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Enslaved by African angels: Swedenborg on African superiority, evangelization, and slavery

Vincent Roy-Di Piazza

Postdoctoral Research Fellow Humanities Division, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

ABSTRACT

This article provides the first extensive study of Emanuel Swedenborg's (1688–1772) views on Africans and slavery. Although significant scholarship has been devoted to Swedenborg's influence on the British abolitionist movement in the 1780s-1790s, comparably little has been written on the ideas and context which inspired this influence in the first place. This article explores Swedenborg's ties to networks and debates about African evangelization, colonization, and slavery during the neglected period of the Swedish Age of Liberty (1719–1772). It shows that Swedenborg was the first Swede to condemn slavery, as early as 1741, explains why he regarded slavery as a divine punishment in the afterlife for European missionaries, and why he presented sub-Saharan Africans as superior, in contrast to the dominant dismissive views of Linnaeus, Bäck, Kant, or Buffon. Like most Lutherans of his time, Swedenborg did not advocate the abolition of slavery, yet within a generation his provocative views about African superiority and spiritual emancipation were used by his followers to articulate their abolitionist agenda. Swedenborg's millenarian doctrines more broadly re-harnessed biblical traditions about Africa and tropes about the *bon sauvage*, in a counter-example to narratives about the trope's decline in the second half of the eighteenth century.

KEYWORDS

Swedenborg; Slavery; African Superiority; Noble Savage; Evangelization; Colonization

Introduction

> Every man wishes to be free, and to remove not freedom but slavery from himself. Every boy who is under a master wishes to be his own master, and so to be free …
> The Lord teaches us in John that we are slaves when we are in our sins and that the Lord liberates us when we accept truth from him through the Word.[1]
>
> — Emanuel Swedenborg, *Sapientia Angelica* (1764)

In a famous double portrait from 1789 with his friend Peter Panah, a West African prince from Cape Mesurado (present-day Liberia), whom he had met in Senegambia and redeemed in London, the Swedish abolitionist and geologist Carl Bernard Wadström

CONTACT Vincent Roy-Di Piazza vincent.roy-dipiazza@humanities.ox.ac.uk Postdoctoral Research Fellow Humanities Division, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

(1746–1799) points his finger to Swedenborg's *Sapientia Angelica De Divina Providentia* (*Angelic Wisdom on Divine Providence*, Amsterdam, 1764, see Figure 1). The identification of the text depicted in the portrait seems to have long eluded commentators, and yet reaffirms the roots of Wadström's abolitionism in his faith of Swedenborg's little-studied doctrines on Africans and slavery.[2] Born in Stockholm in 1688 and died in London in 1772, Emanuel Swedenborg was a wealthy nobleman, philosopher, and well-travelled parliamentarian, who served for thirty years as an assessor at the Bureau of Mines of Sweden. After his retirement in 1747, Swedenborg refashioned himself as a heterodox religious reformer and seer who published an extensive theology featuring "memorabilia", viz. doctrinal stories of things heard and seen by him in the afterlife through communication with the spirits of the dead. Swedenborg's sensationalist publications as a theologian were released from 1749 until 1771 and earned him a considerable yet controversial fame which lasted well into the nineteenth century.[3] Swedenborg presented his theology as heralding the advent of a millenarian "New Jerusalem", a claim which in the 1780s and 1790s proved crucial to his abolitionist followers, from Carl Bernhard Wadström, Linnaeus's disciples Anders Sparrman (1748–1820) and Adam Afzelius (1750–1837), to the royal alchemist Augustus Nordenskjöld (1754–1792). Swedenborg's influence has more broadly long been identified as central to the abolitionist commitments of his Swedenborgian followers in Britain, Sweden, France, the United States, and Sierra Leone.[4]

Yet, despite this, a contextualized study of Swedenborg's own views on African superiority and slavery remains long overdue. Such an omission seems even more surprising in light of the considerable interest and literature devoted to his abolitionist followers.[5] To this day, only a handful of partial studies have been made about Swedenborg's own doctrines on the topics of slavery, Africa, and Africans before 1772.[6] This results from a combination of factors: one reason is that the amount of literature on Swedenborg's reception has long been much larger than the literature published about Swedenborg himself.[7] Another factor is that Swedenborgian believers have frequently denied his role as a religious reformer, mostly because of persisting devotional narratives.[8] This article provides, in contrast, a secular assessment of Swedenborg's views about Africans and slavery in the contexts in which they were initially formulated, rather than through the retrospective lens of his followers. Last but not least, Swedenborg's career (1718–1772) coincides chronologically with the Swedish Age of Liberty (*Frihetstiden*, 1719–1772), a historical period still largely neglected by historians, especially when it comes to issues of slavery, transatlantic colonialism, and abolitionism.[9] This is largely because this five-decade period stands between the loss of Sweden's overseas colonies in the seventeenth century and the country's subsequent embrace of transatlantic slavery in 1784 under absolute King Gustav III. In other words, Sweden's lack of colonial possessions during the period has led historians to widely assume that Sweden simply had no relation to colonialism and slavery during its so-called "Age of Liberty". Yet, it is within such a context that Swedenborg formulated his remarkable views about Africans and slavery, and a study of those ideas suggests a different picture.

Through its focus on Swedenborg, this article provides an overview of intellectual debates on Africans, savagery, and colonial slavery in Sweden for the period 1710–1770. Within these debates, it argues that Swedenborg's positioning was that of a dissenting insider, which resulted in a remarkably early stance against slavery and African

Figure 1. Double Portrait of Carl Bernhard Wadström and prince Peter Panah of Cape Mesurado (now Monrovia, Liberia) by abolitionist painter Carl Frederik von Breda, London, 1789. Wadström points to Swedenborg's Sapientia Angelica de Divina Providentia (1764, Amsterdam). Oil on canvas, Nordic Museum, Stockholm.

inferiority. Such a stance, never properly studied before, reveals a series of striking facts: Swedenborg was one of the first, if not the first, Swede to condemn slavery as immoral as early as 1741. In doing so, he anticipated the mid-eighteenth-century anti-slavery turn by almost a decade, although most of his statements took place within it from the 1750s to the early 1770s. Swedenborg also claimed, from the 1750s onwards, that slavery was a punishment after death for European missionaries who taught false doctrines, and would become enslaved by African angels. He finally asserted the superiority of Africans

above all people, an original positioning which placed him at odds with most intellectuals at the time, from his relative by marriage and academy colleague Linnaeus to his ex-follower and detractor Immanuel Kant.[10] The article shows how Swedenborg's original views about African superiority and spiritual slavery were shaped by his family involvement in missionary evangelization, idealized views about the spiritual innocence of indigenous communities untouched by the corruptive influence of Western civilization, and his hopes of converting growing global populations of enslaved Africans to his doctrines. His views also reacted to early intellectual debates about the anatomical causes of blackness, in a wider European context of rapidly increasing discussions on slavery and savagery in the second half of the eighteenth century.[11]

After his death, Swedenborg's early anti-slavery stance eventually became dominant in Sweden, as part of a widening divide between the pro-slavery Gustavian government and a Swedish public increasingly opposed to slavery.[12] This influence would eventually extend beyond Sweden, in a broader context in which anti-slavery sentiments gained traction across Europe.[13] By replacing this influence within a longer contextualized study stretching to the first half of the eighteenth century, the article shows that Swedenborg's contrarian views on Africans, anti-colonial intrusion, and anti-slavery emerged in a context in which Sweden's peripheral ties to the slave-trade economy paved the way for the country's subsequent embrace of transatlantic slave trading in the 1780s. Finally, it also shows how the trope of the *bon sauvage*, often presented as both in decline and increasingly concerned with negative depictions of African savagery by the end of the eighteenth century, was re-harnessed by Swedenborg and his followers in what became a powerful challenge to the institution of slavery and narratives of African inferiority.[14] Such a change reflects a wider generational shift: while Lutheran missionaries exhibited concern for the conversion and spiritual welfare of enslaved individuals, most did not condemn slavery or envision its abolition.[15] Although Swedenborg became an early critic of the immorality of slavery, he nevertheless featured it as an integral divine punishment in his spiritual world, an atonement part of a wider doctrine of spiritual emancipation. Within a generation, these remarkable views became reappropriated by his followers to articulate their abolitionist agenda, a radical shift which sheds new light on the crucial role played by utopian millenarianism in the emergence of abolitionist thought.[16]

Elusive encounters and corpus

The date of Swedenborg's first encounter with enslaved Africans is unknown. All of Swedenborg's publications discussing Africans and slavery were published (and mostly composed) in London and Amsterdam, trading cities in which sub-Saharan Africans lived in various conditions of servitude.[17] According to Jim Lawrence, Swedenborg's first observations of sub-Saharan Africans likely took place in London during his Grand Tour from 1710 until 1715, a city in which he then spent two years, and, overall, thirteen years of his life.[18] Scholars estimate that between three to ten million enslaved persons were traded in England during the eighteenth century; although most of them never set foot on English soil, London remained by far the most active English slave-trading port, along with Bristol and Liverpool, being a hub to large number of enslaved sub-Saharan Africans destined for the Atlantic slave trade.[19] At a time when Sweden had no imperial colonial

possessions left and was excluded from direct involvement in transatlantic slave trading, Swedenborg's twenty years spent abroad allowed him to witness more enslaved Africans and slave traders than the vast majority of the Swedes of his day, and to be part of a small group who came to form an opinion on such issues.

