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**Jesuit Networks and the Transatlantic Slave Trade: Alonso de Sandoval’s *Naturaleza, policía sagrada y profana* (1627)**

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The precarity of life imposes an obligation on us.

—Judith Butler, *Frames of War* (2)

Ao todo, os testemunhos conhecidos sobre os tumbeiros portugueses, brasílicos e brasileiros (durante o Império) não devem passar de três dezenas. Muitos provêm de estrangeiros, mas nenhum deles dos padres que mais viajaram no percurso, os jesuítas portugueses. Por quê? Porque existiam, certamente, instruções da ordem no sentido de evitar tais narrativas (In all, the known first-hand accounts of the Portuguese, Brazilian and Brazilian-Angolan slave ships (during the Empire) do not surpass three dozen. Many come from foreigners, but none of them from the priests who most traveled the journey: the Portuguese Jesuits. Why? Because there surely existed in the Order instructions to avoid such narratives).

—Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, *O Trato dos Viventes* (83)

Perceiving the effects of globalization, whether past or present, has always been subject to a paradox. Current transportation and communication systems have given production chains, markets and finance capital a global reach. Integration into a common market, however, has not had an overall positive effect on world populations. Finance capitalism has destabilized
many communities, increasing inequality and contributing to what has been called “precarity” as a normal social condition.\(^2\) At the same time, however, the technologies that facilitate economic expansion also provide the only means to witness the global conditions of inequality and precarity and thus to act politically on these processes. These simultaneous functions of facilitating and uncovering the effects of globalization make it imperative to investigate the social and political conditions of communication networks. Investigating the conditions of representation is particularly crucial in the case of subjects who have been destabilized under globalization, as representation may expose these populations to more violence rather than serve to protect them.\(^3\)

For these reasons, Judith Butler has argued that rather than seeking representation we must ask “about the conditions under which it becomes possible to apprehend a life or set of lives as precarious, and those that make it less possible, or even impossible” (2). As Butler defines it, precariousness is a basic human condition that is overcome through social bonds (14). When these bonds are weakened or the institutions of care, protection and welfare misaligned with social needs, used for political ends or simply torn down, subjects become exposed once again to precarious conditions. Any attempt to represent this state, however, is subject to what she calls the “framing” function of representation. Representation provides a means for recognition, but also identifies and differentiates subjects, sorting humanity into categories that potentially legitimate the further precarization of populations. As it is not possible to represent, visualize or create material and institutional connections without this function of framing, Butler suggests a goal of “apprehension” rather than recognition (3–5). For Butler, this “apprehension” of precarious life can only occur when there is a disjuncture between the frame and its subject. At this point, the frame itself becomes visible and the ontological ideology it has created can be undone (Butler 12).
The ethical dilemmas that Butler outlines for representing precariousness in the present also pertain to past contexts. The tendency to understand current global precarization as the unprecedented result of neoliberal governmental policies, global technology, and capitalist financialization has obscured ways in which many of these processes were already present in early globalization. One of the clearest examples of the precarization of entire regional populations was the early transatlantic slave trade. During the sixteenth century European slavery was transformed from a local and relatively sporadic institution to commercialized chattel slavery. By the early seventeenth century the capture, imprisonment, and forced migration of hundreds of thousands of West Africans had already become the basis for labor in large swaths of the Americas and elsewhere. The commodification of human labor in a transatlantic market, by which Africans were geographically separated from their communities of origin, was supported by an ideology of what Orlando Patterson has called “social death.” Even if in practice enslaved Africans were able to maintain familial and cultural ties and to create new ones during their arduous journeys, their lives were still ultimately determined by their legal status as commodities that could be bought and sold. The violent separation of Africans from their families and communities and from the networks and practices of meaning that sustained their lives in Africa is, indeed, a very early form of the extreme precarization of global labor.

The paltry documentation of the Atlantic slave trade also demonstrates the paradox of representing this precarity: the very ships that served as prisons for massive numbers of Africans on the Atlantic voyage and as conduits for the governmental and financial interactions that facilitated this human commodification, also carried witnesses to the trade. Yet while the brutality of the slave trade did not go entirely unnoticed at the time, there exist surprisingly few documents that detail the conditions of the imprisonment, sale, and Atlantic journey of enslaved Africans during the early period. The missing archive of the transatlantic slave trade
has often been remarked and a long tradition of historiography has worked hard to overcome its limitations. But given limited numbers of documents, it is all the more important to analyze with care the few exceptions to this archival silence. In the early period, almost all documents detailing the slave trade were written in complicity with the system of enslavement and therefore had little interest in documenting its systemic violence. Even fewer give expression to the enslaved, although again there are fascinating exceptions to this rule. Documents that are written to defend the slave trade, however, can be read in such a way that the frameworks used to capture enslaved Africans in systems of representation and recognition can be denaturalized. While the apprehension of precarious subjects in such an archive remains a challenge, we can more surely analyze the ideological scaffolding that framed this precarity and thus contributed to the rapid institutionalization of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery.

The Jesuit Alonso de Sandoval (1573–1651) has long been recognized as the author of one of the earliest and most extraordinary accounts of the Iberian slave trade. Sandoval’s arrival in Cartagena de Indias in 1605 coincided with a surge in the trade that made the city one of the most important slave ports in the Americas. Not only did Sandoval decide to dedicate his ministry to the baptism and evangelization of the arriving Africans, but he also wrote an extensive treatise on the conditions of the transatlantic voyage and enslavement in the Americas. Published originally in 1627 as *Naturaleza, policía sagrada y profana, costumbres, ritos, disciplina y catechismo, de todos etiopes* and then again in a heavily revised version in 1647 with an additional title of *De instauranda Aethiopum salute*, the treatise was a missionary manual intended to outline the best practices for conversion as well as to convince other Jesuits to take on the same labor. Sandoval explicitly modeled his treatise on the Jesuit Jose de Acosta’s two monumental works: the missionary manual *De procuranda indorum salute* (1588) and the highly successful natural history of the Americas, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1593).
While influenced by Acosta, however, Sandoval focused his ministry on a distinct context and population. Despite the century of interaction with sub-Saharan Africa, European accounts relied on classical and Biblical references and had little knowledge of the diversity of Africa and its people. Sandoval draws on the same sources but supplements these with an extensive natural and human history of Africa drawn from contemporary accounts. Like Acosta, Sandoval discusses at length the moral and legal status of the subjects of his evangelization. However, the commodification and sale of human subjects required considerations quite distinct from those that determined indigenous policy in the Americas. Whereas the Spanish Crown had prohibited indigenous slavery in 1537, the context of African enslavement was deemed legitimate by the European doctrine of “just war” (Andrés-Gallego and García Añoveros 23). No commentator of the period questioned the premise of African slavery, although many critiqued the form in which enslavement was carried out.

