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It is exciting though not a little unnerving to have one's work the subject of a scholarly forum in the *Quarterly*. I am very grateful to my colleagues for their thoughtful reflections on my article, and I hope that their musings and my response can help inspire others to experiment with digital scholarship. The *OI Reader* has the potential to allow us to conceive of new kinds of scholarly articles, deploying different kinds of sources and media, and this forum shows how considering both methodology and substance can lead us to new ideas and understandings. I agree completely with Prof. Sir Hilary Beckles who suggests that born-digital scholarship has the potential to enable us "to break free of traditions of methodological bondage". He believes that this kind of digital scholarship can encourage "a new way of reasoning and writing," which in this article may help enhance the ways in which we see and experience the world of the enslaved: this was my objective.

The readers have raised many interesting ideas, suggestions and criticisms, and I shall try to address a few of these in ways that I hope will encourage *Quarterly* readers to think about both freedom-seeking enslaved people in Jamaica and the potential and drawbacks of digital publications utilizing new media. All of the readers have been kind enough to assess "Hidden in Plain Sight" as an honest attempt to contribute to historical knowledge and understanding, and I appreciate Beckles' thoughtful assessment of how this article fits within the larger subject of resistance to racial slavery in Jamaica. His brief discussion of the nature of walking, running and escape emphasizes its significance as an assertion of humanity by black people that was denied and oppressed by whites. The digital tools and additions form part of the evidence and the analytical framework for what remains an academic article, one which seeks to address that humanity by trying to describe the world of enslaved people who, as Prof. Edward L. Ayers suggests, "were not meant to be seen." How can we hope to "represent, reconstruct, and remember the humanity of each and every enslaved woman, man,

and child who stole themselves in the process of reclaiming their bodies and lives"? (Prof. Celia E. Naylor) I do not believe that this is achievable, but I do think that how we try to learn as much as we can about these people can shape and enrich our understanding. I hope that my article represents an attempt that will encourage readers to approach the sources we read--from newspaper advertisements to plantation records to descriptions of early modern Jamaica—from new perspectives, seeing and hearing familiar sources anew.

Prof. Sharon Leon's remarks build from Toni Morrison's deft critique of the reading and understanding of literature (and history) in *Playing in the Dark* in order to explore how "Hidden in Plain Sight" asks readers "to imagine an Africanist presence in the Jamaican landscape." Surely all good historical writing shares the goal of enabling a reader to imagine past societies and their inhabitants, seeing with one's mind's eye what Leon describes as "that which is unarticulated, unpreserved, and unexplored." Using modern and multi-media additions may enhance our understanding of how enslaved people and masters experienced Jamaica, but as Prof. Naylor astutely points out, the selection and deployment of these recordings and images can no more be taken at face value than can the eighteenth-century images and descriptions they challenge. Naylor generally approves of my attempt to problematize James Hakewill's representations of Kingston and Spanish Town by working with an artist to insert more enslaved and free people in order to render urban spaces more congested and, I would contend, more authentically black. But, by using the images of black people crafted by Hakewill and other white artists of the era, these 'enhanced' urban scenes "introduces other problematic layers of (re)presentation and interpretation." Naylor is absolutely right in concluding that "the inclusion of more people of color from racist images does not necessarily disrupt the racist process whereby enslaved and free people of color were rendered visibly invisible in artwork that served as an extension of white,

hegemonic socioeconomic and political positioning." It might have been better to create new, historically informed images of non-white Jamaicans, although that said it is difficult to build up extensive and usable descriptions of such people that do not, at least in some ways, depend upon accounts created or transmitted by whites.

