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## Knowledge Networks: Contested Geographies in The History of Mary Prince

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## Knowledge Networks: Contested Geographies in The History of Mary Prince

### Abstract

*The History of Mary Prince, a West-Indian Slave, Related by Herself* (1831) is the first published woman's slave narrative. In her *History*, Prince describes horrendous physical violence to which she and other enslaved peoples of African descent are subjected as well as the corresponding psychological and sexual abuse they endure. While Prince "speaks" the sexual abuse to some extent, how she knows what she knows goes unspoken. She expresses her knowledge of reading and writing and, at times, of the law, but she does not explain how she obtains this knowledge or knows what she knows. Her optimism to travel from one geographic location to another may indicate some knowledge that her circumstances may improve; yet when she arrives in a new location, her conditions worsen with the exceptions of Antigua and England. From the beginning of her *History*, Prince possesses a strong desire to escape the conditions of chattel slavery, especially shown as she travels from Brackish Pond to Spanish Point in Bermuda, from Bermuda to Turks Island, and later from Turks Island to Bermuda, then to Antigua, and finally to England. As she relates her travel, Prince speaks her knowledge networks that lay hidden within her narrative through her "silences."

### Keywords

knowledge networks, social networks, slavery, Caribbean, abolition, geographic mobility

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Knowledge Networks: Contested Geographies in *The History of Mary Prince*

but when they tell the story  
they gots to begin  
with mine. (Jackson 8)

In her poem “mary prince: bermuda. turks island. antigua. 1787,” poet and scholar Gale Jackson posits what Mary Prince (1788-c. 1833) may have known,<sup>1</sup> knowledge that Prince silences in her *The History of Mary Prince, a West-Indian Slave, Related by Herself* (Edinburgh and London, 1831), the first-known published woman’s slave narrative. Jackson’s poem explores Prince’s knowledge “past the mask of silence” (6). Jackson acknowledges slaves’ knowledge and knowledge networks through listening: “from haiti we heard past the mask of silence / in haiti they built black armies burned the slave / fields killed the masters black revolt” (6). Although Prince does not mention the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804),<sup>2</sup> Jackson suggests the Revolution’s influence in the Caribbean. Prince silences this war in her narrative, even though the Haitian Revolution occurred during the first decade of her life when she was in Bermuda. Jackson invokes other connections between slave revolt and knowledge circulation in her lines: “burned nat turner alive gabriel they hung / then fired his remains but slaves swear / they got away” (7). Although Nat Turner (d. 1831) and Gabriel Prosser (1776-1800) led revolts in Virginia, Prince, other enslaved blacks, and free blacks elsewhere would have heard about the revolts and executions. By supplying historical events that Prince did not include in her narrative, Jackson imagines what Prince may have known and how that knowledge may have been circulated. This article focuses on moments when knowledge is conveyed through these voices that comprise a knowledge network because of the social and communication connections they create. Locating these voices within Prince’s silences allows readers to pinpoint the nodes that connect the knowledge Prince obtains from people within the geographic locations to which she travels and lives.

Imaginative literature, like Jackson’s poem, helps us to reimagine voices within these silences to express Prince’s knowledge and what may have been known. Similar to Jackson, Toni Morrison explores these silences in slave narratives through what Morrison refers to as “the site of memory” (90-92). Because Prince’s *History* is the earliest published narrative by an enslaved black woman, it is important to locate these silences in her narrative. Through these silences, we can consider how she navigated social and geographic topographies to understand what kinds of knowledge she had: how she learned to read and write, how she knew what she knew about the law, as well as how she obtained news and met abolitionists. When telling “the story” of enslaved and formerly enslaved black women, we have to begin with Prince’s narrative because it was the first one published.<sup>3</sup> While scholars have explored the silencing of women’s sexuality and sexual abuse in enslaved and formerly enslaved women’s narratives,<sup>4</sup> a silencing of enslaved women’s knowledge continues. In addition to reading women’s slave narratives for “silences” about sexuality and sexual abuse, “silences” that reveal knowledge need to be spoken. Furthermore, knowledge displayed in these narratives was a significant aspect of one’s human dignity. Hence, reading for knowledge in slave narratives is reading slave narratives as knowledge narratives.

A way of obtaining information that gets transformed into knowledge, that is, what Prince knew, *knowledge networks* is a concept that addresses how knowledge is obtained through social engagement: community interactions, momentary contacts, and communication channels. These

engagements are not necessarily intentional or long-lasting, but they are created through threads of communication regardless of medium, whether print, oral, or any other form. The distinction between information and knowledge in this context, then, is information that gets related at a moment that Prince transforms into something meaningful within a corpus of what she already knows, and her experience over time. This knowledge also may be theorized through Prince's identity as "intersectionality" (Narain 1-2). Thus, *knowledge* then refers to what Prince may have known through her experience and mobility as an enslaved black woman in the Caribbean. The term *knowledge networks* denotes how Prince may have obtained this *knowledge*. In other words, *knowledge* refers to a translation of information into what Prince already knows through social interaction and her experience. Prince demonstrates her knowledge networks by mentioning her interactions with other people in specific geographic locations, by illustrating how she obtained information by describing how she managed to survive. At other times, she silences these networks.

Unlike Prince, Frederick Douglass explains in his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (Boston, 1845) his silencing of his social networks and thus his knowledge networks to protect those who have aided him in his escape and to protect those who will escape in the future: "I deem it proper to make known my intention not to state all the facts connected with the transaction [his escape from slavery]" (315). Douglass voices a silencing of knowledge by stating that he will not disseminate his knowledge and knowledge networks. He has consciously chosen not to share these networks with his readers for the reasons he mentions. Later, Booker T. Washington does describe a communication and, thereby, a knowledge network in his *Up From Slavery* (New York, 1901) as "the 'grape-vine' telegraph" (8), which was a way that enslaved blacks communicated:

I have never been able to understand how the slaves throughout the South, completely ignorant as were the masses so far as books or newspapers were concerned, were able to keep themselves so accurately and completely informed about the great National questions that were agitating the country. (7)

He again mentions the "grape-vine telegraph" when news was spreading that the U.S. Civil War was ending and "Freedom was in the air": the "'grape-vine telegraph' was kept busy night and day. The news and mutterings of great events were swiftly carried from one plantation to another" (19). To further substantiate Washington's point and to understand how knowledge among enslaved blacks circulated, Nicole Aljoe claims,

Slaves found out about the passage of the various amelioration acts either by reading the many newspapers that proliferated on the islands, through gossip with freed blacks at Sunday markets, from white missionaries, or from the mouths of the white masters themselves. ("Going to Law" 364)

Prince, like Washington, shows moments when this "grape-vine telegraph" is at work in her narrative, such as when she has heard news from other blacks, which is a way of identifying Prince's knowledge and knowledge networks.

Reading Prince's narrative for silences of her knowledge and how she knows, that is, her knowledge networks, as rhizomatic and for what is not there offers an opportunity to identify her social and geographic connections by recognizing what is missing. Therefore, Prince's knowledge and knowledge networks may be postulated through gaps and juxtapositions of events, or even what are referred to as *silences*.<sup>5</sup> In her *History*, Prince describes horrendous physical violence to which she and other enslaved blacks are subjected, as well as the corresponding psychological and sexual abuse they endure. While Prince "speaks" the sexual abuse to some extent, how she knows what she knows goes unspoken. She expresses her knowledge of reading and writing and, at times, of the law, but she does not explain how she obtains this knowledge. Her optimism to travel from one geographic location to another may indicate some knowledge that her circumstances may improve. Yet, when she arrives in a new location, her conditions worsen within these geographic locations, with the exceptions of Antigua and England. From the beginning of her *History*, Prince possesses a strong desire to escape the conditions of chattel slavery, especially shown in her travels. She travels from Brackish Pond to Spanish Point in Bermuda, from Bermuda to Turks Island, and later from Turks Island to Bermuda, then to Antigua, and finally to England. As she relates her travel, Prince speaks her knowledge networks that I argue lay hidden within her narrative through her silences. These less explored silences are the knowledge and knowledge networks of enslaved blacks.