Although like all other prominent commentators, Sandoval accepts the enslavement of Africans, he goes further than most in his critique of the violence of the trade. Most of the critique occurs in several chapters inserted within his geography of Africa and includes shocking descriptions of the conditions enslaved Africans had endured by the time they had arrived in Cartagena. As some of the only published representations of the violence of the middle passage from the period, these have rightly received scholarly attention. However, scholars have not recognized the connection between these scenes and the rest of the treatise, particularly the first book in which they appear. In this first section of his treatise, Sandoval outlines an unusual geography in which he extends the racial category of blackness to link a number of peoples located around the globe to West Africans. Read together, these unusual elements of Sandoval’s treatise form part of a greater transition from sixteenth-century jurisprudence on “just war” to an incipient racial construction of globalized labor. As much as they are denunciations of the violence of the slave trade, Sandoval’s graphic descriptions of
scenes he witnessed in Cartagena are also crucial to a new ideological frame for slavery that avoids altogether the question of original capture.

It is no coincidence that a Jesuit provided this new frame. As an order with global pretensions and an extensive network of correspondents, it is quite possible that the Society of Jesus was the only early modern institution capable of systematically documenting the transatlantic slave trade. Jesuit practice combined the Christian and economic motives for engaging with chattel slavery: Jesuits not only served as missionaries along the path of the capture, commodification and sale of African slaves, but also the order itself owned slaves for both personal and plantation labor (Olsen 16). The Jesuits’s global letter-writing network is an archive of the order’s internal debates on the trade and labor regimes of enslaved Africans. While the published stances of prominent Jesuits such as Luis de Molina (1535–1600) became the most prominent theological justification of the transatlantic slave trade, the order’s internal correspondence shows a more contentious debate on the subject (Alencastro 165–76). Sandoval’s treatise can only be understood in this context. While apparently not fully apprised of the internal debate in the order, Sandoval includes verbatim epistolary correspondence with the Jesuit superior of Luanda, the port of origin of most slaves arriving in Cartagena de Indias. He also cites Jesuit authors as the source for most of his geographical information. Sandoval clearly intuited and made use of the order’s ability to link points along the commodity chain of transatlantic slavery as well as the global dimension of its information network.

Jesuit sources, therefore, put Sandoval in a unique position to witness the transatlantic slave trade and particularly to question its structural violence. The fact that he did not ultimately take a stance against the trade, despite his critique of its excesses, has often been remarked as a sign of Jesuit accommodation of slavery (Davis; Vila Vilar; Blackburn; Olsen). Yet Sandoval provides more than just an apology for the trade. As a complex text located on the cusp of the mercantilist explosion of the slave trade, the treatise shows how framing slavery was crucial to
dissimulating the effects of early global labor supplies. Sandoval represented the African slave as a miserable subject and thus established a means for the Christian recognition necessary for salvation. But this image of the effects of violence on the African body cut out the causal chain that produced this destitution. Sandoval’s opening account of the global geography of blackness substitutes this missing causal chain and implicitly provides a racial logic for European slaving beyond Africa. Sandoval’s act of witnessing, therefore, should not be viewed in isolation from the rest of his treatise. The frame that denounces the trade in local rather than global terms was a necessary prelude to the transition from the individualized jurisprudence of just war to a racial justification that met the needs of the large-scale slave commerce of the seventeenth century.

**Alonso de Sandoval and Jesuit Global Correspondence**

Born in Seville in 1576 and raised in Lima, where his father occupied a bureaucratic post from 1583 on, Alonso de Sandoval attended the Jesuit seminary during a period of upheaval in the justification and administration of the Spanish empire, especially the controversial Toledan reforms in Peru. In 1605 he was sent to Cartagena de Indias, in what was then the viceroyalty of Nueva Granada, to serve as a missionary in the recently inaugurated Jesuit college (Vila Vilar 27–29). At that time, Cartagena was becoming the most important primary destination of what has been termed the “second great wave” of the slave trade, when a series of factors on both sides of the Atlantic resulted in the rapid expansion in the numbers of Africans who were imported as enslaved labor in the Americas. During this period, the slave trade was an almost exclusively Iberian enterprise, as the Spanish Crown controlled much of the territory where slaves were destined and the Portuguese occupied the African coast where slaves originated. From the end of the sixteenth century, coincident with the unification of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns, the Spanish Crown awarded Portuguese traders a monopoly contract
(asiento) over the trade. Until the entrance of the Dutch into the commerce, the Portuguese oversaw its expansion through this bifrontal network of coastal factories, ports, and American plantations. During the first half of the seventeenth century, Portuguese traders continued to account for nearly seventy-five percent of the slave trade to the Americas, delivering most slaves to Brazil or the Caribbean (Eltis and Richardson 25).

This expansion of slavery from a sporadic commercial enterprise to a key element in imperial mercantilism occurred in the final years of the sixteenth century. The reasons for what has been called the “first wave” of mercantilist slavery are likely multiple. It is clear that the asiento monopoly had an immediate effect on the trade, and that expansion of plantations in the Americas at the time of indigenous demographic collapse also sharply augmented demand for labor (Alencastro 79). On the African side, with the arrival in 1607 of a new governor in Angola, Manuel Pereira Forjaz, the Portuguese state was effectively able to expand the range of the slave trade and actively compete with the myriad of traders of Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch origin. By 1617, moreover, another new governor, Mendes de Vasconcelos, led an even more notable shift from a trade that depended upon African enslavement practices to a de facto policy of warfare waged for the purpose of taking slaves. As Linda Heywood and John Thornton have written, the result of these administrative reforms was a “flood” of slaves to Spanish American ports such as Cartagena (112, 116). Recently, David Wheat has supported this impression, providing additional detail. The first surge in captured Africans sold in the Americas occurred in the last decade of the sixteenth century, although between 1602 and 1616 the numbers arriving at Cartagena dropped sharply as the slave trade turned to Veracruz. In between the years 1617 and 1625, a “second wave” arrived in Cartagena. While in the first surge the majority of traded Africans were from the Upper Guinea coast, with a minority from Angola, in the second surge these numbers were reversed and Angola became the dominant
place of origin. Between 1626 and 1640, Angola accounted for two-thirds of the slaves traded in Cartagena (Wheat 4, 22).

Having arrived in Cartagena in 1605, Sandoval was perhaps the member of the order best positioned to witness these dramatic increases in the Portuguese slave trade as well as the horrific conditions to which enslaved Africans were subjected during the middle passage. Deemed unfit for higher theological tasks, Sandoval was assigned to minister to arriving Africans (Vila Vilar 29). The massive numbers of Africans and unclear conditions of Christianization in Africa led to the theological problem of whether or not to risk the rebaptism of those arriving. In 1611, Sandoval penned a short work defending baptism in Cartagena, given doubts that the Africans had been properly baptized in Luanda (Navarrete 50–51). This short work developed into a larger and complex treatise on the nature of the ministry itself, published in 1627 as Naturaleza, policía sagrada y profana, costumbres, ritos, disciplina y catechismo, de todos etiopes. While the immediate impetus of the shorter work was to argue in favor of the catechism and baptism of Africans arriving in Cartagena, the expanded work of 1627 had a much broader purpose of inducing other Jesuits to undertake the task of evangelizing newly arrived African slaves.

