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Sea Dreams: Isaac Julien's *Western Union: Small Boats*

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A dark gated archway at the edge of the sea opens to a blue horizon. We approach the gate from the shadows of an echoing hallway, waves washing gently at the entrance, beckoning us toward the open space beyond. The voice of singer Oumou Sangaré announces the entrance of the graceful figure Vanessa Myrie. As Myrie walks slowly forward from the darkness to gaze into the light, her full profile is serene and statuesque, silhouetted against the sky (fig. 1). Flanked on both sides by gates that are closed and locked, she is free.

So opens Isaac Julien's large-scale video installation, *Western Union: Small Boats* (2007). From this first scene a host of associations comes to mind, from the Atlantic Middle Passage to the proliferating incarcerations of the present, historically framing the contemporary sea passage of African migrants to the southern shores of Italy that is the subject of this work. Thousands of migrants make the Mediterranean journey to Europe each year from the North African coast.

About twenty-two thousand people reached Italy by boat in 2006. Many more travel to Spain. It is estimated that hundreds die each year attempting the crossing. In June of 2007, twenty-four Africans drowned after a dinghy capsized south of Malta.¹ *Western Union: Small Boats* was inspired in part by accounts of such crossings in the international news. One story attracted special attention due to a dispute about where the African migrants would be put ashore. "After weeks stranded in the Mediterranean, thirty-seven Africans were allowed to disembark."



Fig. 1. Isaac Julien (English, b. 1960), *Western Union: Small Boats*, 2007. Film still from three-screen installation, Super 16mm color film, transferred to High Definition, 5.1 sound, 1822'

back in Italy after officials bowed to international pressure and agreed to accept the asylum-seekers," wrote one newspaper, "but Italian authorities later arrested two German aid officials whose ship transported the immigrants to Sicily and said initial checks showed that the Africans were not predominantly Sudanese fleeing the crisis in Darfur, as they had been led to believe."² Instead, it appears the refugees were from Ghana and Nigeria. Being economic (rather than political) refugees, these migrants and their rights to protection were immediately in jeopardy, revealing the double standards used to articulate the logic of "asylum." As Didier Fassin has argued, "If the refugees occupy a crucial space in the biopolitics of Europe today, their collective treatment does not rest on the separation of the 'humanitarian' from the 'political,' but on the increasing confusion between the two."³ Fassin suggests that it is precisely a shift in the conception of asylum that has transformed the contemporary politics of immigration in Europe. The expression "false refugees" has emerged as a new phrase to describe "economic immigrants."⁴ The declaration that a person might be in a "false" relation to his or her own status as subject or citizen—with or without rights—echoes a long history of racially inflected arguments used against immigrant communities that appear to threaten a majority population. Julien's exploration of migratory experiences in *Western Union: Small Boats* reveals the degree to which a complex history of race discourse shapes the conditions of international migration today.

Isaac Julien's early films, such as *Looking for Langston* (1989), *Young Soul Rebels* (1991), and (with Mark Nash) *Frasco Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask* (1995–96), drew critical acclaim for examining repressed histories of racial and sexual politics through an experimental cinematic language. The films challenge the genre of documentary film production by exploring the psychological, interior states of his subjects without losing sight of their historical conditions and political contingencies. His recent large-scale video installations continue this approach by eschewing strictly linear editing, giving Julien the opportunity to explore a synco-pated sound and image landscape more akin to the fragmentary nature of dreams. Like the stanzas of a poem or the verses of a song, his three-screen projections introduce slow conversations among images, inviting viewers to linger on one scene while anticipating the next. Our eyes travel across the space of the exhibition as if scanning a landscape. The scale of the projections places us in an environment where the subjects are life-size or larger, operating in a world that is itself frequently changing scale. The effect is to displace the viewer from a comfortable position of omniscience to one of immersion and identification. Close-up shots in-

vite us to imagine the lives of those depicted as part of a realist documentary, while long shots of landscapes and interiors work to position the viewer as an observer, outside the scene. Ultimately the environmental scale and shifting points of view allow the audience to occupy multiple and contradictory positions.

