Raphael Hörmann
Gesa Mackenthun (eds.)

Human Bondage in the Cultural Contact Zone

Transdisciplinary Perspectives on Slavery and Its Discourses

WAXMANN

Cultural Encounters and the Discourses of Scholarship

Edited by
Gesa Mackenthun

Volume 2

This series seeks to stimulate fresh and critical perspectives on the interpretation of phenomena of cultural contact in both transhistorical and transdisciplinary ways. It brings together the research results of the graduate school „Cultural Encounters and the Discourses of Scholarship," located at Rostock University and sponsored by the German Research Foundation (DFG). One of the concerns of the volumes published in this series is to test and explore contemporary theoretical concepts and analytical tools used for the study of intercultural relations, from antiquity to the present. Aware of significant recent changes in the ways in which other cultures are represented, and „culture" as such is defined and described, the series seeks to promote a dialogical over a monological theoretical paradigm and advocates approaches to the study of cultural alterity that are conscious of the representational character of our knowledge about other cultures. It wants to strengthen a recognition of the interdependencies between the production of knowledge about unfamiliar peoples and societies in various scholarly disciplines and ideologies of nationality, empire, and globalization. In critically investigating the analytical potential of postcolonial key terms such as „hybridity," „contact zone," and „transculturation," the series contributes to international scholarly debates in various fields oriented at finding more balanced and reciprocal ways of studying and writing about intercultural relations both past and present.

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Introduction

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Slavery in Antiquity and Modernity

Slavery – the subjection of certain human beings to a state of bondage by other, more powerful, people – has been a common social institution since ancient times. The practice of enslaving human beings has often been legitimized by claims of their inferiority or lack of humanity. Yet such discursive dehumanization was permanently counteracted by the invention of legal codes defining the social situation of slaves, which in itself signifies an implicit recognition of their humanity, however problematic. As David Brion Davis points out, this contradictory behavior with regard to the slaves' humanity – encapsulated in the reduction of slaves to the status of beasts (or even worse still, of goods) while similarly acknowledging their threat as 'domestic enemies' capable of sabotage and resistance – forms the crucial "problem of slavery." This contradiction was already expressed in Roman law in the code of Justinian,

> which ruled that slavery was the single *institution* contrary to the law of nature but sanctioned by law of nations. That is to say, slavery would not be permitted in an ideal world of perfect justice, but it was simply a fact of life that symbolized the compromises that must be made in the sinful world of reality. (Davis, "Introduction" xv; Davis's emphasis)

This reasoning would remain valid at least until the Age of Enlightenment, only to be displaced by the crude logic of racial and social determinism arising in the nineteenth century – a determinism again evoked to rationalize the highly organized genocides of the twentieth century.

This volume brings together essays on slavery and unfree labor that cover a broad range of their forms and cultural manifestations, from antiquity to the twentieth century. In addition, the individual essays emphasize the significance of cultural difference in the practice and legitimization of slavery. Bearing Davis's assertion in mind it comes as no surprise that ever since antiquity, enslaved people, most of whom (at least then) had been war captives, frequently belonged to cultures other than those of their masters.[1] The assertion of the slaves' cul-

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1   See Davis who points out that the "first and primary source of slaves in many societies was foreign prisoners of war and victims of piracy and kidnapping" (*Inhuman Bondage* 38).

tural difference and 'ambivalent humanity' culminated during the commercial mass-enslavement of Africans to help build the colonial Atlantic economy, which started in the sixteenth century. These assumptions reached their peak in perversity with the discourse of scientific racism. Having gained wide currency in the mid-nineteenth century, its legacy continued to overshadow much of the twentieth century. For example, scientific-racist discourse was subsequently employed in the United States to deny civil rights to black Americans, as well as by South Africa's *apartheid* regime to curtail the civil rights of its black, mixed and 'coloured', non-white, population. Nazi Germany also made ideological use of 'slavery-generated' racism in its attempt to exterminate the Jewish 'race', and (even more evidently) in its scheme to enslave Slavic people.

Although the essays in this volume cover a vast historical and geographical range – from unfree labor in ancient Palestine to forced labor during the Third Reich – they are united by a common concern with analyzing both the structural conditions and the human and cultural aspects of human bondage. Individual topics include the significance of spatiality and control both as elements of slave economies and of a selectively amnesiac memory culture (in the essays of Yekutieli/Cohen-Sason and Wood); the importance of subversion of and resistance to slavery (in the essays of both Marshall and Hörmann); the dialectics of slavery and the colonial culture of taste and sensibility (Gikandi); and music as a creative expression of mourning, suffering, and anger both during and after slavery (Smith). Not least through its wide historical, geographical, and thematic scope, this volume strives to raise the awareness that 'slavery' (let alone 'unfree' labor) has never been a homogeneous institution; rather a disparate one. It wants to invite the reader to discover both similarities and differences between different forms of human bondage without ahistorically and simplistically transferring knowledge from one context to another. We do believe it is important for theories to travel, but, as Edward Said has pointed out, such theoretical migrations ought to be accompanied by a critical consciousness and "responsibility" that prevent us from drawing superficial analogies (Said, "Traveling Theory" 236; 241-2; see also Bal). In bringing together scholarship from archaeology, church history, literature, musicology, history, historical geography, museum studies and other fields, this collection is dedicated to an idea of trans-disciplinarity. This notion has also informed the work of the graduate school "Cultural Encounters and the Discourses of Scholarship," which organized the 2008 Rostock symposium on which this volume is based.

Slavery and Coerced Labor in the Cultural Contact Zone

Though it ventures into antiquity and the twentieth century, this volume was inspired by the historic occasion of the bicentennial of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade by the governments of Britain (1807) and the United States

(1808). However, unlike some of the 'official' celebrations (in particular in Britain), we do not want to uncritically cast abolition and emancipation as a moral achievement of Europe's and North America's ascendant bourgeoisie. Instead, we want to place the emphasis on how marginalized cultural and social forces and groups (both non-European and European) played a central role in the overthrow of colonial slavery. As is suggested by its interplay of different socio-cultural agents, the fight against – as well as the conditions of – slavery frequently involve some form of 'cultural contact' (however unequal) between enslavers and the enslaved. Moreover, the phenomenon of slavery is a classic topic for any graduate school dealing with "cultural encounters" because, as we pointed out above, the institution of slavery is intimately tied to cultural discourses about the nature of humanity, measured over against features that are defined as nonhuman. The discourse of racism is obsessed with this concern of defining what counts as human – an obsession articulated in its elaborate taxonomies and classification schemes that meticulously distinguish 'human' from 'animal' traits. Stated more boldly, the modern discourse on racial and cultural difference, so central to philosophies of identity, may owe its very existence to the socioeconomic institution of slavery and the need for moral legitimization that it produced. This, at least, is Eric Williams's suggestive claim in *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944). As Williams asserts in his analysis of New World slavery, a "racial twist has […] been given to what is basically an economic phenomenon. Slavery was not born out of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery" (7).[2] Consequently, our assumptions for this volume are that there is no such thing as 'natural racism' and that slavery has been a major source of racial oppression, which conversely provided 'scientific' proof for the moral feasibility of human enslavement.[3]

A further characteristic of slavery (and, to a lesser degree, of coerced labor) is that it is almost invariably practiced across cultural boundaries – or, as our title suggests, within cultural "contact zones."[4] While the enslavers (or those who

2 Williams' view is affirmed by other, more recent scholars of slavery and racism. For instance Jochen Meißner, Ulrich Mücke, and Klaus Weber insist in their recent history of New World slavery that "it forms one of the roots for racism," while at the same time stressing that racism has not merely been a discourse, but also, very significantly, an extremely brutal social practice (13; editors' translation). Moreover, Christian Koller assigns to the transatlantic slave trade and New World slavery a critical role in generating modern racism (18). As David Brion Davis concludes, while before the eighteenth century we find "forms of proto-racism," which had already "flourished in the Greco-Roman world [, …] there is no evidence in antiquity or even in medieval and Renaissance Europe of the kind of fully developed racist society" that the system of plantation slavery had created in the New World (*Inhuman Bondage* 57, 58).

3 By and large the contributions in this volume follow the approach suggested by Theodor W. Allen of regarding "racial slavery as a particular form of *racial oppression*, and racial oppression as a sociogenic – rather than a phylogenic – phenomenon, homologous with gender and class oppression" (1; Allen's emphasis).

4 The term 'contact zone' was coined by Mary Louise Pratt. In her study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonial travel writing, *Imperial Eyes*, she tries to establish this term as a more 'positive', less hierarchical and more fluid, alternative to Eurocentric, colonialist terms such as 'frontier' that aim to establish a sharp dividing line between subjects

coerce other people to labor for them) aim to construct a rigid separation between themselves and their laborers, systems of coerced and unfree labor – at least to a degree – also render these boundaries more permeable and nonsensical over time. In the case of slavery the labor regime throws slave owners and slaves into a complex psychological network ruled by anxiety, deceit, and masquerade; as the paradoxical result of its dehumanizing practice it produces a growing population of ethnically and culturally ambivalent men and women. Referring to Atlantic slavery and appropriating Deleuze and Guattari's concept, Robert Young asserts that colonialism and imperialism were "not only a machine of war and administration," they were "also a desiring machine." Slavery was bent on forcing "disparate territories, histories and people to be thrust together like foreign bodies in the night. In that sense it was itself the instrument that produced its own darkest fantasy – the unlimited and ungovernable fertility of 'unnatural' unions" (Young 98). Societies practicing the economic institution of slavery were also determined in their individual and collective identity formation by the coexistence of slaves and masters and by the cultural hybridity, or fuzziness, that this coexistence inevitably produced.[5] Part of the historiography of slavery in the United States has long understood the complexities produced by this increasingly anachronistic system (see Berlin, Rebecca Scott, Sobel). Viewed in this context, theories of racial and cultural purity may be regarded (besides their more obvious function as ideological tools of domination and subjection) as nervous reactions to an increasingly confusing reality marked by psychosocial symbiosis and biological mixing.

Embattled Historiography: 'Quantitative' versus 'Narrative' Approaches to Transatlantic Slavery

Next to stressing the fact of cultural difference in socioeconomic systems of human bondage, the present volume also invites reflections on the relationship between slavery and/or coerced labor and scientific and scholarly discourses. Within the historical study of systems of unfree labor, hardly any field has been

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from different cultures: "'contact zone' is an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect. By using the term 'contact,' I am to foreground the interactive, improvisational dimension of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination. A 'contact' perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonizers and the colonized […] not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power" (7). As has since been suggested, however, Pratt's notion of 'contact zone' risks downplaying the actual and symbolical violence involved in colonial relations (see, for example, Frank 10).

5   In the first volume of this series the editors suggested the use of the term "fuzziness" as a more neutral alternative to the widely used but semantically overcharged term "hybridity" (Juterczenka and Mackenthun, "Introduction" 11-6).

as ideologically embattled as slavery, especially transatlantic slavery. Therefore it is ideally suited to explain what we mean by the term 'discourses of scholarship', which constitutes, besides 'cultural encounters', the focus of the Rostock graduate school. While most individual studies, including the ones in this collection, usually employ an eclectic mix of different approaches, the academic scholarship on transatlantic slavery can schematically be divided between two opposed theoretical camps: first, what may be called the 'humanist and narrative historians' who emphasize the human experience of slavery and the slave trade and whose focus is frequently the gradual abolition of slavery; and, second, the 'quantification historians' who take a statistical and macrohistorical approach and avoid the human aspect, which they associate with a lack of critical distance. The existence of the two opposing schools of slavery scholarship can be traced back to the 1960s when some scholars incorporated the moral outrage they shared with the protagonists of the Civil Rights and Third World resistance movements into their scholarship, while others sought to obtain a degree of objectivity inspired by the methods of economic history, whose statistical practices they borrowed. Other slavery historians and historians of colonialism were additionally influenced by the pervasive antihumanism of structuralism – itself in part a response to the predominance of the 'hard sciences'. The two approaches may be exemplified by the widely influential 'humanist' study *Black Cargoes* by Daniel Mannix and Malcolm Cowley (1962) on the one hand and by Philip Curtin's similarly authoritative *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (1969) on the other. While Mannix and Cowley, later followed by scholars like James Walvin in *Black Ivory* (1992) and Hugh Thomas in *The Slave Trade* (1997), sought to produce a sense of the 'culture' of slavery by presenting long quotations from original sources such as the diaries of the slave ship captain John Newton or the slave ship surgeon Alexander Falconbridge, quantification historians like Curtin, Herbert Klein, and David Eltis concentrated on numerical and macrohistorical aspects of the slave trade and filled their books with statistical data culled from the surviving trade records.

Herbert Klein's essay "Economic Aspects of the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Slave Trade" (1990) is a classic example of this latter approach. Its overall implication is that the slave trade was not as horrendous as previous studies of the Mannix/Cowley kind had asserted. Klein uses the power of numbers and economic law to substantiate his point. Viewing the slave trade from a macrohistorical perspective, he contends that its contribution to the Atlantic economic system and to the rise of industrialism in Europe was much less important than commonly assumed. He promises "a study of such questions as the relative importance of the trade in African slaves within the total movement of goods and services across international frontiers," of "the mechanics of the trade in terms of goods exchanged and routes developed," as well as of the demographic effects of the shipment of this "unique commodity" (287). Klein furthermore argues that the Atlantic slave trade, because it "initially fitted into traditional trading networks [...] was but an extension of" existing African trade markets (289), and that the

Africans' demand for European consumer goods virtually "forced them and their European contacts to turn more heavily toward shipments of slaves" in the eighteenth century (290).

An undeniable advantage of the macrohistorical method is that it shows the global economic network of which the slave trade formed merely one part. Yet Klein's ostensibly dispassionate language hides a distinctly ideological agenda. The purportedly value-free terminology of macrohistory allows Klein to refer to African slaves as "goods" and "commodities" – a language that reiterates that of the slave traders themselves: the struggle for abolition had centered around the question that Klein's economic language conceals: of whether slaves had the legal status of goods or of human beings. In other words, the antihumanist language of macrohistory in this case returns to a preemancipation terminology that dehumanizes human beings. This stance reappears in Klein's assertion that the slave traders were "forced" into their practice by economic necessity – an argument that denies the possibility of human agency (e.g., interest, desire, greed) and discounts the moral power behind the struggle for abolition – which is never mentioned in Klein's essay and only occupies about four pages in his longer study, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (1999). Klein's historical logic, it seems, is informed by a sense of history as a continuum determined exclusively by long-term economic laws and forces beyond individual control. His claim to scientific objectivity is coupled with the claim that black scholars writing in the vein of W. E. B. DuBois and, more recently, Paul Gilroy, were unable to adequately recount the history of slavery and the slave trade because they were too emotionally involved to give cool-headed accounts of it.[6]

Perhaps the most reasonable part of Klein's refutation of what he calls the "limited and highly emotional accounts" of scholars like Mannix and Cowley is his discussion of the mortality on slave ships. Against the "astronomical" mortality rates given by the "emotional" historians, Klein offers a "theoretical argument" of why the mortality rate must have been much lower: the point is that no sensible slave ship captain would risk such high rates because it would mean a considerable loss of income. The same imputation of economic rationality to the slave ship captains (a rationality that strangely resembles that of Klein himself) serves Klein in denying a correlation between the packing density of slaves and the mortality rate ("Economic Aspects" 303-4). Having severely downplayed the inhuman and criminal aspects of the slave trade – a practice that various international conventions had outlawed since the end of the eighteenth century – Klein's disclaimers that "slaves were [not] traveling in luxury" and that even a death rate of five percent would be regarded as "epidemic" if it took place among eighteenth-century French peasants seem well-placed (304, 305). Yet, such qualifications can hardly neutralize the overall apologetic tone of the essay – which refers to slaves as "migrants," their treatment on board as part of a "daily hygiene" and "care of the

6   This opinion was personally conveyed by Herbert Klein to Gesa Mackenthun during a conference in 1999.

sick," and which puts the failure of American slave populations to increase down to the advanced age of African women who had "lost some potential reproductive years" (305, 307). Klein's euphemistic language, far from transporting an 'objective' image of the slave trade, suggests that the Middle Passage, owing to "experienced and efficient captains" (306), resembled cruises on hospital ships.

Klein's revisionist essay, discussed here in some detail to illustrate the approach and the 'scientific' language of the quantification school, is implicated in a crudely materialist theory of history that discounts the impact of both human psychology and of 'culture' on historical action ('culture' here not limited to what Gikandi in this volume calls the "culture of taste" but including, for example, racial theories of cultural superiority, the discourse of Christian proselytizing, and ideological conceptions of plantation life in terms of romantic pastoralism). With its refusal to integrate its economic findings into a wider understanding of the sociocultural system of Atlantic slavery, Klein's essay amounts to a polemic against the similarly selective methods of the 'culturalist' historians. Its dispassionate body count suggests that bodies don't count in a 'rational', i.e. 'scientific', historical scholarship – least of all bodies in pain.

The quantification school's disregard for psychology and the whole field of representation in the name of scientific objectivity is in radical contrast to our second example: Barry Unsworth's fictional reinvention of a slave ship voyage in his Booker Prize-winning novel *Sacred Hunger* (1992). In a pivotal scene, the protagonist and moral conscience of the novel, the British surgeon Matthew Paris, is observing the branding of a slave. Seeing how the hot branding iron is applied to the skin of the man, Paris suddenly recalls his student days and his assistance at dissections:

> Almost, for a moment, even now, it seemed that he might find some retreat in the memory of those days, the intent circle of students clustered round the table in the lamplight, the precise and somehow stealthy approach of the knife to the cadaver. Faces too, there were, in this present circle, which showed signs of distress, like those novice anatomists of long ago. (211)

What recalls him from his memory of the anatomy lesson to the deck of the slave ship is the slave's outcry of pain. As the professional slavers resume their routine of swapping slaves for muskets, Paris ponders that

> it was death of course that made the difference. You can work your will on a dead body. Those laid out for dissection had been men and women dying destitute, stolen from paupers' graves, or criminals cut down from the gallows, with no rights whatsoever over the disposal of themselves in death. And in life? As he stood there the distinction grew blurred in his mind. (211-12)

The passage radically rewrites the body counts of the quantification school. Unlike the British poor, who may have enjoyed some degree of human dignity – at least in the Christian moral sense – while alive, African slaves are by definition caught in a state of what Orlando Patterson called "social death." For Unsworth, as for his humanistic protagonist, it is the individual body that counts, whether dead or alive, and not the precise number of slaves transported or drowned or otherwise killed on the way to America. With its historical accuracy and psychological sensibility, Unsworth's novel fills the gaps between Klein's numbers – to a point where it renders perverse the historians' debates about the effects of tight or loose packing on slave mortality.

But the passage also shows the psychological processes by which the human mind familiarizes and domesticates a terrible event, as well as the process by which representation establishes a distance from the slave's suffering. Because the scene continues with Paris glancing up at a shipmate who is keeping lookout in the cross-trees, and he wonders how "from so high above what must this business seem like." The sailor in the foremast is

> too far away to smell the scorched flesh. A brief contortion of the face, which might have betokened laughter or even merely dazzlement. A cry thinned out to a voice of the wind [...] From the perspective of the cross-trees inexplicable, unless you knew. From the office where his uncle sat [in Liverpool] even the mystery was gone from it, reduced to an entry in a ledger. (212)

The sailor's elevated perception of the scene is one step further removed from that of Matthew Paris. Lacking both auditory and olfactory evidence, the sailor in the cross-trees can only read the event insufficiently. Paris' own previous mental move to escape the horror of the scene by returning to safer memories of the violation of dead bodies in the service of medical science gives way to an ambivalent and silent spectacle (are the African's features twisting in pain or in mirth?). At the end of this series of removals from the actual experience of physical pain, Unsworth places the image of the ship owner making an entry of his 'commodity' in a ledger – from where it will become one of the many pieces of statistical data that form the empirical basis for historians like Herbert Klein.

Unsworth's fictional reinvention of the slave trade gives a sense of the discursive process by which the body in pain becomes a 'blank fact' in the historical record. The link established between the suffering slave and the dissection scene subtly evokes the interconnections of seemingly disparate realms of cultural practice – slavery and medical science. His dramatization of the mental processes of amnesiac displacement and acoustic misapprehension reinforces Elaine Scarry's concern about physical pain posing the ultimate challenge to representation (3-19, passim).[7] As Unsworth's example suggests, 'science', with its promise of a disin-

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7   See also Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others.*

terested intellectual stance, offers various possibilities for escaping from a reality too unpleasant to bear – whether by way of metaphor or by way of method.

As our comparison shows, the historical scholarship of slavery was confronted with the prominence of the topic of the pain and suffering inflicted upon African slaves that has been addressed by works of literature, especially since the publication of Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* (1987), with its cryptic evocation of the slave ship experience through the collective voice of a baby ghost, and the subsequent attention given to the topic in other postcolonial works of fiction (by Caryl Phillips, Fred d'Aguiar, Charles Johnson, Michelle Cliff, David Dabydeen, and John Edgar Wideman, to name a few anglophone writers). Established historical scholarship was also challenged by the emergence first of Black Studies in the United States and Britain and then the rise of Black Atlantic Studies in the wake of Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* (1993), which argues for a re-centering of Atlantic Studies on the socioeconomic axis of the slave trade and the movements of black people throughout the Atlantic world – "not only as commodities but engaged in various struggles for emancipation, autonomy, and citizenship." Viewed from this perspective, the study of the Black Atlantic entails a reexamination of "nationality, location, identity, and historical memory" (Gilroy 16). Gilroy recommends the slave ship as a metaphor for rethinking modernity itself "via the history of the black Atlantic and the African diaspora into the western hemisphere" (17).[8] A host of studies has followed since, the best of which combine the empirical knowledge gained through the work of the quantification historians with the dramatic expertise of the narrative approach. Seeking to avoid what Marcus Rediker, quoting Derek Sayer, calls the "violence of abstraction" (*Slave Ship* 12), they neither succumb to the temptation of populist storytelling. The former opposition between the statistical and the humanist approach is currently overcome in studies employing the methods of ethnography and *petite histoire*.[9] Examples are Marcus Rediker's *The Slave Ship. A Human History* (2007), which he calls "an ethnography of the slave ship" (12), or Madge Dresser's *Slavery Obscured* (2001/2007), which explores the links between gentrification and slave-based wealth in Bristol.

Capitalism and Slavery Revisited: The Stakes of the 'Abolition/ Emancipation Debate'

While Dresser's book enlarges on the well-known thesis, connected with Eric Williams's *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), that the emergence of industrial capitalism in the eighteenth century received critical funding from the slave-based

8 For a recent collection that brings together over sixty years of scholarship on transatlantic slavery and thus illustrates the historical development here sketched, see Laurent Dubois and Julius S. Scott.

9 This is a methodology originating with the French *nouvelle histoire* that combines historiographical methods with literary techniques of representation.

Atlantic economy, the second part of Williams's thesis is at the heart of recent reevaluations of the history of abolition and emancipation: Williams claims that the abolition of slavery was not predominantly the result of political antislavery mobilization but of the economic transformation – what he calls the 'maturation' – of the industrial capitalism that the slave trade had at first helped to establish. Both these arguments, as Williams emphasizes, are strictly economic in nature.[10] Although he gives a detailed account of the abolitionist movement, he ultimately neglects what Rediker calls the "human history" of slavery in favor of a history of economic forces.

Yet, even from a purely economic perspective, Williams's thesis has been severely criticized. With the publication of Seymour Drescher's *Econocide* in 1977, Williams's argument that slavery had become an increasingly anachronistic socioeconomic system already in decline when it was abolished received a decisive blow. Backed up by an impressive array of economic data (32 tables, 9 figures and a 21-page appendix on the development of the trade in sugar, coffee, and slaves during the age of abolition and emancipation), Drescher illustrates that both the slave trade and plantation slavery – far from being an economic system in decline – had been extremely lucrative and profitable right up to their respective ends. Furthermore, he argues, both abolition and emancipation – at least in the short run – had disastrous consequences for the British economy. In short, as the book's provocative title suggests, abolition and emancipation for Britain amounted to an economic suicide; a pointed thesis that leaves many questions unanswered, amongst them how it was then possible for Britain to rapidly become – in the course of the nineteenth century – not only the world's leading imperialist power but also its largest economy. For instance, Drescher's thesis largely ignores how in the late eighteenth century, partly in response to American independence and revolutionary events that shook the Caribbean during the age of the French Revolution, the vanguard of the British mercantile and industrial bourgeoisie increasingly redirected its attention from the Americas and the West Indies (whose economic future seemed increasingly precarious with the antislavery movement gaining momentum) to the new global economic frontier in India and South East Asia.[11] In his attempt to counter William's pronounced materialist explanations for the ending of the slave trade and plantation slavery Drescher goes from one extreme to the other: his insistence on the 'moral agency'

10 As Williams outlines in the preface, his is a Marxist "economic study of the role of Negro slavery and the slave trade in providing the capital which financed the Industrial Revolution in England and of mature industrial capitalism in destroying the slave system" (vii).

11 A contemporary observer, the British radical John Thelwall, presciently drew attention to this shifting colonial frontier as early as 1795 when he suggested that the East India Company and "their Nabobs [who] are well represented in the Commons' House of Parliament" were about to overtake – at least in political if not yet in economic influence – the increasingly beleaguered lobby of "the West India monopolist[s]" (297). Even the seemingly entirely high-minded abolitionist campaign to boycott West Indian 'slavery-tainted' sugar in favor of East Indian sugar produced by 'free' laborers becomes a slightly less moral affair if one considers that some of the abolitionists had business interests in India.

of both the British bourgeoisie and the masses as the decisive factors in ending the slave trade (1807), as well as subsequently slavery (1834/38), and his stress on the alleged immense economic sacrifice can only be termed an idealist version of history.[12]

Not only was the British bourgeoisie less idealist than Drescher would have us believe, but it also was much more resilient and innovative in its response to the economic challenges posed by abolition and emancipation than his polemic acknowledges. From a theoretical perspective, Drescher ignores the bourgeoisie's ability to turn any short economic crisis into a long-term economic advantage for some of its members. Perhaps most importantly, the enthusiastic celebration of abolition and emancipation tends to obscure how coerced forms of labor (such as indentureship, forced labor and penal servitude, not to mention the increased incarceration of paupers in workhouses in the 1830s in Britain) persisted after the ending of transatlantic chattel slavery (see the essays by Jennings and Mohabir in this volume). Although it may amount to a truism one must stress the paradox that despite the overall victory of the *ideology* of free labor, actual *forms* of unfree labor have persisted globally up to the present day.

Slave Resistance and the Overthrow of Transatlantic Slavery

Whatever the shortcomings of Eric Williams's thesis on abolition and emancipation might be, a principal merit of his work has been that it has decisively shattered the up until then dominant myth about the ending of transatlantic slavery: that it had been the sole achievement of a few high-minded and unselfish white male Europeans who were led by the British abolitionists, Europe's humanistic vanguard.[13] Even Drescher was unable to uphold this discredited thesis in its 'strong' form, arguing instead that it was the collective action of the British people – in particular the working classes, women, etc., that is, the majority of the population barred from official life – that constituted the decisive force behind the abolition movement. As he maintains in his lecture series *Capitalism*

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12 As Drescher concludes in his study of British emancipation and its aftermath, *The Mighty Experiment*: "It is easier to dismiss the impact of British persistence against the grain of economic interest than it is to imagine the relationship of coercion to freedom without it. A nation with a less ingrained commitment to antislavery as a matter of national honor might well have cut its losses in the midcentury crisis. […] This was not because the emancipation was a practical economic success and certainly not because it was based on verifiable economic theory – far from it" (236).

13 Rather surprisingly, however, David Brion Davis has – at least to a certain degree – resurrected this thesis of the British abolition of slavery being solely motivated by humanitarianism. A shining example of how ethics won over material interest, it constitutes for Davis proof of "moral progress" in history (*Inhuman Bondage* 239). Dismissing Williams's "cynicism" (249), Davis argues that "the history of British antislavery served as a paradigm of how enlightened liberals and reformers struggled in one stage after another to overcome the forces of greed, tyranny, and the most *unambiguous* symbol of man's inhumanity to man" (239; Davis's emphasis).

and Antislavery (1986) (which in its title announces Drescher's claim to overturn Williams's assertions made in *Capitalism and Slavery*), both the British and the American *people* and not their *elites* had been the true agents in abolishing slavery.[14] While generally supportive of Drescher's emphasis on the significance of popular reform movements, Robin Blackburn in *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery* contends that abolition and emancipation only succeeded because they were the least controversial reforms that could be undertaken "in a deeply conservative political system" (295).

Perhaps even more dubiously, Drescher seriously downplays the agency of slaves when he insists that "neither masters nor slaves" (*Capitalism and Antislavery* 164) but subaltern British social groups were the decisive agents in overthrowing the slave trade and slavery. As Gelien Matthews has shown, Caribbean slave revolts even had a major *direct* impact on British abolitionism. Furthermore, Drescher's apotheosis of British abolitionism fails to properly acknowledge that it was the rebellious slaves in the French colony in Saint-Domingue who forced the French revolutionary government to – almost instantly – emancipate the slaves in all its territories in 1794, forty years before Britain would take this step in 1834.

Multiple Forms of Slave Resistance

Slave resistance was by no means limited to New World plantation and chattel slavery. Although by now it has almost become a truism to state that wherever there was slavery there was resistance, it is worth recalling just a few historical instances to illustrate how ubiquitous slave revolts actually were. They occurred long before the Early Modern Period and the age of plantation slavery. The Spartacus Revolt in ancient Rome (73-1 BC), which involved tens of thousands of slaves,[15] and the so-called "Zanj Revolt" (869-83), a decade-long struggle of African slaves in the region of today's Iraq to gain their freedom, are but two of the largest premodern acts of armed slave resistance. But slave revolts were only the most spectacular (as well as the bloodiest) expression of slave resistance. It came in many different forms and shapes, including (but not limited to) feigned stupidity, insolence, dragging one's feet, abortion, self-mutilation, and sabotage as well as armed rebellion. As several contributions to this volume also illustrate, it ran the whole gamut: from seemingly trivial examples (such as stealing the mas-

14 He writes, for example: "One institution of millennial durability was mastered by a collective effort on both sides of the Atlantic. On a planetary scale abolition entailed a global change over more than a century. The decisive groups were neither masters nor slaves. Many were even outsiders by economic status or gender to their own electoral system. In the political process most members of the Parliamentary elite were reacting to, not initiating, change. Viewed in the long run Mill and Tocqueville were more realistic than naive in attributing British emancipation to the power of public opinion, just as Marx was more realistic than naive in ultimately attributing American emancipation to 'ordinary people' rather than to a single hero" (*Capitalism and Antislavery* 164).

15 For a study that investigates slave resistance in the Roman world up to the Spartacus Revolt, see Bradley.

ter's luxury goods, as Marcus Wood mentions), through persistent everyday 'cultural' and 'religious' resistance that harbored the potential to trigger rebellions (as Emily Marshall's analysis of Afro-Caribbean trickster tales and religion as means of resistance suggests), through religiously motivated attacks on slave holders (see Jennifer Glancy's account of the actions of a mysterious early Christian sect in North Africa), to one of the most exceptional forms of armed slave resistance in history, the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), whose treatment in the contemporary British discourse is here investigated by Raphael Hörmann. While resistance thus constitutes both a fundamental element in slavery studies as well as having been a key factor in overcoming slavery, one needs to be careful to clearly distinguish between its various manifestations and steer clear of lumping them all together indiscriminately. As James Walvin warns, "the concept of slave resistance can be misleading, if only because it embraces a wide range of responses by the slaves to the world around them" (*Short History* 113).

Slave resistance, in any form, rarely featured in historical scholarship before the mid-twentieth century. In fact, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot has claimed, the arguably most influential act of slave resistance in history, the Haitian Revolution, was largely silenced by Western historians (at least until the 1970s) in their accounts both of the overthrow of slavery and the Age of Revolution. Hence, when in 1938 the Afro-Trinidadian scholar and anti-colonial activist C.L.R James (who tellingly came from outside academia) in his groundbreaking Marxist account of the Haitian Revolution, *The Black Jacobins*, extolled the indispensable role of armed slave resistance in the fall of New World slavery, this was an exception that ran against the grain of most established scholarship. Only a few radical scholars (largely of Afro-Caribbean origin) were ready to follow him.[16] It was only after Eugene Genovese's 1979 study of New World slave revolts that mainstream historians seriously began to consider the fundamental impact that slave revolts had on the overthrow of slavery. Ever since these pioneering works, the Western perception of slaves has been gradually but substantially changing: in scholarly opinion, slaves have gradually mutated from helpless, passive victims, who were utterly dependent on European humanitarian intervention on their behalf, to powerful agents in their own struggle for liberation. As C. L. R. James recalls in the foreword to the second edition of *Black Jacobins* in 1980, his motivation behind writing the book in 1938 was precisely to change the wide-

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16 In chapter 12 of *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), which Williams added after the manuscript had already been accepted by the University of South Carolina Press, he also emphasizes the agency of slaves in overthrowing slavery. He asserts that "the most powerful and dynamic social force in the colonies was the slave himself," a fact that most scholars have "studiously ignored, as if the slaves when they became instruments of production, passed for men only in the catalogue" (201–2). The slaves and their actions were essential in overcoming their alienation and dehumanization, Williams suggests in a Marxist-humanist vein, thus clearly eschewing here the orthodox Marxist economic determinism that he has widely been accused of. As Williams further maintains, armed slave resistance was "one road to freedom," with the "successful slave revolt in Saint-Domingue [forming] a landmark in the history of slavery in the New World" (202).

spread notion of Africans as mere victims, as mere *objects* of violence. Instead, he wanted to represent them as *subjects* in their fight for freedom, during which they were themselves enacting world historic change (xv).

As well as insisting on the subjectivity and agency of slaves, recent studies also emphasize the transnational, transcultural, and "rhizomorphic" (i.e. branched and twisted) structure of slave resistance, as Gilroy terms it (4). The Haitian slave revolt, for example, becomes less of an exception when regarded in line with the 'First Maroon War' (1666-1739) in Jamaica, which ended with the British granting Blacks partial independence and their own territory; the 1712 slave uprising in New York City (the largest in the USA); the eighteenth-century Maroon Wars in Surinam and elsewhere; the massive 1763 slave uprising in the Dutch colony of Berbice; the large-scale revolts in the British colonies of Barbados (1816) and Demerara (1823); and, shortly before the signing of the British bill of emancipation, the so-called 'Baptist War' or 'Great Jamaican Slave Revolt' (1831-32), which decisively helped to tip the balance toward emancipation in the British Empire.[17] It also coincided with Nat Turner's Rebellion, which caused "terror and mayhem" in the Southern United States for many months following (Aptheker 57, passim). Recent scholarship focussing on exploring the communications networks of the Black Atlantic world has shown an elaborate information network between the slave communities of the Caribbean and North America as well as across the Atlantic (e.g., Julius Scott, "Common Wind" and "Afro-American Sailors"; Linebaugh and Rediker; Bolster, chapter 1; Gilroy, chapter 1).[18] This dimension has been particularly foregrounded in newer scholarship on slave resistance, ranging from the investigation of specific African political ideology or military tactics to the analysis of transcultural social-religious practices such as Voodoo or Voudun and narratives of resistance as sites of slave agency (see Emily Marshall's contribution to this volume). The syncretic cultural-social nature of American slave resistance provides one key argument for our proposition that slave societies and slavery – as well as the resistance against them – are located within more or less complex and multilingual cultural contact zones.

17 The definitive account of this revolt still remains the chapter "The Baptist War" in Mary Turner's study of the final fifty years of Jamaican slave society (148-78). For a recent book that tries to revise Turner's views on Jamaican slave society and the Baptist War, see Petley.

18 Eugene Genovese also identifies African influences in the way the revolts were orchestrated. He argues that the early American slave revolts and the Maroons harked back to their respective African cultural traditions when mounting their resistance: "Throughout the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth century, the numerous slave revolts followed a generally restorationist course. The various slave populations with their discrete African and Afro-American cultures rose against the oppression of their European and white-creole masters. In doing so they drew upon their own cultural identities and collective commitments to reject oppression and to advance alternative social norms. When their path did not lead to bloody defeat and heroic sacrifice of life, it led to a withdrawal from colonial society and the establishment of maroon societies" (xvii–xix).

The Dialectics of Slavery and Modernity

In addition to modern scholarship's growing awareness of African agency within the Atlantic system, we can observe an increasing recognition of the ways in which the institution of slavery was obscured in the metropolises of the Atlantic-centered world system. Furthermore, studies have emerged of the strategies of evasion and disguise used by the representatives of a socioeconomic practice that was increasingly perceived as morally reprehensible if not outright illegal (see Marika Sherwood for England, Ernest Obadele-Starks and Gerald Horne for America).[19] One result of this new scholarship, inspired by a knowledge of the complexity and ambivalence of representation and bent on exploring the complex dialectics between slavery and modernity, is Ian Baucom's book *Specters of the Atlantic* (2005), which tackles the Atlantic slave-based system as an essential element in the unfolding of Atlantic economic and cultural modernity (for a similar approach in this volume, see the essay by Simon Gikandi). Baucom identifies financial speculation and risk as the 'logic' of the Atlantic economy and reads historical slave ship cases through the lens of theories by Benjamin, Derrida and Agamben.[20] The economic-cultural deep-structure described in Baucom's study eerily resembles that of our contemporary situation of international financial-economic collapse. Conversely, it is the contemporary experience of global speculative and increasingly reckless 'predator capitalism' that informs our historical perspective and makes us look for earlier manifestations of this practice. All of this is to say that the study and analysis of the slave-based Atlantic system is still very relevant to us: in some fundamental ways, we still live in the world that emerged in the eighteenth century.

Although Atlantic slavery is a significant focus of this volume, other – earlier and later – forms of human bondage will also be explored, from Roman labor camps in Palestine, early forms of slavery in Christian antiquity, and Christian and Muslim forms of bondage in the early modern Mediterranean, to Nazi labor camps in Europe. Arguably the so-called Black Atlantic is not the only cultural-historical constellation that could and should be viewed as what Gilroy (somewhat problematically) called the 'counterculture of modernity'.[21] Without denying the cultural productivity of slave culture – its power to transform the traumatic experience of exploitation and oppression into creative, and cathartic, energy (see the essays by Thérèse Smith on the legacy of slavery in African American music and by Emily Marshall on Afro-Caribbean trickster tales), we also believe it nec-

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19 For a study of the impact of this invisibility in early national and antebellum American literature, see Mackenthun 2004.

20 On the emergence of the insurance business in connection with the transatlantic slave trade, see also Armstrong.

21 We regard the concept as problematic because it foregrounds the productive and creative effects of the slave-based Atlantic system in studying manifestations of cultural survival. Gilroy's perspective, it will be remembered, is inspired by the 'rhizomorphic' movements of the 'counterculture' of present day global music.

essary to retain an understanding of the dialectics between economies based on the exploitation of human labor and the so-called cultural and scientific 'achievements' of modernity. The 'Dialectic' of the Enlightenment – modernity's apparent paradox between the demand for political freedom and the creation of highly rationalized systems of oppression – would fully manifest itself in the totalitarianism and mass culture of the twentieth century so ably analyzed by Horkheimer and Adorno. The same dialectic is already at work in the eighteenth-century system of plantation slavery whose inherent violence is sublimated into theories of aesthetic freedom and practices of conspicuous consumption.[22]

Apart from having to navigate the 'ethical minefield' that the academic treatment of slavery and human bondage constitutes, all essays in this volume struggle, in one way or another, with the fragmented state of the empirical source material. This poses an even greater challenge for those essays dealing with antiquity or with slavery-based cultures less well documented than those of colonial Europe and America. Both the 'humanist' and the 'quantification' approach have to come to terms with the meagerness of the historical record – perhaps best evidenced in our volume in the essays by Yekutieli and Cohen-Sason, Glancy, and Davis. Yet in most other cases also, scholars are faced with an absence of survivors' records; even in respect to the well researched transatlantic slave trade, sources consist largely of non-narrative documents such as ships logs, merchant ledgers, and the like. Those personal records that do exist, whether written by slavers, abolitionists, or former slaves, must be treated with care and are often dismissed as 'impure' sources by a positivistic logic of research. However, as Marcus Wood's essay in this collection demonstrates, gaps in the record may also be the result of an amnesiac and selective memory culture. Those of us interested in reconstructing the experience of slavery from the point of view of the slaves themselves are inevitably forced to combine empirical findings with a fair amount of guesswork. Especially in this aspect of his or her work, the student of slavery runs the risk of 'translating' knowledge about better explored systems of slavery to other, less well documented ones. The danger of mistranslation similarly arises when comparing 'classical' forms of slavery in the Atlantic world to the forced labor practiced during the Third Reich or to different forms of 'neo-bondage' today (including the sexual coercion and exploitation referred to as "trafficking"). In provoking the reader to perform these acts of critical comparison, we hope that this volume will contribute to an understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon of slavery and counteract a common tendency to downplay both its intricacies and the interrelationship between slavery and other cultural, philosophical, religious, and sociopolitical concepts and phenomena, such as class, economics, racism, faith, literature, oral traditions, and the visual arts. By embedding the

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22 Adorno and Horkheimer's failure to engage with slavery in their profound analysis of the paradoxes that lie at the heart of the Enlightenment is symptomatic of the ongoing, widespread suppression of these bleak origins of modern bourgeois thought and culture, both in academic and public discourse.

changing forms of human bondage and coerced labor in their shifting sociocultural contexts over time, this volume aims to represent slavery and the struggle against it as an ongoing social and historical process, a process that shows us the worst manifestations of human exploitation and alienation, but also some of the most heroic attempts to combat oppression.

Chapter Summaries

The essays in this volume are structured chronologically, covering a timeframe stretching from antiquity to the twentieth century. In chapter 1 *Yuval Yekutieli* and *Eliyahu Cohen-Sason* suggest that surveillance of unfree laborers was already being practiced in ancient times. Based on archaeological evidence from two excavation sites – one a late Bronze Age mining complex in the southern Negev Desert and the other a stone quarry in the Judean Desert, dating from the Roman period – they try to reconstruct, with the help of methods from landscape archaeology, how surveillance systems established by imperial powers might have concretely operated. Due to a scarcity of hard evidence, the authors stop short of calling the laborers "slaves," but they nevertheless suggest that these laborers could not have been free workers. They support their claim by pointing to the existence of extensive surveillance systems that the authors reconstruct at both sites. In the case of the older and larger mining complex, they reach the conclusion that the workers had been watched almost constantly from numerous watchtowers and posts wherever they were on the site. By contrast, the laborers could never discern with any certainty whether any of these observation stations were manned or not. Thus, the authors suggest, this large-scale complex constituted a "landscape of total control." As Yekutieli and Cohen-Sason argue, surveillance was even more total with respect to the much smaller Roman quarry, where the workers could be observed from a single lookout post, again without being able to see their watchers. In a final step, they relate these ancient systems of surveillance to modern ones such as Jeremy Bentham's plan for a 'Panopticon' (1785) (famously analyzed by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*), or even CCTV surveillance, which is now ubiquitous in many countries. Without disregarding the huge historical distance and the important differences between these systems of surveillance, their findings invite us to reconsider Foucault's contention that elaborate systems of surveillance only emerged with the Enlightenment.

In Chapter 2 *Jennifer A. Glancy* addresses an under-researched subject: the attitudes towards and the practice of slavery among early Christians in late antiquity. While from a modern perspective, the New Testament, with its injunction of brotherly and sisterly love and its insistence on the equality of all humans before God, appears to directly challenge slavery, Glancy proves that this view was definitely not shared by most early Christians. Drawing upon Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the *habitus*, and particularly on Linda Martin Alcoff's adaptation of it,

she argues that slavery was such a strongly (even physically) embodied social practice in late antiquity that it was almost impossible to evade. Her essay provides ample evidence for the existence of slavery among early Christians, including the enslavement of fellow Christians, and it traces the ethical justifications of slavery by some of the Church Fathers, including St. Augustine. Towards the end of her essay, however, Glancy shifts her attention to fringe groups among the early Christians in Asia Minor and North Africa, who seem to have repudiated slavery. This rejection, she argues, went hand in hand with their dismissal of other established social norms, manifesting itself in a carnivalesque parody of the established habitus (in, for example, clothing and sexual demeanor) taken to such an extent that their detractors feared a general inversion of the ruling social order and hierarchies. Glancy's examples of these groups living on the margins of the Roman Empire suggest a potential connection between their oppositional behavior and divergent attitudes concerning slavery and their positions within a cultural contact zone.

In chapter 3, *Robert Davis* explores the significance of slavery in the Christian-Muslim contact zone in the Mediterranean in the period between 1500 and c. 1750. Davis argues that both the Christian Spanish Hapsburg empire (as well as some independent Italian states such as Venice) and the North African Muslim states enslaved each others' citizens not merely for economic or political reasons but also as part of the ongoing "holy war" between the two religions. He shows, on the basis of personal records from Christian merchants, clergymen and former slaves, that Christian slaves were most frequently employed as agricultural laborers in the state of Algiers. The predominance of 'faith' as a single motivation for enslaving nonbelievers may elicit some doubt, since we also know that Christians were often kept for a ransom as the only way for Muslim states to participate in the Christian-dominated Mediterranean commerce (Wolf 294-5; Kitzen). Racial difference seems to have played a certain part, too (Crowley 81). Nevertheless, Davis's essay warns us about assuming that 'race' was the predominant ideological justification of early modern Mediterranean slavery. Moreover, bondage and forced labor, as he suggests, were a common element of the early modern Mediterranean on both sides of the religious divide.

Simon Gikandi's essay (chapter 4) also takes its departure in the early modern period, in the Dutch Golden Age, but in order to carry us into the paradoxes of modernity's culture of taste. The rise of conspicuous consumption in the wake of Atlantic capitalism – whether in the form of a transformed culinary culture now dominated by coffee, sugar, and tea, or by the building of large country mansions in the hinterland of the Atlantic sea ports – has always been one of the most fascinating, but most severely under-explored, topics in the historiography of transatlantic slavery. Sidney Mintz's *Sweetness and Power* (1985) was one of the first book-length studies dedicated to this aspect. Unlike Mintz, however, Gikandi is less interested in the colonial popular culture of coffee houses and chocolate cakes than in the culture and philosophy of the aesthetic. How is

it, he asks, that Africans could at the same time be legally and physically reduced to the status of beasts *and* be treated as aesthetic objects in the realm of fine arts? Gikandi regards this conspicuous presence of African bodies in colonial paintings as a symptom of the crucial paradox between the Enlightenment ideas of freedom (here represented especially by Kant) and the concurrent economic practice of slavery. While noting the omnipresence of black bodies in the social self-stylization of Europe's eighteenth-century culture of sensibility, especially in representative paintings, Gikandi offers to follow Edward Said in reading the culture of sensibility and taste "contrapuntally," as an ambiguous expression of a society whose economy was fundamentally dependent on the exploitation of African labor. Gikandi invites us to wonder to what extent the emergence of the aesthetic realm as a separate cultural sphere – begun at Kant's time and reaching its peak with high modernism in the early twentieth century – may itself be seen as modernity's persistent and ongoing denial of the 'unspeakable' logic of exploited labor at its core. Rephrased in the terms of Roland Barthes's definition of the work of myth, the black presence in the aesthetic production of Enlightenment Europe may be seen as a gesture of "inoculation" [*la vaccine*] – the partial and morally curative representation of an unpleasant truth that "immunizes the contents of the collective imagination by means of a small inoculation of acknowledged evil" in order to conceal the larger evil at work (150).

Chapter 5, *Ulrich Pallua's* essay on a slave-figure in James Miller's comedy of manners *Art and Nature* (1738), investigates the ideological implications of a highly tenacious myth of the European Enlightenment (as well as later of Romantic) thought and culture: that of the 'noble savage'. As Pallua demonstrates, the portrayal of the play's character Julio, a "native of the American Woods," is highly ambivalent. Acting as slave/servant to an Englishman, he is alternately portrayed as 'wild man', 'noble savage' or non-European savage. In the latter two roles Julio functions as a "hyper-positive" counter-image to the emerging English bourgeoisie who are criticized as being obsessed with capital, having become 'slaves to riches'. In the role as savage, however, he is shown to be in need of the European 'civilizing mission' in order to realize his full humanity. Julio's allegedly savage nature, Pallua suggests in his conclusion, contains – to a large degree – his critique of European civilization. Since he is shown to be lacking in civilized manners, his enslavement becomes justifiable within the framework of the play. Moreover, the overall validity of the notion of Europe's civilizing mission is also ultimately affirmed, despite Julio's scathing and hard-hitting criticism of contemporary Britain as a money-obsessed society that recklessly exploits its poorer members.

Chapter 6 continues debating such transatlantic political-cultural transferrals, as it engages with the interconnection between a world historic event in Europe's American colonies and contemporary European (in particular British) culture and politics. In it *Raphael Hörmann* unpicks the assertion made by Michel-Rolph Trouillot and others that the Haitian Revolution (1792-1804) was an "unthinkable

event" for European contemporaries. Presenting a series of commentators both from the Caribbean and Britain, Hörmann demonstrates that the ideas of a black revolt, as well as the possibility of a black republic, did belong to the imaginative repertoire of politically alert (or socioeconomically interested) writers across the entire political spectrum. While in some texts the valiance of the revolutionaries of Saint-Domingue was glorified in order to make the French Jacobins (and/or Napoleon) look like savages in comparison, other writers (both radical and conservative) regarded the fight against slavery as part of a more general class war. The thesis of the "unthinkability" of the Haitian revolution, Hörmann argues, runs the risk of downplaying its importance for key contemporary political and social questions, such as the stance toward the French Revolution, slavery, and the future of colonialism. It also ignores the explosive radicalism of what Linebaugh and Rediker called the "revolutionary" or "red" Atlantic, especially the nexus that radicals identified between the exploitation of the emerging European proletariat and that of the Caribbean slaves. Hörmann traces Trouillot's use of the concept of "unthinkability" to Bourdieu's analysis of the "unthinkability" of progressive theoretical models among French ethnographic fieldworkers in Algiers during the French rule in Northern Africa. With reference to Edward Said's essay "Traveling Theory," he shows how problematic it can be to translate a theoretical concept from one context to another – in this case from an intellectually restricted climate of scientific methodology to an intellectually open climate at the end of the eighteenth century, an age in which next to no form of revolution was unimaginable.

Staying in the Caribbean, in chapter 7 *Emily Zobel Marshall* traces the transformation of West African trickster figures in the context of Caribbean slavery. Focusing on the examples of Jamaica and Saint-Domingue/Haiti, she shows that the Afro-Caribbean slaves took these traditional figures of West African folk mythology and religion and turned them into potent symbols, allegories, and narratives, i.e., into "mediums of resistance." Zobel argues that slaves used West African trickster figures, such as the spider *Anansi*, as models to practice resistance in everyday labor relations (e.g., by faking stupidity towards their masters, using dissimulation, or making fun of them). Furthermore, she contends, these trickster figures lie at the heart of Afro-Caribbean religions, functioning as potent figures of resistance. While the central role these 'syncretic' religions played in slave resistance has been discussed by various scholars before, Marshall manages to tangibly demonstrate how African trickster figures were resurrected in the Haitian *Voudun* gods as menacing and powerful agencies of forceful resistance against the slaveholders and the colonial authorities. Marshall's essay illustrates how the violently created diasporic communities of African slaves in the Caribbean at once preserved their cultural heritage and reshaped and transformed it as a means of resisting the extreme brutality of slave life and labor. In the contact zone between West African and Afro-Caribbean-Creole cultures the slaves thus used traditional cultural practices, which they adjusted according to their needs and circumstances, as social practices of resistance against their European-Creole

exploiters. Avoiding the pitfalls of conflating different forms of slave resistance, Marshall conclusively demonstrates that this strategy of social-cultural resistance took place both at the level of everyday resistance *and* at the more exceptional (but still frequent) level of violent resistance.

In chapter 8 *Marcus Wood* invites us to revisit Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, today one of the most celebrated historical heritage sites in the United States. Although Jefferson's relationship with his black slave Sally Hemings has by now been acknowledged by scholarly literature, and even forms a plot line in James Ivory's movie *Jefferson in Paris* (1995), the conservative and nationalistic discourse of the public memorial industry still evades the painful truth that a large part of America's slave population, including some members of Jefferson's own plantation, were fathered by white masters (including Jefferson himself). Wood follows the trail of museological and national forgetting through a series of architectural changes made to the so-called slave "dependencies" at Monticello, which led to the erasure of Sally Hemings's bedroom, suggesting a connection between such crude acts of architectural amnesia (at the site of Hemings's room is today a ladies' restroom) and the large-scale suppression of America's slavery past. Regardless of whether the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, responsible for the historical accuracy of the site, intentionally converted Sally Hemings's room into a public lavatory or whether this act is symptomatic of a pervasive structure of historical amnesia (Wood seems to suggest both explanations), what is sorely missing at Monticello is a memorial to the actual lives of Jefferson's slaves that reflects their true economic – and human – significance.

Chapter 9 shifts to the Hispanic Caribbean, to Cuba and Yucatan. In it *Evelyn Powell Jennings* meticulously reconstructs the Spanish struggle to perpetuate the slave system in Cuba after the demise of the British slave economy and of the Spanish colonial empire since the 1820s. Drawing on extensive archival material, she concludes that Spaniards simultaneously resorted to various complementary strategies to preserve the Cuban slave society and economy: indentured labor, draconian repression of any resistance, and the importation of non-African slaves and bond laborers, including a mysterious contingent of Irish laborers who worked on the railway. The transportation of indigenous prisoners of war from the Yucatan peninsula to Cuba as forced laborers proved especially controversial since it violated the traditional practice of enslaving Africans rather than Caribbean people or Indios, a custom that had been established during the sixteenth century. The case of the *yucatecos* throws a spotlight on how the system of racial slavery, which construed people of African origin as 'natural' slaves, continued to exert a lingering, powerful influence, even as its tenets were clearly opposed by economic and other pragmatic considerations. Conversely, Jennings's essay also demonstrates that, perversely, the Cuban authorities sometimes tried to ignore deeply entrenched notions about the connection between 'race' and forced labor in their desperate bid to ensure a continued supply of 'cheap' or even 'free' labor. It becomes evident that they used every conceivable method of coerced labor,

not least to ensure the persistence of the plantation economy after the impending emancipation. Seen from a broader perspective, Jennings' contribution could be said to strengthen William's thesis that the ending and continuation of slavery and coerced labor was not as much an ethical question as it was a socioeconomic one.

In Chapter 10 *Nalini Mohabir* provides the wider context for the debates about different types of coerced labor that Jennings traces in relation to nineteenth-century Cuba. In particular, Mohabir addresses the highly contentious debate (both public and academic discourses) whether slavery and indentureship are to be regarded as two completely different forms of unfree labor or whether there are close parallels and affinities between the two. She starts off by reconstructing a recent debate in the Guyanese papers which centered on the question of whether slavery and indentureship are comparable or not. As she shows, for the Guyanese this controversy is not merely an academic one about historical 'accuracy' and 'cultural memory' but also is strongly and intractably linked to explosive present-day political and socioeconomic problems. After sketching out Guyana's present ethno-political constellation, she then moves on to discuss how the relationship between slavery and indentureship was regarded in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century. What Mohabir's overview of the historic and academic discourse on slavery and indentureship clearly shows is that slavery-like structures continued to persist long after emancipation and that indentureship forms an essential link between slavery and more 'modern' forms of (semi-) coerced labor. The essay also demonstrates that the primary focus of the public and academic discourse on the most 'spectacular' form of unfree labor, slavery, tends to establish an all too rigid separation between 'coerced' and 'free' labor and therefore tends to provide a distorted overall picture of coerced labor. In particular, this easily leads both academics and the wider public to ignore less 'spectacular' forms, such as indentureship, in spite of the latter's vital historic importance and the great 'human cost' (Hobsbawm) it involved.

In chapter 11 *Thérèse Smith* also traces the legacies of slavery and its aftermath, as she engages with the cultural and social practice of music that formed a central part in Afro-American resistance, both to slavery and to the unequal labor regime and racist violence that followed its abolition after the Civil War. While tracing the history of music as a tool of resistance used in North America since the eighteenth century, Smith focuses particularly on the song *Strange Fruit*, penned by the Jewish American songwriter Abel Meeropol. A harrowing protest song against the continuation of lynching, it is best known through its poignant interpretation by the African American jazz singer Billie Holiday. Placing it in the context of lynchings that occurred during the period (as well as that of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's counter-campaign), Smith undertakes a combined close analysis of both the song's lyrics and Holiday's 1939 musical rendition of them. She explains that the imagery of the song resonates with contemporary images of lynchings, as they appeared for instance on repulsive 'lynching postcards' which were sent by bystanders and par-

ticipants to their friends and relatives. The shocking images of the song, together with Holiday's staggering, nail-biting performance, which barely hides the pent-up anger behind a thin cloak of melancholy, form a powerful protest against lynching. At the same time, the song's lyrics imply a strong continuity between plantation slavery and twentieth-century anti-black racist violence in the USA.

The volume concludes with chapter 12, an essay in which *Cord Pagenstecher* recovers an often-repressed topic from one of the darkest episodes in German history: forced labor in the Third Reich. Drawing upon first-hand accounts by survivors he not only sketches a bleak picture of the atrocious conditions under which these (apart from the Jewish prisoners) mostly foreign forced laborers had to work and live, but also debates – from various angles – the question of whether they could justifiably be termed slaves. He shows that while several survivors clearly thought of themselves as such, the term has also had extremely significant legal and financial implications, both during the prosecution of the perpetrators and the protracted struggle of former laborers for compensation. In particular he reveals that the concerted attempts of victims of forced labor (not least through their haunting testimonies), of lawyers, prosecutors, and victim associations, as well as some committed scholars, have not only experienced significant success, but have also contributed to recovering these repressed atrocities and earning them a place in the public memory. In this, Pagenstecher's essay reflects the intention of the volume as a whole: to make a contribution to the ongoing public and academic investigation and commemoration of human bondage without ignoring the theoretical and empirical pitfalls such a project inevitably involves.

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Surveillance at Ancient Imperial Labor Camps in the Desert. A Southern Levantine Perspective[1]

YUVAL YEKUTIELI AND ELIYAHU COHEN-SASON

Introduction

Most of our knowledge about slavery and unfree labor in antiquity derives from ancient texts and their analysis through procedures of historical investigation. Archaeology examines the same issues differently, by reading and evaluating the material culture rather than the written documentation. The material culture – both mundane and exotic remains that have survived of a people's activities in the past – enables archaeology to look at places and see things that written documents could never reveal. Archaeology can reach back to ordinary people in a way that gives them a voice that is absent from other historical records, which were often compiled by members of the hegemonic classes. In the case of slavery in antiquity these documents were usually written by the slavers and not the enslaved.

Our contribution to this volume focuses on a very specific issue within the broad scope of archaeological research on slavery. It concentrates on ancient surveillance methods at two labor camps that were operated by imperial powers in desert zones of the southern Levant. The first is a large-scale mining complex in the southern Negev dated to the end of the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1350-1150 BC), and the second is a small stone quarry in the Judean Desert from the Roman period (Fig. 1).

Our aims here are to describe these specific sites, to draw some conclusions about the exercise of surveillance at labor camps in these contexts (imperial pow-

Fig. 1:
Regional map and the locations of Nahal Zohar and the Timna Valley.

ers operating in a faraway desert), and finally to highlight the potential of certain archaeological methodologies, particularly landscape archaeology, to uncover a dimension of the human condition which no other method can achieve.

Methodology

Since the main audience for this publication does not come from the discipline of archaeology it is worth stating in a few words where our research is situated within this broad field. In general, one can reduce the main paradigms common in archaeological studies within the last sixty to seventy years to three approaches: 'Culture History', 'Processual Archaeology', and 'Post-processual Archaeology'.

'Culture History', the earliest of the three, was the mainstream method during the first half of the twentieth century up to the 1960s. It dealt primarily with typologies of ancient artifacts. On that basis it sought to answer questions regarding the chronology and development of specific cultures. Accordingly, it set out to define space-time units in which particular cultures existed, interacted with, influenced, and replaced each other.

'Processual Archaeology' appeared in the 1960s as a critique of the culture history paradigm, which it accused of being too humanistic. The new approach propagated a more 'scientific' way of doing archaeology, one which aspired to find general laws that might explain cultural systems and cultural change.

In its turn, the subsequent paradigm – 'Post-processual Archaeology' – criticized its predecessor, Processual Archaeology, for having become too scientific and thus having neglected many human aspects of ancient cultures, such as agency, symbolism, and behavior. During its period of maturation, this approach became a wide umbrella term for various concepts that include, among others, 'Archaeology of Gender'; 'Archaeology of Social Practice and Agency'; 'Archaeology of Symbols and Meaning'; and 'Landscape Archaeology'.

The evolvement of these archaeological positions is noticeably linked to developments in other related sciences – anthropology, geography, and history among them – and the conceptual exchange with these other fields and disciplines that has been increasing since the late 1980s. As such, works of the post-processual archaeology genre are often influenced by the social sciences and humanities, especially structuralist projects and concepts used by Sahlins in *Islands of History*, by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*, Bourdieu's concept of the *habitus,* Giddens's idea of 'agency', Braudel's notion of *longue durée*, which informed his study *The Mediterranean*; and Heidegger's phenomenology, to mention just a few.

The work presented here employs the methodology of Landscape Archaeology and it may be situated within the broader 'package' of Post-processual Archaeology. The main concept of landscape archaeology asserts that landscape is not a mere background but an active player that shapes and is shaped by the people living in it. Therefore, studying the archaeological landscape of a region enables the formulation of numerous observations about the social realities of its past inhabitants.

The impetus to apply this method, as Knapp and Ashmore point out, "stems from archaeologists expanding their interpretive gaze beyond the isolable 'hot spots' termed sites, to consider a more comprehensive distribution of human traces in and between loci, now often termed "'places of special interest'" (2). An equally important aspect of this approach is to take seriously the idea that the ancient landscape constitutes far more than just a passive backdrop in front of which people interacted, created settlement patterns, and exploited economic resources. On the contrary, it contends that landscape was central to the perception, experience, and contextualization of socio-symbolic projects (Knapp and Ashmore 1; Creighton 65).

Of central importance to our methodology is the analysis of the gaze, view, or line of sight. The procedure we practice entails a thorough examination of the degrees of visibility and invisibility at multiple places within each site and in the surrounding landscape. What makes this method promising for archaeological research is the fact that visibility is a central socio-symbolic aspect of society and culture (Zhu 171-72). As socio-cultural anthropologist Michael Gilsenan states in reference to contemporary Lebanese village architecture: "In such a highly structured space there is always the question, moreover, of who 'sees' whom, because 'seeing' is a socially determined act and not a question merely of images on the

retina and physiological process" (171). Applying Gilsenan's insights into architecture in rural Lebanon to archaeological sites, our team set out to examine how the gaze could expose power relations between social groups in ancient labor camps in Israel's Negev and Judean Deserts.

Our specific attraction to conducting archaeological work in the desert arises from the fact that the desert conditions offer an incredibly high level of preservation. This arid, hot, and hostile environment was beyond the major human activity zones for long periods, and hence remained undisturbed. In the few cases when people did visit the area and leave traces, these traces were not affected as long as they were located away from *wadis* (brooks that flow only after rare and heavy rains). The landscape we investigate thus did not change significantly for a few thousand years, and what we see today is quite similar to what people saw in antiquity. Likewise, ancient structures and installations are clearly visible, and to a large degree may be studied without the need for excavation.

Our previous work using this methodology (Yekutieli, "Is somebody watching you"; "Crossing the Rift") as well as studies by Avner ("Ancient cult sites"; *Studies in the Material and Spiritual Culture*) and Rosen and Rosen, show that the application of concepts developed in landscape archaeology and more specifically, visibility analysis, are useful analytical tools that can provide insights into both instrumental and symbolic uses of power and that may allow conclusions to be drawn about other ideological dimensions in desert environments.

Our fieldwork focuses on two cases: a copper mining complex from the Late Bronze Age and a small quarry from the Roman period. At both sites we searched for indications of surveillance and control. Practically, we asked the following questions: Are there any specific structures located in strategic points in the landscape? Do certain sites offer better panoramic views than others? Are any sites located in particularly prominent places so that observers can survey a wide area? And what is the relation between different markers in the scenery and other variables?

This paper presents the results of our explorations of these places. The presentation of each case begins with a description of the local surroundings, proceeds to a description of the sites, and ends with a discussion of the relevant aspects of ancient surveillance and the significance they hold.

Timna Valley Copper Mines

Timna Valley is located in the southern Arava, about thirty kilometers north of Eilat (Fig. 1). The valley is extremely rich in copper ores, which have been attracting people to the area since 5,000 BC (the late Neolithic period) if not earlier. The area is exceedingly arid and hot throughout the year.

Western travelers and researchers had already noted ancient remains in the valley in the nineteenth (Petherick 37) and beginning of the twentieth centuries

Fig. 2:
A general map of the Timna Valley (upper left), with a zoom on the research area that indicates sites mentioned in the text (bottom right).
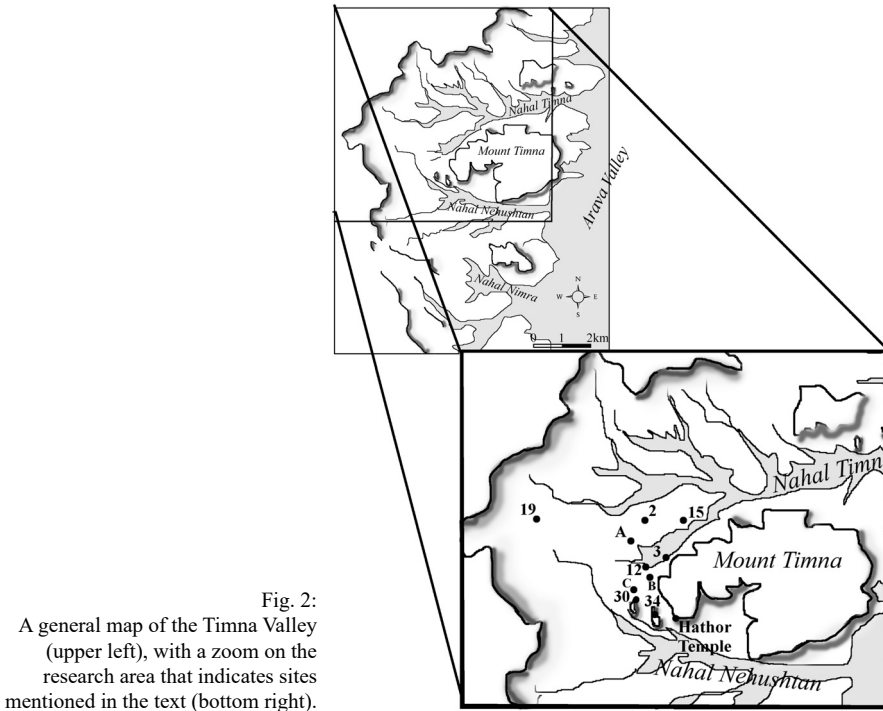
(Musil 185–7; Frank 233–4; Glueck, "Explorations in Eastern Palestine II"; *The Other Side of the Jordan*). However, systematic archaeological research in the region only began with the establishment of the "Arabah Expedition," directed by Beno Rothenberg in 1959 ("Researches in the Southern Arabah").

Rothenberg's team accomplished substantial work in the Timna Valley. It surveyed the region systematically, located numerous sites (Fig. 2), excavated at selected locations, and conducted experimental archaeology research. The expedition's meticulous work brought the complete production cycle of copper in the valley to light and outlined in detail the specific techniques that were employed in each period. As part of its work, mining shafts and galleries, work camps with numerous furnaces, massive slag heaps, dwellings, sanctuaries, rock art monuments, and burial places were uncovered (Rothenberg, "Ancient Copper"; *Negev Archaeology; Timna*; "Die Archäologie"; *The Egyptian Mining Temple*; *The Ancient Metallurgy*; "The Chalcolithic Copper"; "Researches in the Southern Arabah"; "Archaeo-metallurgical Researches" Part 1; "Archaeo-metallurgical Researches" Part 2; "Egyptian Chariots"; Conrad and Rothenberg). In so doing, the Arabah Expedition's work became a cornerstone in the evolving discipline of Archaeometallurgy (Rothenberg, "Researches in the Southern Arabah" 8) and in the archaeology of southern Levantine arid zones.

One of the discoveries of Rothenberg's team was that copper production in the Timna Valley reached an unparalleled peak during the late fourteenth to the twelfth centuries BC (Rothenberg, *Timna*; *The Egyptian Mining Temple*; *The*

Ancient Metallurgy). During this period – known as the end of the Late Bronze Age and the early Iron Age in Levantine terminology, and late New Kingdom in Egyptological research – Egyptian expeditions arrived in Timna in search of copper. These expeditions set up an extensive production apparatus in the valley, which encompassed mining areas, smelting camps, storage facilities, lookout points, and supporting logistics installations (Rothenberg, *Timna; The Egyptian Mining Temple*; *The Ancient Metallurgy*).

Working initially under the theoretical framework of the culture history paradigm, and based on analysis of pottery types, rock art styles, and furnace shapes, Rothenberg suggested that the ethnic makeup of the Egyptian operation was complex. In addition to Egyptians, he proposed that large numbers of local Negebite workers, as well as a workforce from northwest Arabia (a region he labeled "Midian," following biblical tradition) labored in the Egyptian factory (Rothenberg and Glass, "The Beginnings and the Development"; Rothenberg, "Researches in the Southern Arabah" 24-5; "Egyptian Chariots").[2]

Rothenberg proposed identifying the New Kingdom operation in Timna with the legendary *ATIKA*, the copper rich country mentioned in papyrus Harris I: 408 – dated to the reign of Ramesses III (ruled 1183-52 BC) – and reported by that source to have been exploited by Egyptian expeditions ("Researches in the Southern Arabah" 20). The fact that inscriptions bearing this very king's name were found on rock faces above the *Hathor* temple in Timna (Rothenberg, *The Egyptian Mining Temple*) and near the ancient well at Nahal Roded a few kilometers south of the valley (Rothenberg, "Researches in the Southern Arabah" 20) strengthen his proposal.

The expedition's research interests shifted from time to time in the course of its forty-year-long duration. At the beginning of his work in Timna, Rothenberg dedicated much time to untangling the ties claimed by earlier biblical archaeologists (e.g., Glueck, "Explorations in Eastern Palestine II"; *The Other Side of the Jordan*) to have existed between King Solomon and the southern Arava copper mines (see detailed review in Rothenberg, *The Egyptian Mining Temple* 1–18). Later on, with the advent of the quantitative processual archaeology approach in the 1960s and 1970s, the physical, chemical, and mathematical aspects of the local metallurgical processes moved to the forefront of the expedition's research goals (Rothenberg, Tylecote and Boydell; Merkel; Bamberger and Wincierz; Rothenberg, *The Ancient Metallurgy of Copper*). Correspondingly, Rothenberg's expedition performed an extensive reconstruction of the *chaînes opératoires* ("chains of operations") of ancient copper production in the Timna Valley and investigated the development of metallurgical knowledge in the region throughout the ages (Rothenberg, "Archaeo-metallurgical Researches" Part 1; "Archaeo-metallurgical Researches" Part 2; Rothenberg and Glass, "The Beginnings and the

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2   At a certain stage Rothenberg even suggested some involvement of "Sea Peoples" at this site (see, "Egyptian Chariots").

Development"; Rothenberg and Merkel, "Late Neolithic Copper Smelting" and "Chalcolithic, 5th millennium BC").

The Arabah Expedition did a pioneering job: it systematically opened up the Timna Valley for scientific research, defined and elaborated new research methodologies, and made innumerable scientific breakthroughs. However, even with these enormous achievements, and due to the dynamics of an archaeological discipline that modifies its agendas over time, several issues were only studied in a modest way during the Arabah Expedition's prime (late 1950s to late 1990s). Among these relatively neglected issues are the social aspects of the mining operation, which our current research in Timna specifically targets. It draws on the Rothenberg expedition's published database as well as on our additional fieldwork. Our intention is to bring a socially oriented position to the research of the ancient mines, and to investigate the social reality of miners who inhabited the valley during antiquity.

Rothenberg's team identified and studied numerous New Kingdom sites in the Timna Valley (Fig. 2). Our mission, as we defined it, was to add to this body of knowledge the huge amount of data hidden in the landscape outside the built sites but which is essentially a part of their essence. The presentation of our results will trace the copper production track, all the way from a mineral trapped in a geological formation into transportable copper ingot. Starting at the mining area where ores were extracted, we follow the way the ores made to the smelting work camps. Because the miners' community was involved in various activities in addition to producing copper, along with the smelting sites we will present a few other camps whose presence was recorded in the region. Finally, we will center the discussion on the notion of movement between the various localities in the valley.

