THE UNBENT KNEE: MEMORY, IDENTITY, AND THE TRANSATLANTIC POLITICS OF
THE RESISTANT BLACK GAZE

by

REBEKAH JAMES

WENDY CASTENELL, COMMITTEE CHAIR
JENNIFER FELTMAN
RACHEL STEPHENS
HEATHER MCPHERSON

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ABSTRACT

In October 1852, a young artist Eyre Crowe experienced a life-altering transatlantic journey. William Thackeray, the British author of *Vanity Fair*, had been invited to do a series of lectures in America, inviting Crowe along as his secretary. In his writings, Crowe, the son of a journalist and the brother of a diplomat, records how his explorations into the heart of American culture led to a jarring confrontation with the American slave trade. These harrowing experiences and the political frenzy ignited by Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1852 bestseller, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, incited Crowe to join the growing antislavery movement. Between 1854 and 1861, Crowe would publish two autobiographical articles about his journey to America and produce five paintings prominently featuring black people. This thesis analyzes the second work Crowe created, *After the Sale: Slaves Heading South from Richmond* (1854). I argue that though *After the Sale* was created by a British artist, it should be reappraised as a prime example of mid-nineteenth-century transatlantic cultural hybridity. This assertion is supported by the myriad parallels between the various characters, postures, and groupings seen in *After the Sale* and in other visual and literary media found in Anglo-American and Anglo-French societies. However, beyond the visual hybridity of *After the Sale*, this paper also investigates how Crowe translated his professed abolitionist ideologies into a visual declaration against the institution of slavery.

Primarily, this paper seeks to answer two questions: First, how does Crowe use the various interactions between the characters to effectively and accurately communicate the tragedies he witnessed? Second, how does he use black agency and individuality to reject pro-slavery claims that black people were subhuman creatures that needed white American
paternalism. Consequently, this thesis is an analysis of nineteenth-century transatlanticism, race relations, and visual culture. Despite the wide range of nineteenth-century archival materials highlighting people of African descent, only a slim margin of scholarship on British art has made the effort to investigate who these figures are and their social relevance. With this thesis, I will complicate the belief that the enslaved were voiceless, powerless individuals, and I will revitalize discussions on the largely forgotten and vastly understudied oeuvre of Eyre Crowe and the complexities of nineteenth-century race relations.
DEDICATION

For God...who carried me to the finish line
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I would like to extend my thanks to the many individuals who helped see me through this lengthy process. To Dr. Wendy Castenell, my committee chair, thank you for not allowing me to quit. Your encouraging words guided me, and your praise inspired me. I am the scholar I am today because you allowed me to stand on your shoulders. Thank you.

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INTRODUCTION

On October 30, 1852, William Makepeace Thackeray, the author of *Vanity Fair* (1848), set sail from Liverpool, England to embark on an ambitious six-month lecture tour throughout the northern and southern states of America.¹ He invited the son of a family friend to accompany him as his secretary, a twenty-eight year old Briton named Eyre Crowe (1824-1910).² At the time, Crowe was a fledgling artist, and his attempts to gain respect and acclaim in the British salon had met with limited success.³ However, his experiences amid the free and slave-trading states of America would revolutionize his artistic career.⁴ His journey into the heart of American slave culture ignited in the artist an unyielding fervor for the abolitionist cause. The “unhallowed serfdom” of a segregated, slave society impressed upon Crowe the need to capture the realities of subjugated African Americans, both enslaved and free.⁵ The sketches he would create during these six months would become the backbone of his future abolitionist art.

Over the course of the next eight years following Crowe’s trip to America, thirty-three percent of his oil paintings would focus on people of African descent.⁶ In total, Crowe created five works focusing on the narratives of black peoples: *After the Sale: Slaves Going South from Richmond* (1854) (Figure 1), *A Slave Sale in Charleston, South Carolina* (1854) (Figure 2), *Untitled* (1855) (Figure 3), *A Barber’s Shop at Richmond, Virginia* (1861) (Figure 4), and *Slaves Waiting for Sale* (1861) (Figure 5). For the sake of clarity and length, this thesis will primarily analyze the cultural influences behind the creation of Crowe’s *After the Sale* (the shortened title will be used henceforth).
Because this thesis is the first monograph to ever be dedicated to Eyre Crowe’s After the Sale, the scope of this work is expansive and multilayered. To be exact, the focus of this thesis is trifold, split across two chapters. First, I argue that After the Sale, though a British work, should also be regarded as the byproduct of a series of transatlantic exchanges between France, England, and America. The way Crowe composes this painting and its figures bears striking resemblances to the art and stylistic preferences of the British and French salons as American graphic culture. The impact of existing schools of thought on Crowe’s art has not been examined by previous scholars. Consequently, the first leg of this thesis seeks to rectify that lapse in the scholarship by explicating After the Sale’s debt to the Realist movement, the British School, and Paul Delaroche, the French genre painter. This thesis further aims to demonstrate how Crowe also used contrived stereotypes and postures traditionally used for heroic white protagonists in Anglo-French salon art to rehumanize the enslaved African Americans on the canvas.

Secondly, despite the influence of salon culture, I also argue that After the Sale should be viewed as an authentic historical document of nineteenth-century American society and as a visual diary of Crowe’s experiences. Because After the Sale is a painting whose narrative is mediated by a white artist, many modern scholars may overlook the numerous historically accurate allusions to African American life that, I argue, can be seen throughout the canvas. This painting tackles several themes, such as human rights, child abuse and abandonment, social resistance, black agency, and the black gaze. The last two themes comprise the third topic of this thesis: the politics of the black gaze.

Third, this thesis asserts that, similar to a photograph, After the Sale, can be examined in conjunction with other source materials to analyze the varying degrees of black empowerment and understudied role of the resistant black gaze in African American culture and Anglo-
American art. I argue that the forthright gazes of some of the enslaved African Americans is not a coincidence but are based on the memories of real-life encounters Crowe had with black Americans. Summarily, this thesis argues that *After the Sale* can be used not only to examine Crowe’s own relations with African Americans, but also to investigate the understudied arena of black resistance and agency amongst nineteenth-century African Americans. The aim of this body of work is to help fill the gap in the existing literature on the black presence in nineteenth-century British art.

While researching *After the Sale*, I accessed myriad primary documents, such the travel articles Crowe submitted to *Household Words* and *The Illustrated London News* and the travel book the artist wrote in the second to last decade of his life. These materials offer insight into what events inspired to Crowe to create his slave trade series. Moreover, they provide a small glimpse into the daily lives and attitudes of the African Americans Crowe met. These details are crucial for determining to what degree of intent Crowe intended this painting to be received as an antislavery work and to what degree he sought to subvert negative representations of black people. These archives also permit scholars to ascertain how much of the painting is based on memory. However, these documents are merely summaries of his trip to America, leaving many holes in the research. Eyre Crowe accumulated approximately fifteen diaries during his lifetime. These might have answered more definitively many of the questions posed throughout this thesis; yet, I have been unable to access them.

To fill in this gap in the history, I rely on close reading, intensive visual analysis, and iconographic assessments, juxtaposing *After the Sale* with a contemporaneous visual media and relevant criticisms from extraneous primary sources, such as newspaper clippings, magazine articles, and biographies. Moreover, because this thesis is the first monograph dedicated to *After
the Sale, this thesis is predominantly interdisciplinary in its approach as I attempt to weave together a wide range of topics in a finite page length. Beyond the aforementioned methodologies, this thesis will also engage with feminist theory and race studies, contemporary gaze theories, film studies, literary studies, biographical analysis, and the sociohistorical context in which After the Sale was produced. Recent film scholarship on the politics of the racialized gaze play a pivotal role in my discussion of the oppositional black gaze and to what degree it exists in After the Sale.

Now to understand what is transpiring in the picture, it is important to know that After the Sale is actually illustrating the following scene from Crowe’s 1893 travel book, With Thackeray in America: “After these sales we saw the usual exodus of negro slaves, marched under escort of their new owners across the town to the railway station, where they took places, and ‘went South.’ They held scanty bundles of clothing, their only possession. These were the scenes which in a very short number of years made one realise the sources of the fiercest of civil wars.” The oil painting is a perfect replica of the scene Crowe describes. A hazy outline of the Richmond cityscape sits in the background. The main setting is the Richmond railway station. It is comprised of a dirt platform with small to medium-sized rocks strewn across the walkway. A small stream washes across the middle of the station floor from the left side of the canvas. It appears to be pouring in from a larger waterway. A couple of individuals are stepping on the rocks to safely cross the stream without getting wet.

From left to right, exactly two dozen enslaved African Americans march across the canvas towards the wooden train car that overshadows the left side of the painting. Most of the individuals seen are the adult African Americans walking towards the train. One man is even running towards it. Beyond this gathering of people, a few stand on or sit in the train car itself.
Another handful sits in a horse-drawn wagon cart. Inside the cart perch five women. The one closest to the audience sitting in the bottom left corner of the vehicle holds a baby in her arms. A young African American man standing in front of the cart before appears to be in the process of pulling the child out of the woman’s hands. Besides that infant, only three other children are featured in the painting – an adolescent girl, a toddler, and another infant. They occupy the bottom center of the canvas. Attached to this same group, a leashed dog tugs at the skirt tail of the girl, drawing her attention away from the train. However, the dog is not the only one in the painting that acts irregularly. Three African Americans – two women and one of the infants – ignore the car and the mass of people around them. Instead, they boldly turn their gaze towards the audience. Their gazes briefly disrupt the narrative of the painting as their eyes meet the viewer’s and engage the audience in silent dialogue.

In addition to these peculiarities, art historian, Maurie McInnis, has identified the young black man seen in *After the Sale* running towards the train as a carbon copy of the iconic print figure which had become a ubiquitous image in nineteenth-century American print media (Figures 6 and 7). Though most twenty-first century viewers would recognize this figure as the ‘runaway slave’, it frequently doubled as a symbol for slaves being sold (Figure 8). Consequently, its presence in *After the Sale* is fitting. The only changes Crowe made to the icon was making it polychrome. The inclusion of this print figure reveals that Crowe did borrow ideas from various sources, including mainstream American print media. The very presence of this icon is a blatant, unapologetic acknowledgment of Crowe’s debt to other artists and the larger Euro-American visual culture.

Shockingly, despite the large number of people illustrated, the artist shows everyone reacting differently to the numerous situations that are transpiring around them and to them.
Everyone exists within their own world, leaving the viewer with the impression that though this image is one scene it is not one narrative. Multiple storylines coexist within this medium-sized, 27 by 36 inch frame. The artist effectively presents a multi-faceted illustration of the slave trade by painstakingly individualizing each of the enslaved physiques and expressions. As a result, the audience witnesses a wide range of emotions across the features of the enslaved: confusion, exhaustion, sorrow, and fear. Significant to this thesis, the level of individuality with which the artist infuses his characters is no coincidence, but purposeful.

For instance, the image of the elderly woman in front of the horse towards the center left of the canvas looking up in exhaustion can be traced to an earlier portrait Crowe had made of a black woman while in Washington, D.C. (Figure 9). The older woman had worked in the hotel Crowe had been staying in as a maid. Whether she was a free citizen or a hired-out enslaved worker is unknown. According to Thackeray in a letter written on February 19, 1853, he found the lady posing for Crowe in his room that day. In this portrait sketch, she stands upright and gazes directly at the artist, clutching the tools of her trade, a pitcher and a tea (or coffee) pot, in her hands. She is one of the easiest sitters to spot in After the Sale because nearly all of the African Americans in the paintings are young men and women. Beyond these details, both the elderly woman in the painting and she bear almost the same elongated, weathered faces. Albeit, the one in the painting has been further dramatized for the sake of the audience. Yet, the feature that helps identify her the most is the hat she wears.

In his sketches, the Washington maidservant is the only person whom Crowe ever drew wearing that specific triangular head covering. No other woman in the painting has a hat that shape. In addition, the hat in the painting is a perfect copy of the hat in the sketch. This detail in conjunction with the strong facial similarities leaves little doubt that these two women are one
and the same, making her the only figure thus far who can be identified by name in After the Sale. At the bottom right corner of the sketch, opposite of the date (February 19, 1853) and the city (Washington), Crowe has scrawled “Winne” or “Winnie.” However, because of his loose script, the exact lettering is hard to verify.

For Crowe to record a detail like her name and occupation is not an unusual occurrence for the artist. In With Thackeray in America, Crowe divulges to his readers that he actively sought out African Americans who were both willing to let him sketch them and tell him about their life in America. Often, beside the drawing, he would jot down personal details such as their names, occupations, salaries, etc. For instance, concerning the individuals seen in Slaves Waiting for Sale, Crowe wrote that he drew those individuals already knowing that he would include them in a painting at a later date.

Many of the themes touched upon in this thesis have neither been discussed in conjunction with Crowe nor After the Sale before, primarily because the artist himself is a forgotten figure, but also because the black presence in nineteenth-century British art is a vastly understudied field. Despite the wide range of archival materials like After the Sale highlighting people of African descent, only a slim margin of academic scholarship has made the effort to investigate who these figures are and how they fit into the dynamics of larger society. However, an increasing amount of art historical literature has been dedicated to rectifying this gap in the canon of British art. For instance, in the groundbreaking catalogue raisonné, Black Victorians: Black People in British Art, 1800-1900, the editor, Jan Marsh and other academics compile dozens of obscure artworks outside the official canon that prominently feature black persons. The edited volume attempts to cover the expansive history of the Black image in nineteenth-
century British art through a handful of in-depth articles and a multitude of individualized summaries for each item depicted.

Though only containing a small sample of the vast archives of British art featuring Black people, *Black Victorians* includes a wide range of archival materials from artists of diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Eyre Crowe. At its heart, the *Black Victorians* collaboration is a protestation of the lack of representational scholarship in the canon of art history. The editor, Jan Marsh, posited the following as the impetus of this collaboration: “The fact that the Black presence in British art through the nineteenth century has been ignored and that art historians, virtually all white, have seldom looked for it, is no accident but the result of class and cultural power.” In this quote, Marsh underscores the willful neglect that has led the study of Black representation in nineteenth-century British art to remain stunted in its development. *Black Victorians* blazed the trail for future studies in multiethnic makeup of nineteenth-century British art.

The anthology, *Victorians and Race*, focuses exclusively on black-white relations in Britain. Since race relations in these two countries are different, my thesis depends on this research to analyze Crowe’s motivations as a British abolitionist. This book is an anthology of different essays on Victorian attitudes towards race. However, the two contributors to whose research informs mine the most are Douglas Lorimer and Tim Barringer.

In “Race, Science, and Culture: Historical Continuities and Discontinuities, 1850 -1914,” Lorimer problematizes modern understanding of Victorian racism. As he notes, historians tend to regard Victorians as the “other”, the foil to our “colorblind” postmodern society. On the contrary, Lorimer claims the complexity of Victorian race relations shares many similarities with those of today. Lorimer asserts Victorian race relations are best understood on individual case
bases as Victorian attitudes towards race differed from person to person. Furthermore, in addition to scientists, he highlights the importance of artists, travel writers, novelists, critics, and historians in determining perceptions of race in the nineteenth century.

Tim Barringer builds upon Lorimer’s comments discussing how visual media helped white Victorians control how other races were represented, ensuring that white middle (and upper) classes were regarded as the most advanced of humanity. His insights revealed how perceptions of race and culture were increasingly shaped by the rise of popular culture and print media in the mid-nineteenth century. Barringer demonstrates the diverse methods Victorians used to control public perception of certain minority groups, as well as how some of the developed stereotypes ended up contradicting each other. Barringer’s cross-cultural approach to art historical scholarship intersects with my own. Above all, his comments on the construction of ethnicity through visual media helped inform my analysis of how After the Sale constructs black identity and how Crowe’s approach to black identity simultaneously differs and resembles previous representations.

Though neither mention Crowe, both Barringer’s and Lorimer’s research help establish the theoretical framework for my own examination of ethnic identity and relations throughout this thesis. Yet, the downside of both of these essays is that they are very obscure and focus on either overarching topics or individual case studies. Neither author covers specific facts concerning the abolitionist movement in Britain. To meet this need, I turned to three articles exclusively dedicated to critiquing Britain’s participation in the transatlantic abolitionist movement: Miller Palmer’s “How Ideology Works: Historians and the Case of British Abolitionism,” Marcel Van Der Linden’s “Unanticipated Consequences of ‘humanitarian Intervention’: The British Campaign to Abolish the Slave Trade, 1807-1900,” and James
Walvin’s “The Slave Trade, Abolition and Public Memory.” Each article highlights the ambiguous nature of the antislavery movement in Britain and its intricate ties with the nation’s capitalist ambitions. These articles, especially Walvin’s helps lend context to critics’ mixed reactions to Crowe’s black genre paintings and their blatant references to the slave trade.

On this note, this thesis also incorporates a wide variety of sources chronicling the complexities of slavery and the color line in American society. Though Crowe is British, he was attempting to replicate slices of American culture and racism. Therefore, it is critical to be able to grasp both sides of the coin, so one may come to a more detailed understanding of the transatlantic historical context in which After the Sale was produced. The four sources most fundamental to my thesis are the following: Michael Tadman’s Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South, Jack Trammel’s The Richmond Slave Trade: The Economic Backbone of the Old Dominion, Steven Deyle’s Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life, William Dusinberre’s Strategies of Survival: Recollections of Bondage in Antebellum Virginia, and Damian Alan Pargas’s Slavery and Forced Migration in the Antebellum South. Each of these books thoroughly document the social, economic, and emotional impact of the domestic slave trade in the southern states of America. Because Crowe only briefly writes about the scenes that inspired him to paint After the Sale, these books help contextualize the scenes that Crowe portrayed in the painting. In addition to these secondary sources, Charles L. Perdue’s Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves contains hundreds of interviews dictated by previously enslaved Virginians in 1937. Because of the interviews took place seventy years after emancipation, most of the interviewees could only recall the last two to three decades of slavery, meaning a large quantity of the interviews cover the period of time that Crowe was in the state.
However, out of these books, excluding *Weevils in the Wheat*, Trammel’s stands out as the most invaluable tool for anyone researching slavery in Richmond. In *The Richmond Slave Trade: The Economic Backbone of the Old Dominion*, Jack Trammel underscores how entrenched Richmond’s society and economy were in the domestic slave trade. Richmond operated as a major center for the transportation, breeding, and selling of slaves in America. Most significantly, Trammel explains the uniqueness of slave culture in Richmond, detailing why enslaved black people in Richmond were generally more assertive than enslaved people in rural Virginia. Very few have studied agency within the enslaved populations of early Richmond Virginia. Since this thesis investigates the intent behind some of the more empowering stances in *After the Sale*, Trammel’s research sheds light on the unusual level of independence urban slaves possessed in Richmond and helps answer questions on how bold or submissive enslaved Richmonders were.