The opening scene of *Western Union: Small Boats* moves from the close-up of Myric's profile, gazing offscreen, to water shimmering in symmetrical patterns suggesting two shores. In several of Julien's recent video installations, the figure of Myric appears as both witness and actor: as one who observes, reveals, enacts, reflects. Her presence punctuates the work like a Greek chorus; she seems to hover, ever watchful, on the margins of historical events. Rather than a traditional protagonist, she embodies perhaps the passing of time, the wind of fate, or destiny. Her gaze is our gaze, her witnessing is our witnessing.

Part of an ongoing exploration of sea passage and transnational crossings that Julien calls his *Expedition* series, which includes *True North* (2004), *Fantôme Afrique* (2005), and *10,000 Waves* (2000) based on Chinese migrations to England, *Western Union: Small Boats* follows a loose narrative arc that operates simultaneously on the level of documentary realism and psychological lyricism. The documentary elements provide a sobering framework for the more breathtaking and disturbing interpretive gestures of the lyrical passages. Near the beginning of the video, the viewer is invited to engage in an intimate way with the contemporary condition of African sea migrants through photographs, short clips, and found sound elements. There is no authoritative voice (or voice-over) in the work, just carefully chosen juxtapositions of images that speak to each other. Closely cropped views of Italian fishermen winding their nylon fishing line, their boats rocking in the early morning sunshine, give a human face to those who are often on the front lines of sea rescues. Nautical details are accompanied by a shift in the aural landscape. Distant humming of high-pitched static and the clicks and tones of Morse code form the background to barely intelligible voices on a radio frequency. Snatches of English and Italian comment on the imperiled status of some forty refugees. We see the weathered faces of Italian fishermen, their paint-chipped boats in blue and white with names like *Messina* bobbing in the port. Then the video cuts to a very different scene: a graveyard of small wooden boats painted with Arabic script with tattered makeshift sails of black plastic and torn fabric fluttering in the breeze. The ships are stacked and overturned, broken and bleached by the sun, and contain discarded shoes and crumpled clothing, empty life vests, dry water bottles (fig. 2). By now such vessels are so common in Spain (where they



Fig. 2. Isaac Julien, *Shipwreck—Sculpture for the New Millennium* (Western Union Series no. 9), 2007. Fluorans in lightbox. 47.25 x 118.13 in. (120 x 300 cm)



Fig. 3. Isaac Julien, *Western Union: Small Boats*, 2007. Film still from three-screen installation. Super 16mm color film, transferred to High Definition, 5.1 sound, 1922'

are called *patroni*) that they have become an iconic sign and key metaphor for African migration in Spanish fiction and non-fiction.⁵ Just a few of the scores of boats that have washed ashore or been abandoned by their owners on the coast of Italy, these skeletal remains have been gathered into heaps by the Italian authorities.⁶

Having thus set the stage, Julien shifts from the subtle realism of documentary images to the first movement of a thoroughly lyrical interpretation of the migrant's sea crossing. A magnificent barren hillside of white rock (the Turkish steps near Agrigento, Sicily) becomes the backdrop for a small group of dancers who walk in unison down to the shores of the coastline (fig. 3). Stunning striations and undulations of stone are repeated in the ripples of calm seawater. In an adjacent screen, Myrie wears a black dress and stoops to grasp a red T-shirt that floats gently in the surf. Its graceful undulations are as fluid as a sea creature until, lifted out of the water in a slow, deliberate gesture, it becomes a lifeless remnant of a lost human host. From the barren shoreline we cut again to the sound of crashing waves and a group of African men sailing in a small vessel under an unforgiving sun. We see a man dozing with eyes closed and another man staring blankly at the horizon in boredom or exhaustion. Memories of home cut across the multiple-screen array: parched earth, dusty roads, rural architecture, mosques, and sunlit trees. One man nods off, head drooping, and suddenly the roaring of the ocean ceases; we enter the strange silence of a dream.

