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The Second Life Project will portray the idea of servitude in the novel *A Mercy*. To convey this theme, ships bringing both slaves and women to the new world will appear in the distance. Once the women's ship is clicked on this quote will then appear. "Rebekka learned otherwise soon enough, soon as they were separated from males and the better-classed women and led to a dark space below next to the animal stalls. Light and weather streamed from a hatch; a tub for waste sat beside a keg of cider; a basket and a rope where food could be let down and the basket retrieved. Anyone taller than five feet hunched and lowered her head to move around. Crawling was easier once, like the street vagrants, they partitioned off their personal space" (Morrison 81). When the slave ship is clicked on no slave will appear on board and only this quote will appear. "When the canoe heeled, some of we jumped overboard, others were pulled over and we did not see their blood swirl until we alive ones were retrieved and placed under guard. We are put into the house that floats on the see and we see for the first time rats and it is hard to out how to die. Some of we tried; some of we did. Refusing to eat the soiled yam. Strangling we throat. Offering our bodies to the sharks that follow night and day. I know it was their pleasure to freshen us with a lash but I also saw it was their pleasure to lash their own (Morrison 164). The song "Go Down Moses" will also be playing in the background when any of the slave ships are clicked on. When the ships arrive at port both will unboard their unfortunate passengers. The women's ship will unload sickly, ragged, destitute-looking women from below deck, who will then be led away by a male figure,

interesting - why? is the significance in the lyrics? (provide those)
 the connotations of Moses as a leader or exile, or seeker of home?
 (plot-focused)

and the slave ship will unload sickly Africans, who will be chained together and led away hobbling in the direction of a slave master.

To further convey this theme, seven characters --Florens, Sorrow, Lina, Jacob Vaark, Rebekka Vaark and Scully-- will be portrayed on a tobacco field near a coast that has a view of ships coming in to port. All of the characters will be in the field picking tobacco with the exception of Jacob, who will be overseeing them on a hill. To convey a sense of suffering again, the song "Go Down Moses" will also appear when any of the tobacco pickers is clicked on. In addition to picking tobacco, these characters will also be in leg irons. As for Jacob Vaark, when he is clicked on this quote will appear. "To be given dominion over another is a hard thing (Morrison 167): They wrote new papers. Agreeing that the girl was worth twenty pieces of eight, considering the number of years ahead of her and reducing the balance by three hogsheads of tobacco or fifteen English pounds, the latter preferred" (Morrison 27).

how does this reveal the difficulty of being given dominion over someone?

As for the other characters, they will continue to pick tobacco, but each one clicked on will have his or her chains dissolve. When Sorrow is clicked on this quote will appear: "To take dominion over oneself: 'And although Lina helped her through childbirth, sorrow never forgot the baby breathing water every day, every night down all the streams of the world. Kept as distant from the new girl as she had been from Patrician, Sorrow behaved thereafter the way she always had—with placid indifference to anyone, except Twin'" (Morrison 124). A copy of Sorrow will then appear helping to work the field. When Sorrow is clicked on a second time, the copy of Sorrow will

understand how = dominion over self

disappear and a baby will then gradually emerge on Sorrow's back followed by this quote. "To take dominion over oneself: 'Twin was gone, traceless and unmissed by the only person who knew her. Sorrow's wondering stopped too. Now she attended routine duties, organizing them around her infant's needs, impervious to the complaints of other'"

OK! this plot works better

(Morrison 135). As for Lina, when she is clicked on this quote will appear. "To take dominion over oneself: 'Her loyalty, he believed, was not a submission to Mistress or Florens; it was a sign of her own self-worth—a sort of keeping one's word. Honor, perhaps (Morrison 151). Lina will then appear to move toward Jacob and Florens. After

good

Lina is clicked on a second time this second quote will appear. "To take dominion over oneself: Lina had hovered over Patrician, competing with Mistress for the little girl's affection, but this one, coming on the heels of Patrician's death, could be, would be, her

= taking dominion over another, no?

own" (Morrison 61). The moment Florens is clicked on this quote will appear. "To give dominion of yourself (Morrison 167): 'My head is light with the confusion of two things,

hunger for you and scare if I am lost. Nothing frights me more than this errand and nothing is more temptation. From the day you disappear I dream and plot. To learn where you are how to be there'" (Morrison 4). Florens will then move to the woods, but when

not clear how = dominion

she is clicked a second time she will come back to the field and resume picking tobacco.

