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978-1-108-06019-6 - Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the
Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species

Ottobah Cugoano

Frontmatter

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Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species

In the late eighteenth century, slave labour in Britain's colonies was seen as central to world trade, and the practice was supported by prominent members of society, including the king. Ottobah Cugoano, an emancipated slave living in England, had joined the Sons of Africa, a group whose members wrote to the royal family, aristocrats and leading politicians to condemn slavery and campaign for its abolition. This work, first published in 1787 and sent to George III, was a daring attack on colonial conquest and enslavement, arguing that slaves had a moral duty to rebel against their oppressors. Widely read upon publication, it went through at least three printings that year and was translated into French, with a shorter version published in 1791. This reissue of the original work makes available an important document in the history of colonialism and slavery in the British Empire.

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THOUGHTS AND SENTIMENTS
ON THE
EVIL AND WICKED TRAFFIC
OF THE
SLAVERY AND COMMERCE
OF THE
HUMAN SPECIES,

HUMBLY SUBMITTED TO

The INHABITANTS of *GREAT-BRITAIN*,

BY

OTTOBAH CUGOANO,

A NATIVE of *AFRICA*.

*He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or maketh merchan-
dize of him, or if he be found in his hand: then that thief
shall die.*

LAW OF GOD.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED IN THE YEAR

M.DCC.LXXXVII.

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Page 73. Every slaveholder is a robber, if he buys a man without his own consent, or by any fraudulent method to obtain his consent unawares; and it is the duty of every man to deliver himself from rogues and villains if he can.

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tions, as only proposed that some wise and righteous plan might be adopted.

Page 138 Particular thanks to the promoters of that laudable and charitable undertaking of sending a company of the black poor to Sierra Leona; but some contrary effects to be feared from the bad conducting of it.

Page 142. Observations for instructing the heathen nations in the knowledge of christianity, &c.

N.B. Since these Thoughts and Sentiments have been read by some, I find a general Approbation has been given, and that the things pointed out thereby might be more effectually taken into consideration, I was requested by some friends to add this information concerning myself:—When I was kidnapped and brought away from Africa, I was then about 13 years of age, in the year of the Christian era 1770; and after being about nine or ten months in the slave gang at Grenada, and about one year at different places in the West Indies, with Alexander Campbell, Esq; who brought me to England in the end of the year 1772, I was advised by some good people to get myself baptized, that I might not be carried away and sold again.—I was called *Stuart* by my master, but in order that I might embrace this ordinance, I was called *John Stuart*, and I went several times to Dr. Skinner, who instructed me, and I was baptized by him, and registered at St. James's Church in the year 1773. Some of my fellow-servants, who assisted me in this, got themselves turned away for it; I have only put my African name to the title of the book.—When I was brought away from Africa, my father and relations were then chief men in the kingdom of Agimaque and Affinee; but what they may be now, or whether dead or alive, I know not. I wish to go back as soon as I can hear any proper security and safe conveyance can be found; and I wait to hear how it fares with the Black People sent to Sierra Leona. But it is my highest wish and earnest prayer to God, that some encouragement could be given to send able school masters, and intelligent ministers, who would be faithful and able to teach the Christian religion. This would be doing great good to the Africans, and be a kind restitution for the great injuries that they have suffered. But still I fear no good can be done near any of the European settlements, while such a horrible and infernal traffic of slavery is carried on by them. Wherever the foot of man can go, at the forts and garrisons it would seem to be wrote with these words—

O earth! O sea! cover not thou the blood of the poor negro slaves.