A rectangular pattern of polished floor tile glistens in the center screen. The camera's gaze ascends slowly to reveal a crystal paradise, an eighteenth-century parlor of golden chandeliers and tasseled velvet divans bathed in a sparkling, jaundiced hue of greens and yellows across a reflected hall of mirrors. A space of fantasy, desire, and wealth, the sumptuous décor of the Palazzo Gangi in Palermo, Sicily—virtually unchanged for centuries—is nearly hallucinogenic when paired with the barren and uncertain situation of the migrants crossing the sea (fig. 4). Julien's unexpected editing device shifts our mode of attention. We grasp that we are now exploring the dreamscape of the migrating subject. The shimmering palace is the wished-for haven from hardship and strife, but also a mirage of luxury that is, finally, a site of refusal and unyielding power.

How does the materiality of race figure in the materialist histories we tell ourselves? Is the *coherence* of time (understood as abstract, mathematical, indisputable), as a support for the *coherence* of historical discourse (especially in its realist aspirations), not also racially overdetermined? How do artworks act out or reenact a changing perceptual relationship between the aesthetic past and



Fig. 4. Inocencia, Julián Larraz, *Wimmen Union: Small Boats*, 2007. Film still from three-screen installation. Super 16mm color film, transferred to High Definition, 5.1 sound, 18'22"

the present through a kind of time travel? It is useful to recall Michel Foucault's distinction between a genealogical approach to the past—which develops a provisional account from fragments of always-partial evidence—and a more traditional historical approach to the past that produces overarching explanatory narratives or general characterizations of a historical epoch. He writes that a genealogical model of critical analysis is "no longer to be practiced in the search for formal structures with universal value, but rather as a historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying. In that sense, this criticism is not transcendental . . . it is genealogical in its design and archeological in its method."⁷ A genealogical

approach to the past might be said to follow an interlinking, capillary spread of facts without imposing a necessary or absolute order on things. For, despite the great efforts of traditional historians, the past is not something that can be kept in order—or kept in place. Genealogical methods reveal an effort to chart the relations of bodies to systems of power through which they have been marked and dominated. In this respect, Foucault's asserts, "The body is the inscribed surface of events. . . . Genealogy as an analysis of descent is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body."⁸

Referencing Luchino Visconti's *The Leopard*, the eponymous 1963 film adaptation of the 1958 novel by Prince Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, Julien returns us in his video to the original film location of the penultimate scene. During an elaborate staging of a formal ball, the protagonist, the Prince of Salina, worries to himself that aristocratic privilege and inbreeding may eventually lead to decadence and corruption, while a crowd of beautiful young women in silk gowns laugh and frolic together ("like monkeys," says the prince) in the same hall of mirrors. Some sprawl drunkenly on the velvet divans, while others circumnavigate the room, gracefully fanning their perspiring faces in the summer heat. Set in the 1860s during Garibaldi's red-shirt uprising (the so-called Expedition of the Thousands) that resulted in the unification of Italy, *The Leopard* explores the growing obsolescence of the aristocracy in the face of a rising bourgeois class. The prince struggles to come to terms with this transformation and what it means for himself and his family, and what his own role might be in the face of modernity. In one scene, a newly appointed bureaucratic official comments on the squalor and homelessness of the Sicilian poor: "Our modern administrative system will change everything." The prince replies, "All this shouldn't last, but it always will. The human 'always' that is: a century or two. After that, it may be different but it will be worse. We were the leopards, the lions. Those who will take our place will be jackals, hyenas. And all of us—leopards, lions, jackals, sheep—we'll go on thinking ourselves the salt of the earth." *The Leopard* is equivocal about class relations, suggesting that none of the solutions humans have yet developed are finally successful. In Julien's video, a woman dressed in ruffled pink enters the ornate interior of the palazzo and walks primly across the glistening hall of mirrors to gaze fixedly into the camera. Both desirable and unapproachable, she is eerily like a specter, and the whiteness of her skin is somehow uncanny. Her originally warm smile, prolonged by the shot, slowly and subtly transforms into a fixed