The published corpus of Swedenborg's statements on Africans and slavery is scattered across twelve different works, but mostly in ten religious writings from 1749 to 1771.[20] Across his theological publications (all in Latin), we find at least thirty-four direct discussions of Africans (*Africani*), and another thirty-five spread across seven unpublished writings.[21] Within wider discussions of freedom and servitude, there are fifty-eight direct occurrences of the term slavery (*servitus/servitium*), and at least thirty-six further occurrences across five unpublished works, generally integrated with minor modifications into subsequent publications.[22]

Statements about Africans and their superiority featured early in Swedenborg's theology, based on the idea that black Africans are the "most beloved gentiles in heaven" and receive heavenly truths "more readily than others".[23] A close analysis allows us to pinpoint the precise moment (8 January 1748) at which Swedenborg started to form his views of African superiority, part of a wider theological reflection about the salvation and spiritual faculties of Gentile peoples, and possibly linked to an encounter with enslaved sub-Saharan Africans in the United Provinces. Having freshly retired from the Swedish Bureau of Mines in June 1747, Swedenborg left for Holland and settled in Amsterdam, where he stayed for a year to prepare the publication of his milestone exegesis of Genesis and Exodus, *Arcana Coelestia*.[24] Soon after his arrival in Amsterdam, he started a new journal of *experientiae spirituales*, a private collection of dream analyses, divinely inspired cathartic/moral writings, and allegorical rewritings of everyday events. These records of alleged interactions with deceased spirits would later serve as draft materials for his popular memorabilia of the afterlife. In his first entry devoted to Africans, around December 1747, Swedenborg wrote that "idolatrous Africans and other people" seemed to be "governed in death by nothing but fantasies".[25] But on 7 January 1748, he recorded an "encounter" with a group of Africans who told him, after carefully "weighing their words" out of fear, that they had been maltreated because they were black, yet "longed for deeper things"; and that when entering heaven they had left their blackness behind them to embrace the "brightness of their soul" (*candorem animae*).[26] An expanded version of this account, published in *Arcana Coelestia*, reported that, in their former life, this group of Africans "spoke with a kind of clic or collision" ("*loquela eorum tunc erat quasi cum quodam collisu*"), a possible reference to click-consonants common to South and East African locutors.[27] This experience soon led Swedenborg to amend his previous statement on 11 January 1748 by underlining that "Gentile Africans can nevertheless be saved" and, four days later, that Africans are the "gentlest of all", in contrast with Jews and Christians, who produce the "worst" kind of spirits.[28] It is unclear if such statements resulted from an actual encounter with enslaved South or East Africans during his time in Amsterdam.

In other entries of his *experientiae spirituales*, Swedenborg also claimed that these Africans, after death, wished to change the colour of their skin to white, because of the "brightness" of angels and the prevalence of white garments in heaven; a statement which he supplemented with later descriptions of African spirits clothed with "striped garments of linen" and African women with "striped garments of silk".[29] These

statements reflected popular representations of African fashion at the time, particularly amongst the Christian Africans of Congo, who commonly wore striped motives and associated white garments with both elite status and life after death (see Figure 2).[30]

There were very few African individuals in eighteenth-century Sweden.[31] But perhaps in asserting the superior abilities of Africans to receive spiritual instruction Swedenborg had in mind the most famous of them: Gustav Badin (born Couschi, 1747–1822), the young African foster son, freed slave, and *kammermohr* court servant of Swedish Queen Louisa Ulrika (see Figure 3), with whom Swedenborg enjoyed a privileged relationship.[32] The mischievous Badin was part of a well-publicized Rousseauist experiment since 1757 to demonstrate the possibility to educate any "uncivilized" African, and Badin famously grew up into a pious man and distinguished political confidante of Louisa Ulrika, following his Christian instruction for five years (1763–1768) by the Swedish court chaplain Nathanaël Thenstedt (1731–1808).[33] Swedenborg most likely met Badin at court in the 1760s during his many dinners with the "the whole royal family" and possibly discussed with him, although neither of them left records about meeting the other.[34] However, Badin's diary reveals that, in line with Swedenborg, he placed a great importance on performing good deeds and regarded it as a pillar for spiritual salvation:

> Faith probably without hope, is a promise without impact; but when the deed ratifies faith, hope, religion becomes a goodness … the one who believes in me, the deeds I perform, those he shall also perform; and perform deeds greater than them: for I go to the Father. Can great deeds of kindness fulfil one, like enhancing my followers' earthly and eternal felicity. Those are my thoughts about this gospel, I do not ask the doctor in theology, but my question is submitted alone to the well enlightened in the practicing of Christianity.[35]

Regardless of the extent to which Badin and Swedenborg interacted, it is most likely that Badin's famous public conversion into a pious and devout Christian reinforced Swedenborg's views about the natural superior spiritual faculties of formerly enslaved Africans. Overall, Swedenborg's views were less shaped by his elusive encounters than by his work as a biblical exegete, his missionary ambitions, his interest for traveling literature, and his links to intellectual and colonial debates about Africans in Sweden.

Noble Gentiles and the mapping of *Afriska*

From his retirement onwards, Swedenborg gradually expanded his views about African superiority by attributing various virtues to sub-Saharan Africans, always through the safety of his world of spirits. In doing so, he relied on a common literary strategy of the Enlightenment period: staging conversations in the afterlife to discuss controversial issues, yet with a truth claim which reinforced the reformist impact of his stance.[36] For instance, Swedenborg recorded that converted Africans to Christianity had "such a correct idea" about God that it seemed "beyond belief".[37] He described African spirits as endowed with a superior understanding of God and angels' anthropomorphic form, which led them to instinctively reject that the latter might be disembodied "clouds", a position illustrating his own doctrine of divine incarnation as a support for human worship.[38] In critical attacks of solafidean missionaries, he made remarkable anti-colonial arguments, writing that "Europeans" ought not to intrude on native African

Figure 2. White and striped garments amongst the Christians of Congo as described by Swedenborg. Watercolour on paper by Bernardino d'Asti, *The Missionary Administers Baptism Outdoors*, *c*. 1750, 19.5 × 28 cm. Turin: Biblioteca Civica Centrale (MS 457, f. 7r). Photo: Settore Sistema Bibliotecario Urbano della Città di Torino, cited in Fromont, "Common Threads".

Figure 3. Portrait of Gustav Badin (born Couschi, 1747–1822), the famous African foster-son, confidante, actor, court-servant, and chess-player of the queen Louisa Ulrika of Sweden. Pastel portrait by Gustaf Lundberg, 1775. National Museum, Stockholm.

communities, as "the Africans have no use for new arrivals from Europe who believe that people are saved by faith alone, and therefore just by thinking and speaking, not by willing and doing".[39] Swedenborg repeatedly argued that Africans possess a more highly developed inner judgment and inner sight than other non-Christians.[40]

Swedenborg publicized his views of Africans as spiritually gifted Gentiles with an emphasis on "obedience" (*obedientes*) or submission to God over faith.[41] The antitrinitarian Swedenborg emphasized the alleged common rejection of Africans and Muslims of trinitarian beliefs, and their cultural practice of polygamy, permitted to them "because they are Orientals".[42] This indicates that, like many at the time, Swedenborg drew only a loose distinction between "Orientals" and "Africans", and viewed boundaries between the two as blurred and fluid.[43] However, Swedenborg also argued that, in contrast to Muslims, the higher spiritual nature of Africans inclined them to naturally restrict themselves to one wife, whom they loved according to (Swedenborg's) precepts of true marital love.[44] This doctrine became central to his abolitionist followers, who considered the end of loveless marriages as a cornerstone to the implementation of free labour. Swedenborg frequently referred to compulsive adultery as "slavery towards sin", while lust and love of power leads sinful men to treat their wives like slaves.[45] This led him to depict African spirits as educating Europeans about divine conjugal love, in his highly controversial treatise *De Amore Conjugiali* (Amsterdam, 1768, see Figure 4).