This thesis branches beyond iconographic and biographical content. Though heavily utilized throughout this analysis, these methodologies were ineffective for addressing themes such as the agency of the enslaved in *After the Sale*. For this reason, I decided it best to look outside the reservoirs of traditional historical and art historical literature, and I came across popular film theorist bell hook’s essay on “The Oppositional Gaze.”

In “The Oppositional Gaze,” bell hooks dissects the politics of the gaze and how the gaze has played a role in white-black power relations since the slave trade. Her discourse is predominantly focused on contemporary female moviegoers and how they use the gaze to challenge and subvert negative film stereotypes about black identity. Yet, she opens up discussion of the oppositional gaze to any period where social unrest and reform had mobilized African Americans communities. Her thoughts on the political nature of the gaze function as the
framework for my own analysis of gaze and black-white relations in After the Sale. In addition to hooks’s analysis, this thesis also utilizes two other sources about gaze theory to help buttress the main argument: Manthia Diawara’s "Black British Cinema: Spectatorship and Identity Formation" and K. Harding Nahum’s “Manet’s Gazes.” Both references demonstrate how direct eye to eye contact between figure and audience historically has been employed to connote power and continues to be regarded as an empowering, authoritative gesture.

Now, almost none of the aforementioned literature mention Crowe or his art. However, despite his limited acclaim, there are a few primary sources that directly reference the artist. The main three biographical sources on the artist are Austin Chester’s “The Art of Mr. Eyre Crowe, A.R.A.”, Thompson Cooper F.S.A.’s “Crowe, Eyre, A.R.A.”, and James Dafforne’s “British Artists: Their Style and Character. With Engraved Illustrations. No. LXXIII. – Eyre Crowe.” The authors allow readers a small glimpse into how critics and the public saw Crowe as an artist. They also help fill in many of the gaps in his life concerning his education as an artist and his upbringing. Furthermore, though barely a handful of histories about Crowe and his art exist, the artist himself also wrote about his travels to America as well as the inspiration behind his sketches.¹⁹

His article in Household Words provides a firsthand account on the inner mechanics of the slave sales in Richmond, Virginia, and how systematized its slaveholding community had become. Furthermore, in this account, Crowe proclaims himself to be an abolitionist. This article and the one in the Illustrated London News provide invaluable insight into his feelings towards traders, the institution of slavery, and the mistreatment of black females. Crowe’s final commentary on his travels in America was in his 1893 travel book, With Thackeray in America. This autobiography gives readers a breakdown of Crowe’s thoughts while he traveled America
with Thackeray. The reader can follow along as he first becomes exposed to the inhumanity behind the guise of genteel American society. This book is arguably the most comprehensive firsthand account on Crowe’s motivations for painting African Americans in the American slave trade.

Now, after After the Sale’s first appearance in 1854 at Suffolk Street Gallery, London, the provenance of the painting becomes spotty.\(^1\) There is about a hundred years in which the whereabouts of the painting remain unaccounted. The painting did not reappear on the open market until the mid-twentieth century, and it is unknown if Crowe ever sold the works during his lifetime.\(^2\) The Chicago History Museum in the United States currently owns the work. Scarcely any research has been conducted on the painting, possibly because of its lengthy absence from public domain. However, this lack in scholarship extends beyond After the Sale. The name, Eyre Crowe, exists outside the canon of European art, and most of his artwork has never been studied. If any of his works are named, the mention is cursory at best and is usually accompanied with little analysis or biographical details. A couple passing references to Crowe and his art can be found in larger Anglo-American art catalogs such as in Jan Marsh’s Black Victorians: Black People in British Art 1800-1900 or in Guy McElroy’s Facing History: The Black Image in American Art, 1710-1940.\(^20\) Yet, these two references are more descriptive than analytical in nature and solely mention Slaves Waiting for Sale. Consequently, After the Sale continues to be relegated in art historical scholarship as an object of secondary merit. One minor exception to this pattern is Simon Gikandi’s reference to After the Sale in “Close Encounters: Taste and the Taint of Slavery.”\(^3\)

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In this chapter of his 2011 book, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*, Gikandi investigates the slaveholding and paternalistic practices of genteel American slaveholders. Though the author only briefly mentions *After the Sale*, he borrows heavily from Crowe’s own words on the subject to provide proper historical context. Instead of analyzing the painting, he treats it as report, an illustrative example of slave trading practices in the antebellum South. Though his research and mine are incredibly disparate in intent, in this one regard, Gikandi’s and my approach to *After the Sale* parallel each other. He prioritizes its importance as a historical document. In spite of this similarity, Gikandi’s one-page discussion of *After the Sale* can scarcely be counted as part of the literature on the painting. As aforementioned, Gikandi does not analyze the painting, and therefore, does not offer new insights. Furthermore, the painting is not the main focus of the chapter or the overall thesis for the book. Instead, *After the Sale* is one example out of hundreds used to support his overall thesis. Moreover, whereas his approach is purely historical, mine is art historical. In addition to these contrasts, this entire thesis centers around *After the Sale*, and thus cannot accurately be contrasted with Gikandi’s discussion because the intents behind both works are too divergent. Consequently, the only real literature on *After the Sale* is Maurie McInnis’s 2011 book, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*.

Maurie McInnis is a historian of American art in the colonial and antebellum south. The single chapter she dedicates to *After the Sale* continues to be the primary source for the work. Nonetheless, though McInnis briefly deconstructs and studies the iconography of Crowe’s *After the Sale*, her analysis mainly pivots around the last painting, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*. As no other secondary source even mentions the painting besides Gikandi and her, the painting, *After the Sale*, remains immensely understudied. She uses these three paintings as a case study of sorts to

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4 Ibid.
survey both the landscape of American slavery and how the image of the slave evolved in Anglo-American art. She examines the composition and iconography of each of the paintings at one point in time.

Since her work is the first monograph on Crowe’s art, her studies function as the bedrock of my own. Yet, her analysis of After the Sale is much more succinct than mine own. In her book, After the Sale is a work of tertiary interest, whereas in my thesis, it is the only item of interest. Her discussions often pull her away from the images themselves as she delves into the real topics of her book: transatlantic abolitionism, the evolution of abolitionist art, and the practices of slaveholding Americans. Both McInnis and I approach Crowe’s paintings from two distinctly different angles. Consequently, our research only intersects tangentially.

To be exact, this thesis pushes far beyond the scope of McInnis’s research, addressing matters she never discusses whilst wholly avoiding a few topics she emphasizes. In the following chapters, I will tackle themes of agency, identity, and authenticity. Summarily, Chapter One primarily focuses on Crowe and how and why he composed After the Sale. Meanwhile, Chapter Two discusses the agency of enslaved black Americans. Though enslaved, their legal status does not wholly define who nineteenth-century black people were as individuals. In this thesis, I acknowledge that though Crowe is important, it is equally important not to ignore the very people the painting is about.

Consequently, this thesis will be twofold, both literally and thematically. Chapter One centers on Crowe’s upbringing as an artist and his experiences in America that I argue helped shape the composition of After the Sale. Here, I present much needed background information on the obscure artist, discussing in-depth Crowe’s apprenticeship under Paul Delaroche, the French genre painter, as well as his brief enrollment in the British Royal Academy. Specifically, this
chapter reevaluates *After the Sale* and Crowe as the product of two colliding schools of thought, both French and British. This chapter also provides historical context for many of the scenes represented in the painting itself, such as the high number of children orphaned by the slave trade epitomized by both the trio of children walking on their own in *After the Sale* as well as the infant being pulled out of her mother’s arms. Chapter One is panoramic in its approach, blurring the lines between history and art history, unveiling the past of the artist and the history of the Virginia slave trade. However, whereas Chapter One dissects the entire painting and its history, Chapter Two narrows its lens to focus on only one subject: the black gaze.

Chapter Two is an interdisciplinary analysis of *After the Sale*, weaving together the nineteenth-century art of Eyre Crowe with primary source anecdotes and literature, visual culture studies, history, art history, and contemporary gaze and film theory. This part of the thesis examines black-white power relations in Anglo-American art and the role of the gaze in *After the Sale*. Three of the enslaved people in the painting gaze directly at the viewer, engaging with them on an equal visual playing field. I argue that by having these individuals gaze directly at the audience, Crowe has by intent or accident captured like a photograph the individualized agency of the African Americans he saw and conversed with whilst in America. To support this assertion, I apply bell hook’s philosophy of the oppositional gaze as well as quotes from slave narratives detailing the role the gaze played in nineteenth-century black-white power relations.

The term oppositional gaze specifically refers to the reflective, critical gaze of an oppressed member of society. The oppositional gaze is a look of agency, in which an oppressed party uses the act of looking to subtly challenge or overtly reject their disempowered position in society. Eyre Crowe himself is outspokenly abolitionist and is actively protesting the enslaved status of the African Americans represented in the painting. Because the artist himself denounces
slavery, I argue that he uses the figures of the enslaved, including their gaze and actions, to
denounce the subjugation of enslaved African Americans.

In conclusion, I assert that the figures and narratives captured and represented in this
painting communicate his own political stance against the immorality of slavery. Eyre Crowe’s
contributions to the archives of nineteenth-century abolitionist art have been vastly under-
researched, and as time passes, the details surrounding his paintings threaten to fade into
oblivion. To meet this need, this thesis endeavors to cast a light on Eyre Crowe as both an artist
and as an abolitionist and seeks to demonstrate the continued relevance that his art, After the
Sale, possesses.
CHAPTER 1

PAINTING THE TRUTH FROM MEMORY: *AFTER THE SALE* AND CROWE’S ANGLO-FRENCH UPBRINGING

In 1854, Eyre Crowe submitted *After the Sale* to an untimely showing at the Suffolk Street Gallery in Pall Mall, London. The host for the event had been the Society for British Artists. The Society had created it as an alternative exhibition for those who failed to gain entrance into the salon hosted by the British Royal Academy. The exhibition had started to wane in popularity by 1854, and Crowe’s painting received zero press. These details indicate that the intended audience for *After the Sale* had been British, the majority of which most likely lived in London like Crowe. Nevertheless, because the exhibition itself received so little attention from the press, James Dafforne’s 1864 appraisal in the British *Art Journal* is the first – and only – press statement the painting received.

Moreover, though the reviewer, James Dafforne, appreciated its illustration of Richmond, the headquarters of the Confederate rebellion, he could not refrain from critiquing the painting’s one titanic flaw: the protagonists were black. Nearly all Europeans and Americans, though politically divided on the matter of slavery, unanimously agreed black people had no place in high art. As the antithesis of the white classical ideal, black people subsisted in white minds as the lowest of creatures and therefore belonged to the lowest of arts. Dafforne rejected the presence of African Americans in British high art, or rather he spurned the active repositioning of black people from marginalized object to main character. Even in the “low” arts of graphic illustration, it was standard procedure to present black people in grotesque caricature. To show
black individuals as anything other than subhuman was not only unpopular but an insult to white superiority. Even when Anglo-American antislavery artists tried to render African Americans in a visibly sympathetic light, they were still shown as outsiders, on the fringe, wearing chains, or on their knees. By the time Dafforne reviewed it in 1864, ten years had passed, and most of the British populace had already sided with the South.\textsuperscript{23} Being an abolitionist was no longer in vogue.

As the British \textit{Atlantic Monthly} put it, “to express a decided adherence to the Northern cause was often to be singular and solitary.”\textsuperscript{24} \textit{The Illustrated London News} concurs: “There are few amongst us [the Britons] who adhere so relentlessly to the principle of human freedom as to insist on the immediate and unconditional emancipation of the negroes” (27 Sep 1856).\textsuperscript{25} Yet, in this brief window of time between 1854 and 1861, Eyre Crowe repeatedly returned to his memories of America, writing articles on the subject as well as creating five genre paintings about African Americans, both enslaved and free. Consequently, this chapter investigates how Crowe translated the abolitionist ideologies written in his essays and book from a literary protest into a visual declaration against the slave trade.

First, I examine how the style and theme of \textit{After the Sale} may be the product of his training under French genre painter, Paul Delaroche, and the British Academy’s advocacy for new socially conscious genre paintings. In this section, I also place \textit{After the Sale} as part of the Realist movement in Great Britain. As Crowe originally titled this painting, \textit{Going South: A Sketch from Life in America}, this chapter also analyzes the historical veracity of the events that take place in the painting, and I argue that \textit{After the Sale} should be viewed as more than a British salon painting. Based on its original title, Crowe intended the painting to be treated as a reliable illustration of America’s slave trading past and as a glimpse into the horrors enslaved African
Americans endured. To prove this intent, I cull several anecdotes from Crowe’s own memoirs as well as from slave narratives to prove Crowe based the events taking place in After the Sale on actual events and figures that he either saw or read about in newspapers and antislavery novels. Ultimately, in this chapter, I assert that After the Sale resides as a hybrid of the British and French school of thought and effectively subverts racial stereotypes in Anglo-American art by recasting the enslaved as heroic figures trapped in tyrannous conditions.

A Product of Two Nations: Crowe, Delaroche, and the English Call for Social Reform

In October 1907, Windsor Magazine published an article on Eyre Crowe and his six-decade long career as a British academic artist.26 By 1907, three years before his death, the artist had successfully submitted dozens of canvases to the British Royal Academy, earning him the respect of art critics and patrons.27 As can be seen in his A Good Whiff (c.1877), Crowe had developed a reputation amongst contemporary critics for his emphasis on individual characterization (Figure 10).28 The Athenaeum praises this stylistic trait, writing, “This artist rightly relies upon characterization for success, and deserves high applause for the result.”29 By the turn of the twentieth century, Crowe’s work had been disseminated abroad throughout Europe, America, and Australia.30 These accomplishments garnered him the job title of Occasional Inspector of the Arts in 1859 and induction into the Royal Academy in 1876 as an Associate of the Royal Academy (ARA).31 Yet, in Windsor Magazine, the writer of the Crowe’s article, Austin Chester, did not attribute the elderly artist’s success to Britain, but to Paris.32

Though born in London in October 1824 and thereby British by birth, the artist had spent his early years in the French capital under the artistic tutelage of Paul Delaroche.33 Still acclaimed today by modern historians of nineteenth-century French art, Delaroche pioneered a new subcategory of traditional academic history painting, the genre historique.34 Instead of
drawing inspiration from tales of classical antiquity, he culled from the histories of postclassical Europe. As illustrated by The Execution of Lady Jane Grey (1833), Delaroche infused incidents from the footnotes of early modern history with a tranquil atmosphere of dignified nobility (Figure 11). Crowe also gravitated towards early modern subject matter throughout his career. Yet, the British artist also touched on scenes from contemporary stories as well as his own personal history, such as with After the Sale (see Figure 1). Windsor Magazine surmises that Crowe’s inclination towards the genre historique was borne out of the influence of Delaroche’s teachings. Crowe entered the studio of Delaroche in 1839, and historians of Crowe’s early years document that Crowe joined the French master on an excursion to Rome in 1844. This detail means Crowe was still an apprentice of Delaroche at age twenty, less than a decade before his excursion to America with the author William Thackeray.

The similarities in style betwixt Crowe and Delaroche remain apparent throughout Crowe’s career. Crowe’s Christ’s Hospital Children in London Quad (1877), when juxtaposed against Delaroche’s The Children of Edward (1830), helps illustrate the critic’s point (Figures 12 and 13). The two paintings exemplify their analogous treatment of the human figure and meticulous attention to detail. In his 1868 book, Contemporary French Painters, Philip Gilbert Hamerton elucidates to his readers the key ingredient of Delaroche’s art: the human component. “With Delaroche,” Hammerton explains, “the human interest of the subject was the first thing; and though the artistic questions interested him also, and though he sincerely laboured for the best art attainable by him, these questions with him were always secondary. He selected affecting themes, willingly availing himself of the pathetic interest inherent in the themes.” Similarly, in After the Sale, Crowe fixates on the debilitating psychological component of slavery. In both After the Sale and his later 1861 painting, Slaves Waiting for Sale, Crowe blurs the details of the
background and paints the mannerisms and features of the enslaved with a sharper focus, prioritizing the emotional experience of enslaved African Americans over any other feature (see Figures 1 and 5). Crowe’s own practice of emphasizing the human component of genre painting most likely stems from the example of Delaroche.

To lend context, Delaroche once said: “A picture often says more than ten volumes; and I am firmly convinced that painting, as much as literature, may act upon public opinion.”³⁹ Hamerton attributes this ideology as the governing principle behind Delaroche’s work, that art has the ability and the duty to engage the public on both moral and political platforms, that the visual arts and the literary arts are, in a way, one and the same. In addition, because this romantic interpretation of the visual arts and their purpose frequently manifests itself in Crowe’s art, this statement is especially apropos for After the Sale. Moreover, this approach to painting as set forth by Delaroche introduces a key element of After the Sale, its faceted simplicity.

In “The Art of Mr. Eyre Crowe, A.R.A.,” Austin Chester arrives at a similar conclusion, asserting, “Delaroche interested his pupils in events of the past, helped them to understand that picturesqueness which lies in life and character, and showed them how to turn old events, with their passions and weaknesses, to pictorial use, and that Mr. Eyre Crowe has chosen the generality of his subjects from similar traditions or facts as his master is not to be wondered at.” Both Delaroche and Crowe employed emotion and individual characterization as a tool to effectively communicate an entire story through a two-dimensional platform.

Furthermore, in his review of Crowe’s Cardinal Richelieu and the Père Joseph (1854), James Dafforne also notes the influence of the French school in the artist’s painting style.⁴⁰ The subject of the work, now lost or in private hands, originates from a French text, Cinq Mars, by Alfred de Vigny. Delaroche himself had painted Cardinal Richelieu decades prior in 1829.
However, Crowe’s *Luther Posting His Theses on the Church Door of Wittenberg* (1864) and Delaroche’s *The Conquerors of the Bastille in Front of the Hotel de Ville* (1839) better visualize the artists’ shared disposition towards gripping displays of subtly nuanced emotion (Figures 14 and 15). Though Crowe possesses an earthier color palette, both painters blur the line between historic accuracy and dramatic tableau. However, Delaroche tends to drift towards theatrical, tenebristic lighting more than Crowe. Yet, the parallels between their approaches to painting explains why Arthur Chester and James Dafforne started their brief biographies on the art of Eyre Crowe by highlighting Delaroche and Crowe’s master-apprentice relationship. Both Dafforne, Chester, and others underscore the sway of the French school in the Briton’s art, but in their preoccupation with his early years with Delaroche, they neglect to note two other dominant forces that molded the direction of Crowe’s career: the British salon and the rise of Realist movement.