### **Slave narratives as knowledge networks**

Slave narratives, such as those by Prince and Douglass, not only convey the horrors and atrocities of the psychological and physical violence of slavery, but also express the authors' humanity. The literary convention of sensibility offers another means to feature the human-ness of the authors of slave narratives (Gould 109-114). Because chattel slavery focused on the bodies of the enslaved as commodified and sexualized objects, slave narratives illuminate this commodification and, importantly, the enslaved subjects' knowledge. As literacy and conversion (e.g., Christianity) narratives, slave narratives articulate the dignity of humanity through conveying what the enslaved knew. Therefore, Prince and other authors of slave narratives participated in and, thereby, changed the discourse that justified the enslavement of blacks (Gould 114-20). Through social networks within the abolitionist community, print production, and readership (i.e., print culture), slave narratives offered enslaved and formerly enslaved blacks' participation in transatlantic political and social discourse to substantiate their humanity within this discourse. These social networks produced forms of knowledge, such as literacy in reading, writing, law, Christianity, trade, and mobility (Baird 5-16; Gagnon 222-25).<sup>6</sup> Through these forms of knowledge propagation and dissemination, knowledge itself constructed a network. To restate, while social and communication networks underlay these forms of knowledge, the knowledge itself constructed a network. Hence, by examining social connections and silences within these connections, where knowledge arises, knowledge itself can be abstracted as its own network.

Prince's slave narrative, like the earlier Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* (London, 1789), intersects with multiple genres, including the travel narrative as Vincent Carretta notes in his introduction to Equiano's *Narrative* (xxvii). As travel narrative, Prince's text suggests these knowledge networks through mobility. Anne Thell describes these ways of knowing through motion, that is, "where authors test empiricist models of engagement with the world while

simultaneously seeking out the role of the self and the imagination in producing knowledge” (3). Although Prince is not pursuing empirical knowledge through scientific exploration, she has the empirical knowledge of her own and other enslaved blacks’ experiences that comprises her autobiographical text, which is the slave narrative; for when she goes from one place to another, she relates connections to families, enslaved blacks, free blacks, missionaries, and abolitionists.

By the time Prince’s *History* was published, the slave narrative, as a genre, already had its established literary conventions and publication networks. Carretta’s edited collection, *Unchained Voices: An Anthology of Black Authors in the English-Speaking World of the Eighteenth Century*, demonstrates these established transatlantic protocols that were in place before 1800, which Carretta discusses in his introduction to this anthology (1-16). A parallel between networks within Prince’s narrative and her text illustrates that networks inside and outside the text can be determined, for texts, like people, are social.<sup>7</sup> These networks emerge from Prince’s having to rely on the abolitionist and publishing apparatus manifest in Prince’s narrative. As an extension of this apparatus, the slave narrative was part of an abolitionist network established in the late eighteenth century. A component of this apparatus, Prince’s text is especially mediated, because she dictated her narrative to Susanna Strickland (1803-1885), later known as Susanna Moodie. This mediation also revealed that Prince had knowledge of abolitionist networks, thus constructing a knowledge network.<sup>8</sup> Thomas Pringle, secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, then edited Prince’s narrative for publication. For these networks, this mediation is important to recognize so that Prince’s connection to them may be understood. She could not have located Pringle and Strickland without a social network that provided her access to them so that she could, indeed, voice her humanity through her narrative, even though through another’s hand. Prince participated in the dominant discourse of print culture in an effort to obtain her freedom in the Caribbean and to protest slavery in the Americas.

Emotive expression was another aspect of what it meant to be a human subject. With their audiences in mind, enslaved and formerly enslaved blacks dictated and wrote their narratives to appeal to their readers’ emotions. For example, Elizabeth Bohls observes that Prince “uses the word ‘heart’ throughout her narrative to invoke a network of affective connections and community values”<sup>9</sup> (176). This appeal to the heart obscures Prince’s knowledge networks to transform her narrative into an emotional account to convey her humanity through human relationships (Larrabee 453-73; Medovarski 94-114; Sagawa and Robbins 1-21). As Bohls argues, Prince maintains human connections regardless of the tenets of slavery that attempt to sever these ties.<sup>10</sup> Prince divulges her knowledge through these ties, from knowing where to find her mother and father in addition to knowing to whom to go for assistance. However, she does not say how she knows. Through social connections, her knowledge emerges each time she moves from one place to another.

Furthermore, Prince insinuates that changes in geographical locations may lead to her freedom from chattel slavery, and she learns she is freer in some places than in others. Although she remains enslaved in the Caribbean, she has motility, attends religious meetings, and participates in trade, especially when she is in Antigua. Her social and knowledge networks, particularly those in Antigua, may have led her toward her freedom from chattel slavery in England. Despite her status as an enslaved black woman in the Caribbean, she does not appear to equate her subjecthood with her freedom. She realizes that she is a subject regardless of whether or not she has her freedom.

She proclaims, “All slaves want to be free—to be free is very sweet” (94). Rather than Prince’s narrative being a culmination of selfhood and becoming, her narrative begins with an assertion of her subjecthood in her proclamation “I was born” (57) and is a quest narrative to be legally free. As a subject, Prince attests to other enslaved blacks’ knowledge, her own knowledge, and her agency within respective geographical locations. Within each geographical location, she thus illuminates her and others’ networks.

### Prince as a geographical subject

The slippage between the physical geography of place and the cultural geography of identity in Prince’s narrative centralizes her struggles, as well as her body, in what Katherine McKittrick refers to as “an oppositional geography” (xi). Although McKittrick does not discuss Prince, she locates this “oppositional geography,” or “important black geographies,” in “the landscape, our surroundings and our everyday places, the vessels of human violence” (xi). McKittrick’s concept of “oppositional geography” can be applied to Prince, because McKittrick iterates that black bodies are geographic and that a geographic subjecthood is produced through space and meaning (xi). Responding to the assertion that “black populations and their attendant geographies ... [are] ‘ungeographic’ and/or philosophically undeveloped,” McKittrick claims that “black lives are necessarily geographic, but also struggle with discourses that erase and despatialize their sense of place ... to conceptualize geography” (xiii). Her definition of a “geographic being” relates to Prince’s experience, which is based on geographic location. McKittrick explains,

Black subjects are not indifferent to these [social] practices and landscapes; rather, they are connected to them due to crude racial-sexual hierarchies *and* due to their (often unacknowledged) status as geographic beings who have a stake in the production of space. (xiv, emphasis in original)

Prince’s narrative shows that she is connected to both the physical and social geography of where she lives. She remains socially connected despite her separation from her family and others, and she adapts to her surroundings. As an enslaved black woman, she is a form of property, subject to laws based upon her geographic location. For this reason, she is further rendered as territory, or subaltern, which complicates her existence as simultaneous geographical subject and object.