Sandoval’s introduction to his work describes the treatise’s purpose and structure. After exhorting his colleagues to dedicate themselves to what he portrays is a ministry among the world’s most “miserable” subjects, Sandoval dedicates much of his text to describing how best to catechize and baptize Africans who have been subjected to the middle passage. The practical needs of this task would appear to account for the division of his text into three main parts: the first, a global geography of peoples he variously labels Ethiopians or blacks; second, a description of the benefits of evangelizing them when they arrive on the slave ships; and third, a practical manual on how to catechize and baptize enslaved Africans (Sandoval, Un tratado). Sandoval draws heavily on his personal experience, especially to describe the linguistic and
cultural particularities of the Africans who arrived in Cartagena. But he also incorporates numerous published sources that he researched in the Jesuit library during a short return to Lima between 1617 and 1619.

These written sources are particularly evident in the first book of the treatise, the majority of which is a geographical account similar to that which Acosta had used to frame his 1588 missionary manual, *De procuranda*, but later published separately as *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* in 1593. Like Acosta, Sandoval wades into the nature of the subjects of his ministry. Drawing on Jesuit authors, however, he applies the term “black” not only to Africans, referred to by Europeans as Ethiopians, but to numerous peoples who inhabited an extensive geography of a global South. Blacks, he finds, reside not only in Africa, but also in India, Asia, and the Americas. The uneven nature of Sandoval’s geographical knowledge reflects differences among the quality of his sources. Whereas his information on the West African polities that were supplying the slave trade to Cartagena is detailed and reflects his personal interactions with African slaves and slave traders familiar with the region, the wider geography he includes appears subject to the published sources available to him.

The clearest difference among the populations he describes, however, is whether they are subject or not to the transatlantic slave trade. For this reason, Sandoval interrupts his detailed description of West Africa to dedicate several chapters to the justification of the transatlantic slave trade, a question that had provoked a series of theological considerations in the previous century. The juridical foundation of enslavement rested upon a doctrine of “just war” by which the victor maintained a right to enslave the vanquished. No sixteenth-century author debated the legitimacy of enslavement in itself, given the correct conditions. The debate on African enslavement focused, therefore, on the empirical question of whether or not an individual slave could be certified to having been captured in a “just war.” The stakes of the loss of liberty were clear to sixteenth-century commentators, and thus, most commentators understood the
importance of overcoming what was termed “scruples” (*escrúpulos*) about the justice of any individual enslavement (Andrés-Gallego and García Añoveros 105–6).

While slavery was juridically clear to Europeans, and had underwritten sporadic slavery from the classical period onward, the middlemen who conducted the new transatlantic slave trade could often not certify how any particular slave had been enslaved in Africa. Sixteenth-century skeptics often cited personal interactions with Portuguese slave traders who told of the messy reality of capture in Africa, at times the result of distant wars and at other times kidnapping without even the pretext of war. Once a trader had information of unjust enslavement, according to European jurisprudence, the question became whether or not to free those illegally enslaved.14 The more difficult question was whether unjustified enslavement tainted the entire commerce. Carried out in the context of scholastic economic treatises on contracts, value, and pricing, the focus of controversy became the sale of slaves for whom the original conditions of captivity could not be determined. In what became effectively the final opinion on the issue in his 1593 *De iustitia et iure*, the Jesuit Luis de Molina argued that if slave traders believed in good faith that their cargo had been legitimately enslaved then they could proceed with the sale as if this were true (García Añoveros 326).

Writing well after Molina’s judgment on the matter, Sandoval could easily have authorized his discussion with a short citation from the prominent Jesuit. However, judgment on the legitimacy of enslavement rested ultimately on empirical knowledge, even in Molina’s cynical scenario in which a buyer could state that he had no empirical knowledge of the context of original capture. In a treatise built on personal experience, both his and others, Sandoval had the ability to return to the question of original capture and by the juridical terms of enslavement the moral obligation to do so. After protesting his own perplexity, Sandoval states that his own opinion will follow that of the *dotores* (scholars), most especially Molina:
the great controversy that exists among Scholars about the justification of such an arduous
and difficult business left me perplexed during a long time if I were to pass over it in
silence; despite this I have decided to address it, leaving the determination of its
justification to the Scholars, who have written about this question so eruditely, principally
our own Doctor Molina […] (142).

He follows this statement, however, with a series of skeptical reports from slave traders that
bring back the very doubts that Molina had tried to expel. Rather than coming to a conclusion
himself, therefore, Sandoval leaves the reader in the place of judge: “I will limit myself to
presenting to all what I have understood about this during the many years that I have undertaken
this ministry so that each may take into consideration what they think most conforms to justice”
(142).

Surely intuiting the difficulty of the question of what he calls “such litigious things” (cosas
tan litigiosas), in his introduction Sandoval authorizes his oral testimony from slave traders by
noting that they are honorable subjects, and therefore trustworthy, and that Molina had also
consulted traders. This testimony allows him to examine the justice of enslavement in the main
ports supplying Cartagena: Cacheo and Guinea ports, Cape Verde, São Thomé and Luanda.
For each of these ports, Sandoval interrogates the basis for “scruples” concerning the trade.
Those arriving from Cape Verde he declares to be the simplest case:

because this island is not Ethiopian land, but rather is where they bring them from all the
other ports, as the most principal marketplace among all of them; and in this way those that
bring these blacks from this port, since they buy them there as the third, fourth or further
possessor, are not subject to scruples, just as neither are those buyers here in our ports: for
this reason, without entering into the intrinsic justification of the thing, we will go on to those that come from the port of São Thomé […] (Sandoval 142–43).

He expresses more doubt about those from São Thomé. As evidence, he cites his own discussions with slave traders. A trader “que avia hecho muchos viajes a estas partes” (Sandoval 143) (who had made many trips to these parts) admitted that “all of them had notably weighed down his conscience.” Indeed, a king in São Thomé, Sandoval notes, had enslaved entire families of anyone who angered him. In this region, Sandoval concludes, the slave trade proceeds beyond the experience of the scholastic authorities and thus: “whoever inquires and investigates (principally in things so litigious in themselves and in discoveries of new kingdoms and unexamined captures that even the Doctors have not addressed since they are ignorant of them) does not err” (143). He reserves his greatest doubts, however, for the slaves coming from Cacheo. Without citing his sources, he asserts that there are a variety of forms of enslavement in Guinea, ranging from trade for fabric from Goa to punishment for crimes such as adultery. Other times, slaves are simply ambushed and captured at night. Declaring that “this variety of forms of capture has made me greatly reconsider this business,” Sandoval confirms his suspicions with the confessions of slave traders themselves, including one who declares that the trade was instigating the very wars that were supplying the slaves (147).

