

The Invention of Mungo: Race and Representation in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World

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Abstract

*The mid eighteenth century witnessed multiple depictions of blacks in English and American society. Satirists, painters and playwrights on both sides of the Atlantic in dealing with the political tumult of the Georgian period, used the black body to connote slavery of their fellow Britons and Americans. One central symbol was that of Mungo, a caricature of a black slave that became famous during this period. Mungo first appeared as a fundamental character in Isaac Bickerstaff's 1768 comic opera, *The Padlock*, where he presented a comic foil and a sharp commentary on his oppression. This paper investigates newspapers, poetry, and images to interrogate how the invention of the Mungo character represented race in Great Britain and North America.*

Keywords: Mungo, *The Padlock*, Comic Opera, Theater, Charles Dibdin, Isaac Bickerstaff

Mungo.

Dear heart, what a terrible life am I led,

A dog has a better that's shelter'd and fed:

Night and day 'tis de same,

My pain is dere game;

Me wish to de Lord me was dead.

What e'er's to be done,

Poor black must run;

Mungo here, Mungo dere,

Mungo every where;

Above and below,

Sirrah come, Sirrah go,

Do so, and do so.

Oh! oh!

Me wish to de Lord me was dead (Bickerstaff, 1768, p.12).

Introduction

This study is an examination of the progression of about the usages about Mungo over the mid-eighteenth century. This is an interrogation of the creation and construction of the fictionalized black servant Mungo. From his initial appearance in the play *The Padlock* and his subsequent representations as a symbol for laughter, government oppression, and anti-slavery over the latter half of the eighteenth-century.

What are the implications for our understanding about Mungo and race in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world? Why did the character Mungo evolve to symbolize divergent narratives about race in the eighteenth-century? The answers to these questions and the various mediums used to illuminate and decipher why this figure emerged and allowed these formulations to play out across the stages of Europe and America are important for framing our understanding of race in the eighteenth century.

In examining the construction of Mungo, it is also important to understand the backdrop of blacks in English society as the fictional character Mungo emerged in the eighteenth century. The increased prosperity of the Atlantic Slave Trade linking three continents fueled the growth of the black population of England during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Africans were sold in the slave port cities of Bristol, Liverpool, and London. In the eighteenth century, Africans continued to enter England in great numbers.

Due to the external origin of slavery, the legal standing of blacks in England remained ambiguous throughout the eighteenth century. Black slavery found some clarity in England with the 1772 *Somerset Case*. On June 22, 1772, Lord Chief Mansfield issued a ruling that made it illegal for masters to force their slaves to leave England. He stated that slavery could only exist if a statute or positive law sanctioned the institution. Despite Mansfield's narrow ruling, which suggested that English law did not allow this case and Somerset must be discharged, all over England and America, slaves, abolitionists, lawyers, and judges cited the Somerset case as the end of slavery.

Origins of Mungo

The late eighteenth century witnessed multiple depictions of blacks in English society. Satirists, dealing with political tumult of the Georgian period, used the black body to connote slavery of their fellow Londoners. Painters found a market for portraits of well-known black Londoners. Playwrights gave black characters central roles in their operas and plays.

One of the central symbols of this period was that of Mungo, a caricature of a black slave that became famous during this period. He first appeared as a vital character in Isaac Bickerstaff's 1768 comic opera, *The Padlock*, where he presented a comic foil and a sharp commentary on his oppression (Wiley, 1768). The plot of the play revolved around an older male, Don Diego, who pondered marriage with a poor sixteen-year-old girl, Leonora, who was in love with a young man named Leander. All parties including her parents and Don Diego agreed that Leonora should live in his home under an elderly chaperone named Ursula, for a period of three months to test her virtuousness and suitability for marriage. Don Diego travelled to the home of Leonora's parents to tell them that he intended to marry their daughter. Before leaving, Diego placed Ursula in charge of the home, with strict instructions to permit no one to enter the home. Don Diego used a large padlock to lock Leonora and Mungo inside his home to guard Leonora's purity during his absence, hence the name of the play. Leander, a young student in a nearby school, gained the favor of Mungo by serenading him with his guitar and wine. Entering the home, Leander flattered the lascivious Ursula, who could not resist his charms. Leander thus schemed his way into the house and made his declaration of love for Leonora known. Don Diego returned home to find a drunken Mungo, who reminded Diego of his misfortune. Diego finally calmed down, realized his mistakes, and allowed the two young lovers to wed. Don Diego also removed the bars from his windows as a symbolic gesture. The themes of the play were liberty, captivity, submission, rebellion, jealousy, and trust. The play became a success, but perhaps not entirely due to its themes. Some attribute the popularity of the play to the character Mungo, whose presence drove the value of the play, first for the English audience and, later, foreign audiences (Olfield, 1993, p. 9-11).