In 1745, Swedenborg had expressed in manuscripts his hope to convert the Jews and to establish through them a millenarian kingdom of God in Palestine, in the context of wider efforts by the Swedish government to further the country's colonial expansion by attracting Jewish merchants and assets to Sweden.[46] But, as Swedenborg gradually gave up on his hopes of messianic unification and of establishing a New Jerusalem in the middle East, his interest shifted towards the conversion of enslaved Africans and to the establishment of a New Jerusalem kingdom in West and Central Africa, the location of which he rudimentarily sketched in his 1750s *experientiae spirituales* diaries (see Figure 5). Such a sketch was influential later for his abolitionist followers: it was republished in the Swedenborgian New Jerusalem Magazine in London in 1790, leading to speculations about the possible location of a Swedenborgian realm they called "Afriska" by cross-referencing the map with Swedenborg's complex doctrine of inverted cardinal points in the afterlife; Swedenborg's map continued to prompt attempts well into the nineteenth century by Swedenborgians to reinterpret it in the light of contemporary cartography (see Figure 6).[47]

Swedenborg's idealized projections into the unknown inner parts of the African continent appear mostly informed by travel literature and biblical traditions assessing the spiritual nature of the land of Africa. He had himself written about a holy "Ancient Word" being preserved in "Africa", most likely referring to the southern parts of Egypt.[48] Such an idea was not new: since the Middle Ages, Africa had frequently been presented as the safe haven for the lost Ten Tribes.[49] The trope found new ground in late-eighteenth-century literature, as seen in the foundational best-selling narrative of freedman Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative* (1789).[50] Equiano, who had been renamed "Gustavus Vassa" after the Swedish King Gustav Vasa, wrote how the customs and manners of Africans were redolent of the pastoral lifestyle of the Jewish patriarchs described in Genesis.[51] Like Equiano after him, Swedenborg compared the spiritual wisdom of Africans to that of Abraham, the first of the Hebrew patriarchs.[52]

Swedenborg's assessments of the superior spiritual virtues of Africans reflected traditional Western, Ovidian ideals about the virtues associated with a primordial lifestyle. For Swedenborg, Africans lived in Gentile primordial ways closer to the divine, away from the corruptive influence of Western civilization. His own treatise on cosmic

Figure 4. Engraving from the first English edition (1790) of Swedenborg's *De Amore Conjugiali* (Amsterdam, 1768), in which African spirits educate Europeans on the nature of true marital love (§113) with the quote "Cidaris erit Africo" ("The tiara shall go to the African"). The Swedenborg Society, London.

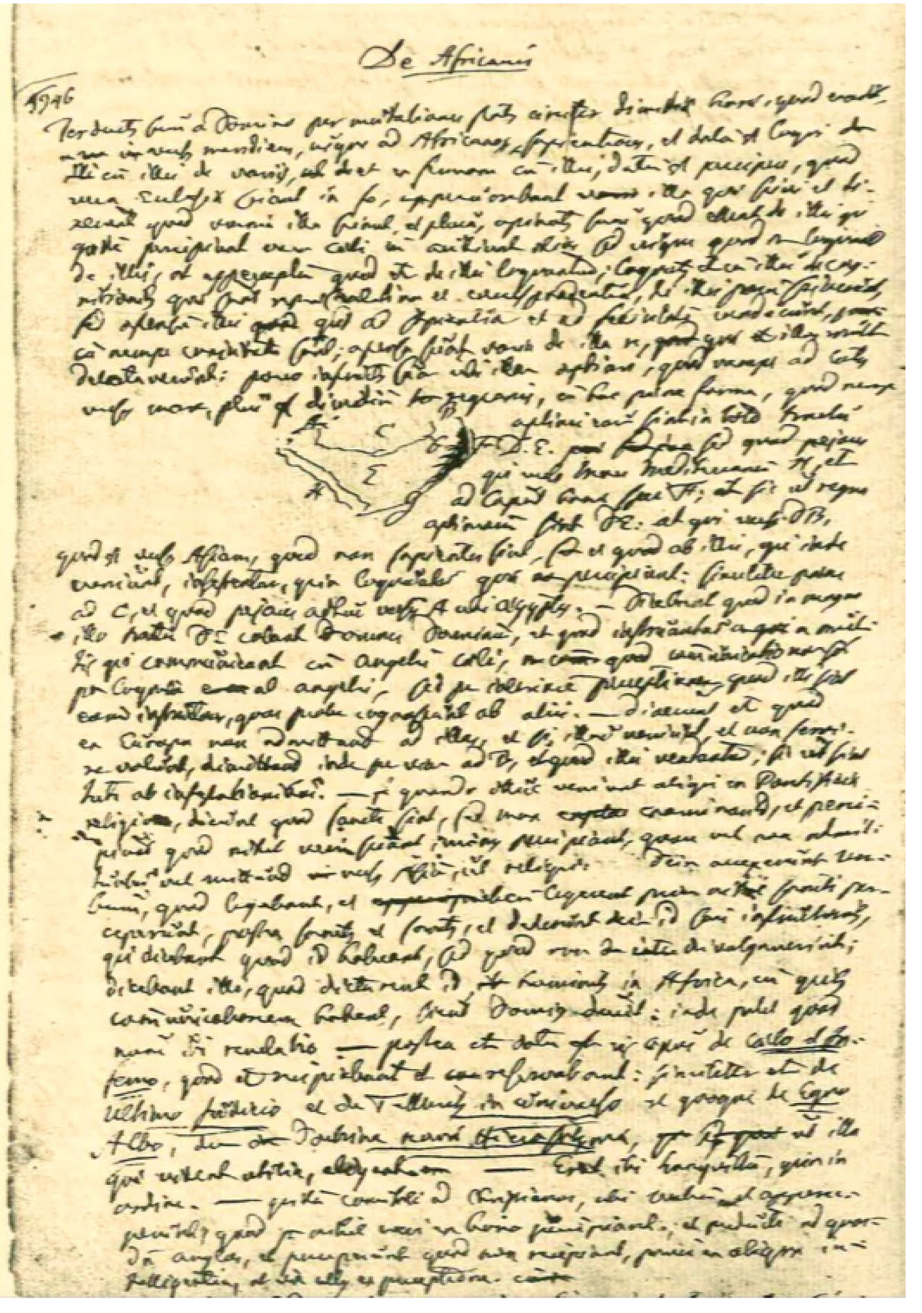

Figure 5. Swedenborg's drawing of a map of Africa in his Spiritual Diary (1750s), §5946. The Swedenborg Society, London.

pluralism dealt extensively with the topic of salvation amongst Gentiles from other worlds.[53] During the early modern period, travel and plurality of worlds literature both relied on the idealized features of Gentiles from far-away lands to reflect on the values and social order of Western society. Swedenborg's assessments of the spiritual

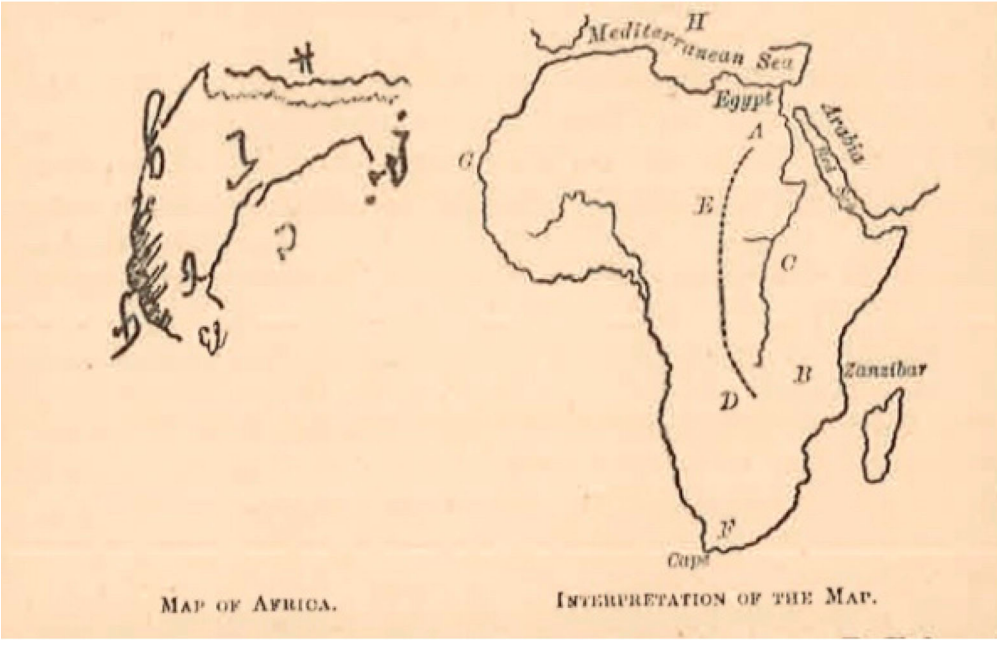

Figure 6. Interpretation of Swedenborg's map by Swedenborgian James F. Buss (1883). The Swedenborg Society, London.