In general Eyre Crowe’s style approximates that of Delaroche, however, *After the Sale*’s contemporary subject matter and its engagement with current socioreligious politics also aligns this work with the Social Realist movement in Britain. In short, his approach may be French, but his subject matter reflects the rising interests of the British Royal Academy of the Arts. After Crowe left Rome in 1844, he finally returned to England and enrolled in the schools of the British Royal Academy for two years.\(^41\)

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Academy fostered a new direction for British art as they instructed their pupils to forge a distinctly British aesthetic. In the Academy Discourses that he delivered to his students, Martin Archer Shee, the Royal Academy President from 1830 to 1850, actively advocated for the development of a new national art. As the Academy gained influence, the *Art Journal* started to join in on the crusade, publishing articles throughout the
1850s and 60s, promoting the Academy’s stance that British artists needed to produce new material in the second half of the nineteenth century. Economically, traditional history painting, a genre popularized by the French, failed to attract buyers in the English market. Instead, British patrons gravitated towards genre and landscape painting. In reaction to this trend, the Academy and likeminded critics encouraged English artists to become either landscape or genre painters. Whereas artists like Joseph Mallord William Turner turned towards landscape painting as a way to visualize the politics and values of modern English society, others like Eyre Crowe selected the alternative route, ultimately giving birth to a wave socially-engaged Realist art.42

Examples of other contemporary artists working alongside Crowe in this vein included Augustus Egg, William Powell Frith, another London native, and the Pre-Raphaelites.43 Several British artists working in the Realist tradition modelled the composition or theme of their artwork on that of the eighteenth-century satirist, William Hogarth.44 The Realist movement encouraged artists to paint society as it was, with all its vices. Hogarth was renowned amongst British audiences for the social criticism he infused in his art, most notably with his moralizing *Marriage à la Mode* series.45 Consequently, nineteenth-century Britons considered Hogarth to be the Father of English Victorian art.46 William Thackeray also contributed to this thread of conversation.

In 1851, a year before his journey to America with Crowe, Thackeray lectured on the greatest minds in English history, referencing amongst others, William Hogarth and his satirical art.47 Thackeray pressed upon his listeners that the “care and method with which the moral grounds of these pictures are laid is as remarkable as the wit and skill of the observing and dexterous artist.”48 To Thackeray, the lessons of Hogarth, his ability to blend satire with morality and naturalistic detail, maintained their relevance in the new Victorian age. Through his
exultations of the late artist, Thackeray further positioned William Hogarth as the principle figure in the English school of painting. The Hogarthian genre was seen as the paradigm of the British aesthetic, and to become a ‘Victorian Hogarth’ was the ultimate aim of serious-minded genre painters in Britain.\textsuperscript{49} Just as Renaissance artists emulated the works of Classical antiquity, mid- to late-nineteenth-century English painters repeatedly referred back to Hogarth and his art, including Crowe.

As evinced by his oil painting, \textit{William Hogarth} (1866-68), Eyre Crowe was conscientious of the British Academy’s and critics’ fixation with Hogarth (Figure 16). The Victoria and Albert Museum had commissioned Crowe, alongside others like Frederick Leighton, to create a couple of canvases showcasing major figures in the history of western art.\textsuperscript{50} The canvas comprises a full-length portrait of Hogarth standing next to his pug. Crowe based the image on a self-portrait of Hogarth that is still hanging on the walls of the Tate Museum in London today. Yet, the self-portrait was more widely recognized as a print, so Crowe may have based the painting on images of Hogarth in popular print culture.\textsuperscript{51}

Significantly, in the entire series commissioned by the V&A, only two portraits featured English painters, Crowe’s \textit{William Hogarth} and Henry Wyndham Phillips’ rendition of Sir Joshua Reynolds.\textsuperscript{52} That Crowe decided to highlight a British artist amidst the myriad paintings depicting Italian masters points to the growing influence of the Royal Academy and its call for nationalistic art. Furthermore, this painting demonstrates that Crowe too considered Hogarth to be one of the greatest artists in the sum of western history, illustrating the continual influence of the nationalistic ideologies perpetuated by his former school on Crowe’s art decades into his career. However, ironically, this campaign for a British aesthetic meshed well with Crowe’s earlier training in France.
This oxymoronic detail explains why *After the Sale* incorporates a hybridity of both the French and British styles of art. Both Delaroche and the British Academy instructed their students to paint genres with compelling, thought-provoking narratives. Also, the correlation between Delaroche and the British Academy extends beyond Crowe’s personal history. In “Paul Delaroche’s Early Work in the Context of English History Painting,” Stephen Bann asserts that Delaroche’s famous *genre historique* originated out of a series of artistic exchanges between early nineteenth-century English artists and himself.⁵³ Therefore, the art of Delaroche is to an extent also English in character, an ironic detail that explains the style’s popularity in early- to mid-nineteenth-century Britain.

In the 1850s, the British fervor for Delaroche’s art had reached its peak. British critics and audiences craved to see his artworks on their salon walls. Consequently, that Crowe would lean heavily on Delaroche’s artistic style during these years and throughout his career becomes less coincidental and looks increasingly intentional. Despite *After the Sale*‘s political motivations, one cannot ignore its capitalist ones as well. Crowe sought to establish a name for himself on the English art scene and to capitalize on the popularity of his former master’s style would be a way to accomplish this feat. Conversely, where *After the Sale* diverged from Delaroche was in its subject matter. Delaroche primarily pulled from postclassical history, biblical texts, Catholic iconography, and secular literature. However, Crowe utilized contemporary subject matter in *After the Sale*, which more closely associates the work with British genre painting. The British school privileged realism, morally thematic subject matter, and narrative painting.⁵⁴ Crowe incorporates all three of these highly sought characteristics in this painting. Moreover, though the oil painting reflects Crowe’s personal politics in the decade preceding the Civil War, *After the Sale* also targets the interests of British patrons and critics.
Created in 1854, *After the Sale* was one of Crowe’s earliest oil paintings, and Crowe created works in the hopes he would eventually establish a name for himself in the English market. Consequently, the art historian, Maurie McInnis, conjectures that the artist’s series on the slave trade may have been born out of this craving to woo British critics and patrons. This theory, if correct, would further elucidate why Crowe continued to adhere to history and genre paintings throughout his career into the first decade of the twentieth century.

In line with the doctrine of the British school, *After the Sale* focuses on a subject of national interest. Although Crowe sets the composition in America, mid-nineteenth-century Britons still perceived the distant nation as its young, wayward offspring. Even as British tourists wrote back home of the differences between the two nations, the British still closely identified with their transatlantic descendants. Moreover, the painting’s abolitionist sentiment perfectly reflected the official stance the English government had taken on the matter of slavery.

Though slavery continued within the borders of the British empire until July 1838, the British government banned English participation in the international slave trade in 1807. After prohibiting the international slave trade amongst British citizens in 1807, England also tried to pressure other countries into capitulating to this rule as well. British naval vessels patrolled the African coast for decades searching for vessels trafficking in illegal human cargo. Additionally, in 1850, a formerly enslaved African orphan called Sarah Forbes Bonetta became the goddaughter of Queen Victoria after being rescued by a British envoy. The envoy had initially approached her captor, King Gezo, to persuade the African monarch to stop participating in the Atlantic slave trade. However, when the king refused, he bequeathed the enslaved girl as a mediating gesture to mollify the Queen. Sarah’s close alliance with the English sovereign officially signaled England’s unyielding commitment to the antislavery cause. These acts of
aggressive abolitionism helped eliminate from public memory Britain’s own marred history as one of the dominant figures of the Atlantic slave trade, where during the eighteenth century it deported over three and a half million people from the African continent. Though most Britons admitted their personal indifference to slavery, they still considered their government’s position against the institution a positive reflection of the nation’s moral character. Arguably, After the Sale originated out of the wave of nationalistic pride that swept across the British Isles as the hardened villainy of the American slave trade poised the perfect foil to the righteousness of post-slavery Britain.

Nevertheless, the sentimentality with which After the Sale is infused belies any reading of the painting as a work created with self-congratulatory, nationalistic intent like with Samuel Jenning’s abolitionist painting, Liberty Displaying the Arts and Sciences (1792) (Figure 17). Instead Crowe’s work is rooted in the tradition of genre painting, causing After the Sale to take on a more intimate, sensitive atmosphere. Furthermore, because the artist approaches After the Sale like a moralized French genre with an Anglo-American subject, the painting operates like a collection of cohesive individual scenes. Like a novel, each segment contributes to the larger narrative, culminating in a multifaceted tableau of a richly diverse set of individuals whose heavy steps Crowe infused with unwavering strength. The painting is composed out of memories, sketches, and emblems of Anglo-American visual culture. The more closely one looks at the painting, the more the moving mass of objectified, enslaved bodies transforms into a crowd of individuals, with their own separate frustrations, tragedies, and desires. Piece by piece, Crowe imbued After the Sale with unrelenting sentiment and symbolism, as blurred memory morphs into composite reality.
Composing After the Sale

Originally exhibited under the label, *Going South: A Sketch from Life in America*, Crowe breaks *After the Sale* into two planes: a roughly outlined background and a meticulously detailed foreground. In contrast to the muted two-toned background, the vibrant colors in the midground and foreground cause the dozens of figures in the painting to jut forward towards the viewer. Meanwhile, a blue-orange haze blurs the features of the background, softening the contours of the buildings that comprise the disappearing town of Richmond. A low sun beyond the frame of the canvas casts a soft yellow-orange glow on the town which is crowned by a blue sky. Crowe based the background on his pen and ink sketch, *Richmond*, that illustrates the cityscape of the Virginia capital (Figure 18). The illustration was first published in the artist’s 1893 travel book, *With Thackeray in America*.

According to the inscription in the lower left corner of the drawing, Crowe drew this sketch on March 3, 1853, the same day he visited the sales. Unlike in the painting, where the train is shown at ground level, the sketch reveals the train originally sat atop a raised platform. In many ways, *Richmond* can be perceived as the final stage of what occurs in *After the Sale*. In the sketch, the locomotive has already started its descent south, close to vanishing from the viewer’s sight. Comparatively, where the painting freezes the enslaved in a state of limbo, the pen and ink drawing exudes a sense of finality. The mass of enslaved people Crowe recalled in his earlier anecdote heading towards the vehicle appear to have already boarded, and the audience, like Crowe, is unable to assist. The viewer stands in the shoes of the artist and is forced to watch from behind as the train carries them away. The young Briton could have painted the sketch exactly as is, and the original title of the painting, *Going South: A Sketch from Life in America* would have been an apt claim. Sticking to the original composition would have made the title
more honest. Yet, as a trained genre painter, Crowe preferred painting the human experience, which the preliminary drawing did not illustrate. In this pursuit of a more appealing visual, Crowe elected to ignore the prearranged composition of the foreground, a decision which would eventually lead the artist to settle on the current layout of *After the Sale*.

In the final iteration of the painting, the artist has rewound the train’s progression and frozen the scene at an earlier stage. However, because he chose to partially abandon his original model for *After the Sale*, there was a gaping hole in his design. He had no source material for how to compose and draw the figures in the foreground. As a result, the artist needed to locate an alternative template, and as Crowe attempted to fix the gaps in his composition, he looked to the following for inspiration: his memory, Anglo-American visual culture, and the other sketches he made during his time in America. Consequently, one of the greatest traits of Crowe’s *After the Sale* is how it mirrors the movements of the past. From the train to the children, each element communicates the bloodstained history of Virginia’s capitol. To some, *After the Sale* may appear to be based on a rather undistinguished concept, a large group of anonymous African Americans boarding a wooden train. Yet, as one dives into the sociopolitical motivations behind the work, a calamitous racial tension overtakes the piece, transforming the two-dimensional painting into an expansive account on the horrors of slavery.

**An Unhallowed Serfdom: Trains, After the Sale, and the Minutia of American Racism**

Because of Richmond’s extensive centralized role as a slave trading center in the Upper South, the image of the train that Crowe includes possesses meaning beyond that of just being another component of the mise en scène. The wooden train emblematizes the railway system’s grave historical significance regarding Richmond’s development as a city built on manufactured industry and the commerce of slavery. The markings on the side of the wooden car identify it as
belonging to the “Warrenton-Ridgeway” and “Richmond-Petersburg” Rail line. The city names Crowe scrawls on the side denote that the train will be heading south to Ridgeway, North Carolina on the Richmond-Petersburg Railway. Only two railroads ran south through Richmond, Virginia, and the Richmond-Petersburg line was a prevalent one for itinerant slave traders who travelled throughout the Upper and Lower South. Crowe’s iteration of the train in After the Sale bears with it the memory of the thousands of African Americans who were forced to migrate South whilst confined within the its walls. In addition, the car itself is also emblematic of the industrialization of an increasingly segregated American society.

Known as the “n----r car,” this car functioned as the only car black people were permitted to stay in. When the car was not being used for a black passenger, conductors often repurposed it as a smokers’ car or baggage car. Its other functions only serve to underscore the rampant commodification of the black body that pervaded nineteenth-century America. According to the Petersburg Express, traders would at times force so many enslaved individuals in the car that the car once buckled under the weight. This news circulated across the south, and on February 12, 1859, the State Gazette in Austin, Texas republished the Petersburg article. It read: “On Tuesday morning the car allotted to servants on the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad was filled to such an extent that one of the spring bars over the track broke down, without, however, producing any harm.” As previously alluded, this passage draws attention to how the slaveholders handled enslaved African Americans as if they were mere packaged goods, without feeling or need. However, when Crowe first witnessed the racist segregation of black and white passengers, he immediately felt a wave of pity and disgust. He frowned upon the forced removal of a black man from a car that had apparently been meant for only white passengers: “The conductor rudely beckoned him out, we recollect, and ordered him to the front car with as little ceremony (and,
indeed, with no complimentary remonstrance) as if he had been one of the dogs who are penned together in one of our own railways.  

He continued his castigation of the strict American color line, declaring to his readers it was an “unhallowed serfdom.”  

Significantly, when one looks back at *After the Sale*, one glimpses fragmented allusions to this debased practice.

Crowe only placed a few individuals in the train car as if intentionally sparing the viewer from having to experience secondhand claustrophobia. Instead, he positioned nearly all the figures outside the vehicle. Nonetheless, almost anyone who spends a bit of time staring at the canvas can realize that there are too many people for that one small car. The staggering number of African Americans juxtaposed against the tiny wooden interior helps visualize the inhumane disregard for black life practiced by most European Americans. Furthermore, the limited capacity of the car versus the overwhelming numbers of the enslaved attempting to board it bears evocation of the iconic British antislavery diagram, *Brookes*, also known as, Thomas Clarkson’s *Slave Ship* (c. 1808) *(Figure 19).*  

The *Slave Ship* emphasized the inhumane, cramped interiors of human cargo vessels, a disconcerting visual tactic that enabled people across the Atlantic to glimpse the incomprehensible trauma that diasporic Africans suffered daily. However, where the *Slave Ship* underscores the inhumane clinical detachment of the slave trade itself, *After the Sale* centralizes the quiet emotionality of the people who were forced to live through the institution. In this regard, the painting takes its cue from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, amplifying the emotional interactions of the characters and as well as their reactions to what has befallen them. The painting is a tableau of despair, longing, and indomitable strength.

**Transgressing Boundaries: Subverted Stereotypes in *After the Sale***

Though initially inspired by Stowe, Crowe’s firsthand encounters with the American slave trade caused his understanding of the institution to shift beyond her text. Crowe could
scarcely tolerate the humiliation slaves suffered in the auction house. He described the traders as “Legrees,” the name of the slaveholder that murdered Tom in Stowe’s novel. He recounted to a British audience: “No pen, we think, can adequately delineate the choking sense of horror which overcomes one on first witnessing these degrading spectacles.” To him, no language had been written that could realistically express the depth of depravity he beheld in the streets of pro-slavery America. No pen, not even Stowe’s, had captured the hellish nightmare in which enslaved black people lived. The personal conviction in his words explains why when nearly all other abolitionist artists had illustrated a scene from the novel, he refrained. He wanted to paint the truth. He did not consider slavery a laughing matter. He recognized the institution as an atrocious denial of basic human rights, and if Stowe’s pen could not capture it, then, he would pick up a brush.

In spite of the dozens of adults comprising the canvas, one of the main interactions in *After the Sale* belongs to that of a little girl who stands at the forefront of the painting clutching an infant against her as a toddler follows behind her. The young girl depicted in this interaction possesses none of the blithe gaiety seen in the Junius Brutus Stearns’s *George Washington as a Farmer at Mount Vernon* (1851), a work which embodies the various stereotypes that dominated nineteenth-century Anglo-American visual culture (Figure 20). Contrarily, the heavy infant the girl props on her thigh conveys the immense responsibility she literally and figuratively must carry at such a young age. Not only has the trade denied her humanity, but also a childhood. With no adult to fend for them, she bears the burden of caretaker. She has become mother and sister to both this infant and the toddler that stands behind her. They are the children lost to the slave trade. Women and children are commonly seen in abolitionist art, but usually, the mother is shown with her child, especially being separated as the scene above the girl alludes.
unfamiliar territory of the seemingly orphaned girl and infant suggests Crowe may have encountered a girl like this one.

The engraving, *Slave Sale, Charleston, South Carolina*, demonstrates that Crowe had seen children – even infants – that had been torn from their parents (Figure 21). The engraving is based on a sketch that he created on the spot. In the scene, he shows a cacophony of figures. A crowd of upper-class white men watch the proceedings of a slave sale as a large group of black men and women stand on a stage awaiting their fate. Most prominent on the stage is a black mother who watches with a wary eye as a white man lifts a hat off the infant in her arms as if to examine the child further. This hat and the clothing of the newborn is similar to the one worn by the second infant in the center of *After the Sale* who is being pulled out of her mother’s arms. The central scene in the painting of the family being torn apart most likely originated from this sketch. Moreover, towards the bottom left, there are two black figures cut off from the mass of enslaved adults: a child and a toddler. The two children sit in the dirt right beside two men on horseback, one white and one black. Yet, the whip the black man grasps tightly in his hand implies he too was enslaved, working at the behest of his master beside him. The child sits on the ground in front of the black man with one leg propped up, and the toddler glances up towards the horses that come dangerously close to trampling her.

Though alarming to witness, even as a pen and ink sketch, finding a deserted infant lying in the road was a common occurrence in the domestic slave trade. Several accounts dictated by formerly enslaved Virginians confirm the frequency in which slaveholders ripped nursing infants from their mothers’ arms. Samuel Walter Chilton who lived in Richmond Virginia informed his interviewer of how much he deplored the practice: “setch a cryin’ an screamin’ you ain’t nebber heard like dem pitiful cries of dem po’ slaves. Dat was a sad partin’ time. Little babies was taken
from deir mothers breast while nursin’ some time dat little mouth be holin’ titght but dey
snatched him away. What did dem ole mean marster keer. No, dey jes ain’ had no pity an er-er
feelin’ in dey hearts.” Yet, Fannie Berry, a resident of Petersburg, Virginia, explains that this
event not only took place during sales, but also afterwards when young African American
mothers were boarding the train. A formerly enslaved Virginian who lived in Petersburg, Berry’s
narrative sheds light on this phenomenon.