grimace and her echoing footsteps sound lonely in the empty cavernous space. As the current descendent of the original Prince and Princess Pietro and Marianna Valguarnera who occupied the Palazzo Gangi in the eighteenth century, she is also a sentinel of aristocratic privilege. The video cuts away from the face of the princess and focuses on Myrie who, in a surprisingly effective collapse of diegetic space (since we have just seen her at the seashore), strolls regally into the mirrored hall, gracefully fanning herself like the young women at Visconti's ball. The sound landscape is complex: male and female voices reverberate against underwater sounds of the sea. An amazingly compelling effect is created by a vertical pan, projected simultaneously on the two side screens of the installation, inviting our eyes to scan asynchronously up and down, following the contours of the decorative baroque architecture. Myrie is both at home and ghostly, foreign, uninvited. What does her presence in this rarified palazzo mean for the migrant dreamers in the Mediterranean sun?

As if in answer, Julien returns us to the white undulating rocks of the Turkish steps where we see one young man carrying another over his shoulder. The race politics of the work become increasingly complicated, as the man who hangs down flaccidly like a corpse is white, and the man who carries him seems to be of African descent. The one who appears to have drowned, if that is the implication, is not from the small boat we have left behind. Instead, he is part of a dream, a dream of rescue, of human contact, of compassion or duty. Once more worlds collide in a cut reminiscent of Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon*: the two men are transposed from the rough shoreline of Agrigento into the silent Palazzo Gangi, entering as Myrie exits. One man is slung across the shoulders of the other; their bodies sway together, intimately entwined, evoking a homoeroticism that is shadowed by mourning and death. The intimacy of their bodies belies the hetero-normative space of fantasy held by the two women who previously occupied the mirrored hall. It also evokes the corporeality of rescue, the flesh-on-flesh materiality of bodies alive and dead.

The dancer of African descent, now alone, writhes sensually against the smooth surface of the floor to the sound of splashing water. Abruptly, a thrashing of muscular arms and legs creates trails of translucent white in the deep blue of the sea. The video cuts back to the Palazzo Gangi, but this time the floor of the mirrored hall is convincingly repositioned as a kind of impenetrable ceiling that takes the place of the surface of the water (fig. 5). Multiple screens articulate the relation between the seawater and the floor, while the dancer's body curves and



Fig. 5. José Julien, *Western Union: Small Boats*, 2007. Film still from three-screen installation. Super 16mm color film, transferred to High Definition, 5.1 sound, 18'22"

rolls against this polished stone barrier in an ambivalently erotic intercourse with privilege, wealth, and power. Centuries of domination, perhaps the same centuries invoked by Visconti's prince, seem to suffocate those rising from below. The present always traffics in the past, and the histories of that past are as powerful when they are repressed as when they are revealed. Scholars Ian Chambers and Lidia Curti comment: "The colonial adventure is cancelled in the Italian imaginary; it is neither studied in school nor, until recently, has it been the object of research and reassessment."⁹ The history of racial domination and colonial encounter is nevertheless etched into the architectural details of many Italian cultural monuments. Julien's camera zeros in on the face of a painted leopard, part of the exotic motif that decorates the floor of Palazzo Gangi's great hall. We see that its dark shining eyes are not feline, but human (fig. 6).

