liverpool's heritage seem determined to add to our poor self-esteem.'⁸⁹ Though the exact instances of being 'down-trodden' are not explained, this comment may refer to periods of economic decline and political strife, not least incidents as they were presented in the national press (the riots of the 1980s, the Militant Labour years and reporting on the Hillsborough disaster in *The Sun* perhaps most obviously). This was a common response within the letters and it was frequently presented that Liverpool was being in some way wronged by the presence of a museum representing slavery on top of having suffered greatly itself in the past. In the above letter, blame is exerted towards heritage officials for not only allowing this to happen, but being 'determined' for it to take place. Anthony Tibbles, now Keeper of MMM, responded to this letter in the press suggesting that there were many issues concerning the legacy of slavery that the TSG did not currently address (in particular the need for more focus on racism) and that '[i]t is surely a sign of maturity that a great city can acknowledge its past in an honest and open manner and recognise its failings as well as celebrating its triumphs.'⁹⁰ Responses to Tibbles's letter used the 'legacy' idea to suggest that the gallery in fact overlooked a 'positive legacy' of slavery, 'that the descendants of slaves live for the most part in freedom and comparative luxury compared to those remaining in their ancestral homelands'.⁹¹ One respondent was furious that the ISM was 'deemed necessary in our city which has provided homes for so many foreigners and produced

⁸⁸ 'Liverpool has already shown itself willing to acknowledge and atone for its part in this shameful chapter in British history.' "Confronting Our Shameful Past." ' "It's a terrifically significant project for the city, and for National Museums to deal with the topic in the intelligent and mature way we are proposing will show Liverpool is not frightened of analysing its history"' David Fleming quoted in Khaleeli, "£10m Slave Trade Museum Will be Biggest in Country." '...displays about a shameful chapter in British history' Coligan, "Waterfront Site for Slave Trade Museum."

⁸⁹ "LETTER: Damaging," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 10, 2005.

⁹⁰ Anthony Tibbles, "LETTER: Mature Approach," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 13, 2005.

⁹¹ B.W. Hale, "LETTER: Wrong Legacy," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 20, 2005. Hale, a regular to the letters pages, wrote a number of letters critical of Liverpool City Council's apology for the slave trade in 1999. B.W. Hale, "LETTER: History Lesson," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 19, 1999; B.W. Hale, "LETTER: Say Sorry Again," *Liverpool Daily Post*, December 9, 1999.

such wonderful benefactors to the human race over the years'.⁹² The suggestion here is that the museum, something understood as being created for the benefit of 'foreign' people (seen therefore as irrelevant for 'Liverpool' people), was unnecessary since the city already did things for cultural others, including apparently producing wonderful benefactors (which presumably more than make up for the horrible slave traders). The tone echoes white paternalistic benevolence, the celebration of 'wonderful benefactors' (presumably white) being given to the world, and 'providing homes' for foreign (presumably not white) people.

However, support for the museum foregrounded contemporary racism as a legacy of slavery and thereby as a way in which the history of slavery was still relevant.⁹³ The *Post* used the example of the racist murder of Liverpool teenager Anthony Walker earlier that year to highlight one of the legacies the new museum would address which showed that 'slavery and its ramifications are not some distant historical subject, but are still of vital importance today'.⁹⁴ The ISM would later dedicate an education centre to the memory of Anthony Walker.⁹⁵

2007: Contemporary Racism and Contemporary Slavery

Though references were made in 2005 to the opening date of the ISM coinciding with both the Bicentenary of 1807 and of Liverpool's 800th Birthday, when 2007 came around focus shifted almost completely to marking the Bicentenary, an event in which large swathes of the rest of the country was also involved.⁹⁶ Although the opening of the ISM was seen by many as the 'museum highlight of 2007', and NML Director David Fleming declared it 'the most important

⁹² D Morris, "LETTER: Charity Cash," *Liverpool Echo*, November 12, 2005.

⁹³ An interesting perspective from the US was supportive of the museum, 'As an American, I hope our country soon follows suit with a similar slavery museum. So many white Americans are in denial of the devastating impact slavery and racism continues to have on America. A slavery museum in this great country is long, long overdue.' Pamela A. Hairston, "LETTER: Short Points," *Liverpool Echo*, October 12, 2005.

⁹⁴ "Confronting Our Shameful Past."

⁹⁵ Greg O'Keefe, "Tribute to Anthony at Slavery Museum," *Liverpool Echo*, August 16, 2007.

⁹⁶ Newspaper articles in 2005 stated: 'It is hoped the new museum will be ready for 2007, Liverpool's 800th birthday and the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade. 'Coligan, "Waterfront Site for Slave Trade Museum." 'This first stage of the project will open in 2007 to coincide with the bicentennial of the abolition of slavery in the UK and Liverpool's 800th birthday.' Khaleeli, "£10m Slave Trade Museum Will be Biggest in Country." 'The first stage of the museum project will open in 2007 to coincide with the bicentennial of the abolition of slavery in the UK and Liverpool's 800th birthday.' "Confronting Our Shameful Past."

new British museum for 100 years', it was one of many new or redeveloped museum exhibitions to be unveiled in that year.⁹⁷

In 2007, the year of the ISM's opening, public discourse from museum literature and statements by museums officials, and within local press reporting, largely stressed how the ISM would address contemporary themes and concerns, addressing both the 'historical and contemporary aspects of slavery'.⁹⁸ The museum's focus on 'presentness' stood in opposition to much of the critical content of debates around 2005, namely the 'pastness' of the subject of slavery, either in terms of its temporal distance or its irrelevance for contemporary British society. The contemporary issues highlighted in public discourse at this time fell into two broad themes: either as 'direct legacies' of the history of transatlantic slavery itself and the ongoing social effects - particularly racism; or, as apparently comparative experiences in the modern world, frequently described as 'present-day', or 'contemporary' slavery. Whilst museum officials may have been keen to avoid historicising acts of atrocity to a sanitised past and to counteract the discursive temporal distancing seen during the announcement of the ISM in 2005, 'modern-day slavery' was also frequently used within public debate as an argumentative device with which to shift focus away from the specific history of the transatlantic slave trade. Frequently, such devices also broke links to the contemporary legacies of this history closer to home, namely anti-black racism and the history of the Liverpool black presence. Tony Tibbles has noted the use of the present-day slavery motif previously, suggesting it was a response seen within the press to distract attention away from atrocities of 'then', to 'now' and crucially most often from 'here' to 'there', to acts of human rights violation that are 'still going on', notably in other countries and, significantly, in modern-day Africa. Emma Waterton's analysis of official publications and parliamentary discourse produced before and during 2007 demonstrates how these two themes dominated official public commemorative dialogue in the Bicentenary year. Waterton argues that the official commemorations focused on the 'present' in ways which reinforced particular ideas of Britishness by condemning and raising calls to combat global phenomena understood as 'contemporary slavery', usually as forms of human-trafficking, which were placed in a framework of Britain having a 'long tradition of

⁹⁷ Fleming, "Opening of the International Slavery Museum: International Slavery Museum Gala Dinner, 22 August 2007." From the reopening of Wilberforce House, Hull, new exhibitions in the National Maritime Museum ('Atlantic Worlds'), and at the Museum of London Docklands ('London, Sugar, Slavery') and temporary displays which included large exhibitions in the capital, at the British Museum, National Portrait Gallery and Westminster Hall as well as numerous local displays in Plymouth, Leicester, Tyne and Weir See Geoffrey Cubitt, "Museums and Slavery in Britain: The Bicentenary of 1807," 160.

⁹⁸ *International Slavery Museum: Setting the Truth Free (Museum Leaflet)*, (Liverpool: National Museums Liverpool, 2007).