There was young gals an’ dey were marched down to the train – baby, baby! I can
recollect it – a terrible time too, it wuz. Dar was a great crying and carrying on
mongst the slaves who had been sold. Two or three of dem gals had young babies
taking with ‘em. Poor little things. As soon as dey got on de train dis ol’ new
master had train stopped an’ made dem poor gal mothers take babies off and laid
dem precious things on de groun’ and left dem behind to live or die. When babies
were left dat way dey didn’t b’longst to nobody an’ some po’ white man would
take dem an’ raise dem up as his slaves and make ‘em work on his plantation an’
if he wanted to, would sell ‘em.

As Berry illuminates, this practice functioned to a certain degree as the poor man’s
slavery. People who could not afford to buy their enslaved African Americans could glean, so to
speak, from the remnants of infants and toddlers left in the wake of more wealthy slaveholders.
Though an alien tourist, Crowe manages to capture these details in the sketches. He then
recomposed them, creating the final composition of After the Sale, and herein lies the richness
and the magnetism of the painting, not its stylistic traits but its ability to open a window into the
lives of enslaved African Americans, albeit from an outsider’s perspective. Nevertheless, when
one considers who Crowe’s father was, Crowe’s ability to notice and record intricate details
starts to make more sense. After all, his father, Eyre Evans Crowe, happened to be both an
historian and a journalist. He authored the History of France as well as a manuscript on
contemporary Irish culture. In Windsor Magazine, Arthur Chester also draws this connection,
surmising that Crowe’s vast stores of knowledge and intellect most likely derived from his
father. The artist had been raised in an environment where attention to detail was a financial necessity. Yet, this point prompts the question: Was the lonely girl Crowe portrayed in the foreground also inspired by a real memory?

After returning to England in 1853, Crowe published three works covering his trip to America. In all three, he heavily sympathized with the plight of the enslaved black females he encountered. In his 1857 article, “Sketching at a Slave Auction,” the artist recollects the gross mishandling of a young enslaved girl, “of some fifteen or sixteen years of age.” He wrote: “As I left the [first] room, I noticed the auctioneer locking the door after him, and rudely pushing the young negress, while telling her to be off to other quarters, – I suppose those of her purchaser, – and she flitted out of sight down the street. This was the first example I had noticed in the United States of ill-treatment to that sex, for which a chivalrous deference is every where [sic] exacted.”

By the phrase, “This was the first example,” Crowe underscores for his readers that this mistreatment was not a singular event, implying that he saw these abuses repeated on numerous occasions. Yet, he only shares one example with his audience, and even then, he discusses the event in a chaste manner. Later in the article, Crowe comments that the enslaved were driven to strip naked and then paraded one by one in front of the audience. Though he makes a vague reference to a naked man who was forced to endure this humiliating experience, Crowe never mentions the women, though by logic he must have seen them unclothed too. The omission appears to be done almost as if out of deference to their gender. Moreover, in the quoted passage, his diction reeks of disdain. No matter their ethnicity, it offended him as an English gentleman to witness the maltreatment of the ‘fairer sex.’ Because of his upbringing, Crowe was predisposed to be particularly impacted by the travails of enslaved women. In this same article, the artist
wrote that he almost completely forgot about the other enslaved people in the third auction house he visited because he was so distracted by the central grouping of a woman nestled with her children:

I do not hesitate to pronounce the spectacle which here presented itself to be one of the most touching which could well be revealed to the sight. On a bench sat, in expectancy of coming fate, a buxom negress, clasping an infant in her arms; its little profile lost in the folds of her ample neck-handkerchief, its little black and shoeless feet dangling from her lap. Other children, a trifle older, lounged on each side of her…Nestling at the left was a little girl, who looked wistfully in the direction of the coming company, as if conscious of some strange foreshadowed event. The diminutive, striped cap, and the cinnabar-coloured shoes attested the mother’s care of her. This group occupied the centre of the bench, and so engrossed one’s interest, that the four other women who made up the complement of wright which the seat was made to hold, seemed quite secondary personages.79

In this passage, Crowe admitted his bias towards scenes depicting the bonds between enslaved children and their mothers. Moreover, he reveals his interest in the inner psyches and thoughts of these individuals. He privileged their individual thoughts above the others, capturing in explicitly detailed prose their anxious gestures and expressions. Conversely, with the others in the room, he listed only their physical traits. Though he pitied their plight, they are an afterthought in comparison to the more sympathetic figures of lost children and tormented mothers. The sole black man in the final auction room receives Crowe’s least sympathetic reaction. The artist distinguished the male as a “stolid-looking negro” who “seemed almost to belong to an inferior caste of blacks from the excessive protrusion of his thick under-lip: a feature which seems to vary, according to the known law of labial deformity.”80 In actuality, the only African Americans whose safety the artist prays for in his writings were that of the mother and her children because he feared they would be sold away from each other. Due to his obvious abolitionist activities – slaveholders did not sketch the auction process – Crowe was soon after chased from the auction by a mob of angry traders, and he never found out what befell the
woman and her children. Therefore, it is likely that the girl depicted in *After the Sale* is not a fictionalized character but instead may symbolize a girl or a group of girls that he witnessed heading South, especially because of the time and location in which the auctions transpired.

Like any other business based on supply and demand, the American slave trade ebbed and flowed with the seasons, and by chance, the artist arrived in Richmond in March when the trade was in full swing. Because summer and autumn were busy months requiring intensive labor in farming and harvesting, many plantation owners started looking to purchase more enslaved individuals in late winter and early spring, in anticipation of the next cycle of planting. In their letters, speculators such as New Orleans native, James H. Bryan, identified January, February, and March as the peak season for attending auctions and purchasing enslaved persons, though the season sometimes opened as early as December.81 The Richmond and the Charleston slave markets, the two which Crowe captured in his sketches, both happened to be closely entangled with the New Orleans market in the Lower South. Richmond and Charleston specialized in the importation and exportation of enslaved African Americans. As such, the cities vastly appealed to itinerant slave traders, especially in Richmond, causing an abnormally high traffic of enslaved persons.

Unbeknownst to Crowe at the time, Richmond, Virginia was the largest slave market in the Upper South.82 A staggering percentage of enslaved black children were sold separately from their families throughout America. Thirty-three percent of enslaved children were ripped from their families during the domestic slave trade.83 Of the hundreds of thousands of enslaved African Americans forced to migrate each decade, most were children and young males and females of marriageable age.84 Eight- to fifteen-year-old ‘singles’ comprised twenty-five percent the interregional slave trade. The term single means slavers auctioned them off as if they were
unmarried orphans, regardless of their actual family dynamic. For the age group twelve to fifteen, females constituted the majority of this statistic. In regard to Richmond specifically, it too prided itself on being a “negro-raising state for other states” and functioned largely as a major hub for the domestic slave trade. Therefore, these percentages may have been even higher in the Virginia capital. A single Richmond-based trading company, R. H. Dickinson & Bro. auctioned off two thousand black people a year, and another, Hill & Co., grossed over two million dollars in sales in 1856. These numbers give new light to Crowe’s earlier statement, “we saw the usual exodus of negro slaves.” In Richmond, the artist would have been bombarded by images of mistreated and abused children and girls being stripped of any sense of belonging and community they had left. Crowe appeared to be particularly disturbed with the maltreatment of black children whenever he encountered the slave trade. Nearly all of Crowe’s sketches of the Richmond slave trade featured children. As a result, it is probable that he focused so intently on the trio of children in the painting in memory of the actual ones in Richmond, Virginia and Charleston, South Carolina. Further, visual analysis demonstrates that Crowe did base a few of the figures in After the Sale on actual sketches of enslaved African Americans. Close comparison of the painting with his American sketches reveals the girl and the infant she holds in After the Sale are pulled from an amalgamation of sources, instead of one single memory.

When the main infant in After the Sale is juxtaposed against the infant in the engraving, Slave Sale, Charleston, South Carolina, one can observe how Crowe relied on this sketch for source material (see Figures 1 and 21). For instance, the baby in the girl’s arms approximates in both features and attire the one lying precariously close to the horses’ hooves in the engraving, and the viewer can grasp how Crowe relied on extraneous source materials to help him populate
the massive crowd of black Americans that comprise *After the Sale*. In this black and white photocopy of the Charleston sketch, one can see in sharp detail the outline of the infant’s dress. Its short, bunched sleeves match those of the infant in *After the Sale*. However, *The Illustrated London News* printed the colored version of the engraving on November 29, 1856 (Figure 22). Whereas the black and white photocopy allows modern viewers to compare the silhouettes of the two children more clearly, the original colored version reveals another feature the two possess; their dresses share the same pink coloring combined with an off-white underskirt or hem. Their congruous facial types also resemble one another, each containing animated expressions on rectangular faces. The two infants match each other in appearance at every facet, strongly implying that the two infants are one and the same, that the orphaned babe seen in *After the Sale* is based on the maltreated one Crowe saw in Charleston.

In 1854, when Crowe reworked the sketch into the painting, *Slave Sale in Charleston, South Carolina*, he intentionally removed the infant from the composition (see Figure 2). No doubt, viewing a helpless child lying in the dirt at a British exhibition would have deeply appalled and offended the sensibilities of the local public. Yet, by including the baby in *After the Sale*, the artist avoided entirely erasing the institution’s blatant desertion of the black newborn. Instead, he places her in the arms of another child who has already suffered her fate. They are bound together in dejected solidarity. To better grasp how else Crowe’s Charleston sketches inform the composition of *After the Sale*, it is necessary to first understand how he composed the contemporaneous painting, *Slave Sale in Charleston, South Carolina* which was painted only a few months prior (see Figure 2).

In *Slave Sale in Charleston, South Carolina*, just like its original sketch, a crowd of Southern gentlemen and traders stands on either side of the stage. However, Crowe has made
alterations to the scene. Not only has he removed the forsaken infant, but he has already removed the mass of buyers in front of the stage, so the viewer can better see what is happening. The same woman from the sketch stands on the stage holding a child. Yet, since Crowe has parted the sea of gentleman, the audience can now see that she is not leaving the stage but stepping onto a rocky platform. Whereas before it had appeared as if she was looking down in subservience and fear, now, the audience can see she looks down to watch her step. While the treatment of her body as merchandise humiliates and objectifies her, the tiny detail of her having to look down to watch her step individualizes her. It separates the woman from the mass of white and black bodies that surround her. She shares the central focus along with the auctioneer. Instead of being the anonymous victim in this memory, she becomes a major protagonist, of equal visual weight as her white oppressor.

This unique motif of the central black protagonist and the anonymous white individual continues throughout his series of paintings documenting the American slave trade. However, Crowe’s emphasis on the demarginalization of the enslaved is increasingly more prominent in his later works on the subject, including *After the Sale*. In *After the Sale*, the white slave trader has been pushed to the fringes of the canvas. The viewer works through the various interactions amongst the members of the slave community before arriving at the traders engaged in conversation. This scene is almost inconsequential in the face of the overwhelming numbers of black people that dominate the canvas from frame to frame.

With the trinity of children in the bottom left, Crowe repeats in the girl the stance of the woman from the auction. The adolescent girl pauses mid-step, her right foot poised on top of the large rock before her. The dynamism of this position echoes that of contemporary history paintings and their use of cross-diagonals to evoke a sense of tension and charged heroism, such
as in John Singleton Copley’s *Watson and the Shark* (1778), Eugene Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading the People* (1830), and Emanuel Leutze, *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1851) (Figures 23 to 25).

In all three of these paintings, the major figures, such as George Washington, lean forward in singular determination. Their gaze is focused and clear. Their cloaks ripple in the wind from the thrust of their forward momentum. The fierceness of the wind and strained expressions of the crew around him all mix together to create an intense narrative of valiant white heroism. Crowe appropriates this gesture here not to glorify white patriarchs or nations, but to pay homage to an enslaved child lost in an ocean of injustice.

The cross-diagonals inherent in the position imbue the young woman’s body with charged movement. The furious flapping of the shawl tied around her neck flies in sharp contrast to the American flag that hangs tangled around the pole of the train. The gust of wind that surrounds her becomes even more emblematic when one notices the motionless scarves and articles of the other characters in the painting. Nowhere else is a gust of wind present except with this one girl and with the woman who gazes wistfully out the window of the train. Significantly, they are the only two people in the painting who turn to look back. The expression of longing on the woman who sits in the train strongly suggests that the wind symbolizes a longing to escape. The breeze sweeps her napkin out the window of the train, to a place she cannot follow. Crowe infused this woman and girl with connotations of loss and innocence.

In the instance with the girl, the use of wind indicates that Crowe intended for her to be perceived as an empathetic figure worthy of not only pity, but respect. Her leg is positioned to obey the command to move forward, to propel her closer to the train that will discard her in the Deep South. Her leg moves forward, but her eyes look back. The push and pull between these
two opposing momentums, forward and backwards, bathes the scene in bitter solemnity. Heroism and tragedy clash in this one girl’s body as a toddler looks on behind her. Bereft and confused, the toddler drags a toy, a thin twig, in her wake. This trio of children forced into rapid maturity is the anchor point of Crowe’s painting.91

With this emphasis on tragic heroism, it may appear as if the leashed dog pulling at the back of her skirt undercuts the somber tone of the scene. Usually, dogs shown near enslaved black people in British art are usually either hunting slaves down, such as in Richard Ansdell’s The Hunted Slaves (1861) and William Gale’s The Captured Runaway (1856) (Figures 26 and 27).92 When it came to the slave trade, dogs had a strong connotation of being brutal enforcers of white power and black servitude.93 Though not as explicitly as Ansdell’s work, Crowe also alludes to the bloodstained history of canines in the American slave trade in Slave Sale in Charleston, South Carolina. In that painting, a sleeping bloodhound fills the space left empty by the infant he erased. However, the difference between the dog in this work and the one in After the Sale is that one is an unchained bloodhound, commonly used in hunts, and the other is a leashed house dog. Moreover, in Britain, when juxtaposed with girls and women, dogs connoted a gentler message. As can be seen in How Happy I Could Be With Either (1882); Reynolds’ First Sketch (1866); A Quiet Read (1878); and Brick Court, Middle Temple, April 1774 (1862), Crowe repeatedly employed this motif throughout his artistic career (Figures 28 to 31). In all four of these paintings, Crowe inserted a dog into the composition either near or at women’s feet. Each of these women engage in an activity that spotlight their intellect, femininity, or domestic strengths. All of the works, especially How Happy I Could Be With Either, showcased domesticated canines being overly affectionate and sensitive towards girls and women.
The inclusion of the dog actively pulling on the adolescent girl’s dress serves to further highlight her importance to the audience, especially because the dog possesses a leash, distinguishing it as a gentle, domesticated animal rather than a vicious hound. Here the trope of the dog as the white man’s best friend has been subverted. The girl moves readily towards the train, already instilled at such a young age with the fear of running. Yet, the leashed dog breaks away from whomever its owner is beyond the frame and frantically yanks her back. Her entire body is jerked back by the force of his tug. Instead of helping the trader, the dog’s actions hinder the girl from climbing onto the train. Consequently, it is necessary to realize how unusual the dog’s role in *After the Sale* would have been. To show a dog as neither a symbol of nor a perpetrator against, but a faithful servant to a member of the black community shattered the boundaries of acceptable high art. Instead of employing tropes that further belittle the enslaved, Crowe borrows a motif reserved solely for paintings of middle-class white girls – the dog as innocence.

For example, in Samuel William Reynolds’s mezzotint, *The Age of Innocence*, which he based on a painting by James Northcote, the artist placed a white girl in the center of the painting directly facing the audience (Figure 32). She smiles at the viewer as she gently strokes a kitten in her arms. On her left, a dog gazes up at her in adoration. In British art, young girls holding or nursing lost babies signified the child’s loving nature and instinctive motherly qualities.\(^{94}\)

Removed from the violence of the slave trade, the dog here takes on a more domesticated, genteel nature. The motif of the young girl holding an infant with a dog or a cat nearby had become a symbol of white virtue. Combined with the young white girl, the dog morphs into a metaphor for innocence.
This pacific motif is not exclusive to Crowe. A configuration similar to that in *After the Sale* can be seen in Ford Madox Brown’s *Work* (Figure 33). Begun in 1852 and completed in 1863, *Work* is another example of a British Social Realist painting. In this piece, Brown privileges the disadvantaged masses of British society, and the innovative canvas reflected back towards the audience the gross segregation and mistreatment of the lower classes and the public’s blatant disregard for their suffering. The foreground of *Work* features an orphaned adolescent girl with shorn hair and ragged clothes, carrying her infant sibling in her arms. A dog with a rope around its neck crouches by the skirt of her garment, and another child around the age of four stands uncertainly by her side. Like with the African American girl in *After the Sale*, the painter only allows the viewer to see the young girl’s back. Her facial expression remains veiled in obscurity, and the audience grapples with her hazardous fate. The similarities between these two contemporaneous paintings astound and further indicate that Eyre Crowe borrowed heavily from pre-existing conventions in British art when designing *After the Sale*. Yet, most importantly, *Work* demonstrates that the use of dogs as connotations of innocence and the fragility of virtue extended beyond Crowe’s oeuvre in the mid-nineteenth-century, but other artists, including a Pre-Raphaelite like Brown, also employed this motif in their own compositions. Brown intended for this image of an orphaned girl to elicit sympathy from the viewer. Similar to Crowe, he saw in the dispossessed crowd of impoverished workers a group of people worthy of being immortalized on canvas. Brown’s inclusion of the dog helps identify the girl as a tragic figure who despite her fallen state should not be despised or ignored but aided. The canine in *After the Sale* operates in a like manner.

Having the dog in *After the Sale* pull on the girl’s dress makes it unassailably clear that the dog is connected to her. It is not wild but domesticated. Its leash drags in the dirt behind it as
it rears up to get the child’s attention. These tiny details deny any readings of the dog as a joke on the inferiority of the black race. Its active efforts to pull the girl away from the train emphasize that the dog functions as a symbol of innocence. In this sea of corruption, she remains without blight, but only for so long. Tales of the widespread sexual assaults inflicted on enslaved women permeated abolitionist art and literature, including Crowe’s initial inspiration, Uncle Tom’s Cabin. The dog exists as a poignant reminder of her fate. As the train beckons her forward, innocence pulls her back. The dog wrestles with her skirt to prevent her from climbing onto the train, and the viewer grasps that if she continues forward she will leave what little innocence she still possesses in her wake. Through her gaze, Crowe hints at her inner turmoil. Her body moves forward because she must, but her mind yearns to be free.

The artist’s encounters with slaveholding white Americans and free and enslaved African Americans ensued as a series of eye-opening experiences. Together, they help shine a light on the motivations that shaped After the Sale. One of the most consequential stories Crowe shared with British readers was that of his train ride to Baltimore, Maryland. During the trip, the young Briton spotted a black man lounging in a seat nearby him. Based on the artist’s sketch, Negro Expulsion from Railway Car, Philadelphia, the African American gentleman wore a three-piece suit and a top hat and possessed a medium-sized bag filled with his belongings (Figure 34). Crowe immediately set to drawing the man only to accidentally capture a darker incident than he originally intended. Shortly after Crowe started sketching, the conductor approached the African American male in anger, ordering him to leave the compartment immediately. Apparently, to Crowe’s surprise, this car had been only for white passengers. It was then, when the black man complied and trudged over to an adjoining compartment, that Crowe finally became aware of the
‘black’ part of the train: “I now saw for the first time an ill-lighted compartment next the engine, in which were already ensconced a young negro and his wife, or female companion.”