The larger and more challenging issue raised by Naylor is one which connects the lack of "aesthetic neutrality" in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with the decisions I made and the insertions and creations included in my article. Along similar lines, Prof. Beckles agrees that the texts I utilized are worthy of review. At stake is white sight, and the power it implies, in both past and present. As historians we all imagine and represent the lives, the actions and the inner worlds of people in the past, although even if we share race and nationality with such people they are very far removed from our modern understanding. But Naylor is right to point out that by moving beyond the documentary and artistic record and integrating modern sources and additions, I introduced elements of my own sensibilities and biases. I faced the same issue that confront all historians of slavery, how to escape the white gaze that my article sought to confront, and several of the readers note this problem. However, a central focus of the article was this white gaze, for I wanted readers to reassess their understanding of what whites saw and how they experienced their society, hoping that this would prompt a reassessment of familiar sources enabling us to think about how freedom-seeking enslaved people sought to take advantage of what whites did and did not see. I tried, within this framework, to speculate a little about what individual freedom-seekers saw, felt and experienced, but I was more tentative here. I would like to have achieved more of the "multivocality" addressed by Leon, and I see that as a goal of further work of this kind. Given the nature of the sources, this might involve even more acts of imagination and

representation, going even further from traditional historical research and analysis with all of the risks that this involves, but the journey would be, I think, worthwhile.

My article began as a significantly longer piece, and it is still longer than an average *Quarterly* essay, but the commentators quite rightly point out areas that deserved further attention. For all that my use of sound recordings may have added a new dimension to our understanding, it would have been useful for me to consider "the historical import of orality and aurality given the forced and systemic illiteracy of enslaved people due to the tenets of the Jamaican slaveocracy." (Naylor). Furthermore, while white enforced illiteracy had one set of effects, West African "meanings of aurality and orality" (Naylor) may have had entirely different effects, and might serve as ways of linking historical records to present-day recordings.

Furthermore, as Leon suggests, Thomas Thistlewood might have been better and more fully contextualized, although I was delighted by Beckles' observation that hearing Thistlewood's diary "changes the complexion" of this familiar text, enabling "the reader/listener to explore tone and texture and to feel geography more intimately as the hitherto silent subtext." My purpose in seeking out new ways of seeing and hearing white British perspectives was, Beckles suggests, "to (re)situate the reader more immediately into the world of colonial relationships," and I am delighted that this came across. Perhaps some readers/listeners will find the reading of primary sources in accents which may be close to those of the authors "an intervention more irritating than enlightening," but I agree completely with Beckles that we should examine such reactions and the assumptions behind them, and allow history "to be heard" as well as read. Each of us write in our own voice, and in our minds we hear what we

write in our own accented voice, so perhaps we can learn something new from hearing as well as reading.

Leon suggests that I might have given Dr. John Quier more of a voice rather than using him as the passive lens through which the reader can appreciate what whites in Jamaica did and did not see. I had hoped to do this, but there are few surviving writings by Quier, and the letter in which he describes the Vale of Lluidas exists as the preface to a published scientific essay: I do not know if the letter was a private communication excerpted in the published volume, or if it was written with a view to publication. Perhaps this doesn't matter, but I felt more comfortable presenting him in abstract terms, using the more detailed descriptions and accounts written by other whites in Jamaica to flesh out an archetypal white view. While I wanted to use a single white person as a vehicle for the essay, I did not want this to be about one individual, but rather to be about what white people shared in the ways they saw the island and its people.

I can see, too, that my use of Olaudah Equiano to present the article's only voice of a person of African descent, in the process implying that his was a more authentic view of eighteenth-century Kingston than those authored by whites, was inherently problematic. That said, if the article achieves its basic goal of convincing readers that white Jamaicans saw and experienced Jamaica in ways that were fundamentally different from black Jamaicans, then for all that Equiano was a unique individual, there may be a case to be made for him seeing an urban scene in ways that were impossible for whites. His Christianity meant that he was horrified by the sight of market activity on Sundays, but the sight and presence of huge numbers of enslaved and free people of African descent did not, in and of themselves, bother or frighten him in the ways that they might have affected whites.

White fear is an important factor, and I did not mean to imply that Quier and other whites were not paying full attention or could not be bothered to challenge each and every person who might not have permission to be abroad. I think that Leon is right, and I really like her formulation that whites might have taken their supremacy for granted while simultaneously (whether consciously or not) grappling with the fears embodied in the presence of a large enslaved majority. I need to think more about this, and how best to explore and analyze things that even whites would seldom articulate, or perhaps even fully understand, but which might have shaped their understandings of and actions within the society they inhabited.