The Padlock was an English adaptation by Bickerstaff of Cervantes' *The Jealous Husband*. Charles Dibdin, the composer, wrote the songs and the music for the play. Dibdin also assumed the stage role of Mungo in blackface. Yet the play, as its name suggests, was about some type of imprisonment or enslavement. Although the writer granted Mungo some lines to lament his awful condition, the theme of the play is neither freedom for slaves nor emancipation for blacks. The play became a huge success for Bickerstaff and Dibdin. After the sensation and popularity of *The Padlock*, the name "Mungo" entered the eighteenth-century social and popular culture as a byword for both servile and uppity blacks (Gerzina, 1995, p. 10).

The play established multiple firsts in the theatre. For instance, it was one of the earliest dramas to reproduce black dialect on the English stage. Mungo became the first example of a blackface character on the London stage (Carlson, 2007, p. 140). The success of *The Padlock* was proven in the fifty-four performances at Drury Lane between 1768 and 1769 as it ran 142 times in the first nine years on the London stage (Fahrner, 1972, p. 53).

Contemporary reviews lavished praise upon the *Padlock*. The play was popular throughout Europe and the Americas. In Ireland, the play ran 163 times in Dublin, in the United States, the first appearance was at the John Street Theatre in New York on May 29, 1769 (Rankin, 1960, p. 191). The actor Lewis Hallam played Mungo. Hallam received great praise as the character Mungo and several other actors played the role in future performances. The play would eventually have a run to various theatres 81 times, before a final performance in New York, on March 13, 1837. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the play became a popular staple for English-speaking companies, as it was performed in at Kingston, Jamaica in 1780, and as late as 1813. The play was performed in India, Calcutta, Cape town, Bombay, St. Petersburg, and Vienna (Thasch, 1971, pp. 158-159).

It was the first score by Charles Dibdin and the first time that Bickerstaff had utilized Dibdin's music. The blackface depiction of Mungo gave Dibdin the most popular role of his life.

The tradeoff of blackness and comedy proved to very profitable for Dibdin. Originally, Jack Moody, a West Indian actor was to play Mungo, but he proved unable to master the songs. Dibdin later remarked that he deliberately made it hard for Moody to capture the ideal Mungo role because he wanted the role for himself. Indeed, it was Jack Moody who originally gave the idea of a black servant to Bickerstaff and Dibdin, after claiming he could mimic black dialect after spending time as an actor in the West Indies, especially in roles on stage in Barbados (Thasch, 1971, p. 154). The dialect of the play became so popular that one of the lines from the play, "What e'er's to be done, Poor black must run; Mungo here, Mungo dere, Mungo everywhere," enjoyed widespread use (Thasch, 1971, p. 155). Mungo was a construction sprung from the mind of Isaac Bickerstaff and Charles Dibdin. Their imagined Mungo was lazy, gullible, and untrustworthy, but he possessed a quick wit and lamented his life in servitude.

The play succeeded in creating a character who posed no threat sexually. Devoid of erotic interests, Mungo was to protect the love interest of his master, whereas Ursula was portrayed as a lustful and sexual conniving servant. In a telling remark, Don Diego spoke of banishing all from his house that had the "shadow of man or mankind," (Bickerstaff, 1768, p. 30). Evidently, the "shadow of man" meant Mungo possessed no humanity, nor was he a male whom Diego should fear if left alone with his future wife.