“rescuing people”⁹⁹ Waterton suggests that this positions the ‘negatives’ of this history and its legacies away from Britain itself, temporally and geographically, and the ‘positives’ closer to home, where the ‘legacies’ of slavery were discussed primarily as the positive contributions of African descended people against a backdrop of social cohesion and a largely progressive and diverse society.¹⁰⁰

Whilst perhaps it is unsurprising that such language should dominate government discourse given the Blairite focus on multiculturalism and social inclusion policies and objectives, the public discourse in Liverpool fell to a much larger degree on ‘negative’ legacies, on the presence and effects of anti-black racism in contemporary society, and, particularly in Liverpool. Years of institutionalised racism, and high profile reports into this, made such a stance on the ‘positives’ particularly untenable, particularly given that the announcement of the ISM coincided with the murder of Anthony Walker in 2005. In the week before the opening of the ISM, museum officials announced that the education centre in the museum would be named after Walker and that this space would be somewhere for education surrounding the ‘legacy of racial intolerance left behind by the transatlantic slave trade’.¹⁰¹ Racism as a ‘legacy’ of transatlantic slavery was also discussed alongside negative impacts on Africa, the Caribbean and South America which had ‘faced long-term underdevelopment because of slavery and colonialism.’¹⁰² The theme was given greater prominence in David Fleming’s opening speech in August 2007, which drew on an image of a utopian future, where racial discrimination is incomprehensible, that ‘[t]he day will come when it is impossible to imagine that a young man should be murdered by white thugs on the streets of Liverpool simply because he was Black’ but, crucially, ‘that day has not yet come’.¹⁰³ Interestingly, in this opening speech, delivered at

⁹⁹ Emma Waterton, "The Burden of Knowing Versus the Privilege of Unknowing," in *Representing Enslavement and Abolition in Museums: Ambiguous Engagements*, ed. Geoffrey Cubitt, et al. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 32-33.

¹⁰⁰ ‘This bicentenary provides a valuable opportunity to have a real debate about what it means to be British today and how the diverse cultures which compromise modern Britain can forge a common purpose, shared values and a common identity.’ Lord Hastings of Scarisbrick, House of Lords, May 10, 2007 quoted in *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁰¹ O’Keefe, "Tribute to Anthony at Slavery Museum." The space also featured footage of news coverage of the murder. Liza Williams, "Slavery Museum to 'Have International Presence'," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 21, 2007.

¹⁰² *International Slavery Museum (Commemorative Booklet)*.

¹⁰³ ‘And it is because that day has not yet come that the International Slavery Museum is needed.’ Fleming, "Opening of the International Slavery Museum: International Slavery Museum Gala Dinner, 22 August 2007." This was a common theme throughout 2007, and particularly foregrounded within the ISM. See Cubitt, "Lines of Resistance: Evoking and Configuring the Theme of Resistance in Museum Displays in Britain Around the Bicentenary of 1807".

a gala dinner in St. George's Hall where many members of Liverpool's black community were present, Fleming does not discuss the museum's campaign against contemporary slavery, focusing instead on racial discrimination and the importance of remembering the resistance of enslaved Africans.¹⁰⁴ However, and perhaps aligning more with the valorization of abolitionists seen within national discourse on contemporary slavery, contemporary racism was presented as a cause for which the museum would 'fight'.¹⁰⁵

Crucially, combatting contemporary discrimination as well as the foregrounding of contemporary slavery were themes presented on a global stage.¹⁰⁶ This was succinctly summarised by the Director of the museums after the ISM had opened in which he outlined how '[t]his is the world's first International Slavery Museum and it's a very important statement from the government of the dedication of people in Britain to a future against racism.'¹⁰⁷ Fleming also stresses the desire to speak to contemporary issues as a way of going beyond the transatlantic slave trade and avoiding a compartmentalised, and perhaps sanitised, assessment of a time-restricted section of history.

Uppermost in our minds were two things: first, the museum should analyse the impact and legacies of the slave trade, not just the slave trade itself; and second, the museum should open up questions about other forms of slavery and human oppression, especially in the modern world, so as to unlock the full meaning, and full horror, of the transatlantic slave trade. Hence the museum's title – International Slavery Museum.¹⁰⁸

By looking at 'other forms of slavery and human oppression' it is proposed the museum somehow comes full circle, looking again at the historical subject. Here, addressing contemporary human rights abuses is presented as a way of *really* understanding the

¹⁰⁴ 'We are determined that people will remember the strength and the bravery of the enslaved Africans.' Fleming, "Opening of the International Slavery Museum: International Slavery Museum Gala Dinner, 22 August 2007."

¹⁰⁵ 'We believe the museum will fight racism and challenge stereotypical views' Richard Benjamin quoted in Williams, "Slavery Museum to 'Have International Presence'."

¹⁰⁶ 'We want to make it more prominent and to have one of the world's finest exhibitions about transatlantic slavery' Richard Benjamin quoted in Laura Davis, "Facing up to the Past: Liverpool's Newest Museum Will Show That Slavery is an Ongoing Problem," *Liverpool Daily Post*, January 2, 2007. '...this global attraction, expected to draw more than 200,000 visitors a year...' Joe Riley, "Museum's Slavery Tale Seeks a Closing Chapter," *Liverpool Echo*, August 13, 2007. 'Liverpool's new slavery museum will have a global presence' Williams, "Slavery Museum to 'Have International Presence'."

¹⁰⁷ David Fleming, quoted in Catherine Jones, "Civil Rights Leader Jackson Meets Anthony's Mum Gee," *Liverpool Echo*, August 27, 2007.

¹⁰⁸ David Fleming, "Foreword" *International Slavery Museum (Commemorative Booklet)*.

transatlantic slave trade in ways which are not explicitly made clear. The 'International' naming of the ISM is presented as a way of encompassing global themes of past and present.¹⁰⁹

Frequently, the two strands of 'presentness', of legacies of the slave trade itself (and in particular anti-black racism) and of present-day slavery, were discussed interchangeably and in ways which presented both as having shared linear links back to eighteenth century transatlantic slavery, at one point even mimicking symbolic tallies of bodies, where, '[e]nforced labour and human trafficking is still happening to an estimated 12 million men, women and children worldwide'.¹¹⁰ One article titled 'Facing up to the Past: Liverpool's Newest Museum Will Show That Slavery is an Ongoing Problem' couples past and present intimately, using language usually drawn on to discuss the acknowledgement of historic injustices and trauma, to address contemporary themes, a desire echoed by Richard Benjamin, quoted in the same article as stating that it was important to 'open up a debate about contemporary slavery and use the past to highlight the continuing problems today'.¹¹¹

The subject of contemporary slavery was raised in the press against an assumption of slavery's 'pastness':

Although most people think of slavery as a shameful period that is fortunately buried deep in the past, they are far from right. Even today, millions of human beings around the globe are sold as objects and made to work for little or no pay.

Children are trafficked between countries in West Africa, women from Eastern Europe are bonded into prostitution and men are forced to work as slaves on Brazilian agricultural estates.¹¹²

Crucially, these were all examples of slavery 'now' rather than 'then' (therefore thematically set apart from transatlantic slavery), and in the vast majority of cases, elsewhere, attention is drawn to injustices which occurred in foreign places, such as the trafficking of children in West Africa. There was discussion of victims of human trafficking ending up in Britain, though this

¹⁰⁹ However, Richard Benjamin suggests the name was chosen because of the 'international' nature of the historical subject matter and its consequences, rather than a way of embracing other 'international' themes and issues. Benjamin, "Museums and Sensitive Histories," 178.

¹¹⁰ Riley, "Museum's Slavery Tale Seeks a Closing Chapter." 12 million is the figure most commonly quoted for the total number of enslaved Africans taken from Africa to the Americas through the enslavement process.

¹¹¹ Richard Benjamin, quoted in Davis, "Facing up to the Past."