Julien has a long history of working with dancers and choreographers—Bebe Miller and Ralph Lemon in *Three* (1996–99) and Javier de Feutos in *Long Road to Manatlan* (1999). From its inception, *Western Union: Small Boats* was a collaboration between Julien and British choreographer Russell Maliphant.¹⁰ The choreographic elements can be incongruous to first-time viewers who may be uncertain about the status of the actors or dancers and their role in the video. The dancers look like dancers, not migrants, and they move with a casual poise more often seen on the stage than in everyday life. Their bodies are not starv-



Fig. 4. Isaac Julien, *Western Union: Small Boats*, 2007. Film still from three-screen installation. Super 16mm color film, transferred to High Definition, 5.1 sound, 1022'

ing, their bodies are not injured, they are not burned by the sun. When they enter the domain of what appears to be documentary footage, the audience may feel uneasily caught between theater and reality, experiencing a cognitive tension that brings into question familiar strategies and politics of spectatorship. This uncertainty and tension productively disrupts what might otherwise be a merely familiar viewing experience.

Both documentary film and theatrical dance tend to invite or create a kind of visual distance, locating their spectators as outsiders looking in. Although both are modes of enunciation, they are nevertheless quite different; one traditionally presents itself as pedagogical and informative, the other as evocative, eliciting awe and affect. By experimenting within these two traditions, Julien also unsettles his viewers' habits of seeing such that uncertainties arise about how to read the work. It is in the space of this uncertainty that he inserts multiple rubrics of engagement—realist, lyrical, and surrealist filming; first person and omniscient points of view; racial ambiguity; spatial and digetic compression—inviting the viewer to grasp not merely the contemporary situation of African migration to the shores of Italy but to see how this is but one instance of a larger human dilemma that includes the history of political struggle, the risks taken by the immigrant, the privilege of the wealthy, the despair of the dispossessed, the yearning for other worlds, and the psychological fantasies structuring this desire.¹¹ As viewers in the context of the installation—surrounded by unfolding tableaux, implicated in the scale, immersed in the landscape—our relation to the material tends to be more visceral, less distanced. Julien has stated, "I think the demands of a single-screen piece of work lead to a slightly conservative way of viewing. There is something about the three-screen version that allows a certain choreography that emphasizes movement and flexibility in narrative progression."¹² This movement and flexibility create an ambivalent identification in the viewer who is hearing and seeing multiple and parallel narrative threads and political subject positions along the way. The fragmentation of time and repetition of spaces in the work reveal



Fig. 7. Isaac Julien, *Western Union: Small Boats*, 2007. Film still from three-screen installation. Super 16mm color film, transferred to High Definition, 5.1 sound. 18'22"

the relentless, ongoing, hopeful—yet always inherently and involuntarily blind—experience of migration and culture contact.

The last three movements of *Western Union: Small Boats* are the most dramatic. An enormous baroque staircase of gray stone, symmetrical and solemn, becomes the stage for a strange underworld where dancers' prone bodies ascend and descend the steps like flowing water. The racial diversity of the dancers can be seen as a kind of ecumenical treatment of migration by Julien; this is not only about Italy and Africa, this is a work about migration more generally, and the broader history of the sea itself as a critical agent of social change and becoming, of death and disappearance. Moving gracefully and uncannily in reverse motion, the dancers seem to be freed from gravitational and temporal rules and the repetition of their falling bodies is echoed in the ringing of church bells, an aural motif that runs throughout *The Leopard* as well. We cut back to the sea, the African men on the boat, and tourists—real tourists—bathing on the Italian shore. Having regained what appears to be a documentary frame, we observe with mixed pleasure the light-skinned bodies leaping and diving into the waves from rugged outcroppings (a visual reference to Thomas Eakins's *The Swimming Hole* comes to mind) and hear the happy sounds of children playing in the surf (fig. 7). In a well-edited sequence of intersecting frames, we become aware that in the margins of this picturesque scene emerge tragic signs of death: five prone bodies wrapped