The Mining Area

Copper production starts with the extraction and mining of ores. The Egyptian expeditions handled this mission in a very systematic way. Once an area was identified as a potential mining field, they quarried hundreds of vertical test shafts to a diameter of about one meter each. When an ore vein was struck, the workers followed it horizontally, creating a maze of underground tunnels. Ore was extracted from these galleries, hauled to the surface, and then transported to the smelting camps. In the thousands of years that have passed since the Egyptian operation took place, these open shafts have filled up with sediment to such a level that today they look like shallow depressions in the ground. These depressions, discovered by Rothenberg's team, were nicknamed "plates," and the areas they cover were labeled "plate-fields" (Rothenberg, "Researches in the Southern Arabah" 10). Studying one of these huge plate-fields (Site 19), we noticed a low hill that dominates its entire area from the north (Fig. 3). On top of that hill stood a square arrangement of stones (marked as post 19-O), 2.70 x 2.50 m in size. It currently has one course of stones at its southern side, the one facing the plate-

Fig. 3: Site 19; a view from the plates' field towards observation post 19-O, on the elongated hill in the center. The figure on the right added as a scale.

field, and two to three courses on the other flanks. Two meters south of the structure a small L-shaped installation of stones was found. In the given context and due to the perfect panorama it offers, we interpret the structure as an observation post for a small number of observers/guards, and the adjacent installation as a wind shelter for their fireplace. The post is positioned in such a way that it overlooks the entire plate-field from above and yet is close enough that an intervention can be launched immediately in case something happens in that field. Sitting at the post a person can see all the plates in the field and farther east and north towards areas unobservable from the field itself (Fig. 4). Notably, the post is clearly visible from all shaft openings as it towers above the plate-field.

The ores were transported from the mining area to a few smelting work camps. There, after adding other minerals (as flux) and charcoal to the melting charge, they were smelted in furnaces. The final product of this process was raw copper that was cast into ingots. The ingots were shipped out of the valley, most probably directly to Egypt. Eleven camps were identified by Rothenberg in the valley and defined as smelting camps (Rothenberg, "Researches in the Southern Arabah" 23). Noting that these sites have different designs and that some have huge amounts of slag and ash while others only a small amount, we assume that some served primarily as smelting sites. Although the exact differences were not clear, we nevertheless decided at this stage to differentiate on the basis of the amounts

Fig. 4: Site 19; a view from observation post 19-O towards the plates' field. The figure on the right added as a scale.
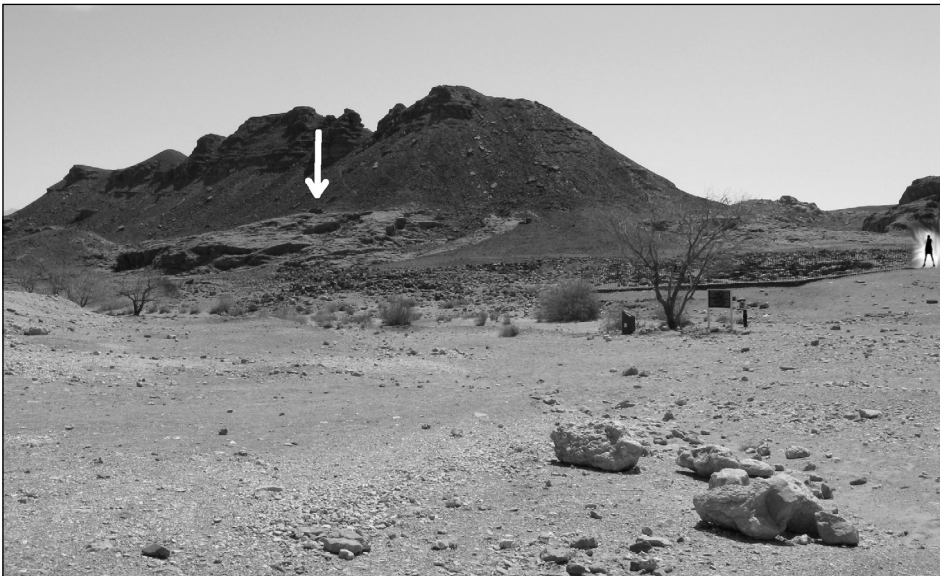
Fig. 5: Site 2; the smelting camp (in the center, behind the tree), and observation post 2-O (located on a rock terrace above the site and indicated by a white arrow). The figure on the right added as a scale.

of slag present at definite "smelting sites" compared to "operational and smelting sites."

Smelting sites

Site 2, a large smelting camp located amid steep towering hills, was excavated intensively by Rothenberg's team ("Researches in the Southern Arabah" 23-26). While studying the area around the site, we could see an observation post located on a terrace east of the built area (Fig. 5). It is 'gate shaped' – a term we utilize for a rectangular plan open at one side and closed by walls on the other three sides. The post is 2.2 x 3 meters in size. Its opening faces the opposite direction of the site while its wide flank faces the work camp. Inside the post many potsherds of large and crude storage vessels were found. Clearly, whoever is in the post can view the entire work camp, and since the post is only tens of meters
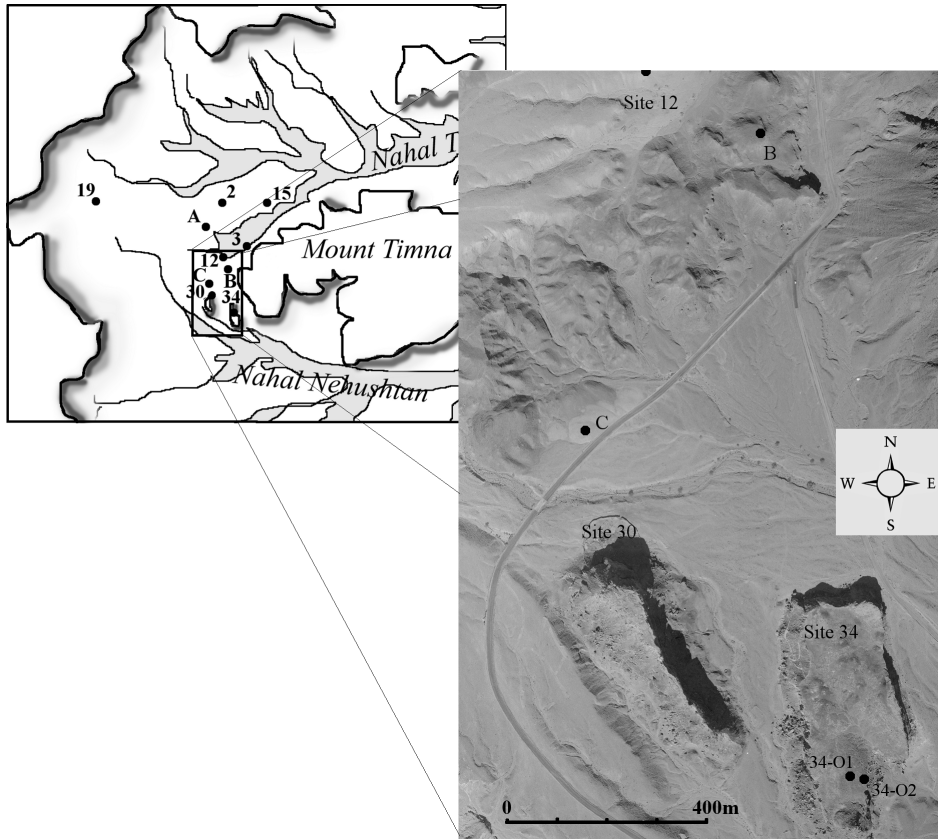
Fig. 6:   Map of the Timna Valley (upper left), with a zoom on the area west of Mount Timna (bottom right). Sites 12, 30, and 34, and posts B, C, 34-O1, and 34-O2 are marked on the aerial photograph.

away from the site can reach any point on it in a matter of minutes. The entrance to the post is hidden from the camp. So, although workers at the camp constantly see the post above them, they are unable to judge if it is manned or not. Moving south, two large smelting sites southwest of Mount Timna – Site 30 and Site 34 – are directly associated with two extremely prominent flat-topped hills. Site 30 is located below the northern edge of the western of the two, while Site 34, also known by its popular name, "Slaves' Hill," is built on top of the eastern hill (Fig. 6).

Site 30 is adjacent to a cliff that towers above it in the south, and it is surrounded by a wall on its other sides. The only way to reach the site is through a single opening in the wall flanked by two small towers. Approximately one hundred meters north of the site a single structure – post C – is located on a low hill, which overlooks the site and its surroundings, including the gate leading into it. The post C structure is rectangular in shape, 2 x 3 meters in size, and its wide flank faces Site 30. In addition to offering a line of sight to this walled work camp, post C offers a perfect view of the trail that climbs Slaves' Hill.
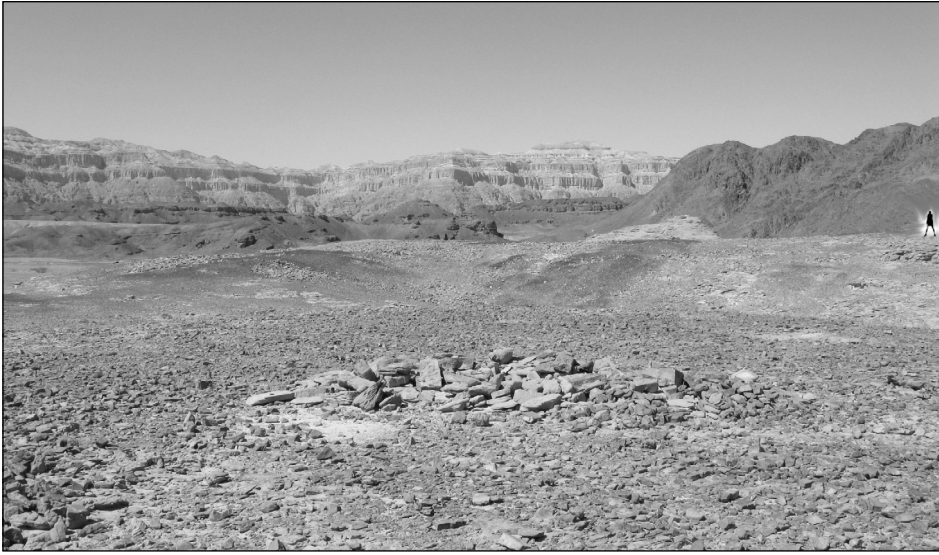
Fig. 7: Site 34 - the "Slaves' Hill"; observation post 34-O1 (at the forefront) and the smelting area (the elongated ridge in the center). The figure on the right, standing at the eastern side of the smelting area, was added as a scale.

Slaves' Hill is a flat-topped mountain with vertical cliffs dropping off at its edges. Its upper plateau, in the form of an elongated diamond, is packed with structures and smelting debris on its northern half and uninhabited on its southern half. A serpentine trail leads to the hilltop from the direction of Site 30 (northwest) and enters the plateau through a gate flanked by two towers. The towers offer good observation points of Site 30 and post C, as well as of the landscape to the north, south, and west. Farther away, south from the built area, but still on the plateau, observation post 34-O1 is located on a small rise. The post, a single-space structure 3.70 x 4.40 meters in size, has its wider side facing the site (Fig. 7). It offers a good view towards the structures and smelting areas but not onto the trails climbing to the mountain. A rounded stone installation, with remains of ash that probably served as a fireplace, is located near the structure. The post is clearly seen from the built-up area; however, looking from there one cannot tell whether it is occupied.

In addition to the main trail arriving at the hilltop through the gate at the plateau's northern half, another trail climbs onto the hill from the southeast. A complex observation installation, which comprises a modified balcony-like natural rock formation and an adjacent observation point (called together post 34-O2), overlooks the trail and the area beyond it, as well as the environs of the Hathor temple and the structures located nearby. At both areas of this observation complex, potsherds, a small grinding tool, and ostrich eggshells were found.

Fig. 8: Site 15. Observation post 15-O (at the forefront) and the workers' camp (in the lower area at the center).

Smelting and dwelling sites

As stated above a few sites had lesser amounts of slag, therefore suggesting that besides smelting they were used for other purposes such as dwelling, storage, and administration.

Site 15, which has approximately ten structures, is located northwest of Mount Timna. It is surrounded by hills on three sides, and opens south towards a *wadi* that drains the area. A surveillance post (15-O) was noted on an elongated ridge east of the camp in a place that offers excellent observation of its structures and the landscape, from the opening of Nahal Timna to the trails leading towards Slaves' Hill (Site 34). It includes a single-space structure 3 x 6.20 meters in size with its wider side facing the camp. Close by, a concentration of stones was found – perhaps a fireplace – with the remains of a crude ceramic vessel next to it. The structure's inner space is currently filled with stones (Fig. 8). The post is clearly visible from any point on the built site (Fig. 9); however, one can enter and leave the post through its back side without being seen from the camp.

Site 3 is located in a depression between low hills on the slopes of Mount Timna. A single structure was found on a rising slope south of the site in a place that provides a good prospect of all structures in the camp. It is 'gate shaped,' 2.20 x 2.70 meters in size, with its built, wide side facing the camp (Fig. 10). From the post it is possible to observe all the structures on the site and there is a direct eye-link with post A (below).
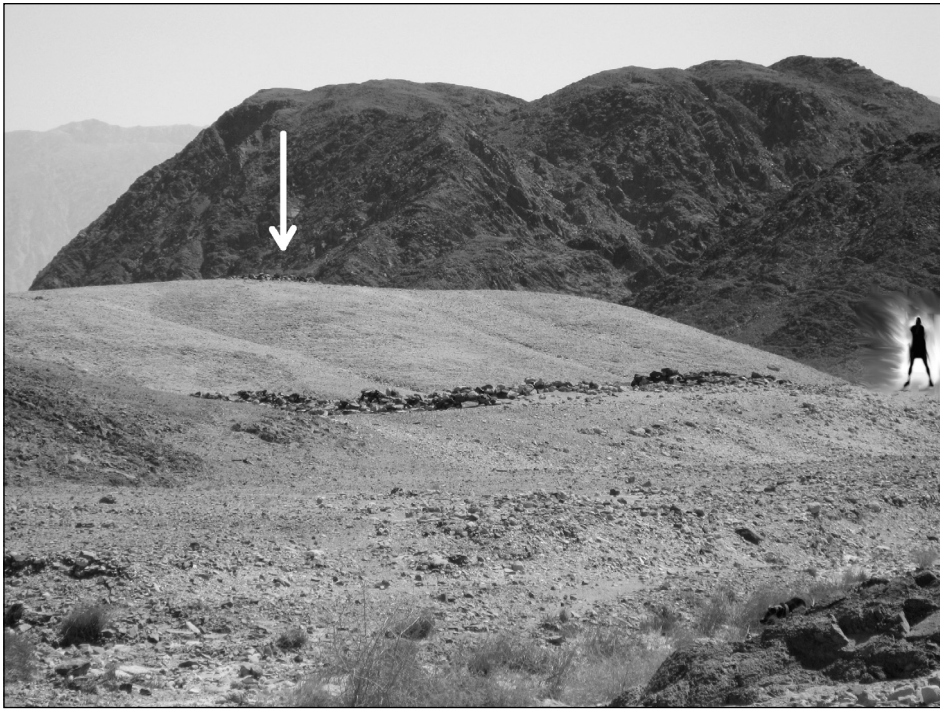
Fig. 9: Site 15; the workers' camp (in the center), and observation post 15-O (located on a ridge above the site and indicated by a white arrow). The figure on the right added as a scale.

Fig. 10: Site 3. Observation post 3-O (at the forefront) and the workers' camp (in the lower area at the center).

Fig. 11: Site 12; panorama from observation post 12-O. The workers' camp is located in the lower area at the center.

Fig. 12: Site 12; the workers' camp (in the forefront), and observation post 12-O on a ridge above the site. The figure on the right added as a scale.

Site 12 is a small site comprising about ten structures, delimited on the south and the north by elongated ridges. On the northern ridge a 5 x 2.7 meter-single-space structure, with its wide side facing the camp, was recorded. A concentration of stones was located near the south side of the structure, probably serving as a fireplace. The post offers an excellent view of the entire camp. In addition to the camp's structures, it overlooks the entrance to the Timna Valley and allows eye contact with post A and the trail leading to Site 12 (Fig. 11). The post can be clearly viewed from any place on the site; however, the entrance to the post from the north is hidden from its grounds (Fig. 12).

Fig. 13: Observation post A. The scale is 50 centimeters high, indicated by a vertical ruler leaning against the wall at the left-hand end of the post.

Road control network

In addition to the observation points that are directly associated with sites, located in their immediate surroundings and offering excellent views of their structures and installations, we found a few posts that monitored major trails connecting the camps.

Post A is a gate-shaped post on a cliff edge south of Site 2. It has a single space and it is 1.60 x 2.10 meters in size, with its wider side facing the observation direction (Fig. 13). It offers a panoramic view all the way from the trail that leaves Site 2 (although the site itself cannot be seen from there) to Site 12. It is approached by a trail that connects it to Site 2.

Post B is located on a flat hilltop that overlooks the trails crossing the watershed divide between Nahal Timna and Nahal Nechushtan. It consists of a scatter of stones in an area of 5 x 5 meters and an adjacent small built installation. The stones were clearly taken from the hill slope, which is of a different rock formation than the top.

Post C was described above in relation to Site 30. It serves the combined task of both observing Sites 30 and 34 as well as the nearby trail junction.

Discussion

The study of the landscape around and between the sites at the Timna Valley has revealed a previously unnoticed phenomenon, notably, that almost all sites are controlled by surveillance posts. Furthermore, the network of trails that connects these sites is also monitored by such posts. This system of inspection, then, functions as a total surveillance apparatus.

The posts are remarkably similar. They are either of a gate-shape or a rectangular plan structure, each averaging 2 x 3 meters in size. They always consist of one space, and in all cases their wider flank faces the observation direction, a fact that makes sense since it enables a wider panorama towards the main focus of interest. In addition, an installation is often discernable near the post – probably a fireplace –, and when pottery is found it mainly consists of large fragments of storage vessels.

Besides their uniform plans, the posts are always built on hills that allow full observation of their corresponding sites, at a distance of no more than one hundred meters from their structures. The posts are thus near enough for close inspection and for any part of their sites to be reached immediately. Moreover, the locations of the posts are themselves always clearly visible from the sites, rising above them, yet built in a way that makes it impossible to determine whether or not they are occupied.

In comparison to the sites, which are mostly in low lying areas, all posts are located on hilltops that offer much wider views towards the landscape, and they often allow eye contact with at least one other observation post.

In this way a person traveling from the mining area to Slaves' Hill, about four kilometers in distance, might have described the trip as follows: "I started my day in the plates' mining field where post 19-O constantly towered above me. Arriving with a load of ores at smelting Site 2, I could be seen from post 2-O. Leaving the site southwards, I could still see 2-O, wondering if there was anyone there, but as soon as it was out of my sight, post A came into view above my shoulder and accompanied my entire walk to Site 12. Upon arriving at that site, I could see post 12-O, but could not verify if it was manned or not. As I walked towards Site 15, guards sitting in posts 3-O and then in 15-O (or not? I could not see clearly, but I am sure they were there the last time) followed my progress. Crossing the watershed divide southwards, a sentinel that is usually on duty at post B probably saw me. When he disappeared, my movement was visible to post C, as well as the watchtowers at the entrances of Sites 30 and 34, which followed my way up the trail to the Slaves' Hill. Entering my hut there, I am sure I saw a person at post 34-O looking at me."

As our current work has disclosed, the Timna Valley New Kingdom copper factory had at least two mechanisms that functioned simultaneously: the operational copper production apparatus, which is well-known from previous researchers' work, and the surveillance mechanism, which has been reconstructed through our work.

The Egyptian project's workers, managers, and functionaries were watched and monitored during every part of their lives in the region: while quarrying the mines, working in the camps, living in their huts, and walking the roads. As a result, Timna could be understood as 'a landscape of total control'.

Roman Zohar Quarry and Labor Camp

The Roman Zohar quarry was encountered during a survey conducted near the western escarpment of the Dead Sea Rift Valley (Fig 1; Yekutieli, "East of Arad"; "Landscape of Control"; "Is somebody watching you"; "Crossing the Rift"). The surveyed area consists of a very narrow coastal strip on the southwestern shores of the Dead Sea, and a few step-like horizontal plateaus and high vertical cliffs that rise in elevation when moving west. A few large canyons cut through this landscape, in a west-east direction, creating impressive fissures in the scenery.

The area is extremely arid and hot with only one permanent water source within the survey's boundaries, the spring at 'En Bokek. Other than this spring, water can be found sporadically in water holes along the channels of the large canyons, which are filled by occasional winter floods coming from the area of the Arad Valley and the southern Hebron Mountains in the west.

The Nahal Zohar quarry is an archaeological complex that contains, among other features, a quarry, a workers' camp, and a built tower. Besides the Roman period, which we will look at in detail below, activity also took place here during the Hellenistic and Islamic periods, and is described elsewhere (Yekutieli, "Is somebody watching you").

During the Roman period, the area under consideration was located at the southeastern border of Judea. In the beginning of the first century AD, Judea became a Roman province ruled by a procurator (Cohen 274). In AD 66, the Jews rebelled against the Romans in what is known as the Great Jewish Revolt. The Romans repressed this insurrection in a long and bloody war during which they conquered all the rebellious territory. In AD 70, Jerusalem was captured and the Jewish temple destroyed. The last rebels escaped to the Judean Desert, where the Roman army hunted them down; the last holdout was in Masada, AD 73 (Yadin, *Masada*; Cohen 288-95). Sixty years later the Jews revolted again, under the leadership of Bar-Kochva (after whom this revolt was subsequently named). Again the Romans sent large armies to the area, and after three years (AD 132–35) they managed to crush this rebellion as well. As on the previous occasion, this revolt also ended with the last rebels fleeing to the Judean Desert, and the Romans chasing and hunting them down in the region's canyons and caves (Yadin, *The Finds from the Bar Kokhba Period*).

Our survey area is located in the immediate vicinity of the final military actions of both revolts. Although not a part of the principal battlegrounds, which are located twenty to thirty kilometers to the north (Masada and adjacent large canyons), it is clearly within the zone where logistic activities related to the war had taken place, including transportation of food, water supplies, and army equipment, and the deployment of communications and extra manpower.

During this period and throughout the province, the Romans built and maintained sophisticated road systems, which also encompassed way stations, observation points, forts, and the like (e.g., Isaac and Roll; Roll). The labor for execut-
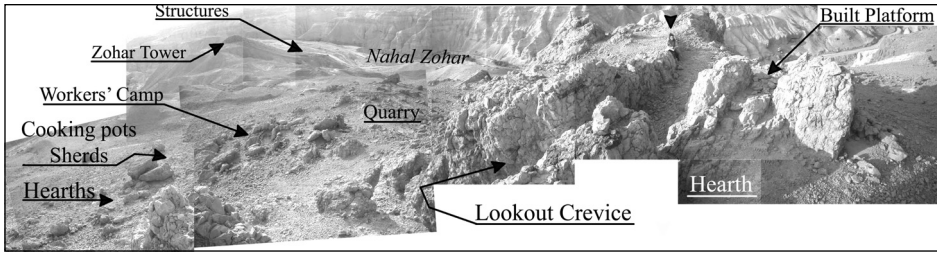
Fig. 14: Nahal Zohar Quarry. A panorama from the top of the hill indicating various components of the site discussed throughout the text. For a scale, note the seated person indicated by a black arrowhead.

Fig. 15: Nahal Zohar Quarry. A shelter for one person.

ing such projects, which numbered among its tasks quarrying, moving masses of stone, and building, was performed either by soldiers or by captives of war (Isaac and Roll; Wiedemann 165, 177). By the time the Romans arrived in the Judean Desert, the imperial army had a large pool of war captives to effect necessary works in the region (Josephus Flavius, *The Wars of the Jews*, Book 6, Chapter 9, paragraph 2).

Our exploration at the site of the quarry began while investigating the surroundings of the so-called "Israelite Zohar Tower." As part of that research we discovered a large whitish scar (ca. 50 × 50 meters) on a rocky ridge about two hundred meters northwest of the tower. Closer examination indicated that this was the quarry from which the tower's blocks were extracted. Research at the quarry hill yielded remains of other man-made artifacts. On a terrace at the base of the ridge and slightly north of the quarry, a large concentration of first

to second century AD Roman pottery was found; the ceramic assemblage consisted almost entirely of cooking-pot fragments. A few meters farther north, the remains of hearths, full of ashes and heat baked stones, were found. A climb up the slope from that area revealed ten to fifteen flimsily constructed "shelters" hidden between the rock boulders. These shelters consisted of stone-free areas of about one to two meters in size, delimited by medium-sized rocks, and in a few cases partly sheltered by large boulders. Judging from their shapes and sizes, each shelter provided just enough space for one person to lie down (Figs. 14, 15).

On top of the ridge that rises above the quarry and the shelters were additional features. The most prominent was a natural corridor-like formation in the rock, between one and two meters wide and about ten meters long. On its northern end were the remains of a hearth, a rectangularly built platform constructed of rough medium-sized fieldstones. The platform was 1 × 2 meters, and it rose on its western face to a little more than one meter (five courses of stone). A natural narrow opening in the rock, which we labeled the "lookout crevice," enabled a perfect view from the corridor-like formation at the top of the ridge towards the quarry and the shelters next to it.

Our interpretation of these structures is that during antiquity a quarry operated at this location. The quarry workers lived in an improvised camp consisting of rock shelters, and met for communal meals at what we defined as the cooking and dining terraces. We accounted for the imposing peak above the camp as the place where the project's commander resided.

On the summit of the ridge, and all the way down the slope, through the area of the shelters to the hearths' terrace below, there was a light scatter of potsherds. These dated mainly from the Roman period, although some Islamic and some still undated sherds were present as well. In contrast to this thin spread, the cooking-pot terrace consisted of a very large concentration of potsherds (more than a thousand). The overwhelming majority of the sherds could be ascribed to the first to second century AD. Given the available evidence, it can be safely assumed that the most intensive activity at the workers' camp, its shelters, and terraces, occurred during the Roman Period.

Our analysis (detailed in Yekutieli, "Is somebody watching you") concluded that stone blocks were already being extracted from the quarry during the Hellenistic period, and perhaps a few more were dug out as late as the Islamic era. Yet, it was only during the Roman phase that people resided on the slope bordering the quarry. At some point during that period a group of between fifteen and twenty-five people stayed for a short period of time (estimated in days or weeks) in flimsy rock shelters constructed among the steep rocky debris; they worked in the quarry – taking out stones to top up the nearby tower that was part of the region's route control network – and had communal meals on the terrace below.

To gain additional insights about the workers' camp, whose shelters are still standing and whose smashed pots and hearths were still exposed on the ground surface, we investigated visibility and observation and their relationship to the
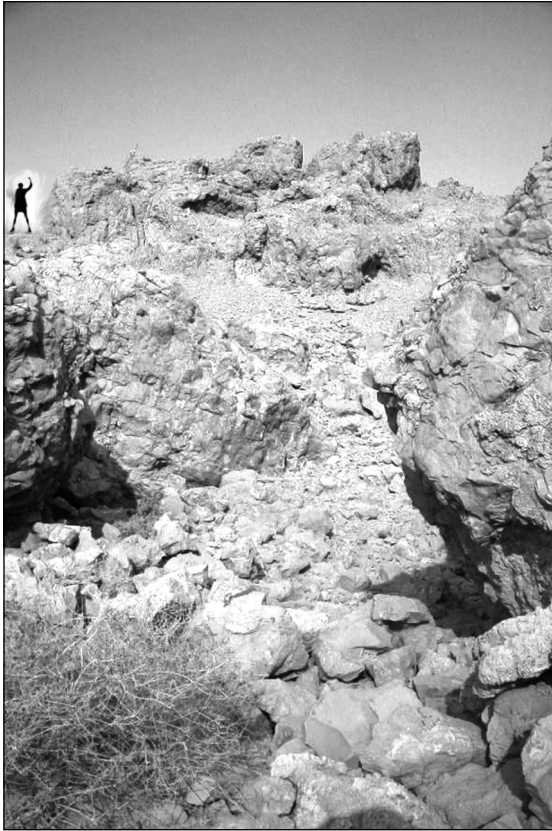
Fig. 16:
Nahal Zohar Quarry. A view from the shelters area (note two shelters at the forefront) towards the lookout crevice (center of the ridge on top). The figure on the left added as a scale.

immediate landscape. The procedure consisted of walking through the site and examining what could and could not be seen from each place, and as a result, we made the following observations:

1. From any single shelter, no more than two other shelters could be seen.
2. From most of the shelters, the top of the hill, and especially the lookout crevice, could be observed lofting above (Fig. 16).
3. Standing on the top of the hill, within the corridor-like feature next to the built platform, nothing of the shelter's area could be observed. Yet the moment one drew close to the edge of the natural corridor and looked through the lookout crevice to the end, the entire landscape opened up: the shelters, the cooking and dining terrace, the quarry, the tower, and the way leading to it.
4. The inspection from the lookout crevice does not require the exposure of the observer, who could have peeped out from the crevice without being seen from the areas observed.

Summarizing these points it appears that the arrangement of the quarry and the shelters' complex creates a case of asymmetrical visibility. The gaze within this area is structured by using the natural landscape configuration in such a way that a person standing on top might see all other localities without in return being

seen from them. Conversely, most of the shelters cannot see the overall picture, and are dominated by the lookout crevice towering above. In this way the workers and their immediate guards are under the impression that they are constantly being observed. Besides the physical force that a guard may apply there is also a psychological force in operation that keeps the workers in constant control.

Conclusions – Comparison – Discussion

The two cases considered above, although different in scale and period, display some similarities that allow a combined discussion. To begin with, both are imperial projects exploiting human labor in a hostile environment in a foreign country – the New Kingdom Egyptian copper mining in the first case, and the operations of the Roman army, as part of crushing a local revolt, in the second case. Additionally, in both examples, besides the exercise of physical force to run the project, another coercive means was in play, i.e., constant surveillance that manipulated the laborers' minds. The ubiquitous observation had a dual effect – inducing fear in some, providing reassurance for others –, exercising unceasing control over the minds of both workers and their keepers at the work camps.

The discussion below will elaborate on these issues by looking closely at three specific areas: the workers' community, issues of power and control, and the methodological innovation of our work.

The workers' community

Although we do not have specific documents that refer to Timna, other New Kingdom Egyptian records suggest that a typical mining expedition consisted of members of different statuses. The majority probably contained ad hoc seasonal crews of foremen and workmen (Shaw, "Exploiting the Desert Frontier" 244); however, there was also a small core of professional workers, including "prospectors" (*sementyw,* represented by a hieroglyphic symbol of the figure of a man holding a bag or stick), professional miners (*ikyw*), doctors (Shaw, "Exploiting the Desert Frontier" 246, 250), and more than likely, managers and soldiers as well.

A common feature of mining communities all over the world, which according to Rothenberg's analyses applied to New Kingdom Timna as well, is ethnic mixture. Based on the analysis of pottery types, rock art styles, and furnace shapes, Rothenberg submitted that the ethnic makeup at Timna comprised Egyptians, local Negebite workers, a workforce from northwest Arabia, and perhaps even some "Sea Peoples" (a group that migrated from the Aegean region to the Near East; Rothenberg and Glass, "The Midianite Pottery"; Rothenberg, "Researches in the Southern Arabah" 24-25; "Egyptian Chariots"). Shaw notes that in more or less contemporaneous circumstances Canaanites worked alongside Egyptians in the turquoise and copper mines of central Sinai, and in Lower Nubia many locals

were almost certainly involved in the Egyptians' procurement of gold, copper, and amethysts ("Exploiting the Desert Frontier" 255). Comparing ancient to modern cases, Sheridan writes that North American mining camps attracted thousands of Native Americans, Spaniards, and *Castas* (people of mixed race; Sheridan 159), and similarly, Hardesty notes a marked ethnic mixture that characterized gold rush towns in the United States (84).

The mixture at mining communities was not only ethnic; as Knapp remarks, the mining community often reflected class divisions as well: "Miners, both today and in the recent past, are prone to sudden death and traumatic injury, are generally poorly paid and housed, and are often ruthlessly exploited by powerful employers. In many pre-capitalist mining camps, they were slaves or convicts. These conditions led to frequent strikes or revolts, which constitute a recurrent theme in the literature on mining" (9). The class divisions did not always reflect the dichotomy of masters versus workers, but also mirrored additional hierarchies such as linguistic and ethnic divisions. In these contexts it was not uncommon for miners from one particular ethnic group to constitute a "labor aristocracy" (Knapp 10).

A major factor that accentuated social tensions within mining communities was their frequent remoteness and isolation. Shaw notes that

> Old and Middle Kingdom Egyptian mining expeditions were virtually always situated physically in the remote desert, which was a quintessentially liminal and 'frontier' location. The mining expedition therefore was ritually charged not only because of the religious and political resonances of the minerals but also because of the nature and associations of the desert itself, which was symbolic of chaos and the unknown. (Shaw, "Exploiting the Desert Frontier" 256)

In addition to this symbolism, the mere fact of being so far from the homeland, and often in secluded places, led to increased vulnerability (Shaw, "Pharaonic Quarrying and Mining" 114-5).

Within the mining areas other issues of social significance also recur, a case in point being a spatial separation between dwelling sites and smelting areas, which aside from practical reasons such as avoiding smoke, also involved other considerations, for example, keeping 'sorcerers' and sexually active women at a distance (Knapp 12), or paying tribute to specific gods associated with mining and the protection of mining expeditions in remote regions (Shaw, "Exploiting the Desert Frontier" 253).

The idea of surveillance at ancient Egyptian mining operations is under-discussed in the archaeological literature, even though cases of control posts located on a higher hill adjacent to workmen's villages are known in New Kingdom Egypt itself, at the El Amarna workmen's village, for instance (Kemp 22-3).

Like Timna, our other example – the Nahal Zohar quarry – is also not mentioned in any ancient text. However, analysis of its geographic location and its region's historic context during the first and second centuries AD may indicate who the people at the place were. As mentioned above, Nahal Zohar is clearly within the zone where the final crushing of the Jewish revolts against the Romans took place. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that the small and short-term workers' community at the place consisted of Jewish war captives employed in maintaining the Roman logistic apparatus in the region, a thesis that is backed up by the quarry's finds. Slaves, convicted criminals, and prisoners of war were often sent to work in the quarries of the Roman Empire (e.g., Humphrey).[3] Given this practice, the workers at Nahal Zohar were probably captives like their contemporary compatriots who were sent to work in the Roman stone quarries of Mons Claudianus in Egypt's eastern desert (Forbes 182).

The quarry supervisors were probably Roman soldiers commanded by a Roman military officer, not much different from a certain T. Sergius Longus who, according to an ancient text, was an officer in a unit guarding quarry slaves at Myli in Euboea (Vanhove 37, n. 15).

Interestingly, in both cases that we have presented here, the initiators and administrators of the operation were members of imperial powers. Patently, operating an organized work force in a remote and hostile region was no simple matter. Handling the workers was only one of the many responsibilities lodged with managers. They also had to plan and provide for the ongoing provision of subsistence and fuel as well as ensuring that transportation routes to and from the work camps remained open and safe. These kinds of tasks cannot be achieved by tribal or simple state organizations. Manifestly, only forces existing on an imperial scale are equipped to attempt projects that require the taming of both people and nature, a situation that only underscores the extremely asymmetrical power relations at the work camps.

In conclusion, it might be said that in both cases the workers' community was characterized by physical isolation, physically demanding and dangerous work, and by extreme power differences. At Timna the makeup of the community was probably diverse, while at the much smaller Nahal Zohar site it was more homogeneous. In sum, the total control exercised at both places suggests a state of conflict between workers and managers.

3 A more extensive quarry-prison operated during this period is on Capitoline Hill in Rome (Rapske 24, 28; Morris and Rothman 17).

Power and Control in Antiquity and Modernity: Towards a Comparison

Our fieldwork at the Timna and Nahal Zohar work camps has revealed that at each site, in addition to the production mechanism, a second procedure of sophisticated surveillance was in place. Despite the differences in scale and period the idea functioned similarly at each location. Highly visible observation posts were placed so that they could be seen by all the occupants of the work camps (both workers and managers); however, these posts were constructed in such a way that laborers were unable to observe if anyone was inside the posts or not. This phenomenon became more widely known in later eras, reaching its extreme in the modern period, first in British philosopher Jeremy Bentham's (1748-1832) plan for his "Panopticon" (Fig. 17), and later in surveillance apparatuses, closed circuit television (CCTV) security systems being a current example (Koskela, "The gaze without eyes"; "'Cam Era' – the contemporary urban Panopticon"; Norris *et al.*; Rosen). Bentham described the Panopticon in 1785 in the following manner:

> Panopticon; or the Inspection House: Containing the idea of a new principle of construction applicable to any sort of establishment in which persons of any description are to be kept under inspection; and in particular to penitentiary-houses, prisons, houses of industry, poor-houses, lazarettos, manufactories, hospitals, mad-houses, and schools: with a plan of management (Bentham 29).

Under Bentham's scheme, a single hidden observer could visually survey an entire establishment. His plan for the Panopticon was for a circular structure with an inner court and a tower rising in its center (Fig. 17). The peripheral building was divided into cells, each of which extended the whole width of the building. One supervisor, positioned in the central tower, could inspect all the cells from that location and, consequently, single-handedly monitor the entire building. In order to make the presence or absence of the inspector unknown to the inmates, Bentham added blinds to the central tower's windows and provided for inner partitions that would prevent the inspector's presence from being evident. If the Panopticon served as a prison, each prisoner was confined to an inspected cell without knowing exactly when or if he or she was being watched. Moreover, in Bentham's design, sidewalls were to prevent individual prisoners from having eye contact with companions in other cells (Foucault 201-2), thus, turning visibility into a mechanism of power.

This special arrangement invokes self-discipline. When people are aware that they are or might be under observation, they usually adapt their behavior to these contingencies (Payne and Payne 107-111). Some of the observed feel threatened, others reassured. In either case, they suppress their spontaneous behavior and act in ways that conform to the normative rules of the observer.

Elsewhere we have already contended that a simple form of a panoptic scheme was in operation at Nahal Zohar quarry (Yekutieli, "Is somebody watching you").
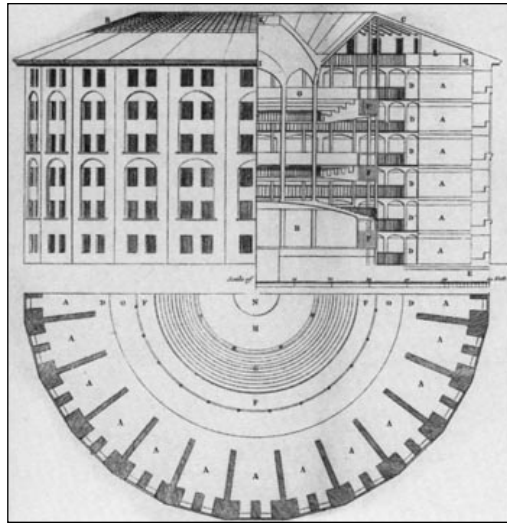
Fig. 17:
Jeremy Bentham's plan for his Panopticon.
From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/
File:Panopticon.jpg [20 September 2009].

Our current work suggests that the idea, although in another format, operated in Timna as well, albeit much earlier. The Timna mines' control apparatus utilized some of these very ideas – a series of observation posts was strung throughout the valley, and not only did each post provide a locus for observing, but each tower could be seen (although, crucially, not its guards) from the work areas as well as from the network of trails connecting them. The posts' design often made it hard to tell who or if someone was watching from within, and so workers and group leaders were always under the impression that they were being under surveillance.

There are other similarities. At Nahal Zohar in addition to being observed, the shelters were organized so that the workers could not congregate, and even eye contact with most of their peers was restricted. Rather than their compatriots, the workers could see, always, the threatening lookout crevice above.

The set up at Nahal Zohar has much in common with the panoptic situation in which fear of a hidden observer is used to enhance discipline, while the organization of the cells prevents plotting and intrigue. Foucault comments on the advantages of this panoptical design for supervisors and its influence on the behavior of its observed occupants:

> If the inmates are convicts, there is no danger of a plot, an attempt at collective escape, the planning of new crimes for the future, bad reciprocal influences; if they are patients, there is no danger of contagion; if they are madmen there is no risk of their committing violence upon one another; if they are schoolchildren, there is no copying, no noise, no chatter, no waste of time; if they are workers, there are no disorders, no theft, no coalitions, none of those distractions that slow down the rate of work, make it less perfect or cause accidents. (Foucault 200-1)

Apparently a closely related concept was put into place in Timna as well. There, on a much larger scale, one finds that the workforce was also separated. The division was not into different cells but into different camps. Camps were sited so that inhabitants of one camp could neither see other camps nor those camps' inhabitants, and communication between them was strictly controlled, minimizing the risk of disorder or collective scheming.

Of interest as well is that the various designs of the Timna camps – some, though not all, surrounded by walls – suggest that there were different levels of freedom. Evidently, under the complex makeup of the workers' community, there operated various degrees of liberty, of ownership of one's body, and of property a person could acquire.

The methodological innovation

The cases presented here indicate that the application of concepts developed in landscape archaeology and, more specifically, visibility analysis, are powerful analytical tools that can provide key insights into the instrumental and symbolic uses of power. That these kinds of analyses are especially feasible in arid zones has been demonstrated in studies by Avner ("Ancient cult sites"; "Studies in the Material and Spiritual Culture") and Rosen and Rosen, the work of both concerning itself with other ideological dimensions in desert environments.

Our work has strengthened the concept that archaeologists, while studying sites and conducting rigorous work within the boundaries of those sites, should not neglect the immediate surroundings. The data existing just outside the perimeters of a site and the analysis of how sites are integrated within and manipulate the landscape in which they are embedded, are often highly relevant for a better understanding of the past, and can uncover a series of issues not otherwise apparent.

Referring to the idea of the Panopticon in his study *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault proposed that modern principles of social organization are based on this condition of visible, unverifiable power, and associated carceral (prison) culture (cf. e.g., Rosen). Foucault argues that under this essentially modern principle individuals monitor their own behaviors and discourses in a non-deliberative manner, to the extent that alternative ways of acting and thinking are marginalized (Wood 235). The two cases we presented highlight the notion that simple panoptic formations were already in practice in periods much earlier than the modern era. This observation is an innovative one for archaeology since the study of panopticism in that field is generally restricted to studying this form of surveillance at modern remains in the New World, such as Delle's study of plantations in Jamaica or Romero's research of nineteenth-century 'fortlets' in Argentina. The work presented here, as well as previous work on the Judean Desert (Yekutieli, "Is somebody watching you") suggests that the panoptic idea – although not in the all-encompassing sense that Foucault refers to in the modern era – had already been developed in antiquity.

We do not argue that the two panoptic cases we discussed match Bentham's highly elaborate program or, for that matter, that they were run in conformance with a Bentham-like manual. Yet the behaviors that arise in response to a hidden observer with superior force, and one who can gaze upon you at any moment, are endemic to human societies. The two cases strongly suggest that ancient people were aware of this correlation, and together with other control methods, manipulated this disciplinary means to their advantage. What is noteworthy is that such acts of observation, in addition to presenting an elaborate system of surveillance, can also be regarded as power and authority statements of the bodies represented by the specific observers, very much the same as the institutions and establishments Foucault described.

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Christian Slavery in Late Antiquity

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I begin with a curious fact. During the era defined by the hegemony of the Roman Empire, not only was physical punishment of slaves considered acceptable; it was seen to have positive pedagogic value for the slave, and so a slaveholder could be seen to fall short in his duties as a householder if he failed to display adequate force in disciplining a slave. Moreover, householders were held responsible for the good order of those households, and it was widely understood that that responsibility included the obligation to discipline subordinates, particularly slaves. Thus, again, a slaveholder could be seen as morally remiss for failing to beat a slave. I call this a 'curious fact' because it challenges today's perceptions of what we could call moral intuitions. Surely – I frequently hear from students, church audiences, and even academic colleagues – slaveholders knew deep down that slaveholding was wrong and that corporal punishment of slaves violated human decency. In fact, the opposite was the case – slaveholders 'knew' deep down that they had a moral obligation to use sufficient force to keep their slaves in line.

Augustine, preeminent Western theologian as well as bishop of Hippo in the early fifth century, argued as much in his magisterial *City of God*.[1] In this view he was not alone among his Christian brothers and sisters. For example, let us consider the views of Lactantius, whose career spanned the late third and early fourth centuries. Like Augustine, Lactantius was a Latin-speaking North African theologian. He declared that although some Christians held the status of slaves or masters, ultimately these were not important distinctions: Christians knew one another as brothers and sisters and as fellow slaves (*Divine Institutes* 7.24.4; 5.15.2-5).

Lactantius nonetheless insisted that the status distinction of free and slave should continue to inform everyday behavior. He supplied the example of Archytas. Discovering that his slave overseer had permitted a field to go to ruin, Lactantius reported, Archytas refrained from striking the slave. Lactantius held that Archytas was not praiseworthy. He believed that slaves required punishment to keep them from grosser failings. On the other hand, Lactantius elaborated, if Archytas had restrained himself from expressing his anger at a citizen or

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1 For Augustine, slavery – while not good in itself and not ordained by God in creation – nonetheless figures as a divinely sanctioned, punitive dimension of the postlapsarian world. See discussion in Garnsey (206-19).

equal who offended him, he would merit praise (*Wrath of God* 18).[2] The Christian Lactantius believed that slave bodies benefited from violence. Free bodies neither required nor benefited from such punitive pedagogy.

My contribution to this volume is inspired by a question I am frequently asked when I speak about early Christian slavery: Given the egalitarian teachings of Jesus, and given Christian insistence that God did not distinguish slave from free, why didn't early Christian communities recognize slaveholding as a moral wrong? Although Christians in the first centuries were hardly in a position to outlaw slavery in the Roman Empire, they might have forbidden the baptizing of slaveholders. To imagine how the Church would have been different if slaveholders had been precluded from membership is a worthwhile thought experiment. In fact, the first Christians – who were of course Jews – might have heard of another group of first-century Jews who were reputed to forbid slaveholding. Both Philo, a first-century Alexandrian Jew, and Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, report that a Jewish sect known as the Essenes outlawed slaveholding by members on the grounds that it was unjust, unnatural, and even impious for one person to own another.[3] Yet we have no evidence that any early Christian churches raised similar objections to slaveholding by members.

In antiquity, Christian slaveholders thought of themselves as morally upright individuals. Or at least, when a Christian slaveholder held himself up to moral scrutiny and found himself wanting, slaveholding did not factor into that judgment. Even if he coerced a slave to have sex, he held himself guilty not of immoral exploitation of a vulnerable person but of failing to control his own sexual desires. A slaveholder who struck a slave in anger would be more likely to condemn himself or herself for acting out of that anger than for injuring the slave. The better course of action, it was widely believed, was to tame one's own emotions and only then to order another slave to beat the slave who had committed the offense.

On one level, this is hardly surprising. Slaveholding was a brute fact of life in Mediterranean antiquity. On other levels, however, this is astonishing, particularly but not only to contemporary Christians who align themselves genealogically with early Christian communities. Ancient Christians organized themselves

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2 References to ancient works (Lanctantius, Philo, Gregory of Nyssa, Josephus) conform to standard citational practices for textual editions and translations.

3 See Philo, *Every Good Man is Free* 79; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 18:21. While the Essenes were reputed to eschew slaveholding, it is unclear whether this reputation reflects actual practices of a historical community. The Dead Sea Scrolls, a trove of ancient Jewish writings discovered in the mid-twentieth century in the vicinity of Wadi Qumran on the western side of the Dead Sea, are widely believed to be associated with the Essene community, although the association is contested on various grounds. The Qumran documents include scattered references to slaveholding by the community or its members; see, for example, the *Damascus Document* (11:12 and 12:10). What is important for my argument is not whether the Qumran scrolls comprised the library of an Essene community or even whether the historical Essenes in fact permitted slaveholding. It is sufficient to note that several first-century Jewish writers could imagine a community of Jews that repudiated slaveholding on moral grounds.

around the memory of Jesus of Nazareth. They remembered that he said the first would be last and the last would be first (e.g., Matthew 19:30); they remembered that he taught them to be slaves to one another (cf. Mark 10:43-4). With few exceptions, ancient Christians proposed that in the eyes of God there could be no distinction between those who were – on human terms – slaves and those who were masters or mistresses. Today, those who do not call themselves Christians may express puzzlement about what may be perceived as an aporia in Christian moral imagination, that is, that those who proclaimed the irrelevance of status distinctions in God's eyes would nonetheless sanction the exchange of human chattel. However, members of today's churches are more likely to experience a form of cognitive dissonance, assuming either that Roman slavery was benign or that the churches somehow discouraged slaveholding.

Neither, however, is the case. There were certainly differences between slave systems in the ancient Mediterranean world and in the New World. Unlike most modern slave systems, ancient slavery was not race based. I am not sure whether or how this would have made a difference to the slaves themselves, although it would have made a difference to descendants who might be freeborn, and who could not so easily be visibly distinguished from other freeborn persons. Moreover, Roman slavery extended more frequent manumission than most modern slave systems. However, while manumission was a common practice, it was not a universal one. Most people born or sold into slavery died as slaves. Finally, although comparisons are difficult, there is every reason to think that the conditions under which slaves labored and lived were at least as difficult in antiquity as in the New World, and every reason to think that the punishments meted out were at least as ugly and, on occasion, deadly.[4]

Nor did the churches discourage slaveholding. Although this article will focus primarily on sources from late antiquity – from the fourth century, the era in which some Christians built basilicas and other Christians, equally privileged, retreated to desert monasteries – the Church was a slaveholding institution from the first generation. The Acts of the Apostles constructs a story of Christian origins in which slaveholding members of the church play pivotal roles. Cornelius, a Roman centurion, is named as an early Gentile convert. In response to a vision he sends two of his slaves to invite Peter to his home. When Peter baptizes the household, presumably both slaveholder and slaves number among the new Christians (10:1-1-48). On another occasion, Peter is reported to have miraculously escaped from prison. He repairs to the home of a believer named Mary, where a prayer meeting is in progress. Peter is greeted there by Rhoda, a slave of Mary and also presumably a believer (12:6-17).

These vignettes allow us to glimpse one role that slaveholding Christians certainly played throughout antiquity: as patrons. Individuals who owned homes large enough for prayer meetings were also likely to be slaveholders. The spread

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4   Bradley provides an invaluable overview of Roman slavery.

of the gospel was thus facilitated by the presence of slaveholders in the believing community. This picture is borne out by other writings of the New Testament. For example, Paul's epistle to Philemon, a cryptic appeal on the part of a runaway slave named Onesimus, is addressed both to the slaveholder Philemon and to the church community that meets in his house. First Timothy, another epistle attributed to Paul, even includes this instruction to slave auditors: "Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful to them on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve them all the more, since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved" (6:2).

Clearly the author of First Timothy presupposes a situation in which both slaves and slaveholder number among a given household's baptized members. In First Timothy there is no instruction to slaveholders to parallel the instruction to slaves, although elsewhere the New Testament does offer pieces of advice to slaveholders. For example, in Colossians, another epistle attributed to Paul, a relatively lengthy charge to slaves to obey their masters is followed by this instruction to slaveholders: "Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, for you know that you also have a Master in heaven" (4:1).[5] Although this injunction is sometimes taken as evidence that Christianity encouraged a kinder, gentler slavery, similar advice is also found in the writings of Greek, Roman, and Jewish moralists.[6] In fact, one would be hard pressed to produce instances in any ancient writing where slaveholders were encouraged to treat slaves unjustly or unfairly, on either moral or practical grounds.

In thinking about the failure of early Christians to recognize slavery as a moral wrong, I argue that the practices of slaveholding constituted a bodily *habitus* that conditioned perceptions of slaves and freeborn persons and of the appropriate relations among them. I elaborate this contention in the course of this essay. My theoretical framework is influenced by the approaches of American philosopher Linda Martín Alcoff and French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Alcoff argues that "social identities are correlated to certain kinds of perceptual practices and bodily knowledges that, as such, may fall below the cracks of the sort of explicit beliefs and assumptions that can be assessed in rational debate." I contend that because Roman slavery structured perceptual practices and bodily knowledge for both slaves and free persons, the embodied experiences of slaves fell below the cracks of explicit beliefs and assumptions that could be assessed in rational debate.

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5   On the challenges to Christian community posed by the inclusion of both slaves and slaveholders in a household church, see Barclay.

6   The assumption that the injunction to slaveholders in Colossians and a parallel passage in Ephesians enjoin a kinder, gentler, *Christian* practice of slaveholding runs throughout much of New Testament scholarship. For a typical example, see Lincoln and Wedderburn, who conclude that the Ephesians household code "accommodates to and modifies the conventions of the Greco-Roman patriarchal household" (124). Specifically, they claim that the love-patriarchalism of the Christian household codes transforms the hierarchical relationships within households.

In making my argument, I eventually highlight two ludic moments in late antiquity when the evidence suggests that a handful of Christians acted in ways that imply repudiation of the embodied system of slavery. The incidents are of interest in themselves as illustrations of the poignant ambivalence of failed resistance movements, yet this is not why I include them. I choose these examples because we can often best see how a system perpetuates itself at the moments when its smooth operation is challenged or disrupted, even though the smooth operation of that system is likely to be rapidly restored. At the same time, these relatively obscure examples help us think about the conditions that allow a group of people to prescind from the hegemonic moral imagination: not only to judge between right and wrong according to received norms but also to disrupt and rethink those norms. I maintain that, because moral norms are perpetuated through bodily habitus, repudiations of those norms are likewise expressed somatically.

My point, it should be clear, is not to justify or excuse slaveholding practices among early Christians. What interests me is the question of what enables individuals to recognize the moral harm in a received ethical norm. I have been asked, essentially, to identify a flaw in early Christian thought that occluded the judgment of believers, inhibiting Christians from sharing our contemporary judgments about what is morally abhorrent. However, this framing of the question lets the questioner off the hook. In focusing our attention on some isolated cases where ancient Christians acted in defiance of slaveholding norms, I attempt to frame a different and I think more urgent question: How does someone embedded in a moral system come to recognize it is riven with shortcomings, flaws, and distortions? What is it that allows some individuals to step outside a moral system to challenge its assumptions? This is not an abstract or disinterested questioning. A problem that haunts this paper, although the effort to resolve it lies outside the scope of what I have undertaken here, is: How would I recognize if I were part of a moral system that was itself distorted, so that acting within its prescribed moral boundaries would in fact lead to reprehensible behavior? Or, perhaps inevitably, how can I position myself to recognize what is, in the final analysis, deforming about the moral systems that govern my life and inform my behavior? How can I retrain my body so that I do not perpetuate norms I was culturally conditioned to embody?

Corporal Habituation

I have noted the early Christian insistence that God did not judge according to status. We nonetheless do not have a single piece of writing from any Christian in antiquity who advocated the abolition of the slaveholding status quo. My assertion is that the churches sanctioned and upheld the institution of slavery because as individuals and as communities Christians were shaped by, and thus embod-

ied, a slaveholding habitus. Some early Christians were slaveholders, freeborn or freed; others were freeborn or freed individuals not wealthy enough to own even a single slave; others were enslaved. I argue that for each of these people, the practices of slavery constituted a habitus that trained his or her body and conditioned perceptions of other bodies. Conditioning to slavery was habitual, a dimension of a corporal vernacular rather than an area of conscious moral decision-making. In this section I outline my understanding of how the habituation of bodies within and by a particular cultural setting sets the parameters of that culture's moral horizon. In the following section I outline my understanding of how the habituation of bodies in the Roman Empire set the parameters by which certain moral expectations were established and certain moral questions were excluded.

What do I mean by habitus? Sociologist Bourdieu relies on the notion of habitus in his practice-oriented social theory. He analyzes the logic of practice by which a society perpetuates itself and advances its values. He contends that we make sense of human bodies, and human bodies make sense, through a "system of structured, structuring dispositions, the *habitus*" (52). Habitus, "embodied history, internalized as a second nature and forgotten as history," translates itself into knowledge borne in the body (56). Through habitus the process of socialization takes place that marks a person "as an eldest son, an heir, a successor, a Christian, or simply as a man (as opposed to a woman)" (58). For Bourdieu, the notion of habitus also encompasses patterns of behavior, which themselves are embodied.

Philosopher Alcoff applies parallel logic to the knowledge that gendered and racially defined bodies carry in American society. Although Alcoff stresses myriad ways that cultures habituate bodies, and particularly the innumerable ways that bodies are habituated to and by race and gender in the contemporary United States, she rejects the idea that bodies are blank pages inscribed by society. Rather, Alcoff understands the body as mindful. She writes that "it makes more sense to think of the body as, oddly enough, a kind of mind, but one with a physical appearance, location, and specific instantiation […] We perceive and process and incorporate and reason and are intellectually trained in the body itself" (114). With an emphasis on the United States, Alcoff helps us see how gender, race, ethnicity, and social class inform bodily interactions. I am not suggesting that modern concepts of race and social class will apply directly as we analyze ancient bodies. Rather, I hold that in analogous ways ancient bodies learned to be particular kinds of bodies that inhabited specific social locations and interacted with other socially located bodies.

With respect to the United States, Alcoff writes that "race operates preconsciously on spoken and unspoken interaction, gesture, affect, and stance to reveal the wealth of tacit knowledge carried in the body of subjects in a racialized society" (108). How loudly to laugh at the joke of a social superior; whether to laugh at the joke of a social inferior; how to move through a crowd to attract attention; how to move through a crowd to escape attention; how a chin should jut to

command respect; how eyes should dip to show deference: these are a few of the body's constant and minute performances, performances that rarely register in the conscious mind. Bodily knowledge of how to inhabit a specific social identity is acquired, but once acquired, seems natural. As a result, Alcoff concludes, behavior based on gender and race is corporally intransigent, often immune to rational attempts at reform. This is a crucial point. Various dimensions of social identity in the Roman world, including identity as freeborn, free, or slave, similarly operated preconsciously on interpersonal interactions, which were always embodied interactions. (Even verbal interactions were embodied.) Corporal inflection of identity informed the kinds of social arrangements Christians constructed and ultimately the moral imagining within Christian circles. Not surprisingly, then, in late antiquity, behavior based on social status, and particularly behavior based on status as slave or free, remained beyond moral critique or reflection.

To flesh out my argument that bodies are culturally habituated in ways that carry durable moral meanings, I turn to the words of an American welfare recipient quoted in an article by Vivyan Adair, a literary critic concerned with American representations of poverty:

> My kids and I been chopped up and spit out just like when I was a kid. My rotten teeth, my kids' twisted feet. My son's dull skin and blank stare. My oldest girl's stooped posture and the way she can't look no one in the eye no more. This all says that we got nothing and we deserve what we got. On the street good families look at us and see right away what they'd be if they don't follow the rules. They're scared too, real scared. (Quoted in Adair 451)

Adair identifies the speaker of these words as a white, single mother of three from Washington State. In thinking about the bodily effects of poverty, the speaker does not distinguish effects that would easily be characterized as purely physical, such as dull skin or stooped posture, both associated with poor nutrition, from effects that might be characterized as psychological, such as a blank stare or inability to return a gaze. Moreover, the speaker understands that the corporal traces of poverty are interpreted in moralizing terms by the larger American public – "This all says that we got nothing and we deserve what we got."

Bodies are habituated to and by deprivation; bodies are habituated to and by relative privilege. Most Americans would deny that they ascribe moral meanings to bodies shaped either by poverty or by wealth, yet this is precisely a key point for both Bourdieu and Alcoff. Embodied status distinctions function *preconsciously* to establish certain moral expectations – for example, that poor people must be lazy – and to exclude certain moral questions – for example, why poor people are more likely than rich people to be incarcerated for a crime such as handling small quantities of narcotics. The kinds of gut reactions middle class Americans enunciate regarding less privileged members of society are often expressed as corporal directives. "Stand tall," for example, or "pick yourself up

by your bootstraps." Similarly, in antiquity individuals were habituated to and by their status as slave or free, and those habituated corporal distinctions functioned *preconsciously* to establish moral expectations and delimit the parameters of moral questioning.

Alcoff notes that we typically become conscious of what our body knows at moments when such knowledge is disrupted. The example she supplies is driving on the left (or unaccustomed) side of the road. Such disruptions of normalcy, she contends, "bring us face-to-face with the wealth of knowledge we take entirely for granted, knowledge lodged in our bodies and manifest in its smooth mannerisms and easy movements" (108). Although this example is not morally laden, it is also the case that we become conscious of the moral coding of bodies at moments when such coding is disrupted. I close this article with several examples of isolated moments of resistance to the corporal habitus of slavery, examples that will, I hope, function in a similar manner to bring us face-to-face with the wealth of knowledge about the relations of slavery that ancient slaves and slaveholders carried in their bodies.

Habituation by Slavery

In the Roman Empire, anyone born to a slave mother was born as a slave. Anyone born to a free woman, even to a former slave who had been freed during pregnancy, was freeborn. A person born in or reduced to slavery had a different status, that of a freed person. However, in another sense slaves were not born but made, corporally trained from infancy to embody a servile identity. Moreover, just as slaves were corporally trained to be slaves, elite persons were corporally trained from infancy to embody a privileged status. Elite children of the Roman Empire acquired the habit of command early. Exercises copied by schoolboys relied on and reinforced the customary directives that little children gave their slaves. One version of these exercises followed the schoolboy through a typical day. Martin Bloomer provides a quick summary: "Starting with the dawn the boy orders his slave to wash him. Clothe me. Feed me and so on" (72). The format includes various lists for the student to practice writing: body parts that the slave is to dry, for example. Bloomer insists, "The boy was learning to command: he was rehearsing the role of slave owner, father, advocate, all the roles of the pater familias" (58). Just as importantly, without consciously intending to do so, the schoolboy was cultivating the pampered body of a slaveholder and absorbing expectations about the relative moral capabilities of slaves – who were understood to require constant supervision and correction, even from dependent children – and free persons.

Although status as slave or free was a legal distinction that determined an individual's rights (or lack thereof), I submit that, on a daily level, identity as slave or free was not experienced as a set of legal rights but as habitus. One

demonstration of this can be found in the fourth-century Asia Minor theologian Gregory of Nyssa's reverent account of his sister's life, *The Life of Macrina*. According to Gregory, Macrina persuaded her mother to transform their household into an ascetic, quasi-monastic community in which slaves were to become sisters. Rather than manumit their slaves, however, Macrina and her mother instead adopted the habitus of their slaves, even sharing bed and board. Gregory reports that he visited Macrina when she was on her deathbed, which turned out to be neither a bed nor a couch but a sack spread over a board, with another board, instead of a pillow, propping her head. There is no suggestion that Macrina had moved from comfortable couch to the floor for the purpose of dying. The reader thus presumes that these are the accommodations that Macrina and her mother would have shared with the women who had formerly attended them (and whom they still may well have legally owned). Twenty-first-century sensibilities anticipate that dissolution of status distinctions should have legal implications, yet I do not think Macrina and her mother were in any straightforward sense hypocritical, however dubious I am that the altered household arrangement improved the lives of their sister-slaves. Rather, the peculiar incident underscores for me the extent to which freedom and slavery were defined as corporal experiences.

Subjection to a battery of physical insults was central to the corporal habituation of a slave. Free persons were not entirely exempt from such treatment, but when they were battered, part of the injury was the insult of being subjected to treatment considered more appropriate for a slave. Even a cursory reading of Roman literature yields a catalog of grotesque punishments that might be inflicted on slaves. My concern here is not with the extremes of violence that pepper Roman sources but with the everyday violence to which slaves were habituated from their earliest days until their deaths. Richard Saller has argued convincingly that, although Roman fathers had the right to inflict corporal punishment on their children, they rarely did so, precisely because such treatment was understood to be suitable for slaves and not for free persons: "(1) the Romans attached symbolic meaning to whippings, (2) the whip was used to make distinctions in the public sphere between free and subject, and (3) the distinction between free and subject carried over into the household in the administration of corporal punishment" (151). Thus, although a Roman father had the right to beat his son, the fear that such punishment would habituate his son to an unacceptable servility restrained his hand – or redirected that hand to inflict violence on a different target.

To illustrate the moral impact of such habituation to corporal violence against slaves, I examine a curious passage in Augustine's *Confessions*.[7] In narrating the events of his life, Augustine pauses when he reaches his mother Monica's death to recall what he knows of her biography. On her son's telling, the Christian and saintly Monica modeled exemplary traits in a wife, despite her marriage to the rougher Patrick: "She bore with his infidelities and never had any quarrel with her

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7   For previous treatments of the violence in this work, see Glancy 71-2 and, at greater length, Clark.

husband on this account" (9.9 [19]). Augustine notes that the faces of many of his mother's married friends were frequently marked by evidence that their husbands had exercised their legal prerogatives to strike them. However, despite the fact that Patrick had a reputation for a quick temper, he never struck his wife. Augustine's recollection of his mother's advice to her friends typifies his analysis of violence, in which the victim of violence is as likely to be held accountable as the perpetrator. Monica instructed her friends "that since the day when they heard the so-called matrimonial contract read out to them, they should reckon them to be legally binding documents by which they had become servants. She thought they should remember their condition and not proudly withstand their masters" (9.9 [19]). That is, inasmuch as wives stand before their husbands as slaves before slaveholders, they are more likely to be kindly treated when they accept that position; otherwise they should anticipate corporal instruction in their legal relations. That is, like a slave, a disobedient wife should expect a beating.

Augustine moves from this reverie on matrimonial bliss into the thicker tangle of domestic relations in late antiquity, relations complicated by the dynamics of household slaves interacting with members of the slaveholding family. When Monica moved into a household that included her husband Patrick's mother, relationships between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law got off to a rocky start. Augustine attributes the animosity to the conniving of the household's female slaves. Apparently Monica won Patrick's mother over in the same way that she would later avoid blows from Patrick, through her gentleness and patience. But the mother-in-law does not repent for her own animosity. Rather, she transfers animosity from Monica to the household slaves. Augustine writes:

> The result was that her mother-in-law denounced to her son the interfering tongues of the slavegirls. By them domestic harmony between her and her daughter-in-law was disturbed, and she asked for them to be punished. So, after that, he bowed to his mother's request and, exercising his responsibility for discipline in the family and to foster peace in his household, he met his mother's wish by subjecting the girls of whom she complained to a whipping. (Augustine Confessions 169)

From that moment Monica lived in memorable harmony with her mother-in-law, a harmony purchased, according to Augustine's explicit account, by the household slaves' fear that they would be blamed – and whipped – for any incidents of hostility that might surface.

Neither freeborn mother-in-law nor freeborn daughter-in-law is held accountable for the hostility, which is entirely displaced onto female slaves, and then beaten out of them. Violence against slave bodies is seen as consistent with household peace. In fact, violence against slave bodies is seen as necessary for household peace. In this context, Patrick's position as head of the family is represented as requiring him to use violence as a leverage against his household chattel. The incident exemplifies the degree to which the corporal habituation of bod-

ies as slave or free reflected and perpetuated a moral horizon in which the exercise of violence against enslaved bodies was seen not as a moral wrong but as a moral obligation.

Changing Habits

This section highlights several instances from late antiquity where we do have indications, however obliquely gleaned, that some Christians used their bodies symbolically to challenge, or at least to outrage, the habitus of slavery, thus attempting to disrupt, albeit fleetingly, the practice of Christian slaveholding. In these few exceptional moments, ancient Christians evinced some awareness of moral problems intrinsic to the institution of slavery, moments where they brought to consciousness moral discomfort with the habitus that shaped them. These moments of resistance were, in fact, futile, church hierarchies being receptive neither to the efforts nor to the Christians who made them. Ultimately these examples of embodied and enacted resistance illustrate precisely the conservative social effects of corporal habituation to particular social locations.

In saying this much, I am stretching the evidence. Both of the cases that follow involve problems of historiography. We only know about (what seems to be) resistant behavior from the oblique comments of those who condemned that reputed behavior. Moreover, even assuming that the behavior is accurately described, we have no sure way to move backwards from behavior to motivation, to reconstruct the rationales that implicitly or explicitly impelled a handful of Christians to reject the habitus of slavery. Nonetheless, the tantalizing evidence regarding what seem to have been outbreaks of resistance to slaveholding habitus underscores two themes central to this paper. First, as Alcoff notes, the smooth operation of bodily knowledge is more easily perceptible at moments when that operation is disrupted. Second, these isolated examples suggest moments where communities collectively seem to have brought to consciousness some ways that the moral system by and to which they had been habituated was in the end morally deforming.

It is important to my argument that these occurrences of resistance to slavery were embodied rather than written. A few Christians marginalized by the larger church (seem to have) acted out what it might mean for the last to be first and the first to be last, but their actions were condemned rather than debated for their theological merits. Did any Christians in antiquity leave a written record of anti-slavery sentiments? The closest we come is Gregory of Nyssa's fourth homily on Ecclesiastes. Gregory was brother both to the ascetic Macrina (discussed earlier) and to the theologian Basil of Caesarea. Although Gregory did not set forth a program of reform, he nonetheless anticipates some of the hermeneutical moves of nineteenth-century Christian abolitionists. Gregory's primary scriptural reference was the Genesis creation account, which figures the human person as the mas-

ter of creation and created in the image of God (Gen 1:26). Genesis says, "So God created humankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." Genesis goes on to say that God gave humanity dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every living thing that moves upon the earth. Taking his cue from Genesis, Gregory demanded to know what price could be paid for a slave who was himself, by dint of his humanity, lord of the sea and sky. He demanded to know how a scrap of paper could document the sale of a slave who was, at the end of the day, an icon of God. As the brunt of Gregory's attack was slaveholder arrogance, however, he did not explicitly call for abolition of slavery or even wholesale manumission of slaves, nor did he countenance resistance by slaves to the realities of slavery.[8]

Eustathius of Sebaste

The first of my examples of embodied resistance to slavery also comes from fourth century Asia Minor, perhaps not entirely accidentally, as I will argue. We are uncertain of the precise date, but sometime in the middle of the fourth-century church leaders convened in Gangra. From the documents of that council we learn about the activities of a group of Christians who were followers of a man named Eustathius, an Armenian bishop in Sebaste. Before the condemnation of his followers at Gangra, Eustathius moved in the same circles as Gregory of Nyssa and Macrina. We may speculate that Eustathius influenced brother and sister in their abhorrence for the hubris of slaveholding, yet we have no hard evidence for that speculation.[9] The historiographic problems surrounding the followers of Eustathius are daunting. We only know about the behavior of the partisans of Eustathius from the records of the church council that condemned them. We thus have a glimmer of their program, but we cannot be sure of the extent to which that program was misrepresented or caricatured by opponents. Moreover, we are left with only a (tentative) record of behavior from which to reconstruct the motivations of Christians who acted out of their distinctive understanding of the demands of the gospel.

The church leaders who assembled in Gangra did not condemn the partisans of Sebaste on the basis of doctrine. Rather, the condemnation was based on their behavior, or more precisely, on their refusal to conform to socially located bodily norms. The list of charges against them can be summarized by saying that the partisans of Eustathius acted in ways that outraged the habitus of their world regarding the most basic, ordinary routines of daily life, especially eating and dressing. They wore "strange clothes in subversion of the common kind of clothing." Disregarding custom, women "assume men's dress instead of women's dress and think themselves thereby justified; moreover, on the pretext of piety, many of

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8 See discussion in Stramara, "Gregory of Nyssa."
9 For consideration of Eustathius's influence on Macrina, see Elm 135 and Silvas 57-8.

them cut short that form of hair which is proper to women." These errant Christians fasted on Sundays, "despising the sanctity of the free days, whereas they make light of the fasts ordained among the churches and eat on them." Apparently, those who were slaves among them left their masters, "withdrawing from their masters and despising them, presuming on their strange dress."[10]

Canon III of the Council of Gangra stipulates that anyone who counseled a slave to treat a slaveholder with contempt, to render faint-hearted service to a slaveholder, or to flee the slaveholder is to be cursed. The Council of Gangra connected this challenge to slavery with a challenge to habitus: slaves adopted peculiar dress rather than the mode of dress customary for slaves, and this violation of sumptuary norms in turn provoked contempt for slaveholders, a contempt so profound that some Christian slaves abandoned their owners. The incident thus hints that some Christians in late antiquity, namely, the partisans of Eustathius, found the practice of slaveholding to be incompatible with the gospel. They seem to have urged slaves to reject their subordination as slaves, and they enacted this provocation, as they enacted their other challenges, corporally and symbolically. The institutional church, however, reacted out of its deeply inculcated habitus and condemned these apparently vegetarian, proto-feminist, anti-slavery Christians.

We normally go about our daily routines without conscious attention to the myriad ways that we embody and enact our social location. We are perhaps most likely to become conscious of habitus at moments when it is disrupted – when we recognize that our own comportment is out of place or when we draw back in response to the inappropriate posture or gesture of someone with whom we are interacting. So fourth-century Christians seem to have pointed to the centrality of habitus in the daily maintenance of the slave system by connecting the behavior of slaves who rejected their status as slaves – by, in fact, leaving their owners – to the slaves' rejection of sumptuary norms. To return to the question that inspires this article: What cues a community to call into question the habitus that has shaped their moral horizon? Drawing together bits and pieces of evidence from the circles around Eustathius, including Gregory's scathing condemnation of the arrogance of slaveholding, I would conclude that at least in some circles the gospel inspired such recasting of a moral horizon. The historical evidence, too scant for a firm deduction to be drawn, is nonetheless tantalizing.