To this extent, Sandoval’s discussion follows the lines of sixteenth-century commentators on the trade. However, Sandoval includes an additional source that his predecessors had not: the direct testimony of a Jesuit superior in Africa. After completing his tour of other African ports, Sandoval declares “on the blacks that come from Angola etc. I have found better information (if it is not the case that these captures have been damaged as is often the case)” (143). This “better information” is contained in a letter he has received from Luis de Brandão, Jesuit superior in Luanda, in response to Sandoval’s 1610 inquiry into the origin of slaves.
coming from the port. Unlike his anecdotal documentation of the slave traders’s reports, moreover, Sandoval reproduces verbatim the superior’s letter. This unusual inclusion of private correspondence between Jesuits in a work intended for publication and on a topic of such controversy merits special attention. Effectively, Sandoval gives voice to the superior as a direct authority on the question of enslavement.

In contrast to the doubts that Sandoval has previously uncovered in testimony from traders, Brandão expresses no ambivalence about the trade. The Portuguese Jesuit opens his short but pithy letter with an acknowledgment of Sandoval’s work in catequizing slaves, sympathizing with the “extraordinary frustrations that he must have with these black people” since “we in this College are saddled even by the Portuguese-speaking blacks.” As for Sandoval’s inquiry into the legitimacy of African captivity, Brandão is decisive: “I believe that your Reverence should not have scruples about that.” In the first place, he writes, referring to the Portuguese council dedicated to questions of morality concerning the trade, the mesa de conciencia (Council of Conscience) in Lisbon, “this is something that the Council of Conscience in Lisbon, composed of erudite men of good conscience, has never censured.” Furthermore, he adds, “the Bishops in São Thomé, Cape Verde and this city of Luanda, who are all erudite and virtuous men, have never censured it.” Finally, “we have been here forty years and there have been very erudite Fathers here as well as in the Province of Brasil where there have always been eminent Fathers from our Religion and they have never considered this commerce illicit” (143–44).

In Brandão’s reasoning, then, the trade has been authorized by members of the order more eminent than Sandoval. Once authorized, moreover, the trade appears to justify itself “and thus we, and the Fathers of Brasil, have no scruples about buying these slaves for our service.” If anyone should doubt the legitimacy of the act of enslavement it is those in Angola who are buying from “persons who have perhaps stolen them.” But those who take part in the
transatlantic commerce, he states, “know nothing of this and so buy them in good conscience and in good conscience sell them over there.” Brandão does admit the possibility that some traveling to the Americas had been illegally enslaved but an inquiry into all cases would simply not be feasible given the staggering numbers who passed through the port:

to search for a few badly captured among the ten or twelve thousand Blacks who leave from this port every year would be impossible no matter how diligent one is. And to lose so many souls that are sent from here, many of which achieve salvation, so that a few badly captured might not be sent, without even knowing which these are, would not seem to serve God, since those would be few and those that achieve salvation are many and correctly captured.

He also warns Sandoval not to question the slaves themselves “because they will always say that they were stolen and captured with illegitimate titles” and assures him that captivity occurs according to a myriad of African “laws and customs.” Finally, he cuts short the discussion with a terse testament to the conditions of the Jesuit mission: “But on this I can’t say more to your Reverence, since it is a complex question, and neither about their rites and customs, because I have neither time nor the health to do so, etc.” (144).

In the midst of Sandoval’s contradictory reports on the justice of the enslavement of Africans, Brandão’s letter is of a different stature: a mandate from a Jesuit superior to desist in his inquiry into slaves’ origins. Even so, the position of the letter is buried amid the contrary testimony from slave traders, including one who confesses his grave doubts about the origin of a cargo of nine hundred Africans he has brought to Cartagena. As evidence, the slave trader even cites a sermon denouncing the injustice of African captivity, pronounced by the same Luis de Brandão. When Sandoval protests that Brandão has written opposing information in
his letter, the trader explains that the surge in unjust captives occurred in the context of a specific war at the time (145). This confluence of contradictory reports from Africa on the justice of African enslavement corresponds to Sandoval’s original statement that he will simply present the evidence that he has gathered over his years in the ministry “so that each may take into consideration what they think most conforms to justice” (142). In the following chapter, directly before his well-known descriptions of horrific conditions of the slave warehouses in Cartagena, he repeats his suspension of judgment: “these blacks, captured by the justice known only to God…” (151).

Sandoval’s suspension of judgment effectively endorses Brandão’s equation of justice with the greater good when the superior states that the salvation of the majority is more important than finding a few mal cautivos (incorrectly captured). While many commentators had similarly defended African enslavement as a means to a justified end of Christian salvation, this had not been understood as a compensation for unjust enslavement but rather as an additional benefit for the justly enslaved (Andrés-Gallego and García Añoveros 28). In this sense, Brandão does not seek to deny the reports of injustice, but rather meets them with a distinct logic: first, that the trade has been established for a long time and that Jesuits themselves participated in it; and second, that injustice of original enslavement could be compensated by the just end of salvation. By suspending his own judgment on the matter of slaves’s origins in Africa and turning to local evidence of excesses in their transport and treatment, Sandoval ends up heeding his superior’s mandate. The inclusion of Brandão’s letter serves as an authorization for a return to a local empirical perspective rather than an inquiry into the global chain that had resulted in the violent effects that Sandoval witnesses in Cartagena.

**Jesuit Networks and the Framing of Slavery**
Historians have often noted the inclusion of Brandão’s letter in Sandoval’s treatise but have never analyzed its purpose in the rhetorical structure of the work. In the most detailed examination of the passage to date, Luiz de Alencastro has placed Brandão’s letter in the context of the Jesuit debate on the legitimacy of slavery, carried out not only in published works such as that of Molina but also in a more contentious epistolary correspondence internal to the order. Correspondence from Jesuits in Africa often commented upon the question of the legitimacy of the slave trade. It is clear Jesuits even acted upon their conscience to denounce the trade. In 1583, Jesuits in Angola complained that one of their peers, Miguel García, was threatening to withhold confession from persons engaged in the slave trade (Alencastro 165). García was returned to Spain and reports from other Jesuits in Africa provided more accommodating stances. One of the more successful versions of this accommodation was that of Balthasar Barreira, a Jesuit stationed in Sierra Leone whose missives were included in the edifying literature that circulated within the order in the years just before Brandão penned his response to Sandoval. Alencastro argues that Brandão’s letter simply reproduces Barreira’s arguments in defense of the slave trade, in a reflection of the influence these must have had in correspondence internal to the order (Alencastro 177). If it is the case that Brandão does not voice an individual stance, but rather repeats elements that had become quasi-official Jesuit discourse on slavery, then Sandoval by contrast appears to act on conscience and out of the necessity of clarifying his local practice in Cartagena.