Prince is a geographical subject within the “archipelagic Americas,” “islands that have been America-affiliated and American-constituting” (Roberts and Stephens 4). Situating Prince within the archipelagic Americas offers a way to rethink network relationships among the Americas, the islands, and continents (Roberts and Stephens 4).<sup>11</sup> The islands are networked by people traveling from island to island, in addition to the islands’ functioning as a network throughout the Americas, Europe, and Africa. By virtue of Prince’s travel from island to island, Prince performs as a geographical subject within this archipelago as a transnational subject. Cherene Sherrard-Johnson uses the archipelago as a way to theorize transnationality in novels by the African-American writer Pauline Hopkins (1859-1930). She argues that Hopkins begins with islands to imagine “islands as archipelagic circuits,” rather than as “bounded geography” (232). Sherrard-Johnson discusses Prince’s narrative in relation to Hopkins’s novels because of “Prince’s focus on the particularity of her enslaved experience on Bermuda and Turks Island [that] becomes part of the accessible discourse of the repeating island” (239). While the island may become representative and symbolic

of enslaved experience, Prince's particular experience demonstrates that religious practices differ among the islands. For example, in Prince's narrative, Christian missionaries provided access to literacy on Antigua, but not on Turks Island. As Prince's treatment as an enslaved black woman differs on each island, her experiences within these geographical contexts provide her with a web of knowledge that binds her narrative.

By becoming her own geographical subject, Prince creates an abstract space through her voice. This space is not a physical one and is not a place. Through a "geographic consciousness," Prince's subjective experience of geography can be mapped through "the experience of navigating an unfamiliar landscape" and having to separate "both from the land and from the people left behind" to obtain freedom (Finseth 249, 251). Similarly, Aljoe posits, "In recording not only geographic journeys from country to country, but movements between different emotional states and social situations, the early slave narrative persistently transgresses borders of text, culture, and voice" ("Introduction" 4). Although Prince welcomes each move, she has little choice in most instances during which she is sold or rented to another. Her familial connections and her community relationships develop into complex and extensive social networks through this commerce as well as her selling goods and her attending religious meetings.

Prince's struggle and body represent their own geography within the African diaspora of the Caribbean. Although she can be uprooted at any time, she becomes a locus through her networks and, thereby, her own geographical subject. Her subjective experience of geography informs her as geographical subject. Prince's subjective experience of geography can be emotively mapped through her anticipation to go to Turks Island. Her anticipation may indicate some knowledge of her potential freedom from being enslaved at Turks Island that does not materialize. This same knowledge may exist in her wish to go to Antigua, a geographic location that does offer Prince more agency within chattel slavery than what she experiences on Bermuda or Turks Island. More agency for Prince means that she engages in trade, attends religious meetings, learns to read and to write, and chooses to marry a man she loves. She knows she has her humanity, despite the institution of slavery that attempts to deny her humanity. Hence, her ability to engage in the aforementioned activities acknowledges and confirms her personhood and self-governance as a geographical subject. Her relationship to freedom from chattel slavery is then also contingent upon her geography and her position as a "geographic being."

As a geographical subject, Prince attempts to act as an autonomous human being, which is an act of resistance that defines her will. Through her social interaction, she creates and participates in social and knowledge networks. In this way, she produces and occupies space that Doreen Massey describes as "socially constituted": "'Space' is created out of the vast intricacies, the incredible complexities, of the interlocking and the non-interlocking, and the networks of relations at every scale from local to global" (*Space, Place, and Gender* 265). Prince performs as a geographical subject, while her narrative performs as a transnational conduit. These performances demonstrate Massey's definition of space, one that is social, physical, and abstract in its construction through time and subjectivity.<sup>12</sup> Prince's narrative creates this space through her social networks interwoven throughout her narrative—from her father's knowledge of where to find her, when she runs away in Bermuda, to her producing networks, when she sells goods in Antigua. Because her silences can be read as "socially constituted," they become spaces, where social and knowledge

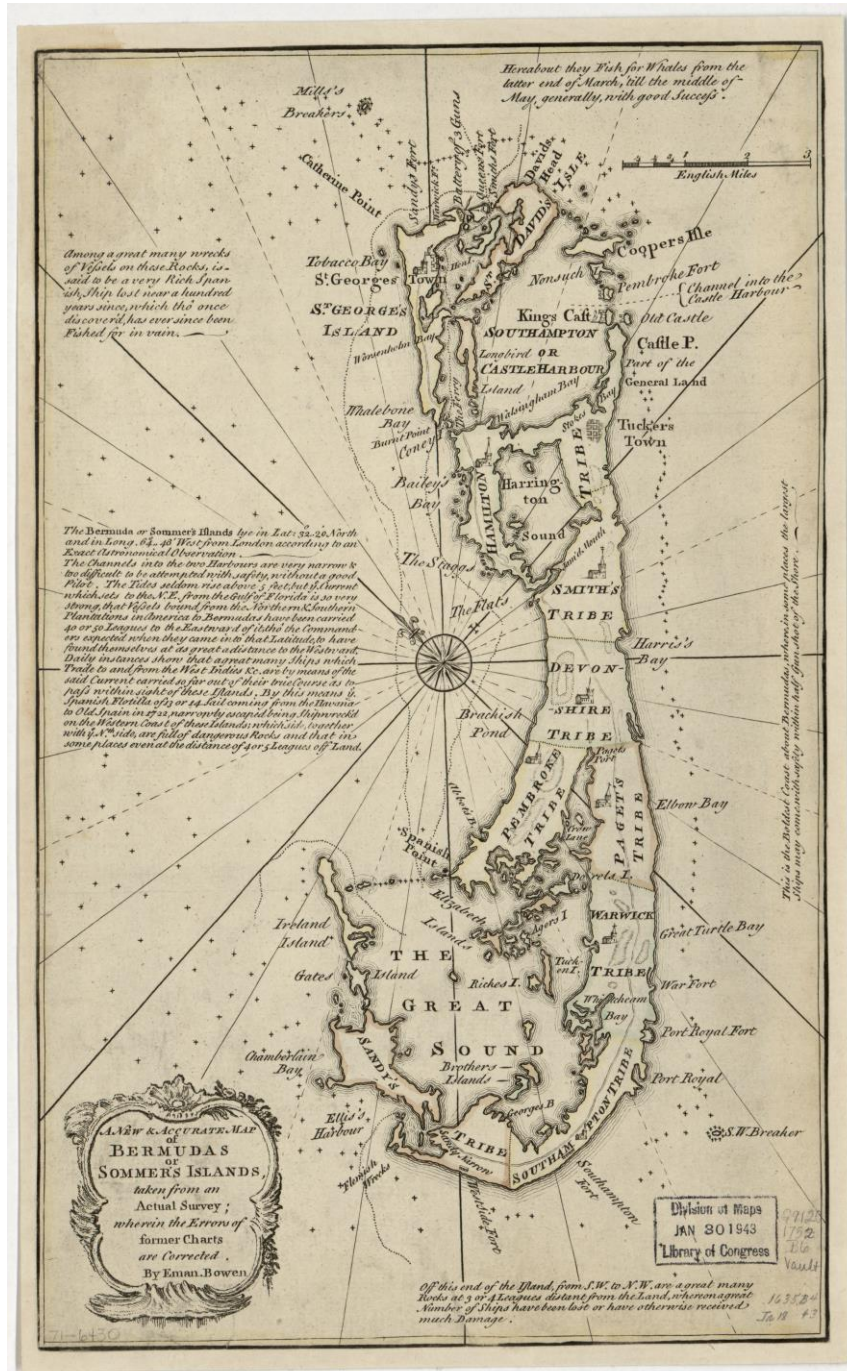


networks may exist; for where social interactions and networks exist, knowledge forms and knowledge networks get created.