faculties of Africans exhibit common features with his descriptions of the virtues of primordial people from other planets.[54] Both genres served as popular motives to reflect on the spiritual and moral decadence of European civilizations, and were part of wider critical debates centred around natural law, freedom, salvation, religious toleration, and Rousseauist ideas about "noble savagery".[55]

As early as 1715, Swedenborg had celebrated the innocent purity of native Sàmi tribes living under the midnight hyperborean sun, paying tribute to an idealized, Edenic tribalism redolent of the Ovidian Golden Age.[56] Forty years later, sub-Saharan Africans came to epitomize such primordial virtues for Swedenborg, supposedly living in a state of closeness to the divine in uncorrupted innocence, redolent of the widespread motif of the *mythe du bon sauvage* promoted in Montaigne's *Essais* (1580–1588), Montesquieu's *De l'Esprit des Lois* in 1748, and Rousseau's *Discours sur l'Origine et les Fondements de l'Inégalité parmi les Hommes* (1755).[57] Such a motive was emphasized by travel literature during the period, and Swedenborg owned several books belonging to the genre, from Thomas Herbert's *Relation du voyage de Perse et des Indes Orientales* (1663) to the anonymous *Voyages aux Côtes de Guinée et en Amérique* (1719). [58]

The claim that a global embrace of the doctrines of the New Church was taking place in large parts of the African continent was not only meant to impress Swedenborg's readers but also reflected the exotic nature of understandings of Africa in Sweden at the time. Travelogues, novels, and adventurers' biographies were popular in Sweden during the second half of the eighteenth century.[59] After Swedenborg's death, the trend continued to grow during the 1780s and 1790s, with a surge of translations of foreign works and theatrical plays discussing Africans, Orientals, and slavery in

Swedish.[60] Swedenborg's views more broadly heralded a growing divide between the pro-slavery Swedish aristocracy and a Swedish public opinion opposed to slavery through increasing exposure to critical travelogues, opera, and theatre.[61] In this context, Swedenborg's claims from the 1750s to the 1770s about the superiority of Africans within their Central-African land, untouched by Western colonial presence, provides a remarkable challenge to scholarly views about the prevalence of associations between African savagery and "barbarism", "bondage", or "brutishness" in the eighteenth century, and ties with lesser-known views of Africa as an unspoilt Arcadia more informed by classical Ovidian tropes than by dismissive biological conjectures about African savagery.[62]

Exegesis against the curse of Ham

Along with this idealized stance on Africans and Africa, Swedenborg developed an extensive interest in biblical depictions of slavery from his work as an exegete. In *Arcana Coelestia*, he compiled and analysed thirty-four biblical quotes concerned with slavery, from Isaiah, Joel, John, Leviticus, Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Samuel, concluding that generally "Male slaves [in the Word] symbolize truth – and female slaves, goodness".[63] In his comment of Exodus 21:16 and Deuteronomy 15:17, he interpreted the practice of ear-piercing the slaves who refused to abandon servitude with an awl as a symbol of one's "refusal to understand spiritual truths" along with the enslavement of Abraham's descendants as "symbolizing the trials of the faithful".[64] Overall, Swedenborg's doctrinal discussions of slavery and Africans were heavily informed by his work as a biblical exegete, which resulted in a rich hermeneutical doctrine of spiritual emancipation, and a critical stance towards Afro-dismissive readings of passages such as the curse of Ham, which attempted to justify skin blackness and African inferiority on loose scriptural grounds.[65]

Linnaeus's dismissive views on African inferiority were actually dominant at the time amongst other Swedish Academy members, such as the famous anatomist (and Linnaeus's best friend) Abraham Bäck (1713–1795), who published a detailed account of his own skin dissections from the corpse of a black man in Paris in 1744, at a time of growing interest in learned anatomical circles for the study of black skin.[66] In a well-received article version of this research, published in the Swedish Royal Academy's transactions in the spring of 1748, Bäck rejected Aristotelian climate-based explanations of sub-Saharan blackness as unlikely, favouring instead models of humoral imbalance and a higher concentration of black bile.[67] Bäck attributed these anatomical differences to the biblical curse of Ham, commonly seen since the seventeenth century as a cause behind blackness.[68] Although Linnaeus did not comment on the curse of Ham, his classification of the four human varieties, with Africans receiving the lowest physical and moral traits, was similarly at odds with Swedenborg's assessments of African superiority.[69] Swedenborg did not rely on the taxonomic nomenclature of Linnaeus, with its different traits based on geography and humoral doctrine.[70] He also did not subscribe to Bäck's attempt to reconcile theories of humoral imbalance with negatively connoted biblical tropes. His views about Africans were devoid of references to his former anatomical research, and he did not subscribe to the dismissive biological conjectures of his colleagues. Because of this, it may seem surprising that Swedenborg's views about Africans exerted influence on later Linnean naturalists such as Wadström and Sparrman, considering how opposed Swedenborg's and Linnaeus's views were on the topic.[71] Yet, Swedenborg's

stance still hierarchized the spiritual faculties of people based on essentialist traits, in a model which, although primarily religious and diametrically opposed to Linnaeus, still echoed the then-popular taxonomical approach of Linnean science. His Linnean followers would later not refrain from mixing both views.[72]

Swedenborg's rejection of the curse of Ham as the cause behind blackness and justifications of African inferiority originated from his biblical studies. In his detailed exegesis of Genesis 9:18–29, Swedenborg offered an alternative interpretation of the curse of Ham, presenting it as an allegorical account of the spiritual corruption of part of the Noachic dispensation, contending that the "descendants of Ham" (a name he assimilated with the Hebrew adjective חָם, "ḥam" meaning "hot") were described as darkened by the "heat of their passions" rather than by any reference to the actual colour of their skin.[73] In line with scholars such as Robert Boyle but in contrast to Bäck, Swedenborg refuted the idea that modern black-skinned Africans had any link through the curse of Ham with a strand of the former Noachic Church.[74] Instead, he interpreted Noah as a symbol of "spiritual slavery" represented by the patriarch's seclusion in the ark while being rocked by waters "which represent [spiritual] falsities".[75] Swedenborg's ideas about "spiritual slavery" drew on classical interpretations of the emancipation of the Hebrews as an anagogical struggle for spiritual freedom from "spiritual captivity".[76]

Apocalypse now: from temporal to spiritual emancipation

These interpretations reveal the extent to which Swedenborg's references to slavery were primarily concerned with spiritual emancipation. By default, Swedenborg considered postlapsarian humans to be in a state of "spiritual slavery" (*servitute spirituali*) from which bond labour ultimately derives; although he rarely discussed the latter. While he never explicitly called for the abolition of slavery, the rapidly expanding landscape of eighteenth-century slave trading meant that Swedenborg's views about the "infernal" nature of captive servitude, coupled to his millenarian promises of total emancipation, soon turned into a call to action for his abolitionist followers. Swedenborg's statements on African superiority took a new turn with his millenarian claims that the apocalypse had taken place in the spiritual world in 1757, the year Sweden entered into the global conflict of the Seven Years War.[77] In his treatise on the last judgment, Swedenborg had alluded to the ultimate abolition of all forms of slavery in a new post-Christian dispensation, writing that "angels know that the slavery and captivity in which the man of the church was formerly has been taken away".[78] This contrasted with Lutheran and Pietist positions, which relied on theological traditions of divine providence and retrospective narration to defend slavery.[79] Overall, Swedenborg often referred to spiritual slavery in temporal terms, an ambiguity which later allowed his followers to easily adopt literal readings of his calls towards spiritual emancipation. This meant that Swedenborg's emancipation doctrines triggered more radical responses in the 1770s and 1780s, as both slave trading and utopian abolitionism gained new ground.

