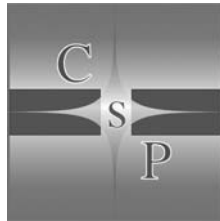


Legacies of Slavery

Legacies of Slavery:
Comparative Perspectives

Edited by

Maria Suzette Fernandes Dias



CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS PUBLISHING

Legacies of Slavery: Comparative Perspectives, edited by Maria Suzette Fernandes Dias

This book first published 2007 by

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

15 Angerton Gardens, Newcastle, NE5 2JA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2007 by Maria Suzette Fernandes Dias and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN 1-84718-111-2; ISBN 13: 9781847181114

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations.....	vii
List of Tables	viii
Introduction.....	1
Legacies of Slavery: Comparative Perspectives	
Part I: Connecting Histories	
Chapter One	16
Legacies of Slavery: Comparisons of Labour and Culture Patrick Manning	
Chapter Two.....	35
The Survival of Slavery in Australia in the 20 th Century: Not if but why? A Black Armband History Peter Read	
Chapter Three.....	48
“Like Poor Galley Slaves...”: Slavery and Convict Transportation Hamish Maxwell-Stewart	
Chapter Four	62
Slavery in Goa: Legal and Historical Perspectives Carmo D’Souza	
Chapter Five.....	76
The Southeast Asian Exception and “Unforeseen Results”: Unfree Labour in the Banda Islands Phillip Winn	
Part II: Centering Discourses: Identity, Image and Text	
Chapter Six.....	108
Sugar and Slavery Bill Ashcroft	

Chapter Seven	126
Historical Representation and Recording of Child Slaves on the Sugar Plantations of the British West Indies	
Jerome Teelucksingh	
Chapter Eight	146
Exalting the Maroon: Identity and Cultural Appropriation in Martiniquan Literature	
Maria Suzette Fernandes Dias	
Chapter Nine	162
A Mountain at Stake: Creole Identity and Heritage in Mauritius	
Sandra Carmignani	
Chapter Ten.....	177
Legacies of the <i>Amistad</i>	
Maria Suzette Fernandes Dias	
Chapter Eleven.....	195
Aphra Behn's <i>Oroonoko</i> : Abolitionist or Sympathist Text?	
Elizabeth Landford	
Bibliography	210
List of Contributors.....	232
Indexes	234

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 6-1 Relationship: Capitalism, Imperialism, Slavery and Plantations.....110

LIST OF TABLES

Slave births at Seawell Estate, October 1795-May 1799	127
List of the increase and decrease of negroes on the Newton estate in Barbados from 1st August 1800 to 1st August 1801.....	129
Payments to slave mothers at the Lowthers estate in Barbados, 1825-1833	130
Money value of unweaned children at the Newton estate.....	130
Names and values of 2nd gang girls at the Newton estate, 1803	132
Number and value of 3rd gang children at the Newton estate, 1803.....	132
Number and value of 4th gang meat pickers at the Newton estate, 1803.....	134
Occupational allocation at Maryland 1822, by age group.....	135
Changes in occupation at Irwin, 1821-1822.....	135
Women on plantations by woman's birthplace, children by mother's birthplace, 1813.....	137

INTRODUCTION

LEGACIES OF SLAVERY: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

MARIA SUZETTE FERNANDES DIAS *ET AL*

The proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly of the International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition during 2004 marked the culmination of recent efforts to re-engage with slavery's past and create an intellectual, social, political and ethical climate conducive to a sustained and meaningful dialogue among cultures and civilisations. This commemoration coinciding with the bicentenary of the establishment of the first Black republic, Haiti, acknowledged that slavery as an experience of dehumanisation, bondage and mercantile commodification of the human being, was an institution as old as civilisation itself, but emphasised that slave trade, particularly the forced displacement of millions of Africans to the New World between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, constituted "the biggest tragedy in the history of humanity"¹.

The past decade witnessed an upsurge of national and international exhibitions and conferences on the impact of slavery and the overwhelming and enduring cultural miscegenation and the demographic, socio-political and spiritual hybridisation that the phenomenon consciously or unconsciously initiated; the celebration of efforts by Abolitionists to publicise the savagery of this inhumane practice; a revival of interest in and the glorification of, the often ignored or historically negatively represented resistance to slavery by slaves themselves; and, numerous endeavours to address the negative legacies of slavery like racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, which continue to impinge upon our present as part of contemporary politics. Director General of the UNESCO, Koichiro Matsuura articulated the aim of the commemoration succinctly in the following words: "by institutionalising memory, resisting the onset of oblivion, recalling the memory of a tragedy that

for long years remained hidden or unrecognised, and by assigning it its proper place in the human conscience, we respond to our duty to remember”.²

Yet, these ventures aimed at raising awareness of the horrors of slave trade and slavery, at honouring struggles for the emancipation of the enslaved, at examining the aftermath of slavery like the emergence of a new historic consciousness, at restoring broken links and solidarity between the historically dislocated diasporas and their countries of origin, at commemorating sites of memory, and, at celebrating artistic and cultural *métissage*, such as the UNESCO’s Slave Route Project, have largely focused on the Atlantic World, and the deportation of slaves from Africa to other parts of the World, raising questions about the legacy of slavery in other societies, like those in Asia, the Pacific and Europe, where slavery still remains on the margins of national and post-colonial histories.

By focussing upon Transatlantic slave trade and slavery in the New World, this commemoration unintentionally endorses the fallacy that only a particular race perceived as inferior by virtue of its colour, suffered from the scourge of slavery, a historical illusion that Ibrahim Sundiata calls “the Old Dixie Narrative” or the erroneous view that that “slavery was confined to Dixie and slaves grew cotton; nowhere else in history of humanity has slavery existed and nowhere else were human beings chattel; Africans were selected to be slaves because they were black; that racism drove the slave trade and slavery, both of which existed as the ultimate form of psychosexual torture”³, and, unconsciously undermines the existence, persistence and impact of slavery and slave trade in their varied incarnations on other cultures and civilisations. It also commodifies rather than commemorate human suffering through the touristic promotion of sites of memory linked to slave trade.