Massey's "socially constituted" space allows for an understanding of Prince's knowledge networks that emerge through Prince's interactions with people in her text. Her first indication of these networks is tied to her family. Prince is only ten years old when she is sold and sent to Spanish Point from Brackish Pond, both in Bermuda. Prince knows the physical and social geography of this locality because of her having lived there and because of her proximity to her family. Emanuel Bowen's *A New & Accurate Map of Bermudas or Sommer's Islands, taken from an Actual Survey* (London, 1752) displays the proximity of Brackish Pond to Spanish Point and their locations along the coast. (See figure 1.) Prince's narrative populates this map with not only the horrors and commerce of slavery, but also her familial network. The map and her narrative together convey how, after a series of daily floggings and beatings, Prince could escape from the Inghams at Spanish Point to her mother at Brackish Pond. However, Prince's escape is temporary because she has no long-term shelter or privacy because of social networks. These networks evidence themselves in her mother's not allowing her into the house, and her father's having learned of her escape:

After this I ran away and went to my mother, who was living with Mr. Richard Darrell. My poor mother was both grieved and glad to see me; grieved because I had been so ill used, and glad because she had not seen me for a long, long while. She dared not receive me into the house, but she hid me up in a hole in the rocks near, and brought me food at night, after every body was asleep. My father, who lived at Crow-Lane, over the salt-water channel, at last heard of my being hid up in the cavern, and he came and took me back to my master. (70)

Bowen's map exhibits the proximity of Crow Lane. Prince does not betray how her father learns of her whereabouts—only that he had heard that she had been hidden.<sup>13</sup> By obscuring her knowledge in this way, Prince conceals her knowledge networks. Readers may assume that Prince's mother may have told her father, but someone else could have informed him. Also, the visualization of the proximity of Brackish Pond, Spanish Point, and Crow Lane bespeaks how physical geography may have facilitated these networks. Yet, Prince's textual concealment protects her knowledge networks. While she includes her interactions with her family and others, she omits connections between communication and knowledge, such as how they or she knew where someone was geographically located.



**Figure 1. A New & Accurate Map of Bermudas or Sommer's Islands, taken from an Actual Survey; wherein the Errors of Former Charts Are Corrected. By Eman. Bowen (London, 1752). The map identifies Brackish Pond, where Mary Prince was born and her mother lived; Spanish Point, where she was later sold; and Crow Lane, where her father lived. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.**

Prince's optimism about relocating may be key to her knowledge networks. When she leaves to go to Turks Island to work, her optimism connotes ignorance and naïveté, which may be a possible

silencing of knowledge. Prince's initial optimism may indicate hope for her possible emancipation because many enslaved black women, especially girls, were more likely to be emancipated while on Turks Island; however, most were under the age of nine and were likely to have been daughters of salt pond owners (Saunders 69). Instead, Prince claims that she welcomes her removal to Turks Island because of the harsh treatment she received when she was at Spanish Point:

For five years after this I remained in his [Ingham's] house, and almost daily received the same harsh treatment. At length he put me on board a sloop, and to my great joy sent me away to Turk's Island. I was not permitted to see my mother or father, or poor sisters and brothers, to say good bye, though going away to a strange land, and might never see them again. (70-71)

Although her optimism may represent hope that her life circumstances may improve, her optimism may also suggest knowledge of this possible improvement. While she despairs at not getting to say goodbye to her family, she divulges that she had connections with her family, even during her separation from them.

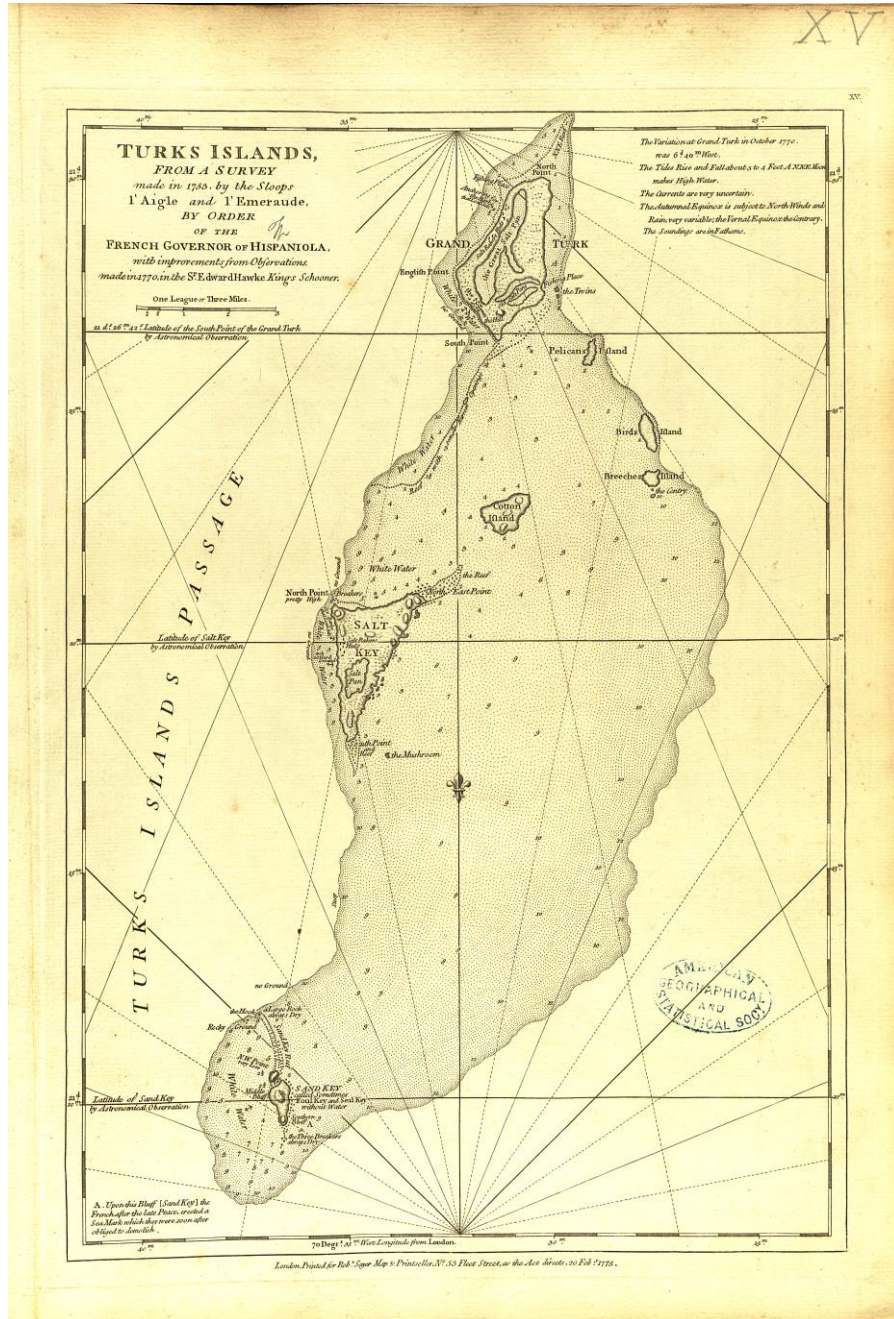
Prince's years on Turks Island reveal more extensive networks, for she sees her mother when her mother is brought there to work. Curiously, Prince learns that her mother is on the island, when Prince happens to be on the beach one Sunday morning "with some of the slaves, and we [they] saw a sloop come in loaded with slaves to work in the salt water" (76). She continues, "We got a boat and went aboard. When I came upon the deck I asked the black people, 'Is there anyone here for me?' 'Yes,' they said, 'your mother'" (76). Seemingly, she is expectant. She knows to inquire, and they know her mother.