A biographer of Isaac Bickerstaffe regarded *The Padlock* as an anti-slavery drama and counted him as one of the "first to bring upon stage the realistic Negro who became a comic figure," (Thasch, 1971 p. 160). However, it seems apparent that Mungo was a play for laughter, not abolition. Mungo's speech was a West Indian pidgin amalgamation that Bickerstaff used for great comic effect. It was broken English that presented at its heart not sympathy, but ridicule. At the end of the opera some of Mungo lines included "Me have a fable pat as she, Which wid dis matter will agree," (Bickerstaff, 1768, p. 31)

Mungo's name came to represent his status and his race in English society. The *Oxford English Dictionary* recorded the meaning of "mungo" generically as "a Negro slave" and attributed its origin to Bickerstaff's play (S.V. Mungo, 2000). By 1769, the term "mungo" had apparently become a typical epithet for a black slave as the result of *The Padlock*. The almost immediate entry of Mungo from the theater stage into the textual life of the eighteenth century reflects the popularity of the character. The appropriation of Mungo began with print images, political satires, songbooks, the utilization of Mungo as the author of multiple essays and other writings.

The popularity of the name Mungo was important in plays and portraits, but a survey of newspaper advertisements from British and American press during the period of the play revealed no black runaways named Mungo. The non-usage of a popular name such as Mungo on black servants signifies a clear demarcation between popular culture and the lived reality of black servants and their masters in eighteenth-century London. It is ironic that the name Mungo possessed such popularity, and yet no slave master would ever attach the name to one his or her enslaved servants.

Amid the creation of the stock caricature Mungo, many black slaves and servants possessed unique talents and abilities that defied the black stereotypes illuminated on the stage in London and North America. A cursory look at some newspaper advertisements for runaway slaves and servants displays the talents of blacks during the period. In the *Daily Advertiser* from January 1765, a runaway slave named Tumbo spoke English and French (1765, *Daily Advertiser* p.3). From the same newspaper a boy named Peter who spoke English and French very well (1765, *Daily Advertiser*, p. 3). From the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, a black runaway named William Lewis, otherwise Sambo speaks English, French, and Spanish, dresses hair, and blows the French horn (1768, *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, p. 4).

In addition, from the *Public Advertiser*, ran away a Negro Man named John Lewis, who speaks French and English fluently (1768, *Public Advertiser*, p 4). Yet, the writers of *The Padlock* presented Mungo speaking a crude black dialect at the same time in London there existed multiple blacks who had mastered European languages throughout the newspaper advertisements. The actual black servants of the period possessed multiple language skills and other talents. They were able to run away in great numbers, travel as a transnational body throughout the Atlantic world, and become the subject of legal cases that challenged the system of slavery in England. The actual reality of black domestic life refutes the comic interpretations that the character Mungo unleashed on the London and American stages.

Anti-Slavery Mungo

The usage of the image Mungo in print continued with a piece that resembled what later came to be known as a prose poem published in 1769. Although *The Padlock* inspired the poem, the writer treated Mungo with great concern that was not found in the original play. The writer of this sympathetic bit wrote in the same jargon as *The Padlock*. Although the words uttered from this construction allowed a fuller response and gave Mungo room to lament his plight. Although the poem utilizes the backdrop of the play, it is an original script, not part of the text from the play.

MUNGO'S SOLILOQUY.

What a miserable life does *Mungo* live! – I am treated like a beast of burden – worse than a jack-ass with panniers upon his back. – *Mungo* must do this, do that, do everything – and answer for the success of everything – for if any thing goes wrong, then the fault is laid on *Mungo's* shoulders – *Mungo* is abused and vilified. – It is d- -d hard and cruel to blame me, because the Livery would not be corrupted – How could I help it? – I am sure I tempted them sufficiently – they would not take his Gr-s' bribes, neither his money nor his tickets – it was none of my fault – yet *Mungo* is now cursed, suspected of treachery, and threatened to be discarded for it – *Mungo* must do all the dirty work, and be d---d for it into the bargain – A cobbler is a happier man than *Mungo* – but *Mungo* is not such a fool and blockhead as his Gr—calls him – *Mungo* sees how the cards are going – his Gr—now holds very bad hands – the game is almost over with him – he cannot stand it long – the outs will be in – *Mungo* must take care of himself – he must, in time, seek out a new master – and make a merit of deserting his old one. – His Gr---'s present ill treatment of me, so underservedly, gives me the opportunity of doing it – and which *Mungo* will not lose (*Mungo's Soliloquy*, 1769, p. 3).