The correspondence between Sandoval and Brandão, therefore, provides an example of the divergent possibilities within the particular practice of Jesuit letter-writing. Global correspondence among Jesuits was a necessary structure for an order for which, as Jerome Nadal declared, “the world is our house” (O’Malley 46). Precepts in the *Constitutions*, augmented by Loyola’s own requests to be informed, had established the order’s epistolary practice (Harris 299, 304–5). In theory, Jesuits were to communicate every week with their
superiors if they were in close proximity, once a month if they were not (Constitutions 292). In practice, epistolary correspondence from some missionary regions could be much more sporadic. Nonetheless, the practice of letter-writing among Jesuits produced a wealth of documentation, in some cases impossibly extensive, as well as new administrative and archival techniques that rationalized and centralized this information (O’Malley 2–3; Friedrich). It also greatly marked the culture of the order, which selected letters to be read aloud among Jesuits as “edifying letters” or to be the basis of the published Annual Letters (Correia-Afonso 6).

In this way, Jesuits could communicate with one another across the globe, and serve as authorities for one another within a greater structure of centralized selection and distribution.15 Recently, scholars have argued that this blend of capillary reach and disciplinary centers made Jesuit letter-writing an antecedent to modern communication networks. Drawing on Bruno Latour’s work on networks in science, for instance, Steven Harris has argued that the Jesuits’s unusually robust production of scientific texts followed from their unique combination of long-distance networks and centralized nodes of accumulation. While the “emissaries” in the field gathered and collected, Harris argues that administrative centers could be considered what Latour calls “centers of calculation” where documents from the field were housed, accumulated, and re-ordered (Harris 294–96). Building on Harris’s work, Markus Friedrich has detailed the Jesuits’s own policies on correspondence. According to Friedrich, the Jesuit emphasis on centralization sought not only to rationalize information, but also to exercise control through governance. By the late seventeenth century, he argues, centralization had become a precept for governing a global organization: “it is clear that a ‘center’ meant several things for the Jesuits: ‘disengaged,’ ‘empirical’ panoptism, and an understanding of politics as effective governance, including a rational, proactive steering of the body social. Thinking a ‘center’ along these lines ultimately was a conceptual tool used to refashion politics” (Friedrich 543).
Fewer scholars have addressed the fact that through these same global networks, Jesuits also participated in and disseminated the violence of early European, especially Iberian, imperialism. Ivonne del Valle’s analysis of eighteenth-century Jesuit writings from the northern frontier of New Spain is one of the first systematic approaches to the question of frontier violence and its transformation by the information-chain leading to the imperial centers (del Valle *Escribiendo*). Her work on colonial violence in the Jesuit José de Acosta’s missionary manual, *De procuranda indorum* (1588) also has important consequences for reading Sandoval’s work (del Valle “Entre el realismo,” “Violence and Rhetoric”). Not only was Acosta’s work a direct influence on Sandoval’s treatise, but structurally the two texts also engaged different poles of the same geopolitical and economic contexts of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Developing and neutralizing Las Casas’s ferocious critique of the excesses of Spanish colonialism, for instance, Acosta represented the Americas as a dystopian context in which a lack of centralized oversight had unleashed the despotic power of Spanish colonizers (del Valle “Entre el realismo”). Yet unlike Las Casas’s final stance that the Spanish king should quit the Americas, Acosta’s solution is a complete rationalization of colonial life and every subject in the colonies (del Valle “Entre el realismo”). As opposed to centralization, then, Acosta favors the fragmentation and governmental administration of violence through an ethical reform of all members of the political economy (del Valle, “Violence and Rhetoric” 58).

The effect of this pragmatics is, as del Valle argues, to disperse and distribute the original violence of colonization in an attempt to dissipate the radical calls for justice that were occurring even in Acosta’s lifetime (del Valle, “Violence and Rhetoric” 64–65). In an argument that reached back to Francisco de Vitoria’s *De indis*, Acosta noted that it was impossible to embrace absolute justice without undoing the entire economic system and, since Christian evangelization depended upon this economic system, doing so would be contrary to the greater
good of salvation (Vitoria 291; del Valle, “Violence and Rhetoric” 60). Indeed, while focusing and centralizing information, the bureaucratic network also risked connecting a dispersed geography and exposing the violence of a global economic order in which it participated. The typically Jesuit combination of fragmentation and habit, individuation and education, accomplished the administrative goals of governance without giving visibility to the aggregated violence of the system as a whole (del Valle, “Violence and Rhetoric” 65). More than a panopticon as the guiding force for reform through individual habit, the Jesuit at the center of Acosta’s De procuranda might be called an orchestrator.

While Sandoval appears to have taken initiative to inquire into a question of conscience, Brandão’s letter to Sandoval supports both the centralizing and fragmenting disciplinary force also made possible by the network. On the one hand, he suggests that Sandoval leave questions of conscience for a centralized body, the mesa de consciencia in Lisbon or other eminent dotores of the order. On the other, he insists upon a fragmented consciousness, giving up on the prospect of searching through the thousands of Africans that passed through his port for the couple mal cautivos and asking Sandoval also give up this impossible task. Just as in Acosta’s example, the violence of the slave trade becomes fragmented, concentrated in local phenomena rather than a systemic whole. Seen from the context of the Jesuit network, therefore, Brandão forcefully blocks Sandoval’s attempt to connect points in the geography of the slave trade to determine its legitimacy. Sandoval’s inclusion of the letter that blocks this inquiry in turn authorizes his decision to turn the majority of his treatise to the conditions he personally witnessed in Cartagena. Justice is also transformed under this intervention. Rather than a late Lascasian dream of an absolutely ethical conquest, Sandoval adapts what del Valle calls Acosta’s third way of a mediated and pragmatic justice (del Valle, “Violence and Rhetoric” 67). Without denying the need to bring justice to the enslaved, Sandoval frames this justice as Christian compensation rather than liberation.
Sandoval establishes the framework for this compensation through the graphic descriptions of what he himself has witnessed in the Cartagena warehouses where Africans were kept before being sold. After dismissing any ability to judge the justice of the trade, Sandoval dedicates the following chapter to the conditions of those who arrive after the transatlantic passage. The images focus closely on the bodies of the enslaved, which become emblems of “misery,” a lexicalized juridical concept designating the need for care (More 31). The depiction of the violence of the slave trade works to a final crescendo in the parting image of the chapter:

And to see so many so sick, so destitute, and with so little succor and protection from their owners, since they commonly leave them naked on the floor with no shelter or aid, causes great pity and compassion. And there they lie and there they often miserably pass away with no one to mourn their bodies or their souls and one could reasonably doubt whether the cause of their death is their great abandonment or their sickness. A good proof of this will be what I saw and wept with my own eyes: in some of the houses of these owners of the slave ships there are great rooms with planks at the edges where they divide the men and women and enclose them all night to sleep and where they appear in the morning the way one would expect after such bestial treatment. They had designated these as places with no remedy for those beyond hope. There they dumped them and in that misery and misfortune there they suffered and finally eaten by flies, some above and others below the planks, there they died. I remember that once I saw among them two who had already died, their naked bodies on the bare floor, as if beasts, their mouths open and facing upward full of flies, their arms crossed as if to signify the Cross of the eternal condemnation befallen on their souls for having died without the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, as no one had been called upon to administer it [...] (Sandoval 153).
To communicate the violence of slavery, Sandoval selects an image of dead African men with their arms crossed “as if to signify the Cross” for having died unbaptized. Sandoval’s depiction of the violent excesses of slavery substitutes his confused critique of the original capture or the ongoing and everyday violence that characterized enslavement as a governance regime. In fact, Sandoval has an interest in the social death of those who arrive in Cartagena. The bodies are naked, signifying both the indignity of enslaved deaths, but also the symbolic stripping of their original social context during the transatlantic journey. To overcome this social death, Sandoval envisions the Africans in a Christian posture, as if the drama of enslavement was not capture, chains, and commodification, but the body as profane condemnation. Above all, these are images of bodies that cannot themselves give witness to the experience of slavery. Already dead, they must be framed to be understood and spiritually secured, a framing that Butler reminds us occurs with all forms of representation.

Again, the Jesuit context of Sandoval’s treatise is evident. It is likely that the emphasis on visualization in the Spiritual Exercises required of Jesuits contributed to Sandoval’s graphic coding of the dead African body in Christian terms. As in the Spiritual Exercises, Sandoval composes a scene that frames its subject but cutting it out of any previous context. This permits the intimacy of witnessing, which in the Spiritual Exercises effects an identification between the exercitant and the object of contemplation (Loyola). In Sandoval’s treatise, the framing permits the recognition of humanity in people whom he says have been treated as if beasts. The isolated, emblematic scene, therefore, establishes a liminal space in which a witness not directly involved in the trade can inspect its consequences as an outsider. But through this framing function, the violence of slavery is also limited to the context of the transatlantic journey that has people made “bestial.” The abjection of African bodies begins when they are crowded into the hulls of the ships where “there is no Spaniard who daring to place his head through the trap door does not become sick, nor can remain inside for an hour without risking
grave illness. Such is the stench, lack of space and misery of that place” (152). They arrive, he says, “turned into skeletons” and are brought from the ship “as raw flesh” after which they are placed in warehouses until being sold.

As opposed to the complex trajectory of African subjects that he has previously uncovered through a network of correspondents, letters, and published works, the representation of slavery becomes condensed in a scene witnessed by Sandoval himself. Indeed, the dialectic between horror and salvation rests on the confines of the ship and holding house where Africans are physically segregated and equated through their shared condition of bodily suffering. Notably, this scene is the center of Sandoval’s denunciation of the effects of the middle passage. Rather than insisting on his inquiries into the subject of African enslavement, Sandoval’s framing of slavery perfectly complements the Luanda Jesuit’s assertion that the reiterated practice of commerce itself has erased the need to find individual justifications for the enslavement. By including Brandão’s authorized mandate, then, Sandoval neutralizes the potential that Jesuit correspondence could expose the violence of the transatlantic trade. His graphic vision of the warehouses stands in for an investigation into the transatlantic production of precarized labor and permits his pivot from the global context to the local practice of slavery that will occupy the majority of his treatise.

**The Slave Trade and the Globalization of Blackness**

To this extent, Sandoval’s treatise neutralizes the potential that Jesuit networks could expose the effects of a new global economy. But this stripping away of the African context and focusing solely on the slaves who have survived the middle passage is at odds with missionary practice that must understand the cultural origin of subjects of evangelization. Like Acosta before him, Sandoval turns to natural history to understand the place of Africa in a new geopolitics. But unlike the older Jesuit who was describing a “new world,” Sandoval must
contend with the long relationship between Christianity and Africa. Much of his geographical
description focuses on the areas that supplied the human cargo arriving in Cartagena and about
which he provides details on distinctions in customs, politics, and history. Clearly Sandoval’s
communication with African slaves, traders, and Jesuits provides more information on these
areas than others. But while detailing the known history of Africa and its diversity, Sandoval
also includes a fragmented account of other areas in Asia and the Americas. He implicitly
justifies these additional geographies through the nomenclature he uses to categorize them.
From the beginning of his treatise, Sandoval has equated Africans with what he calls “blacks.”
When he turns to other regions, however, he extends the term to include populations in Asia
and the Americas. Neither a global natural history, nor a description of the distinct peoples and
languages that arrive in Cartagena, the first book of Sandoval’s treatise can best be described
as an attempt to create a natural history of “black” populations of the world.

Sandoval makes several logical leaps to arrive at this geography of “black” populations.
He begins his treatise with a detailed discussion of the nature of “Ethiopians,“ which he initially
equates with the color “black”: “since we will need to talk about blacks, or Ethiopians,
throughout this book, it would seem best to discuss their name and nature first, before going
on.” The equation is valid, he argues, since most agree that etymologically, the term
“Ethiopian” is related to “burnt.” Thus, he declares, “we will call all black nations Ethiopians,
beyond the particularities that each one of them represents: such as Guincos, Caravalies, Ardas,
Lucumies, Congos, Angolas, Cafres, Macuas, and others” (69). The use of the term “black,”
here presented as synonymous with Ethiopian, is further extended, however, in his introduction
to the scope of his treatise in which he describes its sources as “that which grave and erudite
men have published about Ethiopia and the other Empires and Kingdoms of blacks and that
which the fathers of the Society who are located on these missions have written, the attribution
to whose authorship will be noted in the margins throughout this work” (58). Here, the
geography of Ethiopia, the principal association with blackness, has been suplemented by other “Empires and Kingdoms of blacks.”

Sandoval’s inspiration appears to derive from his access to the network of Jesuits stationed in distinct areas of the globe whose letters and published works detail the populations of these regions. These writings permit a new type of centralization in his work, despite the regional focus on Cartagena: a global gaze that categorizes peoples according to whether they can be defined as “black” or not. Whereas “Ethiopians” may be etymologically related to “burnt” and thus defined as “black,” the inclusion of further peoples under this denomination is not similarly justified. Rather, Sandoval appears to reverse the logic of his etymological foundation for a nomenclature according to color: while his treatise is ostensibly about Ethiopians, it will also include those who by their skin color can be denominated “Empires and Kingdoms of blacks,” whatever their other geographical characteristics. In a treatise on catechization of “Ethiopians,” the original equation between Ethiopian and “black” has permitted a more expansive geography.

