ket, the sickly captives on the *Zong* were worth more dead than alive. Thus, the ship owners' lawyers argued, the act was less murder than fiscal prudence. On reading of the case, Brown argues, Britons were forced to confront how they had become "implicated in the intentional killing of human beings for financial gain" (173).

In colonial Jamaica, Brown concludes, the dead were too plentiful, too powerful, and too useful to ever rest in peace.

Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History. By IAN BAUCOM. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005. 398 pages. $89.95 (cloth), $24.95 (paper).

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In the fall of 1781, the crew of the slave ship *Zong* tossed 133 captive Africans into the sea (one person, incredibly, climbed back aboard). The ship's captain hoped to acquire through an insurance claim what he feared he would not gain in the marketplace. Luke Collingwood's decision and the brief controversy that ensued have made the voyage of the *Zong* perhaps the most notorious in the history of the British slave trade. If it first came to the courts as a case of suspected insurance fraud, it soon became for the emerging abolitionist movement an example of the slave trade's special horrors, an instance of the inhumanity that it licensed, and further grounds for a call to action. Almost every history of the British slave trade and its abolition makes reference to the case, but few do much more than report it. This is because the *Zong* was not really a progenitor of the abolitionist movement that would make it infamous. And the peculiar features of the case that give it value as a brief anecdote also limit its utility for those works that seek to describe the typical slave voyage. So it has been artists, poets, and novelists instead who have worked most fully with the incident, especially during the last two decades. Liberated from the obligation to contextualize the moment, as historians often are inclined if not obligated to do, they have ruminated instead on what to make of it and what to do with it.

This is the task that Ian Baucom also sets for himself in *Specters of the Atlantic*, a subtle, demanding, vigorous, unsettling, and sometimes bewildering meditation on what (and whom) the *Zong* left in its wake. At once an exercise in cultural theory, historical sociology, intellectual history, literary criticism, and the philosophy of history, *Specters of the Atlantic* is unlike anything else in the abundant scholarship on the

Atlantic slave trade. This is in part because Baucom is as interested in the present as the past, although in this work he explicitly refuses the distinction. At the same time, *Specters of the Atlantic* is not quite a book about cultural memory and the *Zong* either, since Baucom is more concerned with the ways the past persists than with the investment that the present makes in it. For Baucom, the *Zong* is a kind of ghost ship that haunts modernity. To develop the point, he leans heavily on an army of mostly twentieth-century philosophers and theorists, most prominently Walter Benjamin, Giovanni Arrighi, James Chandler, Fredric Jameson, Gayatri Spivak, Mary Poovey, Giorgio Agamben, Jacques Derrida, and Edouard Glissant. The book will perhaps repel some of those impatient with this way of proceeding. But they will risk missing a series of ingenious formulations that, taken together, suggest that the cultural history of the Atlantic slave trade, such as it is, now enters a new phase.

For Baucom, the history of the *Zong* discloses the distinctive cruelties of financial capital. The callous, calculated dispatch of living men and women into the Atlantic is a "Truth-Event" (119) that reveals a theory of value characteristic of the late eighteenth century and ours. The Gold Coast captives, as Collingwood knew, were assigned monetary value in Britain months before they entered the marketplace in the Americas. That value had been determined through the speculative work basic to the preparation of marine insurance, which, by its very nature, designated the typical worth for a cargo of captives long before the returns on that voyage would be calculated. In the speculative world of finance capital, Baucom observes, to know is to typify. This preoccupation with the construction of types characterizes the cultural work of a variety of eighteenth-century forms—the novel and historicism in particular, as well as the underwriter—that also depend for their truth claims, Baucom insists, on their assertion of representative types. Together they share "a refusal of the absolute, singular, individual, isolated lives of persons, events, or things" (105). This broader cultural orientation is, then, the "condition of possibility" (106) for Collingwood's actions and for the courts that agreed to consider the case as a question of lost property but not lost lives. In this way the "hyperfinancialized" period of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries "is not contemporary with itself alone. It accumulates, repeats, intensifies, and reasserts the late eighteenth" (30).

