Legacies of Slavery: Comparative Perspectives

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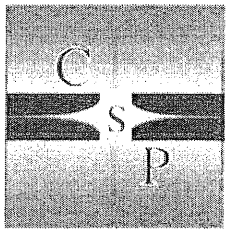

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CHAPTER ONE

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 from 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]

A second debate has focused on the profitability of slavery and, more generally, the contribution of slavery to the modern economic order. One portion of this debate stems from Eric Williams' 1944 contention that the profits from plantations of the British Caribbean contributed to the capital invested in expanding Manchester cotton textile factories. A second portion stems from the contention of Fogel and Engerman in 1974 that the profitability of plantations in the American South was equal to but not greater than the profitability of business enterprise elsewhere in the United States. For both these issues, debates in the 1970s tended to minimize the significance of slavery in the rising industrial system. Reformulation of the questions, however, along with recognition of the pervasiveness of slavery in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, has led to various suggestions that slavery was indeed significant in economic change generally and in industrial expansion in particular.[32]

A third set of debates has centred on efforts to explain the demand for African slaves and the supply of African slaves. On the demand side, analysis has focused on the profitability and labour intensity of mining and plantations of sugar, tobacco, and indigo; on the shortage of alternative labour supplies as Amerindian populations declined; and on the relative immunity of Africans to diseases of both temperate and tropical zones. On the supply side, analysis has focused on the transportation cost for humans as compared with other commodities; on the comparative value of labour as given by African methods of production; and on the relative availability of enslaved persons in Africa. John Thornton's controversial thesis that slavery was widespread in Africa before trans-Atlantic contact has been debated both as an empirical question and as an ideological position.[33]

A fourth set of debates focuses on the nature and dynamics of slave culture, especially in the Americas. The alternative positions taken by various authors give emphasis to the survival of practices from the African homeland among slave populations overseas; the suppression of ancestral practices and the imposition on slave populations of culture designed by the master class; syncretism, an eclectic mix of African and other (usually European) practices; creolisation, a somewhat more purposeful selection among various cultural traditions in a new setting; improvisation, in which the emphasis is on the development of new cultural forms that evoke earlier ones; and still others.[34] Other cultural debates focus on the identification of ethnic, racial, and colour mixes and hierarchies in slave and slave-descended populations.

A fifth set of debates addresses questions of the abolition of slave trade and the emancipation of slaves. David Brion Davis has written several prize-winning volumes on the place of slavery and abolition in Western thought, tracing the development of abolitionist thinking in Britain and the United States.[35] Another trend within the literature emphasizes the activity and impact of Black

abolitionists, including their philosophical, political, and pan-Africanist activities.[36] Seymour Drescher has emphasized the place of the anti-slavery movement in the expansion of representative politics in Britain.[37]

A sixth major area of debate is on the character and extent of slavery in Africa, its changes during the course of the centuries, and the linkages and parallels of slavery in Africa with slavery in the Americas and elsewhere in the Old World. Paul Lovejoy's "transformation thesis" argues that slavery in Africa changed repeatedly in its institutions as a result of the pressures of the external slave trade.[38] Many authors have preferred, on the other hand, to argue that slavery in Africa was milder and brought more protections for the enslaved than was the case on plantations of the Americas.

These debates, while they are ongoing and while they leave much to be determined, have clarified some major patterns in the history of the last several centuries. They have documented in much greater detail the migration of humans, especially those in slave status but also the migration of free people. They have shown how processes of technical change and economic growth, while centred most spectacularly in England and the North Atlantic, were linked from region to region all across the planet. Overall, the discussions have shifted from treating slavery as a peculiar institution, isolated from the main line of societal change, to treating slavery as an important area of human experience, whose rise and decline was connected tightly to the other transformations of the early modern world.

Asia and the Indian and Pacific Oceans in the History of Slavery

Asia, the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific, long neglected in the study of slavery or at best studies through isolated instances, are now being reinterpreted as part of a world in which slavery had far-reaching significance, both direct and indirect. Occasional studies have added significantly to the documentation of Asian and Pacific slavery, though some of them have treated slavery as an isolated, local phenomenon. More generally, the understanding of slavery in Asia and the Pacific has been restrained by the dual problem that historians of the region have shown little interest in documenting slavery and that historians of slavery in the Atlantic and Africa have shown little interest in Asia and the Pacific.