Reparation and affirmative action debates reignited by this resuscitation of interest in slavery and its abolition, have brought to the fore contentious discourses, some tainted by racism, others by the refusal to identify with victimhood and still others characterised by an identification with a past of forced deracination, cultural and emotional deprivation and dehumanisation - like the apparently selective consideration given to the enslaved history of a particular race; the identification by present day descendants of slaves with a certain aspect of their past; the impossibility of quantitatively measuring human suffering and putting a price to it; the moral liability on part of the descendants of former slaveholders to ensure material reparation; and, historical responsibility of enslaving nations. For instance, commenting on how in the American context, discourse with the past, be it cultural, religious, economic, historical, political and scientific, inevitably entails an engagement with slavery, historian Ira Berlin points out,

The confluence of the history of slavery and the politics of race reveals that slavery has become a language, a way to talk about race, in a society in which Blacks and Whites hardly talk to each other at all. In slavery, Americans have found a voice to address some of their deepest hurts and the depressing reality of how much of American life – jobs, housing, schools, access to medical care, to justice and even to a taxi – is controlled by race.⁴

France's adoption of the Loi Taubira on May 2001, recognising slavery as a crime against humanity and requiring schools to include lessons about slavery as part of the school curriculum, was greeted by hostile reception from some quarters, for instance, in June 2005, Olivier Petré-Grenouilleau, author of *Les Traités Négrière*, a book on slavery and slave trade which was awarded the Prix du Senat, when interviewed by the *Journal de Dimanche*, gave a highly politicized version of the implications of his work. Grenouilleau questioned the reasoning behind the admission of European slave trade of Africans as a crime against humanity and underlined the complicity of Africans "as authors" of the trade. He accused Black artists of selectively choosing among their ancestors to trace back their roots to slave ancestors rather than their slaver ancestors.

Even in historiography, slavery discourse has largely centered on Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Early historiography has focussed on the moral gesture of abolition. Later studies like Eric Williams' *Capitalism and Slavery* (1942) have tried to fit trade and abolition within an impersonal scenario of the development of capitalism. The late 1950s and 1960s observed the absence of slavery and slave trade in continental African historiography. The 1970s ushered the debate over the quantitative aspects of the demographic impact of the slave trade on Africa. (Curtin, Inikori and Manning). In the last ten years, the UNESCO has emphasised the need to acknowledge the dehumanising aspect of the Middle Passage and to explore the memory of slave trade through oral history (very few studies like those Iroko and Austen have actually explored this angle) while in the academia, debates over claims to ownership of the history of slavery and the need to de/re-centre historiography, are still strongly contested.

Given the contentiousness of slavery as a subject and the difficulty that we experience in reviewing slavery outside the ethical framework of good and evil, the discursive racial dichotomy of Black and White, and, the problematic definitions of chattel and freed, scholars have long debated on how slavery ought to be studied and remembered – should studies focus on the economical factors and social institutions and practices that gave impetus to and sanctioned this phenomenon, or, the demographical impact of forced migrations, or, the crystallisation of the human experience of subjugation and endurance and its representation through film, literature and museum exhibitions? Should slavery be evaluated as a scourge of the past when labour and social systems

comparable and sometimes exceeding in their exploitative nature, persist even today?

This edited volume is our humble attempt to reconsider slavery as a global human institution which has coexisted with other socio-political, economic, legal and cultural institutions. As a temporally and spatially ubiquitous phenomenon, it has generated and continues to, engender legacies, be they historical, oral or visual, which need to be compared and discussed to facilitate dialogue between cultures and civilisations and to mitigate the wounds of the past which continue to scar our present. It brings together writings by scholars from history, literature, anthropology and cultural studies who examine the indelible mark left by slavery in its various forms, on societies, cultures and peoples all over the world and attempts by artistes and writers to alleviate this stigmata of History.

This volume consists of two sections. The first section entitled “Connecting Histories” explores some of the varied forms in which slavery presented itself in the last four centuries and the need to reengage with its legacies. Adhering to Manning’s contention that slavery is “an enduring metaphor for inequities in the treatment of humans”, this section focuses on identifying the legacy of slavery and its significance in scholarship (Manning); alternate perspectives on slavery through the examination of forced labour and the dehumanising treatment of indigenous people in Australia (Read), enforced migration and labour exploitation of convicts in penal colonies (Maxwell-Stewart); and, a historical overview of Lusitanian slavery in India (D’Souza) and the hybridisation of pre-colonial slavery traditions in the perpetuation of the *perkerniersstelse*, or a profitably managed European settler-colony based on the global monopoly of nutmeg production, by the Dutch (Winn).

In his essay “Slavery’s Legacy: Labour and Culture in Global Comparison”, Manning develops the argument that slavery stands as an enduring metaphor for inequities in the treatment of humans. The legacy of slavery – the continuing dilemma of economic inequality and of racial and social discrimination – thus sustains the study of slavery in the past. The accumulation of comparisons in the study of slavery, in turn, has brought into existence detailed and interconnected analyses that not only expand the understanding of slavery but provide a model for effective analysis in the social sciences. This chapter focuses on identifying the legacy of slavery and its significance in scholarship: it explores the positive interactions among the contemporary legacy of slavery, the demand set up by that legacy for studies of slavery in the past, the comparative approaches adopted by scholars in study of slavery, and the advances in historical interpretation and in social-scientific method that have resulted from research on slavery.