¹¹² Ibid.

was discussed in a language of emancipation, where foreign ‘others’ were rescued.¹¹³ Although one article which outlined how ‘[b]onded labour, sweatshops and human trafficking’ were ‘as much a part of the modern-day slavery story as the human cargo which left Liverpool in profit between 1700 and 1807 is part of our history,’ acknowledged the deaths of cocklers at Morecambe Bay, who died whilst working for gangmasters working out of Liverpool in 2004, there was still an emancipatory silver lining, with the suggestion that with the opening of the ISM came an opportunity to ‘look to the future and what part we can play in ending this iniquity once and for all.’¹¹⁴ This was also done against an awareness of the debate of slavery in the city, as the *Echo’s* opinion piece in support of the ISM acknowledged by stating that although there are some who ‘believe the past should remain the past [...] the fact is that a slavery museum is as relevant today as it has ever been - with thousands upon thousands of people being trafficked around the world each and every year telling its own sorry story’.¹¹⁵

Conclusion: The Legacies of the Memory of Slavery

The presence of, and indeed the ‘memory’ of the TSG was significant to the development of the ISM, and indeed to other museums addressing slavery beyond the city. The experience NML already had in developing a gallery some ten years before the ISM was telling, both in terms of the initiation of procedures of community consultation and an awareness of the pre-existing debates around slavery. Perhaps one of the most significant legacies of the TSG to impact upon not only the ISM but other museums in 2007, was the adoption of a language which sought to humanise African people, rejecting a terminology of economic assessments of transatlantic slavery.¹¹⁶ However, on a guided tour of the ISM in 2012, this very terminology became a site of contention and debate which held at its core issues and sensitivities

¹¹³ ‘Last year, during a special operation, police raided 515 properties in the UK and Ireland, rescuing 72 women and 12 children from Africa, Malaysia, Thailand and Eastern Europe.’ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Jane Gallagher, "Slavery is Not Yet a Thing of the Past," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 24, 2007. Gallagher’s article stated that ‘at least 21 lives’ were lost at Morecombe Bay in 2004 however this figure was actually 23. See Hsiao-Hung Pai, “The Lessons of Morecambe Bay Have Not Been Learned,” *The Guardian*, February 3, 2014.

¹¹⁵ "Voice of the Echo: Right Place For Museum," *Liverpool Echo*, August 13, 2007.

¹¹⁶ *London Sugar Slavery* at the Museum of London, Docklands, also makes a point of adopting this language and a panel at the beginning of the exhibition outlines the reasons for doing so.

concerning the representation of race.¹¹⁷ The tour guide, who had been trained through the Understanding Slavery Initiative,¹¹⁸ had outlined at the beginning of the tour that he would be saying 'enslaved Africans' rather than 'slaves', as a way of emphasising that slavery was something that was done to African people and that 'we mustn't forget that they were people.' Language was stressed by the Understanding Slavery Initiative as important, and the use of 'enslaved African people' within representations and dialogues over slavery was advocated.¹¹⁹ Within the guide's explanation, an indication of fatigue from repetition in adhering to linguistic policies was expressed, and he apologised for 'saying enslaved Africans all the time! But that's why I'm saying it.' However, before entering 'The Immersion' (a creative film representation of the middle passage) the guide explained that he did not agree with this part of the museum since it implies that by watching it, visitors can know what people on the middle passage experienced. The guide tells the group that 'these people would have had to sleep in excrement and vomit, we cannot know what these people would have gone through-', at which point he is interrupted by a black Liverpoolian woman who asks him to stop saying 'these people':

TOUR GUIDE: But we're talking about people...

VISITOR: I know but please –

TOUR GUIDE: ...enslaved Africans

VISITOR: From a local perspective I'm asking you to stop saying that.

TOUR GUIDE: Ok, that's fine. Ok, so the enslaved Africans would have been forced into these disgraceful conditions...

The tour guide's training would have stressed the need to humanise the story of slavery throughout the museum tour, which placed a linguistic emphasis on 'people' rather than slaves. The guide's use of the phrase 'these people' in this instance had the intended emphasis of stressing '*people*', and presumably not 'these people' as a generic and offensive term for black Africans. The visitor who interrupted the guide had not been present at the beginning of

¹¹⁷ Tour of the ISM undertaken as part of a day trip to Liverpool with undergraduate English Literature students from the University of York on the *Slavery in Transatlantic: Cultures, Representations, Legacies* module, taught by Dr Zoe Norridge, April 28, 2012.

¹¹⁸ The Understanding Slavery Initiative is an education project run in partnership with the National Maritime Museum, Hull Museums, National Museums Liverpool, Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives and the Museum of London at Docklands. USI was funded by the Department of Culture Media and Sport and the Department of Education (formerly the Department of Children Schools and Families) through the Strategic Commissioning Programme. "Understanding Slavery Initiative," <http://www.understandingslavery.com/> (accessed March 28, 2014).

¹¹⁹ Understanding Slavery Initiative, *Unlocking Perceptions: Understanding Slavery's Approach to the History and Legacies of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (2008), 11.

the tour to hear the explanation of terminology, and the guide spoke with her after the group had gone into the immersion, where she reiterated her position 'from a local perspective', although since the guide was also Liverpoolian (white), the inference here is that her criticisms came from a 'local black' perspective. Whilst this incident may have been a misunderstanding (particularly of intention), it highlights the politically contentious and highly sensitive, and yet powerful and indeed empowering, potential of language, terminology, and 'naming' when it comes to representations of race in museums. The black Liverpoolian woman perhaps also felt in a position to criticise the guide's language through her involvement with the power structures of the museum itself, stating that 'we sit round a table with David Fleming and talk about terminology'. Whilst this raises questions over the hierarchies of museums and the realities of which members of staff are more often in the firing line, the negotiations over terminology and the potential of being an active part of the 'debate' over the representation of enslavement and race have brought the memory of slavery to the fore in dynamic, if challenging, ways. Here, the debate over words is a debate over representation and memory, just as the foregrounding of 'present-day' themes is a way of counteracting arguments of 'pastness' and irrelevance, the continual conflict over which forms a very public negotiation of the ever evolving discourse of slavery.

For Jacqueline Nassy Brown, the TSG ran the risk of exonerating national engagement with Britain's involvement in transatlantic slavery through its location in 'marginalized' Liverpool, yet she found solace in its 'hemispheric' approach which broadened rather than contracted representation.¹²⁰ It seemed important in public discourse around the gallery that both the black experience being represented as well as the consultation with black people, was happening on a global stage. Here, it was stated that 'Black groups around the world have been consulted'¹²¹ on a project which addressed 'how slavery developed across the Atlantic', and 'its effects on the people of Africa, America and Europe',¹²² the end product of which would be viewed by a global audience, that '[p]eople from all over the world are coming for the opening of the gallery.'¹²³ However, for Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace and Marcus Wood the gallery's strengths lay in its local connections, in the familiar and everyday objects which spoke of an 'ordinary kind of human experience' for Kowaleski-Wallace and the connections made in

¹²⁰ Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail*, 186.

¹²¹ Forgrave, "Gallery Slave Trade Exhibition."

¹²² "History Tinged with Guilt."