The most effective demonstration of the extension of slavery beyond the Atlantic world is Markus Vink's 2003 article on the Dutch slave trade of the Indian Ocean in the seventeenth century. In addition to presenting a rich bibliography and describing the flows of captives from Southeast Africa, India, and Java to sparsely populated regions throughout the Indian Ocean, Vink

estimates that this Indian Ocean slave trade, in the seventeenth century, had a volume of 15% to 30% of the Atlantic slave trade in the same era.[39] Many earlier studies had sunk into obscurity.[40] One interesting exception is the 1900 survey of Indonesian slavery by H. J. Nieboer: his argument that the ratio of land to population determined whether slavery would arise, was picked up by Evsey Domar as a basis for a theory of slavery that became popular among economists.[41] But the analysis of the Netherlands East Indies dropped out of the theoretical discussion, and in any case, Nieboer chose to give no mention at all to the Dutch-directed system of plantation slavery, analysing only the surrounding ethnic groups on the assumption that their systems of slavery were largely independent of each other. A later collection of studies on Asian and African systems of slavery, edited by James L. Watson, drew attention to the cultural variety of their institutions and offered tentative suggestions that they might have been linked.[42]

Nineteenth-century slavery and slave trade on the east coast of Africa, in contrast, benefited from two fine studies by Frederick Cooper and Abdul Sheriff, followed by a collective volume on Indian Ocean slave trade edited by W. G. Clarence-Smith.[43] Suzanne Miers sought to extend the study of slavery and slave trade into the Arabian peninsula, where it is known in general to have been extensive, but met with little cooperation in her analysis. For the oceans, in contrast, Janet Ewald was able to gather documentation illustrating the pervasiveness of slavery in maritime labour for the Indian Ocean, along with its gradual transformation into various forms of subaltern wage labour.[44]

For Asia, the Indian and Pacific Oceans, slavery did not develop the prominence it was to have in the Americas and Africa. Slavery in this great region overlapped and competed with various other forms of unfree labour and with wage labour and independent peasantries. In this regard, the global studies of indentured labour by David Northrup and Hugh Tinker provide an important comparative angle, as does the analysis of the sugar industry in south-eastern China by Sucheta Mazumdar.[45] New discussion on the history of the African diaspora in the Indian Ocean promises to expand knowledge of slavery in that region.[46]

Slavery Viewed at a Global Scale

The exploration of comparisons, debates, and neglected regions in the study of slavery leads logically to consideration of slavery on a global scale. In one sense, to speak of global analysis is to consider an encompassing, world-wide system of forced labour; in another sense, global analysis can be seen as an extended version of comparison. The latter, comparative approach to the global is more fundamental: that is, to explore the local and regional experiences of

slavery and slave trade is to create an opportunity for generalization about those experiences. Yet out of such comparative work can also arise insight into larger patterns of interaction: the existence of a larger system of slavery in which the regional experiences are interacting constituents. In particular, sustained comparison can reveal the dynamics that have reverberated through a global system.

Indeed, slavery can now be seen to have grown, by the eighteenth century, into a global system of forced labour. That is, Africans were taken west to the Americas in large numbers, and served in bondage in a highly commercialized economy that sustained interactions among the colonies. Much smaller numbers of Africans went to Europe as servants and port workers in lands that governed the slave colonies. In a separate but ultimately related stream of slave trade, Africans went to North Africa and to the Ottoman and Safavid empires to serve as domestics, labourers and soldiers. This system of slavery was linked to Russian slavery and to Black Sea sources of slaves (from the Caucasus in the east and from Poland in the west). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Africans went in growing numbers to the islands and ports of the Indian Ocean, again to serve as domestics, labourers, and in the military. There, the enslavement of Africans overlapped with enslavement of South Asian and Indonesian peoples, as they were put to work in the expanding regional economy. Finally, and by no means least important, there developed greatly expanded systems of slavery within Africa: systems that focused at once on the capture, transportation, and exploitation of slave labourers. These African systems began along the Saharan fringe in West Africa, then expanded in coastal areas of West and Central Africa, expanded further along the East African coast in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and continued to expand in the African interior well into the nineteenth century. The term "global system" of forced labour is appropriate in that these systems of slavery, while regionally distinctive, were not isolated. The continual movement of slave labourers from one part of this system to another responded to the relative prices of slaves in different regions, and served to spread the techniques of exploitation from place to place.