This incident acts almost poetically as a microcosm for his entire journey throughout the North and Upper South of America. This confrontation with the unapologetic, belligerent racism that vastly characterized European American society literally shifted Crowe’s perspective. For the first time, he detected a world external to his own white hegemonic bubble. He gazed into the lives of the African Americans around him and acknowledged the pointlessness of their suffering. Just as the event on the train caused Crowe to spy the dimly lit compartment next to the engine, the other atrocities he witnessed helped him divulge the dark side of American society. Specifically, he called this facet, “the dread arcana of the Slave-Trade,” or in modern vernacular, the dreaded secrets of the slave trade. The reason he labels it a dreaded secret is because the numerous efforts white Richmonders took to prevent Crowe from witnessing and disclosing the realities of slavery.

White Americans actively sought to deter Crowe, or any other foreigner, from witnessing the inhumane transactions that happened within the borders of the young British offshoot that swore its deeds were “under God.” Foreign journalists and artists, like Crowe, were met with censure and the threat of being tarred and feathered or lynched. The traders that Crowe met at the auction had chased him out the door in the fashion of a mob seething with violent intent, and when the young Briton returned to his hotel, his hosts remarked in astonishment that it was a wonder he was even still alive. Though many Richmond slaveholders labelled slavery a “dreadful institution,” they punished anyone who dared to capture it on paper. An 1856 article produced by an unknown abolitionist in The Illustrated London News confirms that this attitude stemmed from a fear of the antislavery movement: “The dread of the name of abolition and
everything savouring of the name is so great that the population have more or less the character of spies. The stranger notices that his steps are watched with that suspicion characteristic of sentinelled fortresses.”102 In this passage, the hatred that oozes from the pores of the slaveholders originated out of a need to wield total control over their own narrative, in particular how the public would see them and their involvement in slavery. This reaction from the slaveholders stemmed from a fear of losing power over subjugated African American communities. Anyone who dared to write or visualize any message counter to the official statement that slavery remained necessary threatened to destabilize the core identity and income of white American slaveholders.

The speculators in the auction house on March 3 chased Crowe because the inherent power of the images he possessed in his hand. Despite their efforts to snare him, Crowe successfully evaded capture and would indeed use those very sketches to produce some of the most impactful artworks of his career. Through his paintings and writings, Crowe peeled back a curtain of deception and false American gentility, effectively exposing to the British public the pervasive corruption of young nineteenth-century America. The American slave trade existed as one of the darkest struggles for liberty to ever grace human history, but soon, Crowe would confront a second reality, that this ethnic struggle for white power had bled into the mindsets of the British art market as well.
CHAPTER 2
THE POLITICS OF THE RESISTANT BLACK GAZE

In 1865, the sound of emancipation spread throughout Virginia as Union troops ravaged Confederate territory. For one formerly enslaved woman, the second she heard she was liberated, she sprinted back to the plantation. With fiery determination, she reentered the den of her imprisonment. Yet, her return had nothing to do with hungering for old chains. She returned to repossession her gaze. Generations later, the woman’s granddaughter recalls the story her grandmother once told her: “she dropped her hoe an’ run all de way to [the plantation] – seben miles it was – an’ run to ole Missus an’ looked at her real hard. Den she yelled, ‘I’se free! Yes, I’se free! Ain’t got to work fo’ you no mo’. ”103 This triumphant moment of rebellion etched itself so thoroughly in the mind of the newly freed woman that she passed down the tale from one generation to the next. The woman ran seven miles, into the heart of enemy territory, just to gaze at her former master “real hard” and reclaim her humanity. This act served to counter years of dehumanizing treatment. Slaves were supposed to cower before their “masters.” Yet, this woman looked the slaveholder directly in the eye. Her look criticized and convicted. It communicated that as a new American citizen the former mistress could no longer possess her. The slaveholding woman no longer held the authority to request anything from the female standing before her. Instead, the black woman swore with her voice and eyes that she would govern herself.

This chapter endeavors to analyze the reasoning behind the multiple instances in After the Sale where the black figures gaze directly at the audience. To be specific, this section of the
thesis is exclusively dedicated to analyzing the painting’s representation of black identity and individuality. In art, the gaze has remained closely entangled with themes of agency and power. In visual studies, the restriction or hiding of a sitter’s gaze can and has been read as a sign of inferiority, fragility, or weakness. The viewer holds the power over the one who looks away. Meanwhile, in the history of art, typically, the figures who gaze back at the viewer are read as either empathetic characters, authoritative figures, or as equals. Consequently, in this chapter, I argue that the presence of this gaze in After the Sale is a gesture of resistance, a proclamation against the dehumanizing institution of slavery from both the artist and the figures represented on the canvas. Moreover, I further believe that the myriad uses of eye-to-eye contact in After the Sale was inspired by sketches Crowe had created of real-life African Americans. Therefore, I contend that these gestures exist as more than an example of Crowe’s beliefs, but also as visual documentation of the assertive spirit that enslaved and free African Americans continued to demonstrate in spite their bondage.

Now, in explaining the power of the gaze in art, it is helpful to use this familiar analogy: contemporary film. To gaze directly at the audience in a film disorients and unnerves them. That is why the direct gaze is rarely used, and when it is used correctly, why it is so powerful. In “Black British Cinema: Spectatorship and Identity Formation in Territories,” Manthia Diawara explains the role of the spectator: “Every narration places the spectator in a position of agency; and race, class and sexual relations influence the way in which this subjecthood is filled by the spectator.”104 The audience as spectator expects to invade the world of the subjects in the movie or in this case the painting.105 They expect to be the voyeur. They do not expect the subject to gaze back at them, to gaze through the lens of the camera and step into their world. The confrontational gaze is the gaze of superiority. Only the lead characters, the principal figures,
gaze into the camera. This same understanding of the gaze can be traced back to nineteenth century painting.

In western painting, only the powerful could gaze into the eyes of the audience. For instance, Franz Xaver Winterhalter’s 1846 painting of the British Royal Family depicts Queen Victoria and Prince Albert surrounded by their children (Figure 35). No one dares to directly meet the gaze of the British subjects besides two individuals, the Queen herself and their youngest child, an infant. Everyone else gazes at each other, but only she holds the power to gaze at the viewer. The infant is no threat to her authority, so the baby is permitted to look with her. In addition, the humorous gaze of the child only serves to further endear the population to the Queen. The gaze of the Queen is an assertion of power, and she uses it to exert her authority over the entire British populace. Because of the sociopolitical ramifications of the gaze, white Europeans and Americans strove to erase any trace of the black gaze in art, including that of black females.

However, in her groundbreaking article on the “Oppositional Gaze,” bell hooks draws attention to the cultural phenomenon that had hitherto largely been ignored: the resistant black gaze in white visual culture. She writes:

The “gaze” has always been political in my life...There is power in the gaze...The politics of slavery, of racialized power relations, were such that the slaves were denied their right to gaze [at white people]...Since I knew as a child that the dominating power adults exercised over me and over my gaze was never so absolute that I did not dare to look, to sneak a peek, to stare dangerously, I knew that the slaves had looked. That all attempts to repress our/black people’s right to gaze had produced in us an overwhelming longing to look, a rebellious desire, an oppositional gaze.  

Though hooks intends for her audience to be modern black women as spectators of white films, her words also shed light on the role of the gaze in nineteenth-century power relations.

With the help of accounts from formerly enslaved Americans, bell hooks’s theoretical insights on
the oppositional gaze evolve from a position of hypothesis to that of certitude. In his 1845 narrative, Frederick Douglass mentioned several times the “crouching servitude” enslaved persons were forced to practice. In doing so, Douglass relates the centrality of the gaze as an instrument of power and the consequential fear of the black gaze amongst slaveholding Americans. The slightest glance could be taken as an act of contempt. His words confirm that a “mere look” at a white person was often immediately construed as a “want of power.”

Douglass expounds, “No matter how innocent a slave might be--it availed him nothing…To be accused was to be convicted, and to be convicted was to be punished; the one always following the other with immutable certainty.” Even almost one hundred years later, when reporters across the nation sat down with formerly enslaved Americans to hear their stories, African Americans remembered the sanctions once placed on their right to gaze.

Throughout the interviews of formerly enslaved Virginians, African Americans dredged up memories marred by abuse and sweetened by community. However, as these memories rose to the surface, they remembered the obstruction of their gaze, noting it as one of the injustices imposed upon them. As slaves, when a white citizen approached them, they had to quickly cast their eyes to ground to protect themselves from being accused of challenging white authority. Horace Muse, Jordan Johnson, and Miranda Singleton, three interviewees who were enslaved in Virginia, further confirm the pivotal role of the gaze in nineteenth-century black-white race relations. Horace Muse expressed to his interviewer: “white folks was sho mean den. Better not look at ‘em real hawd. Ef you did, you was sassin’ ‘em an’ dey beat you to death.” This rule functioned like a psychological ploy, controlling their gaze made the enslaved easier to dominate. If the eyes are the windows to the soul, then, slavers demanded every ounce of the black spirit bow down in submission.
In her interview, Marrinda Singleton interrogates the humanity of this treatment as she condemns the obstruction of her right to look: “Scandalous, dey treated us jes’ like dogs. The Colored overseer would beat both men and women. If dey beat our husbands and we looked at dem dey would beat us too.”\(^{113}\)

Frequently, in testimonies about whippings, one reads that slaveholding authorities ordered enslaved African Americans to not look at them. Jordan Johnson remembers how men on the plantation would go into the woods whenever they knew in advance their wives were going to be whipped; the men were not allowed to react in front of the overseers.\(^{114}\)

“But,” he prefaced, if the men were in the fields, they “dare not leave. [They had] to stay dere, not darin’ even look like dey didn’t like it.”\(^{115}\) Johnson tells his interviewer of one couple, Charlie and Annie Jones, who used to work alongside each other in the field. Annie was several months pregnant, and her time to give birth was drawing nigh. However, one day she accidentally cut down a young shoot, angering the overseer. As the overseer yelled at her, she became even more nervous, accidentally cutting off another shoot. Johnson describes this troubling memory to his interviewer as he recalls how the overseer then started to whip Annie for damaging the crops: “An’ Charlie he jus’ stood dere hearin’ his wife scream an’ astarin’ at de sky, not darin’ to look at her or even say a word.”\(^{116}\)

As William Dusinberre iterates in *Strategies for Survival: Recollections of Bondage in Antebellum Virginia*, the restriction of the gaze in moments such as this one served to further emasculate and disempower enslaved African Americans.\(^{117}\) In the story Johnson paints, one witnesses a violent exercise of white power. However, the slaveholders’ insistence that enslaved black people not look them in the eye suggests an underlying, painstakingly concealed fear of an authority external to their own.

In their threats to punish the enslaved for looking, one can identify an underlying uneasiness towards the black gaze. bell hooks explains that the black look, in times of intense
social upheaval and reform, transforms into an interrogating gaze. Slaveholders and overseers commanded the spouses of the people they abused to avert their eyes, as if the authorities feared what they would see in the irises of the people they subjugated. As previously mentioned, slaveholding authorities operated as if they believed the idiom that eyes are the windows to the soul, and windows work in both directions. Just as one can stare out, another can stare in. The bizarre nature of this rule obstructing the black look implies that slavers were trying to protect themselves from feeling condemned. This strict need to deny the immorality of their actions can also be seen in their demand that African Americans smile and feign happiness while on the auction block. Douglass discloses to his readers that slaveholders would even send in spies to infiltrate the slave communities. The spy would ask if the members of the community was happy, and if anyone answered no, the slaveholder would sell them away, literally uprooting any voice that could guilt his conscious. Within this context, the sociopolitical implications of the gazes used in Eyre Crowe’s antislavery painting, After the Sale, become immersed in the mire of mid-nineteenth-century British and American race relations.

In After the Sale, the gaze functions in two ways: directly and indirectly. McInnis identifies three separate characters in the dozens of bodies positioned throughout the canvas who pause to stare directly at the audience. First, on the left side of the canvas, a woman wearing salmon pink robes in the line heading towards the train pauses between steps and acknowledges the presence of the viewer (Figure 36). She carries a pink bundle on her head. In the center of the frame, another young woman in the wooden cart grips the biceps of the older stoic woman beside her. Yet, the young woman’s face remains calm as she confronts the curious viewer face-to-face (Figure 37). Her gaze further breaks the barrier between the illusionistic tableau of the painting and the world of the audience. The third figure who looks at the audience is the infant in the
troupe of children in the foreground. The infant twists in the grasp of the adolescent girl and peeks over her shoulder at the viewer, as if just noticing the audience’s arrival onto the scene (Figure 38). These characters look towards the (usually white) spectator, and the spectator returns their gaze. The gaze is a form of seeing, fueled by motive and intent, both subtle and obvious, and it can exist between the figures themselves or between the figures and the viewer. For instance, in After the Sale, there is the shared gaze between the young girl and the canine. The woman in the train looks outside, her vision wholly absorbed by an unseen vision off the frame, her expression clouded with desire for a hidden dream. Yet, figures also directly engage the viewer in an active visual dialogue as their eyes lock upon the spectator’s. It is important to recognize the dynamic of the gaze in visual studies and that the meaning of the gaze cannot be divorced from the historical context in which said gaze is taking place. Crowe’s Social Realist approach to abolitionist propaganda situates After the Sale within a convoluted contextual framework. Navigating the mercurial politics of British salon culture, After the Sale attempts to integrate the African American gaze in a predominantly white British society, a society that was still in the process of wrestling with its own identity as a free nation.

**Contextualizing the Gaze in After the Sale**

Though England was viewed by many in the nineteenth century (as well as the twenty-first century) as a positive influence in the transatlantic antislavery movement, the English did not abolish slavery strictly for humanitarian reasons. Similar to their American counterparts, British slaveholders refused to relinquish their control over the African-descended peoples in their possession. In the United States, the tensions between pro- and antislavery forces erupted in one of the most violent wars in that nation’s history. Conversely, whereas the Americans chose brutality, the British resorted to bribery. In 1838, to persuade Britons into freeing the rest of the
its enslaved population, the English government paid its slaveholding citizens twenty million pounds. Consequently, 1838 saw the termination of slavery, but not the disavowal of prejudice. Racism continued in England’s borders beyond 1838. In lieu of enslaved black labor, the British merely turned their colonialist gaze towards India and the marginally less abhorrent practice of indentured servitude. Belief in the divine right of white rule still dominated many Britons’ attitudes towards race when Crowe exhibited After the Sale at the Society for British Artists in 1854. This racially charged political tension colored how After the Sale as well as Crowe’s other works on the American slave trade were received by early critics.

For example, the dread of the black gaze and its inherent threat to existing power relations in recently emancipated Britain can be read in the British Art Journal’s 1864 review by James Dafforne. Dafforne writes: “However skilfully [sic] painted such a picture may be, the subjects do not commend themselves either to the eye or to the mind. Neither the colour nor the features of the negro race can be associated with European notions of aesthetic beauty.” The writer is swift in his denunciation of Crowe’s paintings, not because Crowe’s works lack finesse, but because any message related to black empowerment threatened the very structure of his identity as a white Briton.

In his review, Dafforne prefaces his critique with a reminder that people must be allowed to regard black people according to their own views. The subtext of the statement foreshadows his later explicit displeasure towards Crowe for focusing his art on black subjects. Yet, what precipitated his polemic against the presence of black people in European art was not Crowe’s paintings, in and of themselves. Instead, he was reacting in fear of the message it sent. After the Sale repositions the black gaze from the margins to the center, inviting European audiences to grapple with a gaze alien to their own. By 1864, Crowe had been appointed Government
Inspector of the Arts. For five years, he had held substantial influence in the British art world. His paintings were not to be treated lightly. In his analysis of Crowe’s oeuvre, Dafforne chooses to address the artist’s final two paintings on the American slave trade, *After the Sale* and *Slaves Waiting for Sale*. Dafforne first writes a succinctly dismissive commentary on *After the Sale*. He names the black figures in the painting, “newly acquired ‘property’,” inscribing traditional racial hierarchies. Both terms, “acquired” and “property” label the individuals in the painting as possessions, a debased status which reaffirms their inferiority to free white Britons. The only compliment he pays the painting is its accurate representation of the Richmond skyline, a deflective comment which intentionally distracts readers from the black figures on the canvas. However, it is not until he reaches *Slaves Waiting for Sale* that the motive behind his disdain for the works becomes explicit (see Figure 5).

Dafforne includes a passage from a prior *Art Journal* article which discussed the art showcased in the 1861 Royal Academy exhibition. The 1861 critic praised *Slaves Waiting for Sale* for its brilliant portrayal of African Americans. Labelling it the best work of the season, the critic argued that the psychological insight expressed through the figures demonstrates a rare power in art – the ability to capture the human spirit. This comment triggers Dafforne’s acidic retort. The allusion, even if unintended, of people of color being equal to people of European descent snapped the tenuous thread of power which held his own identity as a white man in place. As one of the regulators of race relations in nineteenth-century Britain, the *Art Journal* critic quickly responded to a perceived threat to his and his audience’s white supremacist ideals. Through his words, he strives to marginalize the black Americans on the canvas and reinforce white society’s position as the dominant race. His objection was not to the painting’s
skill, but to its perceived undertones of racial equality. The *Art Journal* critic’s words serve to counter the themes of racial uplift in *After the Sale* and *Slaves Waiting for Sale*.

Because the critic directly juxtaposes the racialized bodies of black and white, he inadvertently exposes the constructed underpinnings of whiteness. In “Spectacles of Whiteness: The Photography of Lynching,” Shawn Michelle Smith investigates how European Americans practiced lynching as a tool for defining whiteness in America.\(^{130}\) Though the *Art Journal* critic is British, Smith’s findings on the constructed nature of whiteness can be applied to both British and American society. According to Smith, to safeguard the idea of a privileged, advanced white race, champions of white supremacy aggressively sought to hegemonize the black body.\(^{131}\) Racism, at its heart, is a quest for power and control. In short, for the white ethnicity to be the greatest another had to become the least. To this day, one of the definitions of white is “nonblack.” That binarism is how whiteness was, and in many ways still is, constructed. The critic’s elevated status in society depended on the perceived inferiority of other ethnicities. In the excerpted passage, the critic actively engaged in this construction of whiteness and white superiority, stabilizing his identity from an external threat, an oppositional gaze.