It is only upon Floren's arrival back in the field that her leg irons fall off and that this quote appears. "To take dominion of oneself: 'It was easy to spot that combination of defenselessness, eagerness to please and, most of all, a willingness to blame herself for

OK!

the meanness of others. Clearly, from the look of her now, that was no longer true. The instant he saw her marching down the road—whether ghost or soldier—he knew she had become untouchable'" (Morrison 152). The moment Scully is clicked this quote will

good

appear: "To give dominion over yourself (Morrison 167): 'Scully never blamed the curate for betrayal nor for the flogging that followed, since the curate had to turn the circumstances of their being caught into the boy's lasciviousness, otherwise he would be not just defrock but executed. Agreeing that Scully was too young to be permanently incorrigible, the elders passed him along to a landowner who needed a hand to work with a herdsman far away (Morrison 154). Scully's leg irons, like those of Florens, will not disappear the moment they are clicked. A pouch of money will appear the second time Scully is clicked on followed by this quote. "To take dominion over oneself: 'In four months he had already accumulated sixteen shillings. Four pounds, maybe less would secure a horse. And when the freedom fee—goods or crop or coin equaling twenty-five pound (or was it ten?)--was added on, the years of peonage would have been worth it (Morrison 154). When Rebekka is clicked on this quote will appear. "To be given to another: Already sixteen, she knew her father would have shipped her off to anyone who would book her passage of feeding her. A waterman, he was privy to all sorts of news from colleagues, and when a crewman passed along an inquiry from a first mate—a search for a healthy, chaste wife willing to travel abroad—he was quick to offer his eldest daughter. The stubborn one, the one with too many questions and a rebellious mouth" (Morrison 74). After she is clicked on, Rebekka Vaark will then move to replace her husband, who will then disappear. Vaark's leg irons will also disappear the moment she is clicked on. This quote will appear the moment Rebekka Vaark is clicked on a second time. "To wrest dominion over another (Morrison 74): Like the eyes of the women that examine me behind the closet door, Mistress' eyes only look and what she is seeing is not to her liking. Each time she returns from the meetinghouse her eyes are nowhere and

have no inside. Her dress is dark and quiet. She prays much. She makes us all, Lina, Sorrow, Sorrow's daughter and me, no matter the weather, sleep outside in the cowshed or the store room where bricks rope tools all manner of building waste are" (Morrison 159). After this quote appears the other characters will then immediately turn their backs on Rebekka.

interesting

More visual than interactive? Da.

Creator's Statement

The theme of the Second Life site is, like was said before, that of servitude. The first way in which this idea is conveyed on Second Life is through the use of ships. To convey the fact that European women and Africans were both thought of as disposable servants during the time the novel is set—an idea whose portrayal was inspired by Valerie Babb's *E Pluribus Unum?* The American Origins Narrative in Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*—the same slave song would appear the moment any of the ships were clicked on. To further emphasize the disenfranchisement of rights both groups shared, a quote will appear for each ship respectively emphasizing the dreary traveling conditions European women and Africans had to cope with. “Paralleling the saga of Florens's mother, Rebekka's tale of Atlantic transiting deepens Morrison's examination of the objectification of women” (Babb). The fact that the European woman and Africans are led away upon arrival at port by European men is supposed to emphasize the fact that European men are the ones that possessed all of the political and economic power in the colonies.

The selection of Jacob Vaark, a European man, as the overseer of the characters picking tobacco further emphasizes this fact. Vaark's role as the land-owning elite in the novel does not mean he is without admirable traits; he is always willing to treat his servants, or any ethnic or racial group, with respect. “Though far from perfect, Vaark represents the possibility of an alternative white maleness that does not take advantage of arbitrarily constructed race and gender privilege” (Babb). The reason the servants are willing to face Jacob while they work is to show respect for him, a way of showing gratitude to someone that thinks of them as having lives with value. The importance

Jacob Vaark plays as a representative of colonial America's elites is stressed by the quote that appears once Jacob is clicked, a quote that demonstrates the ease with which he searched local newspapers for the ideal servants. The part of the quote that says, "To be given dominion over another" is supposed to show to the viewer that Jacob's role in the novel is as a person that was given custody and control over unwanted servants. Another aspect that emphasizes Jacob Vaark's higher social standing is his location: his position on the hill overlooking his servants is a metaphor for the control he holds over his servants and the control that European men have over the colonies.