The Circumcellions

Like the partisans of Eustathius in Asia Minor, the roughly contemporaneous Circumcellions of North Africa acted in ways that outraged the habitus of slavery, while in practice freeing at least some slaves from their owners. Their means were allegedly violent. The Circumcellions were a fringe group within the Dona-

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10 Silvas, *Asketikon of St Basil the Great* 489.

tist Church. "Donatist" was a pejorative label assigned by their enemies; those known to history as Donatists understood themselves as to be orthodox Catholics. Practice rather than doctrine separated the churches. What initially separated the Donatists and the Catholics was the refusal of the Donatists to accept the ministry of priests and bishops who had temporarily repudiated the faith during the height of anti-Christian persecutions, although as the years passed the rivalry between the churches took on added dimensions, particularly issues related to regional power struggles and competing hierarchies.

We only know of the Circumcellions from the writings of Catholics determined to impugn them. Throughout his essay, "Who Were the Circumcellions?" (2004), Brent D. Shaw cautions that much of the evidence concerning the Circumcellions derives from sources outside North Africa with no claim to credible knowledge. However, allegations that the so-called Circumcellions violated the habitus of slaveholding can be found in North African sources, namely, the Numidian bishop Optatus of Milevis and Augustine of Hippo, who characterized the Circumcellions as fanatics acting independently of the more sedate leadership of the Donatist Church. Although we have more information about them than we have about the partisans of Eustathius, we must again keep in mind the strong bias of our sources. Once again we cannot be sure that behavior is accurately described. Inferring motivations based on the Circumcellions' reported conduct is necessarily even more speculative.

The Circumcellions are said to have deliberately acted in violation of bodily norms, often brutally. For example, Optatus reports that the Circumcellions forcibly "scraped" the heads of Catholic clergy. In his study of violence piously enacted by Christians in late antiquity Michael Gaddis characterizes this "scraping" as simultaneously "public humiliation, purification, and degradation" (120). By calling attention to outrages against status-dictated bodily norms, accounts of the Circumcellions highlight the importance of habitus in the maintenance of the slave system. The Circumcellions, Optatus tells us, made the roads unsafe. "Even the safest journeys could not take place, because masters, thrown out of their vehicles, ran in servile fashion before their own retainers, who were sitting in their masters' place. By the verdict and bidding of those men the conditions of master and slave were transposed" (Optatus 3.4). In Optatus's view, this is an outrage rather than a prophetic fulfillment of Jesus' words: the last shall be first, and the first shall be last.

Augustine's recollections of the Circumcellions are similar. "What master was there who was not compelled to live in dread of his own servant if he had put himself under the guardianship of the Donatists?" (*Epistles* 108.6.18).[11] With violence and threats of violence, the Circumcellions destroyed documents that detailed ownership of slaves, a practical measure. They also engaged in symbolic

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11 For translation and discussion, see Frend, 73-5.

violence, ludic violence, violence with no apparent goal except the expression of outrage at the habitus.

What bothered Augustine was not violence per se, but violence directed at respectable bodies. Respectable bodies were habitually exempt from violation. Respectable bodies were regularly entitled – and even expected – to mete out violence against subordinate bodies. Augustine writes, "Certain heads of families of honorable parentage, and brought up with good education, were carried away half dead after their deeds of violence, or bound to the mill, and compelled by blows to turn it round after the fashion of the meanest beasts of burden" (*Epistles* 184.4.15). Although a reputation for violence clings to the Circumcellions rather than their adversaries, they were still brutally suppressed by the more powerful, better organized, and better equipped forces of the imperially aligned church.

Given the absence of any documents composed by the Circumcellions themselves, we cannot reconstruct any coherent purpose behind their reported behavior. Their actions, however, suggest that they found the practice of slaveholding to be incompatible with the gospel. We do not know what motivated the Circumcellions. Their actions, however, suggest that they found the practice of slaveholding to be incompatible with the gospel. They enacted symbolic challenges to slavery by outraging habitus: by seating slaves and forcing masters to run after their own chariots, by hitching slaveholders to mills and whipping them into turning those mills. Were these actions immoral, any more immoral than forcing slaves to run after their owners' chariots, carry their mistresses' litters, or hitch slaves to mills?

Conclusion

As Alcoff observes, we typically become conscious of what our body knows at moments when such knowledge is disrupted. Neither the partisans of Eustathius nor the Circumcellions left written accounts of their own actions or motivations; we can only glimpse their outrage through the reciprocally outraged accounts of their ancient opponents. I would argue that the responses of those adversaries reveal discomfort and even moral umbrage catalyzed by actions that disrupted the smooth operations of what bodies knew about maintaining the dynamics of the slave system. Such knowledge did not, however, precipitate self-critical epiphanies on the part of those who benefited from slavery. Rather, ecclesiastical authorities employed all the forces at their disposal to restore the operations of the ordinary. For almost all ancient Christians, the routinized embodiment of slavery kept it beneath the level of consciousness and thus outside the purview of moral reflection.

As noted earlier, my contribution to this volume is inspired by a question I am frequently asked. Given the egalitarian teachings of Jesus, and given Christian insistence that God did not distinguish slave from free, why didn't early Christian communities recognize slaveholding as a moral wrong? I have argued that the

corporal habituation by and to the practice of slavery constrained the moral imaginings of early Christian communities. In that sense, it is not surprising that the vast majority of Christians in antiquity perpetuated slaveholding norms. Rather, what is surprising is that a few of them challenged and resisted those norms. I have thus suggested that we reframe the governing question by asking how participants deeply involved in a system of morals come to recognize its defects, faults, and weaknesses. While we cannot resolve this issue through analysis of the obscure evidence that exists concerning the followers of Eustathius or the Circumcellions, their reported behavior nonetheless reminds us both of the challenges and the potential of 'disembodying' moral distortions.

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Rural Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean. The Significance of Algiers

ROBERT DAVIS

Despite a recent spike in interest in the corsairs and slavers of the Barbary Coast, the whole phenomenon of slaving in the Early Modern Mediterranean still remains little known and poorly understood. It is too often assumed on both sides of the Atlantic that slavery, wherever it occurred in these centuries, was fundamentally a racial matter – something done by European whites to black Africans (and, to a lesser extent, to Amerindians). This may help explain why Mediterranean slaving is largely overlooked, both by scholars and by the general public, since the basic factor at play here was faith rather than race. For the better part of a millennium, from the Levant west to the Straits of Gibraltar and beyond, Christians and Muslims enslaved each other as part of an ongoing holy war, or *jihad*, that aimed at social and cultural domination as well as territorial conquest. During the Crusades both the struggle and the slaving that it generated reached a crescendo, and though the level of both subsided considerably in the later Middle Ages, they saw a resurgence at the beginning of the Modern Era, around 1500.

Much of this reemergence of what could be called 'faith slaving' can be tied to the arrival in the region of great new empires, led by the Spanish Hapsburgs in the West and the Ottoman Turks in the East. Each side, Christian and Muslim, took to slaving as part of a general strategy of conflict, seeking to weaken, demoralize, and impoverish its religious and imperial enemy in a way that publicly and vividly underscored the superiority of its own faith. Each empire, moreover, had its own satrapies and client states – Tuscany, Malta, Naples, and the Papacy on the Hapsburg side; Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli on the Ottoman. All these players, whether empire or ancillary, found a significant role for slavery in their economies. While the social and cultural role of slavery in these cities never reached the pervasiveness of, say, the Caribbean sugar islands, there were enough slaves, and enough demand for them, to sustain lively markets for bondsmen throughout the Mediterranean. The result on the supply side was to generate a virtual gold rush in faith slaving. At first, in the sixteenth century, the hunt developed along the highly exposed and often poorly defended coasts of Spain, Italy, the great islands, and Barbary. By the early 1600s, after these initial

slaving fields had played out somewhat, or had become too well defended, new hunting grounds were opened up in the Atlantic and Aegean (Davis 57-74).

There are good reasons to believe that, throughout the sixteenth century and well into the seventeenth, faith slaving took a much heavier toll in terms of victims than did race slaving. The capture and transportation of black Africans to the Americas had by the early 1500s also begun to evolve from a largely local curiosity to a major branch of commerce. Still, the trans-Atlantic trade was riskier, more capital intensive, and less driven by the passions of *jihad* than was faith slaving. As a result, it was slower to reach its full capacity. While in the later 1500s Muslim raiders in particular were regularly making off with five or six thousand Christian captives in single raids on Spanish or Italian shores, European slavers were bringing fewer than half that many black Africans to American plantations in an average year.

Although we have no estimates of captive populations in Mediterranean cities until the last decades of the sixteenth century, when these do start appearing – in the records of local governments (on the Christian side), or in the writings of diplomats, missionaries, ransomers, and the slaves themselves (on the Muslim side) – they indicate that faith slavery was well established throughout the region. In North Africa, from the Sultanate of Morocco to the viceroyalties of Ottoman Barbary, there were said to be tens of thousands of enslaved Europeans. In 1634, for example, the Trinitarian Father Pierre Dan reported that "The number of these poor captives reaches about thirty-six thousand, according to the enumeration that I have carried out on the spot and to the records that have been furnished and sent to me by the Christian Consuls who live in the Corsair Cities" (Dan 318). The totals were similar in the heartland of the Ottoman Empire: Constantinople and Cairo were each said to have had large Christian slave populations, mixed in with many black Africans. The numbers on the north shore of the Mediterranean were reported to be comparable: five thousand "Turks and Moors" held in Malta and nearly as many in Livorno, somewhere around ten thousand in Naples, and at least twice that many in each of the big Spanish coastal cities. At any given time between roughly 1500 and 1650, if we can believe the estimates, perhaps one hundred thousand men, women, and children were in bondage around the Mediterranean.

But how trustworthy are these estimates? Although those for Muslim slaves held in Spain and Italy have provoked little dispute (or, indeed, interest), the calculations we have from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for Christians enslaved in Islamic lands have been treated with suspicion by many scholars. The supposition has been widespread, almost since the time that the estimates were made, that those Europeans who went to the Barbary cities in particular were prone to exaggerate the number of slaves held captive there. Certainly there is just cause to doubt the reliability of estimates made by observers who were anything but professional demographers, especially when it was very much in the interest of some of them – missionaries and ransomers in particular, but also the

slaves themselves – to paint as gloomy and threatening a picture as possible of the extent and nature of Christian slavery in the Maghreb.

At the same time, however, there are a great many estimates on hand from the three major Ottoman viceroyalties of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli – for Algiers alone we have well over sixty, complete or partial, from the 1580s to 1830 – and from the independent sultanate of Morocco. While many of these calculations are scattershot and vague, others show a certain precision, with the slaves broken down by nationality, gender, or faith (Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox). Nor do all these estimates come from boosterish priests of the Catholic ransoming orders, intent on underscoring the dire circumstances in Barbary as a means of stimulating fund-raising at home. Diplomats and consuls, who owed a certain accuracy to their employers back in Madrid, Paris, Rome, or London, produced their share of estimates, both of Christians captured and those actually held in slavery in the Maghreb. The slave counts these men provided were often lower than those sent by the redeemers, but not by all that much.

Whatever the reasons that modern scholars have had for rejecting past estimates for slave populations in Barbary, they have rarely stated them outright. Specific figures have often been challenged and almost contemptuously discarded as "impossible," though without much effort to demonstrate why. Most modern scholars seem to take it for granted that the number of Christians enslaved (though not, interestingly, the number of Muslims) was wildly exaggerated at the time, perhaps by as much as an order of ten. Why it is that we should be so much more certain in our (tacit) knowledge of the nature and extent of faith slavery than in the reports of those who actually lived through it is almost never made clear. It is, moreover, "far from a quibble over numbers," as the historian Paul Lovejoy once commented about such disputes in the African slave trade (Lovejoy 474). Determining the extent of North African (and thus of Mediterranean) slavery is vital to establishing the extent and importance of faith slaving relative to race slaving in these years, not only in economic and social terms, but also in the cultural sense of how early modern Europeans conceived of the whole institution of bondage – what their role in it was, and what it said about how their human relationships were determined by race and by religion.

One historian who has sought to go beyond simply dismissing these slave estimates out of hand is Federico Cresti. In an article published recently in *Quaderni storici*, Cresti judged that those who provided estimates for Algiers in particular – where the supposed numbers oscillated between twenty-five thousand and thirty-five thousand during the century after 1580 – were engaged "in a kind of bidding contest, in which each author seems to challenge his predecessors [by] magnifying the dimensions and the power of the city [of Algiers] through the number of its inhabitants and also of the Christians held in slavery there." Less content than previous scholars to simply express his doubts and move on, Cresti examines a number of the available estimates for Algiers. He rejects a few – somewhat peremptorily – because they were "based on data and documents of which

it is impossible to verify the truth and the value... [since] in the current state of our awareness there remains no trace [of them]." Others he discards as apparent (and unquestioning) copies of earlier figures. In the end, Cresti pronounces himself content only with estimates of the so-called "public," or *beyliç*, slaves. These were held in a half dozen or more *bagni*, or slave pens, whence they were mustered for their work as rowers on the state galleys or in other heavy labor around the city. As such, they could more readily be counted by missionaries, ambassadors, or other European observers, although Cresti only really considers the tallies kept by the bagnio authorities in the later 1700s as really trustworthy (Cresti 417-8; transl. RD).

Accepting the likelihood that there were several thousand of these 'state' slaves held in the city, Cresti rejects all other, larger estimates for slave populations for Algiers, and presumably for the other Barbary Coast cities as well. His stance is significant since it does not just encompass the eighteenth century – no one who wrote on the subject ever seemed to doubt that there was a severe contraction in slave numbers in Algiers after 1700, though there was some debate about how sharp or consistent the drop was. Cresti's position is that in earlier years there were far fewer Christian slaves in the city than has generally been believed, even during the heyday of corsair slaving, the years between 1560 and 1620 that Fernand Braudel has termed the "brilliant age of Algiers" (Braudel 2: 880-6). The reason, says Cresti, citing the historical demographer André Raymond, was one of simple geography: the same massive walls that had rendered Algiers secure from invasion for so many centuries also produced an urban area that was physically too small to hold (for example) thirty thousand slaves, along with the one hundred thousand free Moors, Turks, Jews, and Berbers commonly estimated to have lived there. Presumably even fifty or sixty thousand free citizens would have made for a tight fit within those walls, and the resulting slave to free ratio of 1:2 or even 2:3 would have left the city all too prone to uprisings and rebellions.

Much of the problem in figuring out how many slaves were actually held in cities like Algiers – but also in Tunis, Meknes, Livorno, Malta, and Constantinople – lies in a confusion over what they did and who owned them. Cresti and others who have pronounced on slave populations in Barbary have generally stuck to state slaves. These have been the easiest to count (then and now) and the only captives for whom there are some Algerian state records, even if these have only survived from very late in the annals of Barbary slaving, i.e., from 1736 to 1816. The slave numbers recorded in the state archives are indeed small, averaging just under twelve hundred individuals over the course of these eighty years (Cresti 427).

Though there were not many slaves in eighteenth-century Algiers, this was at least partially due to the decline of galley warfare throughout the Mediterranean. Already by the early 1700s, the rowed galley had largely disappeared from those waters, abandoned first by such ocean-going powers as the British and the Dutch,

and subsequently by the French, Spanish, Venetians, Neapolitans, and Maltese. Finally, even the Barbary corsairs, whose strength and strategy had been founded for centuries on these agile and relentless craft, were forced to follow suit and adjust to the new technology, such that Joseph Morgan could comment in the 1720s how "For some Years there has not been one Galley or Galeot in all *Barbary*; and consequently the Captive *Christians* are exempted from that least-tolerable and most-to-be-dreaded Employment of a Man deprived of Liberty" (Morgan 516-7).

Still, the number of men put to work rowing these ships, both Christian and Muslim, had once been prodigious, and this can hardly be denied. In the Battle of Lepanto of 1571, the largest encounter between galleys since ancient times, some 425 war galleys and scores of other vessels were involved. Most of them were powered by rowers, an estimated eighty thousand in all. The great majority of these were Christian or Muslim slaves, and though fifteen thousand Christian *galeotti* gained their freedom, at least twelve thousand slaves of both faiths went down with their ships, most of them still chained to their oars (Fontenay 20; Norwich 486). Even after a sort of uneasy peace came to the region in the later sixteenth century, corsairs and privateers, both Christian and Muslim, continued to roam across the Mediterranean and out into the Atlantic. To keep all their galleys, galeots, xebecs, and feluccas going still required a steady twenty thousand or more rowers. Even more than in the days of the great Hapsburg and Ottoman imperial fleets, the lesser states that controlled these vessels relied on slave rather than free oarsmen.[1]

The pervasive *galérien,* or *galeotto*, was not always at work "tugging an oar," however. During winter months, when the corsair fleets were in port, these *gente di catena*, or "people of the chain," as the Italians called them, were mustered in chain gangs to work around the harbors where their galleys were tied up (Tuppoti 61-2). These wretched, filthy, and broken men could be seen shuffling through cities all around the Mediterranean, burdened, as one of them put it, with "Two great Chains of Eighteen or Twenty Pounds Weight upon each of us, linking us Two and Two with another a cross" (Mouette 30). The cities best known for their chain gangs were Algiers and Livorno, but gangs were also in evidence in Tunis, Naples, and Valletta, in Malta. In France and Venice, where reciprocal treaties with the Ottoman state supposedly forbade the use of "Turks" as *galeotti*, such Muslim slaves could still be found mixed in among the Christian convicts as *gente di catena*. In the galley fleets of some Catholic powers, there were also Protestant galley slaves, as the Englishman William Davies could testify from his own experience in Livorno (Davies). Hidden by their shared shabbiness and general public indifference, such diverse slaves remained unrecognized and uncounted in many port towns, both Christian and Muslim.

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1   For a count of the ships in the Algiers fleet alone, see Dan 308-9, D'Arvieux 264; and Earle 45-6; on the Maltese fleet, see Earle 104-5.

Usually such slaves were put to work in construction, which could take a number of forms. In Algiers they were sent out of town to quarry large blocks of stone, which were then dragged on sleds to the harbor, floated on barges out to the mole, and thrown overboard to build the breakwater. Slaves in Tunis were often dispatched to the hills to fell trees, and these they then dragged by force down to the flatlands and eventually to the port, to be used in shipbuilding. The grandiose Moroccan sultan, Moulay Ismail, assembled his own chain gangs of British, French, and Spanish slaves, sometimes numbering up to five thousand men. Their job, which essentially lasted throughout Moulay Ismail's long reign between 1672 and 1727, was to build (and then repeatedly rebuild) his enormous palace at Meknes, intended to outshine Louis XIV's at Versailles (Busnot 155). State slaves in Livorno, on the other hand, were put to work building their own *bagno*, erected right near the harbor, in the center of town. Those in Valletta labored on the city's famous fortifications.

In some ports all or most of the slaves brought in by corsairs were claimed by the local ruler, "who reserves them all for himself, out of a Principle of Pleasure, of Honour, and of Interest." This seems to have been the practice in Tripoli and in Livorno, while "in the Empire of *Morocco*," according to Dominique Busnot, "they all belong to the King [Moulay Ismail], who does not care to release them; because he finds them more skillful and handy at Building" (Busnot 2-3 and 146). Yet this custom was by no means universal. In Algiers, Tunis, and Valletta, the local *pasha* or *dey* – or the Grand Master of the Knights of St. John in Malta – could claim outright only an eighth or a tenth of the captives brought in by corsairs. This represented what the state considered its fair share of anything captured, including booty, slaves, loot, and ships. This share, known as the *penjic* in the Maghreb, was not the only source of state slaves. In Barbary, the governing council, or *diwan*, could claim a share of its own; the *pasha* or *dey* also had the right to buy slaves at reduced price in the market; and sometimes individual masters sold, donated, or were forced to give their chattel to the authorities. Still, the great majority of captives brought into cities like Algiers, Tunis, and Valletta – probably 70 percent – unquestionably ended up in private hands.

Some of these endured a captivity not much different than that of state-owned slaves. Scores of them were bought up in the market, not by the pasha but by one of the fabulously wealthy corsair captains who dominated these cities – Ali Pegelin in Algiers or Mehmed Chelebi in Tunis each were said to own hundreds of both household and galley slaves. The latter they sent out to row, often in company with the state slaves, and when the fleet was in port, they might well rent them to the local *pasha* or *dey* to do his work. Chained up with the public slaves, these technically private slaves also labored in heavy construction or hauling, only returning to their owner's hands in the evening, and only if he had opted to lodge them in his private *bagno*.[2]

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2   On Ali Pegelin (or Pizilini, Bitchnin, Bijnîn, Piccanino, depending on the author), see D'Aranda 12-13, 24-5, and 31-2; on Mehmed Chelebi, also known as Dom Philippe, see D'Arvieux 41-5.

The rest of the privately owned slaves, probably still the majority of all captives, had more variable fates and have consequently proved harder, if not impossible to track or tally. Many of them were employed in "household" duties, sometimes in large palaces, but also with fairly modest families, including ordinary artisans. Visiting Valletta in the late seventeenth century, the French traveler Jean Dumont observed that "almost all the Maltese are served by slaves, who are suffer'd to walk freely about the streets all day" (Dumont 138). The same could be said of the common run of free Turks, Moors, and Jews in Algiers and Tunis, even the meanest of whom was said to keep a slave – so cheap were they in the sixteenth century – to fetch water, scrub down the house's walls and floors, empty out the privies, or similar tasks. Germain Mouette wrote of his own experience as a household slave in Salé, before he was taken off to Meknes by the sultan:

> They gave me a good Breakfast, and after it a Basket of Corn, to grind at a Hand-mill that was in their Kitchin. This is the most usual Labour of the Slaves in the Sea-port Towns, there being no other Mills. This toilsome Exercise requires much strength, and having never been us'd to work, I began to mislike it the first moment I was imploy'd, and made such coarse Flower that they could not mold it. This mov'd my Mistress to give me a young Child she had, to carry about the Town. (Mouette 10)

Not all the slaves owned by private individuals worked in the household, however, or at least not exclusively. In Barbary especially, city dwellers wealthy enough to own more than one or two slaves also usually owned some rural property, middling-sized plots of land referred to as *fahs*. The slaves who had to work on them – digging, planting, or harvesting – usually referred to these little farms as *masseries* or *giardini* (gardens). Such a term indicates something less than the large-scale, gang-labor farming that marked slave agriculture in the New World at this time, and indeed some of these *masserie* were as much country villas or pleasure houses as working farms. The French slave Chastelet des Boys described the *masserie* where he was put to work as "this little rustic house, rather well built, situated in the middle of a great garden, watered with a quantity of fountains" (Boys 27). Such suburban villas were a popular part of the social life around Algiers, to the extent that one of the Catholic redemptive organizations felt it had to warn its agents to be on guard against the blandishments of wealthy slave owners who might invite them "to eat or drink with them [or] go in their company for recreation [and] pleasure to their *giardini*" (ASVat, Gon., *busta* 1139, fol. 305). Such warnings were not misplaced, for even the slaves of these masters might find these estates a seductive paradise. As one of them put it:

> The surrounding countryside is filled with gardens and country houses that make a very agreeable landscape. These gardens are planted with beautiful fruit trees, and one sees a great many bowers of jasmin, of

> vineyards, of orange groves, where one can go to take the air. (*Voyage dans les États Barbaresques* 99)

These country retreats did not flourish on their own, of course. Slaves would have worked them much as gardeners did back in Italy or Spain – landscaping and maintaining the grounds, pruning the trees, collecting fruit, or fixing the water-works. Moreover, not all masters used their *fahs* simply as pleasure palaces. Some also put their land to commercial use, growing a variety of crops to either sell in the market or consume at home. The French diplomat D'Avrieux wrote of visiting several such farms outside of Tunis, establishments that were probably quite similar to those surrounding Algiers, where the master's villa was "situated in the middle of a vast walled enclosure, which contains some vegetable gardens, fruit trees, some fields of orange groves, some lemons, figs, and other trees" (D'Arvieux 5: 47).

These estates had to be worked like any other farm, and in these semi-desert conditions the labor could be brutal, the slaves "exposed now to the scorching rays of the Sun; now half nude to the abuse of the weather and to the inclement air" (Rincolui 9). The Flemish slave Emanuel d'Aranda complained how he was sent "to delve in the Vineyard belonging to a Country-house of our Patron's, which was very hard work" (D'Aranda 18). Under the direction of one or more overseers – usually Moors, renegade Christians, or sometimes black Africans – the slaves on these *fahs* had to do all sorts of farm work, often apparently without the aid of any animal labor. They harvested and pressed olives, ground wheat by hand while "bending them over the spokes of a mill stone" (Grammont 14) and picked fruit and nuts. They also did the long-term maintenance work, such as clearing brush, planting trees, and digging ditches. Some claimed that their masters, through cruelty or caprice, demanded servitude in its most classic and Biblical form, "forcing them even to be attached to the plow to fulfil the duties of the Ox" (Dominici 17).

This was probably some of the hardest work that slaves of private masters would ever have to do – unless they were rented out to the galleys. Those unaccustomed to tilling the soil, like Emanuel d'Aranda or the French nobleman Chastelet des Boys, complained that the tools were unfamiliar, heavy, and hard to manage, while the sun excruciatingly strong. Chastelet lasted less than a week, as it happened, struggling to master his pick and hoe, and eventually becoming so dispirited, dizzy, and weakened that his fellow slaves complained to the overseer and refused to work with him any longer. Not just the chronically effete had problems with country work, however. More than one slave admitted to being "in good health and suffer[ing] neither for food nor for clothing, but finds that hoeing in his master's garden is hard and very tiring" (CPF, SRC, "Barbaria," *busta* 4, fol. 491).

The *fahs* do not appear to have been especially large. Certainly they were nothing like the great cotton, tobacco, and sugar plantations that characterized

slave agriculture in the New World at this time. Along the semi-arid coast they extended east and west to cover "all the country that is twenty or twenty-five leagues [100 to 125 kilometers] from Algiers," as the Trinitarian father Pierre Dan put it. Even if this cultivated zone only amounted to a thin strip a few kilometers wide and extending up some of the interior valleys, it still comprised some 125,000 hectares of farmland. All the small *fahs, masseries,* and *giardini* divided this highly productive land into a vast and varied mosaic; various Europeans, writing between the early 1600s and around 1720, placed their number at between eight to eighteen thousand. One writer, who claimed to have had a look "at the account books of the Pasha," claimed in 1619 that there were precisely 14,698 *fahs*. If there were even as many as ten thousand, they would have averaged around ten to fifteen hectares apiece, certainly enough land for both a decent villa and a steady and profitable supply of agricultural products.

How many slaves were put to work tending these 'gardens' is an open question. Certainly it cannot be known with anything like the precision we have for state slaves lodged in the public *bagnos*. It would seem a safe assumption that plots of farmland averaging three to four hundred meters on a side would require the work of a least half a dozen laborers to realize their productive capacity. Some of these workers were probably hired Moors or Berbers; but at those times when Christian slaves were cheap – throughout the sixteenth and much of the seventeenth century, in other words – certainly much of the labor fell to them. Many contemporaries said there was a minimum of one or two slaves working on every holding, a number that could obviously vary, according to holding size, crops, and the wealth of the owners, some of whom no doubt owned multiple plots and enjoyed some efficiency of scale. One missionary, Giovanni di S. Bonaventura, put the number as well as anyone, perhaps, when he claimed, "in each *Giardino* there are two or four or even six Christians, or at least one" (CPF, SRC, "Barbaria," *busta* 3, fol. 408). If even one Christian slave, on average, was working in each *giardino* (and European observers uniformly claimed at least that many), then ten thousand farms would have absorbed the labor of upwards of ten thousand slaves and maybe a great many more, in other words, a third to a half of the slaves commonly estimated to be captive in Algerian hands. Farm labor, then, rather than galley rowing or heavy construction, most typified the slave experience in Algiers, and over a period of time, as the city diminished as a corsair power, this preponderance could only have increased. One certainty is that rural slave labor left its mark. Visitors to Algiers praised the surrounding land as "a very delightful Country, prodigious fertile in Corn, Pulse [legumes], Fruits, and Flowers, agreeably diversified with cultivated Hills and Plains" (Laugier de Tassy 163). At the same time, the rural location of the slaves made it hard to account for many of the slaves who were supposedly in Algerian hands. The difficulty was specifically stated in 1589 by a papal ransoming agent, who wrote back to Rome from Algiers that, though he had come up with the names of 150 papal subjects held in the city itself, "many other slaves from the States of the Church

are in Algiers, but since they are outside, in the Mubgera [Maghreb?], and in the various fields and Gardens [of their] owners, one cannot obtain their names" (ASVat, Gon., *busta* 8, filza 39).

The system of *fahs* stretching out from cities like Algiers and Tunis did not give rise to the sort of rural slave culture that came to dominate many areas of the New World. In part this was because the masters employed their villas for relaxation and some casual farming but spent the bulk of their time in the city, pursuing the life of a corsair, soldier, or administrator rather than that of a full-time planter. Many of the slaves working on their lands also lived part-time in the city. Customarily, on *massarie* within five or six kilometers of the city gates, the slaves passed their nights in their owner's house in town and commuted to the fields. This made it unnecessary for the master to provide them with any lodging in the countryside, while also reducing the risk that they might try to run away. However, in order to do their work, these slaves had to rise every day before dawn, and, usually without any breakfast, make the trek of an hour or more out to the fields and orchards.

This arrangement was only suitable for *fahs* close to town. When a farm lay further along the coast, or in one of the interior valleys, it was another matter. Unable to make a daily commute to the fields and orchards, the slaves attached to such plots necessarily had to stay there overnight, possibly three or four days at a time. Judging by the way such slaves complained about their treatment when they were sent to these farms, it seems that owners tended to treat them as actually resident neither in the city nor the country, making little effort to provide them with any accommodations or even much in the way of food. Slaves such as these wrote home lamenting how they "would die in chains and all naked and starving to death, sleeping on the naked earth as if I were a dog" (ASVat, Gonfalone, *busta* 1144, fol. 576). Still further from town – probably anything beyond ten or fifteen kilometers – the arrangements may well have become more permanent, since slaves on such *fahs* seem to have been left there more or less indefinitely. A missionary in 1654 complained how some of them, "after [more than] 25 years," had not been to the city to see a priest (San Lorenzo 16). The best that those working on farms lying closer in could possibly hope for was that perhaps once or twice a year they might be permitted to return to the city, when, for example, it was time to haul the products of the harvest to the master's home in Algiers.

The isolation and rough life of these outlying *fahs* weighed heavily on the slaves. They hated the hot and exhausting work and complained about their wretched rations – "six-ounce loaves of half-cooked bread, made of rotten grain, that the dogs themselves would not eat" (San Lorenzo 16). Like the black African slaves in the Old South, who dreaded their master's threat to send them west, to the bitter cotton lands of Mississippi or Texas, Europeans enslaved in Barbary feared being ordered to go "up into the country, where I should never see Christendom again, and endure the extremity of a miserable banishment" (Rawlings 256). Cut off from the city, such slaves also lost the connections that might

give them hope of eventual freedom, forfeiting any chance they once had of earning extra wages, plotting an escape, or getting picked up by one of the periodic redemptive expeditions. On hearing that he was to be sent to his master's "fair Farm in the Countrey, twelve miles from the City," the English slave William Okeley worried that, though he was being offered the position of overseer, "where I might have been there a *petty Lord,* and *Bashaw'd* over the rest of my *Fellow Servants*," this also meant that, once away from Algiers, he would lose "all means, all helps, and therefore all hopes to rid myself out of this Slavery" (Okeley 41-2).

There was an additional and very real fear that tormented such up-country slaves, especially those held in the valleys that cut into the Tellien hills, which ran just a few kilometers south of Algiers and parallel to the coast. Slaves in these *fahs* were at continual risk of – ironically enough – slave raids. On what amounted to Algiers' wild frontier, there was always the possibility of an attack from the Berbers who made this northern spur of the Atlas range their home. As one eighteenth-century French observer recalled, describing the tentative position of such farms throughout the Maghreb:

> Sometimes those [Berbers] come by Night and suddenly attack those Farmhouses and Gardens, which are in the Neighborhood of the great Towns, and wherein are generally some *Christian* Slaves, to cultivate and look after them, whom they carry off, as well as those *Turks,* &c. who are so unfortunate as to be there present; for they are no more favorable to them [the Turks] than to the *Christians*. (DeLa Motte 41)

Once taken by the Berbers, captives typically fell into an abject and grueling slavery that made the bondage they had known in Algiers seem positively luxurious. For Europeans, it was a kind of double slavery, like falling still deeper into a black hole, as their captors would "feed them as little as possible [and] take from them the greatest amount of work they could give," usually making them watch after goats and camels or gather firewood (Grammont 13-14). In time they might well be traded to other desert folk, who could carry them still further into the interior. There they would remain, miserably dependent on their own impoverished and wandering owners, to live out their lives and die in a shadowy existence of wretchedness, starvation, and pain, without the slightest hope of rescue.

There is clearly a great deal more that we should know about the *fahs* and *masseries* of Barbary. William Okeley wrote that, after his master had taken him out to his "fair Farm," he then "had me to their Markets," seemingly an indication of villages among the *fahs* where the slaves might bring harvests and possibly socialize. The sheer frequency with which visitors, ransomers, and slaves wrote about life on the *masseries* is a good indication that faith slavery in the Mediterranean could be a good deal more rural than has generally been realized. There is little doubt that this was so around Algiers and in Tunis – where it was said, that "they grow oranges in such great quantities that the trees are used for

making charcoal" – but also around Salé and in Christian Valencia and Malaga, where great numbers of Muslims toiled as slaves on the land once owned by their ancestors, until the Spanish crown finally expelled them for good in 1607-09 (*Voyage dans les États barbaresques* 159). Faith slaves around the Mediterranean, as we well know, labored in quarries and on construction sites. The lucky ones were assigned to the relative ease of private households, as servants, housekeepers, secretaries, and concubines. A great many of the Christians among them, however, also pulled plows, swung hoes or picks, harvested fruit, or pushed grain mills around in endless circles under the hot African sun.

Their country labor represents more than just a social curiosity, for it may well validate Federico Cresti's assertion that Algiers was simply too small to hold more than a few thousand Christian slaves. This claim is very likely based on the premise of Raymond's calculation for the surface area of Ottoman Algiers, which was limited to the original walled medina and fortress of the city. This amounted to just 46 hectares, a rough triangle about a kilometer, or eight city blocks, on a side – really a tiny space, almost exactly the size of the modern Vatican City. If, as one eighteenth-century French visitor claimed, the steeply terraced hillsides of Algiers also boasted "ten grand mosques and fifty little ones, three colleges, a number of small schools, and sixteen bath houses, richly marbled," along with a "very considerable" fleet inside a quay "500 paces long" and all manner of warehouses, it is a wonder that there was room for even three thousand residents, much less, in addition, three thousand slaves (Raymond 62-4; *Voyage dans les États barbaresques* 98-9; 108).

It seems more than likely, however, that a good percentage of the slaves – and many of the free inhabitants – who observers claimed made up the population of Algiers actually lived outside the city. In particular, we could say that slaves working on *fahs* over fifteen kilometers from the city – and these were probably the majority – were, simply because their masters lived in the city, slaves of Algiers in name only. When the corsairs were active and constantly bringing in shiploads of fresh captives, the number of country slaves might have ranged from five to as high as fifteen thousand. Even when the slaving business was slow, and the captive population of Algiers began to drop, due to redemptions, deaths, and escapes, the number of slaves on the *fahs* would have declined more slowly than those in the city, since – as we have seen – rural slaves were less likely to attract the attention of the ransomers (and more likely to die of the plague, for that matter).

The likelihood that there were so many European slaves apparently held on African farms calls for a re-examination of the contrast that many historians have made between the 'genuine' race slavery of the Americas and the 'lesser' faith slavery that prevailed in the Mediterranean. The former has been generalized as rural and plantation based, dependent on commercial crops like cotton, tobacco, and sugar. The latter, by contrast, has been seen as maritime or household in nature, always mitigated by the possibilities of ransom or exchange that

made these men more the equivalent of prisoners of war than genuine slaves. The slaves themselves knew better, however. Rural slavery was pervasive in North Africa. It was hard, isolated, and dangerous work. These slaves were all too familiar with such conditions and could certainly agree with the lament of the slave priest Aniello Russo, when he wrote back home to Naples in 1651:

> I find myself in this cruel slavery with a chain at my feet, and every day I go to work in the *giardino*, to dig stones with the other poor slaves, and we are mistreated, beaten, and called dogs without faith, and I would be happy to die, starving to death. God knows what will come to pass for me (ASN, *busta* 7, 22 February 1651).

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CHAPTER FOUR

Slavery and the Age of Sensibility[1]

SIMON GIKANDI

1

Sometime around 1659, the Dutch painter Harmenszoon van Rijn Rembrandt sat in his studio in Amsterdam and commenced work on the *Two Negroes* (Fig. 1), considered one of the most compelling paintings of the last phase of his illustrious career. Working with African models, and operating within a Dutch culture whose domestic economy was driven by the slave trade, Rembrandt sought to represent his black figures, most of whom had probably arrived in the Low Countries as objects of exchange, as human beings. This gesture – the transformation of the most marginal figures in society into elevated works of art – was most evident in Rembrandt's keen sense of the contrast between the two African models. This crucial differentiation implicitly questioned the undifferentiated image of the black as fetish or stereotype that was dominant in the records of Dutch travelers at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century. In short, Rembrandt's Africans were not the generalized villains that agents of the Dutch slave interests were observing on the West African coast – "all without exception, Crafty, Villanous, and Fraudulent," according to William Bosman (117). These portraits were elevated to a vector, common in the early modern period, in which blackness was associated with dignity, decency, and virtue, if not equality.[2] We don't, of course, actually know who the men in the picture were, nor where they came from, but for students of the African image in the European imagination, the *Two Negroes* had fulfilled a key tenet in theories of the aesthetic:

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1 This essay is an excerpt from my forthcoming book *The Aura of Blackness. Slavery and the Culture of Taste*.

2 The image of the black in the early modern period is outside the scope of this essay, but see the general surveys by Peter Erickson and the essays collected in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, ed. T. F. Earler and K.J.P. Lowe. See also the pioneering work of Eldred D. Jones, *The Elizabethan Image of Africa* and *Othello's Countrymen. The African in English Renaissance Drama*. See also, Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness. Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*, Ania Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism*; and the essays collected in *Women, 'Race,' and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker.

Fig. 1: Harmenszoon van Rijn Rembrandt, *Two Negroes*, 1661, Mauritshuis, The Hague, The Netherlands.

the painter had used his genius to reclaim the human from the detritus of slavery – art had "ennobled this humanity" (Kunst 23).[3]

In the same year that Rembrandt was ennobling the black in the aesthetic sphere, affirming the humanity of the African in unmistakable and unequivocal terms, the Dutch merchant, Pedro Diez Troxxilla, wrote a receipt for the slaves he had received from Matthias Beck, governor of the Curaçao islands. The receipt was more than the customary acknowledgment of goods received; it was also

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3 Kunst's view is challenged or qualified by Kim Hall in "Object into Object?" 346-79.

a detailed inventory of objects of trade and the geography in which they were exchanged:

> I, underwritten, hereby acknowledge to have received from the Hon'ble Matthias Beck, governor over the Curaçao Islands, sixty two slaves, old and young, in fulfillment and performance of the contract concluded on the 26th June, A'o 1659, by Messrs. Hector Pieters and Guilliaume Momma, with the Lords Directors at the Chamber at Amsterdam; and as the negroes by the ship *Coninck Salomon* were disposed of, long before the arrival of the undersigned, and the ship *Eyckenboom*, mentioned in the aforesaid contract, has not arrived at this date, the said governor has accommodated me, the undersigned, to the best of his ability with the abovementioned sixty two slaves, and on account of the old and young which are among the aforesaid negroes, has allowed a deduction of two negroes, so that there remain sixty head in the clear, for which I, the undersigned, have here according to contract paid to the governor aforesaid for forty six head, at one hundred and twenty pieces of eight, amounting to five thousand five hundred and twenty pieces of eight. Wherefore, four-teen negroes remain still to be paid for, according to contract in Holland by Messrs. Hector Pieters and Guilliaume Momma in Amsterdam, to Messrs. the directors aforesaid, on presentation of this my receipt, to which end three of the same tenor are executed and signed in the presence of two undersigned trustworthy witnesses, whereof the one being satisfied the others are to be void. Curaçao in Fort Amsterdam, the 11th January, A'o 1660. It being understood that the above fourteen negroes, to be paid for in Amsterdam, shall not be charged higher than according to contract at two hundred and eighty guilders each, amounting together to three thousand nine hundred and twenty Carolus guilders. (Troxxilla 149-50)

This correspondence, dated June 1659, was typical of the new language of what would come to be known, in the verbal trickery of euphemism and understatement, as 'The African Trade', what was assumed to be a triangular commerce joining the industrial centers of Europe, Africa, and the Americas. What made this trade unique in the history of the modern world was that its primary commodity was black bodies sold and bought to provide free labor to the plantation complexes of the New World, whose primary products – coffee, sugar, tobacco – were needed to satiate the culture of taste and propel the civilizing process. In this 'triangle', African bodies mediated the complex relations between slave traders like Troxxilla, colonial governors such as Beck, and the unnamed but powerful directors of the Amsterdam Chamber of Commerce. Here, then, are the startling contrasts that will initiate my meditation on the relation between slavery and the culture of taste: on one hand, we have the work of art endowing aura to some of the humblest subjects in a modern polity; on the other hand, we have these same people reduced to mere objects of trade.

Like the other great works of the major Baroque painters of the period – Diego Velasquez and Peter Paul Rubens, for example – Rembrandt's painting was unique for placing Africans at the center of the frame of the picture and not confining them to borders as was the case in the works of an earlier generation of European court painters, including the portrait paintings of Anthony Van Dyck.[4] But the recognition of the African as a figure worthy of representation in painting was often at odds with their comprehension as objects of trade, the primary conception that was making its way into the prosaic discourse of the time, often in the form of official correspondence, decrees, or so-called accurate accounts of what was then generally referred to as "Guinea." In the prose of the period, the slaves who had become the cog around which trade and social relationships revolved were conceived as mute and invisible objects, available to their interlocutors only as synecdoche (in the sense of parts standing for the whole), subject to monetary additions and deductions, valued solely in terms of guilders, or, in the English case, guineas.

On the surface, Diez Troxxilla and the members of the Amsterdam Chamber of Commerce may not seem to have anything to do with the works of one of the most distinguished painters from the Low Countries during the Baroque period. And for modern connoisseurs of art, Troxxilla's almost impersonal and quotidian prose of trade, notaries, and contracts seems so far removed from Rembrandt's painting that it is hard to believe that the two were produced in the same culture, in the same city, in the same year. And yet, in spite of the powerful 'moral geography' that separates them, these cultural texts were united by both their physical and cultural proximity.[5]

This now barely visible connection generates the questions that inform this essay: What was the relation between aesthetic objects and the political economy of slavery, especially in Britain? How could such elevated images of art exist in the same realm as the harsh world of enslavement and the slave trade? How could the figure of the black simultaneously be the source of what Walter Benjamin aptly called the work of art's unique "aura" and a prosaic object in a discourse of commodity fetishism?[6] And how do we apply the same register to these

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4   This point has been underscored by Allison Blakely (119); Kim Hall provides a compelling reading of the role of the black figure on the margins of the early modern portrait (*Things of Darkness* 321-24).

5   For a slightly different discussion of these issues, see Allison Blakely and Susan Buck-Morss. My discussion here and elsewhere is indebted to Marcus Wood's *Blind Memory*.

6   In addition to Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," I'm here also thinking of Karl Marx's famous use of a religious analogy to describe the emergence, in capitalism, of a relationship "between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things" and his precise conclusion: "This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities" (*Capital* 1: 165). What Marx forgot to say was that the concept of the fetish (Portuguese *feitiço*) was invented to describe trade relations on the West African slave coast. This is the subject of a series of remarkable essays by William Pietz ("The Problem of the Fetish, I," "The Prob-

two spheres of social life, one rooted in the realm of the aesthetic, civility, and taste, and the other in the political economy of slavery? These are the questions that I will address in this essay.

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Within the culture of modernity, slavery is anachronistic. This anachronism arises from the fact that the terms in which the culture of modernity defined itself – and has hence been defined – seemed at odds with all that enslavement entails. Arguably, modern identity was premised on the supremacy of a self functioning within a social sphere defined by humane values; indeed, the distinctiveness of this moment in the history of the Western World has been predicated on the existence of free and self-reflective subjects, not bodies in bondage. And while there are disagreements on what constituted modernity and what its key ingredients were, and while there are still unresolved disputes about the origins, history, and consequences of a modern identity, all major documents on the Enlightenment and its aftermath have been premised on the idea of what Marcel Mauss and others have termed the category of the person.[7]

Whether we approach the issue from the perspective of the German Enlightenment (Moses Mendelssohn and Immanuel Kant), or the British tradition associated with the Scottish Enlightenment (David Hume, Lord Kames, and Adam Smith), the culture of modernity was envisioned across Europe as the moment of liberation of the subject from the dictates of tradition, religion, and old rules of conduct.[8] In its simplest form, the project of the Enlightenment, considered to be the high point of modernity, was conceived as the production and valorization of the subject as autonomous, self-reflective, and unencumbered by immediate experience. Within the European continental tradition, the production of a unique and self-reflective human subject was closely aligned with the project of rationality and the autonomy of aesthetic judgment. Modern subjects were those individuals

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    lem of the Fetish, II," and "The Problem of the Fetish, IIIa"). See also his "Fetishism and Materialism: The Limits of Theory in Marx."

7   See also, Charles Taylor, "The Person." The literature on modernity is too extensive to cite here, but I have relied on the classical philosophical texts, including Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* and *A Secular Age*; Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*; Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*; and Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity;* Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment;* and Michel Foucault, "Afterword." For a historical exploration of the making of the self in a specifically eighteenth-century English context, see Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self*.

8   The key texts here, which I will be referring to throughout this chapter, are Moses Mendelssohn, "On the Question: What is Enlightenment?"; Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?"; David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*; Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*; Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion;* and Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

capable of using their faculties of reason and judgment in the conduct of human affairs; the individual was the sole arbiter of meaning and identity, not a cog in a system of institutional and institutionalized rules and behaviors. This, of course, was the claim made at the beginning of Immanuel Kant's seminal 1784 essay, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?":

> Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity [*selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit*]. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is self-incurred if its cause is not lack of understanding, but lack of resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of another. The motto of enlightenment is therefore: Sapere aude! Have courage to use your own understanding [*Verstand*]! For enlightenment of this kind, all that is needed is freedom. And the freedom in question is the most innocuous form of all – freedom to make public use of one's reason in all matters. (Kant, "An Answer" 55)

Within the series of debates and disputes that came to define the European Enlightenment, reason and the subject's capacity for rationality were paramount. The idea of Enlightenment was premised on a fundamental belief "in the power of human reason to change society and liberate the individual from the restraints of custom or arbitrary authority; all backed up by a world view increasingly validated by science rather than by religion or tradition" (Outram, *The Enlightenment* 3).[9] To understand human life through what Kant considered to be a priori principles or ideas of reason, now separated from the event as a sensual or phenomenological experience, was the ambition of the Enlightenment. All that was needed for a self to develop, Kant asserted, was the most fundamental form of freedom – the "freedom to make *public use* of one's reason in all matters" ("An Answer" 55; italics added). And if Kant's little document is considered to represent a major milestone in the story of European modernity, it is because of its precise isolation of the two issues that would provide the fulcrum for a modern identity – the question of freedom and rationality.

That the mass of African slaves who drove the European economies of the time were not free, was not a matter that bothered Kant or his British interlocutors such as Hume because, as is well-known, the black was excluded from the domain of modern reason, aesthetic judgment, and the culture of taste. Although

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9   See also Outram's *Panorama of the Enlightenment*. As will become apparent, the debates surrounding the project of Enlightenment do not occupy the center of my project, which will focus on the British tradition of taste, but the larger philosophical debates are pertinent. For these, see the essays collected in Schmidt, *What is Enlightenment?*; see also Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity – An Incomplete Project." For the Enlightenment outside the North European circuit, see Franco Venturi, *Italy and the Enlightenment*; *The Enlightenment and its Shadows*, ed. Peter Hulme and Ludmilla Jordanova; and *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze. For slavery and the Enlightenment, see Michelle Duchet, *Anthropologie et historie au siècle des lumieres*; and William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans*.

they were considered rivals in the battle to define the contours of reason and taste, Kant and Hume would still find concurrence when it came to matters of black 'lack,' either in morals or rationality. Kant asserted this concurrence of opinion in his complimentary use of Hume as a source in *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*:

> The Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that arises above the trifling. Mr. Hume challenges anyone to cite a single example in which a Negro has shown talents and asserts that among the hundreds of thousands of blacks who are transported elsewhere from their countries, although many of them have even been set free, still not a single one was ever found who presented anything great in art or science or any other praiseworthy quality, even though some continually rise aloft from the lowest rabble, and through special gifts earn respect in the world. So fundamental is the difference between these two races of man, and it appears to be as great in regard to mental capacities as in color. (Kant, *Observations* 110-1)[10]

This view was a common one in the highest European intellectual circles. In fact, the specter of blackness haunted all attempts to elaborate and valorize the discourse of modern freedom, and by the middle of the eighteenth century, when the order of slavery came to be seen as the central cog in the machinery of commerce and the wealth of nations, blackness, once exalted as a symbol of sanctity in the last great cycle of paintings of the Adoration of Christ at the end of the sixteenth century and the Baroque painters I mentioned above, had come to represent what Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, writing in a different context, have called "the rock bottom of symbolic form" (3).

The "rock bottom" of black representation can even be found in the most unexpected places such as the *Encyclopedie ou Dictionnaire raissoné des sciences, des arts, et des metiers*, edited by Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond' Alembert, published in Paris between 1751 and 1772. Here, under the entry "*Negre*," written by M. le Romain, the language and authority of natural science were deployed to set the black apart from the rest of humanity. The African, defined as a "Man who inhabits different parts of the earth, from the Tropic of Cancer to the Tropic of Capricorn," was identified as the figure of radical difference: "Africa has no other inhabitants but the blacks. Not only the color, but also the facial traits distinguish them from other men: large and flat noses, thick lips, and wool instead of

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10 The question of racism in Kant is outside the scope of my discussion but it has generated significant debate in revisionary histories of the Enlightenment. Thomas Hill and Bernard Boxill focus on Kant's concern for universal freedom and consider racism tangential to his project ("Kant and Race"). For a contrary view, see Emmanuel Eze, "The Color of Reason"; and Robert Bernasconi, "Who Invented the Concept of Race?" See also, Christian M. Neugebauer, "The Racism of Hegel and Kant"; and Raymond A. T. Judy, "Kant and the Negro."

hair. They appear to constitute a new species of mankind" (cited in Eze, *Race and the Enlightenment* 91).

The 1798 American edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* went a step further, exiling the African from the human community in rabid and libelous terms:

> NEGRO, Homo pelli nigra, a name given to a variety of the human species, who are entirely black, and are found in the Torrid zone, especially in that part of Africa which lies within the tropics. In the complexion of negroes we meet with various shades; but they likewise differ far from other men in all the features of their face. Round cheeks, high cheekbones, a forehead somewhat elevated, a short, broad, flat nose, thick lips, small ears, ugliness, and irregularity of shape, characterize their external appearance. The negro women have the loins greatly depressed, and very large buttocks, which give the back the shape of a saddle. Vices the most notorious seem to be the portion of this unhappy race: idleness, treachery, revenge, cruelty, impudence, stealing, lying, profanity, debauchery, nastiness and intemperance, are said to have extinguished the principles of natural law, and to have silenced the reproofs of conscience. They are strangers to every sentiment of compassion, and are an awful example of the corruption of man when left to himself. (Cited in Kramnick 669)

There is no disputing the fact that the most powerful arguments against slavery were made by the philosophers of the Enlightenment; but it is also hard to find a more virulent description of the black than this one authorized by the institutions of modern knowledge, built on scientific explanation, geographical difference, and physiology.

But my main concern here is not the reasons why the great philosophers of freedom sought to exclude the black from the narrative of universal reason; rather, I'm interested in the emergence of a discourse on some of the most pressing issues of the eighteenth century, from civic virtue to beauty, whose primary goal was to quarantine one aspect of social life – the tasteful, the beautiful, and the civil – from a public domain saturated by diverse forms of commerce, including the sale of black bodies in the modern marketplace. For if one were looking for a methodological link among a group of philosophers as diverse as the German idealists, Scottish Enlightenment Rationalists, and English Whigs, it is perhaps to be found in the articulation of a discourse of social life in which the qualities that distinguished the modern self transcend the "array of cultural materials" that actually constituted that self (Wahrman xv).

For Kant, the issue of transcendentalism was simple: in order to have a proper understanding of moral behavior, the age needed "to discover rules or principles of conduct which are logically independent of experience and which are capable of contradiction" (Reiss 18). But apparently these contradictions did not extend to the world of sense experience where one could find slaves functioning as inescapable subjects in the overwhelming materiality of modern life. Even Adam Smith,

who was much more concerned with questions of utility and the production of goods to satisfy immediate desires, was keen to separate, within the system of producing wealth, ends and means: from "a certain love of art and contrivance," Smith noted, "we sometimes seem to value the means more than the end, and to be eager to promote the happiness of our fellow-creatures, rather from a view to perfect and improve a certain beautiful and orderly system, than from any immediate sense or feeling of what they either suffer or enjoy" (216-17).[11] In this value system rooted in rationality, as Ernst Cassirer described it in *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, the analytic spirit would march triumphantly "to conquer reality" and accomplish "its great task of reducing the multiplicity of natural phenomena to a single universal rule" (9).

Thus, whether we are dealing with the rule of reason or matters of taste, the project of modernity was premised on the search for rules in which the larger concerns of the world, including the slavery that reached its zenith in the period of Enlightenment, would be sublimated to an idealistic structure. Considered to be a detritus that came between the modern mind and pure concepts, experience had to be processed through higher forms such as reason and the aesthetic. In fact, the turn to a systematic aesthetic theory, one of the major features of the age of Enlightenment, was premised on the belief that it was in the field of art and its judgment that the traditional opposition between reason and imagination could be reconciled. However, the ideology of the aesthetic was predicated on the capacity of the aesthetic or the sensual to be posited as analogical to reason. This is considered to be the achievement of German aesthetic theory from Alexander Baumgarten's *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* (1735) to Immanuel Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft*.[12] Here, in the transcendental project of aesthetic practice and judgment, materials that were considered anterior to the process of European self-fashioning – such as slaves, Indians, and the poor – were confined to notational margins and footnotes; the Enlightenment's world picture was adumbrated by "a geographical consciousness based on the distinctiveness of the part of the world that came to be called 'Europe'" (Hulme and Jordanova, "Introduction" 7).

Europe could not function as an idea or structure of identity without its real or imagined others who, since the beginnings of modernity at the end of the sixteenth century, were increasingly being incorporated into the modern world picture. People considered to be others had of course been central to the emergence and consolidation of a European identity since the Middle Ages, but in the modern period, alterity became more than a simple inscription of the differences of

11 My discussion here is indebted to Howard Caygill 38-97.
12 Here I provide a synopsis of a debate that has generated a lot of literature. In addition to Cassirer, see Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*; J.M. Bernstein, *The Fate of Art*; Peter Osborne (ed.) *From an Aesthetic Point of View*; Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition*; Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*; and Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market*.

Fig. 2:
Albert Eckhout, *Congolese Envoy to Recife in Dutch Brazil*, n.d. Department of Ethnography, National Museum of Denmark.

other peoples, other cultures, other histories; it now assumed a structural function, the designator of that which enabled Europe to assume a position of cultural superiority and supremacy. This new sense of European superiority was reflected in the new maps placing Northern Europe at the center of the world, or in monumental works of art, such as Giovanni Batista Tiepolo's frescoes at the palace of the prince-bishop of Würzburg that places the allegories of Asia, Africa and America alongside a domineering "Europe." And as slavery was consolidated and later challenged in the course of the eighteenth century, there was a significant repositioning from earlier European views of Africans as agents who could be considered, even tentatively, to belong to the human community to their reduction to objects of trade or figures in the shadows of modernity.

The contrast between Rembrandt's painting and Diez Troxxilla's inventory discussed at the beginning of this chapter was certainly not unusual, but it signifies a more complex shift in the imagining of African others under the pressures of slavery and the slave trade. Indeed, one of my central arguments is that slavery – and especially the powerful moral, visual, and economic claims associated with it – had a salient effect on what one may call the interiorized realm of the European experience, namely the space of sense and sensibility. These shifts were reflected in the histories, discourses, and images in which African difference and

Fig. 3:
Frans van der Mijn, Jan Pranger,
*Director General of the Gold
Coast (1730-1734)*, 1742.
Oil on canvas. Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

its attendant barbarism was invoked as the counterpoint to modern civilization or civility.

As always, it was the visible and iconographic view that represented these shifts. Consider this example: In 1643, the Christian King of the Kingdom of the Congo, Dom Garcia II, sent one of his ambassadors to Recife to see Johan Maurits, the Dutch Governor of the Netherlands' possessions in Brazil. In a painting of the ambassador, often attributed to Albert Eckhout (Fig. 2), the Congolese envoy is represented wearing a broad hat with feathers, a black velvet coat with gold and silver trimmings, and a sash of the same colors, all symbolizing power, prestige, and presence. At a time when the Congolese were considered by Europeans to be equal partners in global trade and cultural exchange, the location of their ambassador at the center of a European portrait was not unusual or extraordinary.

In contrast, Frans der Mijn's 1742 painting of the Dutch Governor of the slave fort of Elmina (Fig. 3) indicates the increasing diminishment of black figures in the European imagination and the domination of the slave interest in the construct of the modern social imaginary. Here we have the portrait of the European man

at the top of the world, the agent of a Dutch empire that had by 1700 "extended trade and established outposts in western and southern Africa, Asia, and the Americas" (Decorse 25).[13] By the time the Dutch established their hegemony on the West African Coast, slavery had replaced gold as the major commodity of trade, a fact that led to a new addition – the figure of the slave – to the iconography of power and prestige. It is not accidental, then, argues Allison Blakely in *Blacks in the Dutch World,* that the period in which the slave trade accounted for most of Dutch wealth and power also led to the production of the largest category of paintings with blacks as adjuncts to the portraits of "Dutch burgher families, groups, and individuals" (104-5). According to Blakely, this kind of art, in which the portrait of an aristocrat is framed by a black shadow, was produced in the Low Countries more than anywhere else in the world. These portraits were intended primarily to project the power and prestige brought on by the new trade, "to celebrate achievement and to leave a lasting record for posterity" (105). Confronted with the diversity of the human world, the modern spirit seemed unable to incorporate the difference that it nevertheless needed to imagine its modernity, and hence authorized itself by inventing a hierarchical structure in which the whiteness of Europe would be refracted by the shadows cast by others.

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My intention here is not to recover the figure of the black from the margins of the modern world picture and to restore it to an imaginary or nonexistent center; rather, I have set out to recognize this marginalized figure, often denied even the status of the human, as occupying an essential and constitutive role in the construct of the interiority of modernity itself. I aim to read this figure and the project of modernity, especially its economy of sense and sensibility or taste, contrapuntally, thus to give slavery, the great unspeakable of our age, an unobtrusive identity and to bring it "into active contact with current theoretical concerns" (Said 66).[14] This contrapuntal reading provokes several intractable questions: How do we reconcile the world that Rembrandt imagined when he was painting the *Two Negroes*, and his careful and calculated focus on the distinctiveness of his two models, their human qualities and individual differences, with Diez Troxxilla's invoice of African bodies crossing the Atlantic ocean to enrich the coffers of the Dutch Golden Age? How does one explain the transformation of the African from the center of Rembrandt's portrait to a mere shadow on the margins of der Mijn's man of trade?

There are two ways of going about this task and they are both valid, although they present us with a different set of problems: one concerns the role of the

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13 See also Charles R. Boxer.
14 For a discussion of the Black Atlantic as a counterculture of modernity, see Paul Gilroy 1-40.

modern system of art in the fashioning of a European identity; the other relates to specific British conceptual and discursive attempts to reconcile commerce and taste. I will sketch both sides of this narrative of modernity because I want to trouble the boundaries that divide continental European debates on aesthetic judgment from the British culture of taste and also question the conceptual boundaries that have hitherto separated the political economy of slavery from the institution of high culture.

Let me start with the idea and institution of art, without doubt one of the key pillars of both modernity and the culture of taste. Modernity and the idea of the aesthetic constitute a powerful dialectic in Europe in the eighteenth century and they inform each other in remarkable ways. As Paul Oskar Kristeller observed in a seminal survey of the emergence of the modern system of the arts, the dawn of modernity made the idea of art possible; in turn, the institutionalization of modernity made the emergence and consolidation of some dominant ideas about the aesthetic – "taste and sentiment, genius, originality and creative imagination" – central to modern conversations about the self (64).[15]

A key component of the modernizing gesture of European culture in the eighteenth century was the location of art at the center of modern systems of knowledge and its wide acceptance, among elites and courtiers alike, as a key cognate in the definition of what constituted a modern social life. In the eighteenth century, perhaps for the first time in European history, "the various arts were compared with each other and discussed on the basis of common principles" (Kristeller 64). And if the role of art in society dominated intellectual debates in almost every major European country, it was because of a certain modern craving for a second order of representation in which the sensuousness of human life could be realized and private desire and public duty, already separated in the categorical imperative of rationality, would be reconciled.

But perhaps one of the most important developments in the history of art in the eighteenth century was its democratization, or, more appropriately, its shift from being a preoccupation of elites and their academies, or courts and their courtiers, to "an amateur public" (Kristeller 225).[16] The gist of this transformation was caught by James Addison in a memorable hyperbole in *The Spectator*: "It was said of Socrates that he brought Philosophy down from Heaven, to inhabit among Men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought philosophy out of the Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in the Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables and Coffee-Houses" (10: 31).

15 For a philosophical/historical exploration of the system of art, see Preben Mortensen, *Art in the Social Order* 1-12 and the essays collected in *Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics and the Reconstruction of Art*, ed. Paul Mattick, Jr.

16 For Kristeller, a key element in the transformation of the arts was the emergence of the amateur as a critic: "The origin of modern aesthetics in amateur criticism would go a long way to explain why works of art have until recently been analyzed by aestheticians from the point of view of the spectator, reader and listener rather than of the producing artist" (225).

The process of 'democratizing' the arts was, however, delimited by the transcendental claims associated with the aesthetic realm. For precisely at the point when it was given special value in the social sphere, art was also asked to stand apart from other domains of lived experience. Indeed, one of the most persistent claims made about art in Europe, at least since the eighteenth century, is what has come to be known as its "ephemerality" – its existence "outside the framework of use and purpose which defines human life" (Danto 166). Criticism or judgment of art, even when it was articulated by amateurs, was necessitated by a persistent and widespread desire to establish a fundamental division between art and life. Here, as in the discussions surrounding reason and rationality, the ideology of the aesthetic would become the product of a process of purification, the purging of those categories that seemed to interfere with the drive toward autonomy and disinterested judgment.

Looking back on this tradition of aesthetic judgment, Ernst Cassirer would go on to argue that it was in aesthetic theory that "the pure necessity of philosophic thought" would come to fruition, even claiming that it was in the sphere of the aesthetic that a synthesis of the critical and productive functions of thought would be achieved (278). Before this period, Cassirer argued, thought had been defined by a struggle between nature and culture, or between scientific and artistic ideals; theories of art struggled to justify themselves in the court of reason and always seemed to fall short. But with the foundation of a systematic aesthetics, a process associated with Alexander Baumgarten, "a new intellectual synthesis opens up" (339). Whereas before, the criticism of art had been predicated on concepts outside the aesthetic domain, now art would become the source of the categories that judged it. Aesthetics – the system of judging art – would thus become a science.[17]

The project of turning the aesthetic into a science was, however, bedeviled by problems from the start; although some advocates of an autonomous aesthetic continued to hold out the possibility that it might provide a higher order of truth, debates about the role of art in the social order were dominated by a recognition of the gap between the artwork as a material object and its idealistic or transcendental goals.[18] It now seems apparent that an aesthetic project that was understood to be "the culmination of Idealist philosophy, or perhaps even Western metaphysics as whole" would sooner or later come up against its limits (Jay 46). Indeed, if the aesthetic seemed to have fallen out of favor for most of the twentieth century (that is until its supposed return in the 1990s), it was because the work of art

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17 In addition to Cassirer, the question of criticism in the Enlightenment has been discussed by Anthony Cascardi 49-91.

18 When I began work on this topic, the major division in the field of aesthetic criticisms was between those who insisted on the redemptive work of art – its capacity to make truth claims – and those who dismissed its function as an alternative mode of knowledge. For the cognitive claims of art and aesthetic alienation, see Bernstein 1-16 and Peter Osborne, "Introduction" 1-12. Terry Eagleton dismisses the political project of the aesthetic as part of the middle-class search for political hegemony (3). See also, Tony Bennett, *Outside Literature* and David Beech and John Roberts, "Spectres of the Aesthetic."

Fig. 4:
Frontispiece from Ignatius Sancho (1729-80), *Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, An African*, 1782, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill University Library. http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/sancho1/frontis.html [16/2/2010].

seemed to be sublimated to the crisis of modern society instead of rising above it. It is in response to this sublimation that Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno longed for an aesthetic in which the work of art would function as enchantment or magic, to serve a spiritual function: "The work of art still has something in common with enchantment: it posits its own, self-enclosed area, which is withdrawn from the context of profane existence, and in which special laws apply" (19).

My position in relation to these debates will become clearer by the end of this essay, but I hesitate to condemn the ideology of the aesthetic as a form of mystification or alienation, or endorse the idealistic claims made for art as a form of cognition outside the mechanization of social life. In response to the claims made on behalf of the aesthetic, I want to hold on to the possibility that the realm of the sensuous could simultaneously function as the site in which the black body was imprisoned but also the conduit for its liberation. Whether we are dealing with questions of aesthetic judgment or the realm of taste, the compulsion for a redemptive hermeneutics through an appeal to sensuousness cannot be dismissed out of hand. For those trapped in the political and moral economy of slavery, the presentation of the self through the work of art, or an engagement with culture as

a weapon against commodification, had the capacity to salvage the human identity of Africans at their sites of repression and denial.

Consider the example of Ignatius Sancho: In both his self-representation as a man of letters and in the historic painting by Gainsborough, Sancho, born a slave in the Middle Passage, could become a modern subject (Fig. 4). Here we have an unquestionable affirmation of the intimate relation between subjectivity and representation and of the prism of the aesthetic as an "exemplary form of modern reflection" (Menke 46). Sancho's correspondence and transactions with other subjects of taste, people such as John Meheux, member of the Indian Board of Trade in London, or Lawrence Sterne, famous novelist, were the means through which this former slave could reflect on his human identity and emplace himself in the modern public sphere.[19]

> Here is Sancho writing to Meheux:
>
> I am uneasy about your health – I do not like your silence – let some good body or other give me a line, just to say how you are – I will, if I can, see you on Sunday … Now, my dear M[eheux], I know you have a persuasive eloquence among the women – try your oratorical powers. – You have many women – and I am sure there must be a great deal of charity amongst them – Mind, we ask no money – only rags – mere literal rags – patience is a ragged virtue – therefore strip the girls, dear M[eheux], strip them of what they can spare – a few superfluous worn-out garments – but leave them pity – benevolence – the charities – goodness of heart – love – and the blessings of yours truly with affection, or something very like it,
>
> SANCHO. (*Letters* 31)[20]

In this epistolary transaction, covering the pleasurable habits of the London metropolitan culture in the middle of the eighteenth century, it was hard to detect any distinction between Sancho, the former slave, the child of the Middle Passage, and Meheux, a distinguished English gentleman working for the board that oversaw the governance of India. Sancho was effectively performing the culture of taste as a gesture of affiliation; in the realm of art the former slave could re-imagine himself as human subject.[21]

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19 For a discussion of Sterne's rhetoric and ethics of sensibility in relation to slavery, see Marcus Wood, *Slavery* 12–8.

20 See also, Ignatius Sancho, *New Light*.

21 See Vincent Carretta 321-32. In addition to his letters, Sancho's investment in the culture of taste can be detected in his musical compositions. See Josephine R.B. Wright (ed.), *Ignatius Sancho*, and the essays collected in Reyahn King et al. (eds.), *Ignatius Sancho. An African Man of Letters*. For a study of the role of black writing during the period, see Keith A. Sandiford, *Measuring the Moment*; Vincent Carretta and Philip Gould (eds.), *Genius in Bond-*

It is now taken for granted by scholars ranging from the Frankfurt School and neo-Marxists to poststructuralists of various kinds that the failure of the aesthetic was inherent in its self-positioning as the fulfillment of reason. No one can write about the redemptive claims of art, especially in the context of slavery and the Holocaust, without confronting Adorno's admonition that "[t]o write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (*Prisms* 34). But Adorno also recognized that the task facing cultural criticism was to develop a method for understanding "the dialectic of culture and barbarism" at its limits, outside the concepts that had enabled it (34). In *Negative Dialectics,* Adorno argued that he had set out "to free dialectics from […] affirmative traits without reducing its determinancy," and this implied "a critique of the foundation concept as well as the primacy of substantive thought" (xix).

One way of troubling the relation between the ideology of the aesthetic and the political economy of modernity is to shift focus from continental European debates on the aesthetic as an epistemological or metaphysical category to British discourses on taste, which emerged under the pressure of the expanding horizons of commercial life in the middle of the eighteenth century. Kant, as is well known, denied the British tradition of taste any claims to philosophical reflection because, as Caygill has noted, "it did not properly account for the universality and necessity of its judgements" and it tended to confuse sensibility and rationality or to endow the former with "the properties of rational law" (98). Kant's complaint was that the British aesthetic tradition was not transcendental or universal enough to claim the status of philosophical reflection: "To make psychological observations, as Burke did in his treatise on the beautiful and sublime, thus to assemble material for the systematic connection of empirical rules in the future without aiming to understand them, is probably the sole duty of empirical psychology, which can hardly even aspire to rank as a philosophical science" (*Critique of the Power of Judgment* 38).

One could, of course, argue that what brought British theorists of taste closer to adjudicating the relation between the realm of art and conduct and the experiences of everyday life was precisely their inability to differentiate sense and sensibility from the properties of rationality, and, by extension, their substitution of psychology for empirical rules. Keenly attuned to the daily tensions between commerce and sensibility, British writers on taste were able to generate a set of discourses in which the subjects' phenomenal or sensuous experience could be brought face to face with the materiality of modern society. Here, a concern with matters aesthetic was not considered part of an attempt to transcend the world of commerce, but to develop rules and standards which would enable the modern subject to reconcile the opposing demands of the production of goods and civic responsibility. This was the point affirmed by Edmund Burke in the last para-

age; Markman Ellis, "Ignatius Sancho's Letters: Sentimental Libertinism and the Politics of Form"; and S.E. Ogude, *Genius in Bondage*.

graph of *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), where he asserted that his design had not been

> [...] to enter into the criticism of the sublime and beautiful in any art, but to attempt to lay down such principles as may tend to ascertain, to distinguish, and to form a sort of standard for them; which purposes I thought might be best effected by an enquiry into the properties of such things in nature as raise love and astonishment in us; and by shewing in what manner they operated to produce these passions. (Burke 160-61)

It is instructive that in key sections of his *Enquiry*, Burke would give "the properties of things" (1) precedence over the ideas or feelings that they generated, for like many of his contemporaries in the crucial 1750s and 1760s, a turn to matters of taste was also an attempt to account for the meaning and nature of trade or the production of wealth. Indeed, for theorists such as Adam Smith, there was an intractable bond between utility and pleasure. A concern with beauty and taste, Smith noted in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, was "often the secret motive of the most serious and important pursuits of both private and public life" (211). And it is not incidental that the theories of taste propounded by Burke and Smith, powerful men with vested interests in matters of empire and governmentality, were haunted by the materiality of social life and especially the excessive values generated by luxurious living. Taste was not the path to transcendence, but a centrifugal force that enabled subjects to confront a world of social energies and desires. Taste, and the realm of the senses in general, would become "active, energetic, almost carnal; a matter of immediate sensation, whether culinary or sexual" (Brewer 349).

4

Now, my goal in this essay, and in the book that will evolve from it, is not to rewrite the cultural history of modern Europe or even to reconfigure the relation between centers and margins; rather, I'm trying to make the case, in a narrower but specific sense, for slavery as one of the informing conditions of modern identity. But I also want to call attention to what it meant for slavery itself to be transformed into a modern category. And in order to sustain this argument, I need to establish the structural relationship between enslavement and forms of social identity, both ancient and modern. A good starting point here is to acknowledge that modern slavery was not a new development in the European imagination, or human society for that matter, nor was it an anachronistic development in the so-called civilizing process. As Christopher Miller has observed in his study of the literature and culture of the slave trade in the Francophone world, slavery and the slave trade are not synonymous, but they are part of a powerful dialectic: "There could be no slave trade without slavery, yet slavery continued after the

slave trade […] the two institutions were inseparable, since each fed and perpetuated the other" (9).