In visual studies, the gaze, or rather gaze theory, is a multistable phenomenon. The gaze can be religious, social, or political. Arguably, within *After the Sale*, all three of these gazes can be found. Yet, between the painting and the audience, the gaze is either a search for empathy or a struggle for power. Whoever holds the right to look possesses the control. This power struggle between the ethnicities bled into the arts as artists and patrons repeatedly sought to cement the mythology of white supremacy in western visual culture.
Print the Legend: Redefining Black Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain

To control narratives of power, the perpetual enslavement of the black gaze became the defining feature of European and American art, both pro- and antislavery. In *Victorians and Race*, Tim Barringer underscores that the “concept of race is socially created and thus historically variable.” A construct must be continuously reinforced to maintain its power. In the British Isles, as well as other nations, artists had honed a prescribed formula for representing people of African descent. This systematic approach to ethnicity in British visual culture sought to ensure that only the mythos of black inferiority ever reached the eyes of the British public. Though there were a variety of ways to manipulate how black people interacted with white citizens in art, I have identified and coined the following as two of the most popular techniques: the supplicant and the minstrel gaze.

The supplicant gaze is a self-referential label, characterized by a (usually black) figure of diminished status kneeling down and gazing at a “superior being” in awe or in supplication. The Frenchman, Jean Moreau le Jeune, was the first, in 1773, to show an enslaved black person in this guise, labelling the illustration, *The Supplicant Slave* (Figure 39). Le Jeune created the engraving to be the frontispiece of a proslavery book, J.H. Bernardin de Saint Pierre’s *Voyage à l’Isle de France*, in which Bernardin was advocating for a more paternalistic approach to slavery. Shortly thereafter, the trope of the supplicant slave also saturated British visual culture, with the creation of the Wedgwood medallion circa 1787 (Figure 40). Because of its imperialist origins and inscribed colonial gaze, the market for supplicant slave imagery was expansive. The design appealed to antislavery activists, proslavery apologists, and middle-class conservatives because it promoted existing racial hierarchies accepted by all three parties. The *Antislavery Medallion* in the National Museum of American History exhibits the ambiguous way
that the popular Wedgwood medallion depicted the enslaved. With the *Antislavery Medallion*, a man, carved out of black jasper, kneels in profile against an off-white background. Only a single article of clothing covers him, the loincloth obscuring his groin. Two chains encircle his wrists and feet, weighing down his arms as he raises them in a gesture of prayer. He looks up with beseeching eyes towards an unseen white audience, and a phrase fences in his form: “Am I Not A Man And A Brother?” The design had been developed by the English Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade.¹³⁵ Notwithstanding, the image typifies the portrayal of the racialized body in English art.

Though this work was created for the enfranchisement of enslaved black people across the Atlantic, the medallion positions the white abolitionist as the Messiah of black people across the world. The words around the man identify that the being he supplicates is not God but his fellow white man. With the black man’s hands clasped in prayer, the white audience is framed as God on Earth, and the black man kneels in loyal servitude. Even in a work intended to further the cause of the enslaved, the ethnocentric ambivalence of British abolitionism comes into play.¹³⁶ Evangelical abolitionists saw people of African descent as two things: natural Christians and wanton savages.¹³⁷ These contradicting labels often merged to form one oxymoronic trope, the noble savage.¹³⁸ The motif reconciled British morality with their dependence on black inferiority, and this image of the noble savage persisted throughout the nineteenth century, most iconic in Thomas Jones Barker’s the *Secret of England’s Greatness* (1863).

Through its use of the supplicant gaze, the *Secret to England’s Greatness* manifests England’s preferred manner for depicting the black body as an exotic creature necessitating white governance and civilization (Figure 41). The painting is based on an apocryphal account in which an African envoy asks on behalf of his prince, “What is the secret to England’s
greatness?”.

Reportedly, instead of saying wealth or military might, Queen Victoria sent back a bible with the message, “THIS IS THE SECRET TO ENGLAND’S GREATNESS.” Barker paints the African in the tale like a refined beast as the black man looks in awestruck wonder at the bible Victoria clutches in her hand. Like a canine, the African diplomat in the painting crouches on his knees before the Queen as if in hopes that he may catch a crumb or two of her glorious splendors. The light raking from behind her, her patronizing gaze, and his bent knee, all combine to create an unassailable message of imperial British dominance. His posture echoes that of the supplicant male slave seen in the Antislavery Medallion. Between this painting and the medallion, there are two notable differences. No manacles hang from his ankles or wrists, and animal skins clothe his torso. However, these changes are not necessarily liberating. His supplicant posture acts as an invisible chain which constrains his authority as an African diplomat. The bible functions as the link which visually binds him to Queen Victoria, the symbol of white British authority.

The story swept through the British newspapers, feeding British moral and civic pride as the empire ‘on which the sun never sets.’ Nonetheless, the tale is a fabrication. No emissary from Africa visited the Queen. No African envoy bowed down before the figurehead of the British Isles and pleaded for Great Britain to give him sovereign guidance. The narrative is a colonial fantasy. English writers and artists invented a narrative in which an African kingdom acknowledged and depended upon Anglo-Saxon primacy. Though the apocryphal text intends to highlight black dependence on white authority, the anecdote instead exposes the efforts white Britons undertook to assert the legend of their dominance. The literary and visual arts permitted Britons to impose a colonial gaze onto the frames of black people. As the fantasy of the servile
black person became entrenched in British ideology, the supplicant gaze transformed into one even more insidious: the minstrel gaze.

Because of the perceived danger of black independence, white artists often undercut the uplifting influence of the black look by employing the minstrel gaze. The term, the minstrel gaze, draws its meaning from the context of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century blackface minstrel performances. Historically, blackface denotes a form of entertainment in which white performers with blackened faces appropriated and exaggerated songs of African descent for white entertainment. A transatlantic phenomenon, minstrel and blackface performances bastardized the intellectual contributions of black people. These theatrical events ridiculed black culture and individuality. With the minstrel gaze, white artists and writers overwrite the black voice, butchering black identity and reconfiguring it to fit a preconceived notion of blackness.

Blackface theater arose in England during the 1840s and continued until the 1970s, long after the United States suspended blackface theatrical productions. William Summers’s *Cinderella and the Black Prince* (1830) helps visualize the pervasion of the minstrel gaze in nineteenth-century British popular culture (Figure 42).

By adorning the guise of a black British citizen, Summers uses an apocryphal black voice to trivialize the customs of free black Britons and to minimize the influence of reform movements targeted towards the advancement of Anglo-Africans. Though an English illustration, Summer’s print was inspired by an American lithographic series, *Life in Philadelphia.* His *Cinderella and the Black Prince* was originally featured in a set of English prints called *Tregear’s Black Jokes, Being A Series of Laughable Caricatures on the March of Manners Amongst Blacks.* In the illustration, three black couples in mismatched clothes converse at what was known as a black ball. Their features are grossly contorted. Above the
central couple, two dialogue boxes appear letting the reader understand that the two are flirting with each other. The man asks the woman to dance, and she responds affirmatively, confessing to her suitor that she finds him irresistible. The dialogue is a bizarre mix of broken English and French suffixes. Many nineteenth-century Anglo-Saxons considered English to be the language of civilization. By showing black Britons as being incapable of speaking Standard English, the caricaturist casts black people as uncivilized. Though the figures try to replicate an approximation of British upper-class customs, the dancers fall short. This message is reiterated through the caption as well.

In two succinct lines, the caption below the title “Cinderella and the Black Prince” reads “Her form had all the softness of her sex/Her features all the sweetness of the devil.” The passage insinuates that the reason she falls short is because she is black. Black, by definition, can never approximate white. Herein lies the minstrel gaze. As the British caricaturist inserts self-effacing words into the mouths of free black citizens, he not only paints them as less evolved, but forces them to say it themselves. Unlike the supplicant gaze which aims to shroud the black look in servility, the minstrel gaze embraces the black voice but only so it may appropriate it. In short, where the supplicant gaze oppresses, the minstrel gaze usurps. Furthermore, the early existence of Tregear’s Black Jokes demonstrates that the minstrel gaze existed in British visual art before the introduction of minstrel theater. In Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain, Michael Pickering identifies Cinderella and the Black Prince as “proto-minstrel,” or prior to actual minstrel performances. Pickering explains that Britons gravitated towards the minstrel because its specialization in demeaning racial impersonations allowed Britons to neutralize the threat of the black ‘Other’. One can see how Eyre Crowe’s After the Sale operates in relation to the
minstrel gaze when juxtaposed against another contemporary work, Louisa Corbaux’s 1853 *Topsy at Her Tricks* (Figure 43).

Both *After the Sale* and Corbaux’s lithograph are the byproducts of Harriet Beecher’s Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. However, their reaction to the material contradict each other in both intent and execution. Their diametrically opposed responses to the novel partially rest with the text itself. Stowe’s literature merges two diverging fields into one, blackface minstrelsy and sentimental fiction, resulting in a hybrid text that is simultaneously uplifting and derogatory.\(^{147}\)

Therefore, just as the text inspired Crowe to paint and write about the American slave trade, the novel also served as an apt point of reference for those who wanted to completely mute the black voice and project their own. Louisa Corbaux’s lithographic prints centering on *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* fall into the second category.

With its dehumanizing, dialogic caption “I’m nothing but a N----r nohow”, *Topsy at Her Tricks* epitomizes the white supremacist overtones that steered the direction of art in the nineteenth century. The focal point of the lithograph, Topsy, was an infamous character from Stowe’s novel.\(^{148}\) The print illustrates the following scene from the novel: “Topsy would make a perfect carnival of confusion…singing and whistling and making grimaces at herself in the looking glass…”\(^{149}\) In this scene, Stowe casts the enslaved child in the role of a minstrel performer, initiating the process of her dehumanization. As Corbaux translates the scene from text to image, she extinguishes the remaining embers of Topsy’s independence – her gaze. Corbaux repositions the direction of Topsy’s sight away from her reflection in the mirror and twists her gaze towards the viewers so they can have front row seats to the performance. Here, like the original novel, Topsy exists solely for the amusement of the white audience. Her gaze and body belong to them. The little autonomy she had – her self-reflective gaze – has been
removed and appropriated for the satisfaction of a larger white audience. Corbaux’s vicious portrayal of a primitive black girl stands in direct contrast to how Crowe depicts black females in After the Sale.

The women and girls in After the Sale are the opposite of Corbaux’s Topsy, or rather an ‘anti-Topsy’. In the novel, Stowe describes Topsy as a bestial, wanton character. The slaveholder, Augustine St. Clare, introduces the child as a source of musical entertainment, whistling at her like a dog, telling her, “give us a song, now, and show us some of your dancing.” She is considered too devolved to be of any other use. Regarded like a wanton demon, the Topsy character acts as evidence of the laughable inferiority of black people. Meanwhile, the “anti-Topsy” has the opposite effect. Defined by her individuality, she is applauded for her overwhelming humanity, strength, and resolve. Whereas Stowe and Corbaux conflate enslaved dark-skinned girls with debauchery, Crowe emphasizes the reality of their forced living conditions.

What separates After the Sale from most nineteenth-century British art that depict people of African descent is that Crowe tried to abandon white supremacist mythology and makes a conscious effort to paint the lives of enslaved African Americans as authentically as possible. Though After the Sale is a mediated representation of African Americans, the painting engages with a way of seeing extraneous to the insular customs of polite British society. McInnis highlights how Crowe, informed by his training as a journalist and a Realist painter, strove to stay as true to nature as possible. In After the Sale, the figures boarding the train are neither objectified nor belittled. No shackles adorn their ankles or wrists. None of the figures crouch like children on bended knees, pleading for salvation like in the Secret to England’s Greatness. Moreover, no comedic elements reside in this piece. Its solemnity demands that the viewer take
the characters seriously. The black Americans on the canvas march with dignity as one disembodied mass towards the train heading South. The three figures who gaze at the audience remind the audience that black individuals trekking across the dirt platform are inspired by actual people. These three characters shatter the passivity of the painting and turn their eyes towards the outside world, halting the encroaching gaze of the spectator.

In “Manet’s Gazes,” Katherine Nahum highlights how this shared interaction of seeing and being seen between spectator and character shifts the balance of power away from the audience. The confrontive gaze has been a trope of royal court portraiture since the seventeenth century, and because of its association with the ruling body, nineteenth-century audiences associated this manifestation of the gaze with class and authority. Usually, in the early to mid-nineteenth century, artists still reserved this type of looking for those belonging to either the privileged classes of aristocracy or wealthy members of the rising bourgeoisie class. These individuals possessed authority in real life and could assert this authority over the public. Moreover, images like Winterhalter’s the Royal Family and Sir Thomas Lawrence’s Elizabeth Farren (1790) spotlighting female authority figures were rare (Figure 4). The wielders of the gaze in nineteenth-century western art continued to be predominantly white and male. With its emphasis on the gazes of black women, After the Sale destabilizes the dominant power relations of male over female, white over black, free over slave.

Numerous people regarded the black gaze as a threat, a hazardous way of seeing the world that threatened the current state of affairs. Out of this fear arose the myth that audiences were not interested in narratives about black people, a myth which is still perpetuated today. Dafforne used this argument in his critique as well. Yet, as much as the perspectives of black Americans repulsed, they also compelled. After the Sale exists in testament to the magnetic pull
of the oppositional gaze. Crowe witnessed the gaze of the imaginary Uncle Tom in prose and pictures, and he immediately sought it further in the eyes of the real black Americans around him. Crowe shares with his readers: “At every step we fancy we meet with…our friend ‘Uncle Tom,’ who, by some means, seems to have risen up [from the grave]…to show himself alive, well, and free [emphasis added].” *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* radicalized Crowe’s perceptions of African Americans, igniting a genuine interest in their lives and their welfare, both enslaved and free. He sketched them countless times, again and again, searching for their voice, seeking their gaze. One Sunday, after visiting a church in Wilmington, North Carolina, he disclosed that it was neither the pastor nor the sermon that snared his interest but the black people worshipping in the gallery. Their smiling faces left an imprint on his conscious long after the sermon text had been forgotten.\(^{158}\) To Crowe, those individuals were the message, a living epistle, so to speak. The inspiration behind the mannerisms of the figures in Crowe’s painting manifests through these stories. However, with *After the Sale*, because it is not based on an original sketch or engraving, the evolution of the gaze within the composition is almost impossible to trace. Usually, with later works like *The Dinner Hour*, Wigan (1874), Crowe chose to include only one (white) person who directly looks towards the audience (Figure 45). There are no sketches showing what inspired him to paint three figures looking at the audience. Yet, one can glimpse the muse behind the gazes in *After the Sale* through Crowe’s stories and by scrutinizing the evolution of the gaze in another work of his, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*.

**Tracing Origins: Borrowed Dissidence in *Slaves Waiting for Sale***

Unlike *After the Sale*, Crowe based his 1861 painting, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, on a preliminary sketch, allowing us to glimpse the initial inspiration of the black gaze in his paintings as well as its advancement. *Slaves Waiting for Sale* focuses on a group of nine African
Americans who sit in a dimly lit interior as an approaching group of slave traders and holders darken the door of the auction room. Moreover, there are two figures who sit apart from the main group of enslaved women and children: the lone male slave on the far left of the canvas and the woman with a turban on the far right (Figures 46 and 47). McInnis notes these two figures act almost like bookends to the rest of the party. Visually, they frame and help contextualize the central scene of mothers and children. Yet, what sets these two even further apart from the rest is their attitude. Between the woman and the man, Crowe buttresses his final painting on the American slave trade with two nonviolent acts of dissent, her interrogating gaze and his simmering rage.

The critics underline the sense of disquiet that exudes from the tense figures in the painted interior. Both times, in *MacMillan’s Magazine* and the *Art Journal*, the reviewers overlook the woman wearing a turban, possibly because of her deadpan expression. However, the man’s antagonistic countenance snared their attention. To be more exact, he impressed them. Commending Crowe for the array of emotions he manifested in the individual faces of those in bondage, *MacMillan’s Magazine* stresses the “sullenly resigned” posture of the enslaved man. A reviewer in the *Art Journal* further describes the man as possessing “the look of suffused indignant scorn, mingled with defiance.” According to this reviewer, the “settled sadness” of the mother, the “fretful” movements of the children, and the demonstrative resentment of the man culminated into the most moving portrayal of the slave trade to date. These quiet signs of resistance beckoned the critics deeper into the world Crowe had depicted. The 1861 *Art Journal* reviewer writes that *Slaves Waiting for Sale* is “the [sic] most promising work of the season” because it encapsulates the “appalling guilt of that accursed system” and its “most hideous horrors.” Just like the writer in *MacMillan’s Magazine*, this writer in the journal praised
Crowe for his attention to detail. The review in *MacMillan’s Magazine* is brief. However, the *Art Journal* reviewer spells out exactly why he found the figures and consequently Crowe’s painting so bewitching – its authenticity.\textsuperscript{163}

The *Art Journal* critic applauds Crowe for realizing the complexities of human emotions amongst the enslaved and for being able to render those emotions on a two-dimensional surface. The critic proceeds to explain: “In writing, no author will ever make clear to others what his own mind does not clearly see and fully comprehend; and artists are authors, who write with brushes instead of pens.”\textsuperscript{164} According to his British audience, Crowe had managed to understand the inner thoughts and passions of the enslaved people of America. McInnis further clarifies the incredulity of what Crowe accomplished. She explains: “While most paintings of slavery only reified white superiority and white power, *Slaves Waiting for Sale* made viewers consider the possibility of black power…This was a painting that did more than focus solely on white power. Here, in the figure of this man, was something startling for white audiences to consider.”\textsuperscript{165} McInnis reminds readers that what separates this abolitionist work from others is the shattered color line. In both *Slaves Waiting for Sale* and *After the Sale*, black independence, power, and self-determination can be seen existing alongside a predominantly white society. Yet, African American individuality, power, and enslavement were all foreign concepts to Crowe, a free, white, British artist. Despite his intellect, understanding the inner thoughts and desires of black Americans to the extent the British critics claim would be impossible for him to accomplish, especially on his own, just by observing from a distance.

As demonstrated before, abolitionists of European descent often failed to make the leap between their own preconceived notions of blackness and authentic portrayals of black people. Therefore, how did Crowe gain this “clear-sightedness” that allowed him to glimpse and
replicate some of the emotions and struggles of the enslaved? This apparent insight into the lives of black Americans suggests the sensitively illustrated figures in Crowe’s series was not a stroke of Crowe’s singular genius as an artist; instead, someone must have educated him. Sometime in his journey in America, Crowe must not only have witnessed nonviolent acts of rebellion but must also have listened to and incorporated, respectively, the acts and the complaints of black Americans in his works. The evolution of the two “bookend” figures in *Slaves Waiting for Sale* offers some insight into the veracity of this prospect.