Manning begins by contrasting questions on today's legacy of slavery with other relevant historical questions on the origins, development, and end of slavery in the past. The argument turns then to tracing the evolution of studies on slavery from the 1930s forward, showing how localized studies led gradually to interconnections, to development of improved structures for analysis, and to interpretive advances in studies of gender, maroon communities, creolization, and emancipation. Turning to general patterns, the study reviews the range of comparisons conducted in research on slavery, thus demonstrating that historical comparison is not a single method but a range of interconnected approaches. Out of this comparative analysis have come major historical debates on the size of the slave trade, the profitability of slavery, the reasons for demand and supply of African slaves, the cultural changes brought by slavery, and the agency of slaves. Further, the logic of comparison has led studies of slavery to go beyond the Atlantic world and Africa to explore both the local patterns and global links of slavery and forced labour in Asian, Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. The sum total of these studies demonstrates that slavery has been significant in many parts of the world, and that it has been an important area of human experience rather than an isolated phenomenon. Touching on global perspectives on slavery, the essay argues that there existed a global system of forced labour which peaked in its extent in the mid-nineteenth century, and declined but did not disappear thereafter. The essay concludes by noting that economic inequality is expanding as rapidly as is the advocacy of human social equality, leaving us with a dilemma that will surely encourage further study of slavery.

"Slavery on the Australian Frontier" investigates claims, including those by contemporary anthropologists and government officers, of conditions amounting to Aboriginal slavery in the Northern Territory of Australia until after the Second World War. Concluding that the claims were justified, Read considers the reasons why, given that a great deal of reform of legal procedures involving Aborigines was undertaken in the period 1930-50 by the Commonwealth government, conditions on the pastoral frontier hardly changed at all.

Why major reform in one sector and none in the other? Read argues that pastoral expansion and consolidation formed part of the (sometimes tacit) national agenda. Reformist groups like the Australian Society for the Protection of Native Races were much more interested in (if not obsessed by) traditional Aborigines living in traditional reserves like Arnhem Land. They thought (wrongly) of pastoral lands being inhabited by part-Aboriginals and therefore less worthy of interest. Related to the above were prevailing prejudices against "half-castes"; the strain, according to many of their 1930s-40s publications, needed to be "eliminated" or "bleached out". "Stolen generations" (removed children working as housemaids) and pastoral workers provided an essential labour force without which the large pastoral stations could not have existed.

Read concludes by observing that the need for labour was the driving force in much of Australian history: as convicts were phased out in the 1860s, older children began to be sent from UK to the colonies in increasing numbers to populate the Empire (later, in Australia, as Barnados and Fairbridge Farm children); they were in due course supplemented by stolen generations of Aboriginal children, and Aboriginal pastoral workers working as slaves within their own country, but without pay and unable to leave.

Despite the fact that convicts were not chattel slaves, there has been a long history of attempts to draw parallels between these two types of enforced migration and labour exploitation. In “Like poor galley slaves’: convict transportation and the slavery question” Maxwell-Stewart examines some of the analogies that have been drawn by convicts, observers of penal transportation and subsequent historians. He contends that while there are important distinctions between the two conditions, comparative analysis is both warranted and highly informative.

Employing evidence drawn from a systematic sample of records for male convicts transported to Van Diemen’s Land during the assignment period (1817-1839), Maxwell-Stewart considers a range of issues including the manner in which seasonality, age and skill all impacted on the way that convicts were treated. He examines the day-to-day conditions experienced by convicts working on farms, in road and chain gangs and in penal stations. The chapter draws on the theoretical and analytical literature of slavery in the 18th and 19th century Atlantic World to place these snapshots within a wider context. In particular, it explores an issue which lay close to the heart of many 19th century observers of the transportation system - that the manner in which convicts were treated, was driven more by local economic circumstances than it was by the imperatives of penal punishment. The irony here is that while convict transportation may have driven colonial growth rates, in the process, it opened itself up to the charge that convicts were punished, not according to what they had done, but according to what they could or could not do as forced labourers. In the end, it was this association with slavery which condemned it as a system of punishment.

In “Slavery In Goa: Legal and Historical Perspective”, D’Souza analyses the legal provisions that sanctioned slavery in Goa, the former bastion of the Lusitanian sea-borne empire in the Asia-Pacific. Wherever possible, he compares Lusitanian jurisprudential ordinances governing trade in and sale of human merchandise, property rights, ownership of slaves, punishment meted out to slaves for offences like running away or stealing, and, conversion to Christianity, to those legalised by the Code Noir.

Without digressing from the legal perspective that forms the thematic thread of his article, D’Souza paints a panoramic view of life in the former “Rome of

the Orient” – slave markets where war captives were sold to the landed gentry; galleons carrying spices manned by slaves and criminals condemned to temporary servitude; the deployment of slaves as assassins in vendettas among families or as exhibits of the wealth and status of the master, or as artistes, vendors and even beggars, supplementing the owner’s income; hierarchy among slaves and laws governing the conduct of slaves belonging to each strata; the paradoxical role of Christianity in perpetuating the enslavement of non-Christians and in ensuring the humane treatment of slaves; legal ambiguity vis à vis status of a slave who had converted to Christianity; and finally, conditions determining the liberation of slaves by the State and the measures adopted to ensure the reintegration of slaves as free citizens.

Winn’s chapter “The Southeast Asian Exception and Unforeseen Results: Unfree Labour in the Banda Islands” deals with the impact of slavery on conceptions of place in the Banda Islands of eastern Indonesia. It highlights historical and contemporary contestations in envisaging the islands’ environment that involve the descendants of European settlers, slaves and other forms of unfree labour present in the islands during the colonial era, who now form the majority of the population.

Following military conquest of the Bandas in 1621 by the Dutch East India Company or VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*), the island group became the site of the *perkerniersstelsel* or “nutmeg-planter system”, a unique project that combined slave labour with visions of a profitably managed European settler-colony based on the global monopoly of nutmeg production. The systematic destruction of much of the existing population of the islands was viewed as a necessary prelude to the imposition of this scheme.

The *perkerniersstelsel* as a technological enterprise involved entire islands in the Banda group being given over to divided segments of occupation and management known as “nutmeg parks” or *perken*. Such a project was consistent with the emerging prominence of *landschap* as a visual category of knowledge shared between Dutch painting and experimental science and applied to maps, pictures and sites. This term marked the appearance of a new and uniquely abstracted view of terrain as landscape; an object of knowledge and at least potentially, an organised, rationalised system.