Before the mid-century trend of anti-slavery publications of the late 1740s onwards, Swedenborg first denounced the immorality of slavery in London as soon as 1741, pointing out in his anonymously published anatomical treatise *Oeconomia Regni Animalis* how "people born into slavery" ended up losing "the very sense of liberty", a faculty which he regarded as crucial to the enlightened use of reason and human free will.[80]

This condemnation alluded to his belief that bond labour aggravates humankind's state of spiritual slavery over time. Nevertheless, this positioning was peripheral to the book's main argument, and was not picked up by reviewers.[81] Ten years later, he maintained that bond labour resulted in the "loss of freedom together with the delight life holds within itself".[82] However, like other Lutheran and Moravian missionaries competing for the conversion of enslaved Africans, Swedenborg considered freeing oneself from slavery to be only a peripheral step to becoming spiritually free, a path which, just like the Moravians, he considered open to all, irrespective of origin or skin colour.[83] This led Swedenborg to claim that, in the spirit world, European missionaries and monks who intruded into African communities to teach false doctrines were commonly reduced to slavery by African spirits, punished, and even sold for almost nothing to poor individuals:

> As for people who come their way from Europe, the Africans said that these are not allowed in. A few, though—most of them monks—do manage to get through. In these cases, the Africans ask them what they know; when the Europeans start speaking about their religious beliefs, the Africans call it nonsense that hurts their ears. They send them off to do work that is useful. If the Europeans refuse to do this work, the Africans sell them as slaves, and by law are allowed to punish them whenever they want. If the Europeans cannot be coerced into doing anything useful, they are eventually sold to social outcasts for next to nothing. [84]

The inverted practice of slavery in the spiritual world was a striking feature of Swedenborg's afterlife, in which communities continued to live separated from each other, grow spiritually, and interact. This was partly a commentary on the well-known practice of West African slavery by sub-Saharan Africans, a topic treated extensively in 1741 by Swedenborg's cousin, the court councillor, parliamentarian, and historian Henrik Julius Voltemat (1722–1765).[85] Nevertheless, Swedenborg's views about enslavement in the afterlife also transcended community boundaries, and were part of a wider doctrine of spiritual slavery which took place at all levels of the afterlife, including hell. Swedenborg regarded humans as being, first and foremost, "enslaved by hell", in a constant state of false "infernal freedom" which "in essence is slavery" ("*quod in se est servum*").[86] Choosing to freely commit evil would lead someone to become "enslaved in hell", while spirits there take delight in enslaving others to inflict evil and cruel treatments.[87] Swedenborg developed a doctrine of spiritual slavery in which he asserted that spiritual freedom was the first step to break the bonds of enslavement, effectively linking it to the pursuit of freedom from sin.[88] Swedenborg developed his views about spiritual slavery within a wider doctrine of "heavenly freedom" (*liberum caeleste*), emancipation, and spiritual regeneration. Within this doctrine, in which the only legitimate master is God, true freedom is to be a servant or slave (*servus*) to the Lord, in contrast to the illusory freedom of being led by self-love, sins, and vices; being a "slave under sin", Swedenborg wrote, is nothing more than being "led by the devil" for "the devil and sin are one and the same".[89] Wilfully becoming a slave (*servus*) to the Lord is a "joyful and pleasing" state, an idea which Swedenborg derived from Matthew 11:30 ("My yoke is easy and my burden is light").[90] Numerous variations of this doctrine can be found across his theology, including the view that "it is slavery to be led by the devil, and freedom to be led by the Lord".[91] A staunch critic of *sola fide*, who defended a theology of works, Swedenborg argued that charity and good deeds lead from spiritual slavery to absolute, heavenly

freedom.[92] This doctrine would later prompt his followers to apply deeds and egalitarian charity to the implementation of free labour.[93]

The quest for power out of self-love also causes sinful leaders to be reduced into slavery in the afterlife.[94] Such atonement punishments after death were not only commonplace in Swedenborg's descriptions of heavens and hells, but echoed, albeit in a different literary perspective, Linnaeus's positioning on slavery as an evil punishment in the latter's controversial manuscript *Nemesis Divina*, a private compilation of case studies documenting divine retaliation.[95] However, unlike Linnaeus, Swedenborg's wider point was to illustrate how the missionary evangelization of false doctrines met with a commensurate response in the afterlife: there, oppressed African communities labelled as spiritually inferior in their former life were now finally able to fight back.

Swedenborg in context: the political economy of colonization in the Age of Liberty

In the Age of Liberty, Sweden gradually attempted to redevelop a colonial empire, yet would not become a slave-holding nation until twelve years after Swedenborg's death. Despite this, we have seen that Swedenborg still formulated a remarkably anti-colonial and anti-slavery stance, which stood out in the landscape of the Age of Liberty, although it met with little response in his own time. This position was shaped by Swedenborg's involvement in the political economy of his country, Swedish debates on colonization, and his family's ties to missionary evangelization.

During the eighteenth century, slavery lay at the heart of the expansionist ambitions of Western colonial empires. In northern Europe, the Danish West and East Indian Companies operated as a global rival force to Sweden's imperialist ambitions from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century. Fighting Russia over Finland and Denmark-Norway on the western and southern borders of Scandinavia, Sweden long struggled to develop a colonial empire of its own.[96] By Swedenborg's time, the four African colonies of Fort Batenstein (1649–1656), Carolusberg (1650–1663), Fort Christiansborg (1652–1658), and Fort Witsen (1653–1658) were long lost. In the Caribbean, the failed acquisition of the island of Tobago during the Seven Years War preceded two last periods of Swedish rule during the Gustavian era on the island of Saint-Barthélemy (1784–1878) and, more briefly, on the island of Guadeloupe (1813–1814). Through the eighteenth century, Sweden pursued a proactive mercantilist policy wishing (with little success) to emulate the success of Denmark in Africa and the Caribbean, and to find new markets for Swedish products.[97] Such policies took place during the emergence of a distinct form of Swedish cameralism, an economic doctrine characterized by its emphasis on international trade, and its vision of the state as the privileged vehicle for economic development.[98]

Back in northern Europe in the 1720s, Swedenborg became an economic expert for the Swedish state, specialized in mining, metal, and foreign trade at a time when such sectors were crucial to the Horn government steering economic reconstruction.[99] Rather than partaking in colonial ventures abroad during the 1720s, Sweden depended heavily on metal trade and mining, and the export of iron alone brought in four-fifths of the total income from Swedish exports in 1724; a fact which underlines the increasing economic importance of mining experts such as Swedenborg for the Swedish state.[100] Recent

scholarship has highlighted how the Swedish iron trade furthered the expansion of Swedish Lutheranism abroad, and how Sweden indirectly benefitted from the slave trade by acting as the leading supplier of iron for Britain and the British slavers through the eighteenth century.[101] Swedish iron helped manufacturing musket barrels in West Africa and, most likely, shackles which served to enslave African people.[102]

Swedenborg never directly invested in slave-trading ventures or ever owned slaves. Nevertheless, his philosophical and theological views against enslavement were not formulated outside of economic realities. Swedenborg's assets were, like most Swedish noblemen, managed by international merchant-banking families such as the Grills, who profited from bound labour via their involvement in the activities of the French, Dutch, and British East and West Indian companies.[103] Based on their expertise and trading connections, the Grills also played a crucial part in the development of the Swedish East India Company (1731–1813), which, despite not relying on enslaved workers, depended on the assets of major stakeholders enriched by the slave trade. The wealthy merchant, director of the Grill Trading House, and ship owner Claes Grill (1705–1767) acted as a patron for Linnaeus and the early Academy as a whole, which, in turn, elected him a member the same year as Swedenborg (1740), and rewarded Claes's company with trading privileges.[104] The boundaries between mercantilism (creation of wealth for the government) and capitalism (creation of profit for individuals) were blurred during the period of Swedish cameralism, and many Swedish Academy members indirectly benefitted from the revenues of the slave-trading economy.[105]

It is in this context that Swedenborg made his first statement against slavery in the second tome of his *Oeconomia Regni Animalis*, one year after the "Negro Slave Act", which aimed at tightening control over enslaved Africans following the Stono rebellion, the largest slave revolt in the British North American colonies, led by "black Christians of the Congo".[106] The term *Oeconomia*, which, in Swedenborg's case, referred to a specific type of treatise about the soul associated with the Dutch Cartesian school of anatomy, was part of a broader continuum of taxonomical oeconomies influenced by Linnaeus's *Systema Naturae* (1735), which informed Swedish cameralist approaches to the management of natural resources.[107] The release of Swedenborg's *Oeconomia* coincided with his nomination for election by Linnaeus at the newly founded Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences (1739), which had a growing utilitarian interest for topics related to Africa, North America, and indigenous populations. The academy sought to acquire knowledge of use to support the cameralist policies of the state and expand new Swedish colonial networks chartered by the Swedish East India Company.[108]

During this period, Linnean naturalism and colonial collecting reinforced discourses about the savage nature of indigenous people.[109] In his four-volume *Gienwäg til de förnämsta europäiska, asiatiska, africanska och americanska staters historia …* (*Path to the history of the leading European, Asian, African and American states*, Stockholm, 1741–1742), Swedenborg's cousin, Henrik Julius Voltemat, discussed the abduction and selling of black men, women, and children by "wild and savage" Nigerians to European slavers, the alleged decline of the Christian faith amongst the kings of Congo, and the considerable profits from the trading of goods and slaves made by the Dutch, the English, and the Danes on the Gold Coast.[110] In 1747, Linnaeus's disciple Pehr Kalm travelled to the former territory of New Sweden to explore the region's fauna and flora,

hoping to discover profitable things through the indigenous Lenape people. This last goal ended in mixed results, as Kalm eventually dismissed the Lenape as "savages with no history".[111] Although Swedenborg did not write specifically about enslaved native Americans, he held a long-lasting fascination for the Sàmi indigenous people of Sweden, idealizing the spiritual virtues associated with their lifestyle and the extraordinary soul-traveling powers of Noaidi shamans, which he claimed had been mischaracterized as magic.[112] During the Age of Liberty, Sweden's colonial settling efforts focused on the internal Sàmi lands (Lapland) in the pursuit of knowledge and resources of use to the political economy of the state.[113] Despite the gradual decline of Sàmi indigenous culture, Swedenborg believed that native gentiles had maintained their extraordinary abilities, most likely by virtue of their innocent ways and closer relationship to God. In the light of such discussions, Swedenborg's early condemnation of slavery and narratives of indigenous savagery in his anatomy and later theology reveal an original dissenting position within growing colonial, scientific, and economic debates in his home country.

