Graduate Student Essay

Readings in Black Women's History: A Discussion on the Afterlife of Enslavement

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Abstract
This literature review centers two primary methods of analysis; the afterlife of enslavement and the legacy of the hold. It examines how the hold of the slave ship became a central site for struggle, death and violence. This essay also explains that everything the slave ship touched—the water, weather, marine life, etc.,—as in, the spaces immediately surrounding the ship, were also sites of terror. Finally, this essay captures how both methods of analysis provide a distinct reading of Black women and girls' existence during and beyond enslavement.

Keywords
enslavement, the hold, slave ship, Black women's history

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Introduction

The afterlife of enslavement[1] is often understood in the context of Black histories, anti-blackness, and modern moments of political unrest and crisis. Sometimes enslavement's afterlife is also extended to racialized immigration, the carceral state, and institutionalized diversity, equity, and inclusion rhetoric. However, scholars seldom discuss the specific ways enslavement's afterlife is intertwined with Black women's histories. Accordingly, the question this literature review poses, centers on our understanding of the afterlife of enslavement; how do we understand the afterlife of enslavement or the endless legacy of the hold?[2] While the hold is often discussed in literature about the Middle Passage; the brutalized African body (as in the case of John Kimber[3]); and the genesis of enslavement; this review contends that analyzing the hold alongside enslavement's afterlife does more than simply enhance the meaning of both. Rather, this review offers unique insights into how such legacies impact the lives and histories of Black women and girls. This essay centers both frameworks of analysis to excavate their distinct contribution to Black women's history. In doing so, this literature review discusses how the hold of the slave ship became a central site for struggle, degendering,[4] reproductive violence, and as Sharpe terms, "un/survival."[5] While such experiences of brutality and death followed Black women and girls throughout enslavement, they also extended to everything the slave ship touched—the water, weather, marine life—as in, the spaces immediately surrounding the ship.[6] Furthermore, this essay reviews how the afterlife of these experiences, both in and beyond the hold, manifest in Black existence today. Finally, it explores how these two frameworks of analysis provide a distinct reading of Black women and girls' existence both in and beyond enslavement.

Understanding the Hold

Scholars who have studied slave ships have often prioritized the perspectives of abolitionists and the voices of enslavers. Furthermore, while statistical evidence of African mortality at sea during the transatlantic crossing has offered insight about the bodies present on slave ships, and the conditions on the ship that impacted the lives of enslaved Africans, this research often fails to account for the psychic, reproductive, and gendered realities of the ship. However, embedded in the data of these historiographies is a counter-narrative of African experiences.[7] This narrative disrupts

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the idea of the plantation as the only or primary site of struggle, resistance, and lived experiences of those enslaved; rather, it centers cargo ships, the hold, the crossing, and the ocean, as the first and foundational site for the making and unmaking of those enslaved.[8]

The hold is often used to refer to the belly of the slave ship where Black bodies were chained above water in floating tombs. Some scholars also use the hold interchangeably with barracoon—iron barred cages on land— where Black bodies were held in wait before taken on board the slave ship. Yet, other scholars argue that this hold, situated on African beaches and soil, was the genesis of slave-making. Here, African understandings of slave and servitude were exploited and manipulated to serve the interests of European enslavers. Thus, as African people were bought and sold, exchanged for Western goods and social bonds, Black bodies were introduced to new ruptures. It was on African soil that "the nightmare of coffles, barracoons and the first, flesh-searing branding"[9] were introduced. Mining for the experiences of the Black female soul during the journey to the barracoon, Wells-Oghoghomeh writes, "as they marched from the interior to the coast, bound by vines or chains, some with nursing children at their breast, enslaved women grew increasingly estranged,"[10] from their culture and kinship ties. While this essay prioritizes the hold at sea, situated in the slave ship, it notes the interconnectedness between these sites of slave-making and the legacy of this hold. For clarity, throughout this literature review all references to the barracoon—the hold on land—will be referred to as the first hold.