Fig. 8. Isaac Julien, *Western Union: Swaf Raon*, 2007. Film still from three-screen installation, Super Heron color film, transferred to High Definition, 5.1 sound, 18:22'

in silver Mylar lie along the water's edge. If it wasn't already evident, Julien's critique of contemporary global economic relations lies in this simple juxtaposition. National boundaries, economic policies, and international law are shown to be effective forms of capital punishment, in practice if not in name. In a world of global migrations, "illegality" has become an ontological state that is defined by the "not-yet" or "not-quite" human. As Iain Chambers has commented, "Globalization not only concerns the migration of capital at a planetary level, but also of bodies, cultures, histories, and lives. While the former is considered inevitable, the latter is both fervently resisted and increasingly criminalized. It has been estimated that in the coming decades one sixth of the world's population will be migrants, and will almost certainly be criminalized for this."¹³

It is not the end, however, for Julien. To the sound of a rapid drumbeat we watch with a certain breathless anxiety as submerged dancers' bodies on all three screens struggle fiercely to stay alive. In the deep blue water punctuated by rays of light, they grasp the ocean with desperate gestures, gyrating in awkward arabesques (fig. 8). Floating to the surface or drifting to the bottom, their bodies' eventual stillness is almost a relief. Moments of this sequence are upside-down and in reverse motion so that the crystalline bubbles surrounding their bodies create a kind of eerie and morbid sense of suction. Radically different from the formal austerity of video artist Bill Viola's underwater bodies in *Five Angels for the Millen-*

wimm (2001), Julien's bodies are not frozen archetypes but rather violent signifiers for invisible but horribly quotidian events.

Criticism of Julien's work sometimes returns us to the question of aesthetics and ethics, or even politics. What is the ethical relation of the artist to his subject matter? Is it unethical to build a body of expensive, lush, and sensually gripping work around the real-life tragedies of immigrants?¹⁴ Julien's video installations garner accolades and economic success. Isn't Julien's current life of relative privilege rather far removed from the African migrant's struggle both at home and abroad? What gives him the right to pursue a fraught topic such as this, and offer it up to be consumed by collectors and art-world patrons? (Julien is not naive: it may be precisely this community of wealth and privilege that is most directly interpellated by the unwavering gaze of the princess who occupies the Palazzo Gangj today.) To make something beautiful out of human relations that are truly ugly—how can this be a politically progressive gesture?

While these and similar questions have arisen in response to Julien's work, they seem to miss the point. A more interesting line of inquiry might be: why have so few visual artists addressed the politics of migration from the psychological, internal state of the migrant? How can contemporary concerns of international migration be given a broader historical frame that includes a long history of colonialism and domination? And what of the more lyrical artistic and cinematic tradition that has depicted tragedy and human suffering for centuries? Julien's work engages with this long tradition, but also speaks to a newer, media-saturated environment where all kinds of violence appear aestheticized and normalized. It is precisely this normalization of violence in popular culture that may function to mask the real world violence of international politics. By producing a nearly sculptural, excessive representation of the drowning body, the choreography of the dancers invites us to glimpse a violence we can only otherwise distantly imagine. It is all the more important, therefore, that we are immersed with their bodies in the projected video environment. Their asphyxiated corporeality dominates the space, replacing temporary fictions of nationality with the unforgiving sea, a substance that promises both life and death. Migration is shown not as a simple trajectory with a beginning and ending point, but rather as a series of intersecting and looping paths, flows, and currents that map non-contiguous spaces of economic, social, and historical difference. To cite Iain Chambers again: "In this disruptive geography it becomes both possible and necessary to rethink the limits of the world and the Mediterranean we have inherited; it becomes possible to