The servants, of course, still do not have the best lives imaginable, in spite of Jacob Vaark's willingness to treat them with respect; they still belong to another human being. That fact is the reason the song "Go Down Moses" plays each time one of the tobacco pickers is clicked on. The reasons the servants are working a tobacco fields also involve slavery. The first reason is that since tobacco the greatest cash crop of the region and time where the novel is located, it was a source of great miseries for the slaves that had to harvest it; so it is the perfect symbol for enslavement in 1600's. The second is that tobacco helps to demonstrate that the characters picking it are servants. The servants were not free people but slaves whose sole prerogative was to work for a master, despite Jacob Vaark's willingness to treat them with respect. As for the leg irons, like the tobacco and the music, they also show that the characters are enslaved. But the leg irons, unlike the tobacco picking, will disappear for each character that is clicked on a first or second time. A quote will then appear with a statement from the novel to show the way in which that character is not enslaved mentally: The breaking of the leg irons signifies that an enslaved character has become emotionally independent. As for the phrase, "To

ok

ok

why/how is each "unwanted"?

ok

provide lyrics

set

why? worse than cotton? sugar? indigo?

ok

take dominion over oneself”, it is there to signify that the leg irons disintegrated to demonstrate that a character has come to exist for him or herself and not for another person. And as for the continued tobacco picking, it exists to demonstrate that the characters are enslaved physically.

There are several very different, personal reasons for each character being independent minded. For Sorrow, this independence derives from her close companionship with Twin. Instead of emotionally relying on other people, Sorrow seeks companionship with her friend Twin, a ghostly or imaginary being that does not judge or abuse her harshly. This being does not disappear until the moment Sorrow’s second child is born, as shown by Second Life. For Lina, this independence derives from a selfish need for affection and self-worth: To her, loyalty to people like Jacob and Florens is a means to garner affection and a way of showing her superiority. These desires are exemplified by the way in which the computer Sorrow moves toward Florens and Jacob. As for Florens, the desire to be emotionally free from others does not come as soon for her as it does for Sorrow and Lina. As shown by the quote, “To give dominion of oneself”, Florens is initially emotionally reliant on the blacksmith, as evidenced from her willingness to search for him as her mistress is dying. The computer journey into the woods mimics this same incident. It is only when the blacksmith rejects her upon her return from the forest that Florens is emotionally free, albeit to an extreme extent- she feels she does not need to have any connection to other people. To demonstrate Florens’ new self-reliance, the moment the computer Florens returns from the tobacco field her leg irons fall off. And as for Scully, the reason his leg irons do not fall immediately was to indicate that, as a young child, he gave himself emotionally to the priest the fondled him

as a young child. To save his molester from execution, Scully was willing to be sold by the Anglican church to the colonies as an indentured servant. To further indicate this fact, the quote that informs the viewer of Scully's past begins with the phrase, "To give dominion of oneself". The independent nature Scully develops from his life in the colonies is shown the second time he is clicked on; it is then that the viewer sees that Scully intends on purchasing his freedom. It may seem strange that Rebekkah, Jacob's wife, is also leg irons, but a look at her past the reason she is chained like that. As indicated by the quote that appears when she is first is clicked, Rebekkah was, like with Sorrow, Lina, and Florens, a commodity that Jacob Vaark bought for himself. "A Mercy makes another departure from origins narratives in its record of women's voices that illuminates female commodification. The women characters who come together at the Vaark farm all arrive there via transactions: Lina is bought by Vaark; Rebekka becomes his wife through his funding an arranged marriage; Florens is acquired in the settlement of a debt; and Sorrow is given to Vaark free of charge to remove her from the sons of a local sawyer" (Babb). The quote mentioned, however, shows not any hatred or disrespect Jacob Vaark has for his wife, but rather it is in an indication that Rebekka has no value as a human being to her father. Rebekka's subordinate status to her husband does not last long. After her husband dies, Rebekka becomes the head of her own household, as symbolized from the disappearance of her leg irons, her ascend^{to up} of the hill and the disappearance of her husband. As evidenced from the quote that appears the second time she is clicked on, Rebekkah soon comes to stand for a new emerging social order, one where the degree or absence of whiteness, and not class, determines one's social class (Babb). Once Rebekkah becomes convinced of the superiority of her

whiteness, she then treats her servants with the same disregard that most other colonialists treated their slaves, as evidenced from the second quote. To further emphasize this fact and stress Rebekka's desire to lower her servant's to a common slave status, the phrase "To take dominion of" will introduce the quote. The servants eventually come to resent Rebekkah to such an extent that they want to be rid of her. To show this disgust, all of the computer servants turn in the opposite direction the moment the second quote pops up. ✓