Cargo ships were designed to carry hundreds of enslaved bodies across the ocean. Enslavers designated Africans as cargo and designed these enormous "wooden worlds,"[11] to intimidate them. Prior to stepping on board, Africans already understood that these boats were deathworlds. Those transported to Portuguese speaking countries like Brazil often referred to these deathworlds as tumbeiros or túmulos flutantes*,* meaning tombs and floating tombs respectively.[12] Tumberios was also used to refer to the ship's crew as in, "bearers to the tomb" or "undertakers."[13] The first hold reinforced this understanding of death by ship/ship bearer. Once on board, Africans were forced below the main deck and "packed in between decks with less than five feet of head room in the center and half that on the shelves on which they slept."[14] While the structures of slave ships varied based on the architecture, this sardine-style arrangement of the humans-turned-cargo was consistent. The space that each body was given in the hold reflected their perceived value, ability to resist, and

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physical size. Women and children were often able to move around without being chained to shelves, whereas smaller men and those with physical disabilities were often chained and given the least space in the hold.[15] While enslavers "sought to minimize the economic losses that resulted from high slave mortality rates by cramming as many people into the hold as they could,"[16] they did so without regard to the long-lasting psychic effects lying in the dark would have on human beings. Rather, enslavers focused their attention on ensuring that the rigging of each ship would survive the passage and accumulating resources that would keep their so-called cargo alive enough to sell at auction. The captain and crew had to juggle how much human cargo they could successfully carry for the long passage with the food and supplies needed to keep the enslaved alive.[17] This, however, proved difficult, as sailors continued to load African captives from various ports, despite the remaining space available within the holds.[18] Thus, the transition from the first hold on land, to the hold at sea, symbolized its own crossing.[19]

Transatlantic crossings revealed the ways sexual violence and ungendering processes functioned in the hold. Even before the long passage, captives were exposed to various diseases, extreme punishment, and psychic trauma that contributed to their untimely death and unceremonious burial. Transatlantic crossings symbolized a crossing into a world fraught with racialized meanings, ungendering, and dehumanizing practices. Here, the ungendering process of the Middle Passage was inherent in the slave ship's structure. Johnson describes how the "gendered geography"[20] of these wooden worlds was particularly apparent in the "poorly constructed women's compartment."[21] This compartment was at times also known as the "whore hole,"[22] and a place where sailors were known to spend most of their time.[23] The vulnerability of Black bodies is uniquely illustrated in the women's quarters, as well as in the hold. Wells-Oghoghomeh states that, "As they sailed in the darkness of ships, with the men shackled belowdecks, and the women unencumbered but confined in separate quarters, surrounded by the noxious sounds and smells of menstruation, childbirth, death, and rodents, African captives were initiated into an alternate reality."[24] For African girls journeying through adolescence during such transatlantic crossings, "menstration en route added to enslaved terror and discomfort."[25]

What does it mean to come of age in the hold of a ship? What does it mean to experience your first menstrual cycle amid rapid infections, fecal matter, and death?

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How did one react to the brown stickiness of blood without the warmth of a mother, the privacy of a bedroom or bathroom, or the availability of a hygienic menstrual products? How would a child interpret the unexpected flow of blood, especially if their body had already been marked by sexual violence? We can only imagine the shock and horror this sudden vaginal bleeding must have caused young girls amidst rampant rape and death. The alternate reality Africans were introduced to on board the ship consisted of an intimacy with death produced by chronic exposure to corpses and events of death.[26] It was heightened by consistent malnourishment, dehydration, and illness. It also included chronic experiences of rape, sexual torment, stigma, and sexually motivated murder. While experiences of sexual violence dominated the experiences of Black women and girls, they also likely extended to men and boys.[27]

Like slave ships themselves, the Middle Passage, was a site of unmaking. Black womanhood and girlhood were chipped away, re-made, and dismantled through continual acts of brutality, unalivement, and the rhetoric of enslavers.[28] The line between girl and woman was thin and ever shifting.[29] African girls were included in reproductive discourse as ages of reproductive promise were listed between 9-17.[30] Known ages of childbirth began at 9 years old ranging through age 51.[31] It is significant to recognize that the bodies of African girls were likely counted among those in the women's quarters, rather than with children who moved freely about the hold. Turner notes that planter discourse surrounding the age African girls should be purchased and sold reflected the normalization of rape, sexual brutality, and the desire to protect economic interests.[32] Owners of the enslaved, who were likely also participants in sexual predation, wanted girls and women who were able to defend themselves from ongoing brutality, only when it served their interests.[33] Yet, despite the ungendering of the hold, sexual violence was launched particularly at women, both as an act of subject making, and sexual conquest.