Critics commend Crowe’s portrayal of the enslaved man for its rebellious undertones, but the defiant man they saw in the painting was not how he was originally depicted in the original sketch. McInnis also notes this discrepancy. She labels the man Crowe first drew in the preliminary sketch, *In the Richmond Slave Market*, an “Uncle Tom” figure because he appears happy and complacent with his position (Figures 48 and 49). With his distorted features and bulbous lips, he is a grotesque caricature of the African American male. Meanwhile, the man in the painting is pointedly not a stereotypical representation of a black man. McInnis points out that this image of a seated, hunched over man with a hat near his feet resembles a similar composition in one of Hammatt Billings’s illustrations for the 1852 edition of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. This illustration, *Little Eva Reading the Bible to Uncle Tom in the Arbor* would have been familiar to Crowe because he had just finished reading the 1852 edition (Figure 50). Therefore, McInnis argues that the drawings of Uncle Tom influenced the original sketch of the man, especially because in the illustration Uncle Tom is dressed in a suit like the man in the sketch. McInnis infers that the difference in attitudes between the two versions is because Crowe must have developed a greater, more sensitive understanding of slavery during the eight-year gap between the sketch and the painting. However, McInnis approaches the painting as if it was
entirely based on one sketch, only comparing *Slaves Waiting for Sale* to its original composition in *In the Richmond Slave Market* (see Figures 5 and 48). Yet, other evidence suggests a tertiary influence.

As seen with *After the Sale*, Crowe frequently borrowed from other sketches in his oeuvre to compose his figures. He altered the composition and figures of both of his earlier paintings on the slave trade to achieve a more desired effect. Crowe’s actions unto this point suggests that there is more at work than McInnis conjectures. Out of close visual analysis between *Slaves Waiting for Sale* and two sketches, *In the Richmond Slave Market* and *Slave Auction at Richmond, Virginia*, there unfolds a more multifaceted explanation of why the attitude of the man in the final painting differs from the one in the sketch. In *Slave Auction at Richmond, Virginia*, a recently sold black man storms away from the auction stage (Figures 51 and 52). The enslaved man clutches his left boot in his right hand as he shoves his left arm back in its shirt sleeve. His disheveled appearance is peculiar. People were less inclined to buy malnourished, unkempt slaves because they looked ill-fit for labor. As a result, slave traders usually dressed slaves in immaculate clothing to ensure enslaved people would sell for a good price. He walks partially bare foot, hastily getting redressed as he hurries to leave the nightmare of the auction behind him. Based on the scene, the dealers had most likely forced him to strip as they pricked and prodded him to determine whether he was able-bodied. Such dehumanizing inspections of the bodies of the enslaved commonly took place. As illustrated in a British print, *Dealers Inspecting a Negro at a Slave Auction in Virginia*, the inspections were conducted to discern the worth of the individual and whether he or she would be an effective laborer (Figure 53).

The print depicts five European Americans and one African American alone in a room, as one man pushes up the eyelid of the black man standing before him. The black man grins at the
audience while his eyes twist in two different directions. The writer of the article that accompanies the image, G. H. Andrews, explains the scene that transpired. Andrews relates, “they turned his head to the light, and lifted the corners of his eyes, to ascertain whether they were free from indications of disease; in the same way they examined his teeth.” The inspection process had not changed at all between the time Crowe first visited in 1853 and when Andrews visited in 1861 for Crowe writes of the same event:

…some doubt was expressed as to his ocular soundness. This was met by one gentleman unceremoniously fixing one of his thumbs into the socket of the supposed valid eye, holding up a hair by his other hand, and asking the negro to state what was the object held up before him. He was evidently nonplussed, and in pain at the operation, and he went down in the bidding at once. More hands were put up; but by this time feeling a wish for fresh air, I walked out…

Though Crowe only directly mentions sketching In the Richmond Slave Market, the existence of Slave Auction at Richmond, Virginia proves Crowe drew two sketches, thereby possessing two visual records documenting how the people at the Richmond auction looked and behaved. Based on the scene described in Slave Auction at Richmond, Virginia, the artist most likely drew the sketch when he first arrived at the sales. This reasoning shall be explained in further detail later.

In addition, his sketch, Slave Auction at Richmond, Virginia, highlights how some enslaved black people found the inspection so invasive and dehumanizing they refused to cooperate, staying stubbornly silent whenever a question was posed to them. The defiant posturing of the man in Slaves Waiting for Sale is first seen in Slave Auction at Richmond, Virginia. To see how, it is necessary to take a closer look at the man getting dressed in the sketch, Slave Auction at Richmond, Virginia. In the drawing, the man’s features contort in rage as anger rolls off his shoulders in waves, and a white gentleman ambles after him, as if attempting to speak with him. The white man possibly could be his new owner. Yet, the black man blatantly brushes him aside. The way he thrusts his arm in his left sleeve echoes the thrust
of a punch. Rebellious rage exudes from every pore in his body. He ignores the commands of the white gentleman behind him and takes his wrath out on his clothes and the dirt on which he stomps. Furthermore, because this man is in the process of getting redressed, one can determine exactly when this scene takes place. When Crowe first arrives at the auction house, he relays to his readers in succinct detail: “the preliminary process of examination of the negroes seemed partially over; one old negro was once more donning his coat…and had altogether a quaint appearance of shocked propriety.” The scene underscores a beat in time in which Crowe saw a look of recognizable disdain across the black man’s face towards slaveholding authorities. Moreover, he recorded this interaction twice, first in a sketch and second in *Household Words*. These two accounts, visual and textual, not only confirm that Crowe witnessed this act of resistance firsthand, but they also unveil his fascination with moments such as this one where the façade of servility cracks.

As it spotlights a moment of suppressed anger, the sketch reveals how those nonviolent signs of discontentment directly informed Crowe’s portrayal of black people. For instance, in his sketch for *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, the enslaved man seated on the left waits complacently. The man is well dressed. The man wears a bow tie and a three-piece suit. Unlike the man who stormed off the stage in *Slave Auction at Richmond, Virginia*, this man possesses no rage. Interestingly, in the 1856 engraving of *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, Crowe decides to remove the man entirely (Figure 5). Yet, in the 1861 painting of *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, Crowe returns to the original composition, reinserting a male figure. The man sits on the bench separate from the women, but he is not the quieted man from the *Slaves Waiting for Sale* sketch. Though the figure still wears a vest, he lacks a jacket and exhibits the tightly rolled sleeves of the man from *Slave Auction at Richmond, Virginia*. The raised pants leg and the exposed boots also match the man in
Slave Auction at Richmond, Virginia. Moreover, the anger of the man in the painting is unmistakable. Just like the man in Slave Auction at Richmond, Virginia, rage emanates from his form. The similarities in their costuming and attitude strongly suggests the man in the final painting is a composite image of the man from the original sketch and the defiant man in Slave Auction at Richmond, Virginia. Furthermore, through his conscious decision to include a man with scarcely concealed rage in Slaves Waiting for Sale, Crowe discloses his admiration for black acts of defiance, as well as his desire to actively include them in his criticism of the slave trade. Therefore, could the confrontational gazes in After the Sale also be based on the actions of real black Americans?

With the painting, Slaves Waiting for Sale, the woman at the left is the only one who looks towards the audience with a steady, intent gaze. Her watchful eyes, mere specks composed of dry brown pigments, pierces through the fabric of the canvas and plummets into the viewer’s. However, the outward look of the woman in the turban is based on an actual experience that Crowe records in his sketch, In the Richmond Slave Market. With the sketch, her face is almost entirely obscured by shadows. Yet underneath the hatch marks of pen and ink, the bold curve of her nose, the thick arches of her brows, and the flat line of her lips materialize, and amid his rapid shading, Crowe leaves two spots for the whites of her irises with two sharply drawn black pupils etched in the left corners of her eyes (Figure 55). She peers at Crowe, almost in curiosity, understandably so. After all, Crowe had not entered the room the conventional way.

Crowe had stolen into the auction room by himself well before the rest of the crowd. He spoke to no one and expressed no interest in buying. He simply settled in and began sketching the seated families, moved by “one of the most touching [scenes] which could well be revealed to the sight.”*181* For a supposed buyer, he was behaving out of character. Only abolitionists
usually bothered to sketch at an auction. On the other hand, regarding how Crowe perceived her at first, he admits that the woman in question was originally only a person of secondary interest. He was too captivated by the central grouping of the mother with her children. The woman in the turban was almost forgotten. However, the evolution of her gaze throughout the three iterations of *Slaves Waiting for Sale* demonstrates that Crowe purposefully included oppositional black looks in his paintings.

For instance, the 1856 engraving, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, omits the figure of the man on the right as well as the direct gaze of the woman on the left. The artist saves the hat from the original composition, and when one sees the sketch and the engraving together, the hat becomes a ghostly reminder of the man who was eliminated. Meanwhile, the woman looks pointedly at the ground. Her hunched shoulders paint her as despondently resigned to her fate. Also, the white auctioneer gains a more prominent presence as well. Whereas in the 1861 painting, the artist blurred his form and spotlighted the figures of the enslaved, here in the engraving, the auctioneer is clearly delineated. Any socially transgressive elements have been scrapped. Furthermore, in the article that accompanied the engraving, Crowe makes no mention of a woman looking at him. His original sketches capture minute details that time, politics, or expediency had expunged. Audience plays a role in what details an artist decides to withhold.

His decision to redirect her gaze implies he was aware of its sociopolitical ramifications and how much it could offend readers of *The Illustrated London News*. For instance, despite the features of the people in the 1856 engraving being less exaggerated than in his initial quick sketch, they maintain much of the crudeness of Crowe’s original drawing. In addition, the 1856 engraving follows the standard guidelines for portraying black people in popular print culture, enabling the antislavery scene to remain digestible to popular British readers. Based on his
writings, his decision to publish a more traditional image of black people was most likely out of deference to his audience, rather than due to his own outright rejection of the black gaze, like with Dafforne. Whatever the motivation, the two differences between the sketch and the engraving reveal Crowe was aware of the political ramifications of the black gaze within the context of British art, even if it cannot be discerned whether he fully understood its cultural significance within American society.

Nevertheless, the return of her outward gaze in the 1861 Slaves Waiting for Sale illustrates that the individual voices of the black Americans Crowe encountered overpowered his hesitance. Again, and with even greater clarity, one sees the push and pull of the black gaze in Crowe’s life. This gaze is, in many ways, diametrically opposed to his own. By keeping the woman’s original look in the final painting, Crowe inadvertently memorializes a moment of dissidence. As a slave, the woman was not supposed to look an individual of European descent in the eye. Yet, she breaks protocol and locks her eyes onto Crowe’s. He privileges the gaze of the quiet woman seated in the shadows, and its authenticity refreshes the painting as it merges her voice with his. Moreover, the different iterations of Slaves Waiting for Sale – sketch, engraving, and painting – indicate that Crowe did not take the black gaze lightly but cautiously considered how it should operate in each of his compositions, including After the Sale. Crowe’s curiosity, his interest in the lives of African Americans, resurfaces as he engages in a transatlantic dialogue on the role of black people in a white imperialist society. That the look of the woman in the final painting was based on the sketch suggests that the gazes in After the Sale were also based on real memories. There is the possibility that all three individuals who stare at the audience in After the Sale were inspired by this one woman’s expression. However, she was not the only African American who looked Crowe in the face.
Illustrations of free and enslaved black people are peppered across the pages of Crowe’s autobiographical travel book, *With Thackeray in America*. Throughout these sketches, black eyes repeatedly look into the eyes of the audience. Enslaved and free, young and old, the pattern remains the same. While two may look away, one usually returns Crowe’s gaze. This development can be further seen in a sketch titled, *Negro Faces*, which comprises six individual profiles of African Americans (Figure 56). The text above this image suggests that these people are enslaved people Crowe met on the street. For instance, Crowe recalls: “I asked a young negress to come and have her likeness taken at the hotel…She was a pea-nut seller, was quite modest and retiring, but she confided to us her great grievance against one of the known ordinances of slavery.”\(^{183}\) In the following sketch, amidst the profiles of five men, there is indeed the picture of a young woman who gazes towards viewer.

As this portrait is the only one Crowe does of a young black woman, the woman in the sketch is most likely the saleswoman of whom Crowe wrote. In Crowe’s account, she vented her frustration with being prohibited entry into a play because of her status as an enslaved woman.\(^{184}\) Yet, what is startling about this interaction is her open discontent. As Douglass writes, the enslaved were prohibited from showing their resentment.\(^{185}\) They were not permitted, neither in word nor in action, to communicate their dissatisfaction to anyone. Consequently, enslaved Americans had taught themselves at a young age how to lie and feign happiness, but this young woman breaks the unwritten rule of the institution in a single encounter with a stranger. Therefore, that Crowe wrote she “confided” in him is somewhat apposite for the situation. One wrong move with the wrong person and she could have been punished. This understanding of the potential danger in trusting Crowe, even marginally, can be seen from the rest of the passage.
Crowe wrote that when the woman told him of her grievance her friend entered the room shortly thereafter. The artist never mentioned inviting her friend, just the friend’s sudden arrival. Coupled with the fact the artist called her ‘retiring’ meaning shy or reserved, the saleswoman might have simply been being careful around Crowe, taking precautions by asking her friend to stop by just in case the Briton turned out to be less than savory. After all, Crowe was white, male, and a stranger.

Within his writings, on the part of black Americans, one can read a subtle rejection of the color and class lines that barred them from the privileges of dominant white society. Crowe once remarked to his readers on his surprise at the “artistic proclivities” of a young mixed race man in Washington, D.C. who often helped tend to Crowe’s hotel room. In With Thackeray in America, Crowe reminisced, “He used, uninvited to take up my sketches, and pass very apposite critical remarks in a good-natured way.” Crowe emphasizes that the young man acted “uninvited” before praising the young man’s eye for detail. The word “uninvited” highlights the boy’s boldness, and the phrase “artistic proclivities” his potential as an artist. This information paints a picture of a young man not only human, but also independent, talented, and intelligent. This scene shows an African American pushing against the confines of American society which believed black people had no place in art. Equally as important, this passage shows an incident in which Crowe’s preconceived notion of what black people are capable of accomplishing was subverted. The young man’s keen eye amazed the British artist and ultimately led to the young man gaining Crowe’s respect as an artist. In addition, this interaction, as well as the earlier one with the peanut seller, reveals that for some reason many black Americans had started to relax around the young British artist. This occurrence may have to do with the fact that he was a British foreigner.
By the mid-nineteenth century, news of Britain’s antislavery efforts had spread throughout the states, and consequently, several African Americans saw the British as “the best friends the coloured people have upon earth.” This revelation explains why both enslaved and free black Americans sometimes felt they could bend the strict color line of American society when they were alone in his presence. The black Americans that Crowe interacted with talked with Crowe about their lives, their work, and their spouses. Whether it be little Rebecca from Richmond, the aging maid with her teapot, or the freeman Peter who habitually goes to confession, their voices, their gaze, a fraction of it all persists in After the Sale (Figures 57, 9, and 58). For a nation where the white voice and gaze reigned sovereign, the British artist captured many instances of black Americans asserting their own individuality. He glimpsed a side of black Americans that very few people of European descent were permitted to see, and few white people cared enough to see. The few that did seldom ventured too far past the color line. The incidents Crowe described and recorded in his sketches manifest his growing absorption in the affairs of black people in the United States, as well as elucidate why the enslaved people in After the Sale are so sensitively portrayed.

**Clamoring for Freedom: Slave Narratives and the Voice of Dissent**

As bell hooks surmises in the “Oppositional Gaze,” enslaved African Americans did not bow on their own accord. Whenever they had a chance, they stood up for themselves. In Frederick Douglass’s autobiographies, he frequently described the moment when he finally hit his master back as the time he felt most free. Douglass testifies: “I felt as I never felt before. It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom. My long-crushed spirit rose, cowardice departed, bold defiance took its place; and I now resolved that, however long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when I could be a slave
in fact.” His words reveal how many African Americans equated acts of resistance with freedom. Douglass remained a slave for a little longer after his fight with the plantation owner, but that moment of rebellion freed his spirit from slavery. Enslaved African Americans disobeyed instructions, disappeared from their station for extended periods of time, robbed their owners, lied to them, and often ran away. In the narratives of former slaves from Virginia, the reader sees how enslaved Virginians treated safeguarding the fragmented remains of their independence like a “Cold War.” Instead of acts of physical aggression, the most widely practiced forms of dissidence amongst the enslaved were acts of nonviolence.

Cornelia Carney reminisced with pride on how her father once ran away into the woods and stayed in the forest with two other runaways, his cousin Gabriel and a man named Charlie. Her father frequently snuck back onto the plantation on Saturday nights or Sundays when the owners went to Church, and her mother would often sneak food to her husband through their son. Carney boasts that he was never caught, and she still remembers that experience as proof of black people’s cunning and intelligence. Robert Ellet explains that though not everyone successfully ran away, many did. He thought back on how “Moses” would sneak people along the Underground Railroad into Pennsylvania. Moses was an alias for Harriet Tubman, and those in bondage would whisper of her and follow her to freedom.

Numerous records detail instances of black empowerment through nonviolent resistance. However, an enslaved bartender interviewed by G. H. Andrews summarizes better than anyone today could the unbending spirit of the enslaved. To provide context, Andrews had been confused because each slave he saw looked as if they were content with their lot. Yet, when he asked if the bartender was a slave, the man rejected the label, and when Andrews asked whether
enslaved African Americans wanted to be free, the bartender told him an analogy. Andrews writes:

…when I asked him if slaves were contented with their lot. He instantly turned a tumbler glass down upon the counter and two or three [sic] of the flies were imprisoned under it [they had been feeding on the crumbs]; there was fire in his eye, and his whole body was agitated as he pointed with his finger to the glass in which the captured flies were buzzing about. ‘Why,’ said he, ‘don’t those flies continue to eat and drink as before? There is plenty there for them, enough to last them a week, but they will neither eat nor drink; they have lost their liberty, and without that nothing else is of value.’ He lifted the glass, the flies flew away.200

The African American gentleman that Andrews interviewed impressed the journalist with his intellect. The British correspondent remarked, “It would be as safe to cram the cellars of their houses with gunpowder and continue to live over them as to fill the State with men like these, for certainly they will strike for liberty when they have a chance.”201 Similarly, when people view works illustrating enslaved African Americans, they often only see their objectification as slaves, failing to pay attention to narratives of black power that can be seen and traced throughout the arts. Whether in novels, biographies, slave narratives, paintings, sculptures, etcetera, transgressive tales emphasizing black identity are not a twentieth- and twenty-first century phenomenon. Instead twentieth- and twenty-first century writers and artists took their cue from established traditions within visual and literary culture and built upon them, creating new, transformative, revolutionary media.

Likewise, Crowe also pulled from established conventions but frequently subverted them to create an original painting that emphasized the individuality of African Americans. Yes, the characters in After the Sale are tragic figures, unable to control their own fate. The artist intentionally highlighted this aspect of their lives. Yet, the purpose of this work is not only to spotlight their objectification. On the contrary, After the Sale differs from most contemporary
antislavery material because of how it situates African Americans in relation to the rest of white society.