This example proposes another network: the sailors. Trevor Bernard estimates, "in 1739, Governor Alured Popple estimated that at least one-quarter of all sailors who crewed Bermuda's celebrated sloops were black" (140). Bernard claims that eighteenth-century Bermuda was a "maritime economy, specializing in shipbuilding, trade, and salvage" (140). Paul Gilroy acknowledges the significance of black "sailors, moving to and fro between nations, crossing borders in modern machines that were themselves micro-systems of linguistic and political hybridity" (12). He points out, "it has been estimated that at the end of the eighteenth century a quarter of the British navy was composed of Africans for whom the experience of slavery was a powerful orientation to the ideologies of liberty and justice" (13). The sailors likely contributed to these knowledge networks,<sup>14</sup> for Prince continues to know the whereabouts of her mother. Prince mentions in her narrative that her mother remained on Turks Island "for some years" and returned to Bermuda "some time before" Prince did (76). The geography of Turks Island poses that it may not have been unusual for Prince to remain connected to and to maintain networks between Turks Island and Bermuda.

Beyond Prince's learning that her mother is on Turks Island, her narrative resonates with isolation, torture, and torment. With the exception of the presence of other enslaved blacks and Prince's getting to see her mother, her isolation on Turks Island charts a temporary disconnect from her networks. Her isolation simultaneously highlights the existence of her networks in Bermuda and the ones she later develops in Antigua and England. In Bermuda, she has more familial connections and reports more frequently of hearing from enslaved and free blacks. While in Antigua and

England, she participates in trading goods, religious meetings, and the legal system. Thus, the time she spends on Turks Island is more insular in the sense of a “bounded geography.” The only substantial network between Turks Island and Bermuda Prince admits is the one with her mother and the sailors until she returns to Bermuda. Otherwise, Prince’s narrative echoes a sense of isolation unlike that which Prince appears to experience in any other geographic location.

On Turks Island, her body and the island get conflated through the commodity of salt and Prince as a commodity (Speitz, pars. 11-13, 21). As an enslaved black woman, she is both geographical subject and object, as mentioned above. As property on Turks Island, Prince gets mapped by virtue of the work that she does. She is defined as a salt gatherer, or raker, as represented by the *Salt Rakers Huts* on Thomas Jefferys’s 1775 map *Turks Island, from a Survey made in 1753*. Jefferys notes where salt gatherers, presumably Prince, lived. (See figure 2.) In her narrative, Prince describes her hut: “We slept in a long shed, divided into narrow slips, like the stalls for cattle. Boards fixed upon stakes driven into the ground, without mat or covering, were our only beds” (72). While she compares her situation under slavery to being treated like cattle, Jefferys’s map includes the *Salt Rakers Huts* as a toponymical feature of the map and a topographical feature of the island.



**Figure 2.** *Turks Island, from a Survey made in 1753, by the Sloops l'Aigle and l'Emeraude, by order of the French Governor of Hispaniola, with improvements from Observations, made in 1770, in the Sr. Edward Hawke Kings Schooner [By Thomas Jefferys] (London: Printed for Rob<sup>t</sup>. Sayer, Map & Printseller, N<sup>o</sup>. 53 Fleet Street, as the Act directs, 20 Feb<sup>y</sup>. 1775).* This map illustrates both the potential for isolation and communication on the island as well as where Mary Prince may have lived as labeled on the map, *Salt Rakers Huts*. From the American Geographical Society Library, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries.

Prince, like the physical geography, is subject to the weather, which Jefferys's map details. She works outdoors from sunrise to sunset, so the weather would have had an impact on her. Prince

focuses on the salt, the salt water, and the effects of these on her body: “Our feet and legs, from standing in the salt water for so many hours, soon became full of dreadful boils, which eat down in some cases to the very bone, afflicting the sufferers with great torment” (72). In her narrative, the boundaries among these scapes—land, sea, and body—become blurred. Jefferys’s map similarly blurs these scapes. On Turks Island, through punishment, an enslaved body also gets rendered as landscape:

Poor Daniel was lame in the hip, and could not keep up with the rest of the slaves; and our master would order him to be stripped and laid down on the ground, and have him beaten with a rod of rough briar till his skin was quite red and raw. (74)

The punished and tortured enslaved body performs as a metaphor for the salt-raked territory that likewise serves as a resource in a master-slave economy. The time that Prince remains on Turks Island appears to be her most isolated period in her narrative, where she becomes almost subsumed as the subaltern (Chaves, par. 5; O’Callaghan 166-68).

Further indicating this isolation or “bounded geography,” Prince does not elaborate on Ingham’s or Mr. D—’s connections to Turks Island (71). In about 1660, Bermudans started coming to Turks and Caicos Islands to rake salt, and, in the 1750s, they occupied the islands. Prince was likely on Turks Island from 1802-1812. Because Turks Island was a British colony, the British prevented trade with the United States during the War of 1812, which caused famine in the islands. Following Prince’s return to Bermuda, she mentions a natural disaster in relation to an enslaved blacks’ prayer house getting destroyed by whites:

After I left Turk’s Island, I was told by some negroes that came over from it, that the poor slaves had built up a place with boughs and leaves, where they might meet for prayers, but the white people pulled it down twice, and would not allow them even a shed for prayers. A flood came down soon after and washed away many houses, filled the place with sand, and overflowed the ponds. (76-77)

She is likely referring to the hurricane there in 1813 (Maddison-MacFadyen, “Turks Islands’ Salt” 40-44). While hurricanes were also associated with slave revolts (Drexler 442-44, 453-55, 458-59; Mulcahy 96-103), Prince ascribes a Christian god’s retribution: “I do think this was for their wickedness; for the Buckra [white] men there were very wicked” (77). Although she does not directly mention the hurricane, the war, or the famine, she both silences and demarcates her networks when she states, “I was told by some negroes that came over from [Turks Island]” (76).<sup>15</sup> She neither identifies who the “negroes” were or their specific location except that they were mobile, like her, in their travel from Turks Island. Her communication with them represents an orality, like Washington’s “grape-vine telegraph,” that informed her social connections and knowledge networks.

### **Knowledge networks through Christianity and the law**

Prince’s above statement attests to networks that she maintains between Bermuda and Turks Island through her mobility. Her detail “I was told by some negroes” affirms communication among blacks. She emphasizes Christianity in the statement “but the white people ... would not allow

them even a shed for prayers” (76-77). Proslavery whites feared blacks meeting together because of their networks and potential revolts.<sup>16</sup> Prince’s juxtaposition of these details in her narrative demonstrates her knowledge of whites’ fear of slave revolts. Prince appeals to a Christian audience in her statement that whites would not allow blacks to hold prayer meetings. By omitting whites’ fear of revolts, Prince evokes sympathy through Christian sensibility.