For cultural purists, a concern with slavery and taste would appear to be far-fetched since the abjection of the former always appeared to negate the ideals and claims of the latter. Indeed, given the investment modern society has made in the ideal of cultural purity, slavery could appear to be the greatest danger and threat to the self-understanding of the modern subject as civil and virtuous.[22] This explains why in what were considered to be isolated centers of white civilization such as the cities of the Antebellum South, culture needed to be symbolically quarantined from African slaves, who were associated with dirt and defilement. Here, slaves were considered to be categories of persons who embodied abstract ideas about impurity and contamination. In addition, slaves were associated with a noxious odor, one that had the capacity to defile civilized subjects.[23]

But to understand ritual contamination, it is important to probe the sources and uses of this terminology. We need to know, in the words of Mary Douglas, "who is issuing accusations of defilement and who is the accused," for unless "we can trace which categories of social life are being kept apart, how they are ranked and who is being excluded, the usual analysis of defilement is blocked" (*In the Wilderness* 25). In this instance, we must remember that while slavery and the civilizing process were separated on the symbolic level, they were powerfully connected in the everyday world of modern life. Furthermore, as an institution, slavery had always been part of the way in which cultures understood and defined their understanding and conceptualization of civilization. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that in many human societies, in all geographical areas of the world, there has been an intimate connection between a sense of cultural achievement and superiority and the practice of domination.

As an institution slavery has often been associated with cultural capital (Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron 30) or at least an "economy of intellectual prestige" (Catherine Hall 167-96). Moses Finley, the distinguished classicist, once noted that "there was no action or belief or institution in Graeco-Roman antiquity that was not one way or other affected by the possibility that someone involved *might* be a slave" (60; Finley's emphasis). And in his exploration of ideas of slavery, from Aristotle to Augustine, Peter Garnsey observed that although slavery was perhaps not a "universal or typical labor system" in the Mediterranean world, "it can hardly be dismissed as marginal, if it was embedded in the society and economy of Athens, the creator of a rich and advanced political culture, and of Rome, the most successful empire-builder the world had thus far known" (5).

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22 The terms here are borrowed from Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger* 1-6 and *In the Wilderness*, especially chapter 3.

23 I return to this topic in subsequent chapters of my forthcoming volume *The Aura of Blackness. Slavery and the Culture of Taste*. See also Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Honor and Violence in the Old South* and Mark M. Smith, *How Race is Made. Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses*.

The West Indian and Antebellum 'aristocracy' invested heavily in developing fences to isolate white civilization from what was considered African barbarism, but they could not avoid rehearsing and reaffirming the claim that there was, allegedly, an innate connection between slave holding and cultural achievement. Often, the cultural status and intellectual lineage of the British and American planter classes depended on their claim that the enslavement of Africans gave slaveholders the authority and gravitas of antiquity. For example, George Frederick Holmes, the son of a British planter and official in Demerera, educated at Durham University, was considered "the most brilliant and creative of the proslavery school," and like his peers he drew on Aristotle's ideas on natural slavery to justify the institution of bondage in the South (Wish 83).

Garnsey has noted how "the pro-slave theorists of the old south" posited Athens and Rome "as the standard-bearers of classical civilization and understandably called them up in support of their cause, along with the Biblical slave owning societies of ancient Israel and early Christianity" (5). In his *Sociology for the South*, first published in 1854, George Fitzhugh would claim that domestic slavery had "produced the same results in elevating the character of the master that it did in Greece and Rome"; he compared the nobility of leading Southern aristocrats such as George Washington and John Calhoun to that of Greek and Roman senators, insisting that both had been ennobled by slave holdings (224). During the debates on the future of slavery in the United States in the 1830s, an anonymous Southern clergyman provided the most succinct connection between slavery and civilization, arguing that the institution of slavery "ever has been and ever will be the only sure foundation of all republican governments."[24]

The clergyman had a point: ancient civilizations assumed that slavery was a key fulcrum in communal organization, part of an elaborate political and symbolic economy, and the authorizing agent of claims to cultural superiority. In addition to Greece and Rome, slavery was one of the major sources of political and cultural capital in the Middle East, Africa, India, and China. In sub-Saharan Africa, undoubtedly the major casualty of modern slavery, the rise of the great kingdoms of the Sahel – Mali, Ghana, and Songhai – depended on the control of the lucrative slave routes of the region. Great empire builders and cultural heroes of African resistance to colonialism, such as Samouri Toure, are still remembered in West Africa as slave raiders.[25]

In responding to the connection I make here between slavery and the 'civilizing process' (see Elias 363-448), some of my interlocutors have called attention to the distinctions between ancient and modern slavery both in terms of their organizing principles and the ideas informing them. My focus, however, is not

24 Quoted in John White and Ralph White 113. My argument here is indebted to Page Dubois's *Slaves and Other Objects*.
25 Indigenous African slavery is the subject of Akosua Adoma Perbi's excellent book, *A History of Indigenous Slavery in Ghana From the 15th to the 19th Century*. Other important studies of slavery in Africa can be found in Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff's volume.

on these distinctions, which have been the subject of outstanding monographs, but the important though perhaps axiomatic fact that modern slavery presented particular difficulties to European society because it emerged in an age in which enslavement had disappeared in the cultures that were at the center of the slave trade. The Atlantic slave trade thrived at a temporal juncture in which modern identity was predicated on the question of freedom, and in an era in which subjectivity depended on the existence of free and self-reflective subjects. As a modern institution, slavery was anachronistic – it seemed at odds with the aspirations of the age, yet it provided the economic foundation that enabled modernity.[26] But still, and perhaps because of this anachronism, slavery informed and haunted the culture of modernity in remarkable ways; its infiltration of the governing categories, from morality and the law, natural history, and even discourses on the nature of the self was unprecedented. Slavery, in effect, constituted the ghost or specter that would, in the Derridean sense, "mark the very existence of Europe," informing but also displacing "its great unifying projects" (Derrida 4-5).[27]

Nowhere was this informing and haunting more dramatic and vivid than in the American colonies, where slavery was so palpable, so visible, and so phenomenal that it could not be buried in an underground economy of representation. Here, where slave owners considered themselves to be subjects of freedom, where migration and settlement had often been generated by the desire for even greater freedom, the existence of others as slaves was always necessary but also disturbing. Quite often, debates on the nature of African slavery in the new world were prefaced by the necessity to affirm the distinctiveness of an English identity that had to account for its presence and prescience in zones of displacement and enslavement.

To put it another way, the greatest anxieties about freedom were often expressed by those invested in the enslavement of others as if they, the free, might fall into the condition that sustained their lives. Thus, a Maryland statute of 1639 would define the settlers of the tobacco colony as Christians who were entitled to the liberties, immunities, privileges, and customs "as any naturall born subject of England" (quoted in Jordan 74).[28] In a now famous address to Oliver

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26 Debates on the political economy of slavery are outside the scope of this project, but for a long historical view, see Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*; Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760-1810*; Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*; Anthony J. Barker, *The African Link*; David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas*; and James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce*.

27 See also, Ian Baucom.

28 My discussion of the haunting of freedom by the ghosts of slavery relies heavily on Jordan's discussion of colonial encounters in America. See also, David Brion Davis's *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* and Alden T. Vaughan, *The Roots of American Racism*. For colonial encounters in the Atlantic World, see the essays collected in Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden (eds.) *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800*; Nicholas Canny (ed.) *The Origin of Empires*; and P.J. Marshall (ed.) *The Eighteenth Century*, both in the *Oxford History of the British Empire*. For the cultural traffic between Africa and the Americas, see John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680*.

Cromwell, the Assembly of Barbados defined itself as a body of "Englishmen of as clear and pure extract as any" entitled to "liberty and freedom equal with the rest of our countrymen" (quoted in Eltis 15). And in the 1650s, "a number of royalist sympathizers taken by the Protectorate and sold in Barbados described their situation to Parliament as slavery (and therefore, because they were English, unjust) without betraying any awareness of the condition of the Africans with whom they must have worked" (15).

Here, then, we have one example of the negative dialectic of slavery: freedom could not be imagined or embodied as a social value without slavery as its repressed other. The larger irony of these demands for freedom was taking place at precisely that moment in the eighteenth century when it became, in David Brion Davis's terms, "imperative to reconcile the revival of slavery in modern times with various theories of human progress" (13). One of the challenges that the slavery/freedom dyad has come to present to scholars working in various disciplines is how to explore and elaborate the structural relation between doctrines of liberty located at the center of modern life and slavery positioned on the margins of the polity yet essential to its operation. It is in response to the challenge presented by the cauldron of slavery in an age of freedom that new modes of scholarly interpretation have emerged to excavate forgotten histories and narratives of slavery and empire and to locate them at the center of European life.

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The Ambiguity of Europe's Colonizing Mission. The Subservient Slave in James Miller's Play *Art and Nature* (1738)[1]

ULRICH PALLUA

Introduction

Collective symbols and images played a decisive part in eighteenth-century British colonization as prejudices against, attitudes towards, and ideas about the 'Other' paved the way to ideologizing other peoples' inferiority, thus justifying their colonization and subjugation. Cultural and bodily 'anomalies' were instrumental in the British Empire's ideologically constructing 'an(Other)' identity, modeled as the counterpart to the European, dividing humankind into the benevolent British colonizer and the pitiful non-European colonized who is to be rescued from his/her ignorance and then properly educated. This evaluative process of a positive self-presentation and a negative other-presentation strengthened the consciousness of 'racial'/ethnic differences. The ideological 'battle' about being part of the in- or out-group was above all fought amongst Europeans themselves: the greater the 'distance' kept between the supposedly superior European and the inferior 'Other' in terms of cultural and moral evolutionary progress, the better Europeans could argue for the education of 'inferior' peoples. Non-Europeans were considered a threat in terms of intercultural contact, and categorizing them by conjuring up images of their inferiority made it easier to keep them at a far reach from the 'civilized' West. Biological and cultural differences – termed "inegalitarian" and "differentialist/culturalist racism" – were the mainstay of racist discourse in the British Empire in its endeavor to demean the 'Other' (cf. Wodak and Reisigl, "Discourse and Racism: European Perspectives" 181).[2] This

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1 Parts of this essay have been previously published as Pallua, "Discursive Strategies in Fixing Images of Power: The Enslaved 'Other' in Miller's *Art and Nature* and Kotzebue's *The Negro Slaves*."

2 As Reisigl and Wodak further delineate in another publication: "the concept of 'inegalitarian racism' is intended to denote the legitimisation of domination, discrimination, and separation based on overt doctrines in support of genetic, biological inferiority, whereas 'differentialist racism' emphasises cultural differences, including lifestyles, habits, customs and manners, and paints a threatening picture of the mixing and interbreeding of cultures and ethnic groups" (Reisigl and Wodak, *Discourse and Discrimination* 9).

process of detaching Europe from barbarous 'savages' required concocting fictitious traits and characteristics of non-Europeans for the British public. Everyday racism, "defined as socialized meanings making practices immediately definable and uncontested so that, in principle, these practices can be managed according to (sub)cultural norms and expectations," loomed large in the minds of the eighteenth-century readership, thus controlling, stigmatizing, marginalizing, and excluding the 'Other' (Essed 50). Taking Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl's contention that "racism, as a social construct, as a social practice, as an ideology, manifests itself discursively" ("Discourse and Racism: European Perspectives" 175) as a starting point, this paper attempts to demonstrate that eighteenth-century stereotypical literary representations and depictions of the 'Other' affirmed the images of power that colonial ideology had produced of non-Europeans. At the same time, subjecting to scrutiny the attitudes, convictions, and stereotypes adopted by writers in portraying the 'inferior Other' in their works will uncover how these writers – cognitive-linguistically – succeeded in internalizing prejudices/stereotypes by "delineate[ing] the out-group" (182). It will further investigate how James Miller – by portraying the 'savage' Julio as a simple but noble creature impersonating the "Voice of Nature and Reason" (Miller 43) – sets out to turn the table on racist argumentation but ended up sketching Julio as an inferior being in need of moral instruction.

The Image of the 'Noble Savage'

The analysis of Miller's play, *Art and Nature* (1738), will closely examine the relationship between images and ideological tenets used to describe and position non-European characters in literary works. As literature is addressed to a particular readership, the analysis will deal with social identities, cultural values, and stereotypes used to collectively juxtapose two different cultures. A critical analysis of the play will reveal the "biased discourses" and "mental models" (Van Dijk, "Multidisciplinary CDA" 103, 112) developed from ideological attitudes and beliefs in order to dissect how images of inferiority and oppression became socially acceptable and shared opinions. Van Dijk describes this process as follows: "Recipients tend to accept beliefs, knowledge, and opinions through discourse from what they see as authoritative, trustworthy, or credible sources" ("Critical Discourse Analysis" 357). The colonial discourse laid the foundations for images of power in the contact zone by placing emphasis on the fixity of the image of the 'Other' as inferior and subservient.

The image of the inferiority of the 'Other' reveals which "traits, characteristics, qualities, and features" are attributed to it, and which arguments are used "to justify and legitimate the exclusion, discrimination, suppression, and exploitation of others" (Wodak and Reisigl, "Discourse and Racism" 385). According to Michael Hays, "the socio-aesthetic specialisation of imperialist discourse

must prevail in a multiplicity of cultural realms, and in all social groups at home before it can be fully implemented as a universalizing discourse abroad" (71). The marginalization of non-Europeans then leads to what Reisigl calls "mono-culturalization/monolingualization," in which the antagonistic culture is 'passivized', oppressed, and its voices silenced (cf. "Cuius ops" 210). The ethnocentrism or "Whitecentrism/denigration of culture" effectively dismissed all non-Europeans as inferior, thus cultureless and in need of being civilized (Essed 10). A crucial element of the "social practices oppression, suppression, exclusion, or marginalization" (Van Dijk, *Elite Discourse* 24) is the prejudiced group attitude towards the respective 'inferior' culture as it is shared by all "members of a social group [with] generalizations based on lacking, insufficient, or biased models [maintaining] in-group dominance, power, and exploitation, or the protection of interests or privileges. In this respect, ethnic prejudice is the cognitive foundation of racism" (Van Dijk, *Communicating Racism* 195). According to Blumer, "[t]he basic tenets of prejudice are (a) a feeling of superiority, (b) perception of the subordinate race as intrinsically different and alien, (c) a feeling of propriety [sic!] claim to certain areas of privilege and advantage, and (d) fear and suspicion that the subordinate race wants the prerogatives of the dominant race" (cited in Essed 45).

I will analyze James Miller's play *Art and Nature* (1738) in relation to the image of the "Wild-man […] from the American Forests" (Miller 16), namely the image of the 'noble savage', which as the epitome of rationality stands in stark contrast to the development of European culture and morals. Although he never used the term, Jean-Jacques Rousseau is considered to be the "most effective agent" of the "Noble Savage, a mythic personification of natural goodness by a romantic glorification of savage life" (Ellingson 1, 2) as early as 1755 in his essay *A Discourse upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality among Mankind* (1755). Rousseau claims that civilized society is further removed from the willingness to enjoy the way of life of the 'natives' than are Africans themselves from the desire to think and reason like civilized Europe (Rousseau 22). As H.N. Fairchild claims, "the real Rousseau was much less sentimentally enthusiastic about savages than many of his contemporaries, did not in any sense invent the Noble Savage idea, and cannot be held wholly responsible for the forms assumed by that idea in English Romanticism" (139). Moreover, Rousseau did not maintain that the 'savages' (who with him largely constituted an hypothetical entity not to be confused with the existing contemporary 'savages') were innately 'good' because they had an inbuilt moral sense but rather because they were ignorant to conceive of evil. Even in the British discourse before Rousseau and Romanticism the term 'noble' was not used in connection with nobility but rather with the goodness of the 'natives'. As is the case with Rousseau's position, the noble savage belonged to an earlier stage of the human evolution when inequality (the result of private property) was assumed not to have existed: "[w]hat differentiates the 'savages' from Europe is their distance from the state of nature" (Lestringant 103). John Dryden, in his drama *The Conquest of Granada by the*

Spaniards (1672), is one of the first English writers to refer to the nobility of the 'savage'. Pivotally, he also emphasizes that at the stage of societal evolution during which the noble savage lived, unequal labor relationships such as "servitude" had not yet been established:

> I am as free as Nature first made man,
> 'Ere the base laws of Servitude began,
> When wild in woods the noble Savage ran.
> (Dryden 1672: 34)

Dryden associates the concept of nobility not only with untouched nature but also with a time *before* the laws of civilization forced mankind into servitude, and finally into losing its nobility.[3] "Thus, 'savage' had become increasingly synonymous with 'hunter-gatherer,' even if there was still a tendency among some writers to apply the term to tribal subsistence agriculturalists as well as hunters," Ellingson contends (295). In consequence

> [t]he myth of the Noble Savage became yet another weapon in the ideological arsenal, ultimately useful for the scientific-racist project of helping to naturalise a genocidal stance toward the 'inferior' races. (Ellingson 298)

According to Bitterli, the 'noble savage' represented the positive mirror image of the 'barbarian', both stemming from an ethnocentric awareness of culture.[4] Regarding the savage as incapable of controlling his passion, his wildness, which he is as powerless to resist as a slave is the command of his master, the 'savage' needs a European master to tame his primordial emotions. The figure of the 'noble savage' seems to appear less and less frequently as the British colonial project progresses, although by then the myth had become so ingrained in peoples' minds that it was part "of the ideological foundations of anthropology in the English-speaking world" (Hodgen 299).

The Subservient Julio: Enslavement as a Civilizing Process

James Miller (1706-44), British playwright and cleric, was the son of John Miller, a clergyman in Dorset, England. Miller went to Oxford in 1826 with the intention of entering banking as a profession, but instead he was ordained in the Church of England. During his university days he wrote several satires directed at school

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3 For further information about the development of the idea of the 'noble savage' in the course of the following centuries, and in order to understand the myth itself, Terry Ellingson's book provides an excellent and in-depth starting point. He stresses in particular its role for the development of the *Ethnological Society of London* and its racist faction.

4 See Bitterli 374. For more information about the 'noble savage' and Rousseau's 'homme naturel,' see Bitterli 280-288, 367-376 and, furthermore, Frank Lestringant.

administrators. Some of his most famous plays include *Humours of Oxford*, which was later produced at Drury Lane (1730), *Vanelia; or the Amours of the Great* (1732), *The Man of Taste* (1737), *Universal Passion* (1737), *The Coffee-House* (1737), *Art and Nature* (1738), and *The Hospital for Fools* (1739). He seems to have courted and enjoyed controversy; almost every play lampooned familiar figures in government, the Church, or public life. As a result, he was under constant threat of legal action and censure. In 1743, when it became clear that his controversial 'second' occupation would prevent him from rising within the hierarchy of the Church, he was given the rectorship at Upcerne, which his father had held before him. But being tucked away in Dorset did not prevent him from writing *Mahomet the Impostor* (1744), *Joseph and his Brethren* (1744), and *The Picture or the Cuckold in Conceit* (1745) for the stage. He died in London in 1744, the night after the first performance of *Mahomet* and on the evening of his first theatrical success.[5]

Set in England, *Art and Nature* revolves around Truemore who returns from the West Indies with the "savage" Julio. Sir Simon Dupe, Flaminia's father, has promised his daughter to Truemore, but believing rumors that Truemore has lost all his possessions he breaks his vow and promises Flaminia to Truemore's friend Outside instead. Julio, personifying "the Voice of Nature and Reason" (Miller 43), challenges the images of power of the British colonial ideology by exposing Europe's degenerate society. The only information the reader is provided with about Julio is that he is a "Wild-man […] from the American Forests" (16): it is not known whether he is a Native American, an Indio, an African transported to America, or whether he had already been a slave when he was captured and taken to England by Truemore. Julio's hybrid nature, which combines features of an African slave and a Native American, is what makes him an outstanding character: he is assigned what I have called a "hyper-positive image [by which] Africans are depicted as being superior to Europeans in their morals thus functioning as foils to European Vice" (Knapp and Pallua 13). Even if most of Julio's past remains a mystery, he makes it clear that living in the woods, in close touch with nature, entails being blessed with reason. He tells Sir Simon: "[…] I would have you go and live in our Woods for some time, and learn for the future to speak as you think, you'll then have no occasion to look so pitiful and silly as you do now" (Miller 75). Julio thus epitomizes the Enlightenment discourse portraying mankind as originally created free and equal. Truemore justifies taking Julio to Europe by claiming that "[t]he pure natural Wit, strong good Sense and Integrity of Soul which appear'd in every thing he said, induc'd me to bring him into Europe. I shall take great Pleasure in seeing pure simple Nature in him oppos'd to Laws, Arts and Sciences amongst us" (17). It is exactly this savage nature Julio sets out to refute when he reacts to Sir Simon who asks him which "[c]ountry [w]olf suckl'd [him]:" "I'll tell thee, Brute; from the Country of Woods and Forests,

where there is not a Mortal of us that know one Word of the Laws, but we are all naturally wise and honest enough; we have no need of being forc'd to do our Duty; we are so very ignorant, that meer natural Reason is enough for us" (25). In the play's prologue the speaker has already introduced Julio to the audience as the 'noble savage' who, representing nature's voice, will reveal the corruption of the Western world. The 'artless savage' who knows no dissimulation is opposed to the calculating and scheming civilized world and becomes a figure of reflection against which the Europeans can measure their own state of depravity:

> New to our Stage one Character he draws,
> Unskill'd in Science, and unbound by Laws;
> A poor untutor'd Savage here you'll find,
> Just cloth'd his Body, naked quite his Mind;
> Whate'er he speaks flows artless from the Soul,
> 'Tis Nature dictates, Truth informs the Whole;
> A Glass too true, in which we all may see,
> Not what we are, but what we ought to be. (Miller v)

Hence, James Miller's representation of the relationship between the slave Julio and the European colonizer can be divided into the following contrasts: (1) the wild and ingenuous slave versus the corrupt European governed by laws; (2) the degeneracy of Europe and the 'Western' world versus the noble brute representing untouched nature and the 'antidote' to corruption, but still considered a simpleton; and (3) Europe as the redeemer, saving slaves from their ignorance versus subservient slaves expected to be thankful for being enlightened.

When "Julio, a Savage" (Miller viii) first appears, he questions the ambivalent attractiveness of Europe while Truemore calls forth the image of the "Wildman," the "poor Wretch" with "pure natural Wit, strong good Sense and Integrity of Soul," whose "pure simple Nature" is seen as the opposite pole to "Laws, Arts and Sciences" (16, 17). Julio is referred to linguistically as an inferior creature representing nature untouched by corruption. Even if Miller lets Outside claim that the Western world is a "vile Corner of the World [permeated by] Fraud and Dissimulation; nothing is to be met with but base Flattery, Treachery and Injustice" (17), it is Violetta, Flaminia's maid, who feels an obligation to remind Julio, the "stupid Head," of his ignorance in failing to recognize the "Rules and Orders [which] make Men wise and honest" and the "Beauty of Order and Politeness in others [which] makes us humain and good-natur'd" (19, 20). Julio replies to Truemore by accusing Europeans of behaving like

> Fools, who call your selves Wise; Ignorant, who imagine your selves
> Learned; Poor, who fancy your selves Rich; and Slaves, who believe
> your selves Free […] you eagerly pursue useless Trifles; you are Poor,
> because you place your sole Happiness in Money, instead of enjoying
> full Nature as we do, who in order to possess ev'rything without Re-
> straint, monopolize nothing; you are Slaves to your Possessions, which

you prefer to your Liberty, and your Brethren whom you'll hang for tak-
ing a trifle of that which is of no use to your selves; and you are Igno-
rant, because all your Wisdom consists in the knowledge of the Laws,
whilst you neglect pure Reason which wou'd prevent your having any
occasion for 'em. (Miller 39)

When Truemore asks Julio how to live without money, Julio counters that in
"the native Woods I had known neither Riches nor Poverty. I had done every
Office for my self, been at once Master and Servant, King, and Subject; from
this State of Happiness and Freedom you have drawn me, to teach me, that I
am only a miserable Slave, faithless, base, inhuman Wretch" (40). James Miller
takes the image of the slave – physically captured, dragged from his homeland,
and enslaved in a distant country – and applies it to the state of corruption with
which Europe is faced, where people are slaves to riches. The discursive connec-
tion between slaves to riches and slaves as a property is embodied in Julio, who
represents eighteenth-century human existence uncontaminated by greed and the
distorted truth of civilization. That is when Julio invites the Europeans to turn
their backs on corrupted Europe and follow him to the American woods, a place
still unspoiled by the machinations of civilization:

> Come along with me then, I'll take you to a Country where we shall
> have no need of Money to make us happy, nor Laws to make us wise;
> our Friendship shall be all our Riches, and Reason our only Guide […]
> Let us hear no more then of your Laws, your Arts, or your Sciences, for
> they are good for nothing, by what I have seen yet, but to give Knaves
> an Advantage over honest Men, and Fools Authority over wise ones –
> No, no, let us go, and enjoy our selves, and be as happy as Nature and
> Common-Sense can make us. (Miller 77)

The connection between slavery, with Truemore subjugating and enslaving the
non-European Julio, and the British being slaves to riches, faced with the moral
dilemma of Europe's corruption and decay, can be interpreted as a critique of
how the British 'civilizing' mission enslaved and converted the supposedly infe-
rior peoples in their colonies. "This 'humanitarian mission' implied portray-
ing non-Europeans as inferior human beings in need of salvation from their own
vices" (Pallua 38). In this self- and other presentation the roles are reversed when
the slave challenges the morality and validity of Western existence. This is again
quickly dismissed by Truemore who – offering to assist Julio with money – dis-
avows the truth and turns a deaf ear to Julio's wish to return to his woods. Julio
is enraged by Truemore's monetary proposal, which he perceives as an attempt to
enslave him. In his mind, freedom and assertion of his identity can only function
in the utopian wilderness of the New World, outside the reach of capitalist eco-
nomics in which property and the division into poor and rich enslaves and alien-
ates the human self.

> But I'll not take any thing of you, since you give nothing for nothing; and I can give you no Money. What! you'd have me give you my self, would you, to be a Slave for a little of your glittering Trash? No; I'll have my Liberty if I have nothing else; I'll be free tho' I am poor; carry me back then to the Place from whence I came; give me my Woods and Wilds again, that I may in them forget that there are Rich and Poor in the World. (Miller 40)

The act of contrasting native life in the American woods and civilized life in Europe reaches its peak when Flaminia asks Julio, whom she names as "the Voice of Nature and Reason" (Miller 43), whether she should marry Truemore against her father's will. Julio, again harking back to the dichotomy of 'honest savage' versus the 'deceitful civilized British', responds by saying, "[t]he People of this Country are so given to lying [to] themselves, they think no body else can speak Truth," and by calling them "Fools" and "a Couple of Asses" (48, 49). The collective identities, 'savage' native and 'civilized' Briton, are interchanged, referring to the supposedly superior Europeans as "Fools" and "Asses"; it is in the Europeans' "Interest to be base, false and dishonourable," evoking the image of the white man as "shameless Animal […] I shall certainly be devour'd by some of 'em at last" (Miller 71). The animal image, and accusing whites of cannibalism, takes the superstition of the savage cannibal – who is thought to devour his/her own fellow beings in the dark corners of the earth – and projects it onto the white colonizer who enslaves the native population. The metaphor of Europeans as devouring white monsters substantiates Miller's critique of the moral decay of Europe, a process that stands in stark contrast to the 'noble savage' whose arrested development marks him as the "Voice of Nature." As Maggie Kilgour contends, this can lead to a reversal of the stereotypical image of the cannibal as the epitome of the evil savage and turn into a potent critique of its civilized European counterpart. The savage cannibal is thus the "inverted image of 'us': the cannibal is now the *idealised* rather than *demonised* opposite of the European, whose natural life exposes the hypocrisy and artificiality of modern society" (Kilgour 243-44). The confrontation of "Prejudice of Education" and "Prejudice of Nature and Reason" induces Outside to realize that he has been blinded by his greed for money: "What shocking Truths has that Creature utter'd! How divine a Bliss is conscious Innocence!" (72) This is an indication of the fact that civilized Europeans are to regain their state of innocence by a conscious effort, following Julio's example. But soon after Outside dismisses the truth he has just discerned, he avows that he "mustn't be preach'd out of [his] Purposes by a Natural" (72). The fact that Julio is identified as an innocent creature ignorant of the benefits of European society leads Outside and Truemore to disregard Julio's offer to go back to the woods with him – a potential reversal of the colonizer dragging the underdeveloped 'race' from its base surroundings to a civilized environment. The bias against the 'innocent creature' from the woods, the "Voice of Nature and Reason," who is theoretically incapable of serving as a role model for Europe-

ans, of representing human nature in its uncorrupted and original state, is justified by the prejudice against the wild 'savage' who is prone to use violence to accomplish his goals. His uncivilized state results in his not knowing how to behave appropriately. It is Julio's aggressive and uncontrollable behavior that renders him unable to perform an exemplary function for the Western world. Consequently, it is the colonizer's duty to 'civilize' Julio.

The degeneracy of Europe is intimately related to the collision of the two 'worlds', and it is Julio who initially contradicts Violetta when she attributes his ignorance to the fact that he has lived among 'savages' in the woods rather than in the "civiliz'd part of the World." He identifies Europe as the place where the real 'savages' live, calling it a "mighty villainous Country indeed" with "big-looking Savages, that domineer over their Fellow-Creatures, most of whom seem to be better than themselves" (Miller 19). The reader/spectator detects a note of irony when Julio avers that "by meer observing how you act, no body cou'd dream you were such excellent Creatures" (20). Julio uses the terminology of Western discourse and creates this image of corrupt and hypocritical Europe. When Julio meets with Sir Simon Dupe who confronts him with his backwardness by calling him "Animal," "Monster," "Brute," "Poor Creature," and "miserable Wretch" (25), he perfects this 'counter-evaluation' by stressing the positive spatialization of the woods against the negative spatialization of Europe's cultural values, including the striving for fame and possessions: "we are all naturally wise and honest enough; we have no need of being forc'd to do our Duty; we are so very ignorant, that meer natural Reason is enough for us […] I sleep well, eat well, drink well, I fear nothing, care for nothing, nor wish for nothing; now if this is Misery, what is your Happiness, Mr. Great Man?" (25) Julio's question, "[i]s this then the only Happiness of the Great, to have more Dishes to gaze upon, more Hours to do nothing in, and more Sicknesses and Doctors to be tormented with" (26), confirms the vanity of European arrogance and its clinging to "Wealth, Lands and Possessions in abundance" (25). Miller once again stresses the corruption of Europe and its greed, not only for money but also for the conquest of territory and the resulting expropriation and enslavement of that territory's population.[6] Julio is portrayed as the lovable "Brute" and "Monster" whose moral attractiveness is acknowledged but who is still considered a "simpleton" (21) incapable of comprehending the doings of civilized Europe – "I shall never find out the Meaning of these Country Savages [the British]; there's strange Doings, strange dark kind of Doings amongst 'em" (27) – and her innovations and achievements.[7] He is the 'noble brute' embodying untouched nature and the antidote to corruption. When he asks Violetta if the people in Europe "are skilful in making these Glasses that shew you your own Faces, why don't you make

6 Julio intentionally makes fun of their inability to discern the right moral values by contrasting it with himself – being so ignorant that he simply relies on reason.
7 The ambivalence of this statement is quite telling as it also hints at the fact that Julio, as the child of nature and reason, does not understand Europe's corruption.

some that shew the Mind and the Thoughts as well?" she realizes that nobody would really care for such an invention. As she insists, "they'd very seldom bear the Seeing, I'm afraid" (22), covertly pouring scorn on her own people's morality and their inability to confront their deluded ideological reasoning. Julio's master Truemore, however, criticizes the gap between rich and poor by drawing attention to inner-European problems of class and rank:

> The Happiness which you imagine in their [the British rich] Condition, is very often the Cause of their Misery […] Because Riches only multiply Mens [sic] Cares; the Poor labour only for the Necessaries, but the Rich for the Superfluities of Life; which are boundless by reason of their Ambition, Luxury, and Vanity which consume them; thus the rich Man's Wealth is the Cause of his Labour and Want. (Miller 39)

The image of the violent slave to be subjugated is intertwined with him being thankful for being introduced to civilized 'existence'. Julio's question as to why Truemore has taken him "hither, into a civiliz'd Country, as you call it; where the Virtue you pretend to, is only a Snare for the Credulity of those you want to deceive. I find that there is neither Truth, Honour nor Honesty in any of you," is dismissed as irrelevant, attention instead being drawn to the issue of money, an essential quality in the characterization of the 'corrupt' Europeans. Julio's communitarian utopia must remain outside the civilized order since commerce and private property are regarded as the cornerstone of civilized society: "[W]e don't here live in common as you do in your Woods; ev'ry one has a Property of his own, and no body must take what does not belong to him, without giving Money for it" (Miller 38). Miller creates collective symbols of Europeans and non-Europeans by categorizing them according to the then predominant ideology. Even if at first glance he attempts to suggest that the European lifestyle and its cultural background are corrupt and degenerate compared to the purity and reason of Julio, it is evident that the 'corrupt' characters do not really give credence to what Julio has to say. Thus, he does not actually dismantle the cultural identity of Europeans but instead confirms it, even if that identity is a 'corrupt' one. The first 'concession' is turned into negation, corroborating the 'ignorance' of the characters and their obvious self-appropriation and the resulting stereotyping of others. When Julio expresses amazement at peoples' habits in Britain – "Some are carry'd about in Cages, others are help'd to their very Victuals and Drink […]" – Violetta points to the greatness of civilized Britain, thus stressing Julio's ignorance: "Thy Uneasiness at this is owing to Ignorance; thou hast always liv'd amongst Savages, which only follow brutish Nature, but in the civiliz'd part of the World […] Men are govern'd by Laws, and are skill'd in Arts, and Sciences" (19). Julio's ignorance is then taken to justify his being enslaved and subsequently civilized: "thou must be a little more polish'd thy self, before thou canst see the Beauty of Order and Politeness in others […] I will take little Pains with thee, to make thee like a human Creature if possible" (20). Julio is portrayed as the epit-

ome of the unruly slave full of unbridled passion, an image that is summoned, for example, when he completely loses his temper and threatens to "thrash" people.[8] This significantly weakens and even negates the 'positive discrimination' entailed in the "hyper-positive image" (Knapp and Pallua 13) in which he serves as the superior moral entity and thus as the counterpart to European vice.[9] Julio as the rational human being is given permission to articulate his abhorrence of Europe's corrupt nature but is then 'silenced into the background' and subjected to Europe's powerful image of capitalist profit personified by the benevolent (and at least in terms of the men) paternal characters Truemore, Outside, Sir Simon Dupe, and Flaminia. Within the overall framework of the play, Julio's powerful ethical critique of the capitalist economy and its society is ultimately constrained by sullying his character and construing the image of the morally 'enlightened' capitalist who acts as the paternal and benevolent master to his slave.

Conclusion

The analysis of the play corroborates the stereotyped view of the dominant British ideology in assessing its relationship towards the 'Other', identified as the "wildman" who is taken from the forest and brought to Europe. The aim of this paper has been to uncover the playwright's attempt to come to terms with "simplified and generalised judgement[s]" (Quasthoff 19; my translation) in the slavery discourse – even though *Art and Nature* was first published as early as 1738 – scrutinizing the playwright's attitudes concerning the enslaving of human beings. Allport defines attitude as a "mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations to which it is related" (cited in Quasthoff 22). Once verbally expressed, attitudes referring to social groups turn into stereotypes (Quasthoff 27). Stereotypical images of the 'Other' conjured up in the dominant ideological struggle between Britain and other nations and peoples in the contact zone produced a firm belief in the inferiority of the 'Other' (27). The explication of the play has revealed that the playwright created images of resistance that counteracted the dominant ideology. The act of resisting and/ or overcoming prevailing prejudices implies deconstructing ethnocentric beliefs by discursively affirming the validity of the respective 'Other'. Yet, by doing so Miller confirmed the belief in the civilizing duty of Europe in educating Africans allegedly destitute of culture, religion, morality, and dignity.

8   There is a slight contradiction between Julio's passion and his characterization as an epitome of rationality; the fact that Julio is still depicted as being the 'uncontrollable savage' paves the way for the ideological justification of civilizing non-European peoples.
9   For the six meta-images of Africanness, see further Knapp and Pallua, "Images of Africa(ns)" 12-3.

The 'noble savage' Julio is not silenced by the dominant ideology but instead assumes an active role in expressing his disdain for the "civiliz'd part of the World" (Miller 19): Julio accuses Europeans of being not only foolish and ignorant, since all their "wisdom consists in the knowledge of the Laws," but also as poor "who fancy [themselves] rich," and slaves to their possessions, which they "prefer to [their] liberty," leading to the oppression of their "Brethren whom [they]'ll hang for taking a trifle of that which is of no use to [them]" (40). Property as fetish is criticized as the root of all evil, especially in connection with enslaving human beings. Julio's critique of Europeans striving after possessions, either land or human beings, not only denounces human trafficking but also the treatment of the British lower classes by the upper class. Thus, the criticism of trading in slaves in the name of civilization is also directed at the treatment of the lower class in Britain itself – an argument supporters of the slave trade would later take up, maintaining that the poor in Britain were worse off than the slaves in the colonies, who at least were cared for when they were old and sick. Miller creates a romantic notion of nature, reason, and knowledge literally untouched by the fatal machinations of modern civilization; nevertheless, even if the white characters listen to Julio's accusations and appeals, he is dismissed as a "simpleton," a "brute," a "natural" to whom it is not worth paying attention. Although his presence in Europe has reduced Julio to "a miserable Slave, faithless, base, inhuman Wretch" – compared to his existence in the woods where he was "at once Master and Servant, King, and Subject" not knowing "Riches nor Poverty" (Miller 40) – it is only the gap between rich and poor that is of concern to the white characters. The identities of both Europeans and the 'Other' are evaluated, contrasting liberty with money and corruption, but eventually the non-European is marginalized by creating a superior 'monoculture' controlling the inferior existence of the subservient slave Julio who is coerced into being thankful for being introduced to corruption and decay. So even if Miller lets Julio denounce the ambiguity in Europe's colonizing mission – trying to delude readers into believing that "the Voice of Nature and Reason" may defy the inexorable decline of Europe's morality – by serving the function of the foil to European vice, he confirms the strong cultural and national identity of Europe. At the same time he substantiates Europe's unwillingness to return to a state of "nature and reason": instead, Europe compels ostensibly inferior people to adopt her corrupt cultural values. *Art and Nature* stakes out the 'Other' by internalizing the negative image of the 'noble savage' from the woods. The subservient slave who is still untouched by the sinister reverberations of civilization fails to instruct Europeans, thus being in need of education. The image of Julio stands in stark contrast to the 'we', the British, who by pairing values of money and morality with civilization triumph over reason and nature.

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Thinking the 'Unthinkable'? Representations of the Haitian Revolution in British Discourse, 1791 to 1805

RAPHAEL HÖRMANN

The Haitian Revolution: A Milestone in the History of Emancipation and Decolonization

Most scholars today agree that the Haitian Slave Revolution (1791-1804) constituted a momentous event, both in the struggle against slavery and the history of the anti-colonial movement.[1] As the Afro-Trinidadian writer C. L. R. James emphasizes in the preface to his classic, Marxist account of the revolution, *The Black Jacobins* (1938), the Haitian Revolution stands out as "one of the greatest epics of revolutionary struggle and achievement." With his gripping narrative about the struggle and his heroic celebration of the way in which oppressed African slaves managed "to defeat the most powerful European nations of their day" (xviii) (i.e., France and Britain), James not only wrote his own epic of this revolution, but he also aimed to praise the anti-colonial revolutionary movements of his time.[2] In spite of James's openly revolutionary agenda and his literary style

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1 "In 1804 Haiti emerged as the first black republic from the world's only successful slave revolution," declared its former president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, highlighting the unprecedented nature of this revolution (vii), while Aimé Césaire stressed that the Haitian Revolution constituted the first genuine "révolution anti-colonialiste" (25). In his study of the connection between racial oppression and slavery in Anglo-America, Theodore W. Allen succinctly summarizes this double character of the Haitian Revolution. According to him it was the "[h]istorically most significant" act of black resistance and struggle in the Americas since it was "an abolition and a national liberation rolled in one" (9).

2 As James explains in the 1938 preface to *The Black Jacobins,* it was the contemporary global context, in particular the burgeoning anti-colonial and Pan-Africanist movement, that prompted him to write his history of the Haitian Revolution: "[…] I was working closely with [the Pan-Africanist and anti-colonial activist] George Padmore and his black organization, which was based in London. As it will be seen all over and particularly in its last three pages, the book was not written with the Caribbean but with Africa in mind" (xvi).

his enthusiastic verdict on the extraordinary nature of this feat is shared by more disinterested scholars of the history of slavery such as David Brion Davis:[3]

> The blacks turned the white cosmos upside down […] Every New World society was familiar with slave rebellions: some maroon societies had resisted conquest for many decades and had even negotiated treaties, as in Jamaica, with colonial authorities. But no slaves in history had ever expelled their former masters and established their own nation-state. (Davis 168-9)

What started out as a large-scale slave revolt in the northern part of the French colony of Saint-Domingue in August 1791 turned into an anti-colonial revolution that rocked the entire Atlantic World.[4] The overthrow of plantation slavery in the richest colony in the Caribbean, the official emancipation of the slaves (1793-1794), and the subsequent founding of the independent black state of Haiti (1804) posed a global challenge to the socioeconomic colonial order of all European nations. As one of the foremost historians of the Haitian Revolution, David P. Geggus maintains, "[a]fter 300 years of unchecked growth, colonialism and slavery, the defining institutions of the Caribbean, were annihilated precisely where they had most prospered" ("Slavery" 1).

Such a fundamental blow to Western imperialism naturally affected one of the largest European empires of the time, Britain. Not only did Britain have major colonial possessions in the Caribbean whose economy relied on plantation slavery, but in 1793 Britain also became directly involved in the fight for Saint-Domingue. Trying to profit from the civil war in the French colony, it launched an invasion only to be decisively defeated by the troops of the black general Toussaint Louverture by 1798.[5] This failed military expedition had a strong impact both on British views of the Haitian Revolution and on the public attitude towards abolition. The slave revolt of 1791 and its lurid coverage in the contemporary media had already proved a severe setback for the British aboli-

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3   In the introduction to a new edition of James's book, James Walvin points out how James's shift from European abolitionists to Afro-Caribbean slaves as the agents of liberation was revolutionary at its time. Alluding to the heroic-epic character of his narrative, Walvin states that for the first time in historiography, *The Black Jacobins* portrayed slaves as agents of their own story rather than being the grateful recipients of the largesse of others" ("Introduction" viii–ix). Alongside the epic, the other narrative pattern of James's history is tragedy, in particular the one of the revolutionary Toussaint Louverture. For contributions that engage with this dialectic between the epic and the tragic mode in *Black Jacobins*, see Villani as well as Scott, who argues that James's representation of the Haitian Revolution also reflects the tragedy of the twentieth-century revolutionary anti-colonial intellectual such as James himself. For a recent history of the Haitian Revolution that employs the epic as its narrative model, see Dubois' *Avengers*. For a review article that emphasizes the 'literary' dimension of the Dubois history, see Peabody.

4   For a collection of essays that investigates the repercussions of the Haitian Revolution for the Atlantic World see Geggus, *The Impact*.

5   Geggus's revised doctoral thesis *Slavery, War and Revolution* (1983) still remains the authoritative study of the failed British attempt to conquer Saint-Domingue.

tion movement and its campaign to evoke empathy with the fate of the suffering slaves.[6] Yet, it was in the years during and after the British military campaign that any "public sympathy" in Britain with the black fighters of Saint-Domingue was greatly "diminished," as was public support for the abolition campaign (cf. Geggus "British Opinion" 127-8).[7]

As I will argue throughout this essay the minute consideration of those historical facts and developments is pivotal for an adequate understanding of the contemporary British discourse on the Haitian Revolution. For instance, the turn of the tide in public opinion regarding the Haitian Revolution helps to explain why we find some very positive, indeed enthusiastic, appraisals of the 1791 slave revolt by British abolitionists in 1791 and 1792, but hardly any after 1793 – neither in abolitionist discourse nor amongst radical authors. Indeed, one of the earliest British reactions to the 1791 slave revolt on Saint-Domingue, a pamphlet by the abolitionist reverend and poet Percival Stockdale, contains an impassioned defense of the revolted slaves. He even justifies the brutality of the rebels, which he regards as the inevitable side effects of the slaves' righteous struggle for their emancipation. Violence is necessary, he argues, because the slaves cannot wait for the European abolitionists to succeed with their campaigns. For "unless they [the slaves] hazarded some desperate attempts for their emancipation […] the most deplorable servitude seemed to be inevitably entailed on them, and their posterity" (18). Urging his readers to put themselves in the shoes of the slaves, he even in the two following rhetorical questions, prompts his reader to consider whether the Europeans should not in fact praise the grim determination of the fighting slaves to gain their human rights rather than to self-righteously condemn their brutality as amounting to nothing more than savage atrocities:

> […] should not we approve of their conduct, their violence (call it which you please)[,] should we not crown it with eulogium, if they exterminated their tyrants with fire, and sword? Should they deliberately inflict the most exquisite tortures on those tyrants, would they not be excusable in the moral judgement of those who properly value […] those inestimable blessings, personal, rational, and religious liberty? (Stockdale 19)

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6   One of the most lurid depictions of the 1791 revolt was an anonymous French colonialist pamphlet that was translated into English as *A Particular Account of the Commencement and Progress of the Insurrection of the Negroes in St. Domingo* (1792). Extremely popular, it saw four editions within a year. Depicting in gruesome detail the alleged atrocities of the insurgent slaves, it served as the main source for most subsequent British accounts, which often copied verbatim from it.

7   In a concise account of the history of the British abolition movement, James Walvin also maintains that the Haitian Revolution caused a backlash against the abolitionist cause. He asserts that from 1792 to 1802 the British MPs " – and all the organized interests which supported them – recoiled from the idea of even discussing the end of the slave trade because it seemed likely to threaten a reprise of events in Haiti" ("British Abolitionism" 74).

It is not only Stockdale who in 1791 affirms the human rights of the slaves and the legitimacy of gaining those rights by force. The chief propagandist of British Abolitionism, Thomas Clarkson, in an anonymously published 1792 pamphlet that deals with the Saint-Domingue slave revolt also leaves no doubt that he regards the question of the human rights of the slaves as central to their uprising. Somewhat more ambivalent about the question of violence than Stockdale, he nevertheless seems to suggest that the slaves, who "have been fraudulently and forcibly deprived of the Rights of Men" (3), have no other option than "to assert their violated rights by force of arms" (Clarkson, *True State* 7).

Moreover, Clarkson and Stockdale's view of the revolt as the struggle of the slaves for their human rights shows that they regard it not merely as an import of the French Revolution by French agitators, as most contemporaries have suggested. When the slaves are fighting for their human rights, they mean primarily the freedom from slavery, in the sense of chattel slavery. Hence, Clarkson suggests, their struggle is *not directly related* to French revolutionary ideas as these originally precluded slaves from the rights of men, including the right to liberty.

While the exact relationship between the 1791 slave revolt and the French Revolution has remained a moot point even today,[8] Clarkson's argument must also be viewed as a rhetorical move to distance the British abolitionist campaign from the increasingly radical French revolutionaries. Several French revolutionaries were also involved in or associated with the French abolitionist society Les Amis des Noirs while some of the Jacobins, such as Robespierre, adopted a staunch antislavery position, for instance in a speech in 1791 (see Davis 163). It is partly for these reasons that Clarkson acknowledges the distinct motives of the Haitian revolutionaries:[9]

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8   Historical opinion is divided on the exact motives behind the 1791 slave revolt. Yves Benot argues "that the attainment of universal liberty and independence was the driving force behind the uprising" (106). By contrast Carolyn Fick claims that all the evidence from the preparatory meetings suggests that while the slaves "were preparing for war in a determined effort to free themselves of their bondage by destroying all its material manifestations with violent means," their program did not amount to "a declaration of independence" (3). By contrast, Michel-Rolph Trouillot stresses the more pragmatic goals of the slave revolt's leaders: They "did not ask for an abstractly couched 'freedom.' Rather, their most sweeping demands included three days a week to work on their own gardens and the elimination of the whip" (103). In an influential article John K. Thornton emphasizes the role that African models of governance played for the revolt, a point taken up recently by Nick Nesbitt who discusses in how far a Malian thirteenth-century antislavery charter (the *Mandé* Charter of 1222) also had an indirect impact on the uprising (45-8). Seymour Drescher's conclusion that the motives of the insurgents were "multivalent" (160) can hardly be contested but this does not absolve historians from inquiring further into the rebels' specific potential motivations.

9   Gelien Matthews points out that opinions such as those put forward by Clarkson "caused British abolitionists to be branded as Jacobins, for the doctrine of the rights of men had emerged out of the French Revolution of 1789 and was perceived by many in Britain as extreme and dangerous" (63).

> Such is the true state of the case respecting the Insurrection at St. Domingo and what do we learn from it but the following truth. "That the Slave Trade, and the oppression naturally resulting from it, was the real and only cause of this Insurrection," […] but that the Revolution of France, by causing the three divisions before mentioned [i.e., between the free colored, the whites who opposed their emancipation and those who favored it] did afford the Negroes an opportunity they would not have found that easily otherwise, of endeavouring to vindicate for themselves the unalterable Rights of Men. (Clarkson, *True State* 7-8)

While Clarkson points out that, in heightening the tensions between the ethnicities and political factions in the colony (in particular by the emancipation of the free blacks in May 1791), the *French Revolution* had contributed to the *outbreak* of the slave revolt in Saint-Domingue, the slaves were fighting their own *separate struggle for freedom*. Although "somewhat connected with the late Revolution in France," the slaves have a different agenda from that of the French revolutionaries. Acknowledging the full humanity of the slaves, Clarkson is convinced that the revolt is the slaves' attempt to assert for themselves their human rights. Hence their fight is foremost seen as one that pursues the goal of achieving their emancipation from slavery. At the same time, however, Clarkson tacitly acknowledges the importance of the French *Déclaration des droits l'homme et du citoyen* (1789) for the 1791 revolt, when he asserts that for the slaves the issue that is at stake is to claim for themselves, as oppressed Africans, the "Rights of Men." In his recourse to the revolutionary idea of the rights of men, Clarkson goes a considerable way towards affirming the universality of these rights.

His view seems more relevant than ever to today's scholarship on the Haitian Revolution. Various scholars (starting with C.L.R James) have contended that the Saint-Domingue slaves, in asserting the doctrine of human rights for themselves, fundamentally challenged any limited notion of the rights of men that excludes slaves, women, the lower classes, etc., as the American and French Revolutions had largely espoused it despite the lofty, universalist language of their respective declarations.[10] As for instance Nick Nesbitt has recently argued in his study of the interactions between the Haitian Revolution and the 'Radical Enlightenment', the slaves' harking back to the *Déclaration*, which was not originally intended to apply to Africans, any more than was the *American Declaration of Independence*, the slaves took an unprecedented step towards "the invention of *universal*

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10 Peter Hallward succinctly sums up this fundamental difference between the overall ideology of human rights in the French and American Revolutions on the one hand and the Haitian on the other, while at the same time emphasizing their dialectic interconnectedness: "Of the three great revolutions that began in the final decades of the eighteenth century – American, French and Haitian – only the third forced the unconditional application of the principle that inspired each one: affirmation of the natural, inalienable rights of all human beings. Only in Haiti was the declaration of human freedom universally consistent. Only in Haiti was this declaration sustained at *all costs*, in direct opposition to the social order and economic logic of the day" (11; Hallward's emphasis).

emancipation (as opposed to, say, the emancipation of white, male, adult property owners)" (1; Nesbitt's emphasis).[11] J. Michael Dash even goes as far as to claim the Haitian Revolution turned the entire Caribbean into a touchstone for the universalist pretensions of the European Enlightenment. As he maintains, in "its appropriation of this universalist discourse, the Caribbean had become one of the explosive borders for enlightened modernity" (10).

As it becomes evident in the contemporary discourse, the outbreak of the Haitian Revolution allowed for a strong challenge to the socially and racially exclusive interpretations of the rights of men, as Stockdale's and Clarkson's insistence on the human rights of the slaves proves. Such voices (of which I will present more later on) forcefully contradict Michel-Rolph Trouillot's claim that in neither the USA nor in Europe were the questions of the slaves' human rights and the right to resistance up for debate. As he maintains, in "*1791, there is no public debate on the record, in France, in England, or in the United States on the right of black slaves to achieve self-determination, and the right to do so by way of armed resistance*" (88; Trouillot's emphasis). Yet, the alternative positions that I have sketched out show that the British discourse on the Haitian Revolution was far from homogenous. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that with the increasing radicalization of the French Revolution, the continuing armed struggles on Saint-Domingue, and, perhaps most importantly, with the British intervention into the fight for the colony, most of those alternative voices tended to die down. With Clarkson, it is only in an 1823 essay in which he argues for gradual slave emancipation in the British colonies that he would again dare to mount a very cautious defense of the Haitian Revolution (see "Thoughts" 19-29).

Despite the pronounced antipathy towards the black rebels and their anti-colonial struggle, which dominated the contemporary British mainstream discourse on the Haitian Revolution and became almost ubiquitous during the time of Britain's military involvement (1793-97), we do find some very rare exceptions. For instance the radical agitator and author John Thelwall voices a dissenting opinion in a public lecture that he delivered in London on 14 October 1795, at the height of the British military involvement in Saint-Domingue. In this lecture, which is extremely critical both of slavery and colonialism, Thelwall asserts the legitimacy of the armed struggle against slavery. While he fears a prolonged bloody conflict, "the calamities of this struggle for emancipation," he hails the not too distant

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11 Susan Buck-Morss also explored this aspect in her 2000 essay "Hegel and Haiti" and further her extended 'postscript' to it, "Universal History" (2009). Among the latest (and most prominent) theoreticians to discuss this universal dimension of the Haitian Revolution and its interconnection with European revolutionary movements is Slavoj Žižek. Drawing heavily upon Susan Buck-Morss and Peter Hallward, he suggests that the Haitian Revolution was the first 'communist' revolution in history, as it aimed for universal emancipation in Marx's sense. Its actors, the Afro-Caribbean slaves, who constituted "a 'part-of no part' of the social body" (a direct allusion to Marx's depiction of the proletariat in the 1844 "Introduction to *A Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*"), "directly stand for universality." Thus they epitomized "[p]roperly communist revolutionary enthusiasm [which] is unconditionally rooted in full solidarity" (124).

prospect of an independent Caribbean that will be liberated from the scourge of plantation slavery, a stance that is informed by his pronounced hostility to colonialism as an oppressive system:

> […] with respect to West-India slavery, it is abolished: its final doom is fixed. It may, perhaps, keep up a struggling, feeble existence, for a little time; but the period cannot be distant, when the West-India islands will be cultivated by slaves no more – and for my own part, Citizens, I own that I cannot very much lament the prospect of this separation. […] it would be a happy thing for the universe, and for Britain in particular, if there were no such thing as a colony or dependency in the political system of the universe. I am convinced the people would be more happy: that a more extensive, but a more fair and equal commerce would be spread all over the world; and that population and happiness would be essentially promoted. (Thelwall, *Politics* 294)

Criticizing colonial exploitation as much as the political oppression of the Caribbean by the European powers, Thelwall juxtaposes the colonial economic relations with a scenario of a liberated, decolonized Caribbean. The new nation-states, Thelwall optimistically hopes, will be on an equal footing with the European nations in economic terms. The formation of nation-states, however, first requires successful anti-colonial revolutions. Thelwall correctly detects the first step towards decolonization in the revolutionary abolition of slavery on Saint-Domingue, which – as he predicts – will lead to the formation of an independent nation. It is from this perspective that he dismisses the British military campaign to capture Saint-Domingue as a doomed and futile imperial adventure for which the British lower classes are paying the price:

> But our monopolists would be injured [by independence of the West Indies]; and therefore a fresh armament is to be equipped for the *West-Indies*, with the vain and hopeless expectations of preventing a catastrophe which is inevitable: which may be delayed, perhaps, for a few years, but which never can be permanently prevented. The principle [of emancipation] is broad awake; and no drug in the shops of the political quack doctors, who have so long been dosing us with their potions and their pills, can send it to sleep again. But still we are struggling with Despair: like men who, in their sleep, dream that they are running, and though their feet are clogged with the bed-cloaths, endeavour to kick and sprawl about; so, in our dream of conquering the *West-India* islands, we send our fleets, with the best blood of the country, stored with the necessaries for which our poor at home are starving, to flounder and sprawl, and buffet the adverse elements, till, faint and exhausted, we wake from the delirious slumber, and find that we have toiled in vain. (Thelwall, *Politics* 294–5)

For Thelwall the "principle" of slave emancipation and anti-colonial struggle that first materialized in the Haitian revolution is unstoppable. Those who think otherwise are either politically and economically involved in the colonial enterprise or blinded by constant nationalist and imperialist propaganda. As Thelwall expresses it, the British are deluded when they think any colonial conquests will result in the advancement of the nation as a whole: caught up in these ideological fetters like a dreamer in tangled bedclothes, the British lower classes foolishly believe in the glory of the imperial project. In reality, however, any colonial mission is just a further socioeconomic, upper-class attack on the poor majority of the British population, who are footing the bill for the colonial wars. It is with these ideological shackles – the deluded belief in British colonialism and nationalism – that the majority of the British public is still bound. These metaphorical bonds correspond to the physical manacles that a large part of the West Indian slaves must still bear. However, as Thelwall insists, the rebellious ex-slaves on Saint-Domingue, who in contrast to the British lower classes have developed a revolutionary consciousness and acted accordingly, have triggered a revolutionary avalanche. This, Thelwall implies, might also reach Europe and lead to a transformation of socioeconomic power relations there; a scenario that I will discuss further in the final section of this essay.

The Ideologies of Theory: Trouillot's Thesis on the Haitian Revolution as an "Unthinkable" Event

In his "now classic discussion of European reactions to the Haitian Revolution" (Dubois, "Avenging America" 123), Haitian anthropologist and historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot has influentially argued that the Haitian Revolution constituted an "unthinkable" event for the Western contemporaries: they were unable to conceive of a revolution undertaken by slaves for the purposes of their liberation. Thus – according to this thesis – a contemporary position such as Thelwall's – that acknowledges and even praises the revolutionary achievements of the black liberation fighters – should have been impossible in the first place. In his critique of Western historiography, *Silencing the Past. Power and the Production of History* (1995), Trouillot uses the Haitian Slave Revolution as his prime example to trace gaps, silences and erasures in the European historiography of non-Western history. As he maintains, while the "silencing of the Haitian Revolution is only a chapter in the narrative of [Western] global domination" (107), the failure to acknowledge this revolution has been absolute. Not only does this erasure of the Haitian Revolution apply to Western *historiography of* the Age of Revolution, which until recently had largely managed to exclude the Haitian Revolution from its accounts, but allegedly the reactions of European and American contemporaries *during* the Age of Revolution as well.

While Trouillot and others have provided sufficient evidence to support claims about the silencing of the Haitian revolution in Western historiography, it is the assertions about the erasure of the revolution by contemporaries that I find highly problematic. Unlike the 'silencing' of the Haitian Revolution by professional nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians, the 'silencing' by contemporaries did not consist so much in not mentioning the revolution at all; on the contrary, Trouillot identifies a broad discursive engagement with it. The contemporary silencing rather manifested itself in the *trivialization* of the revolution. As Trouillot explains, the Haitian revolution was often cast as an 'imported' revolution. Accordingly, the agency of slaves was often transferred from them to European revolutionists and abolitionists, sometimes resulting in the most far-fetched allegations and conspiracy theories:[12]

> It was due to outside agitators. It was the unforeseen consequence of various conspiracies connived by non-slaves. Every party chose its favorite enemy as the most likely conspirator behind the slave uprising. Royalist, British, mulatto, or Republican conspirators were seen or heard everywhere by dubious and interested witnesses. Conservative colonialists and antislavery republicans accused each other of being the brains behind the revolt. Inferences were drawn from writings that could not have possibly reached or moved the slaves even if they knew how to read. (Trouillot 91-2)[13]

An initial, superficial survey of the British discourse seems to confirm Trouillot's verdict. With his allegation of the European denial of the slaves' agency, Trouillot seems to have highlighted a key European strategy to discount the revolution-

12 An example of this tactic in the British context were allegations against the British abolitionist and MP William Wilberforce that his interminable campaigning for a law against the slave trade played a decisive role in the outbreak of the 1791 revolt in Saint-Domingue. Perhaps most absurdly these claims are expressed in the apocryphal anecdote of the rebellious slaves dancing around an idol of him, a story that gained wide currency and notoriety. The vicious attacks on Wilberforce were most likely also due to the fact that he "did not add his voice to the defamation of the St. Domingue slave rebels of 1791, and he was able to rise to the challenge of meeting and opposing proslavery descriptions of the rising" (Matthews 62).

13 In particular, Trouillot's last contention here that the slaves could not have known abolitionist or revolutionary pamphlets, since they were mostly illiterate, has come under strong criticism. See for instance Nebitt, who counters the argument that their illiteracy precluded any knowledge of the revolutionary events in France by arguing that someone could have "read them a posted announcement of the Rights of Man" (35). Aravamudan quotes from a letter by one of the highest officials in Saint-Domingue who writes in September 1789 about the alleged impact of abolitionist and revolutionary propaganda: "'All those who write about and concern themselves with the emancipation of the blacks are making inroads in the colony [...] these blacks agree with everything said [...] that the white slaves have killed their masters, and being liberated from now on, they will govern themselves and claim possession of all the earth's assets.'" (308). Moreover, in an account written by Louis de Calbiac, who was taken prisoner by the rebels in 1791, we find the claim that during the first of the insurrections, "une troupe innombrable de nègres," which assembled close to batteries of Le Cap, demanded "le droit de l'homme" (de Calbiac 776).

ary feats of the slaves. In the English discourse the explanation of the revolution as a European conspiracy hatched by French abolitionists and revolutionists was most influentially brought forward by the Anglo-Jamaican planter and MP Bryan Edwards.[14] As he alleges in the first British (and most influential) contemporary history of the still ongoing Haitian Revolution, *An Historical Survey of the French Colony in the Island of St. Domingo* (1797):

> It was not the strong and irresistible impulse of human nature groaning under oppression, that excited either of those classes [i.e., the mulattos and the slaves] to plunge their daggers into the bosoms of unoffending women and helpless infants. They were driven into these excesses – reluctantly driven – by the vile machinations of men calling themselves philosophers (the proselytes and imitators in France, of the Old Jewry associates in London) whose pretences to philanthropy were as gross a mockery of human reason, as their conduct was an outrage on all feelings of our nature, and the ties which hold society together! (Edwards xx–xxi)

In an often-repeated argument, Edwards here attacks the French Enlightenment philosophers, abolitionists, and revolutionists (as well as dissenting English radical ministers such as Richard Price, who, as preacher in the Old Jewry meeting house in London, had enthusiastically hailed the French Revolution). Even if they may not have directly conspired to stage the Haitian Revolution, their deliberate propaganda amongst the slaves, at the very least, instigated it. These widespread accusations against European radicals, however, do not mean that for the proslavery campaigners and colonists the massive 1791 slave revolt and the Haitian Revolution would have been "'unthinkable' facts" (Trouillot 82) that needed to be explained by inferring a conspiracy of abolitionists. As Clarence Munford and Michael Zeuske have convincingly shown, the fear of a large-scale slave uprising had been ubiquitous (though often repressed) in the Caribbean even *before* the Haitian Revolution, while *after* 1791 the 'Great Fear' of a slave revolution, the specter of the Saint-Domingue revolt, haunted the region.[15] A "veritable 'Trauma Saint-Domingue'" affected the ruling elites across the entire Caribbean, they maintain (41), including those in the British West Indian possessions. Such traumatization is clearly visible in Edwards's style, too. It is plain to see

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14 As Olwyn M. Blouet points out, "by the mid 1770s [Edwards] was one of the richest men in Jamaica, holding numerous properties and about 1,500 slaves" (45).

15 Additionally, David Geggus points out the following flaw in Trouillot's argument. Discussing the situation in Saint-Domingue shortly before the outbreak of the revolution, Geggus argues that Raynal's warning of a future "black Spartacus" in his *Histoire des Deux Indes* (1770 ff.) and "the triumph of such a figure [...] foreseen in Louis-Sébastien Mercier's frequently republished 1771 novel *L'an 2440,*" cast strong doubt on Trouillot's central claim of the unthinkability of a successful slave revolution. Moreover, he continues, "the widespread fears of slave revolt that struck colonists, merchants, and officials at the beginning of the French Revolution" would be difficult to account for, "if contemporaries were incapable of imagining a massive or successful rebellion" ("Saint-Domingue" 4).

that his downplaying of the slaves' agency serves to shore up – against abolitionist attacks and pressure – the socioeconomic system of plantation slavery, in which he was heavily involved, both as planter and as a political lobbyist for the British West Indian faction. As he chillingly argues – simultaneously acknowledging and defending the inherent violence of plantation society – if the slaves lose their fear and take "action" by forcefully demanding their rights – which are absolutely incompatible with slavery – the entire plantation economy will collapse. However, this downfall of slave society and its economy, Edwards insists, will inevitably lead to the disintegration of *all* public order, leaving the European colonies economically and socially ravaged:

> In countries where slavery is established, the leading principle, on which government is supported, is fear; or a sense of coercive necessity, which leaving no choice of action, supersedes all question of right. It is in vain to deny that such actually is, and must be, the case in all countries where slavery is allowed. Every endeavour therefore to extend positive rights to men in this state, as between one class of people and the other, is an attempt to reconcile inherent contradictions, and to blend principles together which admit not of combination. […] With all the abuses arising from licentiousness of power […] and the system of slavery, the scale evidently preponderated on the favourable side; and […] the signs of publick prosperity were every where visible. […] but, unhappily a spirit of subversion and innovation, founded on visionary systems inapplicable to real life, had taken possession of the publick mind […] and produced a tempest that swept every thing before it. To trace those effects to their proper causes, to develop the atrocious purposes of pretended philanthropy, political fanaticism, and disappointed ambition; and to describe the vast and lamentable ruin which they occasioned, thereby to furnish a profitable lesson to other nations, is the aim of the following pages. (Edwards 11-3; Edwards's emphasis)[16]

The socioeconomic argument creeps into Edwards's rhetoric, as Saint-Domingue is presented as a "profitable" lesson, an example of horror for all other colonial, slave-owning powers. It is more a system of class than one of racial dominance, Edwards seems to suggest, when he plays with the two meanings of "class of people," in the biological and the sociological sense. As he further insists, in a corresponding passage in his preface, terrified "by the gloomy idea, that the only

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16 Cf. further the following passage from the "Preface." Invoking Horace's maxim of "*delectare and prodesse*," Edwards further emphasizes the instructive nature of his narrative, which he places over its entertainment value: "All therefore that I can hope and expect is, that my narrative, if it cannot delight, may at least*, instruct*" (xix; Edwards's emphasis). In spite of Edwards' emphasis on *prodesse*, it is obvious that Edwards' lurid depictions of the slaves' alleged atrocities also possessed a huge entertainment value for his contemporary readers. As Blouet insists, Edwards "littered his text with bloody and sensational atrocities, recording stories of rape and unspeakable cruelty that must have rocked the reading public, in a way that the horrors of the Indian Mutiny would later affect Victorian society" (50).

memorial of this once flourishing colony would soon be found only in the records of history," his representation of the events as tragic serves as an admonition to Great Britain and its West-Indian planters not to recklessly endanger its wealth by emancipatory moves. As he hopes, his "own country and fellow-colonists, in lamenting its [Saint-Domingue's] tragedy, might at the same time *profit* by so terrible an example" (xiv; my emphasis). If the British slaves – fueled by the ideologies of revolutionaries and abolitionists – start to revolt as well, a similarly horrific, general slaughter of all whites, as allegedly perpetrated by the black slaves of Saint-Domingue, will be the inevitable consequence.

Cloaked in a Gothic rhetoric of terror he paints an apocalyptic picture of the aftermath of the slave revolution. Edwards belongs to a group of proslavery authors who in their Gothic narratives on the Haitian Revolution are "haunted by something quite different from what they represented – not an onslaught of atavistic barbarism, but an organized and strategic revolution of slaves" (Dubois, "Avenging America" 112).[17] Edwards even tacitly acknowledges that the slaves in their "exterminating war" pursued such a deliberate aim. The killing of the planters and the destruction of the plantations, for which Edwards gives precise statistics that contrast oddly with the preceding apocalyptic and melodramatically Gothic imagery, strongly suggests for Edwards and his readers that the principal aim of the revolutionaries was the destruction of the slave economy and the slaveholders:

> To detail the various conflicts, skirmishes, massacres, and scenes of slaughter, which this exterminating war produced were to offer a disgusting and frightful picture; – a combination of horrors; – wherein we should behold cruelties unexampled in the annals of mankind; human blood poured forth in torrents; the earth blackened with ashes, and the air tainted with pestilence. It was computed that, within two months after the revolt first began, upwards of two thousand white persons, of all conditions and ages, had been massacred; – that one hundred and eighty sugar plantations, and about nine hundred coffee, cotton, and indigo settlements had been destroyed (the buildings thereon being consumed by fire), and that one thousand two hundred christian [sic] families reduced from opulence, to such a state of misery as to depend altogether for their clothing and sustenance on publick and private charity. (Edwards 77-8)

As Edwards gravely warns his readers in this highly Gothic rhetorical vein, which runs through his entire *Historical Survey*, both economic ruin and social anarchy, unspeakable "scenes of anarchy, desolation and carnage" (xviii), will be the inevitable result of slave action in any colony. Edwards alleges that the same socio-revolutionary leveling spirit that had emerged in the French Revolution, the dismissal of any "progressive improvement in the situation of the lower ranks of

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17 See Clavin for an essay that undertakes a preliminary investigation into the function of the Gothic in contemporary representations of the Haitian Revolution.

the people" in favor of a *tabula rasa* approach of revolutionary change has also fueled the Haitian Revolution: "[I]n their hand reformation, with a scythe more destructive than that of time, mows down every thing, and plants nothing" (xix-x). Revolution as such is even more deadly than the Grim Reaper, as this allegory of reformation suggests. Alluding to the fact that the planters were often mowed down by the rebels' improvised weapons, which often consisted of their fieldwork tools, Edwards sees in both the Haitian and the French Revolution "the triumph of savage anarchy over all order and government" (iv). This allegation echoes Edmund Burke's warning in *Letters on a Regicide Peace* (1796) that the "wildest anarchy" of the "Republick of Regicide," i.e., revolutionary France, has not only left "a ruined commerce," but also threatens the survival of European civil society and civilization (*Regicide* 66). While at first glance Edwards seems to entirely dismiss the revolutionary intention and agency of the slaves, a closer investigation reveals that in reality he is acutely conscious of their main socio-revolutionary goal, i.e., the destruction of slave society.

Thus it seems no coincidence that Edwards's seminal history does not feature in Trouillot's study, as it would seriously undermine his thesis of the contemporary trivialization of the Haitian Revolution. Moreover, whenever Trouillot draws attention to attempts to belittle the agency of the slaves, he is careful not to foreground any of the *specific* socioeconomic reasons that often lie behind the attempted trivialization of the Haitian Revolution. Neither does he take into account how the demonization of both the French and Haitian revolutionaries in the British mainstream discourse might be linked to a broader counterrevolutionary and anti-socio-revolutionary ideology, as Edwards's allegation against the revolutionaries paradigmatically displays. Enmeshed within a liberal post-modernist ideological framework, Trouillot is keen to eschew the socioeconomic and sociological perspective on the Haitian Revolution, which was first adopted by James in his *Black Jacobins*. Unlike James he does not emphasize the relation between racist ideology and the economy of plantation slavery. Nor does he relate the Haitian Revolution to the wider socioeconomic conflicts of the time, for example by analyzing and demonstrating the dialectic interactions between the material and the superstructural, between conditioning and agency, as does James:[18] "the movement of the economic forces of the age; their moulding of society and politics, of men in the mass and individual men; the powerful reaction of these on their envi-

18 Trouillot's anti-materialism is in line with the majority of contemporary criticism. As Robert J. C. Young argues materialistically in his 1996 study of the politics of theory, the strong anti-Marxist bias that most cultural and literary theory has displayed from the 1980s onwards marks out the superstructure of the present socioeconomic system. This accounts for its political and social conformity to the economic logic of late capitalism: "And we have to concede that it is not for nothing that we speak of the *economy* of capitalism: its duplicitous extravagances not only play themselves out in the stock markets, finance houses, and treasuries of the world, but also determine the conceptual and theoretical formulations of its academies. Contemporary theory, be it dialogism, New Historicism, postmodernism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, or psychoanalysis, repeats this structure and, in describing it, re-enacts and reinforces it" (8; Young's emphasis).

ronment at one of these rare moments when society is at boiling point and therefore fluid" (James xix).[19] Trouillot, however, in his strongly social constructionist argument, not only downplays the socioeconomic but also the ideological dimension of most of the contemporary representations of the Haitian Revolution. For instance, he fails to even mention another evident cultural-ideological, much less openly socioeconomic, explanation for the trivialization of the Haitian Revolution: that the contemporary public had to deny the revolution's social and political dimension, since acknowledging the slave revolution in its own right would have meant relinquishing deeply entrenched ideological preconceptions about Western racial and cultural superiority. Neither does he explicitly argue that, for Western contemporaries, abandoning their racist notions of biological and cultural superiority would have risked tearing down the very ideological pillars on which the slave economy and the colonial system rested. Instead he introduces the elusive epistemological concept of the 'unthinkable' to *exclusively* account for the trivialization of the revolution: "The Haitian Revolution thus entered history with the peculiar characteristics of being unthinkable even as it happened. […] They [i.e., the Western contemporaries] could read the news only with their ready-made categories, and these categories were incompatible with the idea of a slave revolution" (Trouillot 73). In positing the categorical impossibility of such an intellectual move for the entirety of the Western public, Trouillot moves beyond any *historical-ideological and sociological* arguments and adopts an essentially ahistorical, epistemological perspective. As he further insists, it was *absolutely* inconceivable for the Western contemporaries to adopt an alternative view of the Haitian Revolution. Even if they had *wanted* to transcend this perspective on the revolution they would have been *unable* to do so since they lacked the necessary concepts and categories. Contemporary Western ontology could neither conceive of the category of universal equality nor of a revolutionary transformation that was enacted by what were perceived as semi-human barbarians. By introducing his notion of the "unthinkable" he thus effectively denies that any alternative perspective on the Haitian Revolution could have existed:

19 Trouillot implies that James's thesis of extremely close links between the French and Haitian Revolution, and the parallels and interactions between their respective social histories, constitutes the major flaw of his book. While he lavishes praise on James for being the first to have acknowledged the Haitian Revolution as a revolution in its own right, he objects to the book's title because for him it represents an attempt to downplay the independent and distinctly different goals of the Haitian compared to the French Revolution: "Yet since the first publication [in 1938] of C. L. R. James' classic, *The Black Jacobins* (but note the name), the demonstration has been well made to the [historical] guild that the Haitian Revolution is indeed a 'revolution' in its own right […], and not an appendix of Bastille Day" (104). By contrast, Robin Blackburn asserts that the "title of C. L. R. James's classic study, *Black Jacobins*, challenged the ideas that emancipation was a gift bestowed by the republic and that slave revolt was its own program" ("Haiti" 664). For a more recent Marxist, and more historically accurate account of the Haitian Revolution than James's, one that also teases out the close interrelations between the French and the Haitian Revolution and their social histories, see Blackburn, *Overthrow* 161-264.