Here existed a Mungo who lamented his life and treatment. The allusion to the panniers was a direct reference to the opening of *The Padlock* play in which the character had a basket on his back. In the soliloquy, Mungo depicted a world where he did all the labor and was responsible for everything. Often in the play, Mungo suffered from abuse and mistreatment from the hands of Diego. In the passage above, Mungo received blame for the damaging of a servant's livery uniform. Mungo reported that all his master's attempts to protect the livery failed. The response of the master was cursing Mungo and threatening to remove him from his position. Mungo implied that he would eventually gain the upper hand over his master or would leave the service of his master by running away after suffering such bad treatment. The poem clearly was using similar language to the play and addressing its issues, but with a complete reversal of meaning. Readers were supposed to sympathize with the unjustly treated black slave.

The sympathetic aspects of Mungo's life found more breath in a poem published in 1788 in the *Gentlemen's Magazine*. The author was ostensibly a clergyman whose name remains unknown, but his intent is clear. The words offered a defense to the position of the fictionalized Mungo. The newspaper account opened with a purported account of the origin of the poem:

October 1787

Mr. Urban,

Sept. 24.

The following Epilogue to "The Padlock" was written by a very worthy Clergyman, soon after the first representation of that opera. The author of this little poem died in the Summer of 1786, and, having never been published, a copy of it is presented to your Magazine, by one who agrees in sentiment with the author, and who thinks it will be readily received by you, as being worthy of a place in your valuable repository.

J.D.

EPILOGUE TO THE PADLOCK.

MUNGO speaks:

"TANK you, my massas! Have you laugh your fill"----
 Then let me speak, nor take that freedom ill.
 E'en from my tongue some heartfelt truths may fall
 And outrag'd nature claims the care of all.
 My tale, in any place, would force a tear,
 But calls for stronger, deeper feelings here.
 For whilst I tread the free-born British hand;
 Whilst now before me crouded Britons stand;
 Vain, vain that glorious privilege to me,
 I am a slave, where all things else are free.
 Yet was I born, as you are, no man's slave,
 An heir to all that liberal Nature gave;
 My thoughts can reason, and my limbs can move,
 The same as yours; like yours my heart can love:
 Alive my body food and sleep sustains;
 Alike our wants, our pleasures, and our pains.
 One sun rolls o'er us, common skies around;
 One globe supports us, and one grave must bound.
 Why then am I devoid of all to live,
 That manly comforts to a man can give?
 To live untaught Religion's soothing balm,
 Or life's choice arts; to live, unknown the calm
 Of soft domestic ease; those sweets of life,
 The duteous offspring, and th'obedient wife.
 To live, to property and rights unknown,
 Not ev'n the common benefits my own.
 No arm to guard me from oppression's rod,
 My will subservient to a tyrant's nod.
 No gentle hand, when life is in decay,
 To smooth my pains and charm my cares away;
 But helpless left to quit the horrid stage;
 Harrass'd in youth and desolate in age.
 But I was born in Afric's tawny strand,
 And you in fair Britannia's fairer land.
 Comes freedom then from colour? Blush with shame,
 And let strong Nature's crimson mark your blame.
 I speak to Britons-Britons, then, behold

A man by Britons snar'd and seiz'd, and sold.
 And yet no British statute damns the deed,
 Nor do the more than murderous villains bleed.
 O sons of freedom! equalise your laws,
 Be all consistent-plead the Negro's cause;
 That all the nations in your code may see
 The British Negro, like the Briton, free.
 But, should he supplicate your laws in vain,
 To break for ever this disgraceful claim,
 At least, let gentle usage so abate
 The galling terrors of its passing state,
 That he may share the great Creator's social plan;
 For though no Briton, Mungo is a man! (Epilogue to the *Padlock*, 1787, pp. 913-914)