Black women's bodies were prioritized, measured, and counted because of their reproductive capacities and potential to sexually please their kidnappers, regardless of non-person/non-woman status imposed on them by enslavers.[34] Scholars highlight the ways Black women and girls experienced bodily measurement throughout the Middle Passage, as their breasts, genitals, skin, hair, eyes, and teeth were poked, prodded, gouged, yanked, cupped, and fondled to determine their value.[35] Black bodies, in general, were weighed, measured, and packed, "not as male and female but as differently sized and weighted property."[36]

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The normalization of such dehumanizing behavior laid the foundation for pervasive acts of sexual brutality that occurred both in and beyond the hold. Stories of miscarriage, pregnancy, and childbirth bore witness to the impossible circumstances Black women and girls were forced to contend with.[37] The crossings of Black women and girls came at the cost of not only their humanity and gender, but also their childness, reproductive autonomy, and ability to raise children with the support of kinship ties. Scholars must continue to review archival materials to tell the stories of Black women and girls who endured the Middle Passage.

Infants and children were often not included in the official count of the humans-turned-cargo aboard slave ships. Their contentious presence throughout the long passage was both erased and snuffed out, as enslavers were known to put them to death, and declined to keep track of where these children ultimately ended up.[38] While children were used to capture African women for the Middle Passage, they were not deemed to possess significant value, and thus, were commonly not accounted for during or after the Middle Passage.[39] Commodification therefore became inseparable from the brutality and value assigned to the Black femme body.

Overall, the geography of the hold and the experience of the Middle Passage served to produce terror in the African body. This terror was fostered in the myriad of ways listed above, as well as in the spectacle of violence enacted on the deck of the ship. Beyond grotesque acts of torture, like those of John Kimber designed to instill heightened terror, or murders following acts of resistance on the slave ship, sharks also played an essential role in the horror that was imposed on Black life. There is an abundance of historical evidence to prove the consistent presence of sharks in the sea. Literature suggests that they trailed ships due to the scent of blood and sailors weaponized sharks to terrorize and kill enslaved Africans.[40] Black bodies were often hung on hooks and lowered into the ocean, thrown overboard alive and dead, with others often forced to watch.[41] This allowed the sharks to leap up, swarm around bodies, mangle and dismember them. I can almost hear the screams and feel the horror of this monstrous atrocity. Regardless of whether captains engaged in this behavior as a means of sport or punishment, the experience of sheer terror meted out to the enslaved was the same.

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The Afterlife of Enslavement

In her widely acclaimed book, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*, Saidiya Hartman coined the term, "the afterlife of slavery."[42] In her initial use of this term, Hartman writes, "This is the afterlife of slavery—skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment. I, too, am the afterlife of slavery."[43] In this definition, she notes not only the characteristics of enslavement's afterlife as pertaining to Black existence, but characterizes Black life as enslavement's afterlife. She further connects this term to the legacy of the hold and the rupture that was the Middle Passage in her article, "The Dead Book Revisited." Within this article, Hartman underscores how the intimacy produced in the hold continues to occupy and impact Black life today.[44] She further writes that, "The afterlife of slavery was defined by the enduring and seemingly interminable clutch of the hold on our present and by the ongoing processes of dispossession, accumulation, and extermination."[45] This quote evokes the violence of the slave ship as ongoing and an ever appearing processes manifesting throughout Black histories. In both definitions of enslavement's afterlife, the sustained effect of the hold is evident. As Hartman references the carceral state, access to resources, dispossession, and death/extermination, she calls to mind chained bodies and cages; hunger and dehydration; chronic theft (of children, autonomy, labor, heirlooms, etc.); and the continued impact of state-sanctioned ungendering and dehumanizing violence against the descendants of the enslaved.[46]