The *perkerniersstelsel* of the Banda Islands was among the world’s earliest plantation ventures to draw heavily on supplies of unfree forms of labour, initially in the form of slaves. It has also been described as the sole example of a centrally managed slave-based mode of agricultural production in South East Asia. In this region, unlike Africa and the New World, European colonists are seen as having taken over and interacted with existing systems of slavery, rather than imposing entirely new forms.

Winn argues that characterization of the Bandas as exceptional in these terms is overstated, and that the islands were a location where an emergent technological instrumentality quickly became enmeshed with local cultural relations to place. Such a process can be linked to the persistence of key aspects of pre-colonial slavery traditions in the region, in particular the prominence of domestic service and the existence of diverse opportunities for manumission. Both factors contributed to the complex social character of the nutmeg parks, the households they contained, and the villages that grew up on their peripheries. As a result, the *perken* of the Banda Islands remained distinct from the systematized instrumentality of plantation landscapes as they developed in the modern era.

Certainly, the *perkerniersstelsel* can be viewed as a precursor of the total system approaches that are often understood as diagnostic of modernity. But ultimately this ordered plantation landscape retained a numinous character, manifest in the colonial context by Dutch support for significant local ritual events linked to island fecundity, and in a contemporary sense by the continued veneration of significant sites associated with Islamic holy figures or saints among Muslims and Christians alike. Importantly, such activities offered waves of unfree labourers brought to the nutmeg parks over centuries, a route to meaningful ontological relationship with the Banda Islands as a distinct locality, and to local identity.

The second section of the book entitled “Centering Discourses: Identity, Image and Text” begins with a postcolonialist reading of Caribbean slavery as a legacy of capitalism, imperialism and plantation culture and above all, the globalization of sugar consumption (Ashcroft). The two chapters that follow resuscitate two of the many categories of slaves who were victims of historical silence, namely children in the sugar plantations of the West Indies (Teelucksingh) and Martiniquan maroons (Fernandes-Dias). Articulating with the discourse on identity and cultural appropriation introduced in the preceding essay, chapter nine provides an overview of the power struggle at work in the construction of Creole identity and its political legitimization, through a topical analysis of the process of commemoration of a “site of memory”, Le Morne Brabant, symbol of slavery and marronage in the Mauritian collective memory (Carmignani). The final two chapters explore the problematics of presenting slavery through the adoption of a counter-hegemonic discourse, particularly through the arts. Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* which exalts the Black slave as a hero without making any explicit case for the abolition of slavery, continues to occupy the terrain of sympathist - abolitionist ambiguity (Landford) while the *Amistad* case, despite its numerous positive legacies, demonstrates how excessive popularization of the incident as an Abolitionist *cause célèbre*,

resulted in an overload of historical memory to the point of obscuring historical reality (Fernandes Dias).

The contention of Bill Ashcroft's article, "Sugar and Slavery" is that slavery is itself a legacy of the phenomenal growth in the plantation, trade and consumption of sugar. Despite the catastrophic consequences it has bequeathed to the world, slavery would not have had the significance it did without the discovery and development of a commodity that had an even more widespread and insidious impact on the history of the world. In 1493, Christopher Columbus, on his second voyage to the West Indies, brought cuttings of sugar cane from the Canary Islands. These few cuttings of sugar cane were to have the most profound effect in global structures of imperial power, in the relations between vast communities of people and, ultimately, in the political shape of the world itself.

How did sugar come to have this immense impact? The key lies in the rapid rise to power of the British Empire from the seventeenth century, and the rapid increase in sugar consumption that accompanied Britain's growing influence. The interrelation of these elements -- empire, industrial power and capitalism -- is so intimate in the production and consumption of sugar that it is almost impossible to unravel them. But it was slavery that brought sugar to prominence and it was sugar that made slavery the catastrophic phenomenon it became. While the sugar cane industry in the Caribbean was begun by Spain, it was the subsequent British development—with its exponential increase in the slave trade, its transformation of whole islands, such as Barbados, into virtual sugar factories, its subsequent impact on world capitalism and its transformation of European domestic culture—which began the political and cultural revolution of sugar.

The chapter argues that sugar is significant for four reasons. Firstly it represents an extraordinarily over determined focus of imperial economic history, a fulcrum for the connection between, and the development of, Capitalism, Imperialism, Plantations and Slavery. Quite simply, without sugar, none of these phenomena would have had the character, extent or significance they had by the turn of the century. Second, because of the very magnitude of its economic, social and cultural effects, sugar represents an unparalleled metonym of imperial discourse: its circulatory relations, its dependence on a complex link of culture and economics and its continuing material consequences. Third, it provides a focus for an analysis of the ways in which the dynamic of imperialism generated the explosion of twentieth century globalisation. Fourth, for many of the same reasons, it focuses the transformative cultural effects of post-colonial discourse. The phenomenon of tropical cane sugar, through its disastrous use of large scale industrial slavery has had an impact on world trade, diet, race and labour relations that remains to the present day.

In “Historical representation and recording of child slaves on the sugar plantations of the British West Indies”, Jerome Teelucksingh examines the historical representation and recording of child slaves on the sugar plantations of the British West Indies. Children in slavery were usually a result of one or both parents being slaves, be it in the field, factory or plantation. The epistemology and pedagogy on Caribbean slavery has overwhelmingly focused on the slave trade, profitability of sugar, resistance, emancipation and abolition. During the last decade, there has been some scholarship on the contribution and roles of women in Caribbean slavery. Though there are occasional references to their offspring, there has been no comprehensive study on children in British West Indian slavery. The historiography on the British West Indian slavery tends to overlook or downplay the prevalence of child slavery on the plantations. Female slaves were viewed by planters primarily as potential child-bearers and they were thus treated differently from their male counterparts.