The author granted Mungo an active voice. This sympathetic subject had much to say about the plight of Africans in London. The language encompassed the most passionate aspects of Enlightenment thought and anti-slavery sentiment. The writing demonstrated a clear challenge to *The Padlock* and its comic renderings. The Mungo in this poem is not a jester or someone weak, but a slave giving voice to his own humanity. This version of Mungo lashes out at a larger English society that enjoyed freedom while slavery became the destiny of far too many Africans. The juxtaposition of freeborn English people and African slaves was a thematic strain throughout the poem. The work was an eloquent plea for abolition of slavery and a vigorous defense of black freedom. Here in this poem the writer drew upon the ideals of natural law to assert equality amongst all peoples and an end to slavery, which for this writer was against the natural state of liberty. This poem also crossed the Atlantic and was reprinted in several colonial newspapers in after 1788. Some historians have suggested that the epilogue was performed at the end of the play in America. This is dubious to say the least due to the fact the poem was not discovered until 1787, and only published in 1788. The sentiments of the poem contrast sharply with the original story of *The Padlock*. The juxtaposition of the appeals to the humanity of Mungo alongside the comedy of the play would have undoubtedly presented most audiences with a clear demarcation. There is no recorded instance of the performance of this epilogue poem during *The Padlock* that I have discovered in my ongoing study.

The poem not only appeared in America, but this version made its appeal to an American audience using anti-slavery sentiments espoused by a writer positioning themselves as Mungo. The changes to the poem included replacing the word Britons and Britain's with the moniker of Columbia. During this period, the name Columbia was a name utilized by colonists to describe America. The American interpretation of the Epilogue was printed quite often after 1789.

The COURT OF APOLLO
 EPILOUGE to the PADLOCK

"TANK you, my massas! Have you laugh your fill"----
 Then let me speak, nor take that freedom ill.
 E'en from my tongue some heartfelt truths may fall
 And outrag'd nature claims the care of all.
 My tale, in any place, would force a tear,
 But calls for stronger, deeper feelings here.
 For whilst I tread Columbia's free-born land;
 Whilst now before me crowded freemen stand;
 Vain, vain that glorious privilege to me,
 I am a slave, where all things else are free.
 Yet was I born, as you are, no man's slave,
 An heir to all that liberal Nature gave;
 My thoughts can reason, and my limbs can move,

The same as yours; like yours my heart can love:
 Alive my body food and sleep sustains;
 Alike our wants, our pleasures, and our pains.
 One sun rolls o'er us, common skies around;
 One globe supports us, and one grave must bound.
 Why then am I devoid of all to live,
 That manly comforts to a man can give?
 To live untaught Religion's soothing balm,
 Or life's choice arts; to live, unknown the calm
 Of soft domestic ease; those sweets of life,
 The duteous offspring, and the obedient wife.
 To live, to property and rights unknown,
 Not even the common benefits my own.
 No arm to guard me from oppression's rod,
 My will subservient to a tyrant's nod.
 No gentle hand, when life is in decay,
 To smooth my pains and charm my cares away;
 But helpless left to quit the horrid stage;
 Harrass'd in youth and desolate in age.
 But I was born in Afric's tawny strand,
 And you in fair Columbia's fairer land.
 Comes freedom then from colour? Blush with shame,
 And let strong Nature's crimson mark your blame.
 I speak to freemen – Americans then behold
 A man by tyrants snar'd and seiz'd, and sold.
 And yet no American statute damns the deed,
 Nor do the more than murderous villains bleed.
 O sons of freedom! equalize your laws,
 Be all consistent-plead the Negro's cause;
 That all the nations in your code may see
 The American Negro, like the American free.
 That he may share the great Creator's social plan;
 For tho' an African, Mungo is a man! (Epilogue to the *Padlock*, 1789, p.4)

Throughout both epilogues, the writer positions Mungo as rebuking the comical interplay at work within the play. There is a declaration within the poem that the enslaved African has some truths to teach Europeans. The poem revealed the real human condition and pointed out the contradictions of slavery and freedom. The anti-slavery appeal of the poem cautions that although a slave Mungo, has urges, desires, dreams, wants a wife and children, right to property like any other human being. The writer lamented the lack of control that Mungo possessed over his own life as he suffered under the tyranny of his slave masters. Both poems rebuked the crimes of the Atlantic Slave Trade, proffered that there existed no current law against the slave trade, and called for end to slavery.