In a detailed exegesis of this oddity, Eduardo Restrepo has taken on the challenge of disentangling Sandoval’s terminology of geography and color. As Restrepo remarks, despite his initial comments, Sandoval does not fully equate Ethiopian and “black” (124). In the first place, Sandoval notes the diverse physical characteristics of the Ethiopians. For instance, there are those who are of more of a cinnamon color, those who have straight rather than curly hair, and a “nation of gentile Ethiopians, called Maracatos, black as tar but which have marvelously straight hair and the facial features of gentlemen [ahidalgadas] such as those of Spaniards” (191). At one point, Sandoval admits that “although it is true that we commonly refer to all of these nations as black, not all are dark; rather within and among them there is great variety; some are blacker than others, others not as black; others are quince color, as they say, others are dark brown, or zambos, or yellowish brown, as mulattoes, of a burnt color” (136). Sandoval
also notes the diversity of the West African nations arriving in Cartagena, calling them by their polities and stating that some are more sought after by Spanish slaveholders than others. Sandoval’s written sources on greater Africa provide an even more eclectic assortment of anecdotes, including those that tell of lapsed Christians who defend their rites against missionaries and others that recount the barbarity of the Bedouins who refuse even to allow foreigners in their midst (193).

As Sandoval turns to regions outside of Africa, however, he exclusively adopts the term “black.” “In the territory of Peru,” he declares, “some say that there are nations of blacks so uncivil and remote that they have not even come to our notice” (59). Of Filipinos, he writes “these blacks are not as dark colored as those from Guinea, nor as ugly” (95). Indeed, the phenotypical diversity of Africans most likely permits the extension of the term “black.” If Ethiopians may be called “black,” even in their diversity, then the term can justifiably apply to all the world’s darker-skinned people despite a similar diversity. Perhaps picking up on the common designation of some Filipinos as “little blacks” (negritos), for instance, Sandoval distinguishes between the indios and the “blacks” of the Philippines. The term “black” itself, then, becomes the operative link between territories stretching across the global south.

For Restrepo, this categorization stops short of establishing a racialized system (174). Rather, he argues, Sandoval leans toward a version of biology by which accidental qualities become naturalized over time without, therefore, inhering to color. However, it is important to note that Restrepo, like many readers of Sandoval, bases his argument on the 1647 revision of the treatise. In the original publication of 1627, Sandoval posits only two much more rudimentary possibilities for the origin of blackness. The first is classical climate theory, by which the heat of the tropics had led to darker skin. But in this case, he argues, Spanish in the tropics would also give birth to darker children. For this reason he finds the second possible cause more plausible: that Africans are the descendents of Ham “who was the first servant and..."
slave in the world, and who contained this intrinsic heat such that it stained his children and
descendants” (75). This mark had designated those who bore it to be forever condemned to
servitude. In the following chapter, he argues that any diversity within nations, which he calls
by the Aristotelian term “monstrosities,” was due to the power of the imagination during
conception. In the 1627 edition of Sandoval’s treatise, the curiosities of albino blacks introduce
the possibility that accidents could change nature without disturbing the basic commonality of
dark skin among the many “blacks” of the world.

The differences between the 1627 and 1647 versions of Sandoval’s treatise reflect their
distinct contexts. In 1627 the slave trade had just expanded into a massive enterprise whose
main port of entry to the American market was Cartagena. While seemingly random in its scope
and odd in its shoehorning of diverse geographies under the rubric of blackness, this
geographical extension provides the basis for a leap from a juridical argument to a global racial
division as the justification for slavery. At no point does Sandoval declare that all those whom
he calls blacks can be enslaved. But from the beginning of his treatise he defines blackness as
the condition of being “miserable.” Indeed, Sandoval’s decision to favor the category “black”
over “Ethiopian” in the treatise may follow from this association. If blackness was the “mark
of Ham” that condemned its people to servitude, then the extension of blackness across points
of the Iberian empire, where trade and evangelization were occurring simultaneously,
implicitly provided a racial logic for further enslavement. This potential for precarization as a
normal condition was exactly what would ensure its institutionalization, beyond a specific case
of sacred guilt or “just war.”

In 1627, this logic is still incipient. Yet it is still a decisive transformation of previous
justifications of the enslavement of Africans, once the arbitrary circumstances of “just war”
had been put into question by the sheer numbers of enslaved arriving in the Americas. The
juridical contortions of the sixteenth century were the first step in providing a rationale for the
enslavement of a specific group of people, determined by skin color. Even toward the end of the sixteenth century, the individualizing discourse of “just war,” by which each case must be argued and debated, was giving way to a language of geography and natural law. Sandoval takes this justification further, perhaps because he is unwilling to embrace the sweeping generalizations it entailed. Thus, whereas in treatises such as Tomás Mercados’s 1571 *Suma y Contratos*, Africans are described as peoples of such bestial barbarism that they naturally fell into slavery, Sandoval presents something more like a racial codification of the global south (Mercado 232; Andrés-Gallego and García Añoveros 106). Color, then, becomes a general sign that divides the globe into Europeans, “the smallest of the four parts of the world, but the greatest in nobility, virtue, and gravity, magnificence and number of political beings,” and a patchwork of geographies whose association in Sandoval’s treatise depends upon two arbitrary conditions: the whims of the expansion of Iberian empires, that provided cover for the global reach of the Jesuits, and the increasing association between “blackness” and enslavement.

**Conclusion**

Sandoval’s treatise affords a singular view of the construction of a new framework for transatlantic slavery at the moment when the commerce was quickly becoming inextricable from the global economy. The rhetorical structure for this incipient ideology reflected conditions afforded by only the global Jesuit network. Although it was not synonymous with the geography of the Iberian empires in the period, this Jesuit network tended to accompany Iberian expansion. In the early seventeenth century, Iberian expansion provided the global commercial structure for the transatlantic slave trade and Jesuits were necessarily witnesses to all of the points along the chain of production of commodified humans. The Jesuit involvement in slavery may be considered another form of their practice of moral accommodation, a term usually applied to their acceptance of diverse cultural practices in their missions (Rubíés; del
Valle “Violence and Rhetoric”). While defending Jesuit slave ownership is not the task Sandoval sets out for himself in the treatise, his ministry follows from the assumption that slavery cannot be undone as an institution despite indications of its unethical basis even in the juridical terms of the period. Sandoval’s shocking descriptions of Africans arriving in Cartagena cannot be considered neutral and unadulterated testimonies of the slave trade. These images appear in the treatise at the moment when Sandoval breaks with his inquiry into the conditions of enslavement in Africa, and thus, are important elements in the foreclosure of the discussion that had been the focus of sixteenth-century debates. His account subtly turns from the idea that slaves unjustifiably captured, by the European doctrine of “just war,” should therefore be freed, to the idea that those already enslaved, “with the Justice known only to God” may only be saved through Christianity.