¹²³ Todd, "Slavery Exhibition Wins Tribute."

displays of Liverpool street names for Wood, which demonstrated the 'violent collision' of past and present in ways which amplified tangible evidence against historical amnesia.¹²⁴

The ISM's global stage, however, was one dominated by transnational discourses on human rights and international 'campaigns' against 'modern-day slavery'. Whilst official literature, discourse and indeed the internal displays of the ISM itself went to great lengths to foreground themes of racism as a legacy of transatlantic slavery and other contemporary human rights abuses, namely 'present-day slavery', these were themes which initiated distinctly racialised public responses, and which were drawn upon by critics as discursive distancing strategies. The continued prominence given to 'present-day slavery' led to problematic linguistic links from past to present.¹²⁵ Here, the suggestion that slavery was 'still going on', meant attention was turned from transatlantic slavery and its legacies closer to home, and to 'other' places where the fight for emancipation can be directed. In discussing British and Dutch engagements with slavery, Stephen Small and Kwame Nimako identify this as a 'new anti-slavery movement', which views slavery as having been ended in the West in the nineteenth century meaning that groups should now focus on modern 'slaves' in Africa and Asia, a process which necessarily directs attention away from the European slave trade.¹²⁶ The ISM, in promoting the contemporary slavery cause, inadvertently enables and endorses this 'new anti-slavery movement'; even though there may be no intentions of turning focus away from transatlantic slavery. Furthermore, recent developmental strategies only strengthen this direction, from a collections management policy focusing on building a 'contemporary slavery' collection, and the associated appointment of a Collections Development Officer in 2009 focusing on contemporary slavery, to the expansion of the ISM into a previous Maritime Museum storeroom to house a dedicated 'Campaign Zone' gallery.¹²⁷ Given this increased focus, and the previous analysis by Small and Nimako which critically classified a focus on contemporary human rights abuses as a 'new anti-slavery movement', it is perhaps appropriate that the first accessioned artefact within the ISM's contemporary slavery collection strand was an exhibition of photographs by Rachel Wilberforce, great-great-great

¹²⁴ Kowaleski-Wallace, *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory*, 43; Wood, *Blind Memory*, 299.

¹²⁵ 'Although this exploitation is often not called slavery, the conditions are the same.' Extract from literature produced by Anti-Slavery International and republished in museum booklet. *International Slavery Museum (Information Booklet)*, (Liverpool: National Museums Liverpool, 2007).

¹²⁶ Stephen Small and Kwame Nimako, "The Unfinished Business of Emancipation: The Legacies of British and Dutch Abolition," in *Trajectories of Emancipation and Black European Thinkers Symposium* (National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy, Amsterdam 2009).

¹²⁷ Benjamin, "Museums and Sensitive Histories," 191-93.

grand-daughter of William (see Figure 45).¹²⁸ A perhaps more cynical assessment of the foregrounding of contemporary slavery and international human rights issues might turn to the globalisation of museums in other areas of their administration; particularly in the realms of fundraising. In an era of increasingly tighter budgets for state-funded national cultural organisations, it is perhaps appealing to look to new potential funders world-wide, and beyond traditional 'museum' funding pots, which are necessarily stretched by increasing applications from organisations trying to make up financial shortfall. To be associated with (indeed, partnered with), such high profile international organisations such as Anti-Slavery International, Free the Slaves, and Stop The Traffik, would, if nothing else, promote the global positioning of an *International Slavery Museum*.

However, not everyone who supports the museum's 'campaigning' stance on contemporary slavery is necessarily avoiding an engagement with transatlantic slavery and its more local legacies. In understanding transatlantic slavery as a defining feature of modernity, rather than an 'aberration' of otherwise 'progressive' development, the memory of slavery can become part of a broader critical commentary on global capitalism.¹²⁹ Alan Rice has praised the ISM for not limiting its remit to historical slavery, for tackling subjects of contemporary human rights in ways which link broader processes of global capitalist systems, a response he also sees within the work of contemporary black artists in Britain.¹³⁰ Perhaps this is one way of countering the 'exceptionalism' of transatlantic slavery. This is comparable to concerns over the way that the Holocaust has been framed as 'unique', and therefore potentially beyond comparability or indeed, repetition, in ways that some commentators have suggested, means that representations cannot make meaningful connections to the present.¹³¹

¹²⁸ The exhibition, *Missing* (2007) was accessioned in 2009. Ibid., 191. Adeline Iziren, "My Story: Rachel Wilberforce (Interview)," *The Guardian*, May 19, 2007. The 'museum visitor' in Figure 45 is actually me – much to my surprise. I was unaware that this image had been used in the ISM's promotional literature until half-way through the PhD.

¹²⁹ Hershini Bhana Young, *Haunting Capital: Memory, Text and the Black Diasporic Body* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2006), 11. Referenced also within Rice and Kardux, "Confronting the Ghostly Legacies of Slavery,". See also Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*; Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

¹³⁰ Rice, *Creating Memorials, Building Identities*, 208-09.

¹³¹ See the essays in Alan S. Rosenbaum, ed. *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide* (New York: Westview Press, 2001). In particular, Stannard's article on 'Uniqueness as Denial: The Politics of Genocide Scholarship.'



Figure 45: Museum visitor at Rachel Wilberforce 'Missing' Exhibition. Scan from last page of promotional booklet International Slavery Museum. *Campaigning to Make a Difference*. NML

Support for engaging with 'contemporary slavery' in Liverpool also made connections to the 2007 Bicentenary. Chief Angus Chukuemeka is quoted as suggesting that '2007 should give us the opportunity to focus more intensively on legacy including contemporary slavery, it has not been brought to an end 200 years after abolition'.¹³² However, for Scott, the ISM's focus on contemporary human rights issues was a particular point of contention:

When it comes to children as regards working in factories in India working to produce carpets – that's a separate thing completely. When it comes to sex slavery, modern days, that is completely different. It has no right whatsoever to be put alongside, because what it does is it takes something *away* – cause people- oh well that's not that bad because look what's going on now!¹³³

Scott's issue, perhaps, is not with museums highlighting or raising awareness of these types of issues as such, but the *impact* that this might have on a viewing public and their subsequent assessments concerning historical transatlantic slavery and its impacts on African people.

¹³² Liza Williams, "Slavery Museum Ensures Liverpool Will Not Forget," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 24, 2007.

¹³³ Scott, interview.

What is significant about the focus on contemporary slavery in the ISM, however, is the way it aligns to global 'human rights discourses' (discussed in Chapter Two). The 'globalisation' of memory is frequently seen as a way to view 'local' histories as globally significant, or, indeed, as being 'framed' in transnational narratives and discourses. Brian Conway outlines how this has been the case with the memory of Bloody Sunday (1972) which, in the 1990s, was placed within a 'universalizing frame' which concurrently drew on other, global, 'traumas' which meant placing Bloody Sunday 'in the abstract idiom of human rights'.¹³⁴ However, the 'transnational discourse of human rights', Andreas Huyssen suggests, might be a worthwhile way through public memory of 'traumatic' histories, that '[h]uman rights activism, truth commissions, and juridical proceedings are better methods for dealing with historical trauma' than psychoanalysis which focuses on the personal.¹³⁵ Alternatively, the shift from localism to 'abstract ideas about human rights', Conway argues, could hollow the event's *local* meaning. This would render Bloody Sunday 'an empty shell on to which a range of meanings, with little direct connection to the original events, can be attached.'¹³⁶ If the 'shells' Pierre Nora saw left on his metaphorical beach after the 'sea of living memory resides' are, not only 'memories', but *legacies* of the history as previously argued, does hollowing them of the specifics of transatlantic slavery, render these 'empty shells' open to the use and abuse by a myriad of contemporary campaigns? Of, perhaps, 'new' legacies? Where, then, does this leave previous 'legacies' so central to the debate around the TSG in the 1990s, of ongoing racial discrimination and the history of the Liverpool black presence? Against concerns over there being too much *memory*, in relation to memorializing trends at the end of the twentieth century generally, but also particularly relating specifically to transatlantic slavery,¹³⁷ is there now too much *legacy*?

¹³⁴ Brian Conway, "Local Conditions, Global Environment and Transnational Discourses in Memory Work: The Case of Bloody Sunday (1972)," 191.

¹³⁵ Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, 9.

¹³⁶ Conway, "Local Conditions, Global Environment and Transnational Discourses in Memory Work: The Case of Bloody Sunday (1972)," 204.

¹³⁷ This point was made by Kobena Mercer about the descendants of enslaved being 'haunted by too much memory' contrasted with the descendants of the enslavers having too little. Rice and Kardux, "Confronting the Ghostly Legacies of Slavery," 256.