The Trans-Atlantic Representation of Mungo

The success of *The Padlock* in Europe spurred on its popularity in British North America. Hence the origin of blackface minstrels began in England and traveled to North America from the stage performance of Mungo in *The Padlock*. In America, the Hallam/Douglass Company quickly picked the play up, and the younger Lewis Hallam performed the role with a success equal to or greater than Dibdin's according to theatergoers of the time (Hill, 1994, pp. 75-76). The play made its debut in New York on May 29, 1769 at a theatre in John Street. American audiences loved the play.

The Padlock was performed at Valley Forge by officers, their wives, and a military band sang the Padlock songs to a packed house (Miller, 2007, p. 17). The play was also performed in Jamaica several times between 1780 and 1813.

Lewis Hallam gained great notoriety as the drunken slave Mungo and in the eyes of many surpassed Charles Dibdin as the quintessential Mungo. According to theater historian William Dunlap “In the Padlock, Mr. Hallam was unrivalled to his death, giving Mungo with a truth derived from the study of the negro slave character which Dibdin, the writer, could not have conceived,” (Dunlap, 1833, p. 222). Other accounts raved that “Mr. Hallam’s Mungo granted higher praise than was ever before given to any part acted on the American stage,” (Seilhamer, 1891, p. 222). The popularity of Mr. Hallam as the fictional African found whites asking blacks about his performance as Mungo. In a newspaper account from 1792 there is this account:

A Negro, from the coast of *Coromandel*, who had been at a representation of the *Padlock* in Philadelphia, in which Mr. HALLAM performed the part of Mungo, was asked by his Master, how he liked his countryman. The African in simplicity of heart replied, - *Massa He no my countrymen* – he IBO, the name of a part of the slave coast not far from *Coromandel*. The character must have been well filled to have given rise to the African’s observation. – In truth, it is impossible that the negro can be personated with more appropriate accent and gesture, than by Mr. HALLAM in that character (Columbian Centinel, p. 2).

In this account, the African denied that he and Mungo shared the same country. He ascribed to Mungo a different part of Africa. The reader is left with no inference to his true thoughts about Hallam’s performance as a Negro. The great glee that Hallam’s performance inspired amongst audiences is evidence in this reply being recorded and discussed in the newspapers during the period. In the colonies according to Sterling Brown Lewis Hallam’s characterization of Mungo in the Padlock “fathered a long line of comic Negroes in the drama,” (Leonard, 1986, p. 159).

Sexualized Mungo

Three years after the initial production of *The Padlock*, in January of 1772, a completely new and different image of Mungo appeared in London: A painting called *High Life Below Stairs, or Mungo Addressing My Lady’s Maid* by William Humphrey. In this picture Mungo seduces a white maid with caresses, wine, and Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria* (Figure 2).



Figure 2 Humphrey, William. (1772). *High Life below stairs, or, Mungo addressing him to my lady's maid*. Lewis Walpole Library, Connecticut.

A fellow black man playing on a musical instrument appears to be along for the fun, but the focus of the picture is Mungo and the lady’s maid. Yet the two blacks appearing in the same image symbolized a unique communal relationship between blacks.

The appearance of two blacks in the same image was extremely rare. Normally only one black appears in paintings. Unlike in *The Padlock*, which contained an asexual Mungo, this projection conveys a sexualized individual. The Mungo in the new print is seeking the affection of a lady's maid. It is not clear if Humphrey sought to convey some personal sentiment about interracial relationships, but it is quite clear that the image involves interracial characters and is sexual in nature. Mungo is not only wooing the lady's maid, but is embracing her as he places his arms around her and touching her breast. Whereas in the play Mungo had supplied the wine for the young couple, here the wine has a personal purpose designed to gain favor for Mungo. In the text below the image, the words read: "For Wine inspires us and fires us with courage, love, and joy, etc" (Humphrey, *High Life Below Stairs*, 1772). This image of Mungo reveals a sexual character uninhibited by societal norms who is actually challenging his status. Here underneath the stairs existed a servant using guile and cunning to win the affection of the lady's maid. The constructed image of Mungo remained popular and contained various messages for the larger English public.