As if to seal this transition, or perhaps because he intuits that even the moral argument that slaves were cursed by the mark of Ham would ultimately be inadequate to meet the needs of the voracious labor market of imperial capitalism, Sandoval provides a preliminary attempt at racializing the global south. While Sandoval made use of what was perhaps the only means to witness the radical transformation in forced labor at the time—the Jesuit letter-writing network—his publication of Brandão’s admonition also exposes the way in which this network policed itself and prevented individual Jesuits from conducting investigations of conscience. Thus, instead of exposing the structure of precarization, in the capture, transport and sale of Africans, Sandoval used his spiritual training and information drawn from his fellow Jesuits to frame enslaved Africans as miserable subjects in need of Christianity. Like current structures of precarization, by which the very economic forces with an interest in transforming state and community institutions first work to undermine these, Sandoval’s treatise exposes a vested interest in the violence of the slave trade. Far from an incoherent set of positions, the first book of his 1627 treatise prepares for his detailed focus on local conditions. While apparently the
pinnacle of the European denunciation of the violence of the slave trade, Sandoval’s framing of the enslaved relegates the experience and expression of violent precarization to the lost archive of transatlantic slavery.

Notes

1. This article benefitted from presentations of sections of it at Washington University, Stanford University, the Mexico City Seminar “The Colonial Roots of Globalization,” and the Tepoztlan Institute. I would like to thank Stephanie Kirk, Lisa Surwillo, Ericka Beckman, Daniel Nemser, David Kazanjian and other interlocutors at these venues. I would especially like to thank my co-editors, Rachel O’Toole and Ivonne del Valle, for their insightful and persistant comments on several drafts. All remaining errors are my own.

2. Numerous studies have argued that neoliberalism has increased “precarity.” To name some of the most evocative recent analyses of this precarity, Carlo Galli has called the new international order one of “global war,” Saskia Sassen has analyzed an intersection of ecological, human and financial “expulsions,” and Judith Butler has questioned the political rights of those who are neither defended nor mourned on a global scale. While distinct, these approaches appear to agree that a basic characteristic of contemporary globalization is the increase in the velocity and number of global exchanges (of information, goods, or capital) and a corresponding weakening of the state as a political and regulatory system. In her excellent study of precarity form of governance, Isabell Lorey gives a concise summary of recent studies on precarity. Following Judith Butler’s work, she makes the distinction between precariousness as a “socio-ontological dimension of lives and bodies,” precarity as a differentially distributed political condition, and precarization as a governmental process linked to economic neoliberalism (Lorey loc. 211).
3. In her study of the politics of visuality in Israel and Palestine, for instance, Gil Hochberg makes the case that Palestinians are subject to visual regimes of governance and thus are not favored by greater representation. See also, Butler 2.

4. The literature on precarization as a process linked to neoliberalism takes post-fordism as a beginning point. Lorey is a good example of a solid analysis that acknowledges the fact that recognition of precarization depends upon a previous norm of stability, through wage-labor, citizenship, and the welfare state. Despite the fact that she acknowledges that these structures were always restricted, by taking Michel Foucault’s account of eighteenth-century shifts in governmentality as her starting point, Lorey ends up inscribing the same periodization (loc 221). Of course, if we define precarization as an economic interest in the destabilization of communities, particularly for labor, precarization should be understood to be a process present since the beginning of capitalism and not just in its latest neoliberal version.

5. The most significant recent work on the transatlantic slave trade is the online Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Database and the linked Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, by David Eltis and David Richardson. Other studies have looked more closely at the slave ship itself and the commodification process to which traders subjected Africans. Nevertheless, work on the slave ship has tended to focus on later periods and documentation from English ships. For a meticulous attempt to reconstruct the process of commodification on an English slave route, for instance, see Smallwood. For the conditions of the Portuguese slave ships from Angola, see Caldeira 132–41.

6. For the Iberian context of slavery, scholars have done extraordinary archival work to reconstruct lives of the enslaved. See, for instance, James Sweet’s recent work on a healer caught by the Portuguese Inquisition, Domingos Alvares, which is one of the most complete histories of an enslaved subject. Rachel O’Toole’s detailed archival work has followed the
lives of enslaved men and women in the Peruvian coastal city of Peru. See for instance, her chapter in this volume and her book.

7. Following Judith Butler’s suggestion, as images circulate frames become dislodged and introduced into distinct contexts, thus denaturalizing them (12). Although she does not consider the possibility, historical distance causes a different type of disjuncture between the framework and its subjects that also permits a denaturalization.

8. The full title of Sandoval’s treatise is Naturaleza, policía sagrada y profana, costumbres, ritos, disciplina y catechismo, de todos etiopes. The 1647 edition simply added the title to which it is commonly abbreviated. Vila Vilar’s introduction to her edition of Sandoval’s 1627 treatise, published under the title Un tratado sobre la esclavitud, remains the best summary of his life. For Acosta’s influence on Sandoval, see 36–37.

9. See, for instance, Bethencourt.

10. See, for instance, Nicole van Germeten’s comments in the introduction to her translation of an abridged version of Sandoval’s treatise.

11. In her analysis of Sandoval’s treatise, for instance, Margaret Olsen recreates his map of global “black” populations. Her explanation for Sandoval’s extension of blackness, that few Jesuits were working in “black” Africa and therefore his sources would assume blackness in other regions, does not answer the question of why he would include this geography in his treatise (Olsen 80).

12. While it is probable that his fellow Jesuits in Luanda could have had a similarly stark portrayal of mercantile slavery, the early mission in Angola was feeble and fragmented, its few members repeatedly decimated by disease (Alden 76).

13. From this point on, all references to Sandoval’s text will cite Enriqueta Vila Vilar’s 1987 edition of the 1627 treatise, which she published under the title Un tratado sobre la esclavitud.
14. In several spectacular cases slaves deemed to have been incorrectly enslaved were indeed returned and freed. Citation on freed slaves.

15. John Correia-Afonso categorizes Jesuit letters into four types: those to the superior; those written to the members in general; those addressed to general public; and those between personal friends within the society (8).

16. For a summary of the use of the term “miserable” to describe indigenous subjects in Spanish imperial jurisprudence, see More 31–32. For an early application of the term by Vasco de Quiroga, see Ivonne del Valle’s article in this volume.

17. Thus, using the term “Guinea” to refer to West Africans, Sandoval writes “These Guineans to whom we will presently refer are the blacks most esteemed by the Spanish as those who work the hardest, cost more, and those who we usually refer to by law as “good natives,” of sharp wit, beautiful [bodies] and well disposed; [they are] by nature lively and happy and do not miss any opportunity to make music, sing and dance, even while engaged in the hardest toil on earth” (110).

18. Restrepo is aware of the differences between the two editions and chooses to work with the 1647 edition, as it is “very useful for dissipating the ambiguities and vague references in the first” (166) (my translation). However, this turn to the second edition erases the specific context in which the first was written.

Works Cited