In this work, Crowe displaces European Americans to the outskirts of the frame as the edge of the canvas cuts the second slaveholder’s body in half. Here one witnesses a marginalized white society in which the African American experience takes center stage. Though mediated by Crowe, a white British artist, the painting privileges the emotions and perspectives of black Americans because it was their history that moved him the most. Their spirit inspired him, and their gaze ensnared him. The only eyes in this entire canvas that directly meet the viewer’s gaze belongs to the subjugated African Americans. Moreover, because the only white figures in the painting are both marginalized and villainized as slave traders, Crowe left the audience no other option than to try to relate to the black Americans on the canvas. The painting pushes the viewer to regard the enslaved as fellow human beings and to look beyond the surface of their debased status in society. *After the Sale* forced nineteenth-century white audiences to see a marginalized reflection of themselves and their own colonialist greed. The painting communicated a rare incident of diverse black individuality. In short, the painting served to rehumanize black Americans. With this emphasis on the characterization of black Americans and its prominent use of the confrontational black gaze, *After the Sale* destabilizes the established power relations of nineteenth-century Anglo-American society.

Though under an oppressive regime, the spirit of African Americans refused to be subjugated. Their will burst through the seams of the institution and laws that sought to constrain it. As Crowe journeyed through the United States, he, just like Andrews, was confronted with this indomitable resistance. The burning desire for liberty he witnessed in the eyes and faces of the enslaved seeped into his sketches and circulated throughout his paintings, gaining greater
clarity with each progression. Though *After the Sale* predates *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, scholars continue to overlook *After the Sale* and its themes of black perseverance, tragedy, and freedom in favor of the rage in *Slaves Waiting for Sale*. However, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, despite its more positive critical acclaim, is an amalgamation of tropes first introduced in *After the Sale*. Most likely, this disregard of *After the Sale* is due to a variety of biases. Historians tend to prioritize acts of violent resistance when studying the history of the slave trade. Also, the subject, the forced migration of the enslaved, has been represented multiple times in western visual culture. Consequently, *After the Sale* at first glance comes across as less original than *Slave Waiting for Sale*.

Because *After the Sale* resembles numerous works in both subject and composition, many may initially disregard the work as a stereotypical depiction of the slave trade and pursue more visibly transgressive material. However, the idea that *After the Sale* is not subversive is a modern prejudice. At the time, as is evident by the reactions of the critic, Dafforne, and the slavers who almost lynched Crowe, *After the Sale* trespassed the boundaries of both nineteenth-century British and American polite society. The realism of *After the Sale* instills dignity into the enslaved people Crowe memorializes on the canvas and infuses the painting with undertones of noncompliance.

Contrary to many other abolitionists who understood slavery from afar, Crowe endeavored to understand the world of slavery by interacting with the people within the culture. He ventured into the auction rooms and recorded as many details as possible. When pressured into leaving by the auctioneer, Crowe openly vowed he would remember everything that he saw, and he did. He approached black Americans in the street and asked questions, jotting down even the most mundane details of their lives. Largely because of his immersive approach to
abolitionism, a more authentic black voice permeates his painting. Though the parameters of a white, racist visual language continue to constrain and mediate their forms, the fragmented voices of the enslaved break out through their gaze. Their resilience and unwavering humanity informed and transformed Crowe's paintings into the insightful works scholars celebrate today. Though the Art Journal critic sought to escape the gaze of the black Americans in After the Sale, it persists, fractured by time, but unyielding in spirit, becoming immortalized in the annals of the very history that strove to erase it.
CONCLUSION

Prior to 2011, before Simon Gikandi and Maurie McInnis published their respective books on the American slave trade, there was no notice of the nineteenth-century artist, Eyre Crowe. Even now, eight years after these publications, the British artist remains widely unknown to both academics and the general public. Time has caused his name to be forgotten, and most of his paintings have slipped from the public eye into private hands. This lapse in scholarship motivated me to analyze *After the Sale*, in hopes that in doing so, I could secure Crowe’s name from entirely vanishing from living memory. The point of this thesis is to spark new interest in the artist and his vast oeuvre. Moreover, in this current age of social resistance, works such as *After the Sale* become increasingly more relevant as past illustrations of active social reform and protest.

What separates this thesis from previous publications is that Gikandi and McInnis only use *After the Sale* as either an example to support their larger thesis or as a segue into the actual topic of discussion. The painting when mentioned has been, at best, a work of tertiary interest. However, it still remains vastly undervalued for its own unique contributions to the abolitionist movement and its representation of black identity and black-white relations. To meet this need, this thesis has become the first secondary source to be dedicated in entirety to *After the Sale*. This analysis broaches topics that have never been discussed in conjunction with the painting: rehumanization, social resistance, child abuse and abandonment, the black gaze, black agency, the Realist movement, and the influence of the French and British schools.
Because *After the Sale* functions like a moralized genre painting, the scenes in the painting can be broken down into different moral and social messages. The loyal dog, the tangled flag, the beckoning wind, for example, are symbolic elements that function as the manifestation of Crowe’s own voice as he condemns the morality of the institution. Further parallels abound between *After the Sale* and Crowe’s writings on the slave trade. The movements and emotions of the people Crowe writes about in his stories mirrors that of the figures seen in his paintings. For instance, in *After the Sale*, the forlorn gaze of the woman in the train echoes the movements of the girl in *Household Words* “who looked wistfully” at the door of the auction room with a strange sense of foreboding. One can see in his writing what sparked his preoccupation with the fate of enslaved women and children, and what motivated him to join the abolitionist crusade. Realism, a genre favored by mid-nineteenth-century British salon critics, entangled scenes of everyday life with biting social criticism. Consequently, Crowe’s Realist approach allowed him to ground *After the Sale* in the harsh actuality of African American life while simultaneously leaving enough room for him to infuse their reality with his own input. However, arguably one of the most enthralling aspects of *After the Sale* is its use of the gaze.

Prior to the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the only people typically allowed to directly gaze upon the viewer were those in power. However, in the mid-nineteenth century, a growing number of artists turned their eyes from the elite to the disenfranchised and underrepresented refuse of society. Ford Madox Brown’s 1863 *Work* and Gustave Courbet’s circa 1850 *Burial at Ornans*, respectively, are prime examples of this phenomenon transpiring in both of Crowe’s childhood homes, Britain and France (Figures 32 and 59). Likewise, an increasing number of artists were turning the appraising gazes of the disempowered masses back
onto the very society that victimized and belittled them in the first place, also exemplified in both *Work* and *Burial at Ornans*. Crowe’s *After the Sale* also follows this trend.

In this painting, Crowe includes three enslaved African Americans looking out towards British populace of London, the location of where the painting had been exhibited in 1854. Through this confrontive or rather oppositional gaze, Crowe draws the audience’s attention away from the African Americans’ legal status as slaves towards a side of enslaved African Americans often overlooked: their resilient individuality. The oppositional gaze symbolically repositions the enslaved African Americans in a position that contradicts the dehumanizing circumstances in which they are embroiled. While the slave trade dehumanizes them, the oppositional gaze functions like a counter and helps rehumanize the African Americans on the canvas.

The aim of this thesis is not to claim that Crowe believed in racial equality. Those details remain unknown. However, one can safely assert that Crowe believed the strict binary color line in America was unjust, primarily because he explicitly called it an “unhallowed serfdom.” The point of this thesis was to analyze the composition of *After the Sale* and its characterization of black people. To be succinct, this thesis examined what may have motivated Crowe to include the specific figures and landmarks that he did. However, this lens did not allow much room for analyzing the influence of socio-religious politics in inspiring Crowe to join the abolitionist movement.

Whilst in America, the artist attended church and visited at least one religious antislavery lecture. Moreover, that he specifically labelled black-white relations in America an “unhallowed serfdom” further indicates that he rejected slavery because he found it un-Christian. Consequently, any future explorations of *After the Sale* will investigate the level of influence religion played in Crowe’s gravitation towards the abolitionist movement and influence of
religious iconography in his art. With an in-depth comparative analysis between After the Sale and A Slave Sale in Charleston, South Carolina, which were both created at the same time, I seek to further establish the cyclical theme of black empowerment and nonviolent resistance in all three of Crowe’s paintings covering the American slave trade. It is my hope that in doing so I may piece together the forgotten fragments of the past, both the voices of the enslaved and Crowe’s.
NOTES


2 McInnis, Waiting, 1, 11.

3 Ibid., 1-4, 11. McInnis writes that during the early stages of Crowe’s career Thackeray was the only art critic who commented on Crowe’s paintings.

4 Ibid., 2.


6 Ibid.

7 Crowe, With Thackeray, 136.

8 McInnis, WATER IS CANAL BASIN

9 McInnis, Waiting, RUNAWAY SLAVE COMMENT

10 Thackeray American Letters, 34-35

11 SEARCHED FOR SOMEONE TO DRAW IN STREETS/CHARLESTON WORKERS

12 Slaves waiting for sale perfect for painting composition


21 McInnis, Waiting, 174.

22 Ibid.


24 Ibid.


27 McInnis, Waiting, 2.

28 Kathryn Summerwill, “Hodge,” Pictures, Eyre Crowe, accessed 1 March 2019, https://eyrecrowe.com/pictures/1870s/hodge/. Kathryn Summerwill posits that A Good Whiff is one and the same as an 1877 painting by Crowe titled Hodge. Crowe’s paintings often changed titles depending on ownership. For instance, After the Sale was formerly called Going South: A Sketch from Life in America and Slaves Going South After Being Sold: Richmond, Virginia. Summerwill convincingly supports her theory by including a quote from the Athenaeum that describes the painting Hodge, and the description also fits A Good Whiff. The description reads, “Mr. Eyre Crowe’s Hodge (127) – it ought to be Pat, as the man who sits taking his beer in an ale-house is decidedly Irish – has a solid, rather dry, spirited expression, marked by humour in the action and face.” It is unlikely that Crowe repeated the subject matter.


30 Chester, Windsor, 506.


32 Chester, Windsor, 506.

33 Ibid., 491.


35 Chester, Windsor, 491.

37 Dafforne, “British Artists,” 205. Dafforne writes that Crowe joined Delaroche while the French artist was painting his famous, Hémicycle which Delaroche and his students worked on from 1837 until 1841. However, Crowe arrived too late to assist in the project.


39 Ibid., 77.

40 Ibid., 206.

41 Ibid., 205.


43 Ibid.


45 West, “British School”, 311; Bills, “character from caricature,” 41, 43.

46 West, “British School”, 41.

47 Ibid., 43.

48 Ibid., 43.

49 Ibid., 55.

50 “Mosaics in the South Kensington Museum,” The Illustrated London News (30 March 1867): 303. South Kensington was the former name of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

51 Victoria & Albert Museum, “Design for a Mosaic.”

52 Ibid.


54 West, “British School,” 312


56 Vanessa D. Dickerson, Dark Victorians (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 14.


59 Walvin, “Public Memory,” 141.


61 Crowe, With Thackeray, 130-31.

62 McInnis, Waiting, 145.

63 McInnis, Waiting, 145.


65 Crowe, “Free and Slave States,” 313.

66 Ibid.

67 Though first printed in late eighteenth century, the Slave Ship diagram continued to be circulated in the beginning decades of the nineteenth century.

68 McInnis, Waiting, 25.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid., 82.

72 Ibid., 25.

73 Ibid., 38-40.


75 Perdue et. al. Weevils, 33.

76 Chester, Winds or, 491.


78 Ibid.

79 Ibid., 155
80 Ibid.
81 Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, 70.
84 Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, 133.
85 Ibid., 142.
87 Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, 63-64.
89 McInnis, *Waiting*, 90.
90 Ibid., 147.
91 Ibid., 150.
96 Royston Spears, “Ford Madox Brown’s Work (1865),” *History Ireland* 25, no. 6 (2017): 34.
97 Crowe, *With Thackeray*, 105.
99 Ibid., 153.
100 Ibid., 156.


107 Frederick Douglass, * Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (Boston: The Anti-Slavery Office, 1845), 32.


109 Ibid.

110 Dusinberre, *Strategies*, 86.


114 Dusinberre, *Strategies*, 86.

115 Perdue et. al., *Weevils*, 160.

116 Ibid.

117 Dusinberre, *Strategies*, 86.


120 McInnis, *Waiting*, 150.


124 Walvin, “Public Memory,” 141.
125 Dafforne, “Style and Character,” 207.

126 Ibid.


131 Smith, “Spectacles of Whiteness,” 144.

132 Barringer, “Images of Otherness,” 34.


135 Ibid., 293.

136 Ibid., 293.

137 Lorimer, “Race, Science, and Culture,” 19.


141 Ibid.


Morgan, *Visual Culture*, 50.


151 Stowe, *Tom*, 246


156 Elizabeth Farren was a popular actress turned Countess. This painting was made at the height of her acting career. For more information, see “Elizabeth Farren,” Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436851.


159 McInnis, *Waiting*, 211.


161 “Exhibition,” 165.

162 Ibid.

163 Ibid.

164 Ibid.


166 Ibid., 188-189.

167 Ibid.

168 Ibid., 189.

169 Ibid.

170 Ibid., 199.

171 Ibid., 135-136.

172 Ibid., 136-137.
173 Ibid., 129.


177 Crowe, *With Thackeray*, 133.


182 Ibid.

183 Crowe, *With Thackeray*, 150.

184 Ibid.


187 Ibid.

188 David Walker, *David Walker's Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*, ed. by Peter P. Hinks (University Park, 2000), 43. The first edition was published in 1830.

189 Crowe, *With Thackeray*, 113, 155. Crowe scribbles a word resembling “Winne” underneath the sketch. This word could possibly reference her name. However, his script is difficult to discern. Underneath Peter’s image, Crowe writes “Peter goes to confess thrice in the…” The last word in the first line is hard to decipher, but it looks like it starts with a y, suggesting the sentence is “Peter confesses thrice a year.” The rest of the lines roughly read, “Doesn’t know his age…or he come from…His wife is out doing washing and cooking. Gets 4 dollars a month + keep.”


191 Douglass, *Narrative*, 73.

192 Dusinberre, *Strategies*, 141.

193 Ibid., 153.

194 Ibid., 153.

196 Dusinberre, *Strategies*, 147.

197 Ibid., 85.

198 Ibid.


200 Ibid., 140

201 Ibid.


204 Crowe, *Household Words*, 155

205 Tate; JSTOR – Taylor and Frith

206 Crowe, “Free and Slave States,” 313.
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Figure 2. Eyre Crowe, *A Slave Sale in Charleston, South Carolina*, 1854. Oil on Canvas. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba.
Figure 3. Eyre Crowe, *Untitled*, 1855. Oil on Canvas. Private Collection.

Figure 4. Eyre Crowe, *A Barber's Shop at Richmond, Virginia*, 1861, in *The Illustrated London News*, 9 March 1861. Engraving of an oil painting.
Figure 5. Eyre Crowe, *Slaves Waiting for Sale, Richmond, Virginia*, 1854. Oil on Canvas. Collection of Teresa Heinz.
Figure 6. Anonymous, ‘runaway’ male (wood-engraving, c. 1840). From L. Johnson and Co., *Type Specimen Book*.
Figure 7. Anonymous, ‘runaway’ advertisement (woodside, broadside, 1838).
Figure 8. Advertisement from a Kentucky slave trader. From J. Winston Coleman Jr., *Slavery Times in Kentucky*. 
Figure 10. Eyre Crowe, *A Good Whiff*, c. 1877. Private Collection.
Figure 12. Eyre Crowe, *Christ’s Hospital Children in London Quad*, 1877. Oil on Canvas. Christ’s Hospital Foundation.

Figure 13. Paul Delaroche, *The Children of Edward*, 1830. Oil on Canvas. Louvre Museum, Versailles, France.
Figure 14. Eyre Crowe, *Luther Posting His Theses on the Church Door of Wittenberg*, 1864. Oil on Canvas. Bob Jones University Museum and Art Gallery, Greenville, South Carolina.

Figure 15. Paul Delaroche, *The Conquerors of the Bastille in Front of the Hotel de Ville*, 1839. Musée d' Orsay, Paris, France.

Figure 17. Samuel Jennings, *Liberty Displaying the Arts and Sciences*, 1792. Oil on Canvas. Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Figure 19. Thomas Clarkson, *Brookes (Slave Ship)*, c. 1808. Print. University of Virginia Special Collections.


Figure 24. Eugene Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830. Oil Painting. Louvre Museum.
Figure 25. Emanuel Leutze, *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, 1851. Oil Painting. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 27. William Gale, *The Captured Runaway*, 1856. Oil Painting. John Scott Collection.

Figure 28. Eyre Crowe, *How Happy I Could Be With Either*, 1882. Oil on Canvas. Private Collection.
Figure 29. Eyre Crowe, *Reynolds’ First Sketch*, 1866. Oil on Canvas. Private Collection.

Figure 30. Eyre Crowe, *A Quiet Read*, 1878. Oil on Canvas. Private Collection.
Figure 31. Eyre Crowe, *Brick Court, Middle Temple, April 1774*, 1862. Oil on Canvas. Private Collection.

Figure 33. Ford Madox Brown, *Work*, 1863. Oil on Canvas. Manchester Art Gallery.
Figure 34. Eyre Crowe, *Negro Expulsion from Railway Car, Philadelphia*, 8 February 1853. Published in Eyre Crowe, *With Thackeray in America* (New York: C. Scribner’s, 1893).
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Figure 36. Eyre Crowe, Detail of *After the Sale: Slaves Going South from Richmond*, 1854. Oil on Canvas. Chicago History Museum.

Figure 37. Eyre Crowe, Detail of *After the Sale: Slaves Going South from Richmond*, 1854. Oil on Canvas. Chicago History Museum.
Figure 38. Eyre Crowe, Detail of *After the Sale: Slaves Going South from Richmond*, 1854. Oil on Canvas, 2’3” x 3’. Chicago History Museum.

Figure 39. Louis Joseph Masquelier after Jean Moreau le Jeune, *The Supplicant Slave (Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto)*, 1773. Engraving. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Gallica).

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Figure 44. Sir Thomas Lawrence, *Elizabeth Farren*, 1790. Oil on Canvas. Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Figure 45. Eyre Crowe, *The Dinner Hour*, Wigan, 1874. Oil on Canvas. Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester, UK.

Figure 46. Eyre Crowe, Detail of *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, 1854. Oil on Canvas. Collection of Teresa Heinz.
Figure 47. Eyre Crowe, Detail of *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, 1854. Oil on Canvas. Collection of Teresa Heinz.

Figure 48. Eyre Crowe, *In the Richmond Slave Market*, 3 March 1853. Published in Eyre Crowe, *With Thackeray in America* (New York: C. Scribner’s, 1893).
Figure 49. Eyre Crowe, Detail of *In the Richmond Slave Market*, 3 March 1853. Published in Eyre Crowe, *With Thackeray in America* (New York: C. Scribner’s, 1893).

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