The glaring absence of children in the historiography reflects their omission from primary sources. Often, in an effort to reduce taxes, planters tended to deliberately omit or underreported the numbers and ages of children. As a result, scholars have encountered difficulty in accurately depicting the roles and population of slave children. The natural growth of the slave population faced certain obstacles. Firstly, the vigorous daily routines of the field slaves and poor diets contributed to childless females. Secondly, due to the unsanitary conditions and lack of proper medical facilities, many babies and children died from diseases like yaws, dysentery and tetanus. On the plantation, the children were the weakest and smallest of slaves who were vital in the division of labour on the plantation. They were usually placed in the “third gang” and worked under the supervision of an elderly female. Children were assigned light tasks like weeding. Young children, four or five years old, were placed in gangs referred to as hogmeat, little or pickininny. Teelucksingh’s essay examines the status and the role of these child slaves.

Edouard Glissant described Martiniquan consciousness as “nonhistorical” and traumatised by “shock, contraction, painful negation (...) and erasure of collective memory”⁵, particularly the memory of the cultural and psychological ravages of slavery. Often considered as a success story of colonial assimilation, Martinique was characterised by Caribbean separatist intellectuals of the late 1970s, as suffering from a “Toussaint complex”. Failing to produce an island born revolutionary hero in the fight against slavery, Martiniquans were criticised of compensating for this paucity by adopting other Antillais heroes like Haiti’s Toussaint L’Ouverture, Cuba’s Jose Marti, Jamaica’s Marcus Garvey and Guadeloupe’s Delgrès. Paradoxically, Martinique’s celebrated anti-slavery hero is a White metropolitan, Victor Schoelcher, the French Deputy instrumental in ending slavery in Martinique.

In “Exalting the Maroon: Identity and Cultural Appropriation in Martiniquan Literature”, Maria Suzette Fernandes Dias proposes to embark on an analysis of the aporia of Martiniquan politics of identity through an examination of literary works produced in the last fifty years. She aspires to demonstrate how Martiniquan writers have endeavoured to integrate into public consciousness, a Black hero whose exploits were never mythified. By resurrecting the character of the maroon from the threat of (non)historical oblivion, Martiniquan intellectuals like Césaire, Glissant and Chamoiseau, have created a potent counter-mythological tool against the colonial domination of Martiniquan History and Memory. The Maroon incarnates popular coloured identity, a symbol of dignity, independence and ideological resistance to domination by metropolitan France, and, a link to the repressed African past and its forgotten culture, myths, tradition and oral history.

In “Heritage and Creole Identities in Mauritius : A Mountain at Stake”, Sandra Carmignani addresses the issue of heritage and memory as political, social and economical instruments embodied in cultural institutions. Her analysis stems from the place of “le Morne Brabant” in Mauritian collective memory. Unlike the idyllic image of Mauritius, Mauritians live within a tense ethnic and political stratification, particularly with regard to referents of the island’s historical past and diverse ancestral origins of its people. Since the beginning of colonisation, le Morne has symbolised a site of memory associated with maroon slaves who freed themselves from slavery and sought refuge on the mountain. In contemporary post-colonial context, the negotiations that operate around the commemoration of the abolition of slavery and the « sacred » mountain, underline the still well established ethnical and « racial » categories inherited from the colonial past. This chapter examines the process of the construction of heritage and its local, national and global definitions, at a time when the site is being recognised as a site of memory”, not only by descendants of slaves who struggle for the recognition of their political rights within the constraints of the Mauritian Republic and its multicultural ideology, but also within the context of the UNESCO’s Slave Route Project and its problematic global definition of world heritage.

Elizabeth Landford’s “Aphra Behn: Slavery Abolitionist or Sympathist?” is an assessment of Aphra Behn’s novella, *Oroonoko*, an immensely influential yet ambiguous work on slavery, which has continued to intrigue readers since its first publication in 1688. Scholars have been divided as to whether this work reveals abolitionist or sympathist views towards colonial slave trade. As a staunch royalist, Behn’s novella was arguably politically motivated, in light of the numerous parallels between her contemporary society and the monarchy that she brilliantly depicts. Many literary critics have attempted to procure anti-slavery sentiments from Behn’s work. However, Landford claims that this

interpretation of *Oroonoko* is difficult to justify, and that the work must be considered within its seventeenth century context. She briefly examines the turbulent state that the British monarchy existed in during the seventeenth century and then turns to the text to illustrate Behn's examination of society's attitudes towards both slavery and nobility.

Landford finds Behn's insistence that she is depicting her lived experience as a visitor to Surinam, rather fascinating and argues that these claims of eye-witness accounts distinguish *Oroonoko* from other fictional accounts of slavery. Behn's position as narrator enables her to reveal her personal sympathies regarding the slavery of the noble Oroonoko. Behn's reluctance to express her personal opinion of the brutal realities of seventeenth century slavery provides the most telling critique of her society's apathetic stance regarding this barbaric practise.

Scholars have historically raised strong arguments both for and against Behn's oft-disputed reputation as one of the earliest slavery abolitionists. Clearly, as one of the first paid women writers she was accustomed to breaking with convention. In *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf wrote that

all women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn, for it was she who earned them the right to speak their minds.

Oroonoko survives as a tale of contradiction and oxymoron- of noble slaves and barbaric "gentlemen." We may never discover whether Behn's intentions in writing *Oroonoko* were admirable or deplorable. However, the novella itself preserves intriguing passages that continue to taunt modern readers with their ambiguity. Ultimately, the question of Behn's personal sympathies is overshadowed by her greatest achievement, as she has dynamically opened the channels of slavery discourse in a manner that has remained topical for hundreds of years.

Treated by some historians as a footnote to the history of Trans-Atlantic slavery, viewed by others as "an icon representing the struggle for equality"⁶, regarded by still others as an epitome of "slavery's deepest contradictions, both legal and philosophical"⁷ and of Antebellum socio-politics, judiciary and foreign relations, but almost ignored in the annals of official historiography, the Amistad incident has aroused, in the recent years, a lot of public interest ... and considerable controversy over the accuracy of its interpretation.

In "Legacies of the *Amistad*", Fernandes Dias begins by presenting the incident in its historical context and examining the socio-political factors that shaped a certain ideological interpretation and popularization of the event in historical memory. She then presents the different visual and textual legacies of the Amistad and explores the challenges involved in visually representing,

historicising and fictionalising slavery and the looming danger of losing the past to the ideological requirements of agencies that shape historical memory.