Conclusion to Part Three

Sites and places in Liverpool's urban landscape have become focal points for the memory debate of slavery to 'crystallise'. This focusing of discourse, debate and 'myth' around particular places, has forged perhaps more 'natural' sites of memory in the face of a distinct absence of official, or 'dominant or constructed' ones, to use Pierre Nora's terms.¹ However, these sites have been forged through contest and dissonance; through debates over history and memory across a *longue durée*. Jay Winter has described sites of memory as sites of post-memory, where people recall second-hand, remembering the 'memories of others'.² This is perhaps most applicable to Goree, where a layering of the urban landscape has 'carried' earlier memories – the stories of slaves in Liverpool in particular representing 'transgenerational' memory, through their bodily form.³ Indeed, sites and places have frequently become focal points through their inferred connections to slavery via the slave body – in the 'myths' that haunt old Goree, or the imagined bodies laid to rest in St. James's Cemetery, or even in visual representations of 'figures in chains' on St. George's Hall and the Nelson memorial.

The figures in chains around the Nelson memorial, however, exist in an ambiguous space of symbolism and centuries of a layering of debate. As a letter written by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool to *The Times* stated:

Sir, The caption to the photograph which accompanied your report states that it shows a chained figure on a central Liverpool monument "said to reflect the slave trade". In fact the monument in question, situated in the square at the back of Liverpool Town Hall and erected in 1813, commemorates Admiral Lord Nelson. The chained figures around its base represent prisoners of war taken at Nelson's four great victories of The Nile, St Vincent, Copenhagen and Trafalgar, and are in no way connected with the slave trade.⁴

The Nelson memorial 'reflects' the slave trade like a black 'swarthy' mirror, hinting at potential connections without explicitly making them. Whilst it may be a stretch too far to suggest that the monument was Liverpool's 'first slavery memorial', the figures in chains have come to fulfil

¹ Nora, *Introduction to Realms of Memory, Volume III*, 23.

² J. Winter, "Historians and Sites of Memory," in *Memory in Mind and Culture*, ed. Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

³ Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 193.

⁴ Frank Doran, "Letter: Slavery and the image of Liverpool," *The Times*, September 19th 1996.

a form of figurative short-hand for the city's involvement in the slave trade and, perhaps, its memory. The figures, semi-nude and bearing chains, look to their feet in the shadow of the Town Hall, one of Liverpool city centre's only surviving eighteenth century buildings, decorated with emblems of the city's trade with Africa, including lions and elephants, as well as more human commodities, bearing high profile reliefs depicting the faces of African people. The Town Hall has also come to be a symbol of Liverpool's involvement with, and memory of, slavery – celebrating its African trade in architectural adornment and acting as the contested stage for the city council's slavery apology in 1999. Yet the figures in chains, surrounding a national maritime hero, reveal and obscure Liverpool and slavery, their obvious connections to enslavement through chains jar against their categorical description as allegories of war victories. Through this and other examples in the built environment, Liverpool's memory of slavery could be said to be both 'physically present and glaringly absent,' as Caryl Phillips claims.⁵

Whilst the museums in Liverpool at the end of the twentieth century made such connections a little more 'physically present', and may in some senses be considered 'sites of memory', debate and discourse also focusing on and around them, and in particular their dockside location being of significance, they are not 'memorials' as such. The ISM, however, does have, a 'shrine to the ancestors'; a place where visitors are invited 'to reflect on the stories and lives of the people represented in this gallery', though this is necessarily situated inside the museum space.⁶ There are no purpose-built public memorials which commemorate slavery within Liverpool's urban terrain. There are, however, memorials to abolitionist William Roscoe (discussed in Chapter Eight) and a memorial to John Newton in the Ferry Terminal Building. Commissioned by Merseytravel and unveiled on 9th July 2009, the Newton memorial was designed by renowned Liverpool-based sculptor Stephen Broadbent.⁷ Broadbent also designed a sculpture known as the 'Reconciliation Triangle' (Figure 46). Originally unveiled in 1990, the statue, showing two 13-foot figures embracing, stands just back from Liverpool's busy central Bold Street. Originally, the statue was one of three, the other two located in Belfast and Glasgow – the figures representing individually 'Hope' and 'Reconciliation', placed in cities with 'historical links and stark problems' to embody unity, 'transcending the

⁵ Caryl Phillips, *The Atlantic Sound*, 93.

⁶ Anthony Tibbles, "Facing Slavery's Past: The Bicentenary of the Abolition of the British Slave Trade," 297.

⁷ "Tribute to Anti-Slavery Campaigner Unveiled," *BBC News*
http://www.bbc.co.uk/liverpool/content/articles/2009/07/09/faith_john_newton_feature.shtml
(accessed April 4, 2011).



Figure 46: Reconciliation Statue, Liverpool. Rept0n1x. "Reconciliation Sculpture, Concert Street, Liverpool, England." [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Reconciliation_sculpture, Liverpool \(1\).JPG](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Reconciliation_sculpture,_Liverpool_(1).JPG) (accessed March 20, 2014).

boundaries of gender, colour or creed.⁸ Poignantly, Belfast's sculpture is positioned at the intersection of the Catholic and Protestant Communities.⁹ In 2005 and 2007, however, another two statues were unveiled, in places which also had 'historical links' with Liverpool, one in Benin, followed by another in Richmond, Virginia (Figures 47 and 48). Whilst delivering the Benin statue, Broadbent carried a message from Liverpool City Council, 're-confirming its apology for the city's involvement in the slave trade.'¹⁰ Local black artist Faith Bebbington worked with school children in the design of these new sculptures, adding new imagery to the base of the figures.¹¹ The replication of a Liverpool statue, originally representing points in a

⁸ Stephen Broadbent, quoted in Terry Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of Liverpool*, 29.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Lew Baxter, "City's Gift of Statue to Atone for Slave Trade," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 6, 2005.

¹¹ "Statues Help Children Understand City's Slave Trade History," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 30, 2004.



Figure 47: Reconciliation Statue, Benin.
Reconciliation Triangle, Benin Broadbent, Stephen.
"Broadbent Studio: Reconciliation Triangle."
[http://sbal.co.uk/what we do/projects/reconciliation triangle/](http://sbal.co.uk/what_we_do/projects/reconciliation_triangle/) (accessed March 28, 2014).

national triangle of sectarian conflict, is here replicated and transported (by a Liverpool ship) to two points on the Atlantic triangle, duplicating the historical transatlantic slaving voyage through memory work. The statues in Benin and Richmond, however, were different to Liverpool's. Both had additional bronze relief artwork at their bases, a lengthy inscription accompanied Benin's statue,¹² and Richmond's formed part of a landscaped memorial area with an information plaque and further street furniture.¹³ One blogger writing about

¹² The inscription on the Benin statue reads 'Let's acknowledge and forgive the past, let's celebrate the present time, let's build the future in the spirit of reconciliation and justice.' Baxter, "City's Gift of Statue to Atone for Slave Trade."

¹³ The information plaque at the Richmond site reads 'THE TRIANGLE / Liverpool, England / The Benin Region of West Africa / Richmond, Virginia During the 18th Century, these three places reflected on of the well-known triangles in the trade of enslaved Africans. / Men, women and children were captured in West and Central Africa and transported from Benin and other countries. They were chained, herded, loaded on ships built in England and transported through the unspeakable horrors of the Middle Passage. / They were imported and exported in Richmond, Virginia and sold in other American cities. Their forced labor laid the economic foundation of this nation.' Phil Riggan, "Richmond Slavery Reconciliation Statue," <http://rotj.wordpress.com/2010/01/16/richmond-slavery-reconciliation-statue/> (accessed March 28, 2014).