I am glad that the commentators found convincing my focus on female runaways as a significant group, and the vital importance of women acting as couriers, messengers and higglers as a way in which women might prepare for escape and then seek to remain free. I believe that Naylor is correct when she suggests that there were other aspects of higgling and messaging which I might usefully have explored, including the ways in which these activities helped create a white communal space, just as they enabled the creation of networks between enslaved and free people across space. In a tale of runaways, both of these are surely significant. As for whether or not these female roles may have provided additional cover for women, or whether female runaways adopted male personas, these are questions for further study.

Josh Piker, the wizard behind the curtain of this and many other Quarterly articles, will probably have smiled as he read the suggestion that I consider the impact of other senses, especially smell, for he made this same argument to me. In my extensive reading of travel narratives and descriptions of Jamaica, Middle Passage ships and West Africa I did note

information related to this, but in the end did not have the time and space to include it. I regret that decision, although I am still unsure how I might have included such information in ways that strengthened the evidence as a base for my argument and analysis.

I appreciate that Naylor equated my recreation of an imagined journey by Dr. Quier with Marisa J. Fuentes' remarkable reconstruction of a freedom-seeking enslaved woman in late eighteenth-century Barbados. Prof. Fuentes' work, along with Prof. Billy G. Smith's "Walking the Streets" in *The Lower Sort*, (7-39) and Prof. Camilla Townsend's "In the Streets of the Cities" in *Tales of Two Cities* (23-46), helped inspire my attempt to reconstruct the embodied experienced of freedom-seeking enslaved people and the whites they may have encountered.

I quite agree with the readers that this article and others that follow might benefit from the inclusion of longer extracts of primary sources (including transcriptions of the sources read aloud), integrated within the app and accessible to readers who wish to dive deeper into the archival base. Perhaps what we are moving toward is something between this article and the pioneering work of Ayers and William G. Thomas in "The Differences Slavery Made", as Ayers suggests.¹ Similarly, as both Vincent Brown and Max Edelson are showing, maps could be more interactive, allowing readers to actively engage with rather than more passively receive digitized maps. Leon observes that my use of 3D topographic mapping could have communicated more information by using a legend to define scale, and by allowing users more control than the video allows. This was my first foray into this area, working alongside David Ely, a skilled graduate student who had just completed a master

¹ William G. Thomas III and Edward L. Ayers, "An Overview: The Differences Slavery Made: A Close Analysis of Two American Communities," *American Historical Review* 108, 5 (2003), URL?

degree in Geoinformation Technology and Cartography. This technology was entirely new to me, while historical maps were entirely new to David, so we learned together. I now have a much better sense of what can be done, and how users might approach and interact with this material.

Working with David and with the others whose skills helped create this article was one of the best things about the process of creating "Hidden in Plain Sight." In the past I have co-authored or co-edited books, articles and chapters, and yet this ostensibly single-authored piece feels as deeply and fully collaborative as anything else I have worked upon. Few of us are capable of using this new format, developing new digital resources, and then crafting these into a finished born-digital article on our own. In addition to the skilled creative work of digital mapping and enhanced art work, I built upon the help of others in making audio and video recordings, and I depended upon the hard work of OI support staff in securing permission to use materials on Open Access format, and then embedding these materials in the new *OI Reader* template. I entirely agree with Ayers that the profession "needs to learn to see collaboration as a strength rather than a weakness." Although we may feel ownership of the research and analysis at the heart of articles such as this one, they are necessarily far more collaborative than most articles, and are richer and more effective because of this. I mention this in closing not just to thank my collaborators for their help in creating elements of the article, the *Quarterly* staff for their hard work in pulling everything together, and the participants in this forum for their thoughtful reflections upon the results. Digital scholarship offers the possibility of what Ayers describes as "deepened and accelerated dialogue" between authors and readers, taking collaboration yet one stage further. I believe that the collaborative element is one of the greatest benefits of creating a born-digital piece that has the potential to become greater than the sum of its parts. I look forward to reading what

comes next. I hope that Leon is correct in suggesting that "Hidden in Plain Sight" offers "flashes of the larger capacities that integrating digital technologies into scholarly production can offer." I am very happy to have achieved that and I hope readers will see a wide range of possibilities for collaborating with others and using this technology to disseminate research in new ways and to new audiences. Have a go: it is worth it.