Satirical Uses of Mungo

In the late 1760s and early 1770s, satirists utilized the image of Mungo to mock political and social corruption in England. Jeremiah Dyson, who was a MP for Weymouth, a Lord of Trade from 1764 to 1768, and a Lord of the Treasury from 1768 to 1774 acquired the nickname "Mungo" during a debate in the House of Commons on January 27, 1769, which dealt primarily on "general warrants and libels," in respect to the case of Wilkes," (Walpole, 1845, p. 315). Dyson became well-known for his opposition to Wilkes, and according to H. Walpole, Colonel Barré remarked that Dyson was synonymous with Bickerstaff's character, "who is described as employed by everybody in all odd jobs and servile offices" (Walpole, 1845, p. 315). In a discussion about freedom of speech in the House of Commons the nickname Mungo appeared in reference to Dyson, "It's Mungo here, Mungo there, Mungo every where; poor Jeremy Dyson is the hack of the house; he must bark though never so hoarse; laugh though never so angry; and talk though never so ignorant: yet a velvet cushion alleviates all his cares; it is a much softer seat than a taylor's shop-board," (Parliamentary Spy, p. 5). Multiple subsequent prints portrayed Dyson as Mungo, whose desire to further his personal interests represented imperial corruption that the Opposition perceived during George III's administration. A 1772 print depicted Lord North robbing the Irish exchequer included a representation of Dyson as Mungo, who comes from behind with his hand held out, saying, and "Don't forget poor Mungo my good Ld. N--h" (Figure 3). The constant reference to Dyson as Mungo appeared throughout British newspapers.

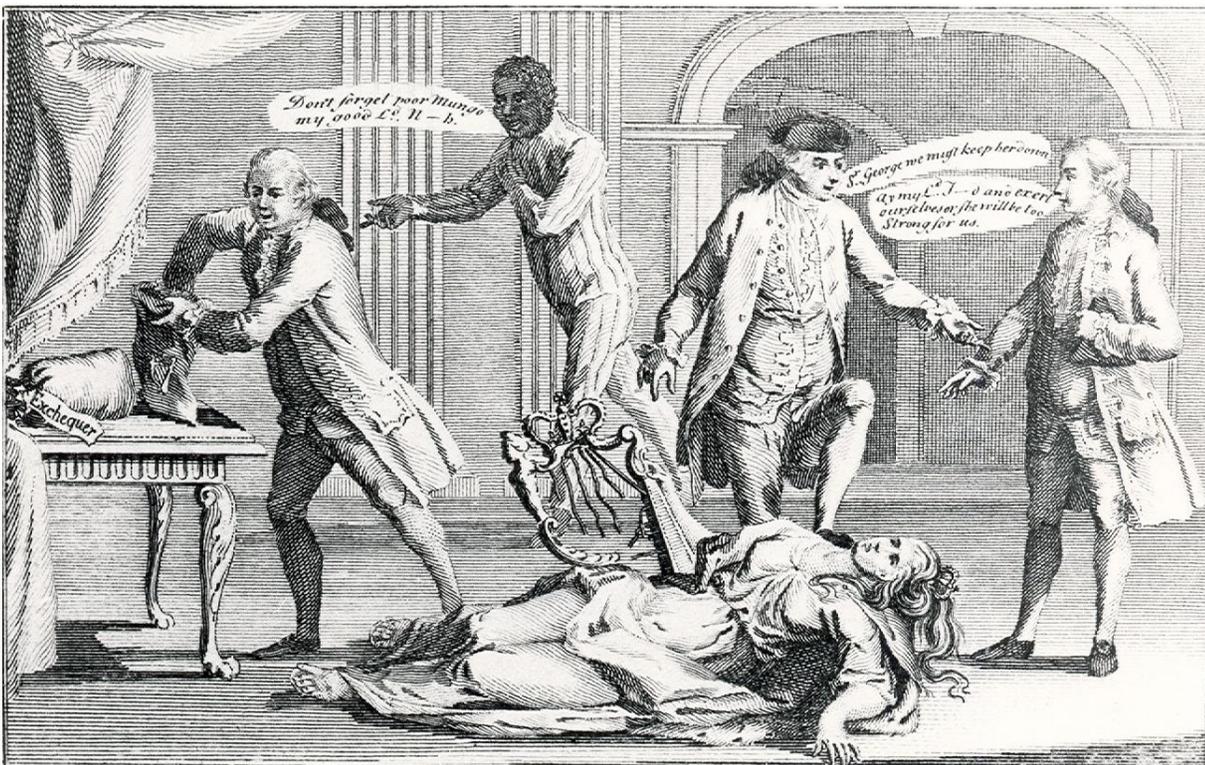


Figure 3 (Anon., *Hibernia in Distress*, (1772).