Since Hartman's coining of the afterlife of slavery, many scholars have grappled with its meaning. In *The Blackness of Black: Key Concepts in Critical Discourse*, William Hart acknowledges the afterlife of enslavement in his discussion of freedom. He maintains that Hartman's usage of the term, serves to uncover the eternal struggle to experience freedom beyond the state's project of terror-making through anti-blackness.[47] While Hart heavily relies on Hartman's understanding of enslavement's afterlife, the terror he refers to is deeply engaged in Hartman's earlier work, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. In the volume, Hartman alludes to enslavement's afterlife, both in terms of its aftermath, and the wound that cannot be closed—the breach that cannot be bridged—and the redress that can never be fully granted.[48] Here, repetitious practices of terror-making and subjection, serve to expose the original wound. Such experiences of loss and

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confinement trigger memory "akin to a phantom limb, in that what is felt is no longer there."[49] It is this ever-present and never-ending rupture—the emmeshed relation between past and present—that truly represents enslavement's enduring afterlife.

Christina Sharpe extends insights of the legacy of enslavement in her book, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. She too acknowledges the impact of a past not past, and how this past/present is embedded in Black being.[50] Sharpe describes what it means to be Black and live in the wake, with a series of definitions for the word wake. She describes the wake as a death ritual, a "track left on the water's surface,"[51] specifically referencing the track left behind by slave ships during the Middle Passage, and "the line of recoil of (a gun)."[52] Lastly Sharpe describes living in the wake as "consciousness."[53] These definitions return to the horror of those floating tombs that continue to mark Black existence. The various metaphors and definitions used to illuminate Black beingness in the wake, intersect with the impact of spectacularized Black death and sharks, and what has been called the "red wake."[54] In this red wake "the past that is not past reappears, always, to rupture the present."[55]

Like Hartman's understanding of enslavement's afterlife, Sharpe's understanding of life in the wake centers around the undying legacy of the hold.[56] However, Sharpe extends interpretations of the hold specifically to Black reproductive bodies. She connects the birth cycle as a type of crossing, a passage from death to life/life to death. Citing the birthing of blackness and the image of the birth canal, Sharpe writes, "The belly of the ship births blackness; the birth canal remains in, and as, the hold."[57] She evokes how sexual violence, reproductive exploitation, and the theft/murder of infants and children on board the ship, continues to mark Black reproductive bodies. Further, this recognition implicates the development of "the enslaved female soul," and how Black womanhood is understood, limited, stigmatized, and attacked by the nation-state today.[58] This can be seen in the epidemic of Black maternal mortality rates, the disproportionate involvement of social services in Black families, and violence that marks the experience of mothering while Black. Thus, the here and now of enslavement's unending afterlife distinctly impacts Black women and girls' ontology.

Enslavement's wake is further understood as the chronic presence of catastrophe that occupies Black existence.[59] The rupture is the air enveloping Black bodies; it is death, unceremonious burials, and non-stop state-sanctioned terror. The disaster is present in surveillance, policing, and the untimely disproportionate deaths

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of soon-to-be Black mothers. It is present in stories consumed, and ancestors torn away from home, who were suffocated and abandoned at the bottom of the ocean. This too, is the legacy of the hold. The hold is a landscape for subject-making, ontological shattering, and a death that haunts Black futures. Like Sharpe, Hart affirms that the enduring legacy of the hold extends to the weather, water, and everything touched by the slave ship.[60] He leans into such metaphors when he writes, "the weather is something we also see and yet do not see. It is the air we breathe, and about which we do not typically give a second thought."[61] The weather—the sound of thunder, crashing waves, and downpouring rain—calls back to "the rhythm of ships,"[62] the ebb and flow of Black bodies tumbling into water, of sounds escaping through cracks in the hold.[63] The weather also calls back to the sound of protestors decrying Black unalivement; the gasps of Black bodies on concrete; and the collective mourning in salons, house churches, and community clinics. This is the afterlife Black bodies are living in right now.[64]