> One will not castigate long-dead writers for using the words of their
> time or for not sharing the ideological views that we now take for grant-
> ed. Lest accusations of political correctness trivialize the issue, let me
> emphasize that I am not suggesting that eighteenth-century men and
> women *should* have thought about the fundamental equality in the same
> way some of us do today. On the contrary, I am arguing that they *could*
> *not* have done so. But I am also drawing a lesson from the understand-
> ing of this historical impossibility. The Haitian Revolution did challenge
> the ontological and political assumptions of the most radical writers of
> the Enlightenment. *The events that shook up Saint-Domingue from 1791*
> *to 1804 constituted a sequence for which not even the extreme political*
> *left in France or in England had a conceptual frame of reference.* They
> were "unthinkable" facts in the framework of Western thought. (Trouil-
> lot 82; Trouillot's emphasis)

Some historians have already emphasized the empirical untenability of Trouillot's
absolute claims.[20] However, I would go one step further and argue that his con-
cept is also beset by various ethical and theoretical flaws. First, his assertion that
the Western contemporaries of the Haitian Revolution could not have harbored
dissenting opinions easily lends itself both to an apologetic for and normalization
of racism: the contemporaries had no alternative but to think in those racist cat-
egories, and thus we have no right to self-righteously criticize them. Blinded by
political correctness we fail to see this absolute determination that they were sub-
ject to. Therefore, one might conclude, we can absolve the contemporaries from
all ethical responsibility.

The less immediately evident ideological problems with Trouillot's notion of
the "unthinkable" only become obvious, however, when one investigates how
Trouillot trivializes and distorts Bourdieu's notion of the 'unthinkable.' Admit-
tedly – albeit to a lesser degree than with Trouillot – this danger of furnishing an
apologetic for racist and colonial attitudes is also inherent in Bourdieu's use of
this concept, in particular in the following passage in the preface to Bourdieu's
The Logic of Practice (1980) to which Trouillot here refers. In a detailed cri-
tique of twentieth-century French sociology and ethnology in the Maghreb during
French colonial times, Bourdieu asserts that it was *more* than the – self-evident
– inherent racism and colonial attitudes towards the indigenous population, "the
colonial situation and the dispositions it furthers" (5), that kept the French social

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20 Michael Zeuske maintains that there existed a "hidden contemporary discourse […] that
was obviously willing to conceive the revolution within the terms of its own logic" (170;
my translation). Susan Buck-Morss counters Trouillot by citing evidence that proves that
"[e]ighteenth-century Europeans *were* thinking about the Haitian Revolution precisely
because it challenged the racism of many of their preconceptions." She further claims that
the spread of a universal desire for freedom both across racial divides and the gulf between
slaves and freemen made it possible for contemporaries to conceive of the Haitian Revo-
lution "as an event of *world* history, and, indeed, the paradigm-breaking example" ("Hegel
and Haiti", 845-6; Buck-Morss's emphasis).

scientists from understanding the indigenous cultures. Cautioning against a liberal-bourgeois attitude that self-complacently looks back at the limitations of past generations, Bourdieu thus wonders what else – apart from their colonialist prejudices – prevented the cutting-edge and most liberally minded French sociologists and ethnologists of the time from gaining any substantial insight into the societies and cultures of the Maghreb. In the particular case of the French colonial social scientists, Bourdieu identifies the major methodological lacuna as the absence of a structuralist paradigm. This lack of what he considered to be an adequate conceptual framework, *besides* political and ethical societal limitations and ideological taboos, is included in what counts as 'unthinkable' by a discipline or a social group at a specific historical moment. As Bourdieu defines in the following passage, which Trouillot also quotes: "in what is unthinkable at a given time, there is not only everything that cannot be thought for lack of ethical or political dispositions which tend to bring it into consideration, but also everything that cannot be thought for lack of instruments of thought such as problematics, concepts, methods and techniques" (5).

Although the "ethical" and "political" – not to mention the sociological – dimensions play a much bigger role in Bourdieu's than in Trouillot's 'unthinkable', one might argue that Trouillot simply shifts the emphasis from the field of social sciences towards epistemology.[21] The full extent, however, to which Trouillot de-historicizes and de-socializes Bourdieu's sociological notion only becomes evident if one pays close attention to the pivotal substitution that Trouillot undertakes. Trouillot tacitly replaces France's "most lucid and best intentioned […] sociologist and ethnologist" (Bourdieu 5) of the first half of the twentieth century, to whom Bourdieu refers in the corresponding passage in *The Logic of Practice* with "the most radical writers of the Enlightenment" and the contemporary "extreme political left in France or in England" (Trouillot 82). While already his lumping together of radical Enlightenment writers and European ultra-radicals (whom he refers to with the term "extreme political left" which strictly speaking is an anachronism for the late eighteenth century) constitutes a highly precarious argumentative move, the sweeping assertion that *all* of these necessar-

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21 It comes as little surprise that as an anthropologist Trouillot is conscious of his distortion of Bourdieu's anthropological notion. As he points out in an endnote, with Bourdieu the "unthinkable applies to the world of everyday life and the social sciences" (169). One might want to subsume Trouillot's operation under – what Said has called – "traveling theory": the significant transformation that theoretical concepts undergo if they are adapted by other theorists. As Said insists, when investigating this process, one has "to specify the kinds of movement that are possible, in order to ask whether by virtue of having moved from one place and time to another an idea or a theory gains or loses in strength, and whether a theory in one historical period and national culture becomes altogether different for another period or situation" ("Traveling Theory" 226). In the case of Trouillot's adaptation of Bourdieu's "unthinkable," I would argue that it qualifies as an "impossible" movement since the original theory loses in strength. Trouillot's eclectic borrowing amounts rather to a "sampling" of theory as it leaves intact little else from Bourdieu's complex concept other than its catchy name.

ily lacked the possibility to transcend the racist conceptions of the time lacks any basis in political or social history. It is telling that, at least in this passage, Trouillot refrains from providing any specific examples. Thus Bourdieu's sociologically and historically specific group (French social scientists working in the Maghreb in the first half of the twentieth century) are substituted for an undifferentiated host of political radical and 'left-wing' writers and activists, who are themselves anything but a homogenous group, diverse in national origin, class, and ideological convictions.[22] Bourdieu's relatively nuanced and concrete sociological-historical critique of the subtle limits and pressures that are imposed upon a discipline and a social group's behavior and thinking serves Trouillot to issue sweeping statements about Europe's radical avant-garde in the Age of Revolution rather than investigating their arguments. It is his wholesale and unqualified denial of the radicals' potential to counter European contemporary racism that I find particularly pernicious. Of course, it would be an equally sweeping – and historically grossly inaccurate – statement to assert that *all* radical Enlightenment thinkers and contemporary members of the "extreme left" were able to understand the revolution on its own terms; on the contrary, as some scholars have shown, this was often not the case.[23]

Yet, Trouillot's sociologically and ideologically highly undifferentiated thesis that suggests that crucial factors such as class, political orientation, and economic involvement were meaningless when it came to Europeans' views on the Haitian Revolution is not only empirically untenable, but also promotes dangerous notions of determinism and the lack of human agency. Significantly, Bourdieu does not state anywhere – as Trouillot does – that the 'unthinkable' would make alternative positions inconceivable or even impossible. On the contrary, Bourdieu presents it as the ethical duty of the members of any social group or academic discipline "to question the categories of thought that produce that 'unthinkable' thing" (162). Ironically, Trouillot's category of the 'unthinkable', aimed at explaining the processes by which the agency of non-European people is marginalized in Western historiography, makes itself vulnerable to a critique analogous to that he mounts against the Western contemporaries of the Haitian Revo-

22 One wonders whether Said's Orientalism does not loom large here as the unacknowledged presence behind Trouillot's 'unthinkable', much more so than the acknowledged source in Bourdieu. As Said states, "so authoritative a position did Orientalism have that no one writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient could do so without taking account of the limitations on thought and action imposed by Orientalism. In brief, because of Orientalism the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought and action" (*Orientalism* 3).

23 For a study of French Enlightenment thought and slavery, see Sala-Molins. For essays that investigate the relationship of British Radicalism and abolition, see Walvin, "Impact," Fladeland, and Hollis. For an analysis of racist stereotypes presented by the English Romantic radical William Cobbett (in particular regarding his negative representation of the Haitian Revolution), see Wood 148-69. For counterevidence that it was ultra-radicals who endorsed violent slave revolution, see MacCalman. In particular, he discusses the antislavery politics of the ultra-radical preacher Robert Wedderburn (1756-1835/36), son of a Scottish-Jamaican planter and a slave mother.

lution. By denying any possibility that Europeans would question racist concepts and categories or harbor dissenting views on the Haitian Revolution, he ironically "silences" these contemporary European dissenting voices in a way similar to the Western historians whom he accuses of having silenced the Haitian slaves and their revolutionary feat. Trying to analyze the way "power" interferes in the "production of history" – as the subtitle of his study promises – and wanting to restore the agency of the Haitian Revolutionaries in the historical process, he leaves himself open to the charge of himself having disempowered other marginalized historical subjects, this time European ones.

"This Wonderful Revolution": Rainsford's Challenge to the Silencing of the Haitian Revolution

Another forceful argument that speaks against Trouillot's thesis of the comprehensive silencing of the Haitian Revolution, and his contention that contemporaries could only conceive of it as an unthinkable event, can be found in the 1805 history of the Haitian Revolution by Marcus Rainsford, *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti* (1805). After Edwards's text, this constitutes the second influential British account of the event that Trouillot fails to mention. Doing so would have significantly challenged his main thesis. Surprisingly, Rainsford castigates his contemporaries for the silencing and trivialization of the revolution in a comparable way that Trouillot would accuse all European contemporaries of 190 years later. In the opening passages of the preface to his history Rainsford delineates the following conspicuous paradox: that in spite of the momentous, world-historic transformations that the Haitian Revolution has wrought, it has been all but eclipsed in contemporary historical discourse. Even more astonishingly, Rainsford provides reasons for the silencing of the Haitian Revolution that closely resemble those explanations that Trouillot provides; an affinity critics have so far not seen.[24] Similar to Trouillot, Rainsford argues that the revolution has not been acknowledged precisely *because* it poses such a severe threat to the conceptual and ideological foundations of Western historiography and philosophy. Since it has challenged not only prevalent presumptions and prejudices but also the entire worldview of the Western contemporaries, only subsequent generations will be able to fully acknowledge the true importance of the revolution:

> It has frequently been the fate of striking events, and particularly those which have altered the condition of mankind, to be denied that consider-

24 Sybille Fischer in her study on the discourses on the Haitian Revolution quotes "this moving reflection" from Rainsford's preface (6-7). However, she falls short of recognizing the challenge that Rainsford's argument poses to Trouillot's thesis. Instead, she uncritically praises Trouillot for his indictment of "Eurocentric historiography" and "his eloquent account of the silencing of the Haitian Revolution and the unintelligibility of slave agency for slaveholders and metropolitan elites […]" (138).

ation by their contemporaries, which they obtain from the veneration of posterity. In their vortex, attention is distracted by the effects; and distant society recedes from the contemplation of objects that threaten a violation of their system, or wound a favourite prejudice. It is thus that history, with all the advantages of calm discussion is imperfect; and philosophy enquires in vain for the unrecorded causes of astonishing transactions. (Rainsford ix)

While these lines may sound like general observations on the inevitable shortcomings of historiography, Rainsford is here clearly referring to the Haitian Revolution and its silencing. Since this event has severely challenged Western preconceptions about the non-European nations, this threat of "a violation of their system" must be contained. Therefore, Rainsford asserts, all preceding historical narratives of the events have sought to belittle the extraordinary dimension of "this wonderful revolution" (xvi). Instead of giving it its rightful due as a sublime and unique world historical event that excites wonder or astonishment, most writers have merely presented it as a senseless succession of atrocities. They trivialize the extraordinary nature of the slaves' revolutionary feats by trying to constrain them within conventional narrative patterns and an imagery of natural disaster:

> The rise of the Haytian empire is an event which may powerfully affect the condition of the human race; yet is viewed as an ordinary succession of triumphs and defeats interrupted only by the horrors of new and terrible inflictions, the fury of the contending elements, and destructive disease, more tremendous than all. (Rainsford x)

Countering the prevalent notion that "destructive disease," i.e., yellow fever, was responsible for the defeat of the armies of the European superpowers Britain and France, not the military feats of the black army, Rainsford goes so far as to suggest that the success of the Haitian Revolution momentarily questioned the very concept of the absolute superiority of European civilization. Playing with the light-and-darkness imagery of Enlightenment rhetoric, he emphasizes that – while the glory of Haiti's black revolutionaries temporarily outshone the splendid light of Enlightenment Europe – Europeans have yet to acknowledge this "brilliant fact": "It will not be believed, that enlightened Europe calmly witnessed its contrasted brilliance with actions which, like the opaque view of night, for a sullen hour obscured the dazzling splendour" (x).

However, it is also important to point out the ideological limitations of Rainsford's stance on the Haitian Revolution and its position within the wider ideological currents of the time. Importantly, his history as a whole is *not* an anticolonial account of the Haitian Revolution that would seriously expose Eurocentric notions. He neither debunks the concept of overall cultural superiority of the white race nor subverts the basic tenets of the European Enlightenment worldview. On the contrary, for Rainsford the extraordinary narrative of the Haitian Revolution actually confirms a key grand narrative of the Enlightenment, that

of human perfectibility. The decisive figure here is the black ex-slave extraordinaire, the military leader and statesman, "this truly great man" Toussaint Louverture (249), whom Rainsford praises as "the perfector of *the independence of St. Domingo* (211; Rainsford's emphasis), and whose "wisdom and magnanimity" (248) also manifested itself in his humane leniency towards "crimes which the governors of nations long *civilized* would have sentenced to torture!" (250; Rainsford's emphasis). The rapid advancement of civilization amongst the Afro-Caribbean ex-slaves under Toussaint's rule functions as proof that under the right guidance and tutelage even culturally 'inferior' nations (as 'Africa' is so perceived) are capable of previously unimaginable historical progress and cultural advancement:

> […] it remained for the close of the eighteenth century to realize the scene, from a state of abject degeneracy: – to exhibit, a horde of negroes, emancipating themselves from the vilest slavery, and at once filling the relations of society, enacting laws, and commanding armies, in the colonies of Europe. (Rainsford xi)

Within little more than a decade, the Afro-Caribbeans have evolved from a quasi-prehistoric state of wandering hordes to one of society and culture that rivals that of European nations, not least in the organization and the efficiency of their army, as the ex-soldier Rainsford incessantly reminds his readers. When he stresses that the slaves have fast-forwarded thousands of years of cultural evolution, he argues from the ideological-epistemological standpoint of what Johannes Fabian has termed, in relation to anthropological discourse, the Western "denial of coevalness."[25] The Afro-Caribbean slaves have catapulted themselves into a position of cultural coevalness with the Europeans, since they have rapidly evolved from the state of "the savage […] *not yet* ready for civilization" (Fabian 26; Fabian's emphasis) into civilized humans. Due to the accelerated civilizing process that took place in Haiti, the African ex-slaves are now on a par with most Europeans, Rainsford implies. Apart from confirming the Enlightenment concept of human perfectibility, Rainsford further reaffirms European civilization as the authoritative point of reference against which to measure any other cultures.

At the same time, Rainsford's 'optimistic' Enlightenment narrative of unprecedented cultural progress also includes a pessimistic counter-narrative of unprecedented European cultural regression. Just as it is possible for *non-European* people to quickly *progress* in the evolution of culture, by the same token it is also possible for *cultured European* nations to *regress* – with equal rapidity – into a former state of the historical evolution of civilization. In the passage that immediately follows, Rainsford accuses France of such a descent into atavistic barbarism in the civil war in Saint-Domingue:

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25 By this term, Fabian understands "*a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) in a Time other than the present of the producer of the anthropological discourse*" (31; Fabian's emphasis). For a concise discussion of this strategy and its relevance for colonial and imperialist discourse see Frank 40-3.

> The same period has witnessed a great and polished nation, not merely returning to the barbarism of the earliest periods, but descending to the characters of assassins and executioners; and, removing the boundaries which civilization had prescribed even to war, rendering it a wild conflict of brutes and midnight massacre. (Rainsford xi)

This passage does not constitute a fundamental critique of European civilization as such, but is merely directed against France. Such allegations of French cultural regression are a stock trope of the contemporary British discourse on the Haitian Revolution, in particular during the time of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars with France.[26] The French atrocities perpetrated on Saint-Domingue are the logical continuation of those committed during the revolutionary Reign of Terror. As Rainsford is at pains to stress, this regression into barbarism *solely* applies to the *French* and not at all to the *British.* Even in the case of the "use of blood-hounds" to hunt down the black fighters – a measure resorted to by the French "in their extremity, to aid and fill up the measure of their enormities" – Rainsford is anxious to distinguish this brutal war tactic of the French from its use by the British. He downplays the fact that the British were the *among the first* to employ dogs for this end, to hunt down Maroons on Jamaica earlier during the eighteenth century. Instead, in a footnote, Rainsford defends "the rectitude of the governor of Jamaica in regard to their use" and emphasizes the British respect "for the rights of humanity," asserting further, though rather unconvincingly, that the bloodhounds "were never let loose, by a British general, for the inhuman purposes for which they were bred" (327).[27]

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26 This rhetorical-ideological strategy was also employed by some contemporary abolitionists, including the conservative James Stephens. Albeit less subtly than Rainsford, in his pamphlet *Buonaparte in the West Indies; or, the History of Toussaint Louverture, the African Hero* (1803), Stephens combines an emphatic celebration of Louverture's military and civilizing achievements with racist invectives on revolutionary and Napoleonic France. He repeatedly terms the French "White Savages" (1: 4), who committed innumerable barbaric atrocities during the war in Saint-Domingue, as well as during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, with Napoleon figuring as a particularly diabolical villain. By contrast, Toussaint is cast as the "noble African" (1: 12), against whom "not a single act of cruelty can be truly alleged" (1: 5). Moreover, in contrast to the other, brute slave rebel leaders, Toussaint urged forbearing from acts of revenge against and the massacring of whites. Instead he embarked on a civilizing mission among his fellow Afro-Caribbean slaves and ex-slaves, "trying to teach them mercy, industry and order" (1: 7). For a recent analysis of Stephens's and Rainsford's respective glorifications of Toussaint and their demonization of the French, see Pierrot. For representations of Toussaint during the Romantic Era, see recently Dellarosa.

27 The barbarity of the French measures is underscored by a histrionic engraving, entitled "Blood Hounds attacking a Black Family in the Woods" (see Figure 1). One of the children, who is lying on the ground with its arms melodramatically outstretched to its parents, is about to have its skull cracked by one of the hounds. The father is already under attack, with a hound biting into his head. And the mother, while trying to shelter the baby in her arms, is being assailed by two more dogs. In the background we see an additional black figure, arms thrown up in the air in yet another highly dramatic gesture, while it is also being attacked by a dog.

Fig. 1:
"Blood Hounds Attacking a Black Family in the Woods." Engraving in Marcus Rainsford. *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti. Comprehending a View of the Principal Transactions in the Revolution of Saint Domingo. With its Antient and Modern State*. London: James Cundee, 1805.

Moreover, Rainsford's narrative also serves as a potent reminder that even an acknowledgment of the Haitian Revolution as a revolution in its own right does not necessarily amount to the recognition of the agency of the black masses. The admiration is likely to be reserved for the revolution's most 'Europeanized' leader, General Toussaint Louverture. "The good, the pious and benevolent Toussaint L'Ouverture" (Rainsford 324) not only by far transcended the barbarity of his Afro-Caribbean rank and file revolutionaries, but – together with his "enlightened society" (318) of close followers – was also the one who taught parts of the black masses about 'European' civilization.

Black Jacobins: John Thelwall's View on the Haitian Slave Revolution

In the concluding section of this essay I will discuss the stance held by the radical John Thelwall on the Haitian Revolution. He provides one of the most politically

and socially challenging interpretations of this event that can be found anywhere in the contemporary British discourse, at least until the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807.[28] Both his political writings and his little-known Gothic novel *The Daughter of Adoption* (1801) (published under the pseudonym "John Beaufort") go a long way towards affirming the right of the Afro-Caribbean slaves to destroy the colonial system of exploitation and the right of the European lower classes to overthrow their socially and politically repressive regimes.[29] Sarcastically satirizing conservative attacks both on the French and the Haitian Revolution (most notably by Edmund Burke and Bryan Edwards), Thelwall goes so far as to portray the slave revolution in Saint-Domingue as the potential prelude to a larger, global social revolution, which might erupt if no serious attempts at radical social reform are made.[30] To a considerable degree, Thelwall anticipates C. L. R. James's Marxist argument in *Black Jacobins* that the Haitian Revolution constitutes the first anti-colonial, social revolution since it destroyed the socioeconomic system of slavery and led to the creation of the first postcolonial state in the Caribbean, Haiti. Thus, far from trivializing the Haitian Revolution and treating it as unthinkable, Thelwall regards it as a cataclysmic event that not only has hastened the demise of the slave system but might also inspire the European lower classes to rise up against their exploiters. As he suggests, this first anti-colonial revolution in Saint-Domingue ultimately aims to extend material well-being to the masses, "for the happiness and the welfare of the whole" society, not just the privileged few (cf. *Politics* 294).

Slavery for Thelwall is part of a wider socioeconomic class war that both the old elite and the emergent financial and industrial bourgeoisie wage against the lower classes: an "open, inveterate, irreconcilable war on the part of the governing few, […] against the lives, properties, and liberties […] of the subject multitude" (*Politics* 392). As pointed out earlier, the colonial wars that Britain was fighting in the Caribbean (including the military campaign to capture Saint-Domingue) were identified as being part of a broader global "profligate crusade of the powerful and wealthy, against the poor and weak" (391). Turning the wide-

28 While not strictly speaking contemporary, Robert Wedderburn's 1810s and 1820s antislavery sermons and articles adopt a still more radical, socio-revolutionary perspective on the Haitian Revolution. On Wedderburn and his antislavery writings, see, besides Iain MacCalman, Linebaugh and Rediker (287-326) and Alan Rice (8-13).

29 As far as I can determine, apart from Michael Scrivener (*Seditious Allegories* 240-44, *Cosmopolitan Ideal* 118-45), there are only two other recent critics who comment on *The Daughter of Adoption*: Arnold A. Markley (106-14) and Peter J. Kitson, "'Bales of Living Anguish'" 529-31. Kitson's forthcoming article "John Thelwall in Saint Domingue" fleshes out Thelwall's conflicted stance on race, slavery, and the Haitian (and French) Revolution as it emerges in *The Daughter of Adoption*. I am very grateful to him for sending me a draft copy of the essay.

30 For an incisive analysis of how Thelwall subverts Burke's counterrevolutionary and proslavery arguments, see Wood 169-80. Michael Scrivener discusses how Edwards' texts provided a major source for *The Daughter of Adoption* (see *Cosmopolitan Ideal* 138-43). For an excellent analysis of how Thelwall in his novel intertextually subverts Edwards's proslavery and anti-revolutionary stance, see Kitson "John Thelwall in Saint Domingue."

spread allegations of Afro-Caribbean barbarism back onto the *British* army and the *British* West Indian plantation owners and their lobby, he goes much further than Rainsford, who only charges the *French* with a relapse into barbarism: "Tens and tens of thousands of our British youth," he angrily contends, "are annually sacrificed by the yellow pestilence [i.e., the yellow fever] (that high priestess to the Moloc of West Indian avarice) for the perpetuity of the African slave trade" (391). With this allegation of barbaric mass murder Thelwall counters Burke's brandishing of the execution of the French royal couple as "the grim Moloch of Regicide in France" (*Regicide Peace* 216). While the revolutionaries murder, they – unlike the British government and the proslavery lobby – do not kill for base ends. Neither the 'savage' Parisian masses nor the African 'savages' sacrifice their enemies to the material idol of gold. Instead, Thelwall implies in his radical vein, it is the British West Indian planters, merchants, and their imperialist ideologues such as Burke who sacrifice the sons of Britain – the campaign on Saint-Domingue being a prime example – to sustain an inhuman system of trade.[31]

Thelwall's attack on the slave trade and Britain's colonial wars must be regarded as part of a wider, scathing critique of the status quo of the global socioeconomic system. Thelwall asserts that capitalism, as it stands, is an utterly barbaric socioeconomic system since it fetishizes the ruthless acquisition of wealth regardless of the social cost. As he maintains, "the detestable Slave Trade," however monstrous, is only "the *most atrocious* system of murder and depredation that was ever dignified by the name of commerce," thus implying that the concept of "commerce" had been also misused to justify other lethal systems of exploitations (293; my emphasis). Since social reform by governments or the ruling class, which would decisively alter such rapacious systems, seems highly unlikely, Thelwall implies that social revolution might be unavoidable, even though he professes to abhor its violence.

For Thelwall the slave revolution in Saint-Domingue represents such a first attempt at lower-class social revolution. Countering in his *Rights of Nature* (1796) Burke's invectives in *Letters to a Regicide Peace* (1796) against both the revolted black slaves in Saint-Domingue and the revolutionary French lower classes, Thelwall issues a thinly veiled threat of an impending social revolution. This – he seems convinced – will not only engulf the Caribbean, but Europe too. The world seems engaged in a global social war that has erupted as the Parisian masses and the Caribbean slaves – who are regarded as belonging to the same social class – rise up:[32]

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31 Marcus Wood stresses the singularity of Thelwall's stance when he comments that "[u]niquely among the radicals, Thelwall isolates the British military disaster in San Domingue […] as a war fought to protect the slave trade within an international monopolist context" (175).

32 For an interpretation of this passage that differs considerably from mine here, see Featherstone 95-6.

> But beware, Mr. Burke, and you, his hypocritical employers, how *ye* ca-
> jole and insult *us* too far. […] when wrong is added to wrong, and co-
> ercion to coercion; when remonstrance is answered by the goad and the
> yoke and insult is heaped upon oppression, reason may be overpowered,
> and madness may succeed […] In vain do you shudder at the cannibals
> of Paris – in vain do ye colour, with exaggerated horrors, the "tribunals
> of Maroon and negro slaves, covered with the blood of their masters";
> […] I cannot, like you, forget by whom those lessons of murderous ra-
> pacity were taught. I cannot forget, that slavery is robbery and murder;
> and that the master who falls by the bondsman's hand, is the victim of
> his own barbarity. (Thelwall, *Politics* 407–8)

This passage is a direct reply to Burke's insinuation that also places the 'blood-
thirsty' ex-slaves of Saint-Domingue on the same social footing as the Parisian
masses; albeit with ideological implications that are directly opposed to Thelwall.
Burke literally accuses the Jacobins and sans-culottes of practicing "*cannibal-
ism*" on their class enemies (cf. *Regicide Peace* 130; Burke's emphasis), while he
strongly implies similar cannibalistic tendencies amongst the black rebels.[33] Writ-
ing in his sentimental and verbose style, he urges his readers to sympathize with
the unfortunate, noble victims of such barbarous violence:

> How must we feel, if the pride and flower of the English Nobility and
> Gentry, who might escape the pestilential clime, and the devouring
> sword, should, if taken prisoners, be delivered over as rebel subjects, to
> be condemned as rebels, as traitors, as the vilest of all criminals, by tri-
> bunals formed of Maroon negro slaves, covered over with the blood of
> their masters, who were made free and organized into judges, for their
> robberies and murders. […] In that bitterness of soul, in that indigna-
> tion of suffering virtue, in that exaltation of despair, would not perse-
> cuted English loyalty cry out, with that awful warning voice, and de-
> nounce the destruction that waits on Monarchs, [and denounce those]
> who consider fidelity to them [i.e., the monarchs] as the most degrading

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33 Aligning the black and white revolutionary 'cannibals' is an insinuation that is not limited
to Burke. It can also be observed in other contemporary British conservative, anti-revolu-
tionary writings. For instance Wilhelm Playfair, in his 1796 *History of Jacobinism,* terms
the French abolitionist Abbé Gregoire a "philosophic cannibal, who was at supper when
the news [of the 1791 slave revolt] was brought." Gregoire allegedly celebrated "this terri-
ble massacre, in which the negroes had as their bloody standard a white infant impaled on
a spear," declaring that its outbreak made this day the "*plus beau jour de sa vie.*" Evok-
ing this notorious and ubiquitous trope of the slave revolt, Playfair accuses Gregoire of
practicing 'metaphorical' cannibalism, while he suggests that the revolted slaves are actual
cannibals. Whilst cannibalism could be said to be part of the 'African' savage nature, it
is the degraded European French revolutionaries, however, on whom Playfair heaps the
most blame as he condemns their political philosophy for instigating the revolt: "Human
nature, whether white or black, must shudder at such barbarity, and blame the cool instiga-
tors much more than the ferocious people who revolted" (Playfair 296; note).

of all vices; and who suffer it to be punished as the most abominable of all crimes; and who have no respect but for rebels, traitors, Regicides, and furious negro slaves, whose crimes have broke [sic] their chains? (Burke*, Regicide Peace* 142)

This horror scenario of a topsy-turvy world in which all social order and morality is inverted constitutes Burke's apocalyptic vision of global social revolution. Employing his entire arsenal of hyperbolic rhetoric (and in turn losing track of his syntax), Burke conjures up the specter of a trans-global, pitiless social revolution in which the entirety of the British higher classes – including the British Monarch himself – will fall prey to the savagery of the revolted black and white bloodthirsty barbarians. All these revolutionaries, "rebels, traitors, Regicides, and furious negro slaves" are indiscriminately lumped together as forming one giant mass of savage 'black Jacobins'. Burke insinuates that not only have slaves violated the given social order but also that *all* these revolutionaries, European and Afro-Caribbean, have committed this crime. As Burke suggests when he argues that the revolutionaries' crimes have broken their chains, their act of emancipation or self-liberation amounts to a crime against all social order. Regardless of differences in actual skin color, all revolutionaries share a 'blackness' of soul, which manifests itself in their respective acts of revolutionary terror.

While Burke, in his *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, thus considers the Caribbean and French revolutionaries as equally barbaric and cannibalistic, Thelwall, on the other hand, directs the accusation of barbarism against the planters and capitalists, both of whom stem from the same social group – the mercantile and financial bourgeoisie: the "aristocracy of the Royal Exchange" and the "aristocracy of commerce" (*Politics* 285). Furthermore, Thelwall also reverses Burke's attribution of guilt for the revolutionary atrocities. It is not the exploited rebels who are to blame for the violence but their exploiters, or – to recall Thelwall's words – the "master," rather than the "bondsman" who kills him. The word "bondsman," which means a "man in bondage" and could refer either to a "serf" or a "slave" (*OED*), forms the semantic bridge between 'white' and 'black' slaves.[34]

These proto-socialist convictions also form the ideological framework for Thelwall's Gothic tale, *The Daughter of Adoption*. About a third of the novel is set in Saint-Domingue in the period leading up to and during the 1791 slave

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34 Marcus Wood rightly emphasizes that the comparison between "the exploited status of the poor white labourer in England and the black slave in the Caribbean" (171) was commonplace in contemporary British discourse. It constituted originally a proslavery argument of the planters and their lobby, since it contrasted the situation of slaves favorably with those of the European laborers, as the following passage from Edwards' *Historical Account* illustrates: "[…] no candid person, who has had the opportunity of seeing the negroes in the French islands, and of contrasting their condition with that of the peasantry in many parts of Europe, will, by any means, think them the most wretched of mankind" (12). This comparison was also appropriated by radicals; again for opposing ideological purposes, as Wood's contrastive investigation of its use by William Cobbett and Thelwall shows (148-180).

revolt. In this story, it is an English lower-class character, the servant Edmunds, who first breaks the news of the rebellion to a group of English expatriates in Saint-Domingue. These include Edmunds's upper-class master Sir Henry Montfort, heir to a plantation in the colony, and the philosophizing 'philanthropist' Parkinson. Using the same imagery as Thelwall in the above passage, Edmunds asserts that there exists a link between the uprising of the slaves, their exploitation, alienation, and reification, and those of the European laborers:

> The first intimation, therefore, they had of this event, was from young Edmunds; who, returning somewhat earlier than was expected, came running up to them, and exclaiming, with eyes on fire and his whole frame in almost convulsive agitation. "Tis done! 'tis done! the negroes have thrown off the yoke. They are breaking their chains on the heads of their oppressors. […] If you were a poor negro, sir, and had been […] roused every morning from your slumber by the unpitying scourge, and driven like a brute beast to labour by some inhuman task-master, you, sir, I think, would have endeavored to realize this phantom; you, sir, would have done, what I am sure I should, and what these poor negroes have." (Thelwall, *Daughter* 2: 5-6)

Defending the rebellious slaves against Parkinson, who avows that the "sympathy of mankind" (6) rather than the "improvident fury of their vengeance" (6) is the "only resource of the oppressed" to achieve freedom, Edmunds praises the slaves' actions. In contrast to Parkinson's liberal-humanist argument, characteristic of many British abolitionists as well as social reformers, Edmunds puts forth a revolutionary stance. Reminiscent of Stockdale ten years earlier, Thelwall here (via his spokesperson Edmunds) dismisses the argument that the slaves should wait for sympathetic white abolitionists to emancipate them rather than take violent action themselves. Echoing (and at the same time redressing) Burke's allegation that it was the slaves' "crimes that have broke their chains," Thelwall has Edmunds maintain that slaves' "breaking their chains on the heads of their oppressors" is the only way to gain freedom, to cast off their yoke.

Thelwall's argument here, though, is not limited to the slave revolution in the Caribbean; the *Daughter of Adoption* affirms the righteousness of lower-class revolutionary violence everywhere. The right to social revolution applies as much as to the British proletariat as to Caribbean slaves. As Edmunds stresses, he himself should also have rebelled against his exploitation. Instead, he carries on serving his English master, Montfort, heir to slave plantations both in Saint-Domingue and Jamaica. While the Afro-Caribbean slaves have revolted against being treated "like a brute beast," which obediently, without protest, continues to labor, the European 'slaves' have not yet risen up. Instead they still toil like "the Negro slave" or like "the dray horse; and the poor ass that drudges day and night in the sand-cart!" (*Politics* 406-7) Yet, like the slaves on Saint-Domingue who overthrew the slave regime in the colony, the white slaves in Europe might overthrow

their respective oppressive regimes, Thelwall warns. Instead of expending their physical force in the service of their masters, they will use their great strength as a pivotal means of forceful liberation.

This frightful scenario of a 'double' social revolution is conjured up in *The Daughter of Adoption* in the depiction of the "faithful" slave Mozambo, a leader of the rebel slaves, who in the novel acts as a parallel figure to the English servant Edmunds:

> Mozambo's hand was armed with a reeking sword. A pair of pistols was tied round his waist with a handkerchief; and his arms were bathed in blood. There was a deathful horror in his countenance. "My wife! my child! Mozambo," exclaimed Parkinson with frantic impatience. He saw the clotted gore upon the limbs and the weapons of the negro. He recoiled a few steps. His heart died within him. […]
>
> *M.* […] "Me love massa. Me love madam, Me love missee. Me wish serve them still. But me love poor negro man, whom cruel white man whip to die. Me love poor negro man, who hab no bed to lie but dirt; who groan, and sweat, and toil; eat fish dat stink like rot, and drink him tears. Dese me love, massa." "And so do I, Mozambo," said Parkinson, the tears swelling into his eyes. "Would we could love them to some purpose." *M.* "Me make dem free, or die." […]
>
> Edmunds clenched his right hand, as if wielding, in imagination, the delegated sword of justice. He strode two or three steps backwards and forwards, swelled his chest, breathed in with a more forcible agitation, and erected his brow with a sort of stern enthusiasm. (Thelwall, *Daughter* 2: 9-13)

This is a powerful counter-vision to Burke's diabolical "maroon negro slaves, covered in the blood of their master." In sharp contrast to both Burke and Edwards, the horrors of revolutionary violence do not function here to demonize the action of the rebellious slave, but rather highlight his determination and the sincerity of his cause. Ironically, however, Mozambo's valiant attempt to protect his master and the master's adopted daughter from being murdered by the rebels leads to his own death; he is killed as a traitor. While trying to save his 'philanthropic' master Parkinson from the rebels, Mozambo is at the same time adamant that violence is necessary to achieve emancipation. The parallel between the Afro-Caribbean slave Mozambo and the English servant Edmunds is further pursued in this passage. Again, while visibly identifying himself with the rebellious slaves, Edmunds, unlike them, still represses his proto-revolutionary anger. As the revolutionary gesture of the clenched fist suggests, however, lower-class revolutionary fury might also soon erupt.

A comparable double perspective on the Haitian Revolution, while fairly unique in contemporary discourse, reemerges in James's *Black Jacobins*. Unsurprisingly, James is much more unequivocal in his endorsement of socio-revolu-

tionary violence. Still the same vision of mutual identification and revolutionary solidarity between the European lower classes and the revolutionary slaves in Saint-Domingue displayed by Edmunds also lies at the heart of James's history. As he argues, the black Jacobins in their social-revolutionary actions were more radical than their bourgeois namesakes in France, who wanted to arrest the social radicalization of the revolution by keeping the lower classes and their demands for political and social freedom in check. While "[r]eaction triumphed" in the National Convention (65), the revolutionary slaves, misinterpreting the exclusively *political* liberal sense of the French Revolution's slogan, carried the revolutionary process through to its *social* dimension in the Haitian Revolution:[35]

> And meanwhile, what of the slaves? They had heard of the revolution and had construed it in their own image: the white slaves in France had risen, and killed their masters, and were now enjoying the fruits of the earth. It was gravely inaccurate in fact, but they had caught the spirit of the thing. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. (James 66)

Conversely, in the chapter significantly entitled "And the Paris Masses Complete," James dialectically claims that the revolutionary actions of the Parisian masses in 1792 in turn saved the revolution in Saint-Domingue. At least for a few years, true class solidarity existed between the Haitian and the French revolutionary masses, James maintains:

> The workers and peasants of France could not have been expected to take any interest in the colonial question at normal times, any more than one can expect similar interest from British or French workers today. But now they were roused. They were striking at royalty, tyranny, reaction and oppression of all types, and with these they included slavery. […] Henceforth the Paris masses were for abolition, and their black brothers in San Domingo, for the first time, had passionate allies in France. (James 98)

While James's Marxist argument of a dialectical interaction between the Parisian revolutionary masses and the revolted slaves in Saint-Domingue is open to as much historical scrutiny as Thelwall's scenario of the Haitian Revolution as a

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35 Brett St Louis even goes so far as to regard James's claim of radical revolutionary solidarity between his black Jacobins and "their French revolutionary cousins" as a prime example of James's concept of an alternative, counter-hegemonic and non-Eurocentric view of modernity: "James's expansive geopolitical and humanistic understanding of modernity is perhaps most evident in his dialectical attempt to wrest an exemplar of the universal progressive potentiality of human will from a terrifying example of particularistic suffering and resistance" (14). Discussing James's thesis, Robin Blackburn also posits a dialectical, cross-cultural relationship between the French and Haitian revolutionaries: "The black Jacobins found something in the ideology of the French Revolution that helped them to elevate and generalize their struggle. Yet at the same time they brought experiences in a slave society and memories from Africa that radicalized the ideas they appropriated from and eventually defended against France itself" ("Haiti" 664).

terrifying eruption of a potentially global social revolution, it would be unfair to charge either of them with trivializing or silencing the Haitian Revolution or of playing down the achievements and the agency of the revolutionary slaves. As I have suggested in this essay, it is time to move beyond any sweeping allegations of 'Eurocentrism' in the contemporary representations and take a less blinkered look at their particular ideology. I would propose that it might be helpful to regard the French and Haitian Revolution as both interconnected and separate in a non-hierarchical manner, as Robin Blackburn has argued, for instance, in *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*, his account of revolutionary events.

Yet it is not only vital for *historians* to tease out these links between the French and Haitian Revolution on a political and socioeconomic level, but also for *cultural historians* to analyze how the contemporary discourse (including literature and visual depictions) views and construes them. Rather than categorically characterizing the Haitian Revolution as an unthinkable occurrence, I would argue that such an analysis may reveal how both this event and the French Revolution functioned as catalysts for what Raymond Williams has termed "oppositional," "emerging" socio-cultural concepts and thoughts: forms that are "emergent in the strict sense, rather than just novel," or just a "new phase of a dominant culture" (cf. *Marxism and Literature* 123). These oppositional, novel forms can never be fully incorporated into the dominant culture without risking its disintegration and downfall, and therefore, "when it becomes oppositional in any explicit way, it does, of course, get approached or attacked" ("Base and Superstructure" 12). In the case of the Haitian and French Revolution it was the concept of absolute universal equality, irrespective of *race* and *class* distinctions, that proved the most radical challenge to the dominant system. This, I would claim, is the element of "revolutionary practice" (11) that resisted incorporation by the dominant, hegemonic order, and – to a certain degree – still continues to do so today.

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Anansi, Eshu, and Legba. Slave Resistance and the West African Trickster

Emily Zobel Marshall

Anansi, the trickster spider of Asante folklore, survived a cultural metamorphosis and became symbolic of the struggles of slaves against the plantation regime in the Caribbean. Like Anansi, Eshu and Legba, trickster deities of Yoruba and Fon origin, also survived the journey from West Africa to the Americas. This paper focuses on the transformations of Anansi in Jamaica and Eshu and Legba in Haiti. It argues that these West African trickster figures were used by slaves as mediums through which colonial power could be both resisted and challenged.

Anansi of the Asante

Anansi is the trickster spider of Akan origin. The term 'Akan' denotes a West African ethnolinguistic group comprising of, among others, the Akuapem, Akyem, Baule, Asante, Brong and Fante peoples. The Asante, the largest of the Akan groups, are based predominantly in central Ghana and have enjoyed cultural and political dominance in the region since the eighteenth century. Although the Akan share Anansi as a folk hero, the tales reflect elements of the Asante cultural framework to a greater extent than those of other Akan groups. The Asante called Anansi "Kwaku" Anansi, a day-name traditionally given to males born on a Wednesday. Although other animals in Akan folktales have forenames, none of them have the honor of having a day-name (Yanka 6). Like so many trickster figures found in indigenous mythologies and religions, Anansi is physically weak and thwarts his powerful opponents using the only means available to him, his wit and his cunning. Several scholars have claimed that Anansi functioned as a deity among the Asante;[1] yet while Anansi may have played a role in the Asante religious world, there is little evidence to suggest that he occupied a position as

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1 Joseph Williams, in *Psychic Phenomena of Jamaica* (1934), writes: "it is particular to Ashanti to use the sobriquet of the Supreme Being or Creator *Ananse Kokroko*, the Great Spider" (36). John S. Mbiti, author of *African Religions and Philosophy* (1969), also links the spider to Asante religious beliefs. He states that "among the Akan and Ashanti, the spi-

a god himself. There are no shrines to Anansi in Asante culture, no sacrifices are made to him, and he is not worshipped as a deity. Anansi does, however, have the ability to restructure both the divine and human world through his chaotic antics and cunning tricks.

There is much disparity regarding Anansi's origins amongst scholars, and the reason for this disparity is clear. Folktales are rarely rooted in one fixed source but are continually being adapted to new environments and conditions to suit the changing needs of the community that tell the stories. While reports regarding Anansi's origins are contradictory, we can find some reliable evidence regarding the function of the tales for the Asante. Anansi stories were vehicles through which the Asante could explain, scrutinize, and question the world around them. They were also celebrations of the intricacies and beauty of language: Anansi is symbolic of the malleability and ambiguity of language, and the Asante delight in his use of tricky wordplay and double entendres to get the better of his adversaries (Yanka 11). For this reason a spider design decorates the staffs of Asante royal spokesmen, otherwise known as court linguists or *Okyeame* (11).

Key secondary sources by R. S. Rattray (1930), E. Meyerowitz (1949; 1960) and Robert D. Pelton (1980) on Anansi's role among the Asante depict Anansi as a folk hero who often tested the boundaries of acceptable behavior.[2] He is a crossroads figure, existing between two worlds and acting as mediator or messenger between humankind and the Asante Supreme Being, Nyame. However, at every opportunity Anansi wreaks havoc in the human world and undermines the omnipotent Nyame. Anansi's actions are often antisocial and destructive, and he can invert all biological and social rules: he can disconnect his own body parts, change his sex, abuse his guests, and even eat his own children.

Anansi was a breaker of the rules and Anansi tales were used by the Asante to air problems and frustrations. A great king or corrupt headman could be criticized through the medium of an Anansi story – criticism of these powerful figures would be unacceptable under any other circumstance (Rattray xi). Even the all-powerful Nyame could be mocked and scorned (xi). Because the Anansi tales portrayed a fantastical world in which the normal rules of society were turned on their head, they provided a vehicle through which the Asante could temporarily escape from their tightly structured social hierarchy. The tales provided a form

der symbolizes "wisdom" and for that reason God is given the title *Anansi Koruoko* which means the Great Spider, that is, the Wise One" (51).

2   Rattray, who became head of the Anthropological Department in the Asante capital Kumasi in 1921, is a key figure in the collection of information on the Asante, and his research forms the main body of early twentieth-century European writing on Asante culture. Rattray compiled a collection of Anansi tales, entitled *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* (1930), recorded directly from Asante Twi storytelling sessions in the 1920s. Although William H. Barker and Cecilia Sinclair also compiled and published a collection of 'Gold Coast' folktales, *West-African Folk Tales* (1917), before Rattray's collection, its usefulness is more limited because these tales were not collected among the Asante specifically and were written in 'Standard' English: they are only 'based' on original Gold Coast stories (Barker and Sinclair 1).

of psychological release and, as a result, helped the Asante accept, rather than resist, the rules of their society. By testing the limits of the Asante social and religious code, the figure of Anansi was able to strengthen social and religious order. While Anansi violated Nyame's rule, in doing so he reaffirmed it (Vecsey 119). Anansi was part of a culture in a constant state of flux, where binary oppositions were tested to reinforce the social structure. Just as there exists both a male and a female god in traditional Asante religion, each with a share of divine power, "all Asante beliefs and institutions embody doubleness so that everyday life reveals an ultimate order" (Pelton 63).

Christopher Vecsey explores the significance of Akan trickster tales and sees the role of the trickster as a threat to the rules of both societal and cosmic order. The trickster is in a continual state of metamorphosis and casts doubt on the concepts of truth and reality. The trickster tales, through performing a simultaneously destructive and regenerative role, help a community to clarify, evaluate, and reflect on their reality: "[B]y breaking patterns of a culture the trickster helps to define those patterns" (Vecsey 106).

Vecsey explains that in Akan thought the community is of greater importance than the individual (Vecsey 118). There are strong obligations to the group and deviation from the norm can result in banishment, the ultimate punishment for a member of such a community: for the Asante being separated from your community is like separating from your grounds of being (Vecsey 118). In contrast to the Asante, Anansi is the quintessential loner, without friends and often even estranged from his family. He has no sense of community ties or obligation to others. As Anansi wreaks havoc the tales portray a very well-ordered society going on around him. While he is scheming and stealing and violating the rules, the other characters in the tales are, in contrast, team players: they are planting crops, cooperating, and being obedient (Vecsey 119). As Anansi threatens social order they uphold it, again reaffirming a faith in the structures of the Asante community.

Furthermore, although Anansi tests Nyame's power, it remains intact or is even strengthened by Anansi's challenges. When Anansi needs something he must go to Nyame to claim it, and he often provides a service to Nyame in exchange. Anansi can suffer as a result of his actions and he normally remains subordinate to Nyame. As Vecsey puts it: "[I]n regard to the Akan people as in regard to Nyame, Anansi is the exception that probes and proves the rules" (119). Rather than having a 'blind faith' in their social structures, through the medium of Anansi the Asante could incorporate skepticism into their belief systems, and by doing so make those systems both more resilient and enduring (121).

Anansi in Jamaica

From the sixteenth century onward, Anansi tales traveled with Asante slaves across the Atlantic Ocean and into the Caribbean. As African American scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr. comments, the survival of African cultural forms such as the Anansi tales in the Americas should come as no great surprise: "Common sense, in retrospect, argues that these retained elements of culture should have survived, that their complete annihilation would have been far more remarkable than their preservation" (4).

In Jamaica, Anansi came down to earth; in his physical form he adopted human characteristics as he became more man and less spider and pitted his wits against Tiger rather than the Asante god Nyame. It is in the plantation context of captivity and conflict that Anansi took on renewed roles and functions. Instead of functioning as a tester of the chains, Anansi helped to break them. He shifted from being assimilated into the sacred world of the Asante to become representative of the Jamaican slaves' human condition.

Although Anansi's interactions with Nyame all but disappeared in the Jamaican tales, he continued to represent aspects of the African spiritual world at wakes or 'nine-night' ceremonies. Originating in Africa and practiced throughout the plantation period, the nine-night ceremony lasts nine nights, during which visitors spend their time singing, dancing, drinking, eating and telling Anansi stories (Perkins, Ms 2019). Anansi tales are told at a nine-night to ensure that the spirit of the dead does not rise and pester the living and to help the departure of the *duppy* (ghost or spirit) to the other side (Herskovits, *The New World Negro* 182).

In this way Anansi continued to be a crossroads figure in Jamaica, evoked during celebrations of the crossroads between life and death, the realm between gods and humanity. Representative of ambiguity, of journeys, travel, liminal states, and multiple possibilities, the crossroads played an important symbolic role in the folk practices of Jamaicans. Traditionally, on the final night of a nine-night ceremony the mourning procession walked to the nearest crossroads and performed a ritual enabling the spirit of the deceased, described in their final hour as "traveling," to journey on whichever path they chose. Following this ritual, the deceased's home was cleared out and mourners returned to the crossroads where they disposed of the deceased's clothing (Chevannes, *Ambiguity* 6).

The Anansi we find in Jamaica is more aggressive, violent, and ruthless than his Asante counterpart. Many elements of plantation life enter the tales, such as Massa, the whip, and the cane fields. While in the Asante Anansi tales there was a testing of limits, there were also always signs of the enforcement of community rules; this was not always the case in Jamaica: in his plantation setting Anansi could invert the social order without paradoxically upholding it. On the Jamaican plantations, Anansi had the potential to serve as the destroyer of an enforced and

abhorrent social system rather than challenging the boundaries of a West African society whose members were generally compliant.[3]

In Jamaica Anansi's predominant character traits are those of cunning, greed, lewdness, promiscuity, slothfulness, and deceit. The Jamaican Anansi tales tell of how Anansi, the small spider, gets the better of powerful animals such as Tiger and Alligator or commanding white humans such as Massa (master), the King, Buckra,[4] Preacher, and even Death, using the only methods at his disposal, his intelligence and his cunning. We find Anansi escaping the whip, tricking Buckra, stealing Massa's sheep or daughters, ambushing armies, killing Preacher, playing drums, and working on his provision ground. For example, in "Nansi Steals Backra Sheep," Anansi represents the poor black Jamaican who seeks to undermine the power of the white and prosperous landowner. Anansi takes the position of headman on Backra's property and starts killing his sheep. When Anansi's son questions his actions, he replies, "'Bwoy, shet up ye mout ['Boy, Shut your mouth'] Look pon [at] Backra sheep how dem nough [enough] nough nough. Ebery minute sheep a bawm [born]. Ebery minute sheep a bawm'" (Tanna 101). Here Anansi is the medium through which the greed and discrimination at the heart of Jamaican society is critiqued and lawbreaking and acts of insubordination against Backra are legitimized. As Jamaican sociologist Barry Chevannes explains, Anansi tales told on the plantations reflected and inspired the trickster tactics slaves adopted to outmaneuver their white masters:

> Anansi became the symbolic focus of the resistance in the minds of the Africans. He was used to provide them with resilience and with modes of escape. In the plantation context he figured as a survivor. So the stories reinforced the principles of deception, guile, *tekin it* – take a smile to cover the pain in the heart, so you do not allow your enemy to see that you are suffering. (Chevannes, Personal Interview 2005)

Another example of the ways in which Anansi overcomes domineering characters can be found in the Jamaican story "Tiger's Death," a classic Anansi tale of bloodshed. Anansi, Monkey, and Puss plan to kill Tiger, Anansi's sworn enemy, after Tiger steals their fish. Monkey and Anansi start to challenge Tiger, and Puss says, "'[C]ome, make we beat him off to deat [death].'" Then "Puss catch up a fire 'tick [stick], an' Annancy catch up a mortar 'tick, an' they never cease murder Tiger till they kill him." Peafowl watches from a tree as they then skin Tiger and

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3   The incorporation of aspects of Jamaican plantation life in the Jamaican Anansi tales can be examined in key collections recorded and compiled by Walter Jekyll, *Jamaican Song and Story: Annancy Stories, Digging Sings, Dancing Tunes and Ring Tunes* (1907); Martha Beckwith, *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (1924); Louise Bennett, *Anancy Stories and Poems in Dialect* (1944), and other collections from 1966 and 1979; Philip Sherlock, *Anansi and the Spiderman: Jamaican Folk Tales* (1956), and other collections in 1959, 1966, 1989; and Laura Tanna, *Jamaican Folktales and Oral Histories* (2000).

4   "Buckra," also spelt "Backra," meaning white master or boss, is derived from an African word, *mbakáre*, meaning in Ibo "white man who governs" (Cassidy and Le Page 18).

salt him. They bribe Peafowl with gold to ensure he doesn't "talk that they kill Tiger." They then devour Tiger together (Jekyll 135-37).

During the plantation period, in times of conflict and oppression, these Anansi tales could inspire both psychological and practical methods of resistance and survival. Jamaica has a long history of rebellion and resistance, and the defiant attitude and resistance methods of Jamaican slaves are represented in their folk-tales. As Lawrence Levine argues, slaves in the Americas devoted "the structure and message of their tales to the compulsions and needs of their present situation" (90).

> [Animal trickster tales] were not merely clever tales of wish-fulfillment through which slaves could escape from the imperatives of their world. They could also be painfully realistic stories which taught the art of surviving and even triumphing in the face of a harsh environment. (115)

Evidence of the ways in which trickery could be used as a method for outmaneuvering whites on the plantation can be found in the journals of Matthew Lewis, author of the British Gothic novel *The Monk* (1796). In 1812 Lewis inherited two plantations in Jamaica and kept a detailed diary of his time on the island. In addition to descriptions of his slaves telling Anansi stories, his journals record his frustration with his slaves' behavior as they find ingenious ways to avoid work and improve their conditions.[5] Plantation production on his estate falls dramatically, yet when Lewis broaches the topic, he explains, they always have a story for him. A slave will sympathize profusely with his problem and "having said so much, and said it so strongly, that he, convinced of its having full effect in making the others do their duty – thinks himself quite safe and snug in skulking away from his own [work]" (cited in Burton 57).

The centrality of Anansi tactics to slave life was not limited to Jamaica but also extended to other parts of the Americas and is brilliantly illustrated in the saying commonly used by slaves in South Carolina: "De bukrah (whites) hab scheme, en de nigger hab trick, en ebry time bukrah scheme once, de nigger trick twice" (Scott 163). Furthermore, the collector of Anansi tales Martha Warren Beckwith (1924) observes that another name for "trickster tales told by Negroes" on the plantations was "neger [nigger]-tricks" (xxii). Beckwith explains:

> To all such story-telling, as to riddling and song, the name of 'Anansi story' is applied – an appellation at least as old as 1816, when [Matthew] Monk Lewis in his journal describes the classes of 'Nancy stories' popular in his day among the negroes as the tragical witch story and the farcical 'neger-trick.' (xxii)

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5 Lewis records what he calls "Nancy Stories" and "Neger tricks" in his journal, some of which are told by the "picturesque" storyteller Goose Sho-Sho, "with her little sable audience squatted round her" (194, 254).

This direct link made during slavery between the Anansi tales and "neger tricks" offers an indication of the extent to which the stories reflected the Anansi tactics used by slaves in their daily lives.

For the Jamaican slaves Anansi came to symbolize their desire for sexual relations, a break from relentless labor, and for plentiful meals. Anansi was a part of the "weapons of the weak" and inspired small acts of resistance, "Anansi tactics," against the plantation system. They were often aimed at hitting Massa in his pocketbook – "where it hurt" – and included lying, stealing, cheating, working slowly, self-mutilation, willfully misunderstanding instructions, breaking tools and machinery, and setting fire to the fields before harvest time (Burton 48-9; Sherlock 128). These Anansi tactics were implemented to 'warren', rabbit-like, within the spaces of the dominant order, and through their persistent warrening Jamaican slaves weakened the structures of domination and speeded up the process of emancipation (Thompson 311-62; Scott).

Anansi of the Asante thus played a multipurpose role in the lives of Jamaican slaves. He established a sense of continuity with an African past whilst offering a means through which the slaves could transform and assert their identity within the boundaries of captivity. He was a liminal, crossroads figure who occupied the threshold between life and death and an agent through which slaves could celebrate their African origins and come together communally through storytelling. He was also a cathartic source of humor and an inspirer of trickster tactics that facilitated a form of resistance to the horrors of enslavement.

Eshu of the Yoruba

Eshu, like Anansi, is both an intermediary, crossroads figure and a trickster. Eshu is of Yoruba origin, one of the largest ethno-linguistic groups in West Africa, which is based predominantly in present-day Nigeria. Eshu injects chaos into the world of humans and the gods, but, unlike Anansi, Eshu is a deity and plays a central role in Yoruba Vodun religious practices (termed 'voodoo' by Europeans): his job is to take the sacrifices and prayers of humans to the *loa*, or spirits (Pavlic 61). As a deity of the crossroads, he opens up pathways between humans and the spiritual realm and his shrines in West Africa are often phallic mounds of earth placed outside homes, the marketplace, and at the crossroads (Hileman 9). He is, however, an unreliable messenger and, akin to Anansi, is known to play havoc in two worlds, causing ruptures between humankind and its divine rulers (Westcott in Cosentino 262; Pelton 129).

The Yoruba dedicate many narrative prose poems to Eshu, named the 'Oriki Esu', which explain the origins of humankind, the universe and the gods

(Gates 6).[6] Among the Yoruba, Eshu is depicted as wearing a multicolored cap, sometimes in red and black, sometimes in white and black. A Yoruba tale tells of how Eshu was once traveling on horseback wearing his multicolored cap (white on one side and black on the other) and passed the farms of two friends who had taken a vow of eternal friendship. After he had ridden by, the two men started to discuss the man on the horse, but could not agree on the color of his cap. They started to argue, which then escalated into fighting. Eshu returned and explained that the friend who claimed the cap was white and the friend who claimed the cap was black were both right and both wrong. He told them that when they made a vow of *eternal* friendship, they had not considered Eshu and his disruptive ways (Hyde 238-9). Here we see Eshu testing humans and their promises, causing conflict and celebrating ambiguity. After Eshu has confessed to the trick he boasts that "sowing dissension is my great delight" (Cosentino 262).

Like Anansi, Eshu is a shape-shifter who can transcend gender boundaries;[7] in sculptural representations of Eshu he is often depicted as a conjoined phallic male and female figure or as a hermaphrodite holding its breasts in its hands. He has the power of invisibility and the ability to transform into a bird, a human, or even the wind itself. Eshu's similarities to Anansi do not end here; Eshu has a permanently erect penis and shares Anansi's insatiable sex drive – both tricksters are in constant search of sexual gratification (Hileman 6). Furthermore, they both walk with a limp and use a cane for support, which has been interpreted as a result of their ability to straddle and mediate between two different worlds (7). Gates notes that in Yoruba mythology Eshu walks with a limp "precisely because of his mediating function: his legs are of different lengths because he keeps one anchored in the realm of the gods while the other rests in this, our human world" (Gates 6). Anansi and Eshu are also both accomplished musicians; Eshu carries a flute or whistle and is sometimes portrayed as double mouthed, while Anansi's fiddle music facilitates the success of his tricks and lures his victims.[8]

6 Henry Louis Gates, Jr., sees Eshu as a figure central in establishing a deeper understanding of the oral and literary traditions of the cultures of the African Diaspora. Specifically, he interprets Eshu as symbolic of the creative potential of the African American vernacular and African American writing. He suggests the need for a new form of African American literary theory that recognizes the power of the oral. He argues that tricksters "manifest themselves in the search for a voice that is depicted in so very many black texts," and as Eshu is both ambiguous and indeterminate, he accounts for the indeterminacy of interpretation in the vernacular tradition (21-2).

7 Evidence of Anansi's ability to transcend gender boundaries can be found in several Anansi tales. However, while he can become a woman temporarily, he always reverts back to being a male. Anansi is sometimes referred to as "she" in both Jamaican and West African tales; in the Asante tale "How Spear-Grass Came into the Tribe," Anansi pretends to menstruate, and in several Jamaican tales Anansi dresses like a woman and changes his voice to sound feminine – see "House in the Air" (Beckwith 21), "Anansi and Dora" (Bennett 59), and "Anancy and Fee Fee" (Bennett 65). In Tanna's "Fee Fee" Anansi dresses like a girl to enter a race at a fair – "Bowy, dat little girl is like lightening," exclaims the crowd (Tanna 103-5; Rattray 213-19).

8 Singing and music play a central part in the Jamaican Anansi tales, illustrating the preeminence of music and song in the lives of Jamaica's African descendants as well as fur-

Legba of the Fon

Oral narratives and myths are in a perpetual state of cultural metamorphosis. Long before his arrival in the Americas, Eshu migrated from the Yoruba to the Fon peoples of Benin (formerly known as Dahomey) and South West Nigeria, where he was named Legba. One source of entry for Eshu into Fon culture may have been a result of the Fon raiding neighboring Yoruba areas to capture slaves during the eighteenth century (Hileman 2).

Amongst the Fon the trickster Legba played the role of agent of destruction and reconciliation. Pelton, in his study of West African trickster figures, explains that Legba, also an intermediary between this world and the next, "is the agent of heaven, but also the friend of the earth, because he, like Ananse, domesticates conflict, which the Fon know to have a life-creating purpose" (Pelton 76).

The Fon Legba is credited with bringing magic into the world, of being a spokesman between gods and men, a guardian of humans and their houses, an embodiment of male sexual potency, and an agent of divination (Pelton 80). Like Eshu, Legba presides over the crossroads, "regulating traffic between visible and invisible worlds" (Cosentino 262). Mawu Lisa, half male and half female, is the Supreme Being of the Fon and determines the fate of humans. She writes down the *fa* (fate) of each person daily and gives it to Legba, so in Fon Vodun ceremonies Legba is evoked before and after any communication with the spirit world and is offered a sacrifice, often a chicken or a goat (Hileman 4). Gates explains that the Fon called Legba "the divine linguist," as he is believed to speak all languages and to have interpreted the alphabet of Mawu Lisa to the other gods and humankind (7).

While the similarities between Eshu and Legba also abound, there are certain differences between the tricksters. The Yoruba take Eshu very seriously, but Legba of the Fon is a more playful creature. His bawdy ways and over-sexed antics are laughed at and he "dances in the manner of a man copulating" (Pelton 87). Legba is a less menacing character than Eshu; as Pelton points out, the Yoruba emphasize Eshu's vengefulness while the Fon insist on Legba's quality of forgiveness (130).

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ther demonstrating Anansi's ability to manipulate language and harness its power. Anansi is able to kill, to court, to hypnotize, and to entice through playing his fiddle and singing his songs. Matthew Lewis records in his journal in 1816: "the Negros are […] very fond of what they call Nancy stories, part of which is related, part sung" (253). In "Anansi and Mr. Able," as Anansi sings his beautiful song, Brar Able says, "well, from since I born I never know man speak my name in such way!" and Brar Able was so moved he "couldn't stay in de house" (Beckwith 121).

Papa Legba of Haiti

Eshu continued to be a prominent figure in the cultural and religious practices of slaves in the Americas and functioned as a figure of resistance during slavery. After the Middle Passage, Gates argues that Eshu "assumed more functions and even a fuller presence within black cosmogonies than he had in Africa" (31). On the Brazilian plantations Eshu was represented by his followers as a slave liberator and an enemy of white enslavers – amongst the slaves, his task was that of "killing, poisoning, and driving mad their oppressors" (Bastide in Gates 31). In this plantation context, Eshu, according to Gates, "assumed a direct importance to the black enslaved, while retaining his traditional functions" (31).

It was Legba, not Eshu, however, who became a prominent figure in Haitian Vodun. The influence of the religious beliefs of the Fon was stronger among Haitian[9] slaves than those of the Yoruba. Roland Pierre argues in his analysis of Caribbean Vodun that this was a result of a significant number of Vodun priests from Benin being deported as slaves to Haiti (28).

The practice of Vodun was banned by the French in Haiti, and all slaves were baptized within eight days of their arrival to the island. The enforcement of this custom led to the continued worship of African deities under the cloak of Catholic symbols and saints. The deity Legba was syncretized with St. Michael, who commands the army of God, and St. Peter, who holds the keys of Heaven. However, the cross was used in Haitian Vodun ceremonies as it was a West African – not Catholic – symbol which represented, like the crossroads, Legba's position between the axes of the world of humans and gods (Cosentino 261-75).

Legba underwent a fascinating transformation in his journey to Haiti. Whilst in Jamaica Anansi became representative of the black slave finding ways to resist, outmaneuver, and thwart his white masters, in Haiti the influence of other African religions and French colonial Catholicism left Legba, now called Papa Legba, old and impotent. However, despite his fragile state, Papa Legba continued to play a central role in Haitian Vodun ceremonies, with Vodun practitioners communicating with him daily and begging him to "*ouvrir barriere por moi passer"* (remove the barrier for me so I may pass) and let the loa (spirits) manifest themselves (Cosentino 262).

So the vigorous, insatiable, mischievous trickster Legba became the weak, lame, and very old Papa Legba of Haiti, and while the Fon exaggerated Eshu's erotic potential, enslaved Haitians "reduced that same potential to a zero sum" (Cosentino 265). Scholars have speculated that this change may have been a result of the long and terrifying journey across the Atlantic to the Caribbean; the physical, spiritual, and psychological distance traveled from West Africa to Haiti was so arduous that Legba aged and weakened. Cosentino suggests that Haitians

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9   'Haiti' is used here to refer both to the French colony of Saint-Domingue (before 1804) and the independent state of Haiti (after 1804).

no longer had a need for the African Legba's strength and phallic power now that they no "longer live(d) in the land he kept fertile" (267). Karen McCarthy Brown argues that Legba lost his trickster qualities because "for a people so brutally cut off from their ancestral roots, tricksterism may have been unbearable in the spirit responsible for communication between humans and protective spirits" (Brown in Hileman 11). While it could be argued that Legba was emasculated and stripped of his vitality by slavery and colonialism, this was certainly not the case with Anansi or Eshu's roles in Jamaica and Latin America, yet Legba's weakening may have been a result of the zeal with which Catholicism was enforced on the Haitian slaves. However, as we shall see, they found a way to fill the gap left by Legba and celebrate once more the forces of trickery, liminality and resistance so vital to Haitian plantation and post-plantation culture.

Hileman states that in Haiti, "Legba's crutch is a debilitating exaggeration of the African deity's spiritual limp, caused by striding between spirit and earthly worlds" (10). His nickname became *pied-cassé* (broken foot) and he was represented as an "old peasant who has worked his fields hard all his life and is now at the end of his powers," reminiscent of an old slave or laborer (Cosentino 265). So Legba, the magnificent divine messenger of the Fon, who was a symbol of life, destiny, the sun, and fire became a tattered old man, bald and thin, with a twisted cane or crutch, an old pipe, and sores all over his body (Deren in Cosentino 266). This ancient Papa Legba forgot how to play tricks and struggled to maintain control of the flow of crossroads traffic between two worlds. However, to fill this vacancy in their spiritual world, the Haitians created a new spirit, born not in Africa, but in Haiti. They created *Carrefour*.

Carrefour ('crossroads' in French) is Master of the Crossroads. Without a direct African descendant, he is a truly New World Creole manifestation. With his muscular arms and huge phallus, he "inherited all old Eshu's old mastery" (Cosentino 268). Carrefour is depicted as a vigorous man in the prime of his life. Cosentino explains that "as the Vodunists developed Papa Legba by exaggerating Eshu's weaknesses, so they generated Carrefour by exaggerating Eshu's strengths" (268). In Haiti, Carrefour is depicted as holding his powerful arms straight out on either side of his muscular frame, forming the figure of the cross (or crossroads), and at nighttime he replaces the fragile Papa Legba's watch of the crossroads.

So while slavery stripped Legba of his vitality, Haitian slaves created a new phallic and vigorous figure to personify their longing for a revitalized existence. However, despite Carrefour's success as keeper of the crossroads, he does not fulfill Eshu or Legba's African role as trickster. This lack led to the creation of yet another manifestation of Legba by Haitian Vodunists named Ghede (Consentio 269; Hileman 13). American author and filmmaker Maya Deren, who researched Haitian Vodun extensively in the 1940s and 1950s and became a *servitor* herself,[10]

10 A devotee of Vodun.

explains that "[Legba] is linked to Carrefour, whose other hand holds firmly onto Ghede" (Deren in Consentino 296). Ghede is the God of the Dead and Lord of the Underworld and, as an intermediary between the living and the dead, his job is to wait at the crossroads to take souls to the other side. Ghede has infinite wisdom as he has amassed all the knowledge of the dead; his shrines there often contain a wooden phallus and the cross of the graveyard. Similarly to Anansi, he dresses like an undertaker and wears a black top hat and dress coat.[11] In his twentieth-century manifestation he is also depicted as wearing sunglasses with one lens, so he may see both worlds – he is even known to steal them from spectators if not provided with a pair. A lover of sweet foods, alcohol, and tobacco, his favorite offerings on his shrines are a hotly peppered rum, sweets, and unfiltered cigarettes – items of considerable value in the lives of the impoverished. Cosentino explains that "Ghede is manifest only at the end of a Vodun service, long after Papa Legba has lowered the barriers and allowed the other, more respectable Ioa to enter the hounfor [shrine] and the bodies of the servitors" (270).

Ghede and Anansi both speak with a nasal snuffle[12] and share a love of language, celebrating the malleability and ambiguity of words and using tricky wordplay and double entendres to get the better of their adversaries. Similarly to Anansi, Ghede is a lusty, gluttonous, thieving, lying trickster. However, despite both being vagabonds and thieves, Ghede and Anansi are loved and celebrated as they are figures of freedom from both a social and divine order.

As Ghede is what Legba once was in his prime, it is perhaps only right that Ghede steals and wears Eshu's multicolored cap. In one Haitian tale, Ghede is caught stealing cassavas in Eshu's cap by a Vodun priest (Houngun). The Houngun asks:

> "Are you sure that it wasn't a man in a little multicolored cap who stole the cassavas?" Ghede wheeled with enormous eyes of innocence. "A little cap? What man in a little cap?" And with a mischievous expression, Ghede winked once, slowly, and walked away. (Cosentino 273)

Tricksters such as Ghede and Anansi are figures of survival and resistance for an oppressed people. They continually challenge the dominant order, subverting it through chaos, anarchy, and creative energy. They refuse to be ruled by the human or the divine and operate on the boundaries between two worlds, refusing to submit to the laws of either.