Richmond's statue also commented that he had seen burning candles and flowers left at the site, votive offerings to mark and remember.¹⁴ Liverpool's Reconciliation Statue however, has remained aesthetically unchanged since 1990. Sandwiched between a Yates wine lodge and a noodle bar, it bares only a single word "RECONCILIATION" on its base. The statue is a memorial to slavery, but only in the locations of its clones, in the other points of the transatlantic triangle, leaving Liverpool's Reconciliation Statue as an idea, perhaps to be cloned again in another ten years, used for another global network, standing silent, an empty shell.



Figure 48: Reconciliation Statue in Richmond, Virginia. Image from "Where am I RVA? Richmond Slave Trail" *Richmond.Com* http://www.richmond.com/discover-richmond/article_9edc708d-a263-566e-90ee-533364b90652.html?mode=image (accessed March 28, 2014)

¹⁴ Ibid.

Conclusion

*'You'll take a memory of Liverpool away with you - but we know you'll bring it back.'*¹

This thesis has addressed the evolving memory of slavery in public discourse in Liverpool, from the beginning of the nineteenth century; starting from the 'event itself', across more than two centuries, and into the twenty-first. The chronology of the research has, broadly speaking, mapped the 'memory-discourse' of slavery in the city, from 'history' to 'memory'. Here this both refers to the starting point of the study; when Liverpool was still heavily involved in transatlantic slavery, and to the wider cultural processes towards the end of the twentieth century, towards a 'rise in memory' on a global stage. The 'memory' of slavery in Liverpool has been considered across a range of sources which have been organised into the themes reflected in the structure; the 'discursive terrain', 'moments' and 'sites' of memory. What is at once both interesting and somewhat organisationally frustrating about Liverpool's memory of slavery, is the extent to which themes, motifs and patterns repeat or are replicated across different genres, and across time. Subjects of debate frequently refer to 'slaves in Liverpool', which can relate to Liverpool's built environment, yet are referenced within guidebooks, written histories, newspapers and much more. Similarly, discursive processes such as the foregrounding and celebration of white abolitionists as a mechanism for the displacement of histories of slavery is observed both within spoken and textual debates, in museum representations, histories, and, as seen in Chapter Ten, through the naming of tangible buildings. Whilst this might render the structural organisation of a PhD thesis challenging, it does highlight larger important issues concerning the *intertextuality* and inter-influential nature of memory, which has been a key theme throughout the project and has significance beyond this study.

This thesis contributes to literature on collective memory, the memory of slavery, Liverpool's memory of slavery, and Liverpool local history predominantly through its approach.

¹ Liverpool City Council, *City of Liverpool Official Guide(1988)*, 11.

The scope of the *longue durée* and the range of source genres considered has broadened the analysis of an otherwise largely fragmented scholarly engagement, which, as stated within the Introduction, has largely revolved around the museums, or other aspects of memory in isolation – for example, histories or the apology, but rarely both together. The *longue durée* has, moreover, enabled a greater focus to be given to not only the immediate context memory work sits within, but the *evolving* context, highlighting the significance of particular events, moments or themes within Liverpool’s general history, across the 200 years considered. This has been most obviously apparent in relation to the history of race and racism in the city, the Liverpool-born black experience and organised black political protest in response to discrimination. The distinct racial tensions across the twentieth century played into memory work approaching the millennium, particularly around the museums but also in areas less readily addressed by scholars, in relation to tours of the city and debate over the restoration of the St. George’s Hall pediment sculpture. This layering of ‘present to past relationships’ develops Jeffrey Olick’s dialogic approach to memory, incorporating evolving contexts alongside evolving processes of memory. In looking at the *longue durée*, as Olick suggests, the ‘ongoing constitution and reconstitution’ of memory work, the influence of one ‘commemoration’ on subsequent ‘commemorations’, also comes to the fore. Liverpool’s slavery-memory discourse is intertextual not only across genre, but across time. The centenaries of ‘King John and the abolition act’ in Chapter Seven illustrated the impact of memory work across decades, just as phrases, motifs and metaphors (Chapter Three) have transcended years of discourse, emerging in text, place, and performance.

Furthermore, as Part One has illustrated, Liverpool’s discursive memory of slavery cannot, or, indeed, should not, be divorced from the city’s broader historic discourse. This study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of Liverpool’s slavery discourse by addressing it within its wider *discursive* context, as well as its wider historical context. Here, the place of the broader narrativisation of Liverpool’s historic story is shown to shape, yet also be shaped by (to *constitute* and be *constituted by*), Liverpool’s slavery memory-discourse. It is moulded through a ‘rags to riches’ narrative, forms part of broader ‘overcoming adversity’ and ‘enterprising spirit’ motifs, as well as constituting and being constituted by discursive displays of competitive tones directed against rival port cities. In relation to these influences in particular, the nineteenth century timing and context of Liverpool’s general historic story, when histories of the city started to be written, is of great determining significance, and the discursive shape of these early histories continue to influence the discourse of slavery in the city well into the twentieth century.

The last aspect of the approach of this thesis which represents a unique contribution, perhaps mostly significantly to developments in memory studies, is the adoption of a discourse-analytic approach to collective memory. This approach has enabled Liverpool's slavery-memory discourse to be mapped across time and genre, across the *longue durée* and through an analysis which looked critically at discursive processes and their uses and abuses in relation to representation. Discourse analysis has been a way to bring together methodologies which have sought out discursive patterns, addressing the *intertextuality* of memory across genre and thinking critically about the processes by which Liverpool's slavery memory discourse constitutes and is constituted by broader social processes. Drawing on the 'critical' focus of CDA, this thesis has sought to unpick the contradictions and complexities of the discourse of slavery in Liverpool, particularly within the realms of debate. Here, an especially active and contested engagement with the past has been analysed at particular points in time (specifically within Chapter Six), and across all the areas considered. Discourse analysis is one way of thinking *critically* about the discursive processes of negotiating memory, or debating the significance of a particular history and, more importantly, what some of the wider underlying significances might be. Part of this approach questions absence; analysing what is *not* said as much as what *is* said. A discourse-analytic approach, moreover, also enables an engagement with the broader 'web' of social discursive interactions, focusing critically on the presence of other influential discourses and, indeed the influence of one upon the other. Liverpool's slavery-memory discourse has been shaped by broader discourses of 'race' and racism; seen within interwar period as outlined in Chapter Two, or in press reporting around instances of black protest within St. George's Hall (Chapter Eleven) and the Museums (Chapter Twelve); of empire, imperialism, and anti-slavery (Chapters Two and Eight especially) and discourses concerning multiculturalism, globalisation as well as more transatlantic black political discourses (Chapters Two, Nine, Eleven and Twelve). The discourse analytic approach allows for multiple discursive interplay, the influence of a number of local, national and international 'discourses' to account for the particular shape of Liverpool's memory of slavery. The approach foregrounds memory as an active and interactive *social* process which is intimately connected with broader social and cultural themes, ideologies and politics.

However, and taking cues from Teun van Dijk and Norman Fairclough's work on CDA, discourse analysis is an approach, not a methodology, or, at least, not the entirety of a methodology. It is necessary, particularly where addressing areas of genre that go beyond 'text' (in its literal, written form) into areas of performance, sculpture, art and imagery, for example, to draw in other theories, approaches and work where relevant. The breadths of such areas are vast and the scholarship drawn upon within this thesis has necessarily been

selective. The merits of adopting a multi-theoretical, interdisciplinary approach to the study of collective memory, is presented within this thesis as integral to gaining a fuller, more nuanced understandings of the dynamics of collective memory.