The second half of the book then turns to the rejection of this aggregating ethos. It examines the emergence of a counterdiscourse of modernity exemplified in the figure of the witness (Granville Sharp, principally, but also Thomas Clarkson), individuals who took a melancholy interest in the remote and inaccessible suffering of others, who claimed an "affective property" (175) in the aggrieved whom they could not see, and who chose to testify to the experience of loss and thereby render that loss visible and enduring. This romantic investment in the particular-but-now-absent departs from the discourse of rights, Baucom observes, with its emphasis on only the most rudimentary claims to social and political recognition and its tendency to abstract men, women, and children from the specifics of their lives. Baucom's witness must be distinguished also from the liberal cosmopolitan stance, idealized in this period by Immanuel Kant, that expresses regard for universal humanity but no one in particular. Sentiment provides the means of connection between the witness and the event. But this melancholy sense of property in others might easily become an overinvestment in the capacity to feel, a regard for sentiment as a mode of "self-enrichment" rather than a path to sustained engagement with the object of concern, so that people become "spectators before it, not . . . witnesses in it" (292). And there could be, too, the temptation to honor the grievance and the aggrieved but to regard them as located in the past or as elements of some larger whole rather than always present, enduring, and repeating through time. For Baucom, each of these modes of witnessing, which notice but ultimately retreat from the scene of horror, obtains throughout the antislavery movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and after in one form or another. One aim in *Specters of the Atlantic*, then, is to define and describe a type of emotional attachment that recalls, retrieves, resuscitates, and resides with "the lost news of the news of loss" (217). This impulse, which first crystallized in the *Zong* trials, Baucom claims, is realized fully in the cultural production of recent Atlantic cosmopolitans primarily of African descent who in different ways have insisted, in an echo of Toni Morrison, that "all of it is now" (333).

Readers of this journal less vested than Baucom in mapping discourses of modernity may want to know what *Specters of the Atlantic* offers for eighteenth-century studies. Here the results are decidedly mixed, although certainly there is much to commend. The precise and rigorous elaboration of "the witness" casts familiar cultural artifacts in unfamiliar ways, yielding fresh takes, for example, on Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), the famous woodcut of the slave ship *Brookes* from 1789, and the 1840 Joseph Mallord William Turner painting *Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On).* There are also memorable evocations of late-eighteenth-century Liverpool and of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, who emerge not "as the architects of history, but as its petty clerks, accountants, and small claims adjusters" (5). Baucom provides a penetrating analysis of the cultural context for marine insurance. He makes good work of the ways enslaved peoples functioned in the Atlantic economy not only as labor and commodities but also as money. His sustained assessment of melancholy attachment nudges the study of sentiment in worthwhile directions.

On the other side, though, for those scholars and students invested in the history of this era, the unwavering commitment to dubious premises and the occasional narrowness of vision will make parts of the book difficult to credit. Some of the problems follow from Baucom's tendency to "deduce" (30) aspects of history from other theorists, so that when Benjamin, for example, is wrong about some aspect of the eighteenth century, Baucom is too. No less serious is the occasional sloppiness about chronology and context. Some of these mistakes are minor, if irritating. The Seven Years' War did not end in 1749, to take just one egregious instance. Others are far more serious. Baucom's picture of British antislavery, for example, is misleading at best. He exaggerates the importance of rights discourse in antislavery argument in both these years and after. He tends to conflate the representational strategies of the abolitionists, which did often emphasize sentiment, with the agendas that moved them. There sensibility was less important. Worse, he does not notice the place of Christianity, the Christian mission, and the discourse of deliverance in the new campaigns of the late eighteenth century and their nineteenth- and twentieth-century successors. One would never know from this work that Sharp, presented here as a founding father of sentimental witness, grounded his antislavery testimony in these years even more in the vindication of English law and the purification of the Church of England. Predictably, a book that perhaps wisely warns of the risks inherent in contextualizing, and thereby vanishing the particular instance, often gets the context wrong.

A comprehensive tally of the pros and the cons, though, tends to miss the point with a book of this kind. Baucom sometimes is incorrect. More often his key claims are by their nature unverifiable. But *Specters of the Atlantic* is an intellectual feast, especially for those engaged with the history of the slave trade or the history of sensibility. They can only come away from a reading of it—and to be fully appreciated the book needs to be read from beginning to end—with new problems, new questions, new ways to frame their subjects. In demonstrating what might be done, Baucom reveals just how much remains to do. If the *Zong* is good to think with, *Specters of the Atlantic* is too.