West African trickster figures offered a form of psychological release for black slaves. In Jamaica, the Anansi folktales, with their focus on turning the tables on the powerful using intelligence and cunning, formed part of a discourse of resist-

11 Andrew Salkey writes in his poem "Anancy":
    "Sometimes, he wears a waistcoat / Sometimes, he carries a cane / Sometimes, he sports a top hat / Sometimes, he's just a plain, / Ordinary, black, hairy spider" (36).
12 Jamaican folklorist Lily Perkins states that "in West Africa Anancy is represented as speaking through the nose as the local demons are said to do" (Ms 2019).

ance to colonial power. In Haiti, the manifestations of Eshu and Legba played a central role in Vodun, a religious practice used to inspire fear in the hearts of the colonizers.

Vodun has played a disruptive role throughout Haitian history and was used to threaten the culture and ideology of the colonial powers. It developed as an underground religious institution, with practitioners attracting large followings and inciting protest and rebellion amongst slaves (Spencer 144). Followers of Vodun in Haiti have used the religion as an instrument of political liberation throughout their history (Laguerre 12). As Laguerre states, "Voodoo is a collective memorization of African religious traditions, a language expressive of African resistance to slavery and a testimony of the will of the enslaved to maintain the values of Negritude in the face of forced Christianization" (56-7).

Vodun was a source of inspiration for leaders of slave resistance in Haiti. Laguerre explains that "most Maroon leaders were Voodoo priests who saw themselves as prophets representing the loas" (52). These charismatic leaders incited the enslaved to revolt by sabotaging plantation property and joining existing Maroon communities (52). As the Haitian slave revolt gripped the island in 1791, the rebels were urged on by a Vodun priest named Boukman. At midnight, in the forest known as the Bois Caïman, Boukman fanned the flames of the revolution. It is said that in a moment of thunder and lightning an oath was taken during the ritual sacrifice of a black pig: to live as free men or die (1).[13] In his classic account of the Haitian revolution, *The Black Jacobins* (1938), C.L.R. James records:

> There Boukman gave the last instructions, and after Voodoo incantations and the sucking of the blood of a stuck pig, he stimulated his followers with a prayer spoken in creole, which, like so much spoken on such occasions, has remained. "The god which has created the sun which gives us light, who rouses the waves and rules the storms, though hidden in the clouds, he watches us. He sees all the white man does. The god of the white man inspires him with crime, but our god calls upon us to do good works. Our god who is good to us orders us to revenge our wrongs. He will direct our arms and aid us […]." (James 70-1)

As Barbara Browning suggests, Vodun was a "religion of resistance" that accorded a "unity of spirit to the struggle" during the Haitian Revolution (92).

Although Vodun played a central role during the fight for freedom from the colonial powers in Haiti, it is ironic that once Haitians won their independence they adopted the religion of their former oppressors: Catholicism became the official faith and Vodun was driven underground (Laguerre 19). However, the reli-

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13 For a discussion of the controversial historical evidence surrounding the Bois Caïman ceremony and the role of Vodun in the outbreak of the Haitian Revolution, see for example Carolyn Fick 92-4. In an appendix, she also provides a collection of contemporary sources dealing with the ceremony (260-6).

gious tradition plays a key role in Haitian life today. In the political sphere, Vodun is often exploited as a means through which politicians try and appeal to potential supporters or frighten their enemies. François Duvalier or "Papa Doc," the former Haitian president and brutal dictator who came to power in 1957, was known for donning dark sunglasses, wearing a black suit and speaking in a nasal tone like Baron Samedi, a manifestation of Ghede, in an effort to inspire fear in his enemies and respect amongst his followers (McCarthy Brown 185; Browning 92-3). Today Vodun practitioners are in the majority in Haiti and politicians campaign heavily among Vodun priests, acutely aware of their influence on the populace. As Laguerre states, "the politicization of Voodoo basically means the recognition of the Voodoo church as a centre of power in the local community and of the Voodoo priest as a broker on behalf of his congregation" (115).

While the role of Vodun in the political sphere in Haiti today may be somewhat dubious, with some exploiting the religion to suit their unjust political ends, it is clear that during the plantation period trickster figures of West African origin, found in both the religious traditions and folklore of the Caribbean, inspired protest against colonial rule. In their inherent ambiguity and transgression of the boundaries between life and death, their ability to subvert hierarchies of power, and their continued connection to West African cultural and religious practices, Anansi, Eshu, and Legba were adapted to absorb and reflect the experiences of enslaved Africans and their descendants on the Caribbean plantations.

What is so intriguing about these trickster figures is their malleability over time; they continually change to suit the needs of the people who keep them alive. Embodiments of resistance and opposition, universal archetypes, testers and extenders of boundaries, personifications of liminality and crossroads, they exist in a perpetual stream of transformation. That is why, in the Asante Anansi tale "You are as Wonderful as Ananse, the Spider," when Anansi is captured by Nyame's executioners for his bad behavior, Ya, Old-mother-earth, explains that they must "let him go and all shall be well" (Rattray 267). These tricksters of West African origin are symbols of freedom and revolt who will continually be adapted to new circumstances as they can never be fixed, captured, or contained.

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Refurbishment, Responsibility, and Historical Memory in Monticello's Slave "Dependencies"

MARCUS WOOD

> The name of SALLY will walk down to posterity alongside of Mr. Jefferson's own name.
>
> James Thomson Callender, "The President Again"

> And Horace was not being satirical when he recommended his own preference for household slaves, male or female: "I like my sex easy and ready to hand."
>
> M. I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*[1]

There is a beautiful yet troubled passage in the great Martiniquan poet Edouard Glissant's book *Faulkner, Mississipi*. Meditating on slavery, historic buildings, and memory in the American South, Glissant visits Nottoway Plantation near Baton Rouge. Going round the house he is horrified by the memorial cleanup to which he is witness, and which he is almost entirely powerless to get beyond:

> "Antebellum": the word is used to describe a residence, a style, and perhaps even a way of being or thinking; it harks back to a time when bands of slaves on estates took care of everything. There is no trace of the slave shacks which would have been alongside the outbuildings and the grounds. Everything has been cleaned, sanitised, pasteurized […] Here memory is selective, rid of the whiff of slavery […] We were in the middle of a slave era film set. Some movies with historic aspirations had actually been filmed in the ballroom and other parts of the house. I remarked that all the incongruous traces of the past had been wiped away. Not a single dirt-floor shack with rotten siding remained […] (Glissant 11-13)

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1 Finley 96. Finley is translating freely from Horace, *Satires*, 1.2. ll. 116-19.

Glissant articulates a phenomenon almost universal throughout the slave diaspora. The buildings through which we are forced to remember the slave plantations are the palaces of the masters, those monumental edifices that expressed and still express their power and luxurious existence. The dwelling places of the slaves were not built to last and have not lasted.

Once Glissant leaves Nottaway, he stops to visit a sugar cane factory, and finds that the landscape can speak to him:

> He led us across the fields where we noticed a little wood planted with plagued trees, rising like an island in the middle of the flat cane. "That's where they buried the workers in the olden days," the man confided to us, meaning slaves. We took a long moment to contemplate that clump of trees, which seemed to twist and arch into a den. A world of tragedy was borne by those trunks sculpted in a world of stiffness, keeping memory alive. (Glissant 12)

Glissant, with a poet's eye, realizes how very hard it is to keep the memory of the slaves alive when not only the conditions of slavery but the attitudes of the custodians of slave houses and slave plantations ingeniously conspire to kill off, to hide, or to bury that memory. One is left with nature, with buried signs, with spaces that necessitate vast imaginative input.

In the following article, I argue that Thomas Jefferson's Monticello is finally invaluable because it does not require such meditative intensity to bring the slave presence back. Thomas Jefferson, for peculiar reasons, housed his domestic slaves in a set of subterranean spaces dug out directly beneath his own mansion. These so called "dependencies" were unintentionally built to last and so preserve a vital set of memories related to slave life at Monticello. Without them, all we would now have would be some ruins on that part of the grounds where the laboring slaves lived, termed Mulberry Row, and an unexplored slave cemetery out by the tourist car parks. Yet the conditions of Monticello's physical creation have ensured that Jefferson's slaves live on, with a unique immediacy, in the minds of those who want to remember them. It is also arguable that these spaces powerfully embody Jefferson's own agonized relationship to his role as slave master; at the same time, the reconstructions of Monticello's slave quarters also contain elements that efface the memory of slavery. And these processes of erasure are seen to reach a baffling and shameful climax in the treatment of Sally Hemings' personal quarters.

Privileged Views and Underground Silences: Jefferson's Privy Spaces and the Sally Hemings Restroom

There has been growing interest in how Thomas Jefferson thought about and how he lived with the slave population he inherited and then expanded at Monti-

cello. His relations with one slave woman in particular have long been a bone of contention. Jefferson's political enemies first placed Sally Hemings in the public sphere. She appears initially not merely as a slave or even as an embarrassment, but as an abomination that must be denied or admitted in its full horror and grotesqueness. Sally Hemings was engendered within white male political propagandas as a weapon with which to beat Jefferson's already substantial myth over the head. Extracting the meaty parts from an earlier publication, and then embroidering them, James Thompson Callender was already delightedly crowing about Jefferson's "African Venus" in 1802:

THE PRESIDENT *AGAIN*.

It is well known that the man, *whom it delighteth the people to honor*, keeps, and for many years past has kept, as his concubine, one of his own slaves. Her name is SALLY […] By this wench Sally, our president has had several children. There is not an individual in the neighbourhood of Charlottesville who does not believe the story, and not a few who know it [...] The allegation is of a nature too *black* to be suffered to remain in suspense. We should be glad to hear of its refutation. We give it to the world under the firmest belief that such a refutation *never can be made*. The AFRICAN VENUS is said to officiate, as housekeeper at Monticello. (Callender n.p.)

The connection with Sally Hemings could mean only one thing if publicly admitted to his contemporaries, i.e., shame for Jefferson. Hemings is present as a subject female sexual sign, a badge of dishonor for her partner, and that is the limit of her existence.

What space does Sally fill in the American imaginary now? It seemed at one point that as time went by the elephant in the ever-growing room of the Jeffersonian heritage industries was growing larger and more audible and can now no longer be ignored. Jefferson's paradoxical relation to, and relationships with, liberty and slavery have taken some big hits of late, as interest in his long-term relationship with Sally has increased. The year 2000 saw not only the dawn of a new millennium but the appearance of the published conclusions of the extensive investigation of the research committee set up by the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation in 1998-1999 to look into the Hemings-Jefferson affair, particularly in the light of the then recently released DNA evidence. Interested parties, including Jefferson's descendants, found it increasingly hard to deny that their great progenitor was also a great 'slave inseminator'. It now seemed certain that Jefferson had a long-term sexual relationship with a slave woman, which resulted in the production of several children over an eighteen-year period.

The mold-breaking books of Annette Gordon-Reed have now taken the relation of the Jeffersons to the Hemingses onto another level of social and biographical complexity. With the appearance of Gordon-Reed's *The Hemingses of Monticello* on the National Book Award short list for 2008, a genuinely mass public

space appeared to have opened up for debating the intimate places of slavery, not merely in Jefferson's thought and life, but in that of the elites of the slave South generally. Sally Hemings, it seemed, was no longer a significant silence. She had moved on steadily from her ghostly initiation into slavery literature as Clotel's mother Currer, in William Wells Brown's novel *Clotel; or, the President's Daughter* (1853). And, just as importantly, she was no longer isolated, but was part of an increasing presence, a historical slave community that could be reclaimed. She now existed within American cultural memory, a focus for so much buried history relating to the sexual exploitation of African American women on slave plantations.[2] But it is often hard to read which way the wind is blowing in the American heritage industries. When it comes to slavery memory and the African American presence, just when you think things are going forward, they move back. I recently visited Monticello, only to find out that rumors of Sally Hemings' recent rebirth may be greatly exaggerated. What I found there may stand as a significant sign underlining the resistance to addressing the memory of slavery, when that memory interferes with certain elaborately protected cultural fictions focused on the birth of American nationhood.

A Room of One's Own, and a Room Without a View: Monticello's Underground Narrative

> Mr. Jefferson's Sally and their children are real persons, that the woman herself has a room to herself at Monticello in the character of sempstress to the family, if not as house-keeper […] is well known. (Callender n.p.)

Every visitor who pays their sixteen dollars to be very thoroughly guided around Monticello receives a copy of the brochure, *Jefferson's Monticello. A Guide for Visitors*. On the penultimate page, there is a small inserted paragraph, which gives the account of Sally Hemings sanctioned for mass public consumption by the "Thomas Jefferson Foundation Inc. a private non profit 501 (c) 3 corporation."

> Sally Hemings
>
> That Thomas Jefferson fathered children with Sally Hemings, an enslaved ladies' maid at Monticello, entered the public arena during his first term as president, and it has remained a subject of discussion and disagreement for more than two centuries. DNA test results released in 1998 indicated a genetic link between the Jefferson and Hemings fami-

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2 The most significant references to the Hemings-Jefferson relationship in documentary sources are cited in *Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Report of the Research Committee on Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings,* Part III "Review of Documentary Sources." The major secondary publications relating to the Hemings-Jefferson affair are Adair and Brodie, "The Great Jefferson Taboo." See also Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson,* Dabney and Kukla, Jordan 461-1; Malone 213-6, 494-8. See also Malone and Hochman 523-8.

lies. Thomas Jefferson Foundation historians believe that the weight of existing evidence indicates a high probability that Thomas Jefferson was the father of Sally Hemings' son Easton (born 1808) and that he was likely the father of all her known children. The evidence is not definitive however, and the complete story may never be known. (*Jefferson Monticello* 7)

What this paragraph tells us, beyond all reasonable doubt, is that Jefferson and Hemings had a long-lasting relationship, which included the creation of children, and that this occurred within Monticello's walls and on its grounds.[3] Jefferson married a free white woman, Martha, in 1772 and had two daughters with her. In 1773 Jefferson inherited Betty Hemings and her children including Sally, who had been born earlier that same year. In 1774 the estate she was part of was divided, and in 1775 the slaves were moved to Monticello. Martha died in 1782. In 1787, Sally, aged fourteen, traveled to Europe with Jefferson and his daughters, spending two weeks in London, and then over two years in Paris, sailing back to Virginia at the end of 1789. She then remained at Monticello until Jefferson's death in 1827. It is generally assumed that the relationship with the young slave woman started in Paris at some point, or soon after her return. For Jefferson, this relationship was a much more enduring attachment than that to his wife, and produced many more surviving children. So going around Monticello now it is natural to want to know where Sally lived, and how she is physically recorded and memorially resurrected within "the only house in America on the UNESCO World Heritage List" (*Jefferson Monticello* 3).

From the information provided there is, however, some difficulty over ascertaining exactly where the slaves' bedrooms were, and what they should be called. The *Guide for Visitors* contains a large centerfold that gives a bird's eye view of Monticello and its immediate surroundings, seen due south from about a quarter of a mile in the air (Fig. 1). It takes the form of a watercolor drawing, showing the property in late spring or early summer, and drenched in greenery. Square signs are inserted on this map informing visitors where the tours start, where the parking is, and the location of the restrooms, one in the visitor's shop and one in the so-called "dependencies." At the bottom of this page of the *Guide for Visitors* is what is described as a "Historic Plan of the Dependencies" (Fig. 2). Near the

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3 The report had been even more categorical; it originally stated: "[T]he DNA study when combined with the multiple strands of documentary and statistical evidence, *substantiates* Thomas Jefferson's paternity of all the children listed under Sally Hemings' name in Jefferson's Farm Book" (my emphasis). The report was altered under pressure from Dr. Ken Wallenborn; see: Thomas Jefferson Foundation, *DNA Study Committee Minority Report, April 12*. The report states: "Twice in the spring of 1999, during and after the conclusion of the work of the committee, Ken expressed some reservations to me, and I encouraged him to write up his concerns [...] For the record, Ken's concerns were reviewed and considered systematically and seriously [...] while respecting fully Ken's opinions, I stand by the research report as circulated." Yet in the report, and all subsequent publicity, such as the brochure quoted above, "substantiates" was changed to "high probability," the expression of certainty over paternity having been one of Wallenborn's major concerns.
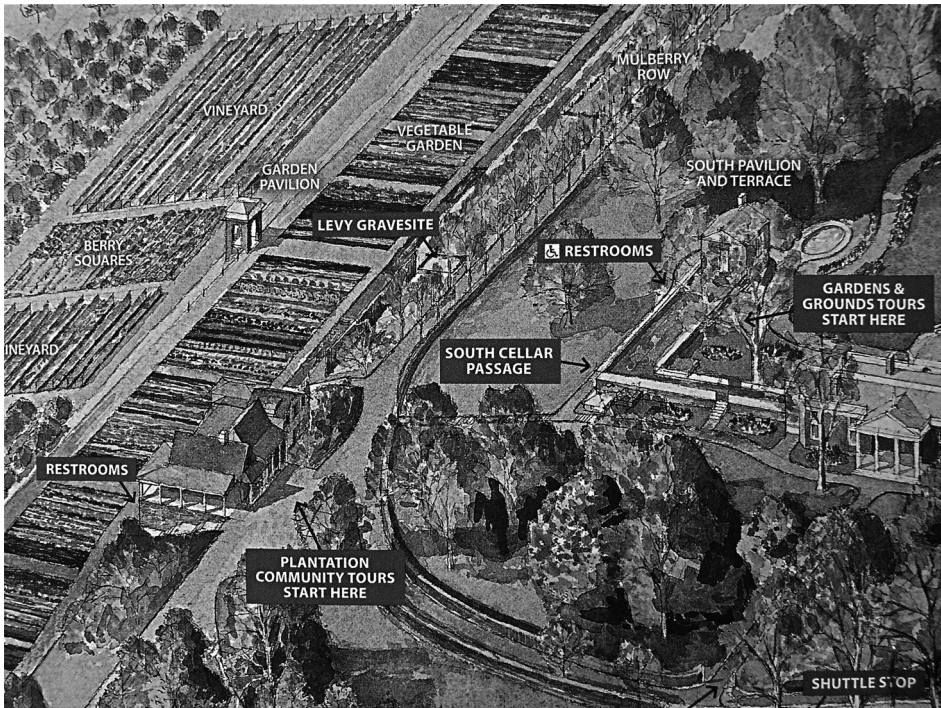
Fig. 1: Tourist map of the "slave dependencies," Monticello (© Thomas Jefferson Foundation)
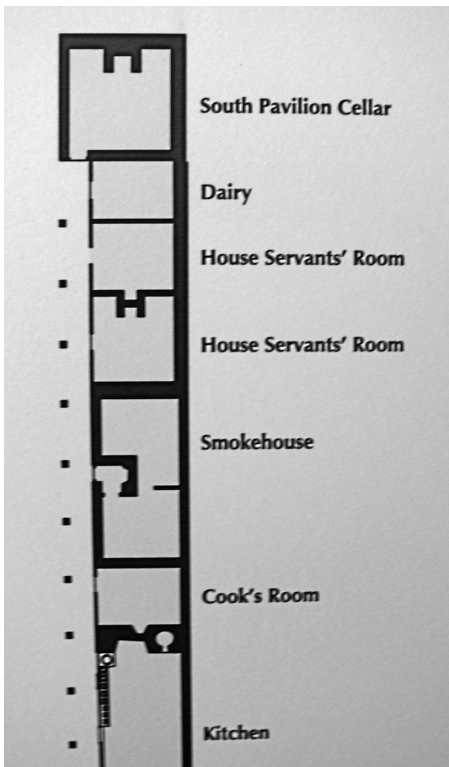

Fig. 2:
"Historical Plan of the Dependencies." *Guide for Visitors*, Monticello (© Thomas Jefferson Foundation)
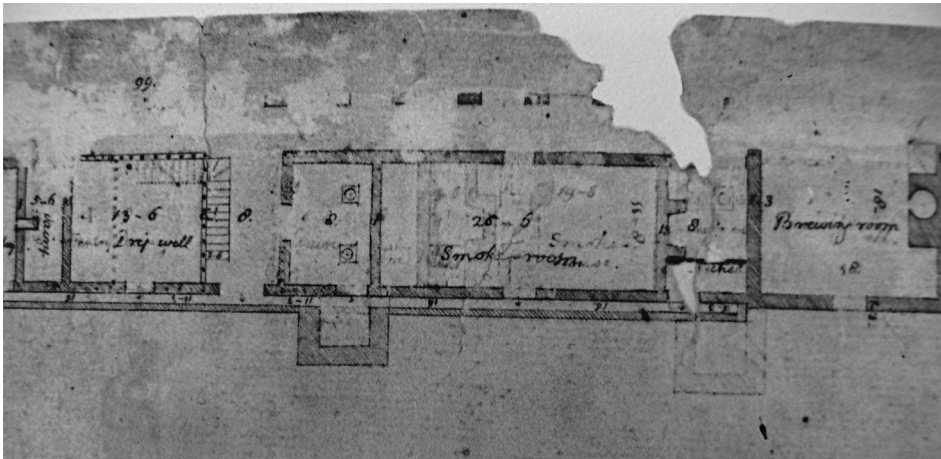
Fig. 3: Thomas Jefferson, "Basement with dependencies final drawing" (© Thomas Jefferson Foundation)

end of the wing that makes up the southern dependencies is a room that is labeled "slave quarter" (*Jefferson Monticello* 7).

On a similar projection of this set of rooms on a large public placard outside the basement labeled "Monticello Dependencies," these rooms are termed "House Servants' Rooms." Yet if one turns back to the bird's-eye map this same space has been labeled "Restrooms," with a little disabled sign attached. We are told matter-of-factly that: "These dependencies or areas for domestic work served as points of intersection between Jefferson's family and enslaved people, and were instrumental to the functioning of the house. They were concealed in the hillside to avoid obstructing the landscape around the house." The grammatical ambiguity of the "They" opening the final sentence is significant. What is its subject, does it refer back to the dependencies, to the enslaved people, or to both? Jefferson produced detailed architectural drawings for Monticello, one of which is entitled "Basement with dependencies final drawing." (Fig. 3). This time the space elsewhere termed "slave-quarter," "house servant's room," "Restroom," and on its door "Ladies," is clearly labeled "smoke room." It appears to be a large space comprising two separate rooms with a dividing wall, each room now labeled "House Servants' Room." The current smoke room is now located off the main walkway under the main building. So it appears that what was intended to be the smoke room was at some point changed into two servants' rooms. And one of these two rooms, as we shall see, lies right at the heart of Sally Hemings' presence in Monticello; it is a room that has not only been multiply named and renamed, but which has come to serve very different functions at different times.

In order to understand what has become of Sally Hemings' bedroom at Monticello it is necessary to think about the construction and symbolic meaning of the slave dependencies generally. The division between "slave" and "free" was physically embodied in the way Jefferson built his house; he kept the house slaves out of it, and under it. In the (probably unintended) words of the guidebook he "con-

cealed" them. Following his plan and his wishes it is easy to extend this compartmentalization today, as America continues its worship of Jefferson, the Founding Father. Monticello physically embodies the strange imaginative apartheid by which this slave owner was able to divorce libertarian intellectual ideals concerning man's relation to freedom from the physical enslavement and sexual exploitation of his black labor force. The construction of the dependencies might be seen as an expression of the failure of the ideals of the American Revolution. As such, this architectural experiment might be seen to encapsulate all that went wrong with the South once it decided that slavery would have to stay ticking away like some kind of ethical time bomb inside the new Constitution, despite the heroic Revolution and Jefferson's remarkable Declaration of Independence.

When you enter the present day Monticello complex, you first have to park in one of the tiers located out of sight of and well away from Jefferson's home. From your lowly asphalt limbo, your touristic concealment, you stand on the edge of an as yet unexcavated but extensive slave cemetery. You then wait for a shuttle bus, which carries you up the "little mountain" and deposits you in front of the neo-Palladian façade of Monticello. The house tours are a constantly rolling phenomenon, every few minutes one group drifts in and another drifts out. The official tours are restricted to a series of set-piece speeches, saturated inevitably in Jeffersonian anecdote, delivered as you move through the first-floor rooms. In these apartments, you are provided with a well-rehearsed narrative of how Jefferson lived his public and visible life, as well as his contemplative and intellectual life, and finally his respectable family life. You are told about his eating habits, and his sophistication in relation to the dishes his Parisian-educated slave cook created, and the imported wines he drank. You are told of his erudition, his worship of English intellectual culture, and you are invited to stare at the memorials in homage to Bacon, Newton, and Locke. You are told of his skill as an architect and interior designer, and of his creation of an "American museum" in the main hall. This is in itself peculiar – a museum within a museum, which is made up of a bizarre set of curiosities, including a sort of ragtag and bobtail wall hanging, about which there are some claims that it was a gift to Jefferson from Lewis and Clark. Given that all Jefferson's possessions were dispersed right after his death, when his house and estate were auctioned off, the provenance of these objects is rather buried in the mists of time. Yet some of them are said to have been part of his famed "Indian Hall," which he set up to impress visitors.[4] The effect now is rather shoddy and chaotic compared to the pristine nature of the other rooms, and the historical weight of the objects in this recreated museum is, in museological terms, unspecific, to say the least.

Yet before the official tour, while you wait to see the house, you are told that you may walk around and view what are still termed "the basement and the

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4   For the highly dubious provenance of most of these exhibits, see the relevant catalogue entries in Stein.

Fig. 4:
The basement and slave
dependencies today (photo:
Marcus Wood)

dependencies." You may not photograph or make any video recordings inside the upper parts of the house in which Jefferson lived, or record the tour operators in these privileged spaces, but in the dependencies you are free to do whatever takes your fancy. These areas are now strangely unpoliced, demonstrably less important than the place where the great man officially ate, drank, and entertained. In spatial terms, the dependencies constitute a series of tunnels and little cells that lie directly beneath the house proper.

These subterranean passages, and small, mainly windowless rooms, are gloomy, damp, and cold. When humans build underground it is usually for a purpose, and the purpose is frequently to hide, to store, or to punish. Prisons and torture chambers are traditionally hidden underground, sewers are put underground, and so are graves, and in this case slaves. But the thing about caves and graves and underground cells is that, built into the earth or the rock, they are permanent structures, they refuse to go away, they endure and, even when filled in, they are a lasting memento of past times.

And so it is here, in these sad spaces, that Monticello's real history has remained intact, restorable, reachable. In these slave habitations Jefferson's Monticello can still be resurrected into a cultural memory very different from that

expounded by the docents. And this fact makes these spaces infinitely precious. The vast majority of slave dwellings across the Atlantic Diaspora were built of insubstantial material, they were made of disposable trash in order to house disposable people. Indeed, as the winds of time huffed and puffed they blew down the houses of Jefferson's plantation slaves on Mulberry Row, flimsy structures set up a mere stone's throw from the dependencies. All those wooden cabins and their occupants have gone, even the few stone structures have been reduced to barely visible ruins, but the spaces where Jefferson's house slaves lived, loved, labored, and died have endured. These spaces quite literally undermine the pretensions of the neo-Palladian structure that squats on top of them. For those attuned to their meaning, the slave dwellings saturate Monticello, they are by far the most real thing there. They signify a brute severance not merely between black slave industry and white slave-owning idleness, but between black-slave and white-free existence within the plantation household.

As you wander through the "dependencies," if you look up from these stygian rooms and walkways, you can see the backside of the floorboards separating the visible world of Jefferson's fantastic public life from this invisible underground life, the sustaining industrial life of the house slaves. If you reach up you can touch the boards; a very few of the old supporting beams are original, roughhewn, and scarred, molded by the mark of the adze and the timber saw. Each of these big pieces of timber would have been carried up from the saw pit on Mulberry Row by slaves who never normally entered the Big House. As you feel the marks made by the endeavor and sense the physical energy invested by slave bodies, your fingertips are three or four inches from the polished top sides of the boards on which Jefferson's Parisian shoe leather trod. Down here there is damp earth, somber light, and even on a bright sunny day no view, but merely a pervading "darkness visible."

At some point, Jefferson conceived the idea of creating a labor camp, to be placed in the ground beneath his feet. He drew the formal plans for this scheme during his first presidency. The abyss separating the political life from the personal life, the existence of a consciousness fully aware of, yet capable of maintaining, this cultural and moral fracture, generates, if you try to think it through, a perceptual vertigo. Jefferson, while in charge of the development of the New World's great experiment in Democracy, had created, and lived within, a brutal architectural demonstration of the raw power relationship between the body of the enslaver and the body of the enslaved.

Jefferson was indeed ahead of his time in the design of the "dependencies." He had a peculiar interest in using architecture to express pure functions of power, and he was unusually interested in creating buildings based on the surveillance of one set of human beings by another. Frederick Doveton Nichols refers to his "plan for a solitary confinement prison in Virginia," which is described as an "advanced idea […] antedating the great criminal reformers in Europe." Jefferson talks of having met various French and English architects interested in applying

Utilitarian principles to public prisons. He refers to his design as providing for "a well contrived edifice, on the principle of solitary confinement." Here we have Jefferson devising two structures, one a prison (unbuilt), one a slave labor space (the dependencies), but both founded on the principles of isolation and surveillance and thereby reminiscent of Jeremy Bentham's coterminously invented panopticon.[5]

Will You Have Your Clock Wound up?
Jefferson Penetrates the Basement Spaces

Having taken the upbeat house tour of Jefferson's light-infused upper apartments, certain thoughts do not easily go away. Did he penetrate the nether world of the dependencies at all, and if and when he did, what did he do down there? In a small placard next to the large grandfather clock in the kitchen is the only clue that provides the tourist with any specific evidence that Jefferson ever descended into these submerged regions. The placard quotes the slave Isaac Jefferson stating that, "'Mr. Jefferson never went into the kitchen except to wind up the clock'." What does this slave's statement really tell us? Why did Jefferson only come down to wind up his clock? Why didn't he get a slave to do it for him? It is known that when the dependencies were built Jefferson was by that time personally and sexually involved with Sally Hemings. He probably had her moved in 1803 up from a house on Mulberry Row to the room now labeled "House Servants' Room" on the large display board outside the dependencies.

During the period when Jefferson had the slave quarters built, Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1760-67) was being avidly read by the educated classes not only of England but of continental Europe and North America, and as his own writings tell us, by Jefferson as well.[6] The book's outrageous opening pages established the intimate connection in Walter Shandy's mind between winding up the clock and having sex with his wife. The phrase caught on and spread in various forms across England, France, and America. Whores in London, Paris, and Washington would confront potential customers enquiring whether "the gentleman would care to have his clock wound up?"[7] Given all the babies they made, it is obvious what Jefferson got up to in Sally Hemings' bedroom, a few feet down the way from the big clock in the kitchen. It seems more than likely that the slave Isaac Jefferson was speaking in code, and maybe Jefferson him-

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5   For both quotations and an analysis of the prison project, see Nichols 5.
6   That Jefferson had read Sterne's book carefully comes out in his hostile but precise account of the ex-slave author Ignatius Sancho's prose style, which is described as at its weakest when incorporating a "Shandean fabrication of words." See Jefferson, *Writings* 267.
7   On the cultural symbolism of clock winding, see, for example, *The Clockmaker's Outcry Against the Author of the Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1760). For modern assessments, see Thompson, Olsen, and Vanderbeke.

self employed the saucy, Shandyesque euphemism to refer to his periodic 'servic-ing' of his favorite slave girl. Maybe in fact, given his mental facility for ordering the existence of his slaves and for internalizing contradictions around space, life, and habitual activity, he actually did perform a bizarre mimicry of Walter Shandy's domestic ceremony, and come down to the servants' world to wind up both his own, Sally's, and the kitchen's clock. Maybe he didn't find it easy to bring his underground trysts with Sally out into the open, and this notorious double entendre was the best way of disguising it.

One element that makes Monticello and its dependencies particularly charged is the extent to which Sally's presence still remains hidden, not only in the sense that Jefferson put her underground, but still today, in the way her living space has been bizarrely and rather horribly camouflaged. Going on the Monticello tour it is very hard to find out exactly where Sally Hemings slept. After almost an hour in which an elegant guide took our almost exclusively white tour group around "Mr. Jefferson's living quarters," we emerged from a side door, into the beautiful late October sunshine. The guide stopped and reached out, with upraised arm, in that gesture familiar from so many statues of great leaders, and fallen dictators, over the centuries. She reached out across rolling grass, over the autumn treetops just turning into rusty reds, over bright vermilions and chrome and lemon yellows, over and out into the smoky Claudean blues of the lovely middle distance, and far away into the melting Virginia hills. And as she swung her jacketed arm, clothed in its elegant sheath of tweed, she enjoined: "If you had all of this, you wouldn't want anything to get in the way of your view, would you?" We were being given a sensible explanation for why Jefferson had had his slaves tunnel, dig, and burrow out from underneath the floorboards of his mansion the series of primitive cave spaces in which they would then exist. The solution Jefferson had come up with was brilliantly simple, as was the rationalization I had just heard for its implementation: that the slaves must never interfere with the view. We were being told, in tones of celebration, that the set of spaces thrown down underneath a house, where even Jefferson complained that the rooms were desperately cold, were the pure product of a refined aesthetic vision. The reality of slave life, the unacceptable truth, was to be earthed up as a sort of living death, a social entombment.

The "dependencies," consisting of coarse, damp stonewalls and earth floors, still possess an unvarnished simplicity that contrasts starkly with the over-restored and slickly varnished upper house. When considering the tourist fictions that now shroud the current state of Monticello, it must be reiterated that when Jefferson died, all the interior contents disappeared. The Founding Father had privately been a management disaster; he lived hugely beyond his means, and committed to debts he would never clear. After all he had invested in the creation of his ideal home, Jefferson's estate was immediately put under the hammer at his death. No one seemed to care about monumentalizing his memory by turning his house into a museum until well into the twentieth century. Now the interiors of the upper
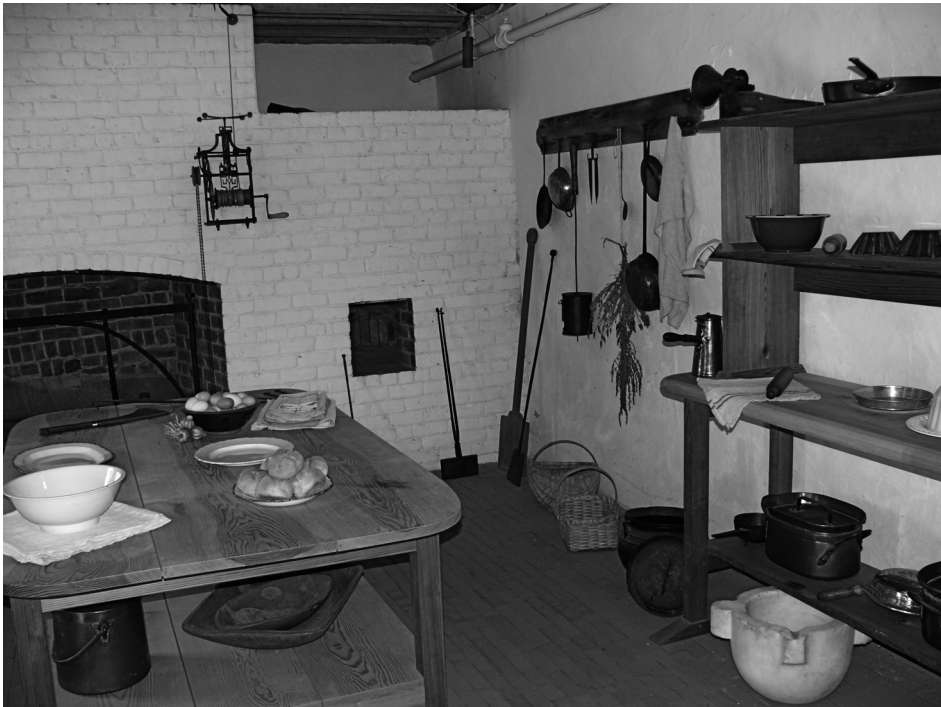
Fig. 5: The Cook's room (photo: Marcus Wood)

parts of the house have been put back together with a hodgepodge of objects that have different claims to authenticity. Some really are "authentic" in that they once belonged to Jefferson and have been bought or given back. Some are authentic in that they are from the period spanning Jefferson's life. Some are reproductions made from originals in private collections, or, like the window drapes, are reproduced from Jefferson's surviving sketches. But others are not authentic at all, just vaguely period, or, like the library, a selection of objects that might or might not have been in Jefferson's collection. The overall effect of the upper house is rather disturbing – a visual white noise, like some overly cluttered antique shop. The spaces are overly clean, overblown, overdone and overfilled, i.e., they are essentially unreal. It is the slave spaces, the underground chambers with their cases of fragments, which contain and exude a sense of reality. If one is committed to the immersion theory of museological recovery, then these spaces certainly provide a substantial dunking. Despite the fact that some rooms, notably the kitchen, have been partially done over, the "dependencies" still breathe with the forgotten life of the human property that lived and died in them. Some of these rooms have been tampered with and filled with a mixture of modern and period junk.

The cook's room (Fig. 5), for example, has been half-heartedly 'facsimilized' with crude wooden furniture, a period style bed with a point blanket on it; a few pots and pans that look suitably ancient have been put up on simple wooden shelves. These old-looking objects contrast unhappily with the opulence

and spanking new shininess of the vast grandfather clock, precisely modeled on the original, which is now sitting somewhere, displaced and sullen in a private collection. I didn't know historically speaking what to make of some eggs in a bowl and some buns on a plate. Yet many of the spaces have not been contaminated and botched in this way. The smoke house has a big metal grill put back in front of it, and a barred locked door, but otherwise remains empty. With its red dirt floor, prison-like bars, and one huge padlock, it makes a plain statement about slave life.

The owners of plantations fought an unending battle to protect their property from their property. They had to lock everything up, they had to safeguard their edible property, indeed all their nonhuman property, at all times, from their human property. Everything upstairs and downstairs was chained up, fastened, nailed down, shut up. Every cupboard and every drawer and every chest had its own key. One placard tells us that "References to theft involve Monticello's corn cribs, charcoal sheds, poultry yard, wash house, wine cellars, nailery and even Jefferson's bedroom."[8] One wonderful case in the dependencies holds objects unearthed from beneath the floor of a slave root cellar. And here, confounding that false museum, that fancifully recreated "Indian Hall" upstairs, we find ourselves in the presence of a real little museum. Labels inform us that "Archaeologists found a number of root cellars (food storage pits) at Monticello slave cabin sites; the artefacts found within them suggested that the cellars also held personal possessions." They certainly did contain personal possessions, but whose personal possessions were they? Surveying the contents of this particular "root cellar," it is clear the slaves' hideaway spaces were stuffed with stolen goods. The contents of one such pit are exhibited in a case opposite the wine cellar. It is a veritable treasure trove, containing "[a] tinware colander, brass straight pins and thimble, tinplated buttons, united states cent, English wine bottle." The relation of this buried English wine bottle from 1810 to the locked up wine cellar is a spectacular demonstration of the secret life of slaves, and of where a good deal of Jefferson's imported fancy goods were ending up. That stolen wine bottle is a joyful object, and its European contents were surely greatly enjoyed by the slave who stole them. This wine, which had sailed in from half way round the world, would have tasted all the sweeter in the knowledge that its consumption put the author of the Declaration of Independence in even deeper debt. These underground spaces and the fragments they have given up, the pins, needles, buttons, bits of dominoes, exotic European cups and plates, and the stolen, broken wine bottles, give lie to the buffed-up falsehoods, the merry fiction of civilized plantation life and esoteric collecting that saturate the sanitized upper house.

Petty theft was a form of resistance that not only allowed slaves to eat and live better, and occasionally get drunk, but it destabilized the entire psychological basis of plantation life. Slave mistresses had to live with the signs of their

8   Monticello tourist placard, located outside the wine cellar, entitled "Under Lock and Key."

fear and societal failure fastened to their waists. Vast bunches of keys fitted every conceivable form of lock, and locks and chains were primarily employed, not in shackling slave bodies, but in the processes of protecting all moveable, and especially edible, objects from slave bodies. Jefferson's wife and daughters rotated responsibility for this ghastly gallimaufry of keys on a monthly basis. These locks and keys were a ubiquitous and perpetual reminder that the slaves were unhappy, underfed, and therefore utterly untrustworthy. The smoke room, furnished with a wall of bars and a vast iron padlock, speaks of a world of anxiety and threat, and tells us that there was in Monticello, as in all plantations, no trust between the master and his slaves.

The world of the slave that Jefferson implanted in the side of his little mountain is suffused in a mighty irony. This irony cuts down the master's assumed superiority in calling his hidden slave quarters "the dependencies." The term has particular resonance when applied to slave housing if its associated meanings within political and nationalist discourse are noted. A "dependency" is, according to Chambers Dictionary, "a kind of subordinate colony without self government." The phrase encases an imagined power structure, and communicates the idea that the visible, the elevated parts of Monticello in which the master lives, thinks, and entertains, comprise an ornate core, a power center, from which the slave dwellings hang. The upper house is the center, the Fatherland, the slave quarters are the margins, the colonies. Yet history, embodied in the strange reconstructive decisions that have marked the emergence of Monticello as a World Heritage site, has turned its back to the implications of Jefferson's authoritative nomenclature. A more complete, but also complex, picture emerges, which shows that Jefferson's world operated through a most peculiar set of fictional filters, that it was a world turned upside down, where the true dependants – in terms of labor force – become the masters. What Monticello's structure now reveals is that Jefferson and his household were utterly dependent on his invisible dependencies. There is a further level of irony when we, the present day interpreters and witnesses of Monticello's secrets, find that we depend on the dependencies to give us genuine insight both into slave life and into the paranoia engendered by slave ownership. And yet some secrets of the dependencies have been shut up and silenced and need to be allowed to speak again.

Final Resting Places and Functioning Restrooms: Sally Hemings' Sanitary Monument

At the very end of my tour of Monticello, during the time finally reserved for questions, someone asked the docent distinctly: "And do we know where Sally Hemings lived, where her bedroom was?" After a silence came the answer: "Well, Sally Hemings had a house somewhere down on Mulberry Row, we are not exactly sure where. When she lived in the main house, we are pretty sure her bedroom was just

about where the ladies' restroom is now. Of course when you come again we hope all that will have been changed." The guide had stated as a matter of fact that the bedroom of the slave Sally Hemings had been turned into a public female lavatory (Fig. 6). Sally's bedroom had indeed undergone a striking process of museological restoration and had been filled with toilet bowls, pipes, water tanks, cubicles, condom and sanitary towel dispensers, and had been given a maroon door labeled "Ladies" (Fig. 7).[9]

The immediate question is why has this happened? Is this pure chance or does it reflect intent or even a policy on the part of the management of the estate? One piece of evidence that suggests that this development is not merely fortuitious relates to utility. Walking out of the spectacular commercial shrine to Jefferson's memory, the Monticello Gift Shop, the visitor sees a sign pointing down to the main "Restrooms," men's and women's. They are not more than a hundred yards from that other restroom, Sally Hemings' sad ruined little bedroom. It made no sense that there was a large men's and women's "Restroom" annexed to the gift shop, but just one small female restroom reserved for women within the "dependencies." Strangely, the neighboring empty slave bedroom had not been converted into a matching men's facility.[10]

Sally's room now constitutes a compromised and rather novel museological space.

Given the proportions of the room, it seems certain that Sally's bed would have had to occupy the space in the top right-hand corner, where the disabled toilet is located, or the top left-hand corner, where two standard toilet cubicles are now located. Consequently, the position from which my photograph was taken, looking out from a sitting position on the toilet seat to the strip light, the mirrors, and the condom machine, was probably the exact location of the bed. The situation seems to be as follows: an unending stream of mainly white Southern women, with a good sprinkling of international tourists, women of all ages,

9 The evidence that this room constituted Sally's bedroom at some point from 1803-07 onward, although she may have been there well before, is set out in the section on "Housing at Monticello" in the *Statement on the TJMF Research Committee Report on Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings* (see Daniel Jordan): "On her return to Monticello in 1789 [from Paris], she may have lived in the stone house on Mulberry Row (present Weaver's Cottage), where her sister Critta Hemings was known to have lived. Thus, in 1793, she would have moved, as did Critta, into one of the three new, 12 by 14 foot, log cabins on Mulberry Row" (Jefferson to Thomas M. Randolph, 19 May, 1793, B.26.65). Some time between 1803 and 1807, she evidently moved into one of the "servants" rooms in the South Dependencies, between the South Pavilion and the dairy. In 1851, while walking around Monticello, Jefferson's grandson Thomas J. Randolph pointed out to biographer Henry S. Randall "a smoke blackened and sooty room in one of the colonnades, and informed me it was Sally Henings' [sic] room" (Randall 236). Given that the cook's room, and the room to the smoke house were known to be occupied by other slaves, Sally would have been in the servants' room of the South dependencies, now the ladies restroom.

10 One gets a good idea of the proximity of the Hemings restroom to the central restroom, and of its resultant practical redundancy, from the section of the scale plan reproduced above as Fig. 1

Fig. 6:   The present site of Sally Hemings' bedroom (photo: Marcus Wood)

Fig. 7:   Interior of Sally Hemings' former bedroom (photo: Marcus Wood)

shapes, and sizes, sit and excrete on the same location where Thomas Jefferson once conceived slave children with Sally Hemings.

Although America has invested and continues to invest a huge amount of symbolic energy in Thomas Jefferson's myth, he remains transcendent. As the *Guide for Visitors* tells us: "Notable achievements of Jefferson's Presidency included the Louisiana Purchase, and the Lewis and Clark Expedition. In retirement he founded the University of Virginia. In addition to his public service Jefferson was an 'enthusiast' in many branches of applied science." The *Guide* further instructs us that Jefferson had very definite ideas about how he wanted to be remembered, how he wanted to control his public memory: "Despite Jefferson's astounding range of accomplishments, the epitaph he wrote for his tombstone included only: 'Author of the American Declaration of Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom and Father of the University of Virginia'" (Jefferson's *Monticello*).

Indeed Jefferson left a sheet of paper with a precise sketch of how he wanted his memorial to appear, the practical advice that it should be made of cheap stone to make it unattractive to grave robbers, and some rather pompous meditations on death and public memory (Fig. 8).[11] His monument was executed, exactly as he had planned it, and it is now housed in a sealed off space down beneath Mulberry Row, standing pristine on manicured grass. The visitor can only get so close to it, protected as it is, under lock and key, by a vast spiked cast-iron barricade and a padlocked black enameled gate emblazoned in gilt with his monogram (Fig. 9). Yet history is not so easily controlled and other monuments and memories cannot be buried forever. Jefferson developed a spatial and architectural solution for the contradiction that determined his life by ordering and physically constructing a three-dimensional model of that contradiction. That underground structure he labeled the "dependencies," viewed in dialectical tension with the celebrated heritage space above ground, has become his true monument.

There is no doubt Jefferson wanted to keep Sally out of his respectable, his public, life and that he would not have relished having the details of what he did with Sally in the privacy of her own, or rather his own, slave bedroom cut into the final verdict on his tombstone. And it can be, and is, argued that posterity should reiterate Jefferson's attitude. Sally's irrelevance to the Jeffersonian cultural inheritance could be summarized as follows. Jefferson had a slave mistress and fathered slave children with her, but he did this in a different moral world from ours, when a majority of other slave owners did the same thing. It is not his normal behavior as a planter, but his exceptional behavior as a Founding Father that should be the focus for study and memory. The memory of Sally Hemings is eccentric in relation to that of Jefferson's important work; it has no bearing on his real status as an Enlightenment genius and intellectual, a preeminent statesman, and the author of the vital document first proclaiming Ameri-

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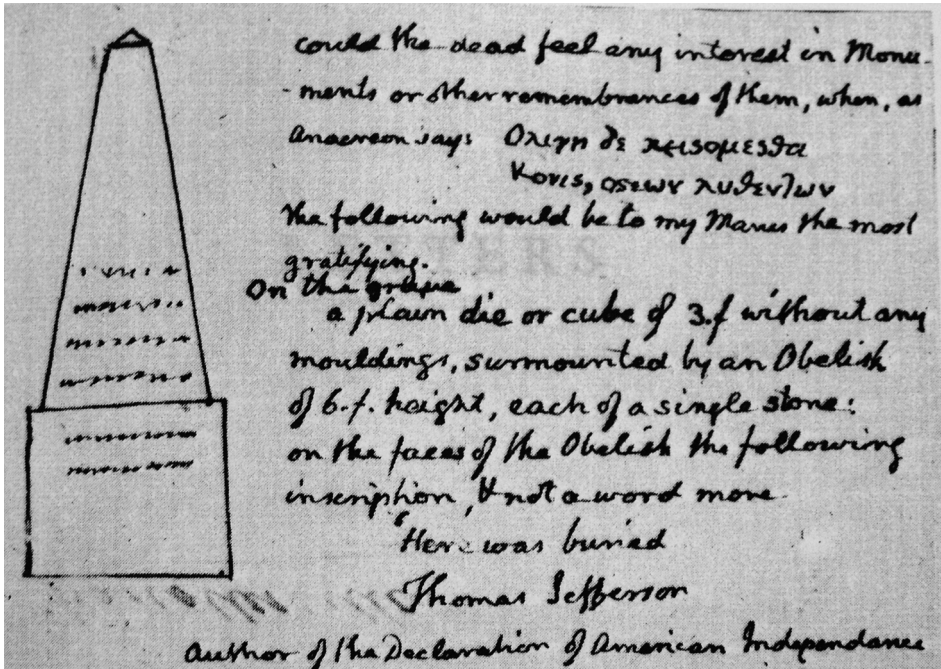11 A facsimile is reproduced in Jefferson's *Writings* 707.

Fig. 8: Jefferson's sketch for his tombstone epitaph (Jefferson, *Writings* 707)

Fig. 9: Jefferson's tombstone, Monticello (photo: Marcus Wood)

can liberty from colonial rule. Yet no matter how much Sally is marginalized by the heritage industries, one still needs to ask, in the case of Monticello, whether she has been granted the monument she deserves. The casual disavowal of Sally Hemings' presence at Monticello should not be regarded as a minor and slightly comic faux pas. If this "Restroom" is to be Sally's final monument, then surely it exists as a sinister indicator of some rather alarming tendencies within America's contemporary memory industries when it comes to memorializing the master and the slaves.

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"Some Unhappy Indians Trafficked by Force." Race, Status, and Work Discipline in mid-Nineteenth-Century Cuba[1]

EVELYN POWELL JENNINGS

Shortly after assuming the post of Captain General of Cuba in 1848, Federico Roncali, the Count of Alcoy, was petitioned by a group of private Cuban slave owners with a plan to import three to four hundred Indians and mestizos from the Yucatan peninsula (*yucatecos*) as workers for a proposed sugar mill. Alcoy investigated the potential benefits and problems of introducing this new group of people into Cuba by corresponding with the Spanish vice-consul in Yucatan. Alcoy asked about the *yucatecos'* "physical aptitude, love for work, customs and morality," their disposition to emigrate to Cuba, and what salaries might entice them to do so (*Colonos* f. 99). The vice-consul's reply satisfied him that the yucatecos could help alleviate the perennial scarcity of labor in Cuba. After petitioning for and receiving Queen Isabella II's approval, Alcoy then gave permission for the introduction of one hundred yucatecos in August 1848 (*Colonos* f. 121). Within a year, questions arose in several sites within the Spanish empire and beyond as to the status and treatment of these new workers.

To date we do not have a clear idea of how many people ultimately came to Cuba from Yucatan in the mid-nineteenth century; estimates range from 730 to 10,000 (Estrade 97). Even at the highest estimate, the number of yucatecos imported to Cuba was small in comparison to the hundreds of thousands of African slaves forcibly transported to the island in the nineteenth century. The number of yucatecos was also dwarfed by the introduction of over one hundred twenty thousand Chinese indentured laborers from 1847 to 1874[2] (Yun 19).

If, as the title of this essay suggests, the yucatecos were only a small group of unfortunates caught in the web of coercion in a slave society, what can a closer look at the history of their migration to Cuba tell us? One important insight to be

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1   This quote is from *Colonos* f. 48. All the English translations from the original Spanish text in this manuscript collection are my own.
2   Yun's Table 1.3 cites 138,156 Chinese as having embarked from China to Cuba from 1847-1873, and 121,810 who actually landed.

gleaned from this history is that for the various officials involved in their recruitment, transportation, and treatment the yucatecos embodied different, and sometimes conflicting, characteristics. Each observer viewed the yucatecos from a distinct perspective that was shaped by local realities as well as wider regional, imperial, or even global circumstances. In Mexican domestic politics of the late 1840s, some Yucatan natives were seen as savages in rebellion against Mexico's central government in the bloody conflict between whites and natives known as the Caste War of 1847-1855.[3] Official Mexican correspondence with Spanish functionaries described the yucatecos imported into Cuba as valued citizens who must be returned to their homeland. Mexican officials contended that the yucatecos had been unjustly coerced into emigrating and were virtually enslaved upon their arrival in Cuba. British officials, who had been frustrated by Spain's circumvention of treaties to end the transatlantic slave trade in Africans, also saw the yucatecos, for all practical purposes, as slaves, and tried to extend their interdiction efforts to include the Yucatan natives.

Spanish officials in Cuba, Yucatan, and Madrid, on the other hand, saw the yucatecos through a very different prism. These natives and mestizos were former imperial subjects about whose history, race, and culture officials claimed specific, historically grounded knowledge. For these officials the yucatecos were laborers who had to be integrated into the plantation slave system in Cuba; they also had to be integrated into a labor force that had expanded to include other coerced workers such as indentured laborers from China and the Canary Islands.

Thus, the official correspondence about the migration of this relatively small group of Yucatan Indians into Cuba reveals colonial attitudes, or an "imperial knowledge," based on a shared, sometimes contested understanding of race, slavery, and labor constructed within Spanish colonialism. This informal compendium of imperial knowledge encompassed this specific case, the wider society, and the historical moment.[4] Through the yucatecos' case we also get a glimpse of pressure points between empires and nations in the mid-nineteenth century, points that highlight emerging discourses of sovereignty, rights, and national identity.

For current scholarship on labor history an examination of even a marginal group of workers can help bridge the scholarly gap that sometimes exists between discourse analysis in cultural histories, on the one hand, and social and economic histories on the other. As Manuel Moreno Fraginals reminds us in his foundational work on Cuban slavery, *El ingenio* (i.e. the sugar-mill), "in Cuba, as in all

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3   Though the major battles of the Caste War had ended by 1855, groups of natives continued fighting into the early twentieth century.
4   This formulation of Spanish officials' attitudes as a collective 'imperial knowledge' is loosely based on Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher's notion of the 'official mind' elaborated in *Africa and the Victorians*. I am not claiming here, as Robinson and Gallagher did, that these Spanish officials shared a common social class, education, and experience, though this was true for some. Additionally, unlike Robinson and Gallagher's Whitehall policy makers, Spanish officials in the Caribbean had actual experience in colonial administration rather than "dealing with places they had never seen" (Robinson and Gallagher 21).

colonies, there existed an impassioned desire for a cheap and submissive work-force" (214). A closer look at the yucatecos' emigration to Cuba reveals that, whatever the other 'benefits' and perils of the racialized hierarchy created by African enslavement, white employers and colonial officials viewed the ability to discipline all laborers' behavior and mobility as central to their prosperity and notions of social order.

An additional insight from *El ingenio* is one that is not often emphasized in studies of Cuban slave society. In spite of the validity of seeing nineteenth-century Cuba as a society dominated by sugar production and slavery, what in fact existed was a "juxtaposition," or a "simultaneity," of both enslaved and wage labor (Moreno 213). Rebecca Scott's work on the transition to free labor in Cuba after 1860 further refines this point in her examination of the "variety of inter-mediate forms of labor organization," providing us with both "a striking exam-ple of flexibility within an economy still based primarily on slave labor" and "a basis for comparing 'racial' slavery with other voluntary and involuntary labor systems" (xiii). Scott also notes that analyzing the problems arising from the coexistence of various forms of labor organization helps us see the cracks and vulnerabilities of a slave system (xiii). Without such comparisons we are prone to emphasize only the rigidity of slave societies – their racialized caste hierar-chies, their resistance to innovation and modernization. Yet the yucatecos' case also reveals that as colonial officials tried to integrate new peoples into the Cuban workforce and society they invariably refracted their deliberations through the prism of Spanish colonialism and slavery.

Thus, I would like to argue for the value of investigating laborers and work sites at the margins of a slave society so that we do not lose sight of the fol-lowing points: Virtually everywhere across time and space slavery coexisted with other forms of labor. Asking how those forms of labor and those laborers may have interacted or coexisted remains crucial to understanding both the centers and the margins of slave societies. Such an investigation helps us understand why slavery endured for so long and why other forms of coercion expanded to take its place after abolition.

This essay probes the margins of Cuban slave society through the writings of Spanish officials in Cuba wrestling with the 'labor question' from the late 1830s to the early 1850s. Cuba had a long history as a slave society, but compared with other sugar islands of the Caribbean, its history of plantation agriculture under-pinned by enslaved labor came late and was relatively brief, though intense. For most of its colonial history the Cuban economy was based on imperial trade and service, with the Spanish state as the largest single slave owner on the island (Fuente 11-80; Kuethe; Jennings, "War"). Not until the second half of the eight-eenth century did Cuba become a slave society based on the private production of tropical export commodities such as sugar. Ironically, Cuba's first sugar boom (1790-1820) took place just as the Caribbean's slave-based plantation system was

being challenged by forces that would ultimately bring about its demise – slave rebellion and abolitionism.

State slavery was central to Cuba's development into the eighteenth century, but it has remained, with a few exceptions, at the margins of the island's slave historiography. A brief outline of its main characteristics will help illuminate the case of the yucatecos. One of the most important features of the state's ownership and employment of enslaved workers in Cuba was the wide variety in labor organization, status, and living and working conditions of state slaves. Some of the Kings' slaves performed the most difficult and dangerous tasks in state-owned mines, forts, and galleys. Others were relatively privileged members of military units or even municipal councilors of their own towns. Some were able to reduce their labor obligations by gradually purchasing their freedom over time (Fuente 151-7; Pérez Guzmán; Díaz; Jennings, "War" and "Paths"). In assigning laborers to specific tasks, the state had to balance the imperatives of colonial defense, public order, and costs. In a far-flung empire always strapped for cash, state officials used multiple methods of coercion and enticement to recruit workers; those workers then used openings within the system to lighten their burden when they could.

The Spanish state in Cuba constantly employed mixed groups of workers in virtually all settings of state-directed labor. In addition to royal slaves it hired privately owned slaves and free workers, sentenced local criminals to labor in public works, and imported prisoners from other parts of the empire. The state's constant resort to a wide spectrum of workers of differing statuses reflects one factor that came to affect private Cuban slave owners like those who petitioned Captain General Alcoy in 1848. As the transatlantic slave trade was progressively abolished, slaveholders continued to face a tight labor market for all kinds of work, a condition that kept wages high for free workers and made coercion almost mandatory in order to secure labor for disagreeable jobs such as cane cutting and sugar processing. When access to slaves was constrained by high prices, disruption of commerce through warfare, or, in the nineteenth century, by abolitionism, all employers looked for mechanisms beyond slavery to ensure a submissive labor force at low cost.

Spain's mainland American colonies had won their independence by 1825, so the next three decades were a period of profound upheaval for Spanish colonialism. With the loss of Peru and Mexico's mineral wealth Spain now depended more heavily on Cuba's slave-produced sugar exports to fund its much reduced empire. Anti-slave trade treaties with Great Britain in 1817 and 1835 had succeeded in disrupting the flow of African slaves to Cuba and raising prices. Spain abolished slavery in the metropole in 1836 and the British officially emancipated the slaves in their empire by 1838, causing Cuban slave owners to fear the eventual end of slavery on their island as well (Murray 68-88, Schmidt-Nowara 14-36). By the nineteenth century the state could not compete in the labor market as a major purchaser of slaves, so it began to experiment with contract labor to complete its largest public works project in the 1830s, the first railroad line in

Cuba. As the transatlantic slave trade continued to shrink, by the late 1840s private entrepreneurs were also compelled to recruit contract laborers from Yucatan and China.

The mid-nineteenth century was also a period of rising fears among whites of the social consequences of the first surge of sugar expansion that between 1791 and 1830 had brought almost three hundred fifty thousand African slaves to Cuba (*Trans-Atlantic slave trade database*). The white elite wrote grimly of the "Africanization" of Cuban society as the island shifted from having a majority of whites to a majority of people of color after 1792, and the state and private organizations proposed initiatives to increase white immigration to the island (Kiple 28). When a cholera epidemic swept the island in 1833, Mariano Ricafort, Captain General at the time, estimated that more than fifty-five thousand people of color had perished, and he reported that some rural estate owners had been ruined, having lost from one-third to two-thirds of their workers. He noted that not all the slaves lost to the epidemic could be replaced, even through illicit slave trading. Since Cuba was threatened on its eastern flank by the "bad example" of an independent Haiti, Ricafort considered a new wave of enslaved African migrants potentially more dangerous than ever. He was also horrified at the impending emancipation in Jamaica, a measure that would only produce "sad and mournful fruits" and "in a single moment destroy the work of three centuries." He felt that Cuba had to avoid the great preponderance of people of African descent in its own population that prevailed in Haiti and Jamaica (AHN, Estado, leg 6374, exp. 36, no. 1, August 27, 1833, Ricafort to King).

Responding to these concerns, Ricafort proposed the creation of a development committee (*Junta de Fomento*) to encourage white immigration to Cuba to relieve the shortage of laborers "without sacrificing the future security of the island" (AHN, Estado, leg 6374, exp. 36, no. 1, August 27, 1833, Ricafort to King). Another Spaniard familiar with Cuba opined that the recruitment of European families to populate the Cuban countryside would satisfy the need for labor in agriculture, help preserve the security of the interior, and ensure the well being of the State (AHN, Estado, leg. 8035, exp. 4, no. 24, Alejandro Oliván to Secretary of the Indies of the Royal Council, Sept. 24, 1835).[5] The issue of internal security was particularly acute for colonial officials concerned about the spread of independence agitation in Cuba and about slave rebellions – the Aponte Rebellion in 1812 and the Escalera Conspiracy of 1843 to mention only the best known (Childs; Paquette; García).

A brief look at the building in the 1830s of Cuba's first railroad line, the first in Latin America, will illustrate some evolving official attitudes about labor recruitment and deployment beyond the enslavement of Africans, attitudes that informed later efforts such as the importations of yucatecos and Chinese contract

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5   On Oliván's personal ties to Cuba's sugar planters and his studies on methods to improve sugar cultivation and processing in Europe and the Antilles, see González-Ripoll Navarro.

laborers in the late 1840s. Most of the resources necessary to realize such a large and complex railroad project could not be found in Cuba or even within the now diminished empire. The Cuban entrepreneurs who championed the rail line enterprise had to use the tremendous wealth of the sugar industry to secure financing, materials, technological expertise, and labor outside both the island and the Spanish empire.[6] Railroad work, like labor on sugar plantations, was arduous and largely unskilled labor, rarely attracting free laborers at the low wages generally offered. An 1837 report from the commission that oversaw the railroad building, published in the *Diario de la Habana*, lamented that in Cuba where "daily wages are so high and hands always scarce for the urgent work of agriculture, workers are not to be found." The commissioners despaired of finding qualified managerial and administrative personnel to run the new rail line as well (AHN, Ultramar, leg. 37, exp. 1 no. 33).

The state could no longer legally purchase African slaves directly from the transatlantic trade and had few squads of royal slaves available around the reduced empire to advance the project. However, there were other modes of coercion at its disposal not yet widely available to the private sector, particularly through the criminal justice system. The labor force for building the railroad came to include virtually every kind of forced and free laborer ever employed in the colony. From 1835 to 1840 the rail line's workforce comprised a varied collection of forced laborers. Some were slaves owned by or housed in the Havana Repository for runaway slaves – *emancipados* or captured fugitive slaves awaiting reclamation by their owners. Others were convicts – Cubans or criminals sentenced to the island from other parts of the empire. The composite group of forced laborers numbered about 500 per year over that five-year span (La Rosa Corzo 68). The emancipados were enslaved Africans freed by the terms of the anti-slave trade treaty signed by Spain and Great Britain in 1817. After 1820 any slaves illegally shipped to Spanish colonies could be seized by the British navy, then freed. In an example of creative coercion by the Spanish state, beginning in 1824 the emancipados were consigned to the Captain Generals of Cuba to be allocated to private individuals for training and Christianization rather than returned to Africa and possible re-enslavement (Murray 271-97, Roldán de Montaud 574-76, Martínez-Fernández 209-13).

Initially colonial officials in Cuba were not keen on having a group of freed slaves on the island whose liberty was "granted without any effort on their part." The Junta de Fomento presented a plan to assign the emancipados as a group to public works projects rather than allow them to be distributed to private individuals. The junta members' racism aroused somewhat contradictory fears that, because they were free, the emancipados would be beyond the discipline of masters, and, because their status was 'unearned', they would have no incentive to

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6   Several loans were obtained from England; engineers, materials, and some workers were imported from the United States. See Zanetti and García, and Moyano Bazzini.

learn the work habits that had allowed many freed people in Cuba to purchase their freedom. Junta members also worried that mixing with slaves and free workers of color would only expose emancipados to "the worst customs in their class." They would quickly learn "the insubordinate spirit of free people of color [...] and slaves would be envious of their [good] fortune" (AHN, Estado, leg. 8034, exp. 8, no. 1 and 2).

Hundreds of emancipados were, in fact, assigned to the railroad project but the demands of other public works, like road repair, and the 209 deaths among rail workers during this same period meant that another source of laborers was needed. Government officials searched for new alternatives to import free workers while retaining mechanisms of control. The Junta de Fomento reported that to avoid giving up the project altogether the importation of a contingent of Canary Islanders and another of Irish workers from the US "was indispensable," although the enterprise experienced heavy losses among these migrants due to "the rigors of the climate and the bad choice of workers" (AHN, Ultramar, leg. 37, exp. 1, no. 30, July 26, 1837).

The junta did concede that, in spite of the many problems, larger goals were served with this immigration scheme: "[T]he white population gained and the construction was assured of the largest and most difficult work that has been undertaken on the island." But numerous difficulties encountered with the program dampened official enthusiasm for employing these white migrants, at least for rail work (AHN, Ultramar, leg. 37, exp. 1, no. 30, July 26, 1837).

Although there had been discussion since at least the late eighteenth century of encouraging white immigration to Cuba, the junta's contracts were the first large-scale initiatives in that direction (Naranjo). The largest group of contract laborers, a total of 927, came from the Canary Islands. By the time the rail line opened two years later in 1837, 632 had completed their contracts, 240 had died or fled, 35 were incapacitated, 13 worked on other public projects, and only 7 remained working on the railroad (AHN, Ultramar, leg. 37, exp. 1, no. 29).

A report by project engineer Alfredo Cruger detailed the "sad and unforeseen" outbreaks of cholera that swept through the workforce, one in June 1836 and another wave of fevers that fall, which "caused the deaths of so many *Isleños* [Canary Islanders], debtors all for the advances that had been made to them" for their initial contracts. The junta lost both the labor and at least a portion of the money advanced for the passages for over 25 percent of the migrants from the Canaries through death or desertion (AHN, Ultramar, leg. 15, exp. 1, no. 4, 2). The junta was particularly concerned about desertion among the Canary Islanders since most would have been fluent in Spanish and could easily blend into the larger Hispano-Cuban population. As the junta reported, there were "sound reasons to fear that they might desert, favored by the multitude of persons of the same origin who were well established on the island" (Zanetti; García 29). In this case their whiteness and Hispanophone culture represented a double-edged sword for their employer.

The Canary Islanders were also not a reliably docile workforce, protesting miserable food and working conditions. In February 1837 a group of isleños working on the Bejucal line took their food allotment to the town mayor saying that it was "all black and so evil looking that no rational person could eat it" (quoted in Moreno 253). Their protest, however, landed them in jail. They were ultimately returned to the railroad work as *forzados* or convict laborers. Since the state was the main employer, it could use both soldiers and the criminal justice system to enforce labor discipline among the Canary Islander contract workers.

In the fall of 1835 the junta contracted with an agent in the US for a group of workers described as "Irish," although the group probably included other nationalities as well. The group consisted of 273 men and 8 women. Less is known of their fates than that of the Canary Islanders, but as with most groups of rail workers a portion succumbed to the difficult working conditions of the tropical climate. On cultural issues, while the junta complained of desertion among the Canary Islanders because they could speak Spanish, with the Irish they complained of their difficulties with that language and their overfondness for cane liquor (Marrero, vol. 11, 184). It is difficult to imagine what linguistic preparation among their laborers would have actually pleased the junta members. Similar to concerns about the emancipados, the key for junta officials was to keep the contract workers sufficiently isolated from the larger free population to guarantee obedience and discourage flight. But ultimately, in spite of all these official complaints, the first line of railroad was finished on time and under budget. White contract labor was, in this case, a successful supplement to other forms of labor coercion.

In addition to problems with desertion and resistance among the white migrant laborers assigned to railroad building in the 1830s and 1840s, colonial officials in Cuba worried that the clamor for independence that had severed ties with the mainland empire by 1825 could threaten the island as well. The enslaved population was not the only element inspiring fear of rebellion, and officials discussed the dangers of a growing white population. In the early 1840s, then Captain General Valdés reported to the crown that "it is very certain that without that great obstacle [slavery] the island of Cuba would no longer belong to the Metropolis." He contended that Cuban creoles knew this and therefore "clamored incessantly for the increase of the white population, because they know that the day that they come to have a superabundance of [whites], they would be able, without danger, to say an eternal good-bye to Spain" (Quoted in Naranjo 166).

The threat of separation was dampened, however, with the discovery and brutal repression of the Escalera conspiracy in 1843 and 1844 (Paquette); Spain's military presence in Cuba provided a bulwark against slave rebellion. The terror among Cuban whites inspired by the conspiracy also renewed proposals to foster the immigration of white farmers with their families, not a large contingent of single men as had been done with indentured laborers like the Irish and Canary Islanders in the previous decade (Naranjo 168). In the end, the social group push-

ing for greater Spanish immigration did not prosper in the late 1840s (176). The vision of "*Cuba pequeña*" (little Cuba) with a countryside and a culture based on a population of small, white farmers was subordinated to the needs of the sugar plantations for submissive, relatively low-cost labor. Funds were now invested in the immigration of yucatecos and Chinese laborers, whose contracts obligated them to accept wages well below the Cuban norm for both free wage earners and hired slaves (162).

To return to the incident that opened this essay, in 1848 when Captain General Alcoy solicited information on the characteristics of yucatecos as potential immigrants, it was the first time Spanish officials had entertained the idea of importing free Indians into Cuba. Indigenous slaves from Yucatan had been imported into Cuba in the sixteenth century (MacLeod 50); Indians and mestizos from New Spain, often referred to as *guachinangos*, were imported to the island as convict laborers for state projects for the next two hundred years (Jennings, "State Enslavement", 157-72; Pike). However, by the eighteenth century the convicts who survived their labors and completed their sentences were usually returned to Mexico and therefore did not become a permanent presence in the Cuban population. Cuba's indigenous peoples were severely reduced in numbers in the first fifty years of the 1500s, though small groups of Indians maintained a separate communal and cultural identity into the eighteenth century. By the 1820s, however, the office of the Protector of Indians had been officially abolished and the corporate designation of *pueblos de indios* was ended by the Spanish crown (Yaremko).

How then did colonial officials conceptualize the addition of a new group of indigenous people to a society overwhelmingly populated by Europeans, Africans, and their descendents? In his April 1848 letter, the Spanish vice-consul in Mérida, Yucatan, Julián González Gutiérrez, responded to Alcoy's query about the aptitudes and proclivities of the Yucatec Indians and mestizos with a long reflection on the necessity of knowing their "strange and peculiar customs" in order to take advantage of their good qualities. His assessments were on the whole quite positive, given the historical context in which they were written – Mexico's Caste War. He began with the point that was of most concern for Cuban employers anxious to find submissive workers; he found the yucatecos to be "mild and docile" of character with a sobriety that was without equal. Echoing characterizations of pre-capitalist peoples in many other contexts, the vice-consul noted that they lacked many of the necessities of life, but had virtually no ambition to better their circumstances, and therefore tended to "laziness in everything." Yet he thought they could be good workers, if "well directed," for even "the rudest and most painful tasks in the countryside," and they were especially well suited to work in tropical climates (*Colonos*, f. 100b).

On the question of the logistics of organizing the actual contracting and transporting of the yucatecos to Cuba, González Gutiérrez pointed out one significant problem – both the Indians and the mestizos of Yucatan were "very attached to

their homes, their practices, and their customs, and it will not be easy for them to decide on their own expatriation spontaneously." The only mechanism of coercion that the vice-consul offered was that some yucatecos who worked as servants had become indebted to their employers and therefore had to follow their masters if they left Mexico. Wages in Yucatan also tended to be low "in proportion to the misery of the country," which could make it difficult to establish binding contracts before the migration since Mexican law and custom dictated that a debt-bound servant could not leave his or her employer until the debt was paid in full, an uncommon occurrence given such low pay (*Colonos*, f. 101a-b). He thought the Mexican government, on the other hand, would not likely oppose yucatecos' emigration since these were free people, but the vice-consul claimed no specific knowledge on this question. González Gutiérrez ended his letter by specifically addressing the issue of introducing members of an ethnic group in rebellion in their own country into plantation society Cuba. He contended that these Indians would not be harmful because in Cuba the causes of the "unfortunate uprising that threatens to destroy" Yucatan did not exist. In their peninsular homeland Indians had both numerical superiority and the advantage of having preserved the tradition that "the country was theirs and that it was snatched from their ancestors by the white race that they now intend to exterminate." As a small minority in Cuba, he implied, the yucatecos would not exhibit such a sense of injustice and resistance (*Colonos* f. 101b-102a).