This approach, the scope of the project, and the findings from the research have demonstrated that Liverpool's slavery-memory discourse has been shaped by contemporary context, evolving historical contexts and the impact and influence of ongoing memory work across a *longue durée*. A question posed in the Introduction to this thesis concerned the perceived *exceptionalism* of Liverpool in broader historic discourse, and whether this can be applied to the city's memory slavery. In short, Liverpool's memory of slavery *is* exceptional, and this relates not only to the ways in which this has been shaped by ongoing (and evolving) contemporary circumstances unique to the city – but to themes which can be argued to be *legacies* of Liverpool's 'exceptional' involvement in transatlantic slavery, in terms of timing, dominance, and people. All collective memory can be argued to be forged through the lens of contemporary context and identity. Liverpool's contemporary context(s) are unique to the city's history, as are its distinctive identity narratives. Whilst this could be presented as the case for most places – everywhere is necessarily 'unique' – discursive legacies emerging from the debate of slavery (concerning pro and anti-abolition) at the beginning of the nineteenth century have been particularly influential. Liverpool's slavery-memory discourse reflects at times awkward negotiations of its exceptional involvement in transatlantic slavery in relation to the scale and dominance of the world's 'slaving capital'; the impact of this on the city's development at a time when it, and other provincial towns were beginning to write their histories, and, significantly, the ongoing trading links with West Africa which were initiated through transatlantic slavery, and have created human legacies, making Liverpool home to the country's oldest continuous black community. The experience of the black community and the relationship between the city council and other authoritative bodies has shaped Liverpool's memory of slavery in distinctive, if dissonant ways.

However, it could also be argued that the Liverpool black presence has itself been exceptionalised, where continually Liverpool is presented as 'having', or owning, 'the oldest black community', as another distinct feature of its ongoing exceptionalism discourse. Whilst this is not incorrect, the discursive exceptionalism can act to deter attention away from issues of contemporary discrimination through a celebration of 'uniqueness', and indeed obscure other forms of demographic peculiarity in Liverpool's later twentieth century history. In 2008, Liverpool celebrated its transnational title of 'European Capital of Culture', through a global

lens, supported by the marketing tagline, 'The World in One City'.² However, partly because Liverpool did not experience the levels of migration of Caribbean people in 1940s and 1950s that other cities did, the city went from being one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the nineteenth century to one of the least by the end of the twentieth.³ Moreover, the city is still viewed as largely segregated by older LBB people.

They love this expression, 'The World in One City'. And what they actually mean is when they walk around the streets of Liverpool, or the city centre, you see people, not – I won't use the word race cause far as I'm concerned, there's no such thing as race. I will use the word – different skin colours, different nationalities. But when you go into the major businesses, where are these people, these non-white people? Where are they?⁴

'The World in One City', muses a younger LBB man, is really 'The World in One Toxteth.'⁵

Andreas Huyssen suggests that 'although memory discourses appear to be global in one register, at their core they remain tied to the histories of specific nations and states'.⁶ Moreover, perhaps, whilst they also remained tied to the specifics of people and place in nonetheless 'global' port cities; they are also links in a chain of pre-existing memory discourses, and related contexts of history and memory. Through the globalization of memory across the turn of the millennium, Liverpool's 'official' slavery memory booms and beats in time to an international drum. Yet its echoes reverberate through the city's 'peculiar' history of racialised relations, with the memory of 1980s political unrest, protest, and the continuing racialised violence against black people ringing to painfully familiar tunes. In 2005, the year in which plans for the ISM were publicly announced, Anthony Walker, a black teenager, was murdered in Liverpool in a racist attack and in the year of its opening, the museum announced that it was to name its education centre after Anthony.⁷ This commemorative naming couples global discourses of campaigns against racial discrimination and violence with a distinctly local circumstance. John Gillis has suggested that one of the paradoxes of the 'globalization' of

² Lynda Roughley, *Liverpool: The World in One City. The Official Guide to the City of Liverpool Supporting European Capital of Culture 2008*, ed. Margo Storey (Gloucester: Liverpool City Council/The British Publishing Co. Ltd., 2002).

³ Pooley, "Living in Liverpool," 187.

⁴ Scott, interview.

⁵ In conversation with James Hernandez, August 2010.

⁶ Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, 16.

⁷ Greg O'Keefe, "Tribute to Anthony at Slavery Museum," *Liverpool Echo*, August 16, 2007.

memory in the 1990s, was that the focus simultaneously also became more 'local'.⁸ However, in the twenty-first century, the scope seems to have broadened further. Liverpool's authoritative institutions have always cast an eye to America within the city's memory work, inviting American speakers to present at Slavery Remembrance Day and maintaining links with American dignitaries. However, the promotion of 'contemporary slavery' has cast the museums' thematic net wider, increasing already global connections further, and into areas well beyond the traditional 'triangle' of transatlantic places and people. Whilst, as discussed in Chapter Twelve, some find the connections between 'contemporary slavery' and historic transatlantic slavery problematic, it aligns to a much broader pattern in recent representations and engagements with this history. The displays at Wilberforce House, Hull, for example, also engage with contemporary human rights issues and this museum has a (much larger) gallery dedicated to modern-day slavery. Furthermore, the interesting use and re-use of abolitionist imagery by contemporary 'anti-slavery' organisations has been commented upon by scholars.⁹

However, and drawing on the significance of mapping a *longue durée* of the memory of slavery across time and genre – slavery, and here particularly images and discourse concerning its abolition, has long been *used* for contemporary moral campaigns. In the 1880s, at the cusp of the scramble for Africa, anti-slavery became a driving force for imperial expansion. In Liverpool in the 1930s campaigns against 'modern-day slavery' were discussed in tandem with the centenary of the emancipation act, using a memory of emancipation to justify largely religious 'civilising' missions abroad, which nonetheless have reverberations at 'home' (Chapter Eight). Whilst it is beyond the scope of this study to assess larger connections between historical and 'ongoing' anti-slavery campaigns, the presence of discourse surrounding 'modern-day slavery' here perhaps most significantly points to the ways in which images of slavery and abolition have been developed, or, in a more pessimistic summation, have been *perverted* to suit contemporary objectives. This was the case with the figure of 'Africa' on St. George's Hall, which illustrated a perversion of abolitionist imagery to align with mid-nineteenth century imperial discourses of race, gender and empire. In summation, perhaps what such 'uses', and indeed 'abuses' of memory may demonstrate, is, as Marcus Wood suggests, the 'violent instability of the slavery archive.'¹⁰

⁸ Gillis, "Introduction," 14.

⁹ See Zoe Trodd, "Am I Still Not a Man and a Brother? Protest Memory in Contemporary Antislavery Visual Culture," *Slavery & Abolition* 34, no. 2 (2013). Trodd highlights the interesting creative re-uses of abolitionist propaganda, particularly through the over-laying of the *Brooks* slave ship diagram onto an aeroplane in a poster concerning human trafficking by Anti-Slavery International.

¹⁰ Wood, *Slavery, Empathy, and Pornography*, 4.

However, as Michael Rothberg has argued, memory is perhaps better understood as more multidirectional than competitive, where the collective memory of diverging histories mutually benefit from links and connections. Just as human rights organisations might be drawing on the memory of transatlantic slavery and abolition, advocates for the memory of slavery have long drawn on the memory of, and discourse around, the Holocaust. The significance of the memory of the Holocaust is never far from the commemoration of slavery at the end of the twentieth century, and the language of Holocaust memory is drawn on within Lenford White's appositely named book *Slavery: An Introduction to the African Holocaust* and William Ackah's description of 'the horror of the slave holocaust'.¹¹ The Holocaust is also drawn on at points throughout public discourse surrounding SRD. Particular phrases are used and repeated in the articulation of the significance and meaning of SRD which bear striking similarity to the way Holocaust memory is talked about, phrases such as 'never forget' and 'never again' crop up repeatedly. SRD is presented as a way to 'make sure this part of Liverpool's history is never forgotten',¹² by council officials, and museums leaders similarly couple the fight against slavery and contemporary injustice with the 'never again' memory magnitude of Holocaust remembrance:

We celebrate the resistance, rebellion and revolution that ended slavery, as well as the rise of popular movements for racial justice and social change that said both then and now 'never again'.¹³

The influence of the memory of the Holocaust and the presence of multiple forms of commemoration in recent years, especially of Holocaust Memorial Day has impacted on Liverpool's memory of slavery and the discourse around it. This is a point expressed by one online commenter following an article on SRD in 2006 who suggested that 'if we have a Holocaust day there is no reason why we shouldn't have a day remembering all those who were enslaved.'¹⁴

¹¹ Lenford White, ed. *Slavery: An Introduction to the African Holocaust (revised edition...with special reference to Liverpool "Capital of the Slave Trade")* (Liverpool: Black History Month Resource Working Group, 1997). William Ackah, "In Our Own Image Understanding Afrocentricity," *Charles Wootton News*, June 1993.