Under pressure of the emancipation movement, slavery declined in some regions of the Americas in the early nineteenth century, though it expanded in others. As European demand for African slaves declined in the nineteenth century, so also did the prices of slaves on the African coast: this effect rippled around the continent, and slave prices fell in every region. At the lower prices, Asian and African purchasers could afford to buy larger numbers of slaves, so the numbers of people captured and traded continued to be substantial, and prices only fell so far. Overall, slave populations rose to a peak in the mid-nineteenth century. I estimate that the number of Black slaves in the Americas

and sub-Saharan Africa rose from about ten million in 1800 to seventeen million in 1850.[47] At the same time, slavery was also expanding in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. As a result, the area of the world in which slavery was significant was near to half the surface of the earth. Indeed, the survival and expansion of slavery brought steady reaction by enslaved populations, which resonated with movements of serfs, conquered nations, subordinated women, and the nascent movements of wage workers into a great set of interconnected movements for emancipation.

This global character of slavery was recognized by nineteenth-century abolitionists as they waged their campaign for emancipation. The suppression of most (but not all) systems of slavery, however, allowed its previous importance to be forgotten. Perhaps it is the more fully globalised nature of society today that makes it easier to see the global interactions in past systems of slavery. Today's globalization is new, but paradoxically its newness gives us tools to see that our contemporary system of global mobility in labour is not so new, for, a clear antecedent existed two centuries ago in the global system of slave labour.

Views of the Legacy of Slavery

The world of today is highly contradictory: we preach as never before an ideology of human social equality, yet expanding economic disparities undermine any hope for equality in material life and perhaps in other areas of life. This contradiction, in which the hope for further emancipation is offset by the expansion of relative deprivation, keeps alive the image of slavery—the extreme form of inequality in the past—as a metaphor for inequality in the present. Study of slavery in our past is thus guaranteed a lasting place in scholarly interest because it addresses at once, the ideological change we have undergone in renouncing slavery, the pervasiveness of labour exploitation, and the cultural transformation and discrimination brought by systems of social inequality.

A second tension in the legacy of slavery is the nature of today's linkage to past slavery. Is the study of past slavery about "the other" or about "us"? Do we see ourselves as the descendants of slaves? As the descendants of slave owners? As unrelated to the past of slavery? Implicit answers to these questions are forced into the open as the discussion of slavery becomes more open and public, for instance through the creation of monuments, museums, and film documentaries to commemorate the experience of slavery. In the Atlantic world, the sites of museums and permanent exhibits include Liverpool (the leading British slave-trade port), Virginia, and Ghana. Major conferences and exhibits have taken place in Nantes (the leading French slave-trade port), in Ouidah (the leading West African slave-trade port), and in New York.[48] Others exist and

more are being planned.[49] Those who create and view such exhibits necessarily reflect on the relationship between their own lives and the lives of those in the world of slavery.

In my opinion, the study of slavery is best seen as about "us", though the meaning of "us" necessarily changes. For some, it is "us" as descendants of those enslaved. For others, it is "us" as descendants of those who held slaves. For everyone in the present, however, it is "us" as members of societies that relied earlier on slavery. That is, we all share the general heritage of slavery brought by the effect of slavery in modifying the economic conditions and the social and cultural relations of the past, and especially during the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century height of slavery as a socio-economic system. In addition to this general heritage, some groups and individuals can trace a more specific legacy because of their ancestry in enslaved or slave-owning communities.

However we identify ourselves in regarding the past of slavery, a clear set of questions arises for investigation: How are we to respond to past injustice? Is there anyone now alive who bears responsibility for past injustice? How is society today influenced by the past of slavery, or indeed by the consequences of ending slavery? The underlying issue is how to identify and appropriately renounce the evil and misfortune of past slavery, rather than hide from it.

Two examples of well-known writings reveal the complexities of addressing the legacy of slavery. Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* provides a lively analysis of post-emancipation Black culture in the North Atlantic, treating it as a "counter-culture of modernity" which has been formative of major trends in the dominant English-language culture.[50] The book has been very successful in revealing cultural creativity and transmission across racial boundaries, and the term "Black Atlantic" has been widely adopted. Yet Gilroy's approach downplays references to the era of slavery and to Africa in any era: his framework celebrates the recovery from slavery without addressing slavery itself.