Later in April 1848 Alcoy wrote to Madrid to ask for further instructions from the crown. He had received word that the Yucatan's indigenous rebels were having greater military success than many had predicted, prompting requests from white families there to migrate to Cuba with their indigenous servants if those servants could remain under the same debt contracts as in Mexico. Alcoy was loathe to allow Indians captured in war by the Mexican government to enter Cuba without approval from Spain; on the other hand, he thought the Indian servants would help maintain "a certain equilibrium between the different *castas* of the island's inhabitants" and "the introduction of this new element [could] neutralize the tendencies of the rest" (*Colonos* f. 103b-104b). In spite of Alcoy's concerns, in early 1849 the Mexican Governor of Yucatan, Miguel Barbachano, began selling captured Yucatec Maya rebels to Cuban planters at 25 pesos per head. He justified the sale on the one hand as saving the rebels from execution, and, on the other hand, because the state of Yucatan needed money to continue the fight against them. In March 1849 Barbachano shipped 140 yucatecos to Havana and another 195 in mid-May (Reed 142).

As the yucatecos began to arrive, Captain General Alcoy was forced to confront the increasing complexities of introducing new peoples into Cuba. In a long letter to the Minister of Governance in Madrid in April 1849, he proposed an official decree that would establish rules for disciplining both the Chinese and Yucatec contract laborers on the island. The Captain General opened by noting that from his first days in office he had been peppered with complaints from land-

owners about the Chinese workers brought to Cuba by the Junta de Fomento. The Chinese were characterized as indolent, insubordinate, and uncommonly ferocious. On some estates they resisted work so openly that they set a pernicious example for the black slaves. On other estates they stole and fled, "and on no estate are they useful" (*Colonos* f. 15). Alcoy worried that landowners lacked the means to compel the Chinese to work and complained that "this is just what would happen with a race that is neither black nor white" (*Colonos* f. 16).

His characterization of their color and status reveals a host of embedded attitudes about race, miscegenation, and labor when he opined that the Chinese were difficult "due to a color more mulish to dusky [*de azemila a la parda*] that is in the same civil position here as the black [race] because all are understood in the general denomination of people of color" (*Colonos* f. 16). The layerings of inferiority implied in his language are stunning. The taint of dark skin color is overlaid with the unnaturalness of "mulish" racial mixture or intermediacy. Their indenture contracts with legal constraints akin to slavery also marked the Chinese as "people of color." Interestingly, the promoters of the initial importation of Chinese workers had trumpeted their relative 'whiteness' as a counterweight to the perceived Africanization of Cuba in the first half of the nineteenth century, and until the US occupation of the island in 1899, the Cuban censuses categorized the Chinese as white (*Noticias estadísticas* 1). Most likely for Alcoy and others it was the fierce resistance of the Chinese to their treatment as virtual slaves that 'darkened' the official estimations of their value as workers. In his April 1848 letter, Alcoy had expressed concern to the Minister of Governance that similar problems would arise with the yucatecos unless measures were taken to ensure their discipline in Cuba.

Because Spanish colonial officials could draw on centuries of experience in interactions with Amerindians, Alcoy made sweeping generalizations about their 'Indianness' based on imperial history and current circumstances. Echoing the words of the Yucatan vice-consul, Alcoy characterized the Yucatan Indian as "indolent and negligent of character, humble and subordinate when he has a superior who dominates him, but insubordinate and cruel when he that directs him shows signs of impotence." The Captain General pointed to the ongoing war in Yucatan, in which the indigenous combatants showed much "savagery," as a continuation of patterns of hostility displayed by colonized populations toward colonial representatives of non-indigenous races. "Such was the Indian of the conquest when the New World was just discovered[,] such is he now without having modified his disposition over the course of more than three hundred years." Because they were accustomed to agricultural work and to the climate, Alcoy felt the yucatecos could be useful in Cuba, but only if they were dispersed throughout the countryside in manageable numbers (*Colonos* f.17).

Given the Spanish empire's long history with Amerindians, Alcoy did not feel the need to comment on the yucatecos' skin color, though, like the Chinese, they were classified in Cuban censuses as white rather than people of color. As a con-

quered people, Alcoy clearly considered the Indians subordinate and regarded them as still barbaric. These perceptions were rooted in an 'imperial knowledge' of Indians and their essential characteristics, information that had been developed in areas of the Spanish empire with larger indigenous populations.

In spite of the differences in the importations of and responses to the Chinese and Yucatec contract workers, Alcoy proposed the same remedy for dealing with them. The crucial issue was regulating their work, behavior, and mobility, all of which could be addressed with a set of rules outlining the obligations of masters and their workers and the punishments for infractions. Though his proposed regulations for Chinese and Yucatec workers in Cuba claimed to respect their contracts and "recognize always the quality of free man of either the Asiatic or the Indian," Alcoy judged it necessary to explicitly permit the use of the tools of slavery to control them – the whip, shackles, and the stocks. He contended that none of these punishments qualified as mistreatment, but without them it would be impossible to keep the laborers at their work since "it was not the most hardworking and temperate people that chose to leave their country" (*Colonos* f. 16).

Queen Isabella II agreed with Alcoy's special set of regulations for Chinese and yucatecos in Cuba because without them "the subordination of the African race so indispensable for the tranquility of that Island would be altered" (*Colonos* f. 33). Officials on the island and in Madrid understood that their biggest challenge was controlling the hundreds of thousands of African and African-descended slaves in the population. No group of workers of whatever status or race could be allowed to disrupt the slave regime.

Despite crown approval of the special regulations for the Chinese and yucatecos, some voices protested even from within the Spanish empire. Francisco Duran y Cuerbo, the *fiscal* (equivalent to attorney general) of the royal court of appeals in Cuba, contended that special treatment, and particularly punishment of the two groups of workers, presented problems, principally because these people were "foreigners of friendly nations" (*Colonos* F. 19). The *fiscal* noted that Mexico, in particular, was now a sovereign nation whether the crown had chosen to recognize its independence or not. According to Duran, both the Chinese and the Yucatan natives had freely entered into contracts for a given length of time and were, therefore, no different than other contract workers such as the Canary Islanders of the 1830s. Thus, the *fiscal* concluded, they could not be subject to special rules nor "could another status [*cáracter*] be attributed to them (be their race European or Indian) than that of foreigners that live in a friendly country" (*Colonos* f. 19). The crown and Captain General Alcoy ultimately disagreed and the special regulations remained in place (*Colonos* f. 33).

Protests from outside the Spanish empire also multiplied. By the early 1850s some military officials in Mexico and enterprising merchants in Cuba were accused of collusion in trafficking in yucatecos and subjecting them to virtual slavery. One Francisco Marty was accused by the British government of conspiring with a Yucatec native to purchase captured Indians on the coast of Belize for

transportation to Cuba as workers and domestic servants. The British protested that such actions contravened the 1817 and 1835 anti-slave trade treaties between Spain and Great Britain. Captain General Alcoy agreed to carry out an investigation, though he contended that the treaties referred only to Africans traded as slaves. He said the anti-slave trade treaties could not be applied to the yucatecos because Spain had never considered Indians as slaves, though this was not strictly true (*Colonos* f. 36-37; Reed 183). The Spanish empire had abolished Indian slavery in the 1540s, except in cases of 'cannibalism' and 'just war', but in practice Indian slaves existed in small numbers in the empire into the eighteenth century (Weber 83-4, 234-41).

As the wrangle with the British dragged on, a letter from the president of the council of ministers in Madrid to the British *chargé d'affaires* in 1853 struck a defiant note in reviewing the official Spanish readings of the treaties as applying only to Africans. In a section that reveals the rancor many Spanish officials held toward British abolitionism, the council president also sarcastically chided the English for applying a double standard and ignoring the resort to indentured servitude in their own empire:

> The government you represent is too equitable and enlightened to not understand that it has the same and legitimate right to import to the English overseas possessions, black Africans as laborers [*colonos*], establishing an internal regimen for the management of them that it has judged convenient, without any foreign government thinking to meddle even indirectly in an internal question of Great Britain. (*Colonos* f. 94)

The Spanish council of ministers also rejected the Mexican request to, from 1849 onward, return to Mexico all yucatecos who had been allowed onto the island without a passport from the Mexican Ministry of External affairs. In June 1849, an internal letter from the Spanish secretary of state Pedro Pidal to the captain general of Cuba expressed surprise that the Mexican government was not pleased to rid itself of a troublesome population that had so vexed the new republic. Pidal concluded that the Mexican consul in Cuba had been acting against the best interests of his government by lodging a protest "in so far as these Indians that are a dismal element for Yucatan can be useful [in Cuba], without the necessity of using hard means of repression on them that would perhaps have been indispensible" if they continued to live in "their own country" (*Colonos* f. 148).

An investigation was launched, however, and 47 of the yucatecos working for Francisco Marty were seized by Havana authorities (*Colonos* f. 55). In his defense, Marty employed arguments with deep roots in the fraught history of Spanish colonialism and enslavement. His first line of argument was that the Havana mayor who brought charges against him had exceeded his authority because Marty enjoyed the special *fueros* (legal privileges) of the Spanish navy and could only be tried in their courts (*Colonos* f. 44-45). Marty also said that the Indians were all free, had come willingly, and worked for a salary. He then pro-

vided a humanitarian rationale, contending that some of the Indians were, in fact, prisoners who would have been shot as insurrectionists had he not brought them to Cuba. Marty himself never admitted purchasing the Indians from Mexican army officers as his detractors claimed, but his resort to this justification called on legitimations used for millennia to cast servitude for war captives as an end preferable to execution. Prosecutors, on the other hand, pointed to the Indians' clandestine entry into Cuba and their miserable wages to support their argument that the yucatecos were slaves in all but name (*Colonos* f. 55).

Ultimately, the Spanish government came to a compromise. Marty was obliged to pay for the return passage to Yucatan for 21 of 36 yucatecos who, officials determined, had been "stolen" from their homeland. But the council of ministers refused to change the status of or suspend the contracts of all the Indians in Cuba because most had been obtained legally with the permission of the governor of Yucatan, Barbachano. The council's president cast the problem as one of the new Republic of Mexico not controlling its own citizens; if the Yucatan governor had exceeded his authority, that was an internal matter. The Mexican government would have to establish rules and prevent the export of any people, even those it deemed inconvenient (*Colonos* f. 148). Still, the Spanish government did agree in the future to prevent the entrance of any Yucatec native into Cuba without a valid Mexican passport as a "testimony of friendly deference toward the [government] of Mexico and its representative" (*Colonos* ff. 95-98).

Conclusion

The Spanish government's wrangles with Mexico and Great Britain over the legitimacy of the yucatecos' importation into Cuba highlight the tensions brought about by Spain's declining status as an imperial power in a moment when the economic importance of its remaining colonies was rising. Spanish officials in Madrid and Cuba were desperate to preserve the plantation regime and its revenue without disrupting the colonial bond to the island. Thus, Spain reluctantly recognized a measure of Mexican sovereignty over its citizens, even those in rebellion who were taken as prisoners of war.

Spain had also been forced to accept British interdiction of the African slave trade to Cuba, but argued vigorously about the distinctions of status between contracted Indians and enslaved Africans in order to frustrate Britain's attempts to extend its power over Cuba's access to other forms of coerced labor. In these debates, it was the yucatecos' status as free people that was most important. Ironically, it was also their supposed freedom to sign contracts that was at the heart of Francisco Marty's defense against charges of enslavement in his clandestine trade in Yucatan Indians.

Official discourses on the yucatecos' freedom also surrounded attempts to curtail virtually every aspect of that freedom beyond the power to contract them-

selves to labor for others. The special regulations approved by the Queen to discipline Yucatan Indians and Chinese laborers gave lip service to their freedom in one breath and imposed the restraints and punishments meted out to slaves with the next. Here the language of freedom was a ruse to deny to an external audience charges of Indian enslavement while maintaining the work discipline of slavery in practice on the island.

The many contradictions in the official characterizations of the yucatecos detailed in this essay foreground many of the dilemmas of a society that rapidly consolidated a plantation slave regime just as the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, and slavery itself in some parts of the Americas, signaled the institution's eventual end. Cuban officials worried constantly about internal security and the threat posed by any group that might ignite rebellion among the island's slaves. Hence, the yucatecos were depicted as docile and malleable workers for Cuba compared to their 'savage' compatriots engaged in a race war against whites in Yucatan, and were considered preferable to the 'indolent', 'insubordinate', and 'uncommonly ferocious' Chinese indentured workers.

The common thread in all this official discourse on various laborers in Cuba is what one historian has called the "original sin" of Spanish imperialism in the Americas – conquest and slavery (Chasteen 53). The characterizations of the yucatecos flowed from 'imperial knowledge' about their alleged inferiority based on those two notions. To Spanish officials, in spite of their rebellion at home, the Yucatan Indians imported to Cuba were the descendents of a defeated people whose inferiority was based both on their subjugation and the proximity of their status to that of slaves. The argument that they were now citizens of another sovereign power carried weight only in diplomatic correspondence.

A final point bears mentioning after this examination of discourses and debates about the status of yucatecos in Cuba. Unfortunately, these discussions tell us little about the people themselves or the lives they lived in Cuba. Studies of the miserable conditions endured by the entire spectrum of people who worked in Cuban plantations suggest that arguments concerning status had less bearing on their lived experience than the reams of paper generated by colonial bureaucrats would indicate. What officials and employers required was hard work and submission. All ideas about race, ethnicity, character, and status were refracted through the prism of those two demands. If the yucatecos could help 'balance' a society now 'overwhelmed' with Africans and their descendents, then they could be almost white. When it served to further the struggles of administrators, land- and business owners for economic and political power in the international arena, then the yucatecos were considered to be free citizens who either chose their current fate or were victims of unscrupulous entrepreneurs. But if, like any unhappy workers, they were unruly and resistant, then they needed to be restrained and punished like slaves.

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Servitude in the Shadow of Slavery? Towards a Relational Account of Indenture[1]

Nalini Mohabir

Contemporary Reflections on Indenture

George Lamming, in his introduction to Walter Rodney's posthumously published book, *The History of Guyana's Working People* (1981), noted that history is, foremost, an ordering and sequencing of past events (xvii). It is a selection of facts woven together. The narrative thread can be an "active part of the consciousness of an uncertified mass of ordinary people, and […] could be used by all as an instrument of social change" (Lamming, "Foreword" xvii). The historical geographies of slavery and indentureship in the Caribbean have been deeply intertwined, not only for chronological and causal reasons, but also pressed into serving complicated humanitarian, economic, social, and political arguments, at home and abroad. From the beginning of indentureship, an analysis of the experiences of 'bound coolies' in the Caribbean (i.e., indentured Asian plantation workers valued as cheap and servile labor for the tropics) took place in the shadow of critical discourse on slavery. By grounding this essay in the ways that Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean histories and geographies have influenced each other, this essay strives to complicate neat divisions between the two.

As a historical geographer, I am interested in the ways that the colonial past is remembered and represented, as well as its implications for the present (Nash and Graham 2). This essay looks at indentureship and its dialogic relationship to the institution of slavery within Guyana, and asks how and why these histories have become linked or distanced. I begin with a look at a contemporary popular debate about the place of indentureship in relation to slavery, then I provide a general descriptive background of the shifts from unfree to 'free' labor

regimes in the Caribbean. Subsequently, I position the complications and debates within a framework that moves away from binaries towards a relational account. In the final section, I suggest that shifts in our understanding might contribute to a transformative space in recognition of the entangled experiences of indenture to slavery. My underlying aims are to call attention to the fluidity of temporal divides in indenture historiography, that is Emancipation (of enslaved Africans) and Arrival (of indentured Indian labor) and to disrupt dominant conceptual frameworks bound to the perimeters of race and binary relations.

Despite Hugh Tinker's ground-breaking work *A New System of Slavery* (1974), indentureship remains a relatively little-known chapter of labor history located prior to, or between, gross unfreedoms of forced movement and the celebratory freedom of a mobile work force 'liberated' by the free-market. By indentureship I refer to a specific form of involuntary migrant labor, confined and compelled by contract to labor on sugar plantations for a specified time period. Such bondage contracts continue to be relevant to more 'modern forms of unfree labour, as Basok observes (in relation to present-day agricultural labor) contractual migrant labor is "structurally only necessary in those economic sectors whose viability hinges on the employment of workers who are *unfree*" (4; emphasis in original). Miles defines unfree workers as those incapable of circulating freely in the labor market due to political and legal chains of restraint (32-3). These criteria equally applied to indentureship, where unfree labor conveyed workers' powerlessness to refuse employers' demands (the harvest and processing of sugar cane is highly time-sensitive), as well as to particular mechanisms of control inherent in colonially supervised recruitment processes, and a pre-existing vulnerability. These were exacerbated by colonial regimes which compelled individuals to accept their "terms of unfreedom" (Basok 4). Such notions of free and unfree labor draw attention to the continuum of domination that operated within, and adapted to, 'progressive' changes regulating plantation settings.

Indentured laborers were shipped to plantation colonies around the world, including Fiji, Ceylon, Mauritius, and the Caribbean. Though indentured laborers were diverse in origins (Portuguese, Chinese, Maltese, African, etc.), the majority of indentured laborers in the Caribbean were Indian.[2] Sugar colonies such as Trinidad and Jamaica received Indian indentured laborers, as did the smaller islands like St. Lucia, Nevis, St. Vincent and Grenada (Ramdin 16; 175). However, of all the British Caribbean countries to import Indian indentured labor, British Guiana (now Guyana) had the longest history (eighty years), and, some say, the most brutal (Naipaul 118).

Culturally, Guyana is a Caribbean country, although it is situated on the mainland of South America. It is populated mostly by descendants of the enslaved

2 "Indian" in this context broadly refers to indentured individuals with ancestral roots in areas controlled by British India or within its sphere of influence, including Afghanistan and Nepal; the majority of individuals were recruited from Bhojpuri speaking districts, and to a lesser extent Awadhi, Urdu, Tamil and Telegu speaking areas.

and indentured, in addition to a significant indigenous population. The specter of unfree labor continues to haunt Guyana today, in an ongoing uneasiness that simmers beneath the surface of the two largest ethnic groups, Indo- and Afro-Guyanese. Resulting in political antagonism and sporadic eruptions of violence,[3] the origins of this tension can be traced back to the colonial period, during which the rioters' respective ancestors were indentured or enslaved. Guyana provides a prime example of postcolonial tensions which have their roots in indentureship (Castles and Miller 54).

At first glance, exploring links between slavery and indenture may not seem to appear grounds for novel insight, as the exploitative relationship of capitalism to labor has long been established, most notably by Karl Marx, who in *Grundrisse* (1858) wrote of the historical interdependence between slave and wage labor (891).[4] His assertions were later expounded by Eric Williams whose path-breaking thesis in *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944) documented the impact of the changing nature of capitalism on the abolition of slavery.[5] Nearly thirty years later, the segregated and regimented plantation system with its accompanying disciplinary structures was strikingly elaborated by George Beckford, who wrote: "[The plantation] binds everyone in its embrace to the one task of executing the will of its owner or owners. And because it is omnipotent and omnipresent in the lives of those living within its confines, it is also a total social institution" (8). The totalizing motivation of its absentee metropolitan owners was to accumulate a profit through the incorporation of African and Asian labor into the plantation system. What is *not* controversial in the literature is the established relationship of enslaved and indentured labor as historically contingent tools to the production of capital and industry which supported European standards of consumption. What *remains* controversial, however, is the complicated shadow which slavery casts upon indenture.

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3   For example, in 2008 the villages of Lusignan and Bartica were the target of a murderous rampage, which, according to mainstream news reports, was a result of violent crime and racial strife. In addition, election time tends to bring a surge in ethnically targeted violence.

4   "[W]age labour arises out of the dissolution of slavery and serfdom [...] and, in its adequate, epoch-making form, the form which takes possession of the entire social being of labour, out of the decline and fall of the guild economy, of the system of Estates, of labour and income in kind, of industry carried on as rural subsidiary occupation, of small-scale feudal agriculture etc. In all these real historic transitions, wage labour appears as the dissolution, the annihilation of relations in which labour was fixed on all sides [...]" (Marx 891).

5   Though Williams' thesis still holds sway particularly among Caribbeanists, the work of Seymour Drescher (2002) challenges the economic determinism of Williams' argument to assert the powerful convergence of European humanitarian, legal, philosophical and social science discourses in the achievement of Emancipation. However, as Dubois suggests, we also need to "pluralize" our understanding of the period, to include ideas and actions of the enslaved, and challenge the separate spheres of elite "Western thought" and the intellectual life of slaves (3). For a discussion of this 'Abolition/Emancipation' debate, see the introduction to this volume (section "*Capitalism and Slavery* Revisited: The Stakes of the 'Abolition/Emancipation Debate'")

As I have experienced, the history of indentureship is largely absent from a collective British consciousness. To situate my social location, I should say that this essay originates, in part, from my struggle to answer a question asked not infrequently of me as an Indo-Caribbean-Canadian overseas researcher in Britain: "Do you have family in India?" It is a question posed in contrast to my claims of Indo-*Caribbean*-ness, as I explain my own roots and research interests in indentured Indian labor in the Caribbean. Seemingly innocuous, this pervasive question underlines a perceived primordial tether on the present, even though for Indo-Caribbeans, India is a land beyond memory. It also suggests that the history of Indian migration is forgotten, or at least widely understood as a recent phenomenon, divorced from a long colonial past. In other words, a contemporary reading of Indian migration collapses time-space and allows the interlocutor to assume close connections between India and its diaspora, to the neglect of other affinities. It also implies a circularity of family connections suggestive of an untroubled voluntary immigration. I offer this reflection, not simply to be transparent about my own position relative to the discourse, but because I believe the deceptively simple act of naming (one's position, one's agency, one's interjection) can help open up space for dialogue.

In contrast to Britain, the past does not remain in the past in Guyana. In May 2009, a flurry of polemic letters to *Stabroek News* and *Kaiteur News* (independent Guyanese dailies) surfaced, questioning comparisons between slavery and indenture. Letters debating the relationship of (Indian) indentureship to (African) enslavement typically surface during the month of May, precipitated by Arrival Day (May 5th). Arrival Day, a recently declared official holiday (as of 2005) that commemorates the sub-continental presence in Guyana, is often contrasted to Emancipation Day. This suggestive opposition highlights a residual tension between two ethnic groups regarding historical precedence while at the same time neglecting the Amerindian community and overlooking European arrival (Jayaram 131). Letters on this particular occasion indicate, as Guyanese historian Winston McGowan pointed out, that the relationship of indentureship to slavery remains a controversial outgrowth of colonial 'divide and rule' policies.[6] These letters to newspapers indicate that the topic at hand is not only of academic interest, but also of particular contemporary social resonance in the Caribbean.

On 11 May 2009, Vishnu Bisram sparked a debate. He wrote a letter following the "celebr[ation] of Indian Arrival" which outlined his perspective on the shared similarities between slavery and indentureship: colonial victimization by sugar interests; a lengthy voyage accompanied by mortality; and wretched liv-

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6   Divide and rule policies (an antecedent of 'labor competition' arguments) minimized opportunities for interaction or co-operation due to geographic separation and hiring practices, fostered a sense that the successes of one ethnic group depended on the degradation of another, and contained possibilities of solidarity across divides. Without this important contextualization, questions might be framed in terms of cultural persistence, i.e., "do Asians create their own difficulties by way of life and remaining separate?" (See Tinker, *Banyan* 138)

ing conditions on the plantation (see Appendix 1). His stated egalitarian impulse was so that "the two major races should appreciate each other's history and learn to respect each other and live in harmony." In his efforts to accommodate slavery and indenture under a singular narrative, he sloppily and insensitively applied the term "recruitment" to slavery (clearly, those forced to board ships in iron chains were *not* recruited), as well as indenture. His letter also focused on suffering under indentureship and its instances of likeness to slavery, which readers understood as implying a case for equivalence. The responses to Bisram's letter were numerous and swift, closing with an editorial on 31 May 2009.

All respondents strongly took issue with any direct equation of indentureship to slavery. They detailed the brutality, magnitude and scale of slavery which defied any such comparison, and scolded Bisram for diluting the exceptional history of slavery. Robin Williams criticized Bisram for writing a revisionist history, stating that "while induced, one [form of labor] was voluntary while the other was absolutely involuntary," thus translating the difference between slavery and indenture into a binary opposition. Bisram was further accused by political scientist Randy Persaud of circulating an Indo-nationalist perspective, i.e., an idyllic vision of life in India prior to indentureship in Guyana. Secondly, Persaud located the discursive space of comparisons between slavery and indenture within the ideological field of anti-indenture activism, making an explicit link between political goals and the use of comparisons. Thirdly, Persaud warned against the slippage of "empirical documentation of hardship" under indenture into a "historical presentism" in search of political valence. Hamilton Green (the mayor of Georgetown) wrote in to say that the use of similes was dangerous in this case, as for most people "like" infers "the same." Furthermore, Green cited the relentless violence of slavery, and stressed Emancipation as a watershed shift in humanitarian consciousness. He raised these points to suggest that indenture and slavery are not comparable across space or time, and to accuse Bisram of a form of epistemic violence. Winston McGowan and Michael Maxwell admonished Bisram's emphasis on the similarities but not the "more striking" differences between indenture and slavery. Though in broad agreement with other respondents, Kowlasar Misir stretched speculation to question whether it was in the realm of possibility that indentured Indians were auctioned like slaves, referring to de-contextualized (and now 'globalized') images on the website of the recent BBC documentary *Coolies: How Britain Reinvented Slavery*. Misir was the only one who ventured to make a case for looking at indenture alongside slavery: "It would be absurd to equate slavery with indentureship; at the same time, it is equally prejudicial to dismiss the parallels that do exist." However, Persaud, in a second letter, cautioned Misir against falling into "the epistemology of suffering framework" which dominates historiography in the Caribbean, and underscores 'blood, sweat, and tears' as master tropes which dictate belonging to the region. In closing, the editorial, entitled "Hijacking history," summarized the differences between slavery and indentureship and added, "one suspects that [in raising the case for similarity] it is a polit-

ical point which is being made, and not a historical one." Touching on Persaud's previous point, the editorial asked, "[does] greater suffering somehow confe[r] a moral advantage?" and ends with the firm rejoinder of distinguished Guyanese elder, Eusi Kwayana, that "we should not be in competition over suffering."

Individual perspectives in the letters point to contested and/or fractured narratives that lie beneath the surface of an elusive shared Guyanese national history and raise questions about how experiences of slavery and indenture are understood, in convergence and conflict with one another. The debate followed three major fault lines: 1) politics constructing the veracity and thus power of history; 2) questions over the qualitative nature of suffering implied in contested victimhood; and 3) accusations of epistemic violence in relation to characterizations of the voluntary/involuntary nature of labor. There appears to be a drive to position discourse as either for or against such comparisons, rather than negotiating the space in between. As David Scott explained, narratives always occur within particular time, place, and circumstances that speak to a set of issues in the present as much as they plot the past (the "problem-space"). In an interview with Stuart Hall, Scott suggests that "histories of the past ought to be interventions in the present, strategic interrogations of the present's norms as a way of helping us to glimpse the possibilities for an alternative future" (Hall, "David Scott"). The debates in the newspapers therefore gesture not only towards the lasting scars of the plantation, outside of which present-day dynamics in Guyana cannot be fully comprehended. The disputes also suggest the need to understand various contributing viewpoints or, at the very least, to expand the dialogue around the space in which lives are tied together.

Troubling the Binary

Although Afro- and Indo-Caribbean diasporas have been separate areas of study due to different circumstances of arrival, I suggest that to foreground difference in the conception of Guyana's historical geographies neglects significant overlaps. From the beginning of Indian indentureship in Guyana (5 May 1838) and the ending of African 'apprenticeship' (1 August 1838), both groups shared an inter-connected "history for the future" in Guyana.[7] Therefore, this section looks at indenture practice, moving away from a rigid focus on sameness or difference (as found in the newspaper letters), towards a fluid framework of complex inter-relatedness.

7   Jocelyn Létourneau makes the case that history can stop us from seeing "passages into the future." In relation to Quebec (Canada's only province with French as the sole official language), Létourneau argues that how we narrate the past (i.e. how the past is represented) has implications for the future. Narrations and representations of the past build collective identity, through living stories (shared in space and time). If these narratives remain centred on victimization (i.e., neglecting stories of unity), we might omit the potentiality of a "history [and geography] for the future" (Létourneau 28).

For more than half of (British) Guyana's written history (from the seventeenth century onwards) the Dutch laid claim to the colonies of Essequibo, Demerara, and Berbice (with fleeting possession by the French). Ceded to the British in 1814, the separate colonies merged to form British Guiana in 1831. Glimpses of the Dutch presence echo in colonial-era 'kokers' (sluices) which dot this land below the sea (level). The dangers of high tide are metonymic for the work of enslaved African labor, first shipped to Guyana in the seventeenth century. The exertion of removing submerged forests, digging canals, and building a defense against the sea – in other words, gaining control over the land – fell on the shoulders of enslaved Africans whose labor transformed swamps into agricultural land. As Rodney emphasized, "[t]his meant that slaves moved 100 million tons of heavy, water-logged clay with shovel in hand, while enduring conditions of perpetual mud and water" (2-3).

"The best negroes," i.e., those deemed to have strength to endure such cruel conditions were known as "pieces d'India" by slave traders (Rodway 158). This phrase hints at the complicated history of intertwined colonial narratives which linked Africa, India, and the Caribbean. From colonial days, the Caribbean was known as the 'West Indies' arising from Christopher Columbus' mistaken assumption that he had found a western maritime route to the (East) Indies. East Indies, West Indies, Amerindians – all indicate diverse, shifting, and inter-related perspectives on what and who comprised 'the Indies'. European notions of a vast and vague 'Indies' were embedded in long-held geographic distinctions. Since Ptolemy, Europeans distinguished between "India intra gangem – the Indies this (i.e., Europe's) side of the Ganges delta" (which sometimes extended to Africa, and was malleable enough to include 'repeating islands' in the Americas) – "and India extra gangem – India beyond the Ganges" (which included another Indies archipelago, that of Southeast Asia) (Ballantyne 104; Gomez 165). Additionally, naming strategies reinforced spaces of association and dislocation – for example Amsterdam and *New* Amsterdam, *Plantation* Wales, *East* Indian and *West* Indian – carving space into axes most relevant to Europe, and creating metaphorical cartographies of vertical order, and horizontal separation.

This historical process of naming outer-European space was far from innocuous and inconsequential. As Ali Mazrui declared, geography is the mother of history, meaning that geography was more than mapping spaces (424). Early geographical theories were also an art: musings on the nature of place, as well the effects of place on the character of inhabitants – assumptions which eventually shaped colonial history. For example, the prevailing logic of the time held that the tropics contained the promise of abundant riches. European accounts inscribed the tropical onto India, Africa and the West Indies; the latter, 'discovered' by Columbus, was notably not only west, but south of Europe, i.e., in a tropical zone (Gomez xiii, 175). Dichotomies between temperate and tropical zones (the former supposedly morally superior and civilized within a hierarchy of nations, the latter

'naturally placed' in a subordinate role) became well-rehearsed justifications for colonial exploitation.

The meaning of the West Indies (on the basis of tropical latitude) was interpreted by Columbus to mean a place which, due to the strength of the sun, bore incalculable amounts of gold (Gomez 40). Legendary gold is also associated with Guyana, otherwise known as the fabled location of the gilded city of El Dorado, made famous by Sir Walter Raleigh's ill-fated expedition. Invoking past fantasies of gold, and new dreams of Demerara golden sugar, historian Anthony Trollope in 1859 summed up Guyana's situation: "What a land then, is this of British Guiana flowing with milk and honey – with sugar and rum […] so that the world might have sugar to its tea" (173-74).

Plantation owners invested considerable amounts of money, and lives, into large-scale sugar production to meet the cravings of their overseas market. Maximizing their profits (and thereby limiting wealth acquisition of others) required a compulsory labor force, planters argued. Guyana yielded 'virgin' land, African and Asian bodies provided expendable labor, and Europe administered the technology and markets. Any threat to a supposedly pre-ordained order was a threat to planters' prosperity.

One of the largest slave uprisings in the history of the British Empire, the Demerara Slave Revolt of 1823, is a starting point to trace these threats to social order which eventually contributed to a shift from unfree to so-called "free" labor. The events of 1823 raised awareness among the wider British public about the inhumanities of slavery, and fuelled calls for its abolition particularly following the death, in jail, of English missionary John Smith, who was accused of inciting the rebellion. The Demerara Revolt occurred in the context of Britain's proposed plans to ameliorate the slave system, an attempt in itself to stem planters' fears that sudden, outright emancipation would turn the supremacist world of plantocracy upside-down.

Rumors of parliamentary discussions on the amelioration of slave conditions reached the ears of those enslaved in Demerara (da Costa 174). In that fateful August of 1823, enslaved Africans along East Coast Demerara suspected that plantation managers were deliberately concealing legal changes.[8] Infused with the hope of imminent freedom and Christian missionary teachings of brotherhood and equality, Quamina (a deacon in Smith's chapel) and his son Jack Gladstone (enslaved to Plantation Success) led the uprising. Not incidentally, the owner of Plantation Success was Sir John Gladstone, slave owner, father of future British

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8   Planters assumed the missionary Smith was responsible for rumors of freedom, but as da Costa documents, enslaved individuals were keenly aware of the efforts of Wilberforce, Buxton and others in Britain through word-of-mouth. She also suggests that in the perception of slaves, the views of anti-slavery activists and the King became fused (and stood in stark contrast to planters), particularly following the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade in 1807 (120).

Prime Minister William Gladstone, and progenitor of Indian indentureship in the Caribbean.

Some 10,000 to 12,000 individuals participated in the Demerara uprising (da Costa 217). Quamina urged restraint and participants mounted a largely non-violent revolt; nonetheless colonial authorities brutally suppressed the uprising. Militias and slave-catchers killed hundreds in revenge. Twenty-seven leaders were executed, their bodies decapitated and the heads displayed on poles in the capital's parade ground. In the case of Quamina, his corpse was hung on a gibbet for public viewing.[9] However, it was the passing of "Martyr" John Smith that turned public opinion in Britain in favor of the abolitionist cause (Matthews 17). As a result of Smith's death as well as the massive slave uprising, the events in British Guiana influenced imperial policy. Slave conditions were finally ameliorated (though emancipation would not arrive for another decade). In 1824, an ordinance was passed that limited the working hours of the enslaved, allowed slaves to marry, hold property, and purchase manumission. A Protector of Slaves was appointed to curb the worst abuses (Cudjoe 192). However, planters in Demerara were reluctant to accept change; as late as 1830 a recalcitrant John Gladstone was still arguing against the abolition of slavery (Pinfold 24).

The historical geographies of the West Indies overlapped with the East Indies, and not only through the eventual actions of Gladstone. In a shrewd calculation, abolitionists linked their humanitarian campaign to the material interests of East Indian sugar producers who resented duties which favored West Indian sugar. Many abolitionists also held private interests in East Indian sugar, and "urged their sympathizers to boycott slave-grown produce in favor of the free-grown produce of India." Eric Williams demonstrated that the abolitionist cause was entangled with an economic imperative – the struggle to "substitut[e] East for West Indian sugar" and to replace monopoly planters with concessions for cheap exploitable wage labor in service of free trade. In addition to religious and altruistic motives, therefore, abolition also represented an effort to apply free market policies to shifting regimes of exploitation (*Capitalism* 183-8).

After the events of 1823, abolitionists singularly pushed for emancipation (not amelioration), and emancipation was achieved in 1834. However, legal emancipation was not liberty. A system of apprenticeship was instituted for the next four years; full emancipation (in a legal sense, though not a philosophical, political, economic, social, or cultural sense) was not to be had at least until 1838. Even today, many might argue that true emancipation still awaits.

According to Bolland, the main intention of the Abolition Act was to ensure gradual social change which incorporated existing hierarchies of power in plantation colonies (594). For one, emancipation did not acknowledge the immense injury or loss to African peoples, nor did the act provide them with any land or

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9   A rare portrait of the atrocities of slavery in British Guiana, images of the executions can be found in Joshua Bryant's account of the Demerara revolt.

source of subsistence (Lovelace 257). Slave owners, however, were generously compensated. For example, the Gladstone family, owners of 2,183 slaves across Jamaica and British Guiana, received the largest single sum of any plantation owner, £ 85,000, in compensation (Williams, "Historical Background" 33).[10] Secondly, under apprenticeship, all formerly enslaved Africans over the age of six were compelled to work without pay for 45 hours per week, under only slightly changed conditions usually for their former "masters" (Bolland 594). In crude summation, the problem facing the emancipated population was how to squeeze freedom out of enduring oppressive and restrictive planter practices. The dilemma facing colonial authorities, on the other hand, was how to guarantee survival of the plantation system within a "free" society (592).

Throughout the West Indies, planters experimented with assorted measures to control 'apprentices', including laws restricting prolonged absence from work, continuing corporal punishment such as flogging, and imposing pass restrictions on movement (Turner 317). Antigua was the only West Indian colony to utilize the option granted by the abolition act, to bypass apprenticeship and move directly to waged labor (319). In Antigua, binding oral contracts were adopted along with a "wage/rent" system where laborers were both tenants and workers on plantations, and planters were landlords as well as employers, thus ensuring a regular supply of labor easily coerced and bound to the land (Bolland 595). Though apprenticeship was a short interlude between slavery in perpetuity and indentureship, it had lasting consequences for the terms of contract labor and ideas of civilizational advancement (Turner 319). The contract, and its accompanying disciplinary tools to manage laborers' time, bodies, and power, were carried over to indenture.

In the post-Emancipation era, the plantocracy, threatened by new possibilities which implied residency off the plantation and the danger of an independent peasantry, enacted a range of strategies to reduce the possibilities of self-liberation, from legalities such as ordinances to restrict the sale of land to petty acts of sabotage like cutting down fruit trees (Peake and Trotz 44; Webber, *Centenary History* 168). Though opting out of the capitalist project entirely was not an option, emancipation conferred to the labor force (an albeit limited) choice in employers, hours of employment and the opportunity to flex collective bargaining power as waged laborers. Such assertions by freed men and women were viewed by the plantocracy as creating a dangerously unreliable work force, i.e., one that was not easily controlled. This view was bolstered by widespread racist colonial discourse which interpreted the behavior of ex-slaves as morally corrupt, lazy, and requiring the fire of competition to boost industry, thereby applying the justifications of free market rationality to racialized bodies (Wahab 285).

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10 This extraordinary sum conservatively approximates more than three and a half million pounds (GB) in purchasing power today, according to online currency converter calculations on the site of the British National Archives at Kew (See "Currency Converter").

In the wake of changing times, the sugar industry panicked; attention turned toward finding a legal means to secure dependent yet wage earning laborers under the new system of labor relations prompted by full emancipation. For planters, this was not a choice between slave or free labor, but rather a double-bind between 'no labor' (i.e., the hard-gained half-freedoms of the emancipated work force) or time-bound indentured labor. Milliroux characterized the choice of bounded labor thus: "Some [planters] proposed the adoption of ploughs, excavators, and other instruments worked by steam power; others, the introduction of the largest possible number of machines, each with the power of two arms and of a good back-bone, called *immigrants*" (italics in the original, 36). Clearly, ideas of subservience were not abolished with emancipation (Kale 5; Milliroux 36; Ramdin 13; Look Lai xi; Lowe 195).

Historical Geographies of Indentureship

An urgent search for a cheap labor source, "to save the sugar industry," led planters to resuscitate a labor system used prior to slavery in the Americas – indentureship (Rabe 17). In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, white bonded servants were used in the Caribbean; however, following entrenched racial practices of the plantation in the nineteenth century, it became virtually unthinkable for Europeans to work in damp, humid lands to cut sugar cane. Conversely (and conveniently for planters), pre-existing forms of enslavement and debt-bondage had survived in India. Indian slave labor was also transported in response to earlier colonial labor demands (for example to Malaya, Réunion, and South Africa); and indentured Indian labor was already in use in Mauritius since 1834. India became a viable alternative for the acquisition of subordinate labor, for reasons not the least of which was the apparent suitability of "coolies" for labor in the tropics (Prashad 72). The movement from slavery to indenture was more complex than any sequential progressive narrative allows.

Most colonial authorities, however, were careful to make a distinction between 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' labor. The emergence of the category of 'labor' was initially connected to the advent of the Industrial Revolution, creating temporal and spatial divides between pre-modern and modern labor history (Bahal and van der Linden 2-3). However, this process has a longer history. For 500 years (from the mid-fourteenth century to the late nineteenth century), 'master and servant law' was used to govern work relations. The relationship between servant and master was not only obligatory but contractual; any breach was considered a criminal offence and punishment was enforced by a socially and politically biased judiciary[11] (Ahuja 287). Thus, contract law was used to define "*rela-*

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11 As with all generalizations, exceptions stand out, notably the efforts of Chief Justice Joseph Beaumont, and Stipendiary Magistrate William Des Voeux to reveal injustices within British Guiana's coolie operations.

tionships between formally unequal parties" and its bureaucratic language was used to mask the contradictory forces underlying free and unfree (288; italics in the original). As Ahuja states:

> Medieval concepts of the asymmetrical legal status of master and servant were preserved by giving them new expression in the language of contract law, which unilaterally criminalized servants who breached the contract. "Master and servant law" thus opened up an interactive space in which an astonishing variety of legal forms of labour relationships emerged in the most diverse political and social contexts [...] with the legal sanctioning of […] unequal social status. This […] appears to give the lie to all those since the nineteenth century who considered the dichotomy between "unfree" and "free" labour to be a social fact and regarded "free labour" as a salient characteristic of "modernization," that is, to all those who confused the conceptual crutch or normative pointer with living practice. (288)

Thus, indentured laborers were not proletarians linked to their employer through a "'cash-nexus'" (Hobsbawm 63), rather indentureship was shaped by prior geographical, historical, and racialized colonial practices which saw the survival of "massa" (master), "backraman" (white man, i.e., eluding to relations of dominance), and overseer roles in relation to a post-Emancipation indentured work force.

Entering into a contract in India which tied them to unknown plantation colonies across the oceans for a lengthy fixed term, indentured laborers would have had little idea of the concrete conditions that would eventually transform their identity into 'bound coolies'. Any illusions of implied individuality and freedom suggested by personal contracts would soon disappear. When Indians crossed the threshold into indenture, disciplinary tactics indicated that social differences were no longer based on familiar categories (such as caste), but rather the most crucial distinction was between bound and free (Kaplan and Kelly 87).

As several detailed texts on indentured Asian labor exist, I provide only a brief summary of 'bound coolie' practices within British Guiana. It is important to note, however, that up until the 1870s indentureship was a multi-racial practice, even though Indians comprised the majority. Additionally, in the first half of the indenture period, coolies were considered merely abstract units of transient labor, but towards the end of indenture, they were viewed as potential settlers (Look Lai 107). Therefore, it is problematic to make sweeping generalizations across time.

Bearing that caveat in mind, it is nevertheless possible to name some typical features of the system. Indian indenture contracts were specified for a five-year period to a single employer. At the end of the five-year period, the debt owing for passage to the colony was considered paid. However, another five years of service were required to cover the costs of the return passage 'home' and many

remained or re-indentured themselves, sometimes up to an astonishing five or six times (Look Lai 131). At the very least, ten years of industrial residence became the norm (Bisnauth 59). For those who went back to India (about one-third), mortality was a constant companion on return ships; however, a small percentage received land grants in lieu of their return passage in later years.

During their indenture, coolies were immobilized, i.e., not allowed to leave the plantation without a pass. As Look Lai remarked, a pass-system gave the planter-cum-employer-cum-landlord formal control over mobility, which violated the philosophical notion of his/her status as a "free agent" (62). Though planters construed this action as protecting an 'ignorant', 'illiterate', or 'susceptible' population from outside influence (e.g., the African community), the effect was to create a population dependent on the plantation for housing, health care, standard-issue rations, and (stagnant or declining) wages. Moreover, though indenture was in theory a contract between equal parties, it was enforceable by criminal penalty (which, depending on the time and offense, ranged from flogging to stocks to fines to imprisonment) for a variety of small to large offenses (from failure to complete assigned tasks to desertion). Behal aptly characterized indenture practices as relying on power structures to sustain employer dominance over coolie labor (156).

Guyana was the first British West Indian plantation colony to find its post-Emancipation solution to "the labor question" in indenture. Though planters had lost the slavery debate, they still held considerable influence. The Gladstone family, for example, held shipping interests in India, and were aware that Indians were used on Mauritian sugar plantations. In 1836, under the 'threat' of impending emancipation, Sir John Gladstone sent a letter to the Gladstone family's mercantile firm in Calcutta, Messrs. Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Company, to inquire about the possibility of obtaining one hundred "Bengalees" for his plantations in Guyana (Chapman 116; Scoble 4). To appease the watchful eyes of the Anti-Slavery Society, he offered accommodation, clothing, education, and religious instruction (in Christianity). The merchant house replied that hill Coolies (aboriginal people from the Chota Nagpur area of eastern India) "have no religion, no education, and, in their present state, no wants beyond eating, drinking, and sleeping," which facilitated their shipment to Guyana (Scoble 5). Accordingly, they were to be plucked from pre-modernity and marched into the modern world of large-scale agriculture.[12]

British occupation of India had undermined the ability of rural peasants and skilled craftsmen to earn a livelihood, creating rootless laborers who were susceptible to recruiters (Meer et al 1). In other words, the value of their products within isolated hinterland economies was eroded, and many were forced to sell the only commodity left – their bodily labor. Indentureship held the alluring promise of

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12 Or, as Mishra bluntly states: "Indenture introduced us to industrialization – steam ships, sugar mills, trains – and quickly transformed us from caste-ridden, illiterate rejects to an enlightened progressive and a relatively homogeneous 'race'" (336).

secure wages, food, accommodation, health care, and return passage 'home.' Under conditions of heightened vulnerability, recruiters targeted tribal or marginalized areas, famine-stricken regions, and parts that had suffered great upheaval and militarized repression following the events of the 'Sepoy Mutiny' in 1857.

Recruiters or agents working on behalf of and serving the interests of colonial rulers in India were known as *arkati* (literally 'fish hook'). Though some recruiters were charged with offenses including unlawful detainment, rape, and murder continuing up to the turn of the twentieth century, these were extreme cases (Look Lai 76). Various authors, however, have characterized recruitment operations as manipulating or intimidating individuals into indentureship. In some cases, 'recruiters' practiced outright abduction (Geoghegan 60; Laurence 47; Myers 17; Persaud 177; Ramdin 18; Ray 271). Narratives of trickery and deception are common to Caribbean history, and elaborate memories of the arkati persist in oral histories passed down through descendants (Myers 17; Ramdin 18). However, this is not to deny the agency of individuals who were indentured, nor to become trapped in a conundrum of deciding whether they were pushed or pulled into indenture. As Kelly has astutely observed, the emphasis on trickery is not an explanation of why, but rather of what – the trope of *arkati* deception is a symbolic explanation of the meaning of indenture: a binding agreement to enter into the unknown, which became a traumatic and ultimately transformative process (Kelly 19).

Though early importation of coolies occurred through private enterprise, it was later carried out under government supervision. An interlinked institutional network – consisting of recruitment centers, closed rail cars, depots, magistrates, office of the Protector of Emigrants in India; coolie-carrying ships and re-fuelling stations across the *Kali Pani* (black waters); and in the Caribbean quarantine stations, the Immigration Agent-general and sugar estates – became the backbone of a trans-colonial labor re-allocation across the Empire. The Colonial Office, mindful of the surveillance of human rights in the post-emancipation era, insisted upon legal and institutional safeguards for care of the coolies; however, prior to indentureship, there was no precedent for such state control and monitoring of mass movements of so-called 'free' labor. The closest precedent for long-distance transportation of labor was found in the shipments of convicts and slaves (Cumpston 11). Thus, the new system raised concerns about "a new system of slavery"; the state responded that it could not divest itself of responsibility for the protection of vulnerable individuals engaged in labor (Mongia 197). The inherited notion of a paternal protector for vulnerable populations carried over to the office of Protector of Emigrants, primarily responsible for checking that indentured laborers 'voluntarily' assented to the terms of their contract.

The foremost concern behind regulations was not to curb excessive abuses, rather it was to establish criteria by which the migration of indentured labor could be construed as 'free' (despite the negation of freedoms under indenture), in contrast to slavery. The special regulation of these 'free' subjects was defended on

the grounds that "it is a distinction common to every metropolis, that their colonies are governed […] by special laws, because the elements of society are not the same therein as in Europe" (Mongia 197). Colonial state regulation of migration demonstrated the geographic rift between 'East' and 'West'; in other words, the West Indies, though situated in the 'New World' west of Europe, were not of the West because their majority non-European population required special monitoring due to their inherent 'vulnerabilities' (Mongia 198; Sheller 125).

Progressive theories of labor had no room for the liminal space between free and unfree; there was no name for 'half-free', and calcifying binaries eventually filled the space created by ambivalence. Gradually, as Indians earned their 'Certificate of Exemption from Labour' (confirmation that they had completed their servitude) and were free to circulate in the limited economy of the colony, they were subtly encouraged to compete against other subordinated groups in a perverse contest for second-place status, based on approximations to (European) 'civilization' and Christianity (Brackette Williams 151). Over time this resulted in the hardening of ethno-racial group distinctions defined with reference to a hegemonic ideal of whiteness (Kaplan and Kelly 98). Therefore, indentureship is a relational location within a space-time context, connected to prior mechanisms of slavery, as well as to continuing debates over the representation of ethno-racial histories in relation to an unmentioned colonial power whose ghostly presence still looms over the political landscape.[13] In the following section, I will explore how these issues are framed in intellectual discourse.

Tracing Intellectual Approaches to Indentureship

Of course, no historical narrative is without its own selective set of assumptions and values (my own version included). However, with broad brush-strokes, one can view the scholarly narration of indentureship history along three trajectories, overlapping with concerns developed in the letters to Guyanese papers: firstly, indentureship as a coercive practice at the heels of slavery (a historical argument first employed by anti-indenture activists and nuanced by later writers); secondly, indentureship as a voluntary immigration with classic motivations, i.e., the search for a better life; and, thirdly, indentureship as an oppressive system stained by exploitative and cross-cutting processes of capitalism and racism.

A long-held view of the close relationship of indenture to slavery is initially found in the literature of the Anti-Slavery Society; they were keenly aware that Emancipation marked both a beginning and an end and closely monitored emerging practices of indentureship. They documented "immigrants" in Calcutta being "sold" and "resold" and forcibly driven onto ships, and described the "scandal-

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13 For an elaboration of Anglo-European hegemonic practices within post-colonial Guyana, see Brackette Williams.

ous" treatment on Guyanese plantations within the very first year of this system (Hollet 66). The influence of the Anti-Slavery Society's stance regarding coolie labor is apparent in Colonial Secretary Lord John Russell's oft-quoted 1840 statement that he feared indentured servitude was "a new system of slavery" (quoted in Tinker v).[14] This concern resulted in the suspension of indentureship from 1839 to 1845, and again from 1848 to 1851.

Close attention to this issue shadowed the indentureship period (1838-1917), manifested for example in the former Chief Justice of British Guiana Joseph Beaumont's critical treatise entitled *The New Slavery. An Account of the Indian and Chinese Immigrants in British Guiana* (1871), which boldly and stridently condemned the biased administration of justice against coolies in the colony. As a rhetorical device, the allusion to slavery also appeared in early twentieth-century fiction, as evident in the title of A.R.F. Webber's novel *Those that be in Bondage. A Tale of Indian Indentures and Sunlit Western Waters*. Published in 1917, the year indentured migration ended, Webber was the first Caribbean-born novelist to explore the gendered, social, political, and economic aspects of bondage which impacted indentureds (Cudjoe 5). Moreover, an understanding of the legacy of chattel slavery as well as the injustices of indenture led at least one indentured laborer, Bechu, to challenge planters with sly wit, within the pages of Guyana's *Daily Chronicle*. For instance, in January of 1897, Bechu wrote in response to a skeptical question regarding his true identity as a coolie: "It is a positive fact that I am a real, live animal. And what is more surprising, I am allowed to go unchained" (quoted in Ramchand 26). The specter of slavery was continuously evoked by differently positioned actors in attempts to contrast, ameliorate, or contextualize the miserable conditions of indentured laborers on the sugar estates.

By the latter half of the twentieth century, British historian Hugh Tinker, in his leading examination of indentureship across the Empire, carried the moral overtones of this theme forward, firmly establishing his framework by reiterating the quote from Lord John Russell (Carter and Torabully 83; Lokaisingh-Meighoo 11). Tinker's argument that indentureship as a process worked through the "inheritance of slavery" was readily adopted by emergent Indo-Caribbean scholars, and his 1974 work became foundational to the field of Indo-Caribbean studies (Lokaisingh-Meighoo 11). His contribution made the Indo-Caribbean a figure worthy of scholarly attention in metropolitan academic centers, beyond the hitherto practiced anthropological gaze.[15] Within the milieu of a post-independence assertion of creole nationalism that claimed nation-space on the primary basis of (Afro-Guyanese) suffering, Tinker's work provided a politicized opening that allowed

14 "I should be unwilling to adopt any measure to favour the transfer of laborers from British India to Guiana […] which may lead to a dreadful loss of life on the one hand, or on the other, to a new system of slavery" (Russell quoted in Tinker v).

15 Early ethnographic studies of Indo-Caribbeans were conducted in the 1950s and 1960s. These were mostly carried out by anthropologists who were interested in models of cultural retention or change (such as Arthur Niehoff or Morton Klass), though geographers, such as Colin Clarke and David Lowenthal, also relied on ethnographic observations.

Indo-Guyanese diasporic scholars to simultaneously re-appropriate their history in a metropolitan setting, and place their history within a Caribbean setting. His imprint soon became apparent in subsequent research on Indo-Caribbean history. For example, Guyanese historians Basdeo Mangru and Clem Seecharan follow Tinker's ideological example, by opening their respective books *Benevolent Neutrality* and *Bechu. 'Bound Coolie' Radical* with a familiar quote from Beaumont's treatise that established their school of thought:

> This is not a question of more or less, of this or that safeguard, of an occasional defect here, or excess there. But it is that of a monstrous, rotten system, rooted upon slavery, grown in its stale soil, emulating its worst abuses, and only the more dangerous because it presents itself under false colours, whereas slavery bore the brand of infamy upon its forehead. (quoted in Mangru i; quoted also in Seecharan 2)

Thakur suggests that an implied claim to equal suffering is an attempt to create space within Caribbean historiography for marginalized experiences. He also observed that the titles of several books in the Indo-Caribbean canon (such as Birbalsingh's *Indenture and Exile* [1989] or *Indo-Caribbean Resistance* [1993]) "seek by their very title, to codify the Indian presence in the Caribbean as essentially a history of suffering – 'Indenture and Exile' – the anguished expressions of oppression and loss," and thus by comparison risk trivializing African suffering (15).

In the post-colonial era, indentured laborers and their descendants were no longer transient laborers but rather permanent settlers (many up to four generations Guyanese). By this time, a neo-slavery paradigm was no longer needed to advocate for improved conditions of indentured workers, but rather served a different purpose. The idea of neo-slavery, i.e., the unfinished business of slavery, enabled an assertion of belonging through the framework of suffering, which is to say it allowed Indo-Caribbeans a point of entry into the nation's originary narrative (subjugation at the hands of European expansionism), particularly during a constitutive moment of Guyanese liberation – the time of independence and consolidation of the nation.

Questions of race implicated in the transition from "colonial dependency to postcolonial nationalism" have been somewhat neglected in the social sciences (Smaje 10). While Benedict Anderson's wide-reaching *Imagined Communities* (1983) grapples with the invention of racial categories by the colonial state, his analysis is under-developed in relation to plantation societies. In plantation societies, where colonial state institutions and political apparatuses fostered rivalry for second-place status, "the colonial social contract not only put races in their places but made the places for races" (Kelly and Kaplan 197). Imported labor strategies in sugar colonies such as Guyana or Fiji resulted in a near-even split between ethno-racial groups, and doomed colonial contestations to a zero-sum game (146). Race proved to have a tenacious grip on nationalism. Colonial narratives which

defined, erased, naturalized, or marginalized ethno-racial communities continued to exert anxiety-ridden influence over conceptions of shared history, and consequently national belonging, into postcolonial times.

During Guyana's early struggle for nationhood, there was an attempt to replace the predominant narrative of conflict between Indian and African communities. Emphasis was placed on commonalities of class oppression as a mobilizing principle by the PPP (People's Progressive Party). However, racialized fissures soon re-surfaced, manifesting themselves in the traumatic racialized violence of the 1960s, when Indian-African conflict in Guyana resulted in more deaths than all of the West Indian labor struggles of the 1930s combined (Lowenthal 145).

In the post-independence period ethnic differences were subordinated to an ideology of Creole nationalism under authoritarian rule (i.e., the People's National Congress that had, not exclusively, but primarily, an Afro-Guyanese support base) for nearly three decades, until an international committee monitored free elections in 1992. However, since then the predominantly Indo-Guyanese party (the PPP) has held power for eighteen years, and has been accused of maintaining earlier authoritarian trends. Broadly speaking, under one political party or the other, suffering has remained the conceptual lens through which Guyanese experiences are filtered.

Moving away from suffering, some scholarly writing such as the early work of Brij Lal, comments from Sidney Mintz, as well as analyses of Pieter Emmer and David Northrup have focused on the aspect of choice, personal freedoms, or economic gain that accompanied indenture/post-indenture (Carter and Torabully 85; Mintz xxiii; Shepherd 152). As Sharma suggests, such a line of thought also has roots in colonial discourse. That is, indentureship was initially characterized as a system which enticed Indians based on their greed, saved them from starvation, or provided an escape from the rigid sanctions of Indian society (Sharma 44-5). Indeed, colonial correspondence of the time variously describes indenture as an opportunity to "live in decent comfort without great exertion," "to enjoy a freedom which is denied them in their own country," or an "apprenticeship for a freer life to come" (Raw 53; Hopkins 74; Pim 107). Colonial discourse portrays an Indian society that was stagnant, with deeply entrenched caste and class structures which thwarted feeble attempts to improve one's lot. Emmer, as well as Northrup, suggest that due to resulting social mobility in the Caribbean, indentureship should be placed alongside nineteenth-century European migration to settler colonies. Such perspectives were articulated from metropolitan centers, mostly by "objective" (i.e., distanced) observers, occurring within what one might term an academic counter-discourse to subaltern/postcolonial studies, i.e., recuperating the innocence or benefits of colonialism.

However, no proposed referential norm is neutral. To view indenture as analogous to white-settler migration not only amputates it from the context of the Caribbean, but also fails to acknowledge the intricacies of power relations oper-

ating at the time.[16] "Immigration" options for Indians in the nineteenth century were tightly controlled for fear of an "Asiatic danger" (Northrup 9; Ramdin 147). Migration to the British settler territories of Canada, Australia, or New Zealand was open to mainly white immigrants in the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century (Northrup 9; Ramdin 8). Thus referring to indentureds as immigrants would mask the historical context of the 'coolie system'. Any freedom of movement through indenture contracts operated within the structures of white supremacy, i.e., economic imperatives which required racial subordination.[17] Therefore, I concur with Kale's overarching structural emphasis and her assertion that Indian migration to the Caribbean under indentureship is aptly understood as an "imperial labor reallocation" as it was ultimately part of an imperial strategy to solve the "West Indian labour question" (5).

An alternative perspective which leaks across the borders of slavery and indenture is exemplified by the scholarship and activism of Walter Rodney in his attempt to shift from a hierarchical emphasis on suffering to a lateral one, by emphasizing the fact that both Africans and Indians were valued only for their bodily labor. Shona Jackson's analysis of Rodney's authoritative *A History of Guyana's Working People* illustrates that Rodney applied the particular term "working people" to African laborers, both pre- and post-slavery, as well as indentured laborers (181). A careful historian, Rodney would have deliberately chosen his words to broadly include divisions of labor under the plantation complex as a system which marked all colored bodies as inferior, an experience shared by working Guyanese people across time. Such a technique:

> provides a rubric within capital, or the economic discourse of capital, in which East Indians and Blacks can coexist as laborers, regardless of the way in which they entered the colony or the identities that they held when they did; 'working people' is also a revalued category used by Rodney to define those who were denied humanity and others who were at its edge,

as Jackson clarified (181).

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16 Prabhu Mohapatra's article on "Eurocentrism, Forced Labour, and Global Migration" (2007) provides a penetrating elaboration of this argument.
17 Laura Pudilo's presentist use of the term 'white supremacy' (in the context of the United States) is also applicable to the historical situation of Guyana. Borrowing directly, I use 'white supremacy' here to refer to "a system of formal or informal rule, and norms of the spatial distribution of material wealth and opportunities and an ideological rationalization of this framework which ensures that the white population will systematically maintain their position and dominance." It is important to note that the socio-historical construction of whiteness in Guyana generally comprised the ruling class, i.e., colonial state officials and European planters, and related to Anglo-European culture. Though linked to phenotype, it was not equivalent; for example Portuguese Guyanese who arrived as indentured laborers (mostly from Madeira) were not considered white due to the irredeemable taint of manual labor.

The works of Rodney and others such as Derek Walcott, George Lamming and Dionne Brand are crucial in their attempts to develop an intersecting and fluid approach to understanding slavery and indenture outside of colonial paradigms. Rodney highlighted a meta-narrative of oppression to encompass the experiences of all who were brought to the colony. Walcott opened his lyrical acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1992 by rejecting categories disciplined by 'History' which marked the Caribbean through the passage of time and continents; instead he stressed the intermingling of past experiences in the present (Kale 2).[18] Lamming's approach to Afro-Asian encounters in the Caribbean is through the overarching aspect of European expansionism, and how that expansionism shaped – and was shaped by – African and Asian experiences.[19] Lastly, Brand underscored that colonial upheavals effectively re-constituted the identities of Indians and Africans in the Caribbean, in a way that made it possible to hold multiple and at times paradoxical allegiances (61).[20] The issue with which these writers and visionaries grapple is not only how to rethink delimited past narratives, but how to hold the fabric of overlap together with the tension of separate experiences.

18 "It is not that History is obliterated by this sunrise. It is there in Antillean geography, in the vegetation itself. The sea sighs with the drowned from the Middle Passage, the butchery of its aborigines, Carib and Aruac and Taino, bleeds in the scarlet of the immortelle, and even the actions of surf on sand cannot erase the African memory, or the lances of cane as a green prison where indentured Asians, the ancestors of Felicity, are still serving time" (Walcott 26-7).

19 "The major journeys from Africa and Asia into this archipelago were organised to lay and consolidate the material base of this experiment. This human cargo would have started out in total ignorance of his destination. The original experience of African and Asian is the experience of a controlled and violent alienation from the produce of their labor […] It must have required an enormous spiritual resource to survive the brutalities of control, the perils and anxieties of the unknown, the suspicion and insecurity which attended all human response in that tentative journey from being stranger, even hostile stranger, to becoming neighbour, friend, partner in a common struggle of resistance. So the Caribbean may be defined as continuum of a journey in space and consciousness. […] It is or has to become our discovery of the meaning of this severance, the conscious confrontation with the fact of our collective separations from original homes of spirit" (Lamming, *Coming Coming Home,* 23-4).

20 "The possibility [exists] that in fact one is unwanted back home, perhaps hated, perhaps even forgotten. The wound of forced exile generations ago is made more acute by indifference, by forgetfulness. No one in India remembers [Naipaul] or the experience he represents. Yet he carries within him this particularly accursed ancestral memory and this crushing dislocation of the self which the landscape does not solve. Instead he finds himself wishing to escape […] To the descendants of the nineteenth century Indian and African Diaspora, a nervous temporariness is our existential dilemma, our descent quicker, our decay faster, our existence far more tenuous; the routine of life is continually upheaved by colonial troublings. We have no ancestry except the black water and the door of no return. They signify space and not land. A 'vastness' indeed 'beyond imagination'. It is not India which is beyond imagination; it is the black water" (Brand 61).

Conclusion: Towards a Relational Approach

David Goldberg, in a recent discussion on comparative racisms, offers a useful framework for such concerns. He begins with the observation that analogies across discrete instances (such as indenture approximating, being similar to, or being a new system of slavery), may obscure as much as it reveals because it only offers a broad analysis which cannot accommodate internal variations within categories such as gender, or changes in ethnic identification, or labor practices across time (1273). Though comparisons are useful for invoking a meeting point of history and emotion (whether healing or creating rifts), any resemblance is fragile, disintegrating when dissimilarities poke through (1273). On one end of the continuum, politicizing dissimilarities may be used to harden societal divisions, and at the other end, similarities may collapse into crass generalizations.

However, Goldberg notes that several postcolonial thinkers such as Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Stuart Hall preferred relational and interactive frameworks to a methodology of contrast and compare (1273).[21] Relationality can point to connections across time and space, shedding light on social, economic or historical (re)alignments. Goldberg states:

> Relationalists here [referring to analyses between South Africans under Apartheid and the current situation of Palestinians] are especially concerned to reveal how new formations look to older modes of repression for resources of control and domination, relating new circumstances to the experiences of the tried and tested elsewhere […] If the latter works through drawing on impressions, the former reveals by showing how movement in one place ripples through impacts in another, and how structures at one time are taken up and put to work in another elsewhere. (1277)

Thus, he observes that comparisons of (racist) practices fail to account for the interactive processes of power relations across place and time, as local conditions and ideas often have a genealogy elsewhere (Goldberg 1273-74). Caribbean scholarship has always had to contend with the power hierarchies embedded within and across Empire.

Though Afro- and Indo- Caribbean diasporas have been spatially and temporally separate areas of study, to foreground Guyana's historical geographies in difference neglects significant periods of overlap; both groups shared common as well as divergent historical paths. One cannot outrightly reject the importance of historical categories (Dei 1). After all the very concept of freedom in the 'West-

21 For example, Hall has contributed an understanding of diasporic identity as "becoming" as well as "being." In other words, what is important is not only the ancestral but the multi-layered forces that shape or even transform identity. He comments: "We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity', without acknowledging its other side – the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute, precisely, the Caribbean's 'uniqueness'" (236).

ern world' is shaped by the institution of slavery, for the premium our societies place on freedom emerged out of the experiences of slavery and bondage (Patterson 9). However, it is also important to move away from dichotomizing discourse by acknowledging that complex historical and social categories also bleed into one another.

Some commentators have looked for the equivalence of indenture experiences within slavery; on the other hand, the juxtaposition of indentureship alongside slavery has been used as a tool for domination, to keep groups in antagonism within a dominant hegemony of not only white capital, but also historic Anglo-European norms. Furthermore, historical narratives acquire heightened saliency during politically turbulent times, and resurrected vulnerabilities or trauma seem to demand, at the very least, recognition. This is not insurmountable; an effort to recall "a social truth, a truth of experience" is well within the grasp of a re-envisioned Guyanese national imaginary (Judge Albie Sachs quoted in Boraine 21).

At the risk of ignoring Persaud's concern that history can be dangerously implicated in politics, I return to Lamming's suggestion that history can also be socially transformative, a tool to create alliances and move towards a humanism that may inspire a collective re-imagining. In any case, historical narratives are not situated innocently outside the hopes, fears, threats, and concerns of present time-space. It must be possible within any critical examination of inextricably linked histories to acknowledge the saliency of particular moments, while acknowledging situational variations (Dei 20). The point is that we cannot understand the configuration of historical ethno-racial identities in Guyana in rarefied isolation. We, the entangled communities who comprise Guyana and its diaspora, exist in relation to each other, though in particular moments we may have been complicit in each other's subordination, while in other moments we share a lingering anti-colonial spirit and project. At times, the history of Guyana's various ethno-racial communities has been co-operative, at other times, conflictual – but always inter-dependent. The unfinished business of emancipation, in this context a process of learning and unlearning historical narratives towards inter-racial solidarities, continues to have contemporary resonance. To repeat the words of Eusi Kwayana, "we should not be in competition over suffering."

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Appendix

Stabroek News
http://www.stabroeknews.com/2009/letters/05/11/
the-indian-and-african-experience-has-been-similar/ [13 May 2009].

May 11, 2009

Dear Editor,

The nation recently celebrated Indian arrival. There is much to celebrate about the Indians' remarkable contribution (culture, industriousness, etc) to the nation and the region. But one should not forget that Indians and Africans had a similar experience and a common history. Their recruitment, the journey, and the conditions on the colonies bore many similarities to those experienced by our African brethren.

It has been amply documented by scholars that the purpose for which Indians and Africans were brought to the Caribbean and the wretched conditions under which they lived were very much the same. The nefarious means under which they were brought to the colonies and the harsh, inhumane lifestyle were reprehensible. As such, the two major races should appreciate each other's history and learn to respect each other and live in harmony.

Both groups of labourers were severely ill treated from the time of recruitment all through the periods of enslavement (indenturedship) and liberation. The poor, helpless Africans and Indians were kidnapped, sold into slavery or duped into coming to the colonies for the sole purpose of "serving King Sugar" as Shawn Mangru put it in a letter in SN some time ago. The Africans, like the Indians, were severely mistreated and brutalized. They were denied their humanity. They were kidnapped and forced aboard the ships to make the lengthy journey to work for free (Indians were given a measly allowance) on the plantations. Many Indians were kidnapped and or lured into making the journey. They were deceived and misled into signing up for the contracted servitude being told of the golden opportunities to emigrate just beyond the horizon.

The journey aboard the ship for both groups of labourers was unbearable with little room for movement. The slaves were bound aboard and the emigrants were kept in holding rooms with very little breathing space and no fresh air. The food they were given was not even fit for human consumption. Water and food were rationed and naturally many became sick on board and died. Disease was rampant and several Indians, becoming homesick, committed suicide by jumping overboard. The situation was so bad that several Indians (as much as 20%) died during each journey. The situation for the Africans was similar.

When the emigrants arrived in the colony, they were in bad shape. Shawn Mangru in a letter in SN quoted from a British Foreign and Anti-Slavery Society pub-

lication of February 1840, that described a sick house at Bellvue: "In one room where there were raised boards for the accommodation of seven persons only, eleven were confined – four of them lying on the floor. The squalid wretchedness of their appearance, their emaciated forms, and their intense sufferings from disease and sores, were enough to make hearts bleed. In the second room were found a worse class of patients – out of five confined there, two were dead, and one was not expected to survive. Their bones appeared ready to protrude through their skins."

According to Mangru in his SN letter, one of the commissioners said he never observed or imagined "such unalleviated wretchedness, such hopeless misery, such bodily suffering and affliction" adding that "the Coolies were not merely suffering from sores, they had mortified ulcers. They were rotting on their bones and their toes were dropping off." The commissioner wrote that at Bellvue, "twenty have died from disease contracted in the colony, and twenty-nine are now in a wretched state from ulcers, many of whom will probably die. Should they survive they will be rendered unfit to service themselves. These people are in great misery and from what cause it may have sprung, the effects are so appalling that humanity calls loudly for the interference of the Executive."

Moved out of the sick houses, the emigrants were also brutalized and oppressed on the estates. They could not move around for fear of being whipped or denied their measly wages. On the estates, poor sanitation, lack of proper toilet facilities, unsuitable diet, overcrowding, bad water, endemic diseases (malaria and parasite-caused diseases such as hookworm, anemia, ground itch), and other health problems combined to make the population continuously sick. These were the same conditions the slaves experienced. Their story of the Indians and Africans is shocking. The two people have withstood enormous pains and difficulties from their colonial masters and have built a society for us to enjoy. It is unfortunate they are involved in a competition for political power. The two races should reach out to one another and strive to live in peace with mutual respect.

Yours faithfully,
Vishnu Bisram

Lyrical Protest. Music in the History of African American Culture

THÉRÈSE SMITH

From the importation of the first African slaves into the American colonies, the history of slavery was also one of protest. Subjected to subhuman treatment, the slaves resisted in any way possible. When overt resistance was not a viable option, they resorted to covert means, often expressing their feelings through music, most notably through song. While some slaves eventually received some training in instrumental music, usually to provide music for colonists' dances (this was an ability often listed in colonial newspapers when a slave was advertised for hire, or as a runaway), music making in the colonies throughout most of the eighteenth century was predominantly vocal, so that song developed as the most important musical strategy for protest and subversion.

Oppressive systems such as slavery naturally engender animosity and distrust on the part of both the slaveholder and the slave, and because of the continuing influx of new slaves, especially in the South, colonists remained distrustful of any large congregation of slaves, for any reason. Governor Spotswood of Virginia stated his objections in 1710 to slave gatherings of any sort: "We are not to depend on either their stupidity, or that babel of languages among them; freedom wears a cap, which can without a tongue call together all those who long to shake off the fetters of slavery" (quoted in Southern 39). Nonetheless, if only on special occasions, slaves were allowed to assemble in relatively large numbers, and contemporary accounts mention that music was always an important part of such gatherings. By about 1750, special Election Day celebrations were being held by African Americans in New England, and in New Orleans large crowds congregated at *Place Congo* (Congo Square) to watch slave celebrations on Sunday afternoons and holy days.