Reflecting on the far-reaching presence of the catastrophe, Sharpe ruminates on how Haiti, a site of a successful slave rebellion, continues to be haunted by a climate of anti-blackness; by the weather of earthquakes; punitive foreign aid; and hunger. Despite those who survived the long passage to the island of Hispaniola, the legacy of un/survival continues to be imposed on Haiti's present.[65] These realities extend to all spaces touched by the slave ship's long "traverse."[66] Rinaldo Walcott describes that the legacy of the massive forced migration that was the Middle Passage, continues to disrupt, confine, and control Black mobility.[67] These conditions are particularly evident in the case of racialized immigrants and asylum seekers, as such bodies are associated with gratuitous violence, and labelled as illegals or criminals, simply for taking up space in the United States.[68] The violence Black citizens experience serves as a lesson to racialized immigrants, while the spectacularized violence experienced by Black migrants and refugees, serves as a lesson to the rest of the world.[69] The afterlife of enslavement, therefore, represents a process in the Americas that mirrors the historical technologies of enslavement, in the sense that it racially separates people into "categories of exclusion."[70] These categories work to dictate the lived experiences of Black bodies and how state technologies of terror and control, operate throughout their lives and deaths. While the strict surveillance and interrogation of Black movement mimics the technology of the hold regardless of gender, these conditions continue to pose distinct meanings for Black women and girls.[71]

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The interminable clutch of the hold continues to manifest in the "affective zone of terror,"[72] that continues to surround childbirth, home-building, citizenship-making, and Black childhood.[73] This is enslavement's legacy, a terror that continues to condition Black life.[74] It is "the cage, the trick bag of the nation-state."[75] Enslavement's legacy is a promise that, "It will get worse,"[76] because, "It has been worse before."[77] Yet, even as the ever-present threat of the hold continues to make contact with Black life in the present, some scholars grapple with ways to undo its totalizing power. Like those on that fateful passage, Sharpe engages with the idea of return; that is, returning to the site of the rupture and the site before the rupture. She questions, "What does it mean to return? Is return possible? Is it desired? And if it is, under what conditions and for whom?"[78] This idea of returning, evokes the wonderings of African mothers, daughters, enslaved, and free, who first embarked on that long passage. It implicates the capacity of Black being, the tenacity of the interior life of Black women and girls, and those struggling against projects of un/survival today.

Conclusion

This essay has illuminated the experiences of Black women and girls in the dark, foul, pestilence ridden hold, to uncover the stakes of their survival. It has engaged the differing images of the first hold (barracoons), and the hold situated in the bowels of ships, to portray the layering experiences of subject-making, terror, and violence. It then connects these legacies with Saidiya Hartman's original definition of the afterlife of slavery and ruminates on Black life in the United States, immigration, the carceral state, and the experiences of Black death today as the afterlife of slavery. This paper concludes that excavation of slave ships and examination of archival resources are rich sites from which to write and preserve the histories of Black reproductive bodies. More research is necessary to disrupt the common slave ship narrative that centers the white men on board, and instead, mine for the conditions of Black women and girls in, and beyond, the hold. Here, deep engagement with how children were defined, and where girls can be seen through the cracks of the hold, is encouraged.

Reflecting on the ugliness of this story, the story of my ancestors, I am reminded of the tenacity of Black women and girls. The psychic strength of tormented bodies, who managed to re-member their culture, and forge new kinship ties, is an important narrative. It was my aim in this essay, therefore, to bring dignity to every part of my

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African ancestors' story, and to look the ugliness in the face, while remembering the resistance. Like Saidiya Hartman so aptly proclaims, "I, too, am the afterlife of slavery."[79] I, too, am the afterlife of profound resistance and struggle—the afterlife of punishment—the afterlife of shame and loss. And I want to say, the afterlife of unmistakable beauty.[80] Both the beauty of my ancestors, and the beauty they carved out of the chaos that was their lives. Beauty in the ways Black girls held and were held by each other, even in the hold. The ways their care work never stopped even when all was lost to them. The beauty that is Black lungs, breathing despite the deaths that are imposed on our lives. Breathing despite the funeral procession that marks our lives. But all this beauty is in fact resistance. This resistance too, is the afterlife of enslavement. While we may never know the names of every child stuffed into the hold with the audacity to speak back to power, of every woman who returned a sailor's advances with a kick, we see the legacy of such resistance in the Black bodies that exist today. Our being is resistance, and despite the strangling clutches of the hold, we can continue to walk in the legacy of such resistance. Resist.