Ties to missionary evangelization, and rivalries with the Quakers, Jesuits, and Moravians

Within debates on natural knowledge, political economy, and colonization, religion and missionary expansion played a crucial role in gathering the knowledge which informed cameralist colonial ventures in the eighteenth century.[114] Swedenborg's deep family connections to transatlantic evangelization well illustrate this role during the Age of Liberty and shaped the last part of his global missionary stance on African conversion. In the Americas, Swedenborg's family was involved in the ecclesiastical administration of Swedish settlers on the northern east coast. The colony of New Sweden in the territory of Delaware (1638–1655) had first passed into Dutch hands, then English control in 1674. Nevertheless, a long-standing Swedish presence was maintained in the colony until the end of the eighteenth century, and the administration of Swedish Lutheran parishes and missionaries was greatly optimized by Swedenborg's father, Jesper Swedberg (1653–1735), a well-known ecclesiastic and psalmist who nicknamed himself the "bishop of America".[115] Three years before his death, Swedberg published *Svecia Nova seu America Illuminata* (1732), a compilation of colonial knowledge gathered by Swedish ecclesiastics who evangelized native Americans.[116] Such evangelizing efforts tied into a broader context in the first half of the eighteenth century, when German and Swedish Lutherans in the Americas did not advocate abolition or emancipation of enslaved African and indigenous people, yet proved eager to compete for their conversion and spiritual welfare.[117] For missionaries in an increasingly fragmented Christian world, the conversion of ever-growing numbers of vulnerable enslaved people became a major issue in the eighteenth century, leading to a quasi-commodification of their spiritual welfare. In other words, transatlantic missionary groups became engaged in a growing competitive struggle for the souls of native Americans and enslaved Africans.

The missionary activities of Swedenborg's family extended beyond America. Jesper Swedberg also administered the Swedish churches of London and Portugal, and was a highly regarded member of the London-based Society for the Propagation of the

Gospel, a transatlantic missionary organization to which Swedenborg later allocated all royalties from his milestone theological work *Arcana Coelestia*.[118] Swedenborg started to donate to the organization as soon as his first stay in London, only three months after the much-publicized visit of the four Christianized "Iroquois kings" to Queen Ann in 1710, who had begged the Queen for missionaries to lead their people to the "true Christian religion".[119] The Swedish missionary Andreas Hesselius (1677–1733), who visited and brought funding to his cousin Swedenborg in London in 1711, also served as pastor to the Swedish settlers in the Americas, at a crucial time for anti-slavery debates amongst Quaker communities in the territories of Delaware and Pennsylvania.[120] Because of this, it is possible that Swedenborg's family ties to the ecclesiastical administration of Swedish communities in Delaware and Pennsylvania exposed him to early anti-slavery discourses which emerged amongst those groups.[121] Such anti-slavery discourses in the Americas and London included Ralph Sandiford's *A Brief Examination Of The Practise Of The Times* (1729) and Benjamin Lay's *All Slave-Keepers, That Keep The Innocent In Bondage, Apostates* (1737).[122]

It is in this context that Swedenborg came to focus his considerable ambitions of global evangelization for his doctrines towards enslaved Africans, who represented a growing global population to evangelize. As a theologian, he viewed the Quakers as missionary competitors against the spread of his own New Jerusalem doctrines, and he attacked them vehemently in a highly –critical millenarian treatise, *Continuatio de Ultimo Judicio* (Amsterdam, 1763), dismissing them as "enthusiasts".[123] Swedenborg also attacked the Jesuits, whom he had previously cast in his plurality of worlds treatise, *De Telluribus in Mundo Nostro Solari* (1758), as spirits infamously known for harassing indigenous populations across the whole universe, and known in the afterlife to be the "worst possible spirits which could exist".[124] Another missionary group he attacked were the Moravians, at a time when the Brethren's missionaries were renowned to convert "thousands" of enslaved Africans in the Americas, and had been evangelizing enslaved Africans on the Danish gold coast and West Indies since 1732.[125] Swedenborg had initially been attracted to Zinzendorf Moravian groups in Stockholm and the Hague, and even worshipped with them in London during the early 1740s.[126] Although he shared their ambitions of global evangelization, he disagreed with them on a growing number of doctrinal issues, and eventually attacked them as part of a wider critique of Moravianism in his *Continuatio de Ultimo Judicio.* He later long contended that accusations of madness against him had originated from disgruntled members of the Brethren.[127] Such attacks were not surprising: the context in which Swedenborg and other anti-slavery intellectuals came to form views about Africans and slavery has more broadly been linked to wider discussions about genius and madness.[128] In Swedenborg's case, such connections are particularly relevant in the light of his controversies with Kant's attacks in the latter's *Träume eines Geistersehers* (Riga, 1766), which dismissed Swedenborg's doctrines as the product of a deluded mind. Although Kant primarily took aim at Swedenborg's metaphysics, the latter's views on Africans were also at odds with Kant's, who expressed dismissive views about Africans by reading Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon and later by corresponding with Johann Friedrich Blumenbach.[129] Despite allegations about his mental state, Swedenborg's influence and reputation continued to grow by the end of the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth.[130]

Concluding remarks

The Swedish Age of Liberty saw heated debates about the resumption of colonial expansion, the potential profits of the slave trade, and the extent to which enslaved Africans were uncivilized. In this context, the article has explored the dissenting positions of Swedenborg on Africans and slavery from the 1740s to the early 1770s, at a time when Swedish elites were building the new colonial and trading networks which heralded the country's subsequent embrace of transatlantic slave trading in the 1780s. A devout man with heterodox pietist leanings and extensive family networks in missionary evangelization, Swedenborg had long sought to locate the primordial sacred land and people through which his doctrines could spread globally, while at the same time condemning European missionary intrusion in African lands. After giving up on his project of converting the Jews and establishing a New Jerusalem kingdom in Palestine in the mid-1740s, Swedenborg shifted his interest towards the vast unmapped parts of the inner African continent, and redirected his efforts towards the evangelization of enslaved Africans abroad, a growing global population whom he perceived as Gentiles ideally disposed to adopt his doctrines. Although the extent to which Swedenborg interacted with sub-Saharan Africans in his life remains unclear, his extensive stays abroad in London, Amsterdam, and Paris, along with his close connections to the Swedish royal court, meant that he saw more Africans than most of the Swedes of his time, and featured them regularly as protagonists of his accounts about the afterlife.

In a bold rewriting of the Rousseauist trope of the *bon sauvage*, Swedenborg developed an original idealized stance which asserted the spiritual and moral superiority of Africans over a spiritually decadent Western civilization. This challenged then-dominant dismissive biological statements of figures such as Linnaeus, Bäck, Kant, and Buffon, who all asserted African inferiority and consistently ranked Africans with lower traits. Swedenborg's millenarian views, which exalted African superiority, spiritual emancipation, and the supposed angelic spread of his New Jerusalem in Central Africa, were shaped by his extensive work as an exegete, biblical traditions about the African continent, philosophical and traveling literature, and his own grand ambitions of missionary conversion in a broader context in which, towards the end of his life, public opinion across Europe started to grow opposed to slavery.

The article has also shed new light on how Swedenborg's views provide an overlooked case study to better understand the emergence of abolitionist sentiment in Europe earlier than usually thought; that is, from the 1720s to the early 1770s. As we have seen, like many at the time, Swedenborg criticized slavery but never called for its abolition. Despite this, in the three decades after his death (1770s–1790s), his followers built on his ideas about Africans and spiritual emancipation to articulate an explicitly abolitionist agenda. Such a paradox illustrates a wider generational shift, from Swedenborg's afterlife which featured enslavement as a rightful divine punishment against Europeans and sinners, to the utopian, classless futures of his followers who envisioned abolition as a goal attainable within their lifetime, in the context of the radical changes ushered in by the French Revolution.