She follows this example of a communication network among blacks with her knowledge of the law in Turks Island as opposed to the law in Bermuda. Religious meetings could have been where enslaved blacks learned about laws in the Caribbean. Prince articulates the difference in laws based upon geographic location in a confrontation with Mr. D—, who was likely Robert Darrell,<sup>17</sup> related to the aforementioned Richard Darrell who was likely the same Richard Darrell with whom Prince’s mother lived (Maddison-MacFadyen and Csank 87-89). When inebriated, Mr. D— beats his daughter, so Prince intervenes:

I strove with all my strength to get her away from him; for she was all black and blue with bruises. He had beat her with his fist, and almost killed her. The people gave me credit for getting her away. He turned round and began to lick me. Then I said, “Sir, this is not Turk’s Island.” I can’t repeat his answer, the words were too wicked—too bad to say. He wanted to treat me the same in Bermuda as he had done in Turk’s Island. (Prince 77)

Her response suggests she knows the law, regarding the protections she has that differ by geographical location. When she confronts Mr. D— with “Sir, this is not Turk’s Island,” it is highly likely that he knows that Prince can take him to court. Aljoe reinforces this idea: “Additionally on Bermuda, which unlike Turks Island had several magistrates and a council of protection for slaves, Prince would have been able to file a complaint against Mr. D— with the local authorities” (“Going to Law” 367). Whether Prince would have won or not, Mr. D—’s inebriation and his abuse of his daughter as well as his abuse of Prince would have been brought to the attention of the public and documented as public record. She refers to her agency within chattel slavery through a network, shown in her statement that “the people gave me credit.” She incorporates Christian rhetoric, when she states she cannot repeat Mr. D—’s “answer, the words were too wicked.” Thereby, she associates him with evil, and, thus, slavery as evil. Within this incident alone, Prince manipulates three kinds of knowledge: legal, social, and Christian.

Prince’s Christian rhetoric avers that slavery is anti-Christian. Christian discourse gets threaded through Prince’s narrative, revealing a tapestry of social and knowledge networks. Prince acknowledges her social networks that provide temporary solace and protection, such as when she avoids Mr. D— when it is time for her to wash him. She describes his having “an ugly fashion of stripping himself quite naked and ordering me to wash him in a tub of water. This was worse to me than all the licks” (77). If she does not come to him when he calls, he beats her. In the moment she decides to defend herself, she claims, “it was high time to do so” (78). She tells him that she “would not live longer with him, for he was a very indecent man...with no shame for his servants, no shame for his own flesh” (77). Her partial silence in relaying this incident whispers the sexual abuse she has to endure as an enslaved woman. Her employment of Christian rhetoric supports her refusal and resistance, and she goes “to a neighbouring house” (77). This event leads to her working at Cedar Hills in Bermuda for pay, though she has to give her money to Mr. D—. She

clearly knows her earnings: “two dollars and a quarter a week, which is twenty pence a day” (78). However, she obfuscates how she gets hired at Cedar Hills; it is also unclear for whom she works.

She hints at networks, but she does not disclose them. For example, she states, “During the time I worked there [Cedar Hills], I heard that Mr. John Wood was going to Antigua. I felt a great wish to go there, and I went to Mr. D—, and asked him to let me go in Mr. Wood’s service” (Prince 78). Her request to go to Antigua “in Mr. Wood’s service” limns a critical transition. To obscure her self-assertion, she invokes Christianity: “It was ordained to be, I suppose; God led me there” (78). This point is the only one in which she mentions God’s directing her. Her knowledge networks underlie the juxtaposition of the narration of these events and the phrasing of them. Prince resists her enslavement, evincing at crucial moments her threshold for abuse by running away, if only temporarily. She invokes her knowledge of the law, and physically strikes back. However, she does not begin to speak of her freedom from chattel slavery until she starts working at Cedar Hills. She frames her desire, and possible knowledge, to go to Antigua by going in Wood’s service and God’s will. In this way, she establishes that she is cooperative and believes in God as an assertion of her humanity. To protect herself and her allies, and to promote the antislavery cause, Prince had to articulate this persona and be positioned as “the grateful slave.”<sup>18</sup> Her most significant and powerful resistance within her narrative may persist in these silences, because they manifest this knowledge.

All the while Prince incorporates these silences, she utilizes legal discourse within her narrative. Her narrative alone stands as a legal document. Aljoe cogently observes, “Just as in a legal deposition, we are assured of the validity of these texts [dictated slave narratives] because we have a transcript of their ‘real’ spoken words” (Aljoe, “Going to Law” 357).<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, Aljoe brings attention to Prince’s fusion of government and religion. The “abuses of the current slave system ... are in direct opposition to specific parts of the Consolidated Slave Acts ... In addition to highlighting the fact that the I—s are violating laws passed by Parliament, they are also condemned for violating the laws of God” (Aljoe, “Going to Law” 366). This violation is twofold and unites the law of Parliament with that of Christianity.

Prince’s narrative evidences that enslaved black women in the Caribbean knew the law and issued lawsuits. For instance, later, when Prince is in Antigua, she goes to court about a disagreement over a pig. Prince recounts, “old Justice Dyett, when we came before him, said that I was in the right, and ordered the pig to be given to me” (80). Prince explains that as a result of her taking this action, Mrs. Wood puts her “in the Cage one night and was next morning flogged, by the magistrate’s order, at her desire; and this all for a quarrel I had about a pig with another slave woman” (80). She further clarifies, “I was flogged on my naked back on this occasion; although I was in no fault after all” (80). Prince’s participation in the court system affirms her human agency; however, Mrs. Wood, through the extension of the magistrate, reminds Prince of Prince’s status as an enslaved person. Hence, Prince still serves Mrs. Wood by virtue of Mrs. Wood’s being married to Mr. Wood. Prince demonstrates that slavery, regardless of amelioration laws, is also about despotic, arbitrary will and control over other human beings, which contradicts British laws and Christian tenets.

Prince’s judicial litigation and Mrs. Wood’s retaliation against Prince for this action reveal that, even though Prince could go to court, she was still subjected to Wood’s arbitrary will. Prince’s



going to court demonstrates her knowledge about her access to the judicial system and her rights. María Eugenia Chaves relates, “Slaves who held a degree of knowledge about how the judicial apparatus functioned and of the power relations structuring society were able to access the courts, and possibly to influence the process”<sup>20</sup> (par. 7). Chaves focuses on “the case of a litigant slave woman [María Chiquinquirá] who pursued a lengthy suit against her master in order to obtain her and her daughter’s freedom” (par. 1) to substantiate that, “Slaves’ participation as plaintiffs in the colonial judicial system transformed them from passive objects in economic transactions to active subjects in legal battles” (par. 1). Chaves echoes Washington: “It is remarkable that slaves, most of them alienated from the codes of literate dominant culture, were able to develop the resources and knowledge needed to use the judicial system to advantage” (par. 3). Prince’s knowledge of these resources reflects that she had informed knowledge networks.

### “Openendedness”: Negotiating freedom in Antigua and England

A correlation exists among geography, money, and freedom as delineated in Prince’s motility throughout her narrative. Prince’s move to Antigua in 1817 with Wood, who purchases her from Mr. D— for three hundred dollars, signifies a transition in her life and her narrative. This transition is exemplified in her going to court over a pig, an assertion of her will within the legal system. Previously, she may have hoped for freedom from chattel slavery, which may have been hinted in her optimism to go to Turks Island. In Antigua she tries to negotiate her freedom by asking Burchell to purchase her for her “own benefit.” She “had saved about 100 dollars, and hoped with a little help, to purchase ... [her] freedom” (81). To earn this money, which she keeps for herself, she performs jobs for others and sells items for herself. Prince’s working in Antigua, earning money in this communal society, and making new social connections acculturate her to a community that reaches beyond familial ties that anticipates her navigating networks in England, when she obtains her freedom from chattel slavery there.