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Notes

[1] Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007), 6.

[2] Definitions of "the hold" will begin with scholarship that unpacks the logistics of the slave ship before reviewing contemporary research on the hold as methodological framework.

[3] Sasha Turner, *Contested Bodies: Pregnancy, Childrearing, and Slavery in Jamaica* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 1-3. The case of John Kimber was continually discussed and depicted throughout my research for this literature review. The various accounts depicted how sexual violence, Black femininity, and landscapes of terror collided in the Middle Passage.

[4] Jessica Johnson, *Wicked Flesh: Black Women, Intimacy, and Freedom in the Atlantic World* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 8. The degendering process of the Middle Passage will further be explored in this paper in the context of the happenings in ship holds. My initial use of degendering/ungendering is based on Jessica Johnson's research about the Middle Passage.

[5] Christina Elizabeth Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Anti-Racist Collection (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 14.

[6] This paper will also incorporate the research of authors who situate Black death experiences near but beyond the ship.

[7] Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 2.

[8] Sowande' M. Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 3.

[9] Clarence J. Munford, *The Black Ordeal of Slavery and Slave Trading in the French West Indies*, 1625-1715 (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1991), 273.

[10] Alexis Wells-Oghoghomeh, *The Souls of Womenfolk: The Religious Cultures of Enslaved Women in the Lower South*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 33.

[11] Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea*, 4.

[12] Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 38*;* Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, 137; Robert Conrad, *World of Sorrow: The African Slave Trade to Brazil* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986.), 4; Marcus Rediker, "History from Below the Water Line: Sharks and the Atlantic Slave Trade," *Atlantic Studies: Literary, Cultural and Historical Perspectives on Europe, Afr 5*, no. 2 (2008): 294, https://doi.org/10.1080/14788810802149758. Marcus Rediker also cites the slave ship as "floating dungeons."

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[13] Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, 137; Conrad, *World of Sorrow*, 3-4.

[14] Madeleine Burnside, Rosemarie Robotham, and Cornel West, *Spirits of the Passage: The Transatlantic Slave Trade in the Seventeenth Century* (Key West: Mel Fisher Heritage Society, 1997), 122.

[15] Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*, 93.

[16] Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*, 93.

[17] Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake*, 35. Instances like what happened aboard the *Zong*, proved that some crews packed double the humans-turned-cargo, while packing limited supplies, in a reckless profit gamble. The epic loss of human life did little to improve these conditions. Magnificent economic losses encouraged other enslaving ships to re-evaluate such gambles to successfully bring their "stock" to market.

[18] Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, 93. Stephanie Smallwood writes about these conditions.

[19] Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake*, 75. Citing the work of Dennis Childs, Sharpe underscores the impact of the first hold or "land based slave ship."

[20] Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*, 94.

[21] Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*, 94.

[22] Wells-Oghoghomeh, *The Souls of Womenfolk,* 41.

[23] Wells-Oghoghomeh, *The Souls of Womenfolk,* 41.

[24] Wells-Oghoghomeh, *The Souls of Womenfolk,* 41.

[25] Johnson, *Wicked Flesh,* 95.

[26] Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea*, 160. Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery,* 38.

[27] Johnson, *Wicked Flesh,* 83.

[28] Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*, 78.

[29] Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 56, 212.

[30] Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 50, 74.

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[31] Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 50, 74.

[32] Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 51.

[33] Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 51.

[34] Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*, 97; Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 23.

[35] Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*, 81.

[36] Sharpe*, In the Wake*, 79.

[37] Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, 142; Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*, 96; Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 212; Wells-Oghoghomeh, *The Souls of Womenfolk*, 52-59. Wells-Oghoghomeh writes about the presence of bi-racial children who experienced rape and terror.