Despite our overarching desire to provide a global and comparative overview of the historical, ideological, economical and cultural factors that contributed to the evolution of slavery and the legacies that the institution generated, this volume is limited in the thematic, chronological and geographic terrain that it has covered. We attribute this shortcoming to the complexity of slavery itself as an institution, the problematic of defining what constitutes slavery and the historical silence maintained over its dehumanizing effects. Yet the story of slavery is also a tale of survival, of resistance and of the resilience of the human spirit to transcend oppression and preserve its inherent dignity. It is the celebration of the rich cultural fusion and *métissage* that rose from the ashes of human suffering. The wounds of the past need to be healed, perhaps initially, at a mythopoetic level, through the articulation of repressed collective angst and its legacies through the arts and through scholarship.

Far from being a historical institution or a brutality of the past, slavery continues to affect some 27 million people worldwide today (and that is more people than at any point in the history of humanity), persisting not only in its traditional incarnation as chattel slavery in Niger, Mauritania, Chad and Sudan, but also under new forms of massive violations of human rights – bonded labour, child labour, prostitution, slavery by descent and trafficking etc in several other parts of the world. The silence maintained about the persistence of this inhumane institution in its various forms even to the present day, should be explored, studied and eradicated, lest humanity repeats its historical errors.

I am extremely grateful to all the contributors who made this edited volume possible; the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research; The Australia-India Council; my cousin, Joseph Dias for his thought provoking and inspiring image for the cover; my colleagues, Ursula Frederick, Celia Vuckovic, Suzanne Groves, Jodi Parvey and Alan Wyburn, for their ongoing support; my former colleague, Dr Laurence Brown who assisted in developing my vision and organising a conference on the same theme in 2004; Ian Anderson, former Director of ANU Centre for UNESCO; and above all, Prof Howard Morphy, Director of the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, for his nurturing and for his faith in my potential, and, my husband, Carl, for being my rock and for all his devotion, encouragement and patience.

Notes

¹ Koichiro Matsuura in his message on the occasion of the International Year to Commemorate the Struggle Against Slavery and its Abolition (2004).

² *Ibid.*

³ Ibrahim Sundiata, “The Amistad: Spielberg, Jews, Blacks and Latins”, *Dissonance*, Feb 22, 1998.

<http://way.net.dissonance/amistad.html>

⁴ Ira Berlin, “Overcome by Slavery”, *The New York Times*, July 13, 2001.

⁵ Edouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*. Trans. Michael Dash. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 62.

⁶ Quentin Snediker, “Searching for the Historic Amistad”, *Log of Mystic Seaport*, 49:4 (Spring 1998), 107.

⁷ David Brion Davis, *Inhuman bondage: The rise and fall of slavery in the New World*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 12.

Part I

Connecting Histories

CHAPTER ONE

LEGACIES OF SLAVERY: COMPARISONS OF LABOUR AND CULTURE

PATRICK MANNING

Legacy as a Dimension of History

The past is gone and will not return, yet it weighs on our lives today. It influences not only the facts of our existence but the interpretation we give to them. The work of historians, therefore, is not only to study the past itself, but to assess the legacy of the past. This second task of historians, the assessment of legacy, is made more complex by its dependence on both the past and the present. The case of slavery – the legacy it has passed on to succeeding generations – is a question not only of understanding past enslavement, but of understanding how the effects of past injustice linger in a world where slavery is condemned and largely eliminated.

Further, since our contemporary society has become relatively alert to global interactions, I propose to explore the legacy of slavery at the global level. That is, while it is appropriate to think of slavery as the experience of individuals and certain societies, slavery was equally an experience of humanity in general. The extent of slavery during its nineteenth-century peak was so considerable that all humanity in the time since then, in one way or another, has been influenced by enslavement, the exploitation of slave labour, and the conditions under which slaves gained their freedom. No brief essay can be fully comprehensive, but I seek here to outline major points in the experience of slavery and its impact on later times. The relevant issues include the range of slave experiences (which I summarize in terms of labour and culture), the roles of slave life (those who were slaves, masters, and those who were neither), the geographical range of slavery (the Atlantic world of Africa and the Americas, but also the Indian Ocean and the Pacific), and the passage of time (from the moment of capture to

the moment of emancipation, and beyond that to the achievement of rehabilitation) This exploration of historical legacy, while distinct from study of the past for itself, is predicated upon knowledge about several aspects of the past. That is, I note the differences between studies of the origins, the development, and the end of a historical phenomenon such as slavery, and how each of these approaches differs from the study of historical legacy.¹ The origin of a phenomenon, such as the origins of slavery or the origins of slavery in a given territory, focuses on the search for beginnings. In this case, the rising phenomenon is set in the context of that which came before it. Questions arise about the time frame of those earlier influences: thus one may distinguish the proximate causes for the origins of slavery and the ultimate causes. The development of a phenomenon—the persistence, transformation, maturation, and interactions of the phenomenon over time—encompasses the many facets of the phenomenon's operation. For the case of slavery, one investigates how it has developed and transformed, perhaps in interaction with other aspects of life and history in the same period. The end of a phenomenon—in this case the end of slavery through long struggles for abolition and emancipation—traces the decline of and perhaps the successor to the phenomenon. The end of slavery was a particular sort of development, but its analysis too focuses on the contemporaneous changes within slavery and also the interaction of slavery and other social processes.