Notes

1. Swedenborg, *Sapientia Angelica De Divina Providentia*, §148:1, §149:4.

2. Rönnbäck, "Enlightenment, Scientific Exploration and Abolitionism", 63–5, 81.
3. For studies of Swedenborg's posterity in spiritualist, Mesmerist, and Romantic milieus, see Haller, *Swedenborg, Mesmer*; Wilkinson, *Swedenborg and French Literary Culture*.
4. See Rob Sunderlin's *Swedenborgianismens historia* from 1886.
5. See Sundelin, *Swedenborgianismens Historia*; Dahlgren, *Carl Bernhard Wadström*; Sprinchorn, "Sjuttonhundratalets planer"; Bodman, "August Nordenskiöld"; Kup, "Adam Afzelius"; Kup, "John Clarkson"; Ambjörnsson, "La République de Dieu"; Braidwood, *Black Poor*; Nelson, "Carl Bernhard Wadström"; Schama, *Rough Crossings*; Coleman, *Romantic Colonization*; Clifford, *From Slavery to Freetown*; Walvin, *The Slave Trade, Quakers*; Rönnbäck, "Enlightenment, Scientific Exploration and Abolitionism"; Forshagge, "Varför var de gamla"; Hallengren, *The Moment is Now*; Persson, "Southern Darkness".
6. See, for instance, Ambjörnsson, "La République de Dieu", 254–73; Coleman, *Romantic Colonization*, 43–4; Hallengren, *The Moment is Now*; Dibb, *A Love Affaire with Africa*.
7. Dunér, *The Natural Philosophy*, 12.
8. Swedenborg has frequently been presented as a "passive prophet" by confessional believers, see e.g. Robsahm, *Memoirs*, 5; Duckworth, *A Branching Tree*; Lawrence; "A World Apart".
9. The foundational studies of Michael Roberts, *The Age of Liberty*, and Charlotta Wolff's *Noble Conceptions of Politics* during the period make almost no mention of these issues.
10. Linnaeus was related to Swedenborg and the Swedberg family by dint of Linnaeus's marriage to Swedenborg's little cousin Sara Elisabeth Moraea (1716–1806) in 1739. Acton, *Letters and Memorials*, I, 487–8.
11. Hudson, "From Nation to Race", 247–8.
12. On the Swedish public being opposed to slavery, see Thomasson, "Knowledge, Silence and Denial", 42.
13. Walvin, *The Slave Trade, Quakers*, 165.
14. On the trope's decline during the eighteenth century until its mythical historiographical reinvention in the 1850s, see Ellingson, *Myth of the Noble Savage*, 45, 99. On increasingly negative depictions towards the end of the eighteenth century, see Ibid., 126.
15. Stange, "Lutheran Church and Negro Slavery", 280. On Swedenborg's lack of direct exhortation to end slavery, see Lawrence, "A World Apart", 176.
16. For a pioneering assessment of this relationship, see Coleman, *Romantic Colonization*, 66.
17. Lawrence, "A World Apart", 176–7.
18. Ibid.
19. For scholars suggesting the higher end of such estimates, see Lawrence, "A World Apart", 176–7.
20. Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia* (London, 1748–1756), Swedenborg, *De Coelo* (London, 1758), Swedenborg, *De Nova Hierosolyma* (London, 1758), Swedenborg, *Doctrina Novae Hierosolymae de Scriptura Sacra* (Amsterdam, 1763), Swedenborg, *Continuatio de Ultimo Judicio* (Amsterdam, 1763), Swedenborg, *Sapientia Angelica De Divino Amore et de Divina Sapientia* (Amsterdam, 1763), Swedenborg, *Sapientia Angelica De Divina Providentia* (Amsterdam, 1764), Swedenborg, *Apocalypsis Revelata* (Amsterdam, 1766), Swedenborg, *De Amore Conjugiali* (Amsterdam, 1768), and Swedenborg, *Vera Christiana Religio* (Amsterdam, 1771). Minor mentions of slavery also occur in Swedenborg, *Oeconomia Regni Animalis* II (London and Amsterdam, 1741) and Swedenborg, *De Cultu et Amore Dei* (London, 1745).
21. Unpublished works discussing Africans include Swedenborg, *Spiritual Diary* (1747–1765), Swedenborg, *Index to Arcana Coelestia* (1749), Swedenborg, *Apocalypsis Explicata* (1759), Swedenborg, *De Athanasii Simbolo* (1759), Swedenborg, *De Ultimo Judicio (Posthumous)* (1759), Swedenborg, *De Verbo* (1762), and Swedenborg, *Index Operis De Amore Conjugiali* (1767).
22. Mentions of slavery in unpublished manuscripts include Swedenborg, *Explicatio in Verbum Historicorum Veteris Testamenti* (1745–1747) Swedenborg, *Spiritual Diary*, *Index to Arcana Coelestia*, *Apocalypsis Explicata*, and Swedenborg, *Coronis* (1772).

23. Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia* §2604; Swedenborg, *De Coelo* §326:1. On the natural rationality of Africans, see also Swedenborg, *Vera Christiana Religio*, §838:2. Swedenborg also presented Africans as more disposed to embrace the teachings of his millenarian New Jerusalem: see Swedenborg, *Continuatio de Ultimo Judicio*, §73, §75.
24. Acton, *Letters and Memorials*, I, 503.
25. Swedenborg, *Spiritual Diary*, §392.
26. Swedenborg, *Spiritual Diary*, §454: "et quod interiora desiderent, nam verba ponderant; dicunt, quod dum male tractantur tunc nigri sint et postmodum exuant nigredinem, ac induant candorem animae, et sic intrant in coelum".
27. Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia* §2603; Westphal, "The Click Languages", 375–90.
28. Swedenborg, *Spiritual Diary*, §7392, §454, §460.
29. Swedenborg, *Spiritual Experiences* §432; Swedenborg, *Continuatio de Ultimo Judicio* §77.
30. Fromont, "Common Threads", 847–50.
31. Danielsson, "Gustav Badin", 46–56.
32. For reference to Swedenborg's privileged relationship to the queen, see Roy-Di Piazza, "Ghosts from other planets", 21.
33. Danielsson, "Gustav Badin", 48. See also Östlund, "Playing the White Knight".
34. For reference to Swedenborg's multiple diners in the presence of the "whole royal family" thus likely involving Badin, see Sigstedt, *The Swedenborg Epic*, 406.
35. Basir, *Badin's Diary*, i, 73, 42.
36. On the common features of Swedenborg's memorabilia with dialogues of the dead, see Roy-Di Piazza, "Ghosts from other planets", 19–21, 25.
37. Swedenborg, *Spiritual Diary*, §5811:2.
38. Swedenborg, *Sapientia Angelica de Divino Amore et de Divina Sapientia*, §11.
39. Swedenborg, *Vera Christiana Religio* §840.
40. Swedenborg, *Continuatio de Ultimo Judicio* §73 ; Swedenborg, *Vera Christiana Religio*, §837–9.
41. Swedenborg, *De Coelo*, §326.
42. Swedenborg, *Continuatio de Ultimo Judicio*, §72.
43. On the blurring of the two, see Thomasson, "Knowledge, Silence and Denial", 40, 44. Swedenborg sometimes used "Moors" and "Ethiopians" as rare synonyms for Africans; the latter mostly in biblical contexts.
44. Swedenborg, *Continuatio de Ultimo Judicio*, §77. On Africans and conjugal love, see Swedenborg, *De Amore Conjugiali*, §113.
45. Swedenborg, *De Amore Conjugiali* §79, §291.
46. Roy-Di Piazza, *Homo Maximus*, 251–2; Swedenborg, *Concerning the Messiah about to Come*, iii–v, 1, 13, 98–9.
47. Armbjörnson, "La République de Dieu", 253; Coleman, *Romantic Colonization*, 73–5.
48. Swedenborg, *Continuatio de Ultimo Judicio*, §120–1.
49. Parfitt, *Black Jews in Africa*, 3–23; Kidd, *The Forging of Races*.
50. Coleman, *Romantic Colonization*, 19.
51. Rix, "The Little Black Boy", 135.
52. Swedenborg, *De Athanasii Simbolo*, §154.
53. Swedenborg, *De Telluribus*. On the links between travel literature, this work and the plurality of worlds debate, see Roy-Di Piazza, "Ghosts from other planets", 13.
54. Compare e.g. Swedenborg, *Continuatio de Ultimo Judicio*, §76, with Swedenborg, *De Amore Conjugiali*, §113, and Swedenborg, *De Telluribus*, §158, §162.
55. Fullagar, *The Savage Visit*, 127.
56. Helander, *Emanuel Swedenborg Ludus Heliconius*, 204.
57. For an extensive study of the trope, including discussions about the extent of its historical validity, see Elligson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage*.
58. Bergquist, *Swedenborg's Secret*, 469–82.
59. Thomasson, "Knowledge, Silence and Denial", 38.
60. Thomasson, "Knowledge, Silence and Denial", 38, 40.