¹² Council Leader Mike Storey, quoted in Joe Riley, "Civic Remembrance Of Slavery Victims," *Liverpool Echo*, January 23, 2004.

¹³ Richard Benjamin, quoted in Richard Down, "Traditional African Ceremony Blesses Slavery Remembrance Day," *Liverpool Daily Post*, August 25, 2008.

¹⁴ 'Urban', "Comment, Yo! Liverpool Forum," <http://www.yoliverpool.com/forum/showthread.php?1880-Slavery-Remembrance-Day> [accessed 21/07/12].

The memory of slavery in Liverpool, as the variety of responses above and throughout this thesis suggests, concerns a great deal more than the ‘remembering’ of Liverpool’s involvement in transatlantic slavery. Memories merge, meet, and mould themselves around identity narratives, national discourses and, indeed, other histories. The focus of this thesis has been on the public, collective discourse of slavery in the city and for the purposes of the study this has necessarily led to a focus on material in the ‘public domain’, official publications, newspapers and online material. However, one of the ways this study could be broadened is through an incorporation of other materials; more private correspondences from individuals involved in memory work, as well as new source areas. The genres considered for this thesis were sufficiently broad to illustrate the breadth of themes and issues across Liverpool’s slavery memory, though this has of course not been exhaustive. A more critical engagement could be extended to a number of Liverpool’s other historic figures, abolitionists and slave traders certainly, but also to the memory of ‘families’ in Liverpool and the place of ‘family history’ within a formation of meaningful, if complex, engagements with the past across time. There are a number of other ‘sites’ which could have been discussed in Part Three if space permitted, such as ongoing debates concerning street names in Liverpool and other buildings with connections to slavery, at least in public discourse, such as Martin’s Bank, the Cunard Building and the Bluecoat School.¹⁵ The commemorative markers in between the centennial and half-centennial points could be further addressed, though initial research indicated a lower level of commemorative focus given to the 150th anniversary of Emancipation in 1983, and there were no celebrations of Liverpool’s ‘birthday’ in 1857 or before. Perhaps the most obvious area that would further this study would be a more critical analysis of the interior spaces of the museums, particularly the ISM. For the purposes of this study, it was decided that a focus on the public ‘debates’ and discourse around the museums would be adopted. This aligned with the approach and argument of the rest of the thesis and accommodated for some restrictions on primary sources. During the project, NML were in the process of applying for external funding to catalogue the archives of the TSG and the ISM, an important and as yet un-researched source area, and were therefore unable to accommodate a research request. This, of course, may be something that will change in the future. Interviews for the project were conducted with some of the figures who had been influential within Liverpool’s slavery-

¹⁵ I have discussed the debates over street names in the 2000s in Jessica Moody, "Birthdays and Bicentenaries: Celebration, Commemoration and the Discursive Dissonance of Heritage" (MA Dissertation, University of York, 2008). However, more work on this could be illuminating. Martin’s Bank has sculptured relief of Poseidon holding his webbed hands over two African boys holding bags of gold, and the Cunard Building has faces of peoples Liverpool traded with around the world. The Bluecoat School was part financed by Bryan Blundell.

memory work. However this is another key area which could be expanded upon, certainly to include female participants (further interviews had been sought but were not possible at this time). Whilst a large-scale ethnography and oral history project was not part of the remit of this PhD, it would form an important expansion and help to give a further nuanced understanding of Liverpool's memory of slavery.

Two themes in particular emerged from the research which would benefit from broader inquiry, within Liverpool and indeed beyond. The themes of 'maritimity' in relation to slavery would benefit from a more 'national' assessment of the place of broader identity narratives (particular of empire), and perhaps also of mythologies and romanticisms of the sea in relation to the memory of slavery. Liverpool's 'maritimization' of slavery, whilst complicated by local identity narratives, is of course a part of this national picture. A perhaps related issue which emerged and was commented upon was the peculiar gendering of memory. Liverpool, perhaps due to its status as a port, is recurrently gendered as female, and 'her' sailors gendered male. This is not to deny that sailors would have been men, of course, but questions are raised over the ways in which the female/male gendering of the city's space and her 'maritime' trade influences broader memory processes. Walter Dixon Scott paints an interestingly gendered image of the city space expressed through the allusion of a fan:

As Liverpool lies deployed upon the South Lancashire landscape, she falls into the shape of an all but fully unfurled fan. The root bone-work of that fan, its un-webbed handle-part, is formed by the commercial apparatus of the place, the municipal apparatus, and – pleasantly conjoined to these hard masculine concerns – the more feminine region of the great shops, the flowers, the carriages, the shopping women.¹⁶

Further, and as discussed in Chapter Four, the curious emphasis given by Cecil Northcote Parkinson, foregrounds the masculinity of Liverpool's slaving seafarers, stating that Liverpool should not be ashamed of them, because 'for we know at least that they were *men*.'¹⁷ This is reminiscent of Derek Walcott's comments on the relationship between slavery and the 'performance' of masculinity:

¹⁶ Walter Dixon Scott, *Liverpool* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1907), 22.

¹⁷ Parkinson, *The Rise of the Port of Liverpool*, 102.

You were when you acted your roles, your given, historical roles of slave seller and slave buyer, men acting as men, and also you father, in the filth-ridden gut of the slave ship, to you they were also men, acting as men, with the cruelty of men.¹⁸

This raises interesting questions over the gendering of Liverpool throughout the city's broader historic discourse, and the impact of this upon its collective memory of slavery. This may also have some interesting links with processes of memory through familial engagements with the past, as previously mentioned. In an interview with local historian Ray Costello, he outlines how he first became interested in history because the women in his family lived so long, relaying stories of the previous century through personal verbal accounts.¹⁹ Moreover, perhaps, how do these themes apply nationally? Does this correlate with comparative port 'otherness', or, perhaps, only particular ports? Is this another feature of Liverpool's exceptionalism, or is there a broader theme to be teased out in relation to romanticised, gendered and maritime engagements with a history whose trauma has so frequently been centred on the sea?

These themes, relating intimately as they do to collective identity; to understandings of self and place, are part of a broader engagement with the complex layering of memory which has perhaps constituted the 'violent instability' of Liverpool's memory of slavery. As has been argued throughout this thesis, contestations over the meaning of the past which are enacted through discursive exchanges, both *constitute* and are *constituted by* Liverpool's memory-discourse of slavery. The interaction of *intertextual* 'memories of memory', memories of context, broader contemporary and indeed historical discourses and the 'exceptional' legacies of the history being remembered, are the oxygen which the 'debate' of memory breathes. It is these exchanges, moreover, which *keep* memory alive, meaningful, and actively engaged with through continual negotiation, evolution and, perhaps *perversion*. The debate, as has been continually advocated, *is* the memorial.

¹⁸ Derek Walcott, "The Muse of History," in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (London: Routledge, 1974), 374.

¹⁹ Ray Costello. Interview by author, January 1 2013, Liverpool.

Abbreviations

CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
ISM	International Slavery Museum
LBB	Liverpool-Born Black
LRO	Liverpool Records Office
MBHMG	Merseyside Black History Month Group
MMM	Merseyside Maritime Museum
NMGM	National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside
TSG	Transatlantic Slavery Gallery

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