The legacy of a phenomenon, then, draws on the understanding of the origin, development and end of that phenomenon, plus its significance for later times. Surely, the experience of slavery has influenced society after the end of slavery, but the time frame is variable and complex. The legacy of slavery in the immediate post-emancipation era might have been rather different from the legacy of slavery in times two centuries after emancipation. At least as complicated is the question of which aspect of slavery one selects in considering its legacy: that is, the establishment of slavery, the maturation of institutions of slavery, and the end of slavery were distinct factors that each had their own legacy in later times, but they also combined to provide a more complex overall legacy.²

The interaction of history and legacy can bring results that may appear surprising. In particular, as I argue, it is questions about the legacy of slavery that have sustained interest in the history of slavery. Today's need to know about the legacy of slavery continues to provoke new questions and deeper research into the historical past of slavery. Why do the descendants of slaves encounter obstacles to enjoying full citizenship in modern nations? Does slave ancestry provide a lasting stigma, passed on to subsequent generations? Does economic growth require social oppression, so that the exploitation of slaves was a necessary stage of human progress? These questions arise repeatedly, not

only because of the specifics of slavery, but because slavery—the subjugation of people into abject submission before their owners—serves as a compelling metaphor for all the social problems of inequality and oppression. Thus, when ethnic groups, women or wage workers complained of their mistreatment, they commonly expressed a parallel between their situation and that of slaves. These are reasons why the study of slavery has remained of interest. And thus it is that issues of historical legacy, arising in society today, create new questions about the past. In addition, I argue, the aspects of the legacy of slavery that have sustained the most attention are questions of labour and culture. For instance, the question of the relative need for oppression and hierarchy in social question is a question about labour; the problem of the stigma remaining for those associated with enslaved status is a cultural issue.

The Legacy of Slavery: Past Assessments

In the ample historical literature on slavery, concern for the legacy of slavery has always been prominent. Slavery has long been officially eliminated, but its past has remained important from generation to generation because its evolving legacy is always with us, providing a standard for assessing the world as it changes from year to year. As I will seek to show, the evolution of the historical literature on slavery reveals a continuing concern with the legacy of slavery. While the origins, development, and decline of slavery have been the principal topics of analysis, the legacy of slavery has provided the principal motivation for conducting and reading these studies.

I begin with the 1930s-40s, when writers in North America, South America, and the Caribbean wrote considerations of the legacy of slavery. Books by Gilberto Freyre on Brazil and Aguirre Beltrán on Mexico sought to conciliate, arguing that the past of slavery had evolved into a non-discriminatory present.³ These authors sought to give respect to those who had suffered under slavery, and to argue that past inequity had now been forgotten. E. Franklin Frazier and Melville Herskovits in North America debated whether Black culture resulted from the impact of slavery or from African survivals.⁴ Frazier treated the distinctive aspects of Black culture in North America as remnants of slavery, and argued that African experience had been lost in the transition. Herskovits argued that some of Black culture was a survival of African culture, and sought therefore to add respect for Africa and respect for Black Americans. These were assessments of the cultural legacy of slavery.

W. E. B. DuBois analysed labour in the experience of North American emancipation, focusing on the productivity of Black labour and the occasional alliances between Black and White labourers. Eric Williams argued that the effects of Caribbean slavery helped build industry in England and then led

industrialists to join the anti-slavery movement.⁵ He too emphasized the productivity of Black labour, this time in the British Caribbean, arguing that it led by steps to industrial advance and to emancipation. These were assessments of the economic legacy of slavery.

The aftermath of World War II brought Cold War confrontation, but it also brought renunciation of the racial policies of the Axis powers, and facilitated the rise of powerful social movements demanding the extension of civil rights and demanding national independence for colonial territories. These movements and their critique of Empire brought an outpouring of studies of slavery in the U.S. and then in the U.K. and France. They became linked to the new techniques of economic and social history. Stanley Elkins' study of U.S. slavery, with its psychological emphasis, relied on comparison of slave plantations with concentration camps of World War II. Eugene Genovese and John Blassingame articulated the logic of slave communities, the one emphasizing paternalism and the other emphasizing the agency of slaves.⁶ At the same time, studies of quantitative economic history arose during the booming economy of the 1960s, and pursued a retrospective analysis of slavery. For the U.S., the study of Robert William Fogel and Stanley Engerman argued that slavery was profitable and viable, and that slave welfare was protected, and brought fierce debate on the last point.⁷ Philip Curtin's census of the transatlantic slave trade offered a regional and temporal breakdown of slave trade, proposing an overall total of just under ten million captives who reached the Americas.⁸

The 1970s and 1980s followed up these studies in several directions. Quantitative social history spread to the plantations of all the Americas, and studies of the volume of slave trade addressed most of the slave-trading powers and most regions of the Atlantic.⁹ Ralph Austen made estimates of the volumes of slave trade across the Sahara, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean.¹⁰ Another group, in which I was included, began exploring the impact of slave trade on African populations.¹¹ Historians and anthropologists began investigating the institutions and processes of slavery in Africa.¹² Gendered analysis of slavery, long neglected, began to get serious attention both for Africa and the Caribbean.¹³ In response to the wave of studies of slavery in the Atlantic and Africa, studies began appearing on slavery and slave trade in the Ottoman Empire, in Russia, and in the Indian Ocean.¹⁴

The importance of slavery in history came to be confirmed by the importance of slavery's legacy. Slavery came to be understood as an integral aspect of the human past, rather than a "peculiar institution" at the fringes of history. In response, organized reference works and surveys of slavery came to be set up. Joseph C. Miller began compiling an annual bibliography of works on slavery and slave trade, published in *Slavery and Abolition*, and then published three successive editions of a worldwide bibliography subdivided by

region, time period, and topic.¹⁵ The volume of the Atlantic slave trade, a topic of active research and debate since Philip Curtin's 1969 *Census*, was periodically summarized, for instance in a 1989 article by Paul Lovejoy.¹⁶ The next stage was the compilation of an electronic database including records of 27,000 known slave-trade voyages across the Atlantic, with data and estimates on the number of persons transported.¹⁷ As a further stage, encyclopaedias of slavery and the slave trade appeared, making it easier for general readers, teachers, and scholars in other fields to access summaries of the scholarly record on slavery.¹⁸