61. On the Swedish public being opposed to slavery, see Thomasson, "Silence, Knowledge and Denial", 42. On Swedenborg's memorabilia addressing contemporary debates, see Roy-Di Piazza, "Ghosts from other planets", 22–5.
62. On associations between African savagery and barbarism etc., see Fullagar, "Reynolds' New Masterpiece", 197–8. On African Arcadia, see Persson, "Southern Darkness", 5.
63. Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §2567:7.
64. On ear-piercing, see Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §3869:11; on trials, §1846:2.
65. Whitford, *The Curse of Ham*.
66. Bäck, "Om Negrernas Svarta Hud", 9–15. On the evolution of studies of black skin towards scientific racism around 1750, see Koslofsky, "Knowing Skin", 795; Hudson, "From Nation to Race", 247–8, 253–4.
67. Bäck, "Om Negrernas Svarta Hud", 13–15.
68. On the curse, see Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*; Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era*.
69. On Linnaeus's statements about Africans, see Charmantier, *Linnaeus and Race*.
70. Tawil, *The Making of Racial Sentiment,* 43. See also Müller-Wille, "Linnaeus and the Four Corners", 192.
71. On Swedenborg's wider influence on Linnean naturalists, see Forshage, "Varför var de gamla", 109–30.
72. Rönnbäck, "Enlightenment, Scientific Exploration and Abolitionism", 80–1. On the views of Linnaeus's apostles about natives, see also Rausing, "Underwriting the Economy", 193.
73. Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §1062–3, see the New Century Edition for Hebrew commentary. For Swedenborg's other commentaries on the curse of Ham, see Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §975, §1077, §1083, §1093.
74. On Bäck's views about the curse of Ham, see Bäck, "Om Negrernas Svarta Hud".
75. Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §891.
76. Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §1703, §6895:2, §7093:2, §10409. On spiritual captivity, see Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §8049, §8866.
77. Bergquist, *Swedenborg's Secret*, 329–30. For Swedenborg's earliest statements about Africans in the spiritual world, see Swedenborg, *Spiritual Diary*, §4740, §4777, §5517, §5518, §5519.
78. Swedenborg, *De Ultimo Judicio*, §74.
79. Koch, "Slavery, Mission and the Perils of Providence", 375, 393.
80. Thornton, "African Dimensions", 1106; Vartija, "Revisiting Enlightenment", 608; Swedenborg, *Oeconomia Regni Animalis*, II, §323.
81. For a list of the work's reviewers, see Ryder, *A Descriptive Bibliography*, I, 430.
82. Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §5647.
83. On Moravians, spiritual emancipation, and enslaved Africans, see Raphael-Hernandez, "The Right to Freedom", 468–9.
84. Swedenborg, *Continuatio de Ultimo Judicio*, §78.
85. Voltemat, *Gienwäg til de förnämsta europäiska*, I, 103–8.
86. Enslaved by hell: Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §6281. On infernal freedom, see Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §9590; Swedenborg, *De Coelo,* §603:4, Swedenborg, *De Divina Providentia*, §149; Swedenborg, *Vera Christiana Religio*, §495:3. On infernal freedom being slavery, see Swedenborg, *De Divina Providentia* §97:8, §145:4; Swedenborg, *Apocalypsis Explicata*, §1155:4; Swedenborg, *Vera Christiana Religio*, §495:3.
87. On slavery in hell, see Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §8293; Swedenborg, *De Coelo*, §574:2; Swedenborg, *De Nova Hierosolyma*, §73, §142.
88. Swedenborg, *Sapientia Angelica De Divina Providentia*, §148:1, §149:4.
89. "Slave to the Lord", Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §5763. "Slave under sin", Swedenborg, *Apocalypsis Revelata*, §578.
90. Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §905.
91. Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §2890, §9586. Heavenly freedom is emancipation from self-love: Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §2884–5; on the role of diabolical spirits in spiritual slavery, see Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §892, §2890.

92. Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, §456 ; Swedenborg, *De Coelo*, §404.
93. Armbjörnson, "La République de Dieu", 263, 273.
94. Swedenborg, *Vera Christiana Religio*, §400:9.
95. Petry, *Carl Von Linné Nemesis Divina*, 95, 206. The precise date of Linnaeus's statements on slavery remains unknown, as he wrote *Nemesis Divina* over thirty years (1740s–1770s).
96. Thomasson, "Knowledge, Silence and Denial", 33.
97. Ibid.
98. Keith Tribe, *Baltic Cameralism*, 39–41. See also Rausing, "Underwriting the Economy", 177.
99. Acton, *Letters and Memorials*, I, 299–30, 318. For Swedenborg's four economic memorials to the Riksdag, see Ryder, *A Descriptive Bibliography*, I, 313, 315, 317, 320.
100. Acton, *Letters and Memorials*, I, 318; Gill, "The Affair of Porto Novo", 47–8; Sakano and Tamaki, "Swedish trade", 43.
101. Evans and Rydén, "Voyage Iron", 11–12, 14. The profits of Swedish iron merchants funded the construction of the London Swedish Church; on this, see Roy-Di Piazza, *Homo Maximus*, 28.
102. On musket barrels built in West Africa with Swedish iron, see Evans and Rydén, "Voyage Iron", 22.
103. Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon (*SBL*), "Claes Grill".
104. Ibid..
105. For discussion of mercantilism versus capitalism during the period, see Hughes, *Circulating Ceramics*, 5, 74.
106. Thornton, "African Dimensions", 1106.
107. Rausing, "Underwriting the Economy", 185; Wennerlind, "Theatrum Oeconomicum", 111–14. On the "Oeconomia Animalis" as a Dutch cartesian genre, see Booth, *A Subtle and mysterious machine*, 82–7.
108. Hodacs et al, *Linnaeus, natural history, and the circulation of knowledge*.
109. Burnett, "Collecting Humanity", 2–5.
110. Voltemat, *Gienwäg til de förnämsta europäiska*, I, 103–8.
111. Fur, "Different ways", 47.
112. Swedenborg, *De Fibra*, §537.
113. Wennerlind, "Atlantis Restored", 1690.
114. The links between those issues outside of Sweden have been extensively studied in Frykenberg, *Christians and Missionaries in India*.
115. *SBL*, "Jesper Swedberg".
116. Hoffecker et al., *New Sweden in America*, 324–5. See also *SBL*, "Jesper Swedberg".
117. Stange, "Lutheran Church and Negro Slavery", 273, 280. For reference to the enslavement of both Africans and indigenous native Americans in New England, see Newell, *Brethren by Nature*, 5.
118. On Jesper Swedberg and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, see *SBL*, "Jesper Swedberg". On Swedenborg giving all proceedings to the Society, see Ryder, *Descriptive Bibliography*, II, 186.
119. Fullagar, *Savage Visits*, 42–3, 46. Coincidentally, Swedenborg titled his last publication *The True Christian Religion* (Swedenborg, *Vera Christiana Religio*, Amsterdam, 1771).
120. Acton, *Letters and Memorials*, I, 34. On anti-slavery debates, see Carey, *From Peace to Freedom*, 106. For Hesselius's accounts of his travels to America, see Hesselius, *Kort berettelse.*
121. On these early discourses, see also Carey, *From Peace to Freedom*, 143–8.
122. Carey, *From Peace to Freedom*, 147.
123. On Quakers in the spiritual world, see Swedenborg, *Continuatio de Ultimo Judicio*, §83–5.
124. Swedenborg, *De Telluribus*, §61; Roy-Di Piazza, "Ghosts from other planets", 484.
125. On Swedenborg and the Zinzendorf Moravians, see Bergquist, *Diary*, 31–4. On Moravian evangelizing in the Americas, see Stange, "Lutheran Church and Negro Slavery", 279. For evidence of the group's early action on the Danish Gold Coast, see Van Gent, "Rethinking Savagery", 30; Raphael-Hernandez, "The Right to Freedom", 460.

126. Hessayon, "Jacob Boehme, Emanuel Swedenborg", 337–84.
127. Tafel, *Documents*, II, 603.
128. Chaplin, "The Problem of Genius", 12.
129. On Kant's views on race and Africans, see Kant, "On the Distinctiveness of Races in general", 16–24. See also Chukwudi, *Race and the Enlightenment*, 39–48; Lauer and Rupke, *Johann Friedrich Blumenbach*.
130. For an overview of Swedenborg's fame as a theologian, see Roy-Di Piazza, "Ghosts from other planets", 21–6.

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Notes on contributor

Vincent Roy-Di Piazza is an early modern historian of science, religion and the Northern World. He recently completed his D.Phil. at the University of Oxford (2022) in history of science, medicine, economic, and social history. His other peer-reviewed publications include research articles in *Annals of Science* (2020) and *Etudes Germaniques* (2021).

ORCID

Vincent Roy-Di Piazza http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5352-7231

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