[38] Turner, *Contested Bodies,* 211, 212; Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*, 96.

[39] Wells-Oghoghomeh, *The Souls of Womenfolk*, 16.

[40] Rediker, "History from Below the Water Line," 287.

[41] Rediker, "History from Below the Water Line," 293; Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea*, 128; Munford, *The Black Ordeal of Slavery,* 283.

[42] Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 6.

[43] Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 6.

[44] Saidiya Hartman, "The Dead Book Revisited," *History of the Present* 6, no. 2 (2016): 208–15.

[45] Hartman, "The Dead Book Revisited," 210.

[46] Here, I am reminded of the pictures drawn by children in ICE detention centers and how the bars of cages permeate everything. I am reminded of the treatment of Haitians on Guantanamo Bay and the drowning of boat people attempting to cross the ocean. All of this is the legacy of enslavement. All of this is slavery's afterlife.

[47] William David Hart, *The Blackness of Black: Key Concepts in Critical Discourse* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2020), 89.

[48] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 4, 77.

[49] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 73.

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[50] Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 13.

[51] Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 3,8,10, 11, 14.

[52] Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 3,8,10, 11, 14.

[53] Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 3,8,10, 11, 14.

[54] Rediker, "History from Below the Water Line," 292.

[55] Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake*, 9.

[56] Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake*, 69; Hart, *The Blackness of Black: Key Concepts in Critical Discourse*, 112.

[57] Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 74.

[58] Wells-Oghoghomeh, *The Souls of Womenfolk*, 19. This push pull relationship between life and death is uniquely present in the ways Black women and girls engaged with mothering in barracoons, the hold, and throughout the Middle Passage. Different approaches reflected not only resistance but impossible desires to preserve the humanity of children and keep them safe.

[59] Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake*, 5; Walcott, *The Long Emancipation: Moving Toward Black Freedom* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 44.

[60] Hart, *The Blackness of Black*, 116.

[61] Hart, *The Blackness of Black*, 114.

[62] Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, 7.

[63] Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, 7.

[64] Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 133. Hartman affirms the relationship between ongoing present crises and enslavement's continuing afterlife. Thus, the realities of the last few years (the epic loss of Black life related to COVID-19 and the medical industrial complex; protests against police brutality as a result of George Floyd's death; the mass shooting in a New York store situated in a Black community; etc.) are situated in enslavement's afterlife and the technologies of the hold.

[65] Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 38.

[66] Johnson, *Wicked Flesh,* 79. Johnson refers to the Middle Passage as "la traversée," and links the rupture of Black life to this journey of terror.

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[67] Walcott, *The Long Emancipation*, 36.

[68] Tiffany Willoughby-Herard, "The Whatever that Survived: Thinking Racialized Immigration through Blackness and the Afterlife of Slavery," in *Relational Formations of Race: Theory, Method, and Practice*, eds. Natalia Molina, Daniel HoSang, and Ramón A. Gutiérrez (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 152-153.

[69] Willoughby-Herard, "The Whatever that Survived," 152; Angela Naimou, "Mediterranean Returns: Migration and the Poetics of Lamentation," in *Writing Beyond the State*, eds. Alexandra S. Moore and Samanta Pinto (New York: Palgrave, 2020), 202.

[70] Willoughby-Herard, "The Whatever that Survived," 151. Willoughby-Herard, maintains that there are three primary identity categories of exclusion.

[71] Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 27. Once again, I am interested in drawing attention to the conditions faced in detention centers and Haitians attempting to make the deadly journey from Brazil and Chile to the U.S./Canada on foot.

[72] Willoughby-Herard, "The Whatever that Survived," 147.

[73] Willoughby-Herard, "The Whatever that Survived," 147.

[74] Walcott, *The Long Emancipation*, 45.

[75] Willoughby-Herard, "The Whatever that Survived," 147

[76] Willoughby-Herard, "The Whatever that Survived," 147.

[77] Willoughby-Herard, "The Whatever that Survived," 147.

[78] Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 60.

[79] Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 6.

[80] But can we really look at this story and say "beauty?" Should we? What are the implications of the unspeakable torment if we do?

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