But the compilation of data on well-researched aspects of the history of slavery did not prevent the expansion of research into new aspects of slavery. In the 1990s, the focus of contemporary society and scholarship turned to cultural issues. When applied to the heritage of slavery, this approach posed questions on the cultural autonomy of slave communities. This led, for instance, to expanded analysis of gender and slavery in the Caribbean, and to the location of maroon communities in Africa that were parallel at some level to those of the Americas.¹⁹ Studies of the dynamics of culture gave attention to the process of creolization.²⁰ Such analysis of cultural interactions among geographically dispersed, enslaved populations encouraged the adoption of the formal framework of the African diaspora, in which the African homeland and the unwilling migrants to the Americas and elsewhere were assembled into an overarching framework for interpretation.²¹ Within this diaspora framework, studies of the emancipation of slaves, in the Americas and in Africa, showed that the end of slavery was as complex as the expansion of slavery.²²

Overall, the metaphorical dimension of slavery—picturing it as the logical limit of any sort of unfreedom—grew steadily as the legacy of slavery came to be perceived as broader and more pervasive. The perception that the legacy of slavery underlay contemporary social inequities gave guidance to historical research, and the results of historical research showed additional expanse and complexity in past systems of slavery. In this interaction of past and present, the legacy of slavery grew steadily in the last half of the twentieth century.

What was the social structure of “legacy” in this era of expanding social and scholarly attention to slavery? Was “the legacy of slavery” the actual overall social transformation of the present brought by past events? Was it the outlook of literate observers on the past antecedents of current crises? Are there more possibilities? These questions cannot yet be answered definitively. I think, however, that this review of several decades of research on slavery shows that “legacy” itself tends to change along with contemporary social issues and along with changing knowledge about the past.

Having considered in this section the legacy of slavery as it has been seen at various times in the past, I turn next to documenting the legacy of slavery as it is

seen today. This assessment will address, in more detail, four principal issues: the technique of comparison as a way of learning about the past and assessing its impact on the present; the currently engaged debates on slavery and its legacy; a regional focus on slavery in Asia, the Indian and Pacific Oceans; and the practice of slavery as seen at the global level. In each case, I will discuss the accumulated knowledge about slavery, and assess its significance for present-day society.

Comparisons among Experiences in Slavery

The accumulated volumes of studies in slavery combine to reflect a major advance in the practice of comparative history. Such scholarship confirms that historical comparison is not a single method, but a range of interconnected approaches held together by the notion of the historical case and the case study, but also taking explicit account of the existence of other cases. Analysis of the volume and distribution of slave trade, launched by Curtin's 1969 study and pursued in many works thereafter, has brought about a much clearer sense of the regional specificity and interregional links of slave trade: we now have systematic detail on the various trading powers, various exporting and importing regions, and time periods. Studies of individual plantations or regional plantation systems came to be compared with each other. Such comparative work led, for instance, to multiple studies on slavery in the Chesapeake and to studies of African plantations comparable to plantations in the Americas.²³ The collection of parallel data on slave societies made it feasible to compare nearby or closely similar cases, such as Guadeloupe and Martinique, but also to compare distant and distinctive cases, such as Mauritius and Trinidad.²⁴

Some authors prepared regional studies in implicit comparison to the wider literature: Joseph Miller's study of Angola in the Atlantic world confirmed the magnitude of its slave exports and showed the sharp contrasts in the demography, commercial structure, and social organization of Angolan slave trade as contrasted with West African slave trade.²⁵ An outstanding case of a comparison in which a similar research design is used for analysis of several cases is that of Barry Higman's study of the years 1808-1838: this study extends Higman's previous analysis of Jamaica to a systematic comparison of sixteen territories in the British Caribbean.²⁶ The logic of comparison in studies of slavery became so compelling that it resulted in the publication of numerous collective volumes, in which the reader is invited to make comparisons among the studies, often with the aid of an introduction linking them.²⁷ Overall, the field of slavery studies has become a model for comparative study in social and economic history.

Comparative work has made it possible to write an intelligible overview of plantation slavery throughout the Atlantic region.²⁸ Comparison locates a range of analogies within the system: for instance, the existence of maroon societies in Africa as well as in the Americas; the conditions of slavery after slave trade has been halted; and certain parallels in the problems of post-emancipation societies.²⁹ But comparison also highlights the differences—such as the contrast between the mostly male slave society of the Americas and the mostly female slave society of the Old World. Even then, the analogies recur: American slave society had its mostly-female sector, in the households of wealthy owners and in the cities. Overall, the study of slavery has brought expanded comparison and has thus strengthened the coverage and analysis of major issues. Further, the comparative studies, by illustrating the web of connections among local systems of slavery and slave trade, led naturally to the conceptualization of slavery as a network of social systems. As a consequence, the legacy of this network of slave systems is now understood to be all the more influential.

Debates on Slavery: Labour and Culture

The comparative research on slavery continues to be accompanied and moved ahead by a series of debates. The most prominent and general debate has been on the numbers of persons transported in the Atlantic slave trade. Curtin's figure of nearly ten million captives disembarked in the Americas challenged the more fanciful estimates of earlier times. Further research brought numerous small revisions, and the overall totals crept up slowly. The British, French, and Dutch slave trades in the Atlantic have been documented with remarkable precision. The Portuguese, Brazilian, North American, and Spanish slave trades are less well documented, and it is the new archival discoveries and more sophisticated estimates of these national trades that are yielding the biggest changes. A forthcoming second edition of the Eltis et al. CD-ROM will show a substantial increase in slave trading voyages for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.³⁰ While the total number of captives who landed in the Americas is thus coming to be known in some detail, there remains room for dispute on ways to set up the problem of the volume of slave trade. First, one can attempt to account for the number of persons who boarded slave ships, a figure of an additional 1.5 million or more, corresponding to the Transatlantic mortality. Second, one can add the slave-trade voyages that were along the coasts but not across the Atlantic: slaves carried to Europe and to islands of the eastern Atlantic; and slaves carried from one part of the Americas to another, such as from Curaçao to Cartagena and then to Peru. Third, one can attempt equivalent estimates of the flows of slave trade (and the magnitude of slave populations) within Africa and from Africa to the north and east.³¹