Travelers' narratives abound, in particular from the latter part of the eighteenth century, depicting the happenings in the *Place Congo*, where slaves could assemble without much supervision, to play music and dance. Such was the enthusiasm displayed at these events that by 1786 a local ordinance was passed forbidding dancing at them until after the close of religious services. The most detailed contemporary description of dancing in the *Place Congo* is found in the journal of Benjamin Henry B. Latrobe, the famous architect who spent some time in New

Orleans during the years 1818-20. Referring specifically to the musical instruments, Latrobe wrote:

> The music consisted of two drums and a stringed instrument… [one of which was] a cylindrical drum, about a foot in diameter […] The drum was an open-staved thing held between the knees […] They made an incredible noise. The most curious instrument, however, was a stringed instrument, which no doubt was imported from Africa. On the top of the finger board was the rude figure of a man in a sitting posture, and two pegs behind him to which the strings were fastened. The body was a calabash. It was played upon by a very little old man, apparently eighty or ninety years old. (Quoted in Southern 138)

Paradoxically, despite colonists' misgivings, music was also viewed as useful both for religious instruction – by way of contrast, colonists repeatedly bemoaned the upbeat, improvised, and secular nature of the songs that slaves sang at camp meetings – and for keeping spirits up and the rhythm of work going. Yet there was continued ambivalence about slaves making music. As Eileen Southern remarks, "by the beginning of the nineteenth century at the very latest, specific laws in the Deep South prohibited slaves from 'using and keeping drums, horns or other loud instruments which may call together or give sign or notice to one another'" (172).

Spirituals comprise the most famous body of songs composed by African American slaves, providing particularly compelling evidence for the continuation of a West African (the area from which most slaves were taken, although some were also taken from East Africa) tradition that countenanced through song criticism that otherwise would have been unacceptable if expressed verbally. The evolution of the spiritual was accelerated by the advent of the camp meetings, evangelical religious gatherings that began in the early nineteenth century.[1] These meetings were frequently held over several days and featured dynamic preaching and hymn singing intended to induce conversion. They were primarily associated with the Frontier, which much of the South, east of the Mississippi river, was at the time.[2] Because these camp meetings were interracial they provided an opportunity for the slaves to be converted and, significantly, to congregate separately from the white attendees, once the formal business of the meeting was over. Several accounts tell of the slaves continuing to sing all night, and many contemporary accounts dwell on the magnificence of their singing. It was here that the slaves had a chance to exchange songs and to develop the spirituals, as well as shouts and jubilees (related types of religious song).

As the spiritual repertoire evolved it became evident that protest was being encoded in the songs in a wide variety of ways: selective use of themes from the

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1   The first camp meeting on record was a Presbyterian gathering in 1799.
2   Final treaties with the Choctaw and Chickasaw native peoples of Mississippi, for example, were not signed until 1830 and 1832 respectively.

Bible – Pharaoh and the Hebrew slaves, for example, in "Let My People Go," – allowed the slaves to sing of ostensibly historical, religious characters and events while actually referring to their own situations; the ruling classes could be obliquely judged through such lyrics as "Lord, I want to be a Christian in-a my heart," in which white Christianity is decried as hypocritical, implying that it is only skin deep or functions merely at an intellectual level. Some spirituals, for example "Done with Driver's driving," or "No more auction block for me," even express open discontent with the ruling class, although these types of songs are, in fact, rare.

In 1807 a law was passed prohibiting the importation of slaves from Africa, a clear indication that the abolitionist movement was making some headway, and that the institution of slavery itself was coming under increasing scrutiny. The law was, however, openly flouted, particularly in the South, where slavery was now stronger than ever.

By 1830 slavery had, however, been eradicated from all the Northern states and from that time on, double meanings were a distinctive element of the language of spirituals, the yearning for freedom featuring most prominently. Songs played an important role in the Underground Railroad,[3] and slaves were well aware of their hidden meanings. Certain symbols became standardized and especially important, for example the "Gospel train" and "chariots" referred to the Underground Railroad, by way of which many slaves were freed, and "Canaan" alluded to the North and freedom.[4]

For the first decades of the nineteenth century, race relations were relatively good.[5] After 1820, however, a series of laws was passed seeking to regulate black behavior, particularly in relation to religious and other group activities. This in turn sparked a number of revolts by black people, which resulted in a strengthening of the Black Codes (as they came to be known), and which after 1831 restricted African American marriage, freedom of speech, freedom of movement, occupational choice, and the right to hold and sell property.[6]

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3   The Underground Railroad was organized by the abolitionists as a loosely knit series of escape routes and safe houses to facilitate slaves' escape from southern plantations to safe havens in the North or Canada. For further description of this organization see, for example, Southern 142-45.

4   Escaped slave Harriet Tubman (1820?-1913) used particular code songs when she returned via the Underground Railroad to free other slaves, and *My Bondage and My Freedom*, the autobiography of escaped slave Frederick Douglass, (1817?-95), includes a large section entitled "Hymns with a Double Meaning."

5   See, for example, Southern 97-8, or Starr and Waterman 18-19.

6   It is only in recent decades that the black-white paradigm that has prevailed in American engagements with race has begun to be challenged. Black versus white has remained the dominant form of discourse, although it is being expanded to other ethnic groups (see, for example, Alcoff, "Latino/as"). One only has to look at the commentary surrounding the 2008 US presidential election, however, to appreciate how deeply the black-white oppositions are embedded in the culture. Barack Obama, lauded (justifiably) as the first black President of the United States, was born to a white mother, raised in a white middle-class

As the century progressed, and the American Civil War gave way to Emancipation, a 'free' black population emerged that was in many ways perceived as a greater threat than the slaves had been. The culmination of these developments was the U.S. Supreme Court's 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* (separate but equal) ruling that legalized segregation and facilitated the institution of a series of "Jim Crow" laws in the South.[7] With "freedom," imperfect as it was, the context and culture of African American life shifted considerably, and this was, naturally, reflected in music. From this point on a new emphasis on the individual can be discerned in African American society, thus individual forms of music making (such as the blues) emerged, although the call-and-response structure so characteristic of African American music was retained in the interplay between instrument and voice, or between various distinct voices in the case of multivoiced instruments. There was also a new emphasis on music for entertainment. But the long-standing tradition of music as a vehicle for protest, as a form of subversion, continued, still necessary as a coping mechanism in a 'free' society where little had changed in terms of power relations between the oppressed and the oppressor.

Even so, by the last decades of the nineteenth century, successful black composers and musicians – Scott Joplin (1868-1917) being perhaps the most famous – had begun a revolution in American popular music with the creation of ragtime, a syncopated form of piano music that Joplin hoped would become a quintessentially American art music. Instead, ragtime came to be closely identified with minstrelsy and minstrel shows. It was during this period (in the 1880s and 1890s) that so-called coon songs (ragtime-influenced songs) were created and popularized through this theatrical genre. As Karen Linn has remarked, "the 1890s was a period of extreme racism in the United States and the 'coon songs' of that era reflected this problem. The 'coon songs' of the 1890s stand apart in the history of American popular song; at no other time did racial stereotyping go to such vituperative extremes" (50). In an interesting racial twist, Ernest Hogan, a black composer, published "All Coons Look Alike to Me" in 1896 (see Fig. 1). This rag was used as a test for the "Ragtime Championship of the World Competition" held at Tammany Hall, in New York, on 23 January 1900. No less racist than the title, the lyrics and sheet music cover depict black Americans as half-human but happy apelike characters, clad in a ludicrous parody of refined dress.[8]

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environment, and had very little contact with his African father. Yet according to the 'one drop rule', he is socially 'black'.

7 Ironically, the origin of this epithet lay with a white actor, Thomas Dartmouth Rice (1808-60), who performed the minstrel song "Jim Crow" (1829) in blackface while executing a 'cakewalk' dance, itself a slave parody of the European quadrille. Rice's trickster character, Jim Crow, used a hybrid dialect that drew on both black and white sources to poke fun at the social elite. An enormously successful performer, Rice even toured England in the 1830s, thus introducing European audiences to a music and style that were perceived as typically American. For a more detailed discussion of this matter, see Starr and Waterman 19-21.

8 For other examples of these covers, see William J. Schafer and Johannes Riedel, especially 170-5. And for further discussion of this type of imagery, see Sam Dennison, especially
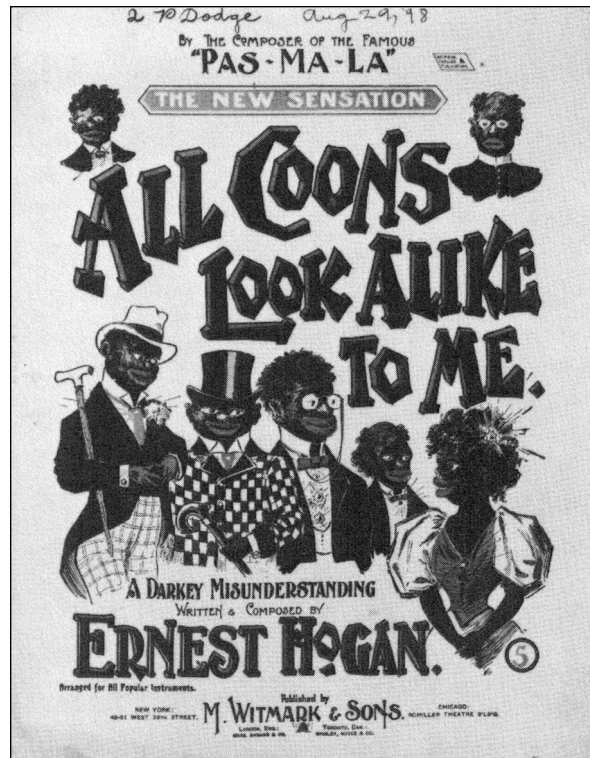
Fig. 1:
Cover of sheet music, coon song composed by black composer Ernest Hogan in 1896 (from Schafer and Riedel 171)

Thus, some African Americans, in one of the few areas where they were allowed to succeed, i.e., music, wittingly contributed to the denigration of their own. It would be unfair, however, to single out Hogan for blame. African Americans who wished to succeed commercially were obliged to fit into the current mold of societal perceptions. In a later ironic pandering to white expectations, the orchestra for the first all-black Broadway musical, *Shuffle Along* (Sissle and Blake, 1921), an orchestra consisting of "sophisticated and fully literate musicians," as Starr and Waterman remark, "had to memorize their parts so that they could appear to be playing by ear" (56). As Eubie Blake (1883-1983) later explained, "white people didn't believe that black people could read music. They wanted to think that our ability was just natural talent" (Morgan and Barlow 113).

But neither freedom nor success was to be easily won for African Americans, particularly in the post-Emancipation South. A violent campaign of lynching was unleashed, at times unbelievable in its ferocity: in a single year – 1900 – one hundred seven lynchings of black people by white mobs were reported (Starr and Waterman 39; see also note 14). These lynchings also spawned an attendant popular form of souvenirs, expressed in pictures and postcards that were quite widely

Chapter 8, "From the Gay Nineties through the First World War." For a more broad-ranging discussion of African American popular music during this period, see Thomas L. Morgan and William Barlow.

circulated (see note 15). But if the depictions on coon song sheet music and in popular cartoons were mass mediated caricatures, lynching photographs and postcards were highly personal and realistic. With a similar, yet much more horrific emphasis on visibility, these "souvenirs" were sent to family and friends, and often sought to emphasize the sender's participation in the horror, the protagonists looking directly at the camera, and the sender often marking his own position with an "X" (see, for example, Fig. 3).

It is not the subject of lynching specifically, however, that I wish to address here, but one powerful and stirring response to this atrocity, continuing the African American tradition of protest through music using subversive means: Billie Holiday's (1915-59) recording in 1939 of the Abel Meeropol song "Strange Fruit":[9]

"Strange Fruit" by Abel Meeropol (aka Lewis Allan, 1903–86)

Southern trees bear a strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
Black body swinging in the Southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.

Pastoral scene of the gallant South,
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,
Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh,
And the sudden smell of burning flesh!

Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck,
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,
For the sun to rot, for a tree to drop,
Here is a strange and bitter crop.

Sonny White (piano), Frankie Newton (trumpet), Tab Smith (alto sax),
Kenneth Hollon and Stan Payne (tenor sax), Jimmy McLin (guitar),
John Williams (bass), Eddie Dougherty (drums)

These disturbing lyrics depict a lynching. They were originally published as a poem "Bitter Fruit" in 1937 by Abel Meeropol (a white Jewish schoolteacher from New York City) in response to photographs of lynchings that he saw in

9   As this is a widely available recording, I have not transcribed all of the musical elements (instrumentation, vocal line, chordal structure, etc., although reference will be made to these), but only the lyrics to ground the discussion. The lyrics have been transcribed as published by Meeropol, but on later occasions, when I am referring specifically to details of Holiday's performance, I have transcribed the lyrics as sung by her. Any modifications that she makes are, in any case, minor, often consisting of little more than dropping the "g" in the "-ing" ending of particular words, for example, or article substitution (see Holiday).

the 1930s.[10] Meeropol, who wrote under the pen name Lewis Allan, was a song-writer in the Tin Pan Alley tradition, one which was dominated by Jewish Amer-ican composers, lyricists, performers, promoters, and publishers.[11] That Meeropol turned his attention to such an unlikely topic as the lynching of African Amer-icans is perhaps on the surface surprising, but it is important to remember that the 1920s and 1930s "golden era" of Tin Pan Alley song was also a period that saw a large number of African Americans migrate from rural (Southern) to urban (Northern) areas and thus much greater interaction between various disparate musical traditions, even at a time of increased racism. Meeropol was, moreover, a man of considerable social conscience and addressed a wide diversity of top-ics in his songs, topics as diverse as the plight of labor during the Great Depres-sion, the rise of Fascism, Racism, American ideals, and American paranoia about the rise of Communism.[12] It is possible, as David Margolick remarks, that the par-ticular image that prompted "Strange Fruit" was of "a double lynching that took place north of the Mason-Dixon line[13] – in Marion, Indiana, in 1930 – immortal-ized in a shocking and widely publicized photograph" (21).

Northerners found this photograph particularly excruciating because, despite some evidence to the contrary, lynching was usually thought of as an exclusively Southern phenomenon.[14] It is contestable, however, whether this was in fact the photograph that sparked Meeropol's lyrics, as some of the most potent and dis-turbing images in his text – the bulging eyes and twisted mouth, and the referent for the catachresis of "Scent of magnolia, sweet and fresh" and "sudden smell of burning flesh!" – are notably absent in this photograph but were present in other photographs and postcards in circulation at the time (see Fig. 3).[15]

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10 The poem was published in *The New York Teacher*, a Teachers Union publication in Janu-ary 1937. Nancy Baker notes that the "editors of the paper *New Masses* had accepted the poem for publication in early 1936 but did not print it" (45).

11 By 1910 Jews made up more than 25 percent of the population of New York City, and they were critical to both the music industry and the vaudeville circuit. Meeropol achieved addi-tional notoriety after he and his wife adopted the two sons of Julius (1918-53) and Ethel (1915-53) Rosenberg when the couple were executed in the United States for espionage in 1953. It seems probable that Julius Rosenberg was passing information about the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union, but the degree of his wife's involvement has always been under debate. Their executions, nonetheless, remain singularly harsh punishments in that context.

12 For a comprehensive overview of his writings in this regard, see, Baker 25-79.

13 A boundary line surveyed from 1763 to 1767 by two English surveyors, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, to settle a dispute concerning territory between Pennsylvania and Mary-land. It runs along the fortieth parallel and is today a term used to designate the boundary separating the South from the North.

14 According to Tuskegee Institute figures, about 90 percent of lynchings that were recorded between 1889 and 1940 occurred in the South. Yet as Gunnar Myrdal remarked in his pio-neering study, *An American Dilemma* (1944): "Even in the North, some people have ceased to be concerned when another lynching occurs, and they jest about going South to see a lynching" (quoted in Margolick 21).

15 See, for example, "'*Townspeople gathered for the burning of John Lee,' 13 August 1911, Durant Oklahoma. Gelatin silver print. Real photo postcard, 5 x 7*," or "*The charred torso of an African American male hung in a coastal Georgia swamp, onlookers. 1902. Gelatin silver print. 2 ¼ x 17/8,*" both from the collection of James Allen (see Allen plates 18 and
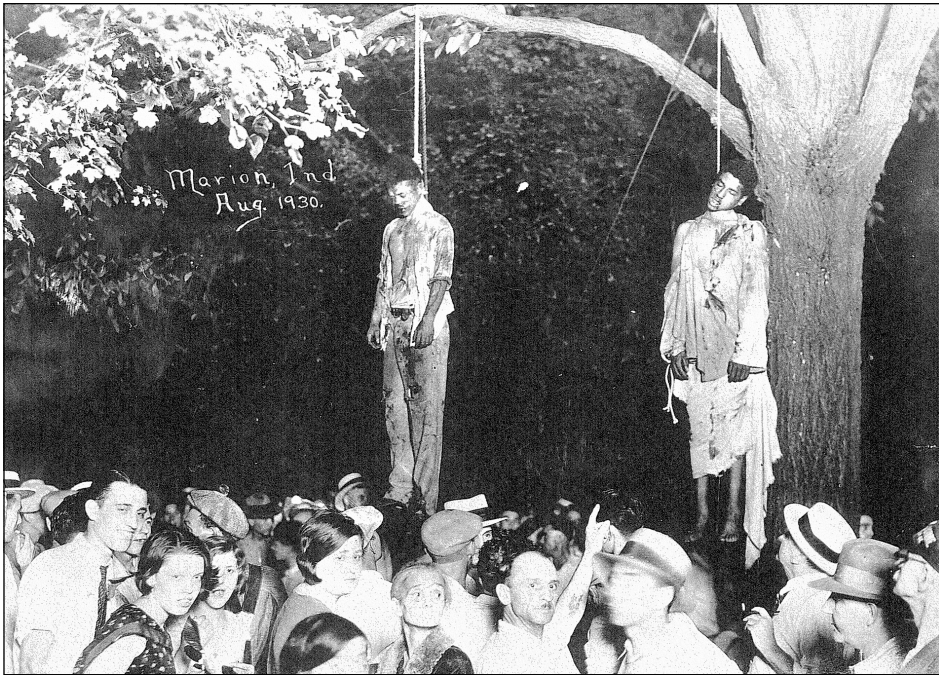
Fig. 2:   The lynching of Thomas Shipp and Abram Smith, 7 August 1930, Marion, Indiana (From Allen plate 31).

Much mythology (some of it promoted by Holiday herself) surrounds the origins and composition of the song, but it is clear that Holiday was neither the first to perform it (several others, including Meeropol's wife, had sung it before her), nor the last (Josh White and Nina Simone recorded it in the 1950s and 1960s, respectively, and more recent artists who have covered it include Sting, Tori Amos, and UB40). Holiday's 1939 recording, however, remains the standard against which all others must be measured. Holiday was not known for performing songs of

59). In 2000, Allen mounted a photographic exhibit in New York City based on 25 years of collecting lynching photographs and postcards. There is also an accompanying book, *Without Sanctuary*. Note on this plate: "25, *Burnt corpse of William Stanley, August 1915 Temple, Texas. Gelatin silver print. Real photo postcard. 5 ½ x 3 ½*" (Allen plate 25). This image, published in *Crisis Magazine* in the January 1916 issue, was described as the lynching of William Stanley, Temple, Texas, five months prior to the lynching of Jesse Washington in Waco, Texas. Please see plate 24 and the endpapers in Allen for Jesse Washington's torture and lynching on 16 May 1916. The Library of Congress has other images of the Washington lynching in their Print and Photograph Division. The sender of this card, Joe Myers, an oiler at the Bellmead car department and a Waco resident, marked his photo with a cross (now an ink smudge to left of victim). "26. *Reverse of postcard (plate 25). This card bears the advertising stamp,* 'Katy Electric Studio, Temple Texas. H. Lippe Prop.' *Inscribed in brown ink: 'this is the Barbecue we had last night my picture is to the left with a cross over it your son Joe.'*" Repeated references to eating are found in lynching-related correspondence, such as "*coon cooking,*" "*barbecue,*" and "*main fare*" (cf. Allen 174-75; Allen's italics throughout). Allen has also launched an accompanying interactive website (see *Without Sanctuary*).
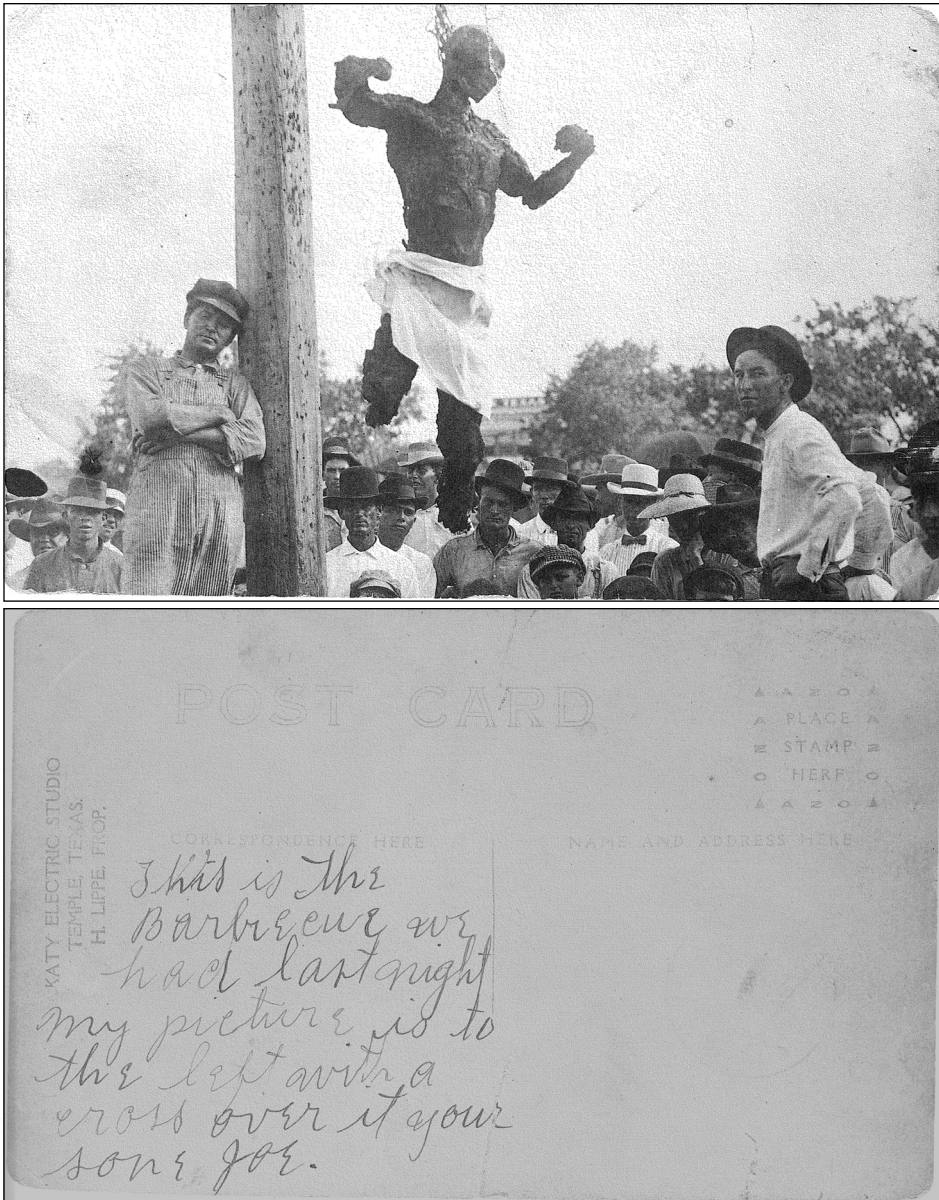
Fig. 3: Burnt corpse of William Stanley, August 1915, Temple, Texas (postcard, front and back). The text on the verso reads "This is the barbecue we had last night my picture is to the left with a cross over it your son Joe" (from Allen plates 25 and 26).

protest but here we have a particularly felicitous instance of the interaction of two distinct traditions: the talent of the Tin Pan Alley songwriter Abel Meeropol, and the heritage of protest and subversion inherent in African American music. At the time of the recording, Holiday's regular performing venue was the famous Café Society club in New York City, and so it was natural that she would record the song with her Café Society backup band, led by trumpeter Frankie Newton.

Columbia, the record company with which she was signed at the time, refused to record "Strange Fruit" on the grounds that it was too controversial, but Holiday persuaded a small company, Commodore Records, to record it, Columbia agreeing to release her for a one-off session. And so, on 20 April 1939, in a studio at 5th Avenue and 55th Street, Billie Holiday and the musicians committed to disc the most famous recording of "Strange Fruit."

Sources indicate that the arrangement of the song on the 1939 recording was the result of a three-week collaborative effort between Holiday, Sonny White (accompanist), and Danny Mendelssohn (an arranger with whom Holiday had previously worked). At any rate, it took four hours that April day to get this 3-minute-5-second track satisfactorily on vinyl. Set in B-flat minor, a resonantly somber key,[16] the song is preceded by a lengthy introduction, first on trumpet (appropriate given that Newton was the leader of the band), and then Sonny White on piano. This introduction, which takes up almost 40 percent of the entire track, and which so effectively sets the scene for what is to follow, was improvised by Newton and White at the direction of Milt Gabler (founder of Commodore Records). Because Commodore's 10-inch vinyls were significantly more expensive than those of their competitors, Gabler was concerned that purchasers would otherwise feel short-changed at the brevity of the track. This overture, with its haunting trumpet solo accompanied by the almost incessant cymbal tremolo, evokes in sound an eerie, surreal landscape. It is worth noting that, although quite different in tenor and style, Newton's solo was undoubtedly influenced by Louis Armstrong's dazzling free-tempo cadenza introduction to his famous version of "West End Blues," recorded eleven years earlier with his Hot 5.[17]

In contrast to the four-square rhythmic regularity of Allan's published version of "Strange Fruit" (see Baker, example 6, 49-51), the Holiday-Mendelssohn-White version is, in every sense – rhythmically, melodically, and harmonically – much more complex. It is, of course, important to note that in any popular music form that is transmitted primarily by oral rather than by written means, songs are rarely performed exactly as published. Sheet music functions mainly as a road map that must be interpreted and personalized. Yet, the departures from Meeropol's sheet music published in the same year as this early recording (copyright 1939 by Music Sales Corporation (ASCAP)), and which includes the entirely new introduction that takes up almost 40 percent of the entire track (as opposed to a brief and fairly straightforward 4-bar introduction in the original), far exceed those that one might expect.

16 See, for example, the more somber pieces of Chopin in the same key, including the sonata in B-flat minor, Op. 35.
17 This took place in Chicago Ill., June 28, 1928, with Fred Robinson (trombone), Jimmy Strong (clt), Earl Hines (piano and vocals), Mancy Cara (banjo and vocal), and Zutty Singleton (drums). Here Armstrong introduces ideas of phrasing and melodic rhythm that were not taken up again until Charlie Parker came along. Satchmo was now in the company of a counterpart on piano who also inspired him. His dazzling introduction, in the form of a free-tempo cadenza, is one of the most famous moments in jazz history.

In a tonal system that predominantly utilizes consonant triads, Meeropol's published score relies almost exclusively on primary triads (i, ii, IV, and V), which might be considered analogous to primary colors in painting, with only the occasional addition of mild dissonances (7ths, and 9ths, for example). The Holiday-Mendelssohn-White arrangement, in contrast, consistently uses upper dissonances and chromatic chords that considerably enrich the sound, adding fiery fuchsias, sulfureous yellows, scorching burnt umbers, and dark, blackened reds to the color palette, to continue the analogy. Thus, in this latter arrangement, the layering of detail creates a rich, if somber, tapestry, a transformation that is continued and developed, both melodically and rhythmically, by Holiday.

After Newton's solo – eight bars of almost free-tempo trumpet – accompanied by sustained chords on brass, White enters, slightly more up-tempo, likewise with a full 8-measure strophic statement. While this piano overture is still melodically haunting in the top voice, it is otherwise funereal in its plodding movement, reinforced by side drum and pizzicato bass, presaging the scene of death to which Holiday will introduce us shortly. A further two-bar transition leads to Holiday's entry.

If the piano and trumpet parts are relatively straightforward, but haunting, the same cannot be said of the vocals: Holiday is of course famous for the intricate delicacy, yet conviction, of her lyric and rhythmic delivery in this performance, but little detailed attention has been paid to just how subversive her rendition is. It is worth first remarking that, from the moment of Holiday's somewhat unobtrusive and low-pitched entrance, the performance becomes hers alone. Unlike her earlier recordings, such as "Mean to Me," recorded in 1937, for example, where Holiday was one of several performers in a small combo of equals,[18] or even the earlier and less accomplished "I Wished on the Moon," recorded in 1935, from the moment Holiday slips into "Strange Fruit," she is incontestably center stage. Apart from a two-bar piano transition between the first and second verses, she stands alone as the supreme (and one might argue sole) melodist: the accompaniment fades into the background with sustained chords, or marking the beat, and in front of this muted and predictable backdrop Holiday's performance burns itself into our consciousness.

I remarked that she slips into the song – and she does, despite the two-bar intro from the piano – entering softly, in the lower part of her range and, while off the beat, drawing no undue attention to the syncopation. Her opening phrase is a good illustration of her approach in the first verse.

Holiday's entry ("Southern trees") is syncopated (off the beat), but not accented, and she unobtrusively comes in on the tonic of the B-flat minor diminished seventh chord (as opposed to the simple C minor chord of the original) sustained by the ensemble. (By contrast, Meeropol's original gives the vocal entry

18 Here she was in the company of talented soloists Buck Clayton (trumpet), Teddy Wilson (piano), and Lester Young (tenor sax).

on the downbeat of the bar, with monotonic recitation on the tonic, C minor, of "Southern trees bear a" accompanied only by a sustained tonic chord.) That Holiday has shifted her initial entry to the middle rather than the beginning of the bar also, of course, effects the accentuation of the lyrics. Where Meeropol placed his lyrics so that the accented words in the first line of the poem are "Southern" and "strange" and reinforced this by using long notes on each accent, Holiday's initial syncopated entry serves to highlight just one word – bear – in this line, an accentuation she reinforces with a sustained, biting dissonance – the E-flat of her melody ("bear") is painfully at odds with the E natural of the harmony (a #iv diminished seventh chord, built on E natural, and decorating the dominant chord F major 7). Although this entry in the second bar of the phrase ("bear a strange fruit") is similar rhythmically to the initial entry, yet with more complex rhythmic subdivisions (a foretaste of things to come), it is also consistently rhythmically at odds with the walking bass line for the first half of the bar, and resolves into the harmony only with the resolution to the V 7 chord on the third beat ("strange"), and even then with a brief D-flat suspension. I use this one brief but detailed example to give some indication of the complexity and artistry of Holiday's rendition, but it should be noted that this level of very precise refinement persists throughout the song, ultimately rendering an exquisitely wrought performance.

The second phrase ("Blood on the leaves and blood at the root") proceeds in an analogous fashion, the melodic line still aligns uneasily with the harmonic progression (I dim 7th, ii dim, V), but absent is the biting dissonance of the first line. The fourth phrase ("Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees") also carries on like the two phrases already discussed, beginning after the primary accent, and split into two halves by a rest, but contained within the two-bar structure, and again without significant dissonance between melody and harmony. Billie is ensuring that we pay attention to the lyrics, counterpointed so carefully against the muted backdrop.

One phrase – the third – does, however, come in for more elaborate treatment. As Billie sings "Black body swingin' in the Southern breeze" her melody notes remain relatively consonant (against a fairly straightforward harmonic background – C minor dim 7, E-flat major, F major 7, or ii7, IV, V); her rhythm, however, almost defies notation, swinging, also horribly, with the body in the breeze. There is no mid-way rest in this phrase, and the rhythm dances in horizontal hemiola, consistently off the beat. This exemplifies the way in which Holiday subverts not only the metric underpinning of the music, but also the accentuation inherent in the lyrics: here, at last, we have an articulated downbeat, but on this downbeat Holiday places the most insignificant word of the phrase – "the."

It is, of course, the alliance of music and lyrics that makes this first verse such a powerful initial statement. The lyrics themselves, although situated in the present, are curiously aloof: we are presented with no human agency in this verse – or indeed in the entire song – instead we are "objectively" presented with a "strange" or curious picture, viewed as it were through a picture window. The

introductory music has, as already mentioned, set a stage of unease and created a funerary mood, but the opening statement of the verse is just that, a statement of fact, detached, even ambivalent perhaps (how are we to interpret "strange"?), but otherwise with little emotional connotation. The biting melodic-harmonic dissonance at "bear," of course, draws attention to its disparate meanings: to bear fruit, which often implies an earlier period of struggle or pain, and/or also to bear or tolerate, generally referring to how much pain or stress one can take. By portraying the body initially as a fruit, it is dehumanized: nature is the only protagonist here. The second line ("Blood on the leaves and blood at the root") is similarly disorienting: blood is not immediately identified with lynching, but is readily associated with horticulture, bloodred leaves, for example, or bonemeal fertilizer. The surreal "Black body swinging in the Southern breeze" is, in this context, difficult to take seriously unless we are paying very close attention, and the refinement of "swinging" and "breeze" conjure up instead images of gently rocking swings on the front porches of Southern houses. The final line of the verse returns to the detached "strange fruit" and concludes with the refined image of poplar trees, elegant and reaching skywards, but not automatically associated with the South unless referring to cottonwood trees (which few people would realize belong to the *populos* genus).

Following on a two-bar piano transition, verse two continues in a somewhat similar fashion to the first, although Holiday's rendition increases pace, not in terms of tempo, but in terms of the complexity of the rhythmic groupings and the way she sets her phrases. If in the first verse each phrase, other than the third one, breaks into two halves separated by a rest, in this second verse each of the phrases is continuous over two bars with the exception, that is, of the third phrase, which breaks into two halves. In this verse we also get occasional, fleeting interjections from the piano, shadows of collaborations in "Mean to Me" and other earlier performances. Ultimately, however, these ephemeral interjections come to nothing: there is to be no collaboration.

The lyrics of this second verse are arguably the most shocking, in part because of the alternating juxtapositions of refined images with awful details of the results of lynching. Thus, the opening "pastoral scenes of the gallant South" evoke an Arcadian image of the plantation South, as does line three's "Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh," the white magnolia being readily linked to the South, and to Mississippi in particular, where it is both official state tree and state flower.[19] Interspaced between these lines, and forming an extreme paradox with them, are the gruesome particulars of lynching: bulging eyes, twisted mouth, and the smell of burning flesh. The images that these lines evoke are so graphic and agonizing that they effectively point up the delusive harmony of the preceding lines,

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19 Both the state tree and the state flower were voted for by the schoolchildren of the state of Mississippi, and then officially designated by the State Legislature, the state tree in 1938 (one year before Holiday's recording of this song), and the state flower in 1952.

painting a vivid contrast to the sweet, fresh, gallant South, through the barbarity evoked by these details.

Without ceremony or transition, then (there is no two-bar transition here), and with the opening "Here," we are dragged unrelentingly into the cumulative anaphora and increasingly more graphic and disturbing imagery of the final stanza ("For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck, / For the sun to rot, for a tree to drop").

Holiday now abandons any pretense at well-mannered structure, and instead of (as before) confining phrases to their respective two-bar segments, she begins each phrase in the space of the previous one, barely allowing us time to breathe, much less absorb the ghastly imagery, until we come, in the third line, to the image of the tree dropping the body. Here Holiday similarly almost drops us (and drops out), lengthening note durations, restricting range, sliding lazily between pitches in that restricted range, reducing rhythmic tension by introducing long notes, and aligning meter and accentuation of the lyrics in a way that is appallingly predictable and anticlimactic. Despite its headlong opening (and it is, significantly, a dissonant opening, persistently pitting a C melody note against the B-flat minor diminished 7th chord), this is ultimately the longest verse in her rendition – extending from 8 to 10 bars – and the recording ends abruptly with Holiday's last note, answered by a spread chord from the ensemble.

Certainly the images of this final verse are harrowing, but they are also curiously objective: the body is again dehumanized as a fruit, and the process of decomposition is evoked by reference to the forces of nature – crows, rain, wind, sun, and tree – that would not be so disquieting were this anything but a human body. The only active protagonist here is the crow, aside from the inanimate natural forces, and what the former does is done without malice, in dreadful contrast to the vicious actions that establish this tableau. The reiteration of "Here" to open the final line keeps us firmly in the frame, as it were, and this final line delivers the single emotive word in the lyrics – "bitter" – to describe the body, which has now been further objectified into a "crop."

This is by any standards a powerful performance, and one rendered even more so by the time in which it was recorded, when lynching, while declining, was still a potent force in American society.[20] (One could, of course, argue that it still was, late into the 1990s, as witnessed by the unprovoked lethal shooting of Yusuf K. Hawkins, one of a group of four black teenagers, walking through Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, NY, in 1989, who were set upon by a gang of white men; the dousing with petrol and setting alight of Christopher Wilson by three white men in 1993 when he was vacationing in Florida; and the chaining of James Byrd, Jr., to the

20 As a result of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)'s antilynching drive, the U.S. House of Representatives passed antilynching legislation "on three separate occasions, in 1922, 1937, and 1940. Each of these measures was ultimately defeated in the Senate" (Markovitz 5) and the campaign for federal antilynching legislation ultimately had no effect.

back of a pickup truck in Jasper, Texas, in 1998, by three white men who then dragged him for two miles until he was dead and his body mutilated.)

Holiday's performance is particularly convincing, I would argue, not least because of the particular timbre and pathos of her voice, but also because of the quality of emotion with which she imbues her performance. This is not an aggressive rendition, it is permeated with sadness, certainly, but also with a certain fatalism and detachment, and so we are dragged along, as "objective" onlookers, to witness the scene. Lynching, and the horrific details that this song puts on record, were possible in a society that had formally ended the tyranny of slavery but had steadfastly held on to the relationships, attitudes, and beliefs engendered in its long history. As Billie Holiday here undermines details of melody, harmony, meter, and lyrics to serve expressive ends, she emancipates melody and rhythm from the metrical constraints of meter, a masterful stroke against a funereally plodding accompaniment. She positions her rendition delicately but assertively against the accompaniment, easing us gently, but without allowing us any chance to escape, into the narrative that she unfolds. In "Strange Fruit" we have a consummately subversive lyric of protest, for which Holiday similarly creates a subversive and intensely expressive sung rendition.

The question of whether Holiday's interpretation of "Strange Fruit" is really as remarkable as I claim is still an open one. Certainly the vocabulary and approaches she used were common to many jazz musicians of the period, but if we look, for example, at "I Got a Right to Sing the Blues," one of three other tracks recorded at the same session, it becomes evident that the level of subversive detail, only some of which I have been able to point to in "Strange Fruit," is simply not present. Yes, in this other sad – if not nearly so frightful – song Holiday's rhythms dance around the beat, entries are delayed or anticipated, and pitch is inflected for effect, but finally there is, on the whole, greater regularity and more sound alignment of music and lyrics. It is the degree of subversion in the specifics of her rendition, I would argue, that in no small way contributes to making Billie Holiday's 1939 recording of "Strange Fruit" not only her own most virtuosic performance, but also the most powerful rendition of the song to date.

Here, then, the tables are subtly but undeniably turned: the oppressed indicts the oppressor, pointing to the dehumanizing effect that slavery and its aftermath have on all involved, and drawing a graphically detailed portrait of the pernicious effects of human bondage that persist well beyond the termination of such a system, and generally result in significant harm to the society of the oppressor as well as to the society of the oppressed.

Conclusion

The African American performance that I have discussed here is exceptional, but it is certainly not unique. Its genesis can be found in the pernicious and vicious legacy of slavery, which itself had fostered continuation of a West African tradition of protest and subversion in song. Nor did that tradition end with "Strange Fruit": it continued through the protest songs of the U.S. Civil Rights movement that mobilized so many to action and, sparked by the atrocities that bedeviled that movement, culminating with the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968, lived on in the performances of Nina Simone and others. Simone's reworking of George Harrison's "My Sweet Lord" (1970), for example, interfaces Harrison's performance with the David Nelson poem "Today is a Killer" in a lengthy (more than eighteen minutes), powerful, and angry production that tops out with the lyrics "Today, who are you Lord? You are a killer!"[21] It also continued in a cross-cultural context in the protest songs of Bob Dylan, songs such as "Blind Willie McTell,"[22] for example, which harks back intertextually, if not musically, to "Strange Fruit." Repatriated to African American rap music, that tradition of protest and subversion endures in the raps of Tupac Amaru Shakur (1971-96).[23] All of the above examples employ musical means, often in collaboration with the iconography of popular culture, to fiercely oppose iniquity, and to disrupt the paradigms of the dominant culture. Each offers a graphic example of how the arts can challenge otherwise "acceptable" societal norms.

Linda Alcoff insightfully remarks that "a society sets out the possibilities for identifying and redressing injustice, and thus for imagining the scope and requirements of justice" ("Objectivity", 835). A society that fosters injustice will ultimately fall victim to that injustice. It is how a society treats its weakest and most vulnerable members that defines its values. To seek to dress injustice in fine clothes, to use language and logic to explain it away, dehumanizes not only the oppressed but, ultimately, the oppressor as well. Human bondage cannot be brushed under the carpet: its pernicious effects contaminate everyone and everything it touches.

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21 On her 1972 album *Emergency Ward*, but recorded live at Fort Dix, New Jersey, in November 1971. My thanks to my postgraduate student, Elaina Solon, for bringing this recording's recent re-release on CD to my attention.
22 Recorded in 1983, but not released until 1991.
23 See, for example, his song "White Man'z World" (1996).

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"We were treated like slaves." Remembering Forced Labor for Nazi Germany

CORD PAGENSTECHER

Introduction

Can Nazi forced labor be considered slavery? What did it have in common with other systems of coerced labor that have appeared throughout history? What aspects are specific to it? I do not endeavor to draw a systematic comparison between these different and complex historical phenomena. A theoretically sound comparison would be difficult in any case because slavery and Nazi forced labor have not been analyzed in the same conceptual frameworks by historians. Very few works on the history of Nazi Germany have been influenced by postcolonial studies (e.g. Buggeln, Conrad, Füllberg-Stolberg, Patel). German historians sometimes use the term "slave" without, however, really relating it to the history of slavery in the United States, let alone in other parts of the world. Recently, however, comparative studies that examine various forms of slavery, serfdom, and bonded labor in history have begun to appear, including Lutz Raphael's work at University of Trier.

Germany's own colonial past is largely forgotten today, although some discriminatory, racist, and genocidal ideas and practices in National Socialism seem to date back to German colonial history, be it Wilhelminian maritime colonialism or the continental, anti-Slavic colonialism during the First World War. German mainstream historiography still focuses on national rather than global perspectives, on political rather than cultural issues, on German-language literature rather than an international one.

Because of the uniqueness of the Holocaust, it is indeed problematic for Germans to take Nazi crimes as an object of comparative, not to mention cultural studies. While such an approach might help in understanding the wider context of unfree labor, it must not trivialize fascist violence or relativize German responsibility. This is rightly stressed in Marc Buggeln's convincing comparison – not equation, as he underlines – between slavery in the American South and forced labor in the concentration camps. His article, however, is restricted to the post-

1942 subcamps of concentration camps, an important, but numerically small part of Nazi forced labor.

Instead of a comparison, this paper thus will provide a short and very general historical overview of Nazi forced labor and its post-war remembrance. More specifically, it scrutinizes the use of the term "slave" within the memorial discourse about Nazi forced labor. With slavery being part of European history, its legacy is also likely to be found in ideas of, about, and after National Socialism. I am asking if and how verdicts of postwar trials, debates about compensation, public commemorations, and – not least – individual memories of former forced laborers themselves spoke of "slave work" or adopted corresponding argumentations. How was forced labor viewed against such a 'slavery' background?

Different possible sources may be examined to answer this question, ranging from judicial documents and press publications to representations in films, monuments, and museums. I will concentrate on written or videotaped testimonies and private photographs of former forced laborers.

Personal testimonies and pictorial evidence, however, do pose certain methodological problems that cannot be discussed here (Young, Pagenstecher). These biographical sources reflect different postwar memory cultures that have recently been a subject of intensive research (Plato et al). As in the case of American slavery, the current interest in former forced laborers' narratives has grown enormously. Historians and memory workers have tried to restore voice and dignity to those forgotten victims who have been silenced for so many decades. Furthermore, these narratives help to recognize the victims as individual actors in history. It is, however, important, especially in Germany, not to forget the analysis of perpetrators and bystanders by concentrating one's research solely on the victims of Nazi crimes.

Historical Overview

National Socialist Germany created one of the largest systems of forced labor in history. Over twelve million people from over twenty European countries were forced to work for Germany during the Second World War (Herbert; Spoerer, *Hakenkreuz*). In the summer of 1944 alone, six million foreign civilians, two million prisoners of war, and over half a million concentration camp prisoners worked in the German Reich. The biggest groups came from Poland and the Soviet Union. A sixth of the foreigners, but half of the Soviet workers, were women, who sometimes had been deported to Germany together with their children or gave birth to them in the camps.

All occupied countries were used as workforce reservoirs. Attempts at voluntary recruitment had little success; from 1940 not only Czechs and Poles, but also a growing number of Dutch, Belgians, and French were conscripted. In the occu-

pied territories, too, millions of men, women, and children were forced to work for the enemy.

Initially, the Nazis did not want large numbers of foreigners to enter the Reich, fearing hostile political activities, military espionage, or "contamination" of "Aryan blood." After the failure of the attack on the Soviet Union in 1941, however, economic and military needs overruled racist concerns. In 1942, the armament minister Albert Speer and the plenipotentiary for labor deployment Fritz Sauckel began organizing the forced labor of millions of foreigners in the war economy, combining racist repression with efficient exploitation. In the Soviet Union, tens of thousands were rounded up on the streets and deported to Germany. Thus, Nazi forced labor was not only closely connected to the course of the Second World War, but it was also integrated into a modern, industrial war economy and an urban society, whereas other forms of slavery, although their modern aspects have been underlined recently, were primarily part of agricultural economies and societies.

During the Second World War, foreigners had to work in agriculture and construction, in industry and on the railroad, in private households and the public sector. It was the forced laborers who kept German arms production and food supply going. German industry profited from the increased production, which also helped bring about the post-war economic 'miracle'. The import of a foreign workforce that suffered massive discrimination offered many Germans opportunities for social advancement: even poorly qualified German workers became foremen and overseers. Unlike the rest of Europe, the German population did not suffer hunger until 1945, thanks to forced labor in agriculture and the exploitation of the occupied territories (Aly).

All foreign workers were meticulously registered and controlled by a racial-bureaucratic repressive apparatus comprising the police, *Wehrmacht*, SS, labor office, and company security guards, thus creating a mixture of private and state slavery. Different from the entirely commercial slavery system in the US, where the planters themselves owned and commanded their slaves and overseers, in Germany there were some conflicts between the slave-'owning' SS, Gestapo, and *Wehrmacht* and the slave-'exploiting' companies or their associations. But these intra-regime tensions between the efficiency of the war economy on one side, and the racialized state terror on the other side, tend to be overstated in some studies simply because they have produced more archival material. They also fit well into the historiographical debate between those who saw a central racist mastermind at the heart of Nazi politics and those who stressed conflicting interests of competing actors within a polycratic system of power. No matter whether National Socialism is being interpreted as Hitler's personal dictatorship, as a racial state, as a capitalist class system, or as a bureaucratic regime that relied on the buy-in of the German populace, the discriminatory exploitation system of forced labor generally functioned well.

The foreigners lived in terrible sanitary conditions, often fell ill, and usually remained hungry after working long hours. They were extremely vulnerable to Allied bomb raids, much more so than the general German population. Their housing consisted of overcrowded, bug infested barracks or disused restaurants and ballrooms. In Berlin alone about three thousand camps of a variety of sizes are documented, which means that they were essentially around the corner from the home of every German citizen (Pagenstecher, Bremberger and Wenzel 96ff., 137ff., 183ff.). The so-called *Fremdvölkische* – a pejorative term used in Nazi racist ideology for foreigners not belonging to what the Nazis construed as the 'Germanic' race – were highly visible on their daily way to work as well as during their labor in the factories and fields. Discrimination was part of war routine and was opposed by very few Germans. Still, a certain number of Germans were persecuted because of illegal contact with foreigners, whether the connection was motivated by sexual attraction, political solidarity, or religious compassion.

Differentiations

The term "forced labor" encompasses a range of quite distinctly different forms of work assignments; as in other historical contexts there were various degrees of 'slavery' under the Nazi regime. The living conditions of the forced laborers varied depending on status, work location, national origin, and gender as well as on the type and size of the camp in which the workers lived. The principal groups consisted of prisoners of concentration camps, civilian workers, and prisoners of war. The majority of camps fell into the following categories: concentration camps (*Konzentrationslager* or *KZ*), KZ satellite camps and external *Kommandos*, ghettos, forced labor camps for Jews, labor education camps, prisoner of war camps (*Stalags*), and – by far outnumbering the rest – camps for civilian workers. The principal groups consisted of prisoners of concentration camps, civilian workers, and prisoners of war. Working conditions and violence levels differed vastly depending on the type of camp (civilian or concentration camp) and on national or religious origin of the laborers (West European, East European or Jewish).

Romany (Gypsy) as well as Jewish slave laborers became victims of "extermination through labor." Quantitative research methods, although sometimes risking too much abstraction from the actual violence, demonstrate the extremely high mortality rates of Jewish prisoners (especially in construction *Kommandos*) compared to civilian West Europeans and particularly on industrial work sites (Freund). On the other hand, work was often the only chance of surviving the *Shoah*, of which Steven Spielberg's highly popular film *Schindler's List* (1993) is an exemplary depiction.

People of Slavic descent were also discriminated against on racist grounds, particularly the so-called *Ostarbeiter* (Eastern workers) from the Soviet Union.

The "Italian Military Internees," deported to Germany after the Italian ceasefire in 1943, were denounced as traitors and also treated miserably.

By contrast, civilian forced laborers had more freedom than prisoners of war or concentration camp prisoners. Forced labor in mines and construction was a lot worse than domestic or agricultural work. Conditions in the occupied territories differed considerably from those in the Reich, and women suffered additional harassment. These circumstances changed considerably during the course of the war, as did the behavior of individual commanders, guards, employers, and foremen, both in the workplace and the camps.

As with all racist systems, Nazi Germany was obsessed with racial classifications. It had to specifically 'signpost' different groups of *Untermenschen* ("subhumans") because they looked more or less the same as 'real' Germans; unlike with the 'black' American slaves, there were no clearly visible signs of racial otherness. In the concentration camps, prisoners had to wear striped uniforms, with textile triangles of different colors indicating the different prisoner categories: political (red), Jehova's Witnesses (purple), *Asoziale* ("antisocial elements") (black), and so on. Among civilian foreigners, workers from Poland and the Soviet Union had to wear special badges, with either "P" or "OST" written on them. In March 1940, the Gestapo issued detailed orders concerning the form and size of the "P" badge, which preceded the special badges – the yellow star – that Jews had to wear first in Germany from September 1941 onwards. Some especially hard-working Ostarbeiter were rewarded by being allowed to wear the "OST" badge on the left arm instead of – as usual – on the right side of the chest (Woock 128).

Slavery was no longer seen as an appropriate economic system for European countries in the twentieth century, and Germany had signed the League of Nation's Slavery Convention in 1926. Even the Nazis rarely used the word "slave," particularly not in reference to their long-term plans for the exploitation of Eastern European *Arbeitsvölker* (peoples deemed only fit for labor) after the Third Reich's expected Second World War victory. Their vision of the future was clearly one of a German slaveholder society.

In the short run, however, the civilian foreign workers were treated according to a mixture of established labor and migration bureaucracy, including registration, documentation, and insurance, but were also ruled by specific pieces of anti-Slavonic and anti-Semitic legislation. The system of discrimination followed a clear race hierarchy, although political and juridical factors were intertwined. The Nazi bureaucracy issued instructions to its lower ranks in the form of leaflets that precisely defined the different ethnic groups and the appropriate forms of treatment that were determined according to each group's rung on a presumed ethnic ladder. Nonetheless there was no clear or consistent nomenclature: in the contemporary documents we encounter words such as "aliens," "foreign workers," "Fremdvölkische," "Ostarbeiter," and "prisoners," but also "guest workers" and colloquial words, for example, "Russenweiber" ("Russian broads").

Moreover, there was also a link between socio-economic and 'racial' status. Mark Spoerer has stressed the connection between a person's level in this racist hierarchy and the level of prosperity of her or his home country. He argues that we find almost a direct correlation between Nazi race groupings and the pre-war gross domestic product (GDP) of different European countries (Spoerer, "Differenzierung" 570). Leaving aside the specifics of anti-Semitism, this correlation – racism affects the poor disproportionately – also applies in many other contexts, even today.

In the course of the war, with defeat looming, Germans began to search for support in neighboring countries, trying to rally European peoples behind the *Führer* in his proclaimed war against Bolshevism. *Europe works in Germany* was the title of an illustrated book commissioned by Fritz Sauckel. The opulent volume, published in several languages, contains photographs showing laughing workers in well-organized camps and clean workplaces (Didier). Officials, such as Gotthold Starke from the German foreign office, tried to counter Stalin's "enslavement" propaganda and now wanted to "engage the Ostarbeiter for a new Europe and thereby for the German war potential" (Pagenstecher, Bremberger and Wenzel 222).

The number of forced laborers under the Third Reich (twelve million) is consonant with other slave systems in history. This enormous number of people was, however, deported, forced to work, and if not killed, liberated within a very short period of time. Only seven years lay between the beginning of labor enforcement for German Jews in 1938 (*Geschlossener Arbeitseinsatz*) (Gruner) and the liberation of the camps in 1945. The system of the KZ satellite camps operated mainly during the last two years of the war.

The rapid and enormous growth of the forced labor system proves the ruthless efficiency of its organizers, but makes systematic cultural studies difficult. The German slaveholder society – fortunately – was halted while still in process. Unlike the African American context, a specific *habitus* or culture of forced laborers had insufficient time to develop, even though various studies have proven the importance of cultural activities of the concentration camp prisoners (e.g. Jaiser, Brauer).

The Czech example

Fig. 1: "Otroci XX. stoleti, Berlin 43" ("Slaves of the 20th century, Berlin [19]43"). Private photograph of Czech workers (Archiv BGW/*Svaz nuceně nasazených*).

A private photograph from the archive of the *Svaz nuceně nasazených* (*SNN*), a Czech survivors' association, shows Czech workers in Berlin gathered around a table on which a bag has been placed on which is written *Otroci XX. stoleti, Berlin 43* (Slaves of the 20th century, Berlin [19]43.) These workers do not look like slaves, however. They are all well-groomed, are all wearing suits and ties, and most are smiling for the camera. But the simple wooden table and the locker with displaying pictures hint at where the photograph was taken: in a barrack of a camp for forced laborers. To be precise, it was taken in a camp of the Ambi Budd metal factory in Berlin's South Eastern industrial district Treptow-Johannisthal.

The names of these 'slaves' are unknown. They are, however, civilian workers from the Protectorate, i.e., what remained of Czechoslovakia after the September 1938 Munich treaty and the March 1939 occupation of Prague. Since 1938 a growing number of Czechs had been compelled to work in Germany due to increasing economic hardship and political pressure. Like laborers from other countries, the Czechs were sometimes called volunteers, although later, during the war, most of them were denied the chance to return home.

Ever since 1942 entire age groups of Czechs had been conscripted to the *Totaleinsatz* (total effort) in the Reich (*Im Totaleinsatz*, Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt, *Totaleinsatz*). All in all, more than four hundred thousand Czechs worked as forced laborers in Germany. They occupied an intermediate position in the Nazis'

racial status hierarchy, being part of the lower Slavonic "race" on the one side, but an urban, well-trained, often German-speaking work force on the other. As with French and Dutch workers, they were allowed to bring photographs and take pictures, which was prohibited for Poles and Russians. As citizens of the Protectorate, legally they were not aliens, but called *Inländer besonderer Art* ("nationals of a particular kind"). In their registration and work documents, however, German officials gave them all different kinds of labels, such as *Tscheche* (Czech) or *BuM* (*Böhmen und Mähren*/Bohemia and Moravia), demonstrating the difficulties German authorities had in putting their sophisticated racist hierarchy into practice. While civilian Czech workers can hardly be labeled slaves, many Czechs were sent to concentration camps, among them about seventy-three thousand Jews and six thousand Gypsies. And many civilian laborers were sent to punitive or concentration camps for leaving their workplace or even allegedly planning acts of sabotage.

František Vendiš, born in 1921, worked for the Siemens Company in Berlin-Spandau from 1942 to 1945. As a qualified electrician, he found conditions bearable. Despite the fact that he was forced to labor by the enemy, after the war, like other (mostly male) civilian workers, he recalled the quality of his work with a certain pride. In the depraved situation of forced labor, work itself was one of the few sources of self-regard and dignity. Nevertheless, Vendiš tried to escape in 1943, but was soon tracked down by the Gestapo and sent to a "labor education camp" for six weeks, where horrible conditions reigned. He was then taken back to Siemens. At the end of his testimony, written in 1997, he asked for help in getting compensation from Siemens. At the time, he was writing a book whose Czech title, significantly, translates as *The Memories of a White Slave* (Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt, *Totaleinsatz* 9).

Postwar debates

A departure from most other slaveholder societies, the Nazi system of forced labor underwent juridical prosecution immediately after the breakdown of the Reich in 1945. The term "slave labor" played a major role during the Nuremberg trials of Nazi leaders such as Fritz Sauckel, in his capacity as the plenipotentiary for labor deployment. "The evidence shows that Sauckel was in charge of a program which involved deportation for slave labor of more than 5,000,000 human beings, many of them under terrible conditions of cruelty and suffering" ("Judgement against Sauckel").

The prosecution successfully proved Sauckel's and Speer's responsibility for what it called the "slave labor program." The Allied judges did not discuss in detail the meaning of this term, but used it to specifically refer to the deportation and deployment of civilian foreign workers, not to concentration camp prisoners. Even West European civilians who were forced to work in Germany but

who could move about freely within cities, and some of whom even lived in private accommodations, were called slave laborers. Maybe it was partly this failure to distinguish between civilian workers and concentration camp prisoners that allowed postwar Germany to almost completely ignore the court's findings concerning mass deportation and exploitation of forced labor, together with the general rejection of the Nuremberg trials as 'victors' justice.' For the German public, forced laborers became forgotten victims of National Socialism. The survivors were only remembered as 'displaced persons', who were often portrayed as members of criminal gangs because after their liberation they stole food from German neighbors or sometimes took revenge on cruel employers or guards.

Foreign victims had no voice in Germany and forced labor was not recognized as a specific Nazi crime. Once the war ended, the camp barracks were either destroyed or used for refugees or migrants. The typical postwar German word *Fremdarbeiter* (a term still used today in Switzerland for foreign workers) erased any notion that force or coercion had been involved in bringing them to work for the Third Reich.

In 1953, the German Federal Compensation Law excluded most foreign forced laborers from receiving payments. In the London Debt Treaty of the same year, West Germany managed to postpone the question of compensation until after a peace treaty was signed, which in the end never materialized. To avoid further discussion, the government paid lump sums to Israel and some Western countries, but nothing to East Europe and nothing to individuals (Goschler).

It were victim groups that advocated for use of the term "slave labor." In 1951, in one of the first German trials held on Nazi forced labor, Norbert Wollheim demanded compensation from the former IG Farben company, which had used him as "slave worker" while he was a prisoner at the KZ Auschwitz (see *Wollheim-Memorial*). In general, however, the former forced laborers could not file suit against their former persecutors or "owners" because after 1945 they had returned to their home countries. Unlike in other slavery contexts, the liberated 'slaves' had left the slaveholder society completely and had no influence in either of the two German states.

Once back home, especially in the then Soviet Union, the returnees were, across the board, suspected of having collaborated with the Germans. Some were placed in Stalinist camps, others were discriminated against at work. Some people did not even tell their families about their forced labor experience. Most still suffer physical and psychological consequences of their forced labor and, especially in Eastern Europe, live in deep poverty.

In many European countries, public remembrance centered on armed resistance and liberating armies, not on the civilians forced to work for the enemy. In France, the former workers of the *Service du travail obligatoire* tried hard to gain a place in the national memorial culture as *Déportés du travail*. In Poland, the millions of civilian forced laborers made up the bulk of the population and were

remembered as 'normality', whereas former KZ prisoners were and are a different victim group, their slave labor essentially ignored.

For decades, German governments and industry refused to pay any adequate compensation to the former forced laborers. In the 1990s, however, political pressure grew in support of individual compensation for forced laborers, civilians and prisoners alike.

Between 1998 and 2000, boycott threats and legal class actions in the US forced the German state and industry to set up the foundation *Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft* (Remembrance, Responsibility and Future), which between 2001 and 2007 made a onetime payment of between 500 and 7,700 Euros to former forced laborers, depending on the circumstances of their persecution. Prisoners of war and other groups of victims received no compensation at all (Jansen and Saathoff, Eizenstat).

Lengthy talks between German companies and politicians, American lawyers, and associations of Nazi victims took place prior to the agreement on financial compensation in 2000. During the debates, Jewish victims' associations stressed the very different conditions faced by concentration camp prisoners and civil forced laborers, as well as by Jewish and non-Jewish prisoners. The term "forced and slave labor" was increasingly used to draw a more or less clear-cut conceptual distinction between concentration camp prisoners and civil workers, which was also supposed to help determine different levels of payment.

Some historians criticized the term "slave labor" as trivializing the "extermination by work" program of the SS, which – in contrast to the agenda of the farmers in the American South – placed little or no value on the life of its "slaves." Spoerer (*Hakenkreuz* 17) argues, therefore, that the term "slave worker" would be most appropriate for the Ostarbeiter, but not for the KZ prisoners.

The prominent American jurist Benjamin Ferencz, chief prosecutor at one of the Nuremberg trials and, for decades, an advocate for compensation of Holocaust victims, summed up this argument as early as 1979 in the title of his book, *Less than Slaves*. Interestingly, however, the German translation of the title, *Lohn des Grauens*, which could be translated as "Wage of Horror," omits this reference to slavery.

Since these debates, the differentiation between 'slave' and 'forced' labor has governed many procedures in the compensation process. For instance, on 17 February 1999, the German president, Johannes Rau, solemnly declared: "I pay tribute to all those who were subjected to slave and forced labor under German rule, and, in the name of the German people, beg forgiveness." Sometimes the term slave labor is used only for Jewish prisoners of concentration camps or ghettos, sometimes for all inmates of concentration camps, but not for civilian workers or prisoners of war. The German federal law establishing the foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" distinguishes between forced labor in concentration camps, ghettos, and similar camps (category A) and forced labor under prisonlike conditions (category B), but does use the word "slave labor" in its pre-

amble, "recognizing that the National Socialist State inflicted severe injustice on slave laborers and forced laborers."

In the press, these separations were not always strictly observed. CNN World, for example, reported on 12 February 2002: "A group of German schoolchildren has donated nearly $15,000 to Ukrainians who had been forced to work as Nazi slave laborers in their hometown during World War II. […] Two million [Ukrainians] were sent to concentration camps or became 'Ostarbeiters', Hitler's main slave labor source." German journalists usually printed pictures of concentration camp prisoners wearing their striped uniforms when writing about civilian Ostarbeiters, who actually did not wear this uniform. "What is the price of Hitler's labor slaves today?", *Die Zeit* wondered in 1997 (Kleine-Brockhof). On a local level, in many German cities the responsibility of public authorities, private companies, churches, and institutions for 'forced and slave labor' has been the subject of debate (*Heinkel in Rostock*). Following the compensation payments, the foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" initiated an interview project called "Documentation of Biographical Interviews with Former Slave and Forced Laborers." Whereas the corresponding book is entitled *Hitler's Slaves* (Plato et al.), the accompanying website, including an online interview archive, is called *Forced Labor 1939-1945* (*Zwangsarbeit-Archiv*). Generally, "forced labor" seems to have become the academically accepted generic term. Yet, the ways in which these words are used in different countries, as well as by survivors and former workers, have remained contested, partly because of their links to the thorny issue of national memorial cultures.

Testimonies

For the purpose of studying the role of 'slavery' in survivors' testimonies, I looked at two resources: During the 1990s, the Berlin History Workshop collected hundreds of written testimonies and private photographs from former Czech, Polish, Ukrainian, and Belorussian civilian workers in Berlin. A similar collection of letters from former Soviet POWs was assembled by the *Kontakte* association, also in Berlin (Kontakte). *Die Freie Universität* (The Free University) Berlin is currently developing a digital interview archive containing almost six hundred audio and video interviews with former slave and forced laborers. The web-based archive platform *Forced Labor 1939-1945: Memory and History* provides access to the collection of testimonies compiled by the *FernUniversität* (Distance-learning University) Hagen and financed by the RRF (*Forced Labor 1939-1945;* see Plato et al., Pagenstecher, "*Zwangsarbeit 1939-1945*").

Drawing on these sources, I have looked at the ways the word "slave" is used in the testimonies. This paper cannot present a statistic because my research is based on material from different collections of testimonies, it uses the German

translations only, and it is restricted to the electronically searchable parts of the collections, which, until now, have not yet been fully indexed.

However, this survey shows the following tentative results: slavery is far from being a dominant collective memory pattern of former forced laborers. Only about a tenth of the testimonies use the word "slave." The number of references to slavery in testimonies does not correspond to the degree of persecution and terror or to the hardships of life under German rule. Only three out of seventy-nine former Ostarbeiters wrote about "slavery," and Soviet prisoners of war also described themselves as "slaves" to a lesser degree than witnesses of other nationalities. For example, this term occurs in twenty-five out of two hundred fourteen Polish written testimonies. Within all national groups, academics and intellectuals taking part in historic-political debates apparently use this term more often.

Obviously, the word "slave" is used when the witnesses want to emphasize the humiliation and the anger they felt. The Ukrainian Michail K. still displayed such anger in 1997 when he wrote: "How can one forget, what we experienced, if there was the stamp 'slave' on the work document? This was a terrible period. I worked in [Berlin-]Köpenick and I was dragged off to work by guards with a dog! Write that down, so that your youth will know what a fascist was!" (Archiv BGW, zwa.br.ost 329)

Some witnesses refer to slavery in order to connect their personal experiences to historical narratives that carry a particular significance within their cultural background or connected to their particular heritage. One of the Jewish survivors recalls the slavery of the Hebrews in pharaonic Egypt. Upset by his memories, he has trouble talking about his captivity, likening his traumatic experience of slavery to a nightmare that continues to haunt him: "I am a kind of slave, sold, that means, they do to you whatever they want. […] I am willing to tell more […] this is simply a nightmare. […] Slaves we were in Egypt" (Shalom A., Archiv ZWAR, za094).

An Italian Military Internee, whose mother was born in the Caribbean, compared his own forced labor to Caribbean slavery. Very active for years in memory and compensation initiatives, he wrote books about "Hitler's slaves" while also collecting his mother's and grandmother's memories of Guadeloupe (Claudio S., Archiv ZWAR, za126). For another Italian survivor, financial compensation meant the – belated – German recognition that she was one of "Hitler's slaves" (Carla M., Archiv ZWAR, no S.).

This issue of recognition and compensation is probably the most important context in which survivors talk about their "slavery" experience. Due to its highly public use during the compensation debate, the slave labor argument is now mostly employed when talking about the reluctance of German companies or government officials to accede to the compensation demands by their former 'slave workers'. A former Soviet POW wrote to the German NGO *Kontakte*: "The moral damages and the slave labor must be compensated with the highest rates" (Archiv Kontakte, Freitagsbriefe Nr. 51). A Polish witness forced to work for Lufthansa

wrote: "Today this wealthy aviation company has forgotten its slaves and paying for forced labor" (Archiv BGW, zwa.br.pl 607).

Many survivors were outraged about the need to prove their deportation as forced laborers. A Ukrainian woman wrote: "The 'Arbeitsbuch' [workbook] is being asked for, where we worked, in which city […] Do you follow me, who would have given us an 'Arbeitsbuch'? All they gave us were beatings. We were seen as slaves. If we had become ill, we would have been burnt in the ovens" (Archiv BGW, zwa.br.ost 377). Active members of survivors' associations, including the earlier mentioned František Vendiš, were more outspoken in articulating this argument than were others. Testimonies recorded after 1999, i.e., during or after the intensive compensation debate, used the concept of 'slave labor' more often than did those recorded prior to this period.

The struggle for recognition and compensation was fought in the survivors' home countries and by their national associations as well. The former Italian Military Internee Claudio S. recalled his answer when he was called a Nazi collaborator after his return to Italy in 1945: "We were hungry for two years; we were slaves, not collaborators" (Claudio S., Archiv ZWAR, za126). A Jewish Dutch camp survivor was astonished that every concentration camp prisoner, whether having been forced to work or not, received part of the compensation money "that originally was reserved for people that really had done slave labor" (Hannelore G., Archiv ZWAR, n. p.). These declarations reveal the chronic marginalization of former forced laborers in Europe's memory. This suppression is one that Nazi forced labor shares with other forms of slavery in different cultures of remembrance.

The witnesses also use the word "slave" when remembering their first days of forced labor. After demeaning sanitary and screening procedures by medical commissions, their bodies were sold to their new employers, either at the transit camp locations or in front of the labor offices. A Czech former forced laborer wrote about Wilhelmshagen on the outskirts of Berlin, a transit camp from which companies picked up newly arrived workers and transported them to their own camps: "In this [Wilhelmshagen] camp I spent four days and could watch how transports of modern slaves were brought here every day" (Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt, *Totaleinsatz* 63). In November 1942, Stanislawa T. was deported as a 17-year old girl after a *razzia* (raid) in her Polish hometown and brought to a place near Berlin: "In this town a kind of slave market was organized, where the buyers selected us" (Archiv BGW, zwa.br.pl 409). Another Polish woman remembered: "On 12 May 1942 on the square in front of the labor office a slave market was organized, where people selected for forced labor were being sold. I was bought for two Reichsmark by a 32-year old German woman" (Archiv BGW, zwa.br.pl 604). Yet another Polish witness remembered: "I was deported to Berlin at the age of 17. This was a kind of slave commerce, only that we did not end up in a brothel." Instead, she worked at the AEG electric factory (Archiv BGW, zwa.br.pl 469). In

these testimonies, the word "slave" is closely connected with the humiliating procedure of humans being rented out or sold to their new owners.

The word "slave" is also often used when describing other groups: "Our barracks were in the centre of the camp, on one side were the barracks of the Russian slaves, on the other side those of the Italians" (Archiv BGW, zwa.br.pl 534). A Polish witness remembers being transferred into another camp: "This was a catastrophe again. The barracks were old; French slaves had lived there before. It was dirty, an unbearable stench, beds falling apart, torn mattresses[,] etc" (Archiv BGW, zwa.br.pl 486).

Sometimes these remarks are full of compassion for the way in which other groups were dealt with by the Germans: "They treated the Italian slaves in our department with much suspicion" (Archiv BGW, zwa.br.pl 522). One witness, however, a Dutch Jewish woman, referred to a workmate as a "slave soul," using the term pejoratively. When, after a pause in work due to missing material deliveries, work started again, one of her Hungarian workmates said: "Thank God, material again." The witness remembered: "You know what I thought? 'This is a slave's soul, she thinks like her boss'. Later, this definition seemed very right to me" (Bloeme E., Archiv ZWAR, n. p.).

Conclusion

With a brutal mixture of racist ideology and economic efficiency, Nazi Germany created one of the largest systems of forced labor in history. Due to enormous differences in their living and working conditions, not all the twelve million forced laborers can be labeled 'slaves'. Such a distinction, however, does not imply any criticism of survivors who experienced their fate as slavery. Marc Buggeln correctly emphasizes: "There is no doubt that the self-characterization of former prisoners as 'slaves' is morally legitimate" (102).

In fact, the words 'slave' and 'slavery' played an important role in the postwar discourse about Nazi forced labor. Slavery served as a point of reference in verdicts of postwar trials, in compensation debates, and in individual memories. Whereas the Nuremberg trials put forward a very broad concept of 'slave labor', in the compensation debates of the 1990s, the distinction between 'slave labor' and 'forced labor' became a focal point of the public debate and, sometimes, also of differentiation between separate victim groups.

Comparing German companies to slaveholders not only underpinned the compensation demands, but also helped survivors and commentators to cope with a phenomenon unprecedented in size, brutality, and rapid development. The brief survey of testimonies presented here shows a variety of individual interpretation patterns in different contexts, and also indicates the influence that public memorial cultures have had on individual memory.

Many, though by far not all, former forced laborers portray their experiences in German camps as a form of slavery. Feliksa W. from Poland, for example, wrote in 1999: "I was 15 years old at the time, we lived in disgusting barracks, fenced in with barbed wire, we were hungry and it was freezing. We were treated like slaves. I have very sad memories of this time" (Archiv BGW, zwa.br.pl 638).

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