Prince’s experience in Antigua expands her networks to give Prince’s voice an “openendedness,” that is, an “imaginative opening up of space ... for multiple becomings” (Massey, *For Space* 120-22). This “openendedness” creates a subject position out of the “to-be-conquered/colonialised” and “active/passive discourses of colonialism,” resituating Prince “between a ‘subject’ and an ‘object’ of knowledge” (Massey, *For Space* 120-22). As the author and protagonist of her own story, Prince repositions herself outside of these constricting Western binaries to generate “the connection between writing-as-representation and space” (Massey, *For Space* 122). Prince represents herself through movement and location. As she travels and tells of this travel, she creates an “openendedness” from which she creates a space for herself and her voice. This “openendedness” represents not only networks, but also hope, because her life becomes less insular. This abstract space created within Prince’s narrative allows Prince to realize the possibility of her becoming a legally free person at the most fundamental level, which is to own herself.

Prince’s social and knowledge networks in Antigua offer a reimagining of Prince’s community that extends beyond the insularity of a master-slave economy. She has access to education and potential for liberty through missionary networks that existed between Antigua and England. These missionary networks begin during the same year she goes to Antigua, where she is baptized as Anglican, and she later attends a Methodist meeting. In 1822, she converts to the Moravian church and develops her reading and writing skills. She also marries Moravian Daniel James, a free black

man, in 1826. By attending Anglican, Methodist, and Moravian meetings, she learns about these Christian denominations, and, most importantly, she becomes engaged in these networks. She does not explain her migrations into these religious communities. Because missionaries taught them to read and write, free and enslaved blacks were drawn to the missionary meetings; Christianity was peripheral (Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival* 55). Missionaries' teachings of Christianity reinforced to blacks that they were spiritually equal to whites. This discourse, which had been used to dehumanize and enslave blacks, admitted free and enslaved blacks access to the same discourse to empower themselves.<sup>21</sup>

The Moravians became a significant force in Prince's life, from her time in Antigua to her move to England. Antigua was a British colony and would have had commerce, traffic, and communication with England. Geography may have played a role in Prince's becoming a Moravian because St. Johns is on the Antigua coast, as Thomas Jefferys's map of Antigua (London, 1775) shows. St. Johns was likely a predominant location for information exchange and knowledge networks because of its coastal location. (See figure 3.) According to Jon Sensbach, "By the 1780s, Antigua alone claimed another 6,000 enslaved converts, making the island one of the single largest concentrations of Afro-Protestants in the world" (*Rebecca's Revival* 240). In 1823, 11,680 enslaved blacks attended Moravian services in Antigua (Thomas 124). These meetings attracted enslaved blacks, regardless of the missionaries' public proclamations on slavery. Although white missionaries, such as the Moravians, in the Caribbean became slaveholders and did not profess the antislavery sentiments of their U.S. and British counterparts, they created a social enclave for spiritual equality, group leadership, and literacy education for free and enslaved blacks. Overall, Prince's involvement with Anglicans, Methodists, and Moravians further anchored her within a network of literate whites and free and enslaved blacks, especially black leaders within these missions, and possibly those in England.



**Figure 3. Antigua, surveyed by Robert Baker, Surveyor General of that Island: Engraved and Improved by Thomas Jefferys, Geographer to the King (London, 1775). The map limns the topography and notes churches, mills, courthouses, roads, parishes, divisions, coastal forts, and toponyms such as *Freemans Bay*. Antigua was a British colony, with an *English Harbor* as shown in the inset map. Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center.**

These networks may have provided her with access to assistance, such as wages and board, in England. Indeed, Prince may express her greatest silence when she accompanies the Woods to England to care for their child. The significance of her going to England is that she will not be enslaved in England, but she does not clarify this knowledge. Instead, she focuses on the possibility of a cure for her rheumatism, while she merely mentions the possibility of freedom from chattel slavery:

About this time my master and mistress were going to England to put their son in school, and bring their daughters home; and they took me with them to take care of the child. I was willing to come to England: I thought that by going there I should probably get cured of my rheumatism, and should return with my master and mistress, quite well, to my husband. My husband was willing for me to come away, for he had heard that my master would free me,—and I also hoped this might prove true; but it was all a false report. (86)

She does not state that she will be free in England, but that her husband “had heard that her [my] master would free me [her].” While in England, she also acts as though she does not want to leave the Woods, initially because of her lack of familiarity with England and her not knowing where to

go. However, she hints at a social connection during her travel at sea when she remarks, “The steward of the ship was very kind to me. He and my husband were in the same class in the Moravian Church. I was thankful he was so friendly” (86). Her fear of leaving highlights the Woods’ cruelty and Prince’s vulnerability by their threat to cast her out, because she has nowhere else to go. Although she might be free from chattel slavery, she needs paid work and a place to live. She locates Methodists and Moravians, who provide her with not only paid work and a place to live, but also legal assistance in England when she does leave the Woods.

She may be intentionally obscuring her knowledge of these groups—who provide employment, publish her narrative, and try to help her obtain her freedom in the Caribbean through the legal system—by not directly exposing how she gets access to employment and to abolitionists. This silence may serve as a means to protect these networks. If she had disclosed these networks, they could have been interceded, especially since her narrative was controversial because of its depictions of violence and implications of sexual abuse. Although this violence and abuse had already preceded her narrative in print in Equiano’s narrative, Prince’s narrative was one of the precursors of women’s slave narratives to disclose this violence and abuse. For these reasons she could not publish the names of her owners. She does disclose her connections in England, such as the Methodists Strickland and Pringle, and elaborates on her pursuit of her petition for freedom:

[A] woman of the name of Hill told me of the Anti-Slavery Society, and went with me to their office, to inquire if they could do any thing to get me my freedom, and send me back to the West Indies. The gentlemen of the Society took me to a lawyer, who examined very strictly into my case; but told me that the laws of England could do nothing to make me free in Antigua. However they did all they could for me: they gave me a little money from time to time to keep me from want; and some of them went to Mr. Wood to try to persuade him to let me return a free woman to my husband; but though they offered him, as I have heard, a large sum for my freedom, he was sulky and obstinate, and would not consent to let me go free. (91)

She delineates how she learns about the Anti-Slavery Society and gets legal aid to assist her with her petition. Her narrative likely helped accelerate the momentum of the abolitionist movement in the British Caribbean since the British made slavery illegal in their colonies with the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833. Although Prince did not legally obtain her freedom from chattel slavery in the Caribbean because Mr. Wood would not appear in court (“Appendix 1”), her narrative and her own legal agency laid the groundwork for emancipation in the Caribbean.