open a vista on another Mediterranean, on another modernity."¹⁵

Western Union: Small Boats is not merely an indictment of globalization and economic inequalities, although it is surely that. It poses a question about destiny and fate, about the desire to fulfill a fantasy that may be finally elusive, about the failed story of migration in which even returning home is impossible. The closing sequence shows shadowed ships sailing out to sea, witnessed by Myric seated high on the cliffs above. Julien employs an effective sequencing of images to wrap the ships across all three screens. Finally, using the asynchronous parallel vertical pan on two screens, seen previously in the Palazzo Gangi, Julien films a male hand gracefully lifting a wet black shirt out of the seawater by the shore and silently dropping it back in. In this closing sequence, we return to Oumou Sangaré, whose repeated vocal refrain from her traditional Wassoulou hunting song, *Saba*, intones: "Jasabu Ye Mogo Ye La, Mali denu Jasabu Ye Mogo Ye La, Mogo m'a Laodon" (There's a source behind everything that happens. Destiny is determined by our actions. No one knows when their time on earth will end).

1. Story from BBC NEWS, published online on 1 July 2007 at 21:05:23 GMT: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6128296.stm> (accessed 26 Sept. 2009).

2. "Italy Accepts African Refugees," *Washington Times*, 13 July 2004.

3. Didier Fassin, "Compassion and Repression: The Moral Economy of Immigration Policies in France," in *Cultural Anthropology* 20, no. 3 (2005): 368.

4. *Ibid.* Fassin writes: "As a consequence of deep changes occurring in popular attitudes toward asylum, explicit orders had been given by the Ministries of the Interior and Foreign Affairs to their respective administrations, and police officers in the airports and bureaucrats of OFFRA have come to view asylum seekers with systematic suspicion: all candidates for refugee status are now considered, until there is evidence to the contrary, to be undocumented immigrants seeking to take advantage of the generosity of the European nations. Use of the expression 'false refugees' to refer to 'economic immigrants' who claim political asylum has become central to bureaucratic common sense."

5. Manuel Martín-Rodríguez, "Mapping the Trans/Hispanic Atlantic: Nuyor, Miami, Tenerife, Tangier," in *Border Transits: Literature and Culture Across the Line*, ed. Ann M. Manzanas (New York: Rodopi, 2007), 215.

6. David Frankel, "Isaac Julien: Metro Pictures," *Artforum* (Jan. 2008): 188–89.

7. Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow

(New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 46. Foucault's use of genealogy follows from that defined by Friedrich Nietzsche, who rejects any historical search for origins (*Ursprung*) in favor of an analysis that marks paths of descent (*Herkunft*) or emergence (*Entstehung*).

8. Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" 83.

9. Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti, "Migrating Modernities in the Mediterranean," in *Postcolonial Studies* 11, no. 14 (2008): 387–99.

10. Rosalee Goldberg, "The World is Flat: Isaac Julien," in *Art Asia Pacific*, no. 55 (Sept./Oct. 2007): 110–13.

11. Hendrik P. van Dalen, George Goosenewold, and Jeanette J. Schoon write: "It is interesting that in statistical studies of African migration, it appears that it is less the actual levels of poverty or the inhospitable political climate that motivate the migrant to leave Africa (specifically Ghana, Egypt, Senegal, Morocco) but rather the 'great expectations' of increased earning potential abroad." "Out of Africa: What Drives the Pressure to Emigrate?" *Journal of Population Economics* 18, no. 4 (Dec. 2005): 741–78.

12. Isaac Julien, "The Long Road: Isaac Julien in Conversation with B. Ruby Rich," *Art Journal* 61, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 32–67.

13. Iain Chambers, "Adrift and Exposed," in *Koncepcje I Redakcje: Isaac Julien, Western Union: Small Boats* (Warsaw: Colophon, 2009), 3–13.

14. Critic Alan Gilbert writes: "The work derives its structure from a series of fragmented and stylized tableaux—so stylized in fact that certain moments approximate a fashion shoot, lending what is a gritty, harrowing, and sometimes fatal journey a slightly incongruous quality of slick sexuality." "Isaac Julien: Metro Pictures," *Modern Painters* 10, no. 1 (Fall 2008): 90.

15. Chambers, "Adrift and Exposed," 5.