An anonymous auction of Mungo appeared in an American newspaper in the 1772. The text clearly alludes to *The Padlock* with the description of a man who does all the work and hard services. It would appear that the trope of using the character Mungo to deride political corruption is the principle satirical tool at play within the narrative. Whether or not Jeremiah Dyson is the focus remains unclear as this auction was published in an American newspaper.

The next lot raised high the expectations of the audience. It was *Mungo*.

AUCTIONEER.

Black as he is, he is very honest, for his heart shines through his face. Who'll put him in? This is not the first market he has been at, and he always *sold* well – and if he lives another *session*, it will not be the last. Buy him who will, they will not loose by him – for he is a man of *all work*, and has long been used to hard services. Poor soul he was long the political foot-ball, the game of green statesmen, and the understrappers of

understrappers – the dupe of dunces, and the butt of weathercock wits – strappado'd by this one, and bastinado'd by that one – “Say this,” said the master; and he said it. – “Do this,” said the servant; and he did it. – Poor Mungo! Some kind soul say six pence for him – He bustled long in the storm – they used him like the foul fiend, and drove him from hedge to stile, and from ditch to dank – through bogs, and fens, and fogs and foul places – now kenneled with parasites, now pillowing upon thorns. Poor Mungo! Put him in. They trod upon his heart, and well for him that it was callous, or he could never have supported it. Poor *black* man! Long he led the life of a dog, and, it was a great mercy he had neither a spark of pride or of virtue, or he would have died under the load. Foul day fair day, Mungo was the word – from morning to night, and from night to morning, it was nothing but Mungo! Mungo! Was a junto to be assembled, or an election to be carried? “Do this Mungo.” Was a lord to be bribed, or a commoner corrupted? “Do this Mungo.” Was the city to be counteracted, a job negotiated, or a question smuggled in the house? “Where are you Mungo,” An outcast from heaven, a knave of knaves, and a devil of devils, he was up, and down, everywhere. – He is now here, and would he were off my hands. “A thirteener for him,” Well said my jewels of Ireland – a thirteener for Mungo, once, twice – nobody more than a thirteener for a *great black*? Once, twice, thrice. The Irish patriots have bought him to hang him in effigy.

Hand up the next lot there, and don't ruffle his headdress. (Hon. C -----s F ---, Esq;)
(Massachusetts Spy or, Thomas Boston Journal, 1772)

The character Mungo as a symbol to challenge taxation became part of curious piece that appeared in 1769. The writer uses Mungo as an attack on taxing Americans.

For the Printer of the Public Advertiser.

Massa Press-Letter,

Can you tell poor Black what he must do, for they say the great English Mens will tax my poor Country America. Tell them I hear young Massa say, Est Modus in Rebus.

If they carry Taxers there, Mungo must seal up he Eyes

Mungo Compliments, -that's all (Public Advertiser, 1769).

Conclusion

The character Mungo illustrated a multiplicity of meanings for English and American audiences. His invented image blacks visible, comic, and sympathetic. It allowed an imagined black figure to occupy white consciousness in a myriad of ways on both sides of the Atlantic. In the enjoyment and performance of Mungo white audiences were able to utilize a fictionalized black character as a symbol for laughter, government oppression, and anti-slavery. The legacy of the character Mungo allowed him to function as a foil for race and representation in the Atlantic World.

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Illustrations

- Figure 1 Humphrey, William. (1772). *High Life below stairs, or, Mungo addressing him to my lady's maid*. Lewis Walpole Library, Connecticut.
Figure 2 Anon., *Hibernia in Distress* (1772), from the *London Magazine*, xli: 3 Books/Articles

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