### **Conclusion: Locating knowledge**

Prince’s escape for temporary relief from the abuses of her masters, her requests to move, her attempts to purchase her freedom from chattel slavery, her meetings with Moravians, her marrying a free black man of her choice, and her engaging in the selling of goods represent kinds of knowledge that exist outside the state-sanctioned freedom she seeks. Her subjectivity is that of “the commodity who speaks” (Moten 8). She desires that the state acknowledge her humanity through her official, legal manumission that the Woods refuse to grant her regardless of her proposed payment and legal petition. Although she is free in England, she wants to return to Antigua as a free black woman to be with her husband. A legal acknowledgement of her freedom

conveys public recognition that she owns herself. Her narrative expresses her personhood, her self-governance, and her dignity. She does not need to be legally free to know her identity, but she knows what an enslaved person knows: “I have been a slave myself—I know what slaves feel—I can tell by myself what other slaves feel, and by what they have told me” (94). Her making this statement counters what others say about slavery when she expresses, “I am often much vexed, and I feel great sorrow when I hear some people in this country [England] say, that the slaves do not need better usage, and do not want to be free. They believe the foreign people [in the Caribbean], who deceive them, and say slaves are happy” (93). What she has felt, she has known. In sensibility, feeling is a way of knowing. Prince’s experience as a formerly enslaved woman in the Caribbean makes her a knowledgeable agent and subject on the experience of slavery. Those who have not been enslaved cannot know what she and other enslaved people feel and know.

Thus, Prince’s enthusiasm to travel to new locations may intimate improvement in her circumstances, rendering her travel strategic and implying knowledge of potential movement toward this freedom. Her narrative informs readers by its omissions, her silences. She does not mention slave revolts and antislavery activities; however, her narrative communicates networks among other enslaved blacks, free blacks, and missionaries. Prince’s narrative reveals that Prince likely had extensive knowledge networks, local and international, that enabled her to resist through the contested geographies of the Caribbean and England. Her experience of these geographies is one of resistance through her travel, accessible through her knowledge networks. Contextualizing Prince’s narrative and experience with slave revolts implies enslaved blacks’ consciousness and knowledge. Jackson provides this context in her poem through Prince’s persona and confirms why “they gots to begin” with Prince’s narrative: it was the first published woman’s slave narrative, which means she conveyed what she knew in print, that is, to be read and circulated within the dominant discourse of the public sphere, and because of what it appears to silence—knowledge.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Jenny Sharpe discusses Jackson’s poem in relation to *The History of Mary Prince* to demonstrate that Prince’s narrative explores Prince’s transformation from ignorance to enlightenment through her journey to freedom from chattel slavery. Similarly, Sharpe acknowledges the transfer of knowledge through communication in Jackson’s poem (135-36).

<sup>2</sup> Moira Ferguson explains “that Mary Prince might well have heard about” “organized plots . . . revolts” (“The Voice of Freedom” 3). She also acknowledges, “Prince never explicitly mentions Bermudian slave resistance, an omission that is part of a larger pattern of omissions” (“The Voice of Freedom” 3).

<sup>3</sup> Ferguson writes of this significance of Prince’s narrative, “Since no African British female who had been a slave prior to 1831 had written for publication, Mary Prince’s narrative helped to name that hitherto untold history and at the same time complicated customary one-sided though politically differentiated accounts by abolitionists and plantocrats alike” (“The Voice of Freedom” 29).

<sup>4</sup> See Carby 21, 45-61 and “Appendix 6” 140-49. For sexual abuse of enslaved black women, see Lewis; White; Fox-Genovese, “Unspeakable Things Unspoken” 254-75; and Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*. Evelyn O’Callaghan contextualizes silences about enslaved women’s sexuality within the contemporaneous social mores and states that “such explicit content was frowned on socially especially by religious institutions, and the interests of the Anti-Slavery Society lay in presenting the female slave as a wronged victim not a sexually active woman” (166). For interpretations of enslaved black men and women’s sexuality in slave narratives beyond the readings of silences, see Sanchez-Eppler 83-104 and Abdur-Rahman 223-37.

<sup>5</sup> *Silences* usually signify sexuality, sexual abuse, and rape in black women’s slave narratives (see endnote 4).

<sup>6</sup> Ileana Baird employs Bruno Latour’s Actor-Network-Theory (ANT). For Latour, networks do not have to be human but may include things and actions. He theorizes that information and its presentation get controlled (182) in addition to networks as rhizomatic (242, 245) to determine what may be missing.

<sup>7</sup> See Brereton 232-53; Sensbach, “Black Pearls” 93-107; Todorova 285-302; Ferguson, *Subject to Others* 292-98; Ferguson, “The Voice of Freedom” 22-28; and Innes 56-71. Ruth Knezevich and Devoney Looser reveal Caribbean social networks and explore transatlantic connections between the sociability of texts and people in their commentary on two letters by Charles Austen and Jane Austen’s literary posterity (554-68).

<sup>8</sup> For specifically addressing the mediation of Prince’s narrative, see Banner 298-311; Baumgarner 253-75; Paquet 278-97; Simmons 75-99; and Davis and Gates xi-xxxiv.

<sup>9</sup> Invoking the word “heart” was a strategy of sensibility, a humanizing project, of the eighteenth century (Knott 1-68). For a discussion of how women utilized emotion in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Blauvelt 1-14.

<sup>10</sup> See Peter Coviello’s discussion of Harriet Jacobs and Douglass’s human ties in light of slavery’s efforts to dehumanize enslaved blacks (107-13, 137-42).

<sup>11</sup> According to Paul Gilroy, examining the transatlantic African diaspora makes black influence and experience visible through networks, although he does not necessarily identify them as such. The concept of the Black Atlantic is similar to that of the archipelagic Americas, because the Atlantic is understood as a kind of highway of social interaction, where identities get transformed and negotiated through exchange and commerce. He suggests “seeing identity as a process of movement and mediation that is more appropriately approached via the homonym routes” (19).

<sup>12</sup> Massey explains, “Since space is the product of social relations you are also helping . . . to *alter* space, to participate in its continuing production” (*For Space* 118, emphasis in original). See also Lefebvre 68-168, 229-91.

<sup>13</sup> Ferguson acknowledges that Prince has some security because of these ties (“The Voice of Freedom” 5). See also Bush 107-09.

<sup>14</sup> See also W. Jeffrey Bolster, especially chapters 6 and 7.

<sup>15</sup> Ferguson suggests that this “story intimates that slaves on Turks Island had been trying to organize a separate space for themselves. Even more importantly, talk of freedom abounded on the island, for it lay only 200 miles from San Domingo . . . Slaves from Turks Island frequently escaped to San Domingo” (“The Voice of Freedom” 10).

<sup>16</sup> Although Christianity had previously been a path to freedom for enslaved blacks, they could no longer utilize Christianity for this purpose (Bohls 173).

<sup>17</sup> Ferguson contends that “the identity of Mr. D— remains unknown” (“The Voice of Freedom” 38n24). On the other hand, Margot Maddison-MacFadyen convincingly substantiates that Mr. D— was likely Robert Darrell (“Mary Prince, Grand Turk” 656; Maddison-MacFadyen and Csank 100n46).

<sup>18</sup> Dwight McBride argues that “Mary Prince . . . recognizes that the power to set ‘us’ free lies not with slaves but with the English” (93). He posits that “these slaves, for the most part, and even if as rhetorical strategy, understood themselves as disenfranchised and *wrote* themselves in this way” (93, emphasis in original).

<sup>19</sup> See also Aljoe, “Going to Law” 358-59 for further discussion of the slave narrative as a legal document.

<sup>20</sup> María Eugenia Chaves posits a similar notion of “silences” that indicates knowledge (par. 4, n7).

<sup>21</sup> Sensbach clarifies, “By no means did it [evangelical Christianity] promise freedom from slavery, but by using the son of the white masters’ own God to condemn them, the slaves robbed their owners of spiritual power and redirected it toward themselves” (*Rebecca’s Revival* 55).

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