More recently, the historian Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau has gained much attention in France with a global overview of the trade in African slaves in which he emphasizes that the number of people enslaved in Africa (especially in the nineteenth century) may have exceeded the number shipped across the Atlantic.[51] The argument has become popular with those in France who are uncomfortable with a recent governmental resolution denouncing the Atlantic slave trade as a crime against humanity. A work of history has thus become aligned with racial and political disputes in France. The work of Pétré-Grenouilleau is taken by some as absolving eighteenth-century French slave traders of crimes against humanity on the grounds that still larger numbers of persons were enslaved in Africa during the nineteenth century. Such reasoning

chooses the path of dividing past and present worlds into numerous competing groups rather than emphasizing the links among populations involved in slavery: interpreting the significance of the enslaved populations within Africa differs according to whether one sees them as "us" or "the other". In my opinion, the arguments of Gilroy and Pétré-Grenouilleau should be understood at once as academic analyses and as ideological positions; as analysis of history and legacy. If ideology is supposed to be expunged from the study of history, it is certainly integral to the study of legacy.

The interactions of history and legacy are not simply about ideology, however, they can also provide knowledge. Scholars of slavery long believed that slavery could not survive without State support. But the experience of the twenty-first century shows that slavery can be reinvented wherever individuals can obtain power over others who are isolated from social or legal support. It has been argued that participation in past slavery involved no excessive violation of human rights, in that its hierarchy became the norm in societies where slavery was generally accepted and sanctioned by law. Slavery in the present, however, can have no such justification, and yet we find it erupting in a variety of social situations.[52] Our ample evidence of slavery in the present, in which it is totally illegal, suggests a revised perspective on the past. Our current observations tend to confirm that much of slavery in the past was conducted not just as the operation of a different social system, but as wilful exploitation of the powerless by the powerful.

The history of slavery tells us that, for much of the world, the passage from the fifteenth to the twentieth century was not a voyage of smooth advance to modernity; rather it included horrible reverses and irretrievable waste for many, redemption for a few, and drastic reallocation of society's benefits to the advantage of others. Modern nations developed out of substantial reliance on slave labour. Even more clearly, modern ideas of individual freedom and equal rights evolved in part out of reaction against slavery. These lessons from the past provide us with some indication of the possibilities of the future.

Notes

[1] Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 184.

[2] One speaks also of "heritage": that term is partly a synonym for legacy, but I think that heritage conveys a more positive spin, emphasizing the past that a community wants to hold on to, while legacy refers a bit more generally to the present results of past phenomena.

[3] Gilberto Freyre, *Casa-grande e senzala : formação da familia brasleira sob o regimen de economia patriarchal* (Rio de Janeiro: Maia & Schmidt, 1933); Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *La Población de México, 1519-1810; studio etno-histórico* (Mexico, DF: Ediciones Fuento cultural, 1946). See also W. E. B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction: an essay toward a history of the part which* ***black*** *folk played in the attempt to reconstruct democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1935).

[4] E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939); Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1941).

[5] Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944).

[6] Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculian Institution: Slavery in the Antebellum South* (New York: Knopf, 1956); Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959); Eugene Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965); Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon, 1974); John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).

[7] Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974).

[8] Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969). Consider using my into as review of the slave trade literature since.[Patrick Manning, 'Introduction,' in Manning, ed., *Slave Trades, 1500-1800: Globalization of Forced Labour* (Ashgate, UK: Variorum, 1996), xv-xxxiv.

[9] Quantitative social history, including Michael Craton, *A Jamaican Plantation: The History of Worthy Park, 1670-1970* (London, W. H. Allen, 1970); Orlando Patterson, *The Sociology of Slavery: An analysis of the origins, development and structure of Negro slave society in Jamaica* (London: McGibbon and Kee, 1967); B. W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984); Arlette Gautier, *Les Soeurs de la solitude : la condition feminine dans l'esclavage aux Antilles du XVIIe au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Editions caribéennes, 1985); Russell R. Menard, *Economy and Society in Early Colonial Maryland* (New York: Garland, 1985); Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: the Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986).

[10] Ralph A. Austen, 'The Mediterranean Islamic Slave Trade out of Africa: A Tentative Census', *Slavery and Abolition*13 (1992), 214-248; Austen, 'The Islamic Red Sea Slave Trade: An Effort at Quantification', in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Ethiopian Studies* (Chicago, 1979).

[11] John Thornton, 'The Slave Trade in Eighteenth Century Angola: Effects of Demographic Structures', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 17 (1981), 417-427; David Geggus, 'Sex Ratio, Age, and Ethnicity in the Atlantic Slave Trade: Data from French Shipping and Plantation Records;, *Journal of African History* 30 (1989), 23-44; Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[12] Claude Meillassoux, ed. *L'Esclavage en Africa précoloniale* (Paris: F. Maspero, 1975); Meillassoux, *Anthropologie de l'esclavage : le ventre de fer et d'argent* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1986).

[13] Claire Robertson and Martin A. Klein, *Women and Slavery in Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983); Hilary Beckles, *Afro-Caribbean Women and Resistance to Slavery in Barbados* (London: Karnak House, 1988); Verene Shepherd, Bridget Brereton, and Barbara Bailey, eds., *Engendering History: Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

[14] Ehud Toledano, *The Ottoman Slave Trade and its Suppression, 1840-1890* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Richard Hellie, *Slavery in Russia, 1450-1725* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Jean-Michel Filliot, 'La traite vers l'Ile de France,' in Manning, *Slave Trades*, 245-256; Ann Pescatello, 'The African Presence in Portuguese India,' in Manning, *Slave Trades*, 143-165.

[15] Joseph C. Miller, ed., *Slavery: A Worldwide Bibliography, 1900-1982* (White Plains, NY: Kraus International, 1985); Miller, ed., *Slavery and Slaving in World History: a Bibliography* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1999).

[16] Paul E. Lovejoy, 'The Volume of the Atlantic Slave Trade: A Synthesis,' *Journal of African History* 23 (1982), 473-501; Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); second edition 2000.

[17] David Eltis, Stephen D. Behrendt, David Richardson, and Herbert S. Klein, eds., *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999). A second edition is forthcoming.

[18] Paul Finkelman and Joseph C. Miller, eds., *Macmillan Encyclopedia of World Slavery*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan Reference, 1998); Seymour Drescher and Stanley L. Engerman, eds., *A Historical Guide to World Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., *Chronology of World Slavery* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 1999); Dinah L. Shelton, ed., *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes against Humanity* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2005).

[19] Beckes, *Afro-Caribbean Women*; Shepherd et al, *Engendering History*; David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine, eds., *More than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996). See also Sylviane A. Diouf, ed., *Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Strategies* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2003); and Kristin Mann and Edna G. Bay, eds., *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (London: Frank Cass, 2001).

[20] Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price, *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological* Perspective (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992); Kristin Mann, 'Paradigms in the Study of the African Diaspora', in Mann and Bay, *Rethinking the African Diaspora*, 3-21.

[21] Isidore Okpewho, Carol Boyce Davies, and Ali A. Mazrui, eds., *The African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Identities* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999); Mann and Bay, *Rethinking the African Diaspora*; Patrick Manning, 'Africa and the African Diaspora: New Directions of Study.' *Journal of African History*, 44 (2003): 487-506.

[22] Seymour Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977); Drescher, *Capitalism and Antislavery: British Mobilization in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery 1776-1848* (London: Verso, 1988); Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts, eds., *The End of Slavery in Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

[23] Russell R. Menard, *Economy and Society in Early Colonial Maryland* (New York: Garland, 1985); Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986); Lorena S. Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove: A History of a Virginia Slave Community* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1997); Paul E. Lovejoy, 'Plantations in the economy of the Sokoto Caliphate', *Journal of African History* 19 (1978), 341-368.

[24] Arlette Gautier, *Les Soeurs de solitude:La condition feminine dans l'esclavage aux Antilles du XVIIIe au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Editions caribéennes, 1985); Richard Blair Allen, *Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Laborers in Colonial Mauritius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Bridget Brereton, A History of Modern Trinidad 1783-1962 (London: Heinemann, 1981).

[25] Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

[26] B. W. Higman, *Slave Populoation and Economy in Jamaica 1807-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean.*

[27] For a list and discussion of nineteen collective volumes published up to 1992, see Patrick Manning, 'Introduction', in Manning, ed., *Slave Trades, 1500-1800: Globalization of Forced Labour* (Ashgate, UK: Variorum, 1996), xv-xxiv.

[28] Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[29] Ismail Rashid, '"A Devotion to the Idea of Liberty at Any Price": Rebellion and Antislavery in the Upper Guinea Coast in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', in Diouf, *Fighting the Slave Trade*, 132-151; Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, and Rebecca J. Scott, *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

[30] Eltis, *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade*; second edition forthcoming.

[31] Such calculations could include enslavement in the Caucasus, in Slavic lands, in South Asia, and in the Indonesian archipelago.

[32] Joseph E. Inikori, *Africans and the Industrial Revolution in England: A Study in International Trade and Economic Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[33] John K. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[34] Frazier, *Negro Family*; Herskovits, *Myth of the Negro Past*; Mintz and Price, *African-American Culture*; Mann, 'Paradigms'.

[35] David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966); Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution 1770-1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975).

[36] Sylvia Frey, *Water From the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Vincent Harding, *There is a River: The Black Freedom Struggle in America* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981).

[37] Drescher, *Capitalism and Antislavery.*

[38] Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[39] Markus Vink, '"The World's Oldest Trade": Dutch Slavery and Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean in the Seventeenth Century', *Journal of World History* 14 (2003), 167-168.

[40] Ann M. Pescatello, 'The African Presence in Portuguese India',*Journal of Asian History* 11 (1977), 26-48 [reprinted in Manning, *Slave Trades*,143-165; James F. Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Singapore: NUS Publishing, 1981); Jean-Michel Filliot, 'La traite vers l"Ile de France', in U. Bissoondoyal and S. B. C. Servansing, eds., *Slavery in the South West Indian Ocean* (Moka, Mauritius, 1989), 84-95 [reprinted in Manning, *Slave Trades*, 245-256].

[41] Herman Jeremias Nieboer, *Slavery as an Industrial System: Ethnological Researches* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1900); Evsey Domar, "The Causes of Slavery or Serfdom: A Hypothesis", *Journal of Economic History* (1970), 18-32.

[42] James L. Watson, ed., *Asian and African Systems of Slavery* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980).

[43] Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in* Zanzibar (London: James Currey, 1987); William Gervase Clarence-Smith., ed., *The Economics of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Frank Cass, 1989).

[44] Janet J. Ewald, 'Crossers of the Sea: Slaves, Freedmen, and Other migrants in the Northwestern Indian Ocean, c. 1750-1914', *American Historical Review* 105 (2000), Gwyn Campbell, *An Economic History of Imperial Madagascar, 1750-1895: The Rise and Fall of an Island Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Richard Blair Allen, *Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Laborers in Colonial Mauritius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); William K. Storey, *Science and Power in Colonial Mauritius* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1997).

[45] David Northrup, *Indentured labor in the Age of Imperialism, 1834-1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas 1830-1920*, 2nd ed. (London: Hansib Publishers, 1993). The great majority of the coverage in these two volumes addresses the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

[46] An international conference, *The African Diaspora in Asia* was held in Goa India from the 9th to the 16th of January, 2006. It was a joint venture of the African Diapora in Asia (TADIA) society, UNESCO (India, The GoaUniversity(India), University ofRondônia(Brazil), University of Alcalá (Spain), and Institute for Technical Support to Third World Countries (IATTERMUND) (Brazil).
It was coordinated by Jean-Pierre Angenot (Federal University of Rondônia, Brazil & Goa, University, India) and Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya (University of London, United Kingdom).

[47] For these estimates, see Patrick Manning, *The African Diaspora: A History through Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming). In research under way, I expect to provide new estimates of the size, structure, and migration of African population in the slave-trade era, using methods of tabulation and simulation. My previous estimates are summarized in Manning, *Slavery and African Life*.

[48] Permanent exhibits and museums: 'Against Human Dignity: Transatlantic slavery', Merseyside Maritime Museum, Liverpool; 'Captive Passage', Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia; Cape Coast Castle, Cape Coast, Ghana. Conferences and exhibits: 'Les Anneaux de la Mémoire', Nantes, 1991; 'The Slave Route', Ouidah, 1994 (sponsored by UNESCO); 'Slavery and the Making of New York', New York Historical Society, 2005-2006.

[49] Among others is a UNESCO-supported project to build an archive and museum in Cartagena, Colombia.

[50] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[51] Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Les Traites négrières : Essai d'histoire globale* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004). His estimates of the size of African populations in slavery are drawn, largely, from an earlier global analysis of slave trade: Manning, *Slavery and African Life*.

[52] For information on contemporary slavery see http://www.antislavery.org, Anti-Slavery International, based in Britain; and http://www.iabolish.com/, the American Anti-